

October 2016

The BORDER SPACE

Working together to secure New Zealand's borders from biosecurity threats



Passenger compliance above target

Our latest annual compliance survey shows MPI's biosecurity controls for air passengers continue to achieve above target.

Of the 538 653 passengers and crew that passed through MPI's controls during the survey period, 98.7 percent were compliant. In other words, they weren't carrying any biosecurity risk items.

This result is the same as last year. Although I would have liked to have seen an improvement, I take heart that we have maintained a high standard of biosecurity in the face of rising passenger numbers. There has been a nine percent increase in international passengers over the last year.

Our target is 98.5 percent compliance across the four airports we survey.

I am particularly pleased to see we scored well when it comes to keeping out high and medium risk goods – those which could cause the most harm to New Zealand. These items include undeclared animal products and fruit and vegetables that could host fruit fly.

The overall compliance rate for high/medium risk goods was 99.2 percent. Of the main airports we survey, Christchurch had the highest compliance rate for high/medium risk goods with 99.6 percent.

In the last issue of **The Border Space** I was pleased to report that biosecurity compliance was very high in the latest mail survey.

Stink bug alert

Border staff are on high alert to stop the invasive brown marmorated stink bug from making a home in New Zealand.

The stink bug season for us runs from September to April – the autumn and winter months in the northern hemisphere. That's when the bug is likely to start showing up in imported cargo.

Quarantine officers have been deployed to target inspections on containers from the United States and Italy, where the bug is well-established in some areas.

In addition, we have increased our surveillance of wharves and vessels, particularly ships that carry imported vehicles and machinery, and areas where cargo is held on ports. We are also encouraging arriving air passengers to check their baggage and notify MPI if they find anything.

There has also been a lot of work to protect New Zealand should a bug make it past MPI's border defences. For one, MPI has just completed successful trials with the United States Department of Agriculture to see if detector dogs can be used to sniff out the bug in an outdoor environment.

We have also been developing traps and working to register insecticides for use against the bug should it be detected in New Zealand.

Brown marmorated stink bug is a serious horticultural pest in the United States. It is also starting to spread through Canada and parts of Europe.

MPI border staff intercepted 406 brown marmorated stink bugs between January 2015 and April 2016.

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



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Join us at *Protecting to Grow New Zealand: Biosecurity Forum 2016* to launch the *Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement* and hear from national and international experts about the future of biosecurity in New Zealand.

The two-day forum will focus on the important role of our global biosecurity system to protect and grow New Zealand's unique environment, economy and people.

The forum will be held in Auckland at the Pullman Hotel on Tuesday 22 (Forum) and Wednesday (Workshops) 23 November 2016.

Find out more on MPI's website
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PKE vessel denied discharge

Those of you who have been keeping up with the media will know the fate of the *MV Molat* and its cargo of palm kernel expeller (PKE).

If not, here's what happened...

My staff blocked the discharge of 23,000 tonnes of PKE when the *MV Molat* arrived at the Port of Tauranga on 6 September. We found that some of the PKE had been sourced from an unregistered facility in Malaysia and this was mingled with compliant product in four of the vessel's five holds.

We then spent a lot of time going back and forth with the importer to consider an application to have the PKE treated in New Zealand.

In the end, I personally made the decision to deny discharge of the cargo in New Zealand. I was granted this authority as a Chief Technical Officer under the Biosecurity Act.

The decision involved consideration of the amount of product involved, the availability of heat treatment facilities in the Bay of Plenty, transport and storage. For example, it was anticipated the



The *MV Molat*

PKE would need storage for 28 weeks. This would require ongoing monitoring and supervision by MPI staff, placing strain on staffing

resources in Tauranga and affecting our ability to carry out other critical biosecurity work.

Ultimately, my finding was the proposed treatment would not have sufficiently mitigated the risk of pests and diseases entering New Zealand.

Just what happens to the 23 000 tonnes of PKE will be up to the importer. The last I heard was *MV Molat* had left New Zealand waters en route to Panama.

