

**Biosecurity Programme Board
Meeting
Holiday Inn
17th November 2010**

Minute

Present: Roger Coppock (Corporate and Forestry Support, Chair)
 Richard Siddons ([Forestry Commission Wales](#))
 Roddie Burgess (CFS)
 Bruce Rothnie ([Forestry Commission England](#))
 David Slawson ([The Food and Environment Research Agency](#)),
 Hugh Clayden ([Forestry Commission Scotland](#))
 Chris Inglis ([The Confederation of Forest Industries](#))
 Martin Williams ([Plant Health and Biotechnology Branch, Welsh Assembly Government](#)).
 Jean Waddie ([Rural and Environment Directorate, Scottish Government](#))
 David Sulman ([The United Kingdom Forest Products Association](#))
 Stewart Snape (CFS Secretariat)
 Andrew Sharkey ([Woodland Trust](#))
 Charlton Clark (Corporate and Forestry Support)

Summary of Action points

Agenda Item	Action
3. Matters arising	
a) Network mapping:	<p>Action: Stewart Snape to circulate Laura Jones's list.</p> <p>Action: Board members to add network contacts and return to Stewart Snape.</p>
b) Exemption to publicity freeze:	<p>Action: Roddie Burgess to provide an update in time for the next meeting.</p>
c) List of publicity events	<p>Action: Board members to forward suggestions to Stewart Snape</p>
d) Reporting indicators	<p>Action: David Slawson will circulate the list of questions.</p> <p>Action: All members to propose questions for a Biosecurity awareness questionnaire to Stewart Snape.</p>

4. Update on the European Union review of the Plant Health regime	Action: Roddie Burgess to seek legal advice on whether the Forestry Act prevents us stipulating restocking requirements to accompany notices.
5. Current status of pests and diseases.	Action: Roddie Burgess to prepare a submission to the minister recommending that UK take unilateral action against the threat of Bronze Birch Borer.
6. <i>P. ramorum</i> in Larch	Action: Bruce Rothnie will provide quantitative information about the anticipated work load for next year.
7. Communication Strategy	Action: Charlton Clark to redraft as discussed and circulate.
8. Biosecurity Protocol	Action: Joan Webber to send comments to Roddie Burgess. Action: Roddie Burgess to redraft the protocol and circulate.
13. Dates for future meetings	Action: Stewart Snape to agree dates with David Slawson and circulate to the Board.

1. Welcome and Introductions (Roger Coppock)

Roger Coppock welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jean Waddie who was deputising for John Speirs. Apologies were received from John Dye ([Timber Packaging and Pallet Confederation](#)); Joan Webber ([Forest Research](#)); Jon Heuch ([Arboricultural Association](#)); John Speirs ([Rural and Environment Directorate, Scottish Government](#)); Nick Boulton ([Timber Trade Federation](#)) and Laura Jones (Forestry Commission England).

2. Minutes of last meeting (Roger Coppock)

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3. Matters arising (Roger Coppock)

Network mapping: The board welcomed Stewart's suggestion that he would circulate the list provided by Laura Jones and members could add to it as necessary.

Action: Stewart Snape to circulate list (discharged)

Action: Board members to add network contacts and return to Stewart Snape.

Exemption to publicity freeze: Roddie Burgess had this in hand and would give an update in time for the next meeting.

List of publicity events: Charlton Clark suggested that local initiatives could supplement national ones. Richard Siddons commented that he was setting up a programme of meetings in Wales.

Action: Board members to forward suggestions for publicity events to Stewart Snape.

Reporting indicators: Roger Coppock asked members to consider indicators and to forward these to Stewart Snape. David Slawson agreed to circulate a list of questions that had been used with students. Chris Inglis suggested that we could examine University curricula to establish whether Biosecurity features highly and use this as baseline against which future course content could be compared in a few years. The group agreed to prepare a Biosecurity awareness questionnaire. Charlton Clark suggested including behavioural type questions. Chris Inglis suggested that we could adopt more than one questionnaire rather than use one very complicated one. Each of these need only have 2 or 3 questions.

Action: David Slawson will circulate the list of questions.

Action: All members to propose questions for a Biosecurity awareness questionnaire to Stewart Snape.

4. Update on the European Union review of the Plant Health regime (Stewart Snape)

Stewart Snape referred to Martin Ward's paper and asked for comments. Andrew Sharkey asked whether there would be other opportunities to feed in comments. Stewart Snape explained that Martin Ward's paper was submitted without prejudice to the need for member states to be allowed to comment on detailed proposals as they emerge. Roger Coppock asked whether the review would result in improvements to the Plant Passport system. Roddie Burgess commented that the Plant Passport system was high on the agenda and he expected the review to deliver improvements in the process.

