



Biosecurity - are we ready to respond?

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One of the biggest threats to the kiwifruit industry today is the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB).

This unwanted pest could cost the wider horticultural industries millions of dollars if it were to establish, and be a significant public nuisance pest as it takes up residence in kiwi homes and industrial buildings over winter.

How would we respond to a BMSB incursion on our orchards? What if we fail? How would we manage it over the longer term?

These are just some of the questions addressed by Kiwifruit Vine Health (KVH) and Zespri at a simulation exercise of a BMSB incursion on a New Zealand kiwifruit orchard, also attended by observers from across horticulture and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

The exercise was supported by technical, operational, research, and communications staff who worked together to test the kiwifruit industry's level of readiness for two scenarios - an incursion and long-term management.

It was held to coincide with a regular meeting of KiwiNet, a team of people selected from across the kiwifruit industry who champion biosecurity readiness and coordinate the deployment of kiwifruit industry resources into biosecurity responses.

Teams worked through what will happen under both scenarios to ensure key advice is developed and provided to decision makers; impacts on orchards and postharvest facilities are managed; key information is given to growers, the media and wider public; and the right capability can be mobilised at the right time e.g. KiwiNet responders.

A readiness plan recently developed by a joint KVH/Zespri working group identified activities to mitigate impacts of BMSB across the industry supply chain and was



KiwiNet team members out in the field during the 2015 Queensland Fruit Fly response.

used during the exercise by teams to guide thinking.

MPI also provided an overview of the planned national approach to a BMSB response, particularly around surveillance, national public awareness campaigns and any potential movement controls.

What we learned from the simulation exercise was:

- Movement controls are difficult as the bugs fly and there are other risk movement pathways (non-kiwifruit activities) beyond our control.

- If we have to spray kiwifruit orchards as part of an eradication programme, we need to have clarified an industry position on compensation issues in advance.
- Industry and Government work together well and have good, aligned systems in place. However, we can't do it alone and the assistance of local councils, iwi and community groups is imperative. We need to make sure we consult with these groups throughout any response.

PORT OF TAURANGA

Welcome to Tauranga

We are a Bio Security conscious port community

DO NOT BRING RISK GOODS INTO THE BAY OF PLENTY

Fruit and vegetables, fresh or dried

All Dairy Products, Honey and Eggs

DISPOSE NOW INTO BIN

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

KVH
Kiwifruit Variety Health

KiwiNet team members out in the field during the 2015 Queensland Fruit Fly response.



Photo 2. KVH Board members discuss governance arrangements during the industry response exercise.

- It's a big logistical exercise to get enough people on the ground as fast as possible. KiwiNet will help make this happen and other support or volunteer networks may also be useful.

KVH and Zespri will now continue to work together on the need for and impact of movement controls, and the development of protocols for postharvest operators to help with their contingency planning.

A framework for coordinated long term approaches will also be developed, to ensure activities and decisions are aligned across industries and regions. This includes working with international experts such as Dr Tracy Leskey, who was recently in New Zealand taking part in several BMSB response workshops.

The entomologist and researcher for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) discussed BMSB with more than 100 people who packed into The Orchard Church in Te Puke to learn more

about the unwanted pests impacts on horticulture, post-harvest facilities, and residential areas in the USA. Dr Leskey went into detail about actions underway in the USA to manage BMSB in crops; the importance of collecting good dispersal and behavioural information about the bug; effective insecticides; biological control options; and various border strategies such as traps and trap crops like sorghum and sunflower.

As a coordinator of StopBMSB – one of the world's largest research initiatives into BMSB, involving more than 50 researchers across 18 organisations – Dr Leskey will continue to work with KVH and Zespri to fill knowledge gaps around our New Zealand eradication plans, as well as potential long-term management and control options within kiwifruit orchards. ■



KiwiNet: an industry network ready to respond

A network set up to ensure there is plenty of skilled capability ready to respond to the next big biosecurity incursion continues to cement its place within the kiwifruit industry.

Initiated by KVH in late 2014, KiwiNet helps ensure there can be quick deployment of industry resources into biosecurity readiness and response activities. The network is made up of a team of people selected from across the kiwifruit industry, who play a key role in championing biosecurity readiness.

KiwiNet Coordinators - nominated by their respective organisations - have good industry knowledge and awareness of what biosecurity threats are out there and why we need to do everything we can to manage any pest or disease that makes its way across our borders.

Psa and fairly recent Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) incursions have reminded us that there's always something on our doorstep ready to come through the front door and if it does, we need to be well prepared and able to immediately respond. What makes KiwiNet so great is that everyone involved gets what's at stake and they know how important it is to be ready.

Coordinators, working alongside KVH, identify experts that can be called upon in a biosecurity response. There's a wealth of knowledge throughout the industry and by pooling everything from people, facilities, and equipment, to communication channels, KiwiNet can quickly and effectively mobilise.

KiwiNet meets twice a year and the most recent meeting coincided with the BMSB exercise testing industry's level of readiness. KiwiNet members took part and worked through what actions the network would need to take to help manage impacts on orchards and postharvest facilities to ensure surveillance plans are implemented, and key information is supplied to growers as quickly as possible.

The exercise proved that industry organisations have their own, good, internal mechanisms for quickly joining forces and responding to a biosecurity incursion. We also know that KiwiNet has a robust system in place for communicating within the network.

We'll always be making changes in line with updated technology and training of new people, but it's good to know that the fundamental infrastructure is there and that KiwiNet will make a positive difference to the whole industry when it is deployed.

KiwiNet was established as part of industry's commitment to readiness and response planning under Government Industry Agreements (GIA) and is part of the National Biosecurity Capability Network (NBCN), which is New Zealand's field capability team deployed during a biosecurity response. It is a joint initiative between MPI and AsureQuality and is made up of more than 120 organisations, which have agreed to commit their skills and resources.

KEEP NEW ZEALAND STINK BUG FREE

Look for black & white banding on the antennae

Look for black & white banding on the sides of the abdomen

Scale 10

The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug is a pest that infests homes, ruins gardens, and stinks when crushed. It could also destroy our fruit and vegetable industries. It's not in New Zealand yet, and we want to keep it that way. If you see one, don't kill it. Catch it, take a photo, and call us.

For more information: mpi.govt.nz/stinkbug

CATCH IT SNAP IT REPORT IT

EXOTIC PEST & DISEASE HOTLINE **0800 80 99 66**

Horticulture AURI NEW ZEALAND WINE Avocado New Zealand Apples & Pears Vegetables TomatoesNZ Ministry for Primary Industries