

**Update on the Defra technical review of the Phytophthora Programme
for Defra, Fera and Forestry Commission,
24th October 2012**

Fera recently set up an expert group to review and evaluate the degree to which the Defra-funded 5 year Phytophthora Programme that started in April 2009 has so far met its objective to “reduce pathogen inoculum to epidemiologically insignificant levels by removing sporulating host plants from high risk areas” and thereby to “reduce the risk of significant tree death and significant impact on heathlands within England and Wales”. The Terms of Reference for the review are attached (Annex 1).

The review group consists of the following experts:

- Jane Chard (Scottish Government, chair)
- Susan Frankel (USDA -Forest Service)
- Colin Hawke (Cornwall Council)
- Mike Jeger (Imperial College)
- Tim O'Neill (ADAS)
- Richard Shattock (ex Bangor University)
- John Wilding (Clinton Devon Estates)
- Tracy Wilson (independent horticultural consultant)
- Andrew Woods (in interim) (Royal Forestry Society)

The group is being supported by Carol Jackson from the Phytophthora Programme

The group met for the first time on 5th October and were given an overview of the Programme. Background information, including the business case and refreshed business case had been provided to the group prior to the meeting. A series of informative presentations were given by staff from Defra, Fera and Forestry Commission on plant health policy, implementation of the Programme, stakeholder engagement activities and the research underpinning the Programme. Some members of the group attended part of the England and Wales Project Board meeting on 4th October as observers.

Following the presentations, the group discussed initial views, the need to gather more detailed information on certain aspects of the Programme and ways of obtaining views from key stakeholders, the public and management groups.

The group will meet again on 1st November to continue the review process. The main work of the review is expected to be complete by the end of 2012 and a short report will be written with a deadline of 28th February 2013.