

KVH Best Practice Advice

Orchard Hygiene



Background

There are a range of pathways that pests and disease-causing pathogens can use to spread between vines and orchards. The risk depends on the organism.

The impact of any new outbreak may be reduced by having an environment where good biosecurity and on-orchard hygiene form part of everyday practice, rather than being introduced after an outbreak has started.

Where biosecurity measures are in place that limit the spread of established diseases, they may also limit the spread of a silent disease before it is detectable.

Scope

Orchard activities should aim to minimise the risk of transferring biosecurity risks such as Psa infection between and within orchards through the movement of plant material and/or soil. The use of orchard dedicated vehicles, ensuring people, other vehicles and equipment are cleaned of plant material, denying access to dirty machinery, washing down and sanitising machinery, can reduce spread of disease. Cleaning of vine tools between bays/rows will significantly reduce the risk of infection spread between plants and within the orchard.

Best Practice Guidelines

The requirements described below are KVH best practice advice. Individual growers need to ensure they communicate their requirements to their service providers, post-harvest, contractors, orchard managers, staff and visitors.

A grower's hygiene protocols will be included in their Biosecurity Guidelines booklet and there should be a way of communicating these to orchard visitors and staff. This could be through signage, contracts or the staff induction process.

Orchard access

Everyone who crosses your orchard boundary has the potential to introduce threats.

- Display biosecurity risk management signage at orchard property entrances listing owner/manager contact details to authorise entry.
- Allow essential vehicles only access to enter the orchard.
- Ensure non-essential vehicles are left in designated parking areas, preferably outside the orchard.
- Do not park under orchard canopy

On arrival at the orchard

- Designate a dedicated wash-down area for all visitor vehicles, equipment and footwear to be cleaned in and sanitised.
- Visitors to observe grower hygiene requirements.
- Workers should not bring their own tools and equipment onto the property unless they have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitised and ideally inspected by the grower or orchard manager.
- Advise contractors of all key operational areas on orchard – parking, equipment clean down, wash down areas, personnel sanitation facilities.



- Orchard work should be avoided under wet or damp conditions.
- Clean used tools to remove all plant residues and sanitise (common practice is using methylated spirits in a spray bottle).
- Clean any cleaning equipment used, e.g. brushes etc. of visible plant material, and then sanitise afterwards.
- Always move from least infected area to more infected when working in an infected orchard.

Waste

- Dispose of any plant debris appropriately.
- Refer to [KVH Protocol: Disposal Options](#)

People

- Ensure all workers and visitors understand and follow the orchard hygiene requirements prior to entering the production area.
- Ensure only necessary equipment and personal items are taken into the orchard.
- Sanitise hands and ensure footwear (particularly soles) is clean immediately prior to entering and on exiting the orchard. Use a footbath, or spray footwear with an approved sanitiser.
- Before leaving the orchard, all personnel should ensure their clothing is free of plant material and soil.

Harvest hygiene

- All orchards should have a clearly defined transition zone for parking, loading and unloading that is separate from the harvest area.
- Limit vehicle and people movement into the 'harvest area' (under the vines).
- At the end of the harvest operation on the orchard ensure all harvest equipment has visible plant material and soil removed and is sanitised before moving off the orchard.
- Harvest bins
 - clear all plant material and sanitise bins before using on an orchard
 - minimise plant debris entering the bins during harvest and/or soil or plant material adhering to the outside of bins
 - check before being transported to the packhouse and remove any obvious plant material.
- Where gloves are used supply new/clean gloves to pickers at the start of each orchard. Gloves should be removed prior to exiting the orchard and placed in an allocated bag, washed (e.g. in Napisan) or appropriately disposed of.



Restricting access to unnecessary vehicles and dirty machinery will help protect uninfected orchards from infection and may help limit the spread of other biosecurity risks between orchards.