



Methyl bromide update

June 2021

DEADLINE FOR METHYL BROMIDE RECAPTURE

- Mandatory recapture or destruction of methyl bromide emissions at the end of fumigation is now required from 28 February 2022.
- Buffer zones will also be updated
- Latest updates are available at [Reassessment of methyl bromide | EPA](#)

WHAT DOES THE DEADLINE MEAN TO TRADE?

- Trade in forestry products to key markets such as China and India will be affected most as they require the largest amount of methyl bromide.
- The log trade to India will be disrupted because currently there is no feasible way to recapture from ship holds, and methyl bromide is the only feasible option for phytosanitary treatment for logs to India.
- New Zealand exported \$3.61 billion of logs in the year ending June 2021. Twenty percent of these logs (\$722 million) were treated with methyl bromide for export.
- Fumigation of logs for export constitutes the bulk (92%) of New Zealand's methyl bromide use. The remaining 8% is used to fumigate other export goods and for managing pests intercepted on imported goods at the border.
- In 2019, New Zealand used 673 metric tonnes of methyl bromide.

WHAT IS METHYL BROMIDE?

- Methyl bromide is a colourless, non-flammable, toxic gas that has no odour.
- It is used to control quarantine pests in export and imported goods by about 50 countries.
- New Zealand is signatory to the Montreal Protocol aimed to control ozone depleting substances such as methyl bromide.
- Methyl bromide is permitted for quarantine use, but countries are urged to reduce or replace it.
- Phase out of world non-quarantine use is nearly complete, New Zealand phased out non-quarantine use of methyl bromide in 2007.

CHALLENGES

- The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Stakeholders in Methyl Bromide Reduction (STIMBR) and Crown Research Institutes (CRI) have been working on finding alternative phytosanitary treatments and reducing methyl bromide emissions.
- Ethanedinitrile (EDN) has been identified as an effective fumigant to replace methyl bromide for the log trade.
- An application to register EDN for use in New Zealand was made by the Czech-based manufacturer, Draslovka, in July 2017 and is yet to be approved.



- Current recapture technology in New Zealand can recapture most (80 to 90%) methyl bromide remaining in the headspace of containers and log stacks under tarpaulin, but ship holds are a problem due to size and access issues.
- The waste product from the recapture needs to be disposed of safely.

CURRENT WORK AND PROGRESS MADE

- Work on a systems approach that includes modelling insect activity to identify opportunities and areas of low pest prevalence to reduce the need to fumigate has been completed.
- Research has shown that Joule heating is effective in killing all life-stages of insects within logs. A pilot plant has yet to obtain finance.
- Debarking is accepted by China and the use has increased to around 9% of log exports.
- Research on EDN as a phytosanitary fumigant and on reduced application rates for methyl bromide have been completed for logs.
- Results show that EDN is effective against common pests associated with New Zealand logs and the current methyl bromide application rates can be reduced significantly.
- An application to register EDN for use in New Zealand is being progressed with the EPA.
- Negotiations are underway with both China and India to gain acceptance of EDN however, Covid-19 has disrupted these.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on methyl bromide, please visit STIMBR website [InFO](#) and for answers to common questions, visit [FAQs](#). Importing countries conditions can be found here: [Exporting requirements for plant products – Importing Countries Phytosanitary Requirements \(ICPRs\) | MPI | NZ Government](#) and the MPI Biosecurity treatment programme can be found here: [Find treatment options and providers | MPI | NZ Government](#)

