

Review of the National Psa-V Pest Management Plan

In 2023, KVH commissioned an independent review of the Psa-V National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) 2013.

The review was undertaken to determine the value and achievements of the NPMP for the kiwifruit industry (and therefore wider New Zealand); and identify insights that can be used to enhance implementation of the Pathway Management Plan and similar biosecurity initiatives.

A summary of the review process and key recommendations is provided below.

For any questions about the review please contact info@kvh.org.nz.

Background

The NPMP was implemented in May 2013 for a 10-year term to reduce the impact and spread of Psa. It set out rules which have been largely effective, as evidenced by the fact that Psa has not been detected in the South Island.

After a one-year overlap with the new Pathway Management Plan, the NPMP expired in May 2023.

Like the new Pathway Plan, the NPMP was a regulatory tool under the Biosecurity Act. The key difference is that the NPMP was specific to Psa only, whereas the new Pathway Management Plan enables the whole industry to better manage a broader range of biosecurity threats.

Considering this regulatory change and new phase of biosecurity management, an independent review of the NPMP was commissioned by KVH, with support from the Ministry for Primary Industries, to learn more about its elements of success, as well as any insights for improvement that we can incorporate into the way we implement the new Pathway Management Plan.

The review was sought via tender process and undertaken by Douglas Birnie, ex Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Director of Biosecurity Policy and Risk, who is now a biosecurity and food safety public sector management consultant. As well as assessing a wide range of reports and literature, the author undertook a range of interviews with kiwifruit growers, post-harvest operators, budwood/pollen providers, banking industry representatives, and Ministry for Primary Industries personnel.

There were two specific questions the author was looking to identify answers to via both the literature review and discussions with interviewees:

- *What was the overall net value to the kiwifruit industry and New Zealand more broadly of the NPMP and its achievement or otherwise of its objectives?*
- *What lessons can be taken forward with the implementation of the new Pathway Management Plan and other biosecurity initiatives in the kiwifruit industry more broadly?*

Summary of findings and recommendations from the review

- In terms of overall value, the review found the kiwifruit industry appears materially better off as a result of the NPMP - a view shared by the majority of those interviewed.
- When considering the above against the NPMP's objectives the findings state it seems reasonable to assert that the Plan slowed the spread of Psa-V (and in the case of the South Island prevented it) and reduced but not necessarily minimised its impacts on kiwifruit production and was effective overall in

achieving its aims.

- With a better level of preparedness, the industry would likely have spared itself some of the significant impact that it experienced in 2010-2011. However, given the industry's lack of preparedness at the time, costs were inevitable once the disease was discovered.
- While some growers had to exit the industry because of the outbreak, overall, the industry adjusted far more quickly to Psa-V than originally envisaged. The review found that on this basis it seems highly likely the NPMP could have been withdrawn sooner than 2023 – which some interviewees noted. However, the review notes that such a repeal would risk Psa-V spreading to the South Island and would have exposed the industry to some of the risks it faced with the original outbreak.
- Themes from the findings highlight the importance of readiness and response planning for incursions/outbreaks; continued leadership, cohesion of the industry and commitment to innovation; reducing the risk profile of the industry (through biosecurity readiness) and maintaining and enhancing investment confidence; and being prepared for the unexpected via Government Industry Agreement (GIA) membership and implementation of the Pathway Management Plan, now a clear leader amongst agricultural/horticultural industries in its biosecurity preparedness.
- Key areas the review found notable for consideration of focus going forward include:
 - Ensuring understanding of key pest and disease *families* not just individuals.
 - Ensuring ongoing connections with relevant experts across the science community.
 - Having a clear understanding of the decision-making processes and systems in place for managing an outbreak under the GIA framework alongside the Pathway Management Plan, and a clear understanding of associated legal powers.
 - Maintaining contact databases and communication networks, with a commitment to using plain language when engaging with audiences.
 - Maintaining strong relations with other agencies and biosecurity networks.
 - Agile, transparent, and independent decision-making on rules, permits and exemptions and explicit timeframes for review of these.
 - Working with the industry to embed Pathway Management Plan/disease controls into commercial supply/sale contracts.
 - Maintaining a graduated range of intervention responses to Pathway Management Plan non-compliance, with publicised enforcement for intentional breaches involving high-risk.
 - Commissioning periodic independent estimates of compliance levels.
 - Publishing performance metrics on delivery against Pathway Management Plan objectives and involvement of industry in reviews.
 - Having incursion response systems that are scalable and protect support for funding.
 - Minimise regulatory costs while ensuring effective delivery of core functions.
 - Continuing strong advocacy for improving flexibility of regulatory tools, particularly via the Biosecurity Act review process. This will provide more effectiveness in managing both pathway and pest management risks in single plans, reduce compliance costs associated with management of plans and allow amendments to plans more readily.

KVH supports the findings of the review and the recommendations, many of which are already in place as part of ongoing work, while we plan to address others.

Overall, the review confirms KVH is focussed in the right areas, both strategically and operationally, and the Pathway Management Plan is a strong enhancement of our biosecurity preparedness and commitment to ensuring industry-wide biosecurity resilience.