

PHC News

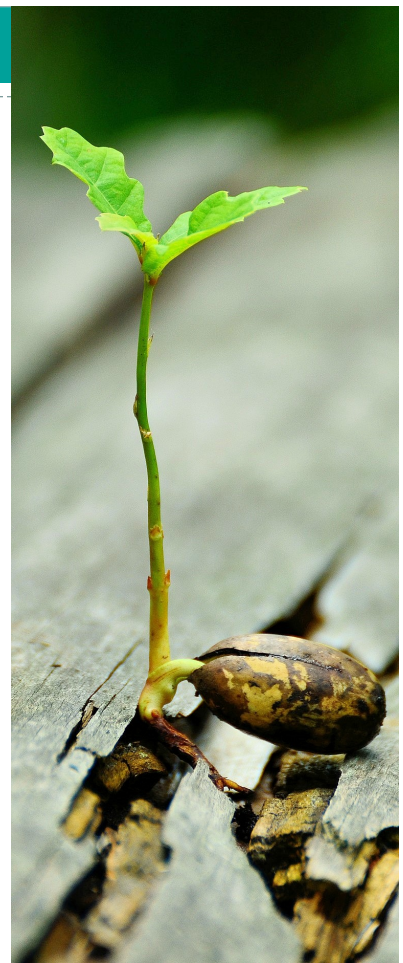
STRENGTHENING SCOTLAND'S CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR *XYLELLA FASTIDIOSA*

Contingency plans are an important part of Scotland's planning against possible incursions of harmful plant pests and pathogens. While the UK contingency plan for *Xylella fastidiosa* offers many of the requirements for this threat, the Plant Health Centre is working with the Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland and other stakeholders to strengthen the plan specifically for Scotland. As a result, three projects have been commissioned by the Centre, building on work being conducted across Europe, as outlined below:

- Risk mapping of the likelihood and impact of *Xylella fastidiosa* outbreaks in Scotland.
- Using modelling to investigate the effectiveness of national surveillance monitoring aimed at detecting a *Xylella fastidiosa* outbreak in Scotland.
- Identifying the presence of potential insect vectors of *Xylella fastidiosa* in Scotland.

For more information visit: <https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/projects>

Image below: Spittlebug vector for Xylella fastidiosa. Credit — <https://www.flickr.com>



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WELCOME MESSAGE FROM SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

We are delighted to receive the following message from Ms Gougeon, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment:

Plant health is at the heart of Scotland's thriving natural environment, our rural economy and our wellbeing. Therefore, the need to protect our plants from the growing number of plant health threats, arising through increased globalisation of trade and climate change, is clear. Building on the development of a Scottish Plant Health Strategy in 2016, I recognise that Government alone cannot tackle all current and future plant health challenges, and this is why Scottish Ministers commissioned the Plant Health Centre and made it a Programme for Government commitment in 2018.

The Plant Health Centre provides responsive evidence that allows me to make informed decisions to best protect Scotland's plant based assets across

agriculture, horticulture, forestry and the wider environment. One such example, was their recent report on the impact that metaldehyde withdrawal would have on Scottish plant health (which is available on the Centre's website). This type of call-down evidence will become increasingly important with the Brexit challenges that lie ahead, as will the Centre's international networks which will help us retain access to vital European research developments and innovations.

I am pleased with the work undertaken by the Centre in its first year and the projects they have commissioned to fill knowledge gaps, and look forward to continued working with them and other key plant health stakeholders in the future to improve plant health resilience in Scotland.

Read the report on metaldehyde at: <https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/publications>

"The Plant Health Centre is a virtual Centre of Expertise funded by Scottish Government through RESAS (Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division)"

BOOST TO THE CENTRE

At our launch, the Centre funded a plant health forecasting and data management post for 1 year working across BioSS and the University of Strathclyde (members of our Science Advisory and Response Team). This funding has now been matched by these organisations to allow up to a year of additional support to the Centre in this important area of plant health.



HOUSE OF LORDS: PLANT HEALTH POST BREXIT

In their recent Report of Session 2017-19 'Brexit: plant and animal biosecurity' the House of Lords identified at least seven areas where Brexit could lead to a shortfall in the UK's biosecurity: Access to research funding; Enforcement of biosecurity legislation; Information sharing; Capacity in the veterinary sector; Inspections and audits; Capacity within Government departments and agencies; and the legislative framework.

They are urging the UK Government to negotiate continued participation in as many of the EU's notification and intelligence sharing networks as possible but also acknowledge that leaving the EU may offer the UK the opportunity to improve aspects of its biosecurity. They state that the need to facilitate trade post-Brexit must not be allowed to compromise the UK's biosecurity.

To read more visit:

<https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/useful-links>



Image: Houses of Parliament. Credit—D. Vetsikas from Pixabay.

CHIEF SCIENTIST FOR CHRIS QUINE

Many congratulations to Prof. Chris Quine, the Centre's Sector lead for Forestry, who has been appointed as the new Chief Scientist for Forest Research (FR), Great Britain's principle organisation for forestry and tree-related research.

Image: Prof. Chris Quine



BARLEY PEST AND DISEASE RISKS

Barley is Scotland's major arable crop but production differs hugely across the country. Fiona Burnett, Sector lead for Agricultural, travelled around Scotland this summer discussing growers' pest and disease issues.

The first island stop was Kilchoman Distillery in Islay for a meeting with ten of only twelve barley producers on the island. Here there is a strong link between producers and maltsters and quality barley has a strong local market. Pest and disease levels are usually low but those seen relate to close rotations. Farmers' main concerns were about producing enough yield in a limited number of suitable fields.



The next stop was Shetland where barley is used for animal feed, with straw also a very useful resource. Disease and pest levels are low and so pesticide use is reduced, while the use of composted