



Chalara dieback of ash - 14 November 2012

Dear Customer

As you will no doubt be aware, as a result of responding to the threat to our ash trees posed by the disease Chalara dieback of ash (*Chalara fraxinea*), the Forestry Commission is facing unprecedented demand on its resources.

This demand on resources has included us leading the urgent rapid survey of England's ash resource to identify the full extent of the disease as part of a Great Britain exercise. We have been supported by the whole of the Forestry sector and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have been involved. We are also grateful to the many agencies such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, FERA, National Trust, Woodland Trust and Country, Land and Business Association as well as the private sector and other organisations, who so readily collaborated with us on this huge undertaking.

Many of our staff, particularly those in our Area Offices including Woodland Officers and Administrative staff, have worked tirelessly on weekends and evenings to collect and organise survey data, and we anticipate further demand on our staff resource in responding to survey related findings and any subsequent responses that will be required of us.

Whilst responding to Chalara and other plant health issues remains our number one priority, we are conscious of the knock-on effect this priority work may have on our capacity to handle business as usual such as processing grants and felling licences. To minimise the disruption to our customers, we are identifying the likely scale of the impact so far and assessing our scope to provide additional resources to our grants and regulations activities. Our current estimates are that in our East and East Midlands Area we are not likely to be back to 'steady state' across all types of business before Christmas; elsewhere this situation is being kept under constant review as

further Chalara linked actions are taken. We are pleased to report that systems such as those delivering farm woodland payments are performing well. You have our assurance that we do not underestimate the impacts that delays in processing grants and felling licences can have, therefore we will keep this under constant review and keep you informed as new demands and response strategies to the outbreak of Chalara become clearer.

I would like to take the opportunity to reassure you that when our staff are able to turn their attention back to their business as usual roles, their priorities will include paying customer claims, responding to felling licence applications and progressing woodland creation applications for this current planting year. We will also progress grant applications where deadlines for applications are time bound and have impacts on receiving payments within the next new Rural Development Programme for England period e.g. approving management grant (WMG) applications by the 15 May 2013.

Please do stay in touch with your Area contacts so we can better understand how best to prioritise getting back to providing our usual service levels.

On a personal note, I am very impressed at the way the Forestry Sector as a whole has come together to respond magnificently to the unprecedented issues currently facing us, and I appreciate all the support and understanding we have received to date. We trust we can rely on this continuing whilst we strive to minimise any unnecessary knock-on effects on you and your own customers.

Yours Sincerely

Richard Greenhous
Director Forest Services
Forestry Commission England



14 November 2012

Effects of new legislation on the timber and firewood trades

The legislation passed in Great Britain on Monday, 29th October, was primarily aimed at restricting the importation and movement of ash trees for planting, because these carry the highest risks of spreading the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus, which causes Chalara dieback.

Ash wood and bark can be infected by the fungus, but wood and wood products can be treated to prevent disease spread. Control over movement of ash wood from infected sites is achieved through statutory Plant Health Notices.

There has been no amendment to the regulation of wood and timber movements into and within Britain, but new legislation has come into effect which controls the movement of ash wood into Ireland.

For details on how the new legislation affects Wood movements within Great Britain, Wood imports into Great Britain and Wood exports from Great Britain please visit the [webpage](#).

Detailed advice on the new regulations is also available from the Forestry Commission's Plant Health Service at the following address:

Plant Health Service
Forestry Commission
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Rd,
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT

Tel: 0131 314 6414

Email: plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Advisory signs for woodland visitors

Signs offering advice and guidance to countryside visitors concerned about Chalara dieback of ash trees are now available to woodland managers to erect at forest entrances. There are two signs - one for display at woods with confirmed *Chalara fraxinea* infection, and one for use at uninfected woods and forests to raise general awareness of, and vigilance for, the disease.

They also encourage visitors to follow simple bio-security procedures when visiting woods to minimise the risk of accidentally spreading the disease on their footwear, bicycle wheels etc. The A3-sized signs can be downloaded from the page "[Advice to Forest Visitors](#)", which is available at a link on our [webpage](#). Woodland managers who do not have the facility to print the posters may ask their Forestry Commission England [Area of office](#) to print one and post it to them.

Further information

For further information on *C. fraxinea* visit our dedicated [web pages](#).

Should you need any further help or information, please contact the woodland officer for your area (look under 'Area' offices for England and Wales, and 'Conservancy' offices in Scotland, in the '[Contact Us](#)' area of our website) or contact the Chalara Helpline:

08459 33 55 77 (open 8am–6pm every day)

Plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Visit our mobile Chalara website using the QR code below:

