

Proposed new Pathway Management Plan

Fact sheet: Kiwifruit orchard contractor biosecurity plans



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?

People and equipment are a moderate level risk pathway because they may visit many orchards in a short timeframe and can transmit a wide range of organisms on contaminated tools, machinery or personal effects.

A key focus of the Kiwifruit Growers Biosecurity Guidelines is that growers manage the biosecurity risk of all visitors to their orchard. These guidelines are already in place on a voluntary basis but are also a proposed rule of the Pathway Plan (see the Kiwifruit Orchard Biosecurity Plans fact sheet). However, the management of people and equipment risk doesn't only sit with growers and the Pathway Plan proposes a specific rule for contractors to actively manage their biosecurity risks (see set of rules on KVH website for wording and explanation of proposed rules).

It is proposed that contractors are required to have and operate in accordance with a biosecurity plan to identify and manage risks before entering orchards. KVH will provide guidance on appropriate cleaning and disinfection recognising practical considerations and that certain tools or equipment have a higher level of risk than others. Where possible KVH will incorporate these requirements into existing standards or schemes such as the Zespri GAP Compliance Assessment Verification (CAV) framework. For contractors outside the CAV scheme KVH will provide online processes as an easy means for contractors to demonstrate compliance with the rule.

What does this mean for me?

Contractors

Contractors who are part of the Zespri Gap/CAV would need to complete an online biosecurity training module and a KVH Biosecurity Risk Management Plan. This would be audited as part of their existing CAV audit.

Those contractors who are not currently required to hold a Zespri CAV will need to complete an online biosecurity training module and a KVH Biosecurity Risk Management Plan. This would automatically be forwarded to KVH who will then issue a registration. A list of registered contractors will appear on the KVH website.

Growers

By embedding the Pathway Plan requirements into the CAV there would be no change for growers who have contractors that come into contact with fruit and vines. They must be CAV certified which is an industry requirement. However, other contractors would need to demonstrate they have and are acting in accordance with a biosecurity plan, such as by completing KVH's online tool and being registered.

How is this different to the current state?

Under the National Psa-V Pest Management Plan (NPMP) there are already hygiene requirements for people and equipment moving between orchards and regions, specific to Psa. The Pathway Plan provides an approach to manage a broader range of pests, enables contractors to determine their own plan to manage risk based on guidelines provided, and will use tools (such as the existing CAV scheme) to simplify how the requirements of the rule have been met.

Zespri's existing CAV scheme for contractor compliance covers many contractors (mostly those that come into direct contact with fruit and vines). Preliminary testing indicates that the integration of Pathway Plan requirements into this scheme would not add significant time or cost to participants.

For contractors who are not currently part of the CAV scheme it is proposed that they would register with KVH and complete the same biosecurity requirements as the CAV contractors through an online training module. To ensure they are managing any risk to their orchard, growers would need to employ only contractors who have either a current CAV or are KVH registered.

Contractors who do not enter the kiwifruit production area would not be included (e.g. meter readers, electrical inspectors etc).

Proposed approach	Option 1: Inclusion within CAV Scheme	Option 2: Online portal
What	Industry contractor verification scheme that is already a mandatory requirement (for H&S, Food Safety etc).	KVH online tool to capture those outside CAV
Who	All contractors who work with the fruit on an orchard; incl. vine work, spray application, those who supply labour for the above. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vine work - pruning and other canopy work; Spray application; Fertiliser application; Supply of labour for any of the above activities. 	All contractors not covered in the CAV scheme - including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter trimming; Root pruning; Compost spreading; Orchard mapping; Irrigation; Infrastructure development; Orchard mowing; Post-harvest – bud counts preharvest assessments; Pest monitoring; Maturity clearance staff; Harvest; Technical advice; Beekeepers; and Flower pickers Grafters Artificial pollen applicators.
Cost of compliance	CAV already a mandatory requirement. The new additions may increase audit time minimally.	30 min training per year. Digital resources to complete online training (phone, Ipad, wifi etc).
Audit	Managed as part of wider CAV compliance to be registered contractor.	KVH receive and maintain contractor registration list. KVH audit Risk Management Plans and may complete risk-based audits against the Risk Management Plan.

How the proposed approach would be implemented

KVH's proposed approach to implementation of the Pathway Plan is to time and phase-in requirements, based on the applicable level of biosecurity risk at any given time.

This means that while the proposed Pathway Plan rules themselves and the legislation framework that they sit within would be available to us, KVH would only intend to use and implement them in appropriately high-risk situations (for example during a response to a new incursion or high-risk situation, or to add extra protection during heightened weather and disease risk periods).

One advantage of the proposed Pathway Plan is this flexibility in how the rules would be interpreted and implemented. Our intention is to implement based on risk so that contractors who deal with higher risk aspects - like plant material - may be asked to do more than those with lower risks. This enables contractors, and the growers they work with, to determine their own biosecurity plans to manage risk based on guidelines provided and will use tools (such as the existing CAV scheme) to simplify/avoid duplication of effort.