MPI has strict biosecurity requirements for importing PKE. They include heat processing to least 85 degrees and that foreign facilities be approved and regularly audited by the exporting country.

Statistics NZ figures show New Zealand imported some 1.86 million tonnes in the year to June 2016. MPI records show there have been 68 unique voyages to New Zealand by PKE vessels during the last 12 months.

New grain transport rules reduce spillage risk

New rules for transporting imported grain will reduce spillage risk.

Under the new requirements, trucking companies used by certified importers must complete a biosecurity checklist and gain approval by the company before transporting bulk grain. The list includes various requirements to contain grain securely and checks to ensure the truck is clean after discharge.

The completed checklist, including records of any clearance checks, must be retained in the vehicle at all times and forwarded to MPI once the trip is finished.

Truck routes will also be monitored using satellite tracking and unannounced verification checks.

We have introduced a minimum of one random annual verification check for importers that transport grain between ports and transitional facilities. And there are now two random checks for grain movements between transitional facilities.

For importers that do not undertake grain movements between transitional facilities, there will be a minimum of two random surveillance verifications for travel between ports and facilities.

MPI will charge the importer for the costs of the checks for port-to-transitional facility movements. We will charge the facility from where the grain moves for checks relating to movement between facilities.

I hope these changes will alleviate biosecurity concerns raised by industry about the transport of imported grain from ports and between transitional facilities.

Low-traffic quarantine facilities may be reduced

MPI is looking at revoking approval for transitional facilities (TFs) that have been operating for a year without receiving containers or other cargo.

The move is about ensuring that private TF operators who deal with imported goods have the skills and experience to meet New Zealand's strict biosecurity standards.

The fact is TFs that process low volumes of goods can find biosecurity requirements to be burdensome, which can lead to compliance issues and disproportionate costs for MPI.

Low-traffic TFs will escape closure if they can show they will receive goods in the future, but they will require MPI supervision to ensure they comply with biosecurity procedures and they will be charged for this.

MPI will now also consider container volumes as part of the approval process for new TFs.

Approvals will still be made on a case-by-case basis, but TFs that plan to only receive six or fewer containers each year are likely to find it harder to get approval.

We will also be introducing a flat charge of \$887.70 in December for approving new TF operators. This replaces the current hourly rate charged for operator approval.

Operation Albatross underway in Northland

Border staff will again be working with the Royal New Zealand Airforce to locate yachts as they approach Northland.

It's the third season that MPI and the air force have worked together under Operation Albatross to make sure arriving yachts don't make landfall before they can be cleared by quarantine officers in Opuia or Marsden Cove.

The operation will run from October to December.

As with previous seasons, the operation will also involve the deployment of additional quarantine officers in Opuia to undertake intensive inspections.

In the lead-up to this year's yacht season, MPI staff have also visited Fiji and Tonga to brief crews on New Zealand's biosecurity requirements before they set sail for New Zealand.

MPI inspected 343 international yacht arrivals last season, making 302 interceptions of risk goods.

Naval visit to kick off busy summer

An international flotilla of visiting naval vessels will kick off a busy summer for MPI port staff in Auckland.

The Royal New Zealand Navy is expecting some 30 foreign vessels to attend its 75th anniversary celebrations from 13-22 November in Waitemata Harbour and the Hauraki Gulf.

To date, MPI understands there will be vessels coming from the United States, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Korea and Indonesia. Vessels from Russia, India and various Pacific nations may also attend.

The ships will require biosecurity clearance. We are expecting most of this to be undertaken when the vessels are at anchor off Rangitoto Island.

It is highly likely many of the vessels will be first-time arrivals with limited biosecurity knowledge. My staff will be keeping

their eyes peeled for biosecurity risks, particularly for issues with stores, ballast, documentation, garbage, bulk cargo, and various hitchhiker pests.

Arrivals from South East Asia and the Pacific Islands are likely to present the highest risk, due to the potential for dangerous hitchhikers like Asian gypsy moth and Giant African snail.

Still they come

Our latest stats confirm the tidal wave of international passengers arriving at Auckland Airport is getting even bigger.

