



## Kent Tree Health Information Day – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012

### Q & As

1. Is there an explanation for the difference in the red and blue lines on the graph? ( Presentation – Science Update – slide 8)

*(Dr Joan Webber) The critical message is the lack of increment in the growth of the tree once infected.*

2. If you have a severe frost, will the spores be damaged?

*(Bruce Rothnie) No. Spores are produced in the summer (July and August) and have a protective surrounding casing. Spore longevity is the key point to discover as there has been very little research done.*

3. What has Poland done to contain Chalara and how effective has it been?

*(Dr Joan Webber) No efforts have been made to contain it. Symptoms have been occurring for years and the disease is well ahead of them. Given it is well-established, they have learnt to live with it.*

4. Does coppicing an uninfected site increase susceptibility?

*(Dr Gary Kerr) The evidence is not clear, however, if you re-space young coppice it will reduce its crown cover and so should increase resilience.*

5. I have been noticing systemic markings on ash for years so does this mean it is always Chalara?

*(Dr Gary Kerr) No, there are lots of discolourations in ash and Chalara is just one of the causes.*

**6.** How do we deal with leaves? Wouldn't composting help increase the spread?

*(Dr Gary Kerr & Dr Joan Webber) The latest guidance on the website says you can burn, bury or compost. It would be best to deal with them by composting them on site rather than taking them away. There is no information available on the required temperature but approx 55-60C should be sufficient to destroy the infection, however garden composts will not reach that temperature.*

**7.** What is happening naturally in Poland? Are there resistant trees?

*(Dr Joan Webber) The Poles are losing and felling a lot of their ash. Felling is occurring where the timber value can be preserved. Approx 10-20% of their ash appear to be less affected.*

**8.** Will there be any financial compensation for works relating to Chalara?

*(Andrew Smith) No. Not at the moment. We would need to present a case to the Minister for this to be considered.*

**9.** Would the worst way forward be neglect?

*(Dr Gary Kerr) Yes, we need to reduce crown cover by continuing to carry out silvicultural thinnings. We need to monitor our woodlands much more rigorously and intervene early when necessary.*

**10.** What are the most important next steps with regard to Chalara?

*(Simon Hodgson) Share knowledge through events and experience. We need to update knowledge in the sector.*

*(Andrew Smith) Vigilance is the key point. A lot of the most recent diseases had already been here for 5+ years before they were identified. We need a better capacity to receive plant health reports.*

*(Martin Ward) Unfortunately we could not have stopped this disease but we need better control measures for the prevention of future diseases.*

*(Bruce Rothnie) We need to share experience of developing resistance*

*(Dr JoanWebber) We need better environmental consciousness in nurseries and we need to expect more from them. We need to have 'home grown' trees.*

*(Dr Gary Kerr) We need to better understand the science*

*(Jim Quaife) We need to be more aware of what we are doing*

**11.** Does the proximity of the outbreaks to main ports suggest that vehicle movements may have been the main cause for the spread of Chalara from the continent?

*No. The pathogen is principally airborne and this will have been the main cause of dispersal.*

**12.** Over the last 25 years the Forestry Commission EWGS schemes have supported new planting, should we be tracing back these older plantings for evidence of Chalara?

*(Bruce Rothnie) The Forestry Commission have only been tracing back to planting sites which have received material within the last 5 years. This coincides with when Chalara was reported in the wider environment in the countries from which material has been imported.*

*Infection seems to be more prevalent in younger trees.*

*The Forestry Commission survey carried out in the wider environment clearly shows that infection is in coppice and natural regeneration and not associated with historic woodland creation schemes.*

*The Forestry Commission does not grant aid all new planting schemes.*

**13.** Should more be done to promote resilience in woodlands rather than just focusing on finding Chalara resistant ash trees.

*(Dr Gary Kerr) Yes this is an ideal opportunity to be promoting silviculture; planting in mixtures, focusing on the right species for the site and managing operations in a sustainable way. This will ensure that in the future our woodlands are robust and able to recover from pests and diseases and extreme weather events.*

**14.** Is it just a matter of time before infected trees succumb to Chalara?

*Yes. However these are still very early days and there is insufficient data from observations / research done in Europe to provide definitive answers in terms of timescales. Also we never know when and what resistance will show and work into this will be ongoing.*

### **In Summing Up.**

Final conclusions from the discussion were, that not just the nursery sector, but all professionals in woodland management and arboriculture, need to raise their game and improve their professional management of trees and woods. The sector as a whole needs to work together to show greater responsibility for biosecurity and use the latest available technical knowledge.