

Proposed new Pathway Management Plan

Fact sheet: Plants and shelter belts



This fact sheet is for kiwifruit growers and Kiwifruit Plant Certification Scheme (KPCS) nurseries. Non KPCS nurseries who are only supplying shelter belt trees to kiwifruit orchards should refer to the separate fact sheet.

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?

The Pathway Plan is proposing that growers should have a high degree of confidence in the biosecurity status of all plants being moved into an orchard, and the supplier should be able to demonstrate how they are managing biosecurity risk. This will include kiwifruit rootstock as well as mature kiwifruit vines, and shelter belt plants.

The movement of plant material presents the greatest risk of moving new pests and diseases around our industry. The kiwifruit industry has already made tremendous progress in managing biosecurity risk across the rootstock pathway with over 60 nurseries currently certified under our Kiwifruit Plant Certification Scheme (KPCS), a leading biosecurity standard for the nursery sector. The Pathway Plan will retain progress made in the KPCS but build on this to cover a wider range of threats, and to include shelter belt plants and mature vines.

Shelter belt plants are not currently covered under the KPCS but many of our threats are not specific to kiwifruit and could be introduced on these plants given they are planted in the orchard. The KPCS will be expanded to enable kiwifruit nurseries to produce shelter belt species under the same risk management scheme. For non-kiwifruit nurseries wishing to supply kiwifruit growers with shelter plants, KVH will recognise equivalence with the newly developed national Plant Producers Biosecurity Scheme (PPBS) which has been developed to manage biosecurity risk across all plant material types.

How is this different to the current state?

What this will do is create a more consistent approach to how risk is managed for plants being brought into your orchard. This makes sense as your biosecurity is only as strong as your weakest link. Changes to current state are summarised below:

	<i>Current level of risk management</i>	<i>New level of risk management</i>
Rootstock	<i>High</i>	<i>High (KPCS)</i>
Mature plants	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High (KPCS)</i>
Shelter belts	<i>Variable between operators</i>	<i>High (KPCS or equivalent)</i>

1. **Kiwifruit rootstock**

- Little changes expected to current state.
- KPCS certification is an easy way to meet current and proposed future rules.
- No significant changes proposed to cost or criteria of KPCS certification due to Pathway Plan.

2. **Mature kiwifruit plants**

- The biosecurity risk of moving mature plants that have been double or triple planted is currently managed by a permission process subject to meeting risk management requirements including diagnostic testing for Psa (including new forms of Psa).
- Proposed changes will provide greater certainty of requirements for growers planning these movements and manage risk of a wider range of threats than just Psa.

- There will be costs associated with meeting the new criteria for independent audit or monitoring and diagnostic testing, but these are expected to be minimal and not a significant barrier to growers planning this activity. The most significant change will be that growers will need to signal their intention to undertake such movements well in advance (i.e. at least six months in advance).

3. *Shelter belt plants*

- Shelter belt plants are currently not required to have any biosecurity risk management in place. While some nurseries are following best practice others may not be and their plants may be exposing your orchard to biosecurity threats. Therefore, we propose to include shelter plants within the KPCS framework.
- For existing KPCS nurseries, shelter belt species can be easily brought under their existing certification with little or no increase in cost.
- Nurseries not producing kiwifruit plants will be outside the KPCS but may demonstrate compliance with the Pathway Plan requirements through equivalent certification (such as the Plant Producer Biosecurity Standard, PPBS). This is consistent with a wider New Zealand initiative to lift biosecurity risk management across all plant producers.

What does this mean for me?

The proposed changes give growers confidence that there is a minimum biosecurity standard for all plants entering their orchard production area. This means reduced likelihood of spreading new and existing pests and diseases, and a much greater chance of successful eradication if a new threat is discovered.

Previous experience with the KPCS suggest that introducing certification for shelter belt species will not have a significant impact on either the price or availability of these plants, especially considering the general trend to introduce biosecurity risk management for all nurseries. Biosecurity risk management is becoming an expectation of good business practice.

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

Case study: *Ceratocystis fimbriata* in Brazil

Ceratocystis fimbriata is a soil-borne fungal pathogen that is causing rapid vine collapse and death in Brazilian kiwifruit orchards. Significant losses have occurred, with many orchards losing 20-40% of their kiwifruit vines. Those growers most affected have reported 50% vine loss over a five-year period. As a result, growing kiwifruit in southern Brazil is looking less sustainable with many growers simply abandoning their plantings once *Ceratocystis* was discovered. Research suggests that one of the main sources of *Ceratocystis* infection in Brazilian kiwifruit stemmed from plants/rootstock purchased from commercial nurseries which had *Ceratocystis* present.

This unfortunate illustration simply highlights the real risk of unmanaged plant movements. Had there been a system in place which ensured good biosecurity practices were occurring within nurseries, including sourcing of clean material and good hygiene practices, *Ceratocystis* widespread distribution throughout the industry may have been avoided. This disease continues to be a major limiting factor for kiwifruit production in Brazil and sourcing clean planting material is considered essential for successful production going forward.



Image above: Pathogenicity screening of cultivars in Brazil showing a collapse of a young plant (left).

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.