

Kiwifruit industry updates biosecurity plan

The new Pathway Management Plan for biosecurity in the kiwifruit industry developed by Kiwifruit Vine Health (KVH) has been welcomed by growers.

Elaine Fisher

"The plan has been well received since it became active on 1 April. We are thrilled that it went through the parliamentary process successfully and is now in place to help protect our industry and build resilience among growers and other stakeholders," says Leanne Stewart, KVH chief executive.

"The aim of the plan is that we can detect anything new quickly enough to stop its spread, limit impacts, and aim for eradication."

Bay of Plenty orchardist, Peter Ombler, who was a foundation member of KVH and its second chairman, is pleased that the plan is in place. "There is **recognition** that due to climate change, the landscape for **orcharding** is changing all the time in terms of biosecurity risks.

"Our industry may have recovered in stunningly good fashion from Psa but it won't be the last threat. Everybody knows the risks are changing each and every day, and that our industry needs effective ways to deal with those risks."

Steve Thomas of Thomas Brothers Riwaka says it is the **right time** for a new plan. "Biosecurity **incursions** won't wait for anyone. There is **too much value to lose** to an incursion by not doing the things we could have done. This new plan is a key tool to ensure we are in a good place in case of an outbreak."

Central to the new Pathway Management Plan is on-orchard biosecurity planning, which consolidates for growers all requirements and expectations around managing risks across pathways into orchards.

Te Puke orchardist and consultant Lynda Hawes is impressed with the hard copy version of the



The Kiwifruit Growers Biosecurity Guidelines booklet is available in web or hard copy versions

Kiwifruit Growers Biosecurity Guidelines booklet which she has filled out. "It is clearly laid out, straightforward with good pictures and **is easy** to use. It talks **about** what we need to do to **manage** risk and it's **pretty** brief.

"I like that KVH has thought about the physical production of the guidelines because lots of people still don't handle electronic copy well. The hard copy is something growers can keep in their GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) folder. It's got a solid cover so it's going to last."

For those who prefer to work online, KVH has recently released a new web version of the booklet as an extra resource to help growers better identify and understand their orchard-specific risks, and is also developing an online traceability tool.

Leanne says the new plan will enable better management of biosecurity risk for all in the kiwifruit industry.

"It is an achievement that reflects the efforts of all who have contributed to development, planning, and several consultation stages since we first announced the proposal in November 2019. KVH is grateful to all who supported the process and provided valued input."

Established in December 2010 to lead the industry **response** to the **incursion** of the vine disease Psa, KVH is a **dedicated biosecurity** organisation and a leader in its field in New Zealand. Its new National Pathway Management Plan, implemented under the Biosecurity Act, is the first national plan of its kind.

"It demonstrates the continued biosecurity proactiveness of our industry and is an important step forward in the way we manage the risk of unwanted threats."

Leanne says the plan is equivalent to the National Psa-V Pest Management Plan (NPMP) but moves away from focus on a single threat to a much broader scope encompassing a wide range of pests and diseases, both those which are currently identified and those which may arise in future.

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Following wide ranging consultation across all stakeholders within the industry, best practice guidelines and templates have been developed for all sectors of the industry to follow.

Leanne says that under the previous plan growers were required to have an orchard plan in place to manage Psa so there is nothing dramatically new in the new one, and it means for most growers they are already doing most of the things needed. “We have developed tools and systems to help growers implement the small changes introduced in the new plan so as not to burden growers but to make sure everyone is following best practice.”

The plan is industry wide and includes growers, contractors, technical organisations supporting growers, nurseries supplying budwood and plants, pollen mills, suppliers of compost, post-harvest companies, Zespri and Kiwifruit New Zealand.

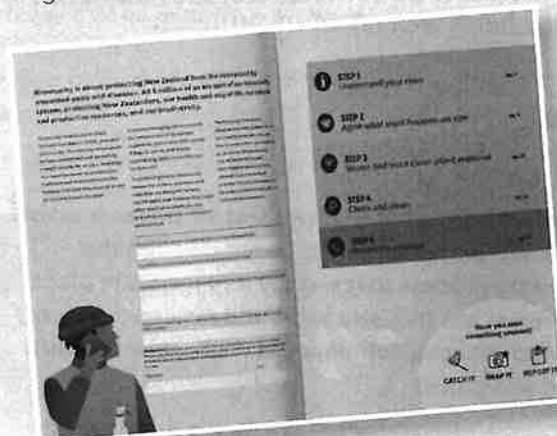
Kiwifruit is grown across several regions in both the North and South Islands, and young kiwifruit vines are produced by nurseries in parts of the South Island remote from kiwifruit growing regions, Leanne says.

“While individual and group actions in specific areas can help manage risk, the coordinated and consistent national approach provided by the plan means we all have a united goal and set of objectives and measures that manage pathway risks across the country.”

The plan replaces the current NPMP as it retains the important elements needed for Psa protection (e.g., controlling movements associated with high-risk pathways to the South Island) and provides much wider benefits, including streamlining and simplifying rules and regulations so they are more pragmatic, and deliver greater value for money.

KVH will provide regular updates on new resources and longer-term projects underway, such as the traceability project mentioned, that will make it increasingly easy and pragmatic to undertake best biosecurity practice and ensure a resilient kiwifruit industry. ●

You can read more detail about the Pathway Management Plan on the KVH website.



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