There was then some discussion about quarantine controls on large semi-mature plants which currently are often outwith scope of control in the EU Directive. Roddie Burgess explained that this level of detail had not been discussed yet. Small operations were unlikely to have quarantine facilities. Kew Gardens were investing in a new facility.

Andrew Sharkey expressed the Woodland Trust's concern that Biosecurity controls could result in deforestation as notices served to control *P. ramorum* did not oblige owners to restock. Stewart Snape commented that certification schemes could have a role to play. Andrew replied that this would only be the case where woodlands are certified. The main issue was over small woodlands, most of which were not certified. Roddie Burgess suggested that we take legal advice on whether the Forestry Act prevents us from stipulating restocking requirements on sites felled in response to a statutory notice being issued. He noted that the Plant Health Order did not and could not make such a provision as replanting per se would not provide a control against the introduction or spread of a pest.

Action: Roddie Burgess to seek legal advice.

5. Current status of pests (Roddie Burgess)

Roddie Burgess introduced this item and referred to his paper on Bronze Birch Borer. This pest was a potential threat to both *Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens* in the UK. Roddie Burgess confirmed that he understood that birch trees were being imported from North America but because birch was not specifically regulated we have little intelligence on the scale of the trade. He was aware of a number of companies from North America that were considering importing wood chips to GB from 2012. The European Plant Protection Organisation has prepared a Pest Risk Analysis for this pest. The EPPO timetable for publication of the PRA was September 2011 and thereafter the European Commission may propose new controls. He recommended that we take early unilateral action under article 16.2 of the Plant Health Directive and asked for comments.

Chris Inglis suggested that we should lobby European Commission for a fast track process. Hugh Clayden emphasised the extent of birch in Scotland and pressed for rapid action. Roddie Burgess confirmed that he could make a quick submission to Ministers based on the high level of risk and advising that emergency action should be taken in advance of a full PRA. David Slawson suggested that a commodity PRA on all wood chips would have merit. In reply to a question from Martin Williams about biosecurity controls at biomass plants, Roddie Burgess explained that the approach taken was for any imported material to be confirmed pest free prior to export.

The OMT agreed that Roddie Burgess should proceed as proposed.

Action: Roddie Burgess to prepare a submission to Ministers recommending that UK take unilateral action against the threat of Bronze Birch Borer.

Roddie Burgess talked about a confirmed finding of *Phytophthora lateralis* on Lawson's Cypress near Loch Lomond. This pest was also known to affect *Taxus brevifolia* but there was no information on susceptibility of *T. baccata*. He confirmed that this pest was on

the EPPO alert list but was not listed in the EU Plant Health Directive. Our contingency plan has been launched and an Outbreak Management Team will be formed shortly.

Roger Coppock confirmed that evidence of Juniper infected with *Phytophthora undulata* in Durham and Perthshire was causing concern. This pathogen was previously referred to as *Pythium undulatum* although David Slawson thought it unusual for *Phytophthora* to be called *Pythium*. Andrew Sharkey asked whether there was any intention to notify relevant bodies about this disease because there may be implications for the collection and propagation of juniper seed. Hugh Clayden commented that it was an issue in terms of Native Pinewood and important in terms of biodiversity.

6. *P. ramorum* and larch (Bruce Rothnie)

Bruce Rothnie updated the board on the current situation, our constantly improving knowledge of the disease and its distribution and how our management action was evolving in response to it.

Hugh Clayden asked where the inspector resource that was currently deployed in England and Wales had come from. Bruce Rothnie explained that the resource was redirected Woodland Officer and Technical Support Unit staff.

David Slawson asked if the anticipated workload could be quantified. Bruce Rothnie explained that he had done work on this and agreed to circulate the information to the Board.

Action: Bruce Rothnie will circulate the information.

Martin Williams asked if the assessment of the problem in larch had extended east. Bruce Rothnie confirmed that it had not and explained that resources had been targeted to the high risk climatic zone in the west. David Slawson added that Fera staff do conduct surveys in the east, but at a reduced intensity to reflect the lower risk.

Andrew Sharkey asked whether a model had been developed to predict the risk of a stand becoming infected depending on its proximity to an infected site. Bruce Rothnie and Richard Siddons confirmed that at least another season of monitoring was required before such a model could be developed. Andrew Sharkey suggested that the information about spread (2km) should be made public to allow managers and owners to make decisions.

Chris Inglis asked about the effectiveness of spore traps. David Slawson replied that water bait traps were very effective. David Slawson added that it may be possible to use the facilities that other agencies have to monitor the level of spores in the air e.g. the Met Office. David Slawson asked about the evidence that *P. ramorum* was infecting other

tree species. Bruce Rothnie confirmed that Noble fir and Douglas fir had been infected but that the disease was not fatal on these species.

Bruce Rothnie concluded by emphasising that whatever management strategy was finally agreed it was essential to consider the implications for resources.

7. Communications strategy (Charlton Clark)

Charlton Clark presented his paper and requested comments.

Hugh Clayden asked if it was time to tell people that we need to consider the aerial application of pesticides to attempt to control this disease.

Martin Williams suggested that the key message about responsibility sharing be moved into Goals/objectives.

David Slawson agreed that the Private Sector could do a lot more to help themselves. He added that it was important to strengthen links to other government departments and agencies.

Roger Coppock emphasised that the key point was to get the right message out to the right audience at the right time.

The Board agreed that the document was almost there and just needed a little tweaking.
Action: Charlton Clark to redraft as discussed.

The Board agreed that David Slawson could adopt the communications strategy for use in the *Phytophthora* programme.

8. Biosecurity Protocol (Roddie Burgess)

Roddie Burgess presented his paper and invited comments.

Richard Siddons asked how the protocol integrated with animal health. He added that it would be ideal to get a chemical disinfectant that was effective against both plant and animal pests. Roddie Burgess noted he was trying to establish whether one could be identified.

Hugh Clayden expressed his concern about the practical implications for implementing the protocol. Roddie Burgess emphasised that it was about changing the culture and observed this would take time.

Hugh Clayden explained that he intended to embed the message, once clear and agreed, within operations contracts.

Bruce Rothnie read out some comments from Laura Jones. Laura Jones agreed with the principle but was concerned about the practicalities.

Joan Webber agreed to send her comments to Roddie Burgess.

Action: Joan Webber to send comments to Roddie Burgess

Action: Roddie Burgess will redraft the protocol as discussed.

10. FAO guidelines (Roddie Burgess)

Roddie Burgess gave a presentation and recommended that the Board read the booklet as they may find it provides useful background when considering topics within the Board's remit.

11. Pests and diseases funding bid

Roger Coppock explained that the bid was still being developed. Defra have suggested improvements and are interested in how devolved administrations can contribute funding. Roger Coppock added that industry contributions was an issue and the ability of forest owners to fund work was limited by the low profitability of the sector.

Chris Inglis referred to the Disaster Fund proposed by Confor. David Sulman was keen to ensure that the industry was properly represented and commented that the UKFPA only heard about the proposed fund earlier this week. UKFPA was keen to discuss the issue but no more than that at this stage. Chris Inglis replied that the proposal was intended to stimulate discussion.

Roger Coppock reflected that Defra would expect a robust case as to why industry should not contribute to such a fund.

Roger Coppock went through his paper. He emphasised the importance of the impact assessment. The biggest costs by far were the ecosystem services that woodland provides. He was due to submit the bid to Defra's Local Approvals Panel on 7th December. The decision would be whether to fully fund, partly fund or not support the bid.

David Slawson commented that the Defra Business Plan facilitated consideration of tree diseases.

Hugh Clayden suggested that reference to the fact that other diseases will come to the fore and what we learn from any work funded by the current bid will contribute to our knowledge for dealing with them.

David Slawson suggested including "Behavioural Change" as an objective within the technology transfer section.

12. Industry round-up

Chris Inglis commented that the issue of Red Band Needle Blight in two Scottish nurseries appears to have been satisfactorily addressed.

David Sulman reported that there had been no howls of protest at the introduction of Pine-tree Lappet Moth controls in the Inverness area.

Andrew Sharkey informed the Board that the Chief Executive of the Woodland Trust had met with Jim Paice. The Minister seemed to be concerned about the threat of pest and diseases in trees. Hugh Clayden added that the Scottish Minister had also expressed concern.

12. Any Other Business

Roger Coppock explained that as Roddie Burgess was retiring at the end of March next year this would be his last Board meeting. The Board thanked Roddie Burgess for his contribution.

13. Date for the next meeting

The next meeting would be held in May. David Slawson offered to host the meeting at Sand Hutton.

Action: Stewart Snape will agree dates with David Slawson and circulate them to the Board.