Numbers are up 10 percent so far this year. And we expect to see a 16.5 percent increase for November (up to 443 000).

One of the reasons for the forecasted increase is a new Hong Kong Airlines service. From 11 November, the airline will begin a new daily service between Hong Kong and Auckland. The arriving A330-200 will have 283 seats, potentially resulting in 8000 extra passengers passing through MPI's border controls each month.

The service is scheduled to arrive at 7.30am, an already busy time for MPI airport staff.

Cruise ship biosecurity trials to begin

Trials of a new accreditation scheme for cruise ships will begin in November.

I have mentioned this scheme in previous issues of **The Border Space** and believe it will provide a significant biosecurity boost to the cruise ship pathway.

Essentially, it involves moving from an inspection to a verification approach to manage biosecurity risk.

Accredited vessels will be required to get their stores from reputable sources. They will also need to provide MPI with assurance they have strict systems for pest control and they actively promote biosecurity messages, such as restrictions on carrying fruit fly-host materials.

MPI will check accredited vessels to ensure the agreed practices

are being undertaken. In some cases this will involve quarantine officers travelling aboard vessels.

The approach means we can reduce some of the biosecurity inspections we currently undertake on the gangway. That will result in speedier disembarkation for passengers, which creates a better experience for international visitors.

For us, it means we can free up biosecurity staff to focus on higher risk areas.

Unaccredited cruise ships will continue to face MPI's full range of biosecurity compliance controls on arrival, including bag inspections, x-ray scanning and scrutiny by detector dogs.

Five cruise vessels are scheduled to arrive in November, four of which will potentially be subject to the new cruise ship accreditation scheme.

In the 2015/2016 season, 32 international cruise ships made 466 port visits in New Zealand, unloading a total of 197 541 passengers.

The Cruise Lines International Association says it will have a record 33 ships cruising New Zealand waters over the season. Between them, the ships will make more than 600 port visits.



Families targeted by ad campaign

We're trialling biosecurity ads targeted at New Zealand-based families of air passengers arriving from India.



Tell family visiting from India to declare any gifts of food or ingredients.

Or they'll face a \$400 fine.

Indian passport holders are increasingly making their way to New Zealand and we expect this travel market to grow further with anticipated new direct flights from India.

Many of these passengers are unfamiliar with biosecurity, which increases their likelihood of carrying risk goods.

A lot of the food items we pick up are intended as gifts for family living in New Zealand. The ads warn about the

\$400 fine relatives will get for bringing undeclared food into the country.

Ads will run in local Indian newspapers, radio stations and on online news sites. We are also at advertising to play on Skype calls between New Zealand and India.

What Now?

I am constantly impressed by the public appeal of our detector dog teams and their ability to promote biosecurity to new audiences.

So it was great to see Zane the beagle and two of my staff appear on *What Now* – the popular kid's show – in early October. Zane didn't disappoint, showing off her sniffing skills by finding a flower under a heavy wooden box, despite the unfamiliar glare of studio lights and a swarm of production staff.

There is a youtube video of the performance available on the **internet**.



Biosecurity check for giant container vessel

It was a routine shipping clearance for us except for one thing, it was the largest container ship to visit New Zealand.

The 347m-long *Aotea Maersk* docked in the Port Tauranga on 4 October.

Capable of carrying 9,640 TEU (20ft container equivalents), the vessel arrived from Chile.

The *Aotea Maersk* is the first vessel to take advantage of the Port of Tauranga's recently completed \$350 million investment in dredging and infrastructure.

My congratulations to the Port of Tauranga for making this arrival possible.

The biosecurity clearance went well, although my officers tell me you need a good head for heights to inspect the vessel.



Local dignitaries welcome the *Aotea Maersk* to Tauranga

\$15,000 penalty for reptile importer

It was great to see the North Shore District Court hand out a tough penalty to a student who admitted importing a range of banned reptiles, including an American corn snake. *continued...*

Harrison Edward Sollis, a 21-year-old Auckland student, was ordered to pay \$15,000 earlier this month after pleading guilty to one charge of attempting to possess unauthorised goods, knowing they were unauthorised.

