



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity

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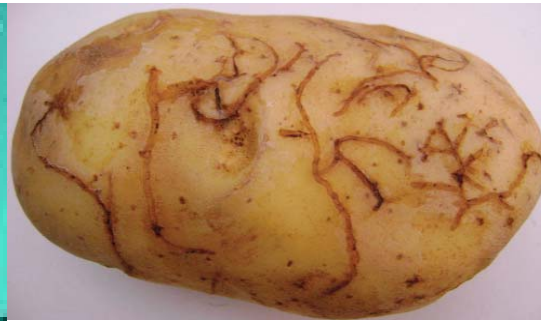
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# Terminology

- Quarantine pest =  
“A pest of potential economic [incl. environmental] importance **to the area endangered thereby** and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled”
- = “notifiable pest”
- Pests includes bacteria, viruses, fungi etc.
- Plants includes trees



# Regulatory Framework

- WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (SPS)
  - rules based trading system
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
  - international standards (eg wood packing)
- Euro - Med Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO)
  - recommends regulation of pests to member countries
  - scans horizon for new risks
- European Union
  - harmonised plant health rules
  - Standing Committee to update rules
  - audits by FVO, and scientific opinions from EFSA

# Plant Health Act 1967

- Forestry Commission covers Forest Trees
- Defra covers other “crops, trees and bushes”
- No definition of “forest trees”
- Detail in Statutory Instruments, eg
  - Plant Health (Forestry) (Amendment) Order 2012
  - Plant Health (England) (Amendment) Order 2012



# UK Implementation

- UK Plant Health Strategy Board
- Risk Management Workstream
  - Commissions pest risk assessments
  - Publishes 10-15 PRAs p.a. and consults on action
  - Prepares UK positions for EU Standing Committee
- UK Plant Health Stakeholder Advisory Forum
- Delivery by Forestry Commission, Food and Environment Research Agency, ... and you!



# Threats

- 250 pests listed in the EU Plant Health Directive
- 25 more in the EPPO Alert List
- More unlisted pests, including many unknown risks from outside Europe

# Responses

- Pest risk assessments based on:
  - biology (hosts, dispersal, damage)
  - pathways (trade, natural spread, other)
- Inform:
  - Surveys to determine distribution (or freedom)
  - Measures on trade (including emergency measures)
  - Contingency plans for eradication, containment or control



# Phytosanitary measures on trade

- May include prohibitions and restrictions, eg that plants must come from a pest free area, or a pest free place of production
- Requirements attested by
  - phytosanitary certificates issued by PH services or (for intra EU movements)
  - plant passports issued by authorised nurseries
- Non-discriminatory, transparent, and minimum impact to achieve appropriate level of protection



# Detection and diagnosis

- Early detection is key to eradication
- Progress on detection < progress on diagnosis
- Improvements to detection sought by:
  - technology (acoustics, remote sensing, spore trapping)
  - citizen science (as Colorado beetle)
- Improvements to diagnosis through:
  - molecular methods
  - lateral flow kits for field use
  - DNA amplification methods



# Eradication, containment, control

- Very few successful eradications on tree pests
- *Anoplophora glabripennis* in Kent this year an exception?
- And Chestnut blight?
- Early detection key to successful eradication – including **by you!**



# Task Force

- SoS has asked Prof Ian Boyd to establish an independent Task Force on Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity to:
  - review risks, costs, benefits and priorities
  - identify barriers to improving plant biosecurity
  - make use of best international practice
  - assess evidence and knowledge gaps
  - consider policy and delivery infrastructure
  - review contingency planning and emergency response
- Interim recommendations now published at:  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/12/06/pb13842-tree-taskforce-interim>

# Review of EU plant health regime

- Evaluation at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_health\\_biosafety/rules/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosafety/rules/index_en.htm)
- UK points so far:
  - faster decision making, to get ahead of the pests
  - better risk targeting including
    - more regionalisation
    - rebalancing action between plants and produce
  - more practical collaboration between inspectorates
- Other key points for negotiation
  - priority list for surveys, contingency plans, EU funds
  - compensation for eradication action?
  - “reverse strategy” of assessing risks before import