



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity

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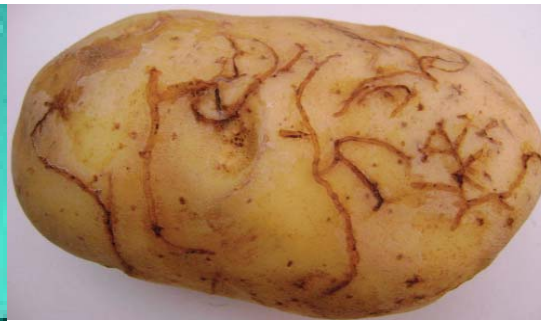
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Terminology

- 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

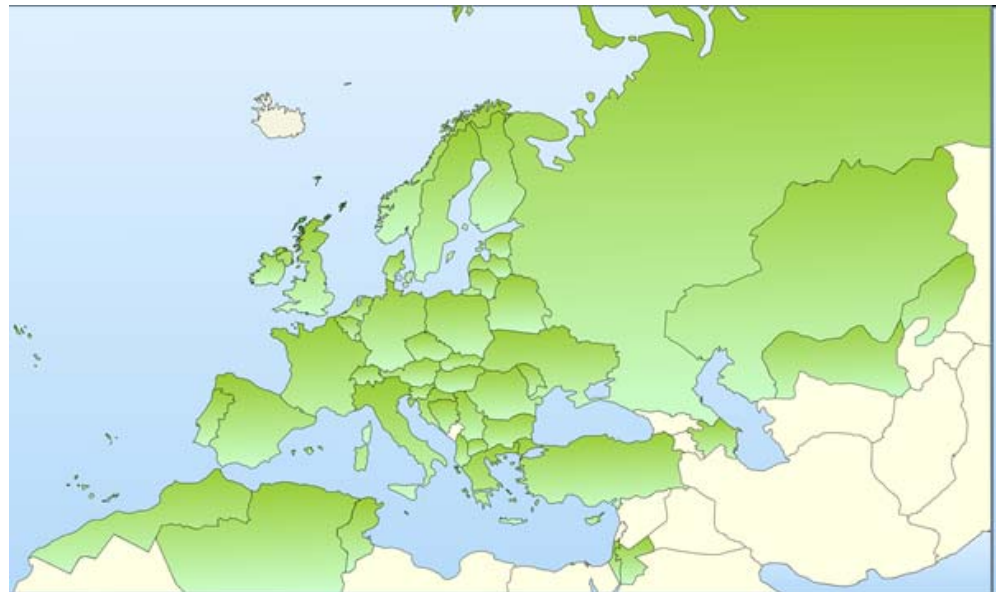


Regulatory Framework - Global

- WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (SPS)
 - measures to protect human, animal and plant health
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
 - sets SPS standards for plant health
- Standards on:
 - tools (eg pest risk assessment, phytosanitary certificate)
 - pathways (eg wooden packing material)
- not on specific pests:
 - because one region's quarantine pest is, in another region, harmless or routinely controlled

Framework - European

- European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO)
 - 50 member countries (including all EU Member States)
 - horizon scanning, regional standard setting, and networking in plant quarantine science
 - Small secretariat (12)
 - Recommends, does not regulate



Regulatory Framework - EU

- Plant Health Directive
 - Harmonised controls for imports to the EU
 - Plant passports for high risk movements within EU
 - Emergency measures against new pests
 - Some regionalisation (protected zones, infested zones)
- Standing Committee updates lists and measures
- Food and Veterinary Office monitors compliance
- European Food Safety Authority advises on science



Regulatory Framework - UK

- Plant Health Act 1967
 - Forestry Commission covers Forest Trees
 - Defra covers other “crops, trees and bushes”
 - No definition of “forest trees”
 - Detail of import controls etc 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 Food and Environment Research Agency, Forestry Commission ... and you!



Threats

- 250 pests listed in the EU Plant Health Directive
- 25 more in the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) Alert List
- More unlisted pests, including many unknown risks from outside Europe



Responses

- Pest risk assessment to inform:
 - Emergency measures
 - Contingency plans
- Measures and plans include:
 - Measures on trade
 - Surveys to demonstrate freedom from the pest
 - Eradication, containment or control plans



Pest Risk Assessment (PRA)

- Carried out according to international standards
- Considers
 - biology (hosts, dispersal, damage)
 - pathways (plants, produce, natural spread, other)
 - risk management (statutory measures, routine controls)
- Feeds into choice of measures and plans



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
- Must be 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 through
 - technology (acoustics, remote sensing, spore trapping)
 - citizen science (as Colorado beetle)
- Improvements to diagnosis through
 - lateral flow kits
 - DNA amplification methods



Eradication, containment, control

- Very few successful eradications on tree pests
- *Anoplophora glabripennis* in Kent this year an exception?
- And Chestnut blight?
- Reports of suspect findings by public, tree officers, arboriculturists are vital to enable eradication.



UK forward look

- 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>

Task Force Interim Recommendations

1. Develop a prioritised UK Risk Register for tree health and plant biosecurity
2. Strengthen biosecurity to reduce risks at the border and within the UK
3. Appoint a Chief Plant Health Officer to own the UK Risk Register and provide strategic and tactical leadership for managing those risks
4. Review, simplify and strengthen governance and legislation

Task Force Interim Recommendations

5. Maximise the use of epidemiological intelligence from EU/other regions and work to improve the EU regulations concerned with tree and plant biosecurity
6. Develop and implement procedures for preparedness and contingency planning to predict, monitor and control the spread of disease
7. Develop a modern, user-friendly, expert system to provide quick and intelligent access to data about tree health and plant biosecurity
8. Identify and address key skills shortages

EU review background

- EU Plant Health Regime overhaul
 - Red palm weevil around Mediterranean
 - *Diabrotica virgifera* spreading on maize
 - Pinewood nematode spreading from Portugal
 - *Phytophthora ramorum* in UK on larch
- Plant health regime is much more open than other countries' and than EU animal health regime
- Trades innocent until proved risky – and not regulated if not known to happen!
- Evaluation at http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosafety/rules/index_en.htm



EU review key points

- 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
 - prioritised list of pests for surveys, contingency planning and solidarity funding
 - compensation for eradication action
 - “reverse strategy” of assessing risks before import