The charge followed a two-year investigation by MPI.

Sollis had arranged for a contact in Sweden to post five veiled chameleons, one iguana, and one American corn snake to an Auckland address.

MPI staff intercepted the package at the Auckland International Mail Centre.

The court turned down Sollis's application for a discharge without conviction.

Readers of this esteemed publication will be well aware that this type of offending exposes New Zealand to biosecurity risk that could have a serious impact on our ecology, economy and international reputation.

Emerging risks

Pests and diseases are spreading throughout the world. MPI's emerging risks system keeps an eye on what could get into New Zealand. Here are some of the things that have popped up on our risk radar in recent weeks.

- Australian officials have imposed movement restrictions on moving fruit within Adelaide's Highgate suburb. The restrictions will remain in place until 18 December.
- Australia has imposed emergency import measures for Melon necrotic spot virus. The measures involve import restrictions on cucurbit seeds.
- Tomato zonate spot virus has been detected in kiwifruit in China.
- *Xylella taiwanensis*, a newly described species, is causing pear leaf scorch disease in Taiwan.
- Italy has detected *Pythium aphanidermatum*, a new pathogen, on leafy vegetables.

Class of 2016

MPI welcomed 27 new frontline border staff at a graduation ceremony in late September.

They were among more than 40 operations staff that joined MPI in the latest intake.

The new border recruits include four new biosecurity detector dog teams.

As I mentioned in the last issue of **The Border Space**, many of these new staff are going to spend this summer on the search benches at Auckland Airport. This will relieve queue congestion during peak times.



MPI's latest dog teams



40 new frontline staff – 27 of them for the border

Puppy wagon

This heading-turning puppy van will be used by our detector dog breeding programme. As I have mentioned in previous issues, MPI has started using its vehicles to promote biosecurity. In this case, the van livery is intended to entice local families to foster our biosecurity puppies. MPI's "puppy walking" programme is an important part of the training for fledgling detector dogs.



Border activity for August/September

	Aug 15	Sep 15	Aug 16	Sep 16
Aircraft and Aircraft Passengers				
Passengers	445 888	447 653	478 228	497 950
Infringement Notices	397	467	739	732
Aircraft	2 899	2 768	3 162	3 060
Sea Containers				
Loaded Containers	39 430	41 281	43 796	45 804
-Inspected	541	677	722	776
-% Contaminated	22%	16%	17%	17%
Empty Containers	13 972	16 621	14 193	16 348
-Inspected	3 362	4 547	4 990	3 663
-% Contaminated	4%	3%	8%	15%
Personal Effects				
Clearances	2 082	2 403	2 419	2 498
Inspections	383	653	733	870
% requiring decontamination	5%	8%	4%	9%
Direct Vessel Arrivals	219	234	232	232
Mail				
Mail Items Arriving	2 427 521	2 019 698	2 577 963	2 583 121
Mail Items Opened	3 374	3 401	2 902	3 502
% requiring biosecurity action	19%	21%	25%	26%

News for TF staff

The latest issue of **See Contain Report** is available on the MPI website. The newsletter provides information targeted at Transitional Facility Staff.

Previous issue

The previous issue of **The Border Space** is available on the MPI website.



Steve Gilbert
Director Border Clearance

Clara expecting

To finish, I am delighted to announce that two of MPI's most famous detector dogs will soon be the proud parents of a unique breed of biosecurity puppies.

Clara is the mum and is one of our most well-known beagles. She was named by Minister Guy in 2013. She has made visits to parliament and has had a star role in promoting biosecurity at various industry conferences.

The sire is Morley, one of the first harriers trained by MPI for biosecurity detection.

Their puppies will be beagle/harrier crosses. As far as I know, it will be first time in the world this type of breed will be trained to work at border to sniff out biosecurity risk goods.

Clara is due in late November. We won't know how many puppies she is carrying until she is x-rayed a week before her due date.



Clara as a young puppy with Minister Nathan Guy.