

Proposed new Pathway Management Plan

Fact sheet: Organic matter inputs (including compost, mulch and soil)



Long term growth and success of the kiwifruit industry requires biosecurity risks to be managed across the supply chain. KVH is proposing to introduce a Pathway Management Plan for the kiwifruit industry to prevent the spread of pests and diseases before we know they are here. This will give us the best possible chance of eradication and minimising the impact to our industry.

Our approach to risk management focuses on six improvement areas. If we can manage risk across these areas, we will be a long way towards protecting our investments from future biosecurity risk. This is one of a series of fact sheets available at www.kvh.org.nz, along with more detailed information and frequently asked questions that explain the implications of changes in these key improvement areas.

Why are we proposing changes to this pathway?

Growers should have a high degree of confidence in the biosecurity status of all inputs coming into an orchard. This includes organic matter inputs such as compost, mulch, and soil as these could carry and introduce biosecurity threats. The specific organisms of concern and the organic matter on which they could be transmitted is somewhat uncertain - KVH and Zespri are conducting research to better understand this risk. Therefore, traceability is included as a general requirement to provide the ability to trace any biosecurity issues that may occur.

The proposed Pathway Plan also provides a framework to introduce risk management processes for specific organisms should these emerge as threats to our industry. The only specific risk management process proposed at this point is retaining the current time/temperature combinations for composting kiwifruit material to manage the risk associated with Psu.

How is this different to the current state?

There are currently risk management requirements for compost under the National Psu-V Pest Management Plan (NPMP), however these are specific to managing the risk of Psu (i.e. no leafy kiwifruit material to be used unless approved by KVH).

The Pathway Plan proposes to retain these Psu measures, at least initially, and undertake research to determine if other organism specific measures should be considered.

The requirement to keep traceability records is new, but we are aware that many operators are already keeping such records, and this is not expected to be a significant change.

The changes are not anticipated to add significant costs to organic matter suppliers; however, the outcome is a framework that significantly improves our biosecurity risk management on this pathway over the longer term.

See the set of rules document on the KVH website for detailed wording and explanation of proposed rules.



What does this mean for me?

Manufacturers of organic matter inputs: all suppliers of any organic matter to orchards must ensure best practice management of inputs and in some cases, a processing procedure to ensure the material is free of high-risk pests (where specified). Traceability is essential and a minimum requirement across all organic matter products to identify where their products have been applied (KPIN and date).

KVH may undertake risk-based audits on an annual basis.

Growers receiving organic matter inputs: growers must maintain records of all organic matter inputs to their orchard as part of their on-orchard biosecurity plan – including where the organic matter input came from, where it was spread or deposited and how much was used. Growers should only receive these inputs from sources that can demonstrate they meet the requirements of the Pathway Plan. While there is little expected change to current practices for growers, it will provide growers with a level of confidence that all organic matter inputs received onto an orchard will have risk management to an appropriate level.

Commissioned research underway to understand the risk

Many pathogenic viruses, bacteria, protozoa, and parasites may gain access to waste materials destined for use on-orchard, including compost. While a lot of the research (and subsequent management protocols) is focussed on human and animal pests and diseases, there is significantly less research to understand the role of plant pathogen movement in organic matter inputs. In any case, what we do know is that some of the most significant risks to our industry are soil borne pathogens, and that organic matter movements provide these organisms the perfect opportunity to spread throughout the industry, if left unmanaged.

Research has proven that most pathogens are inactivated by the composting process and a composting procedure with a process of three days at a temperature greater than 55°C results in a sanitised compost. We know from previous work that this process also kills Psa and renders most weed seed unviable. Many plant pathogens, particularly those soil borne organisms, have the capability to produce hardy, long lasting spores whose sole purpose is to allow for survival under tough conditions. What we do not know is whether the risk of these plant pathogens is managed under current systems for various organic matter inputs. Therefore, we are now undertaking a piece of research which will help us to better understand this risk - not only on compost, but across the organic matter pathway.

The result of this piece of work will help ensure that we are implementing measures that will manage the risk, while aiming for practicality under current operating models for various organic matter inputs.

Take the opportunity to have your say

KVH is consulting with growers and other industry groups (nurseries and post-harvest for example) about the proposed new Plan. Based on feedback received, the Plan and implementation schedule will be finalised, with changes likely to come in to effect from 1 April 2022. Let us know your thoughts on the proposed Plan by Friday 30 October 2020. Speak to any of the team, send an email to info@kvh.org.nz or phone 0800 665 825.