What might a biosecurity plan look like?

It is not proposed that biosecurity plans must be a defined length, follow a particular format, or look a certain way. There is no one size to fit all – the most important thing is that the plan is tailored to appropriately manage any risk you may encounter, and is well understood by all parties involved so that it is consistently operated to.

During consultation, we have had questions from growers and contractors about whether a plan is needed when operating within a small 'bubble' perhaps as small as two people. In cases like this, your plan may simply be an agreement between the two of you that your bubble will remain the same size, and an agreed understanding of how you would advise each other if your bubble was burst, and how you would then manage any associated risk as a result.

There would be examples of plans provided by KVH, including templates and other tools, and there would be workshops and help available to develop and tailor plans to ensure that they would be fit for purpose. It is proposed that these will be developed and rolled out during 2021 prior to the Plan coming into effect from 1 April 2022.

In terms of what a biosecurity plan might look like, here are some examples:

If you are a pruner:

As a contractor undertaking vine work, or supplying labour for vine work, it is proposed that you will have biosecurity integrated within the already mandatory Zespri CAV system. This new biosecurity addition isn't expected to add any significant time or cost to participants or auditors.

As a pruner, your plan would need to describe how you would manage any high-risk associated with your work – for example, how you might clean and disinfect tools that come into contact with vines between orchards. Tool hygiene between orchards for this type of contract would be the recommended minimum, however the contractor and/or grower may decide that between vine hygiene is more appropriate.

If you are a shelter trimmer:

As a shelter trimmer and contractor not currently covered by the Zespri CAV system it is proposed that you will have biosecurity managed within a simple and easy-to-use KVH-managed online tool that we would provide training to understand biosecurity requirements relevant to the contract (about 30 minutes a year).

Your biosecurity plan would need to describe how you would manage traceability at a minimum. This could be as simple as using your invoicing system to maintain a record of orchards visited during the year. The plan should also include when cleaning of equipment occurred so that records show which orchards were visited between cleaning episodes.

Continued How the proposed approach would be implemented

If you are an orchard mapper: As an orchard mapper, it is proposed that you would also have biosecurity managed within the KVH-managed online tool and recorded within a plan. Your biosecurity plan would need to describe how you would manage tracking of those orchards visited during the year and that you would respond to the requirements indicated by the orchard owner in their biosecurity plan.

Would there be exemptions?

We have listened to feedback we've had so far and completely agree that biosecurity risk can be managed at the same time as we keep things practical and applying common sense. We will be considering exemptions to the need for completing a plan in instances where risk is low, movement between multiple orchards is non-existent or the activity is a one off, outside of the production area, such as fixing fencing for example.

Case study: *Ceratocystis fimbriata* in Brazil

Ceratocystis fimbriata is a soil-borne fungal pathogen that is emerging worldwide as a major plant pathogen. A specific strain of this pathogen in Brazil has caused significant damage to kiwifruit orchards. Significant vine losses were reported, with some orchards losing 20-40% of vines. Over five years from detection, some growers reported 50% vine loss.

Pathway management is critical to limit the silent spread of *Ceratocystis fimbriata* within New Zealand (should it arrive) before it is detected. This is because there is inevitably a lag phase between the time a new pathogen arrives in New Zealand and when it is detectable, which can vary from days to years. If spread during this lag phase is limited enough when first detected, we preserve our response options, giving us the best chance at eradication.

Ceratocystis fimbriata does not spread long distances naturally - this only occurs through human assisted means such as the movement of plant material, contaminated tools, equipment, and machinery. Research looking into contaminated footwear inspected at our borders found that on average 2.5 seeds, 41 nematodes and a high number of both bacteria and fungi were present, highlighting the risk of spread through even small amounts of soil on the bottom of shoes. When you couple this low-level contamination potential with regular movements between orchards, the importance of managing this pathway becomes apparent. Contaminated tools, people and machinery could easily spread a pathogen like *Ceratocystis fimbriata* both within an orchard, to a neighbouring orchard, or even between growing regions.



Key risk management activities that contractors can undertake to contribute to reducing risk associated with a pathogen like *Ceratocystis fimbriata* include:

- Good people and equipment hygiene should be practised - this could include removing all obvious plant material before leaving/entering an orchard or even better, cleaning down (where possible) either between orchards (ideal), or at staggered intervals (i.e. end of a week) and ensuring all footwear is clean before entering an orchard.
- Keeping a log of when a machine was cleaned - whether this is between orchards, or at the end of a week, or at the end of a “run”. It is important information to understand if we ever need to trace the risk of movements.
- Traceability records need to be maintained- this includes recording when, and where, your people and equipment have been in kiwifruit orchards.

For more information on *Ceratocystis fimbriata* and how the proposed Pathway Plan can help manage such a threat see the Case Study online at www.kvh.org.nz or request a printed copy from KVH on 0800 665 825.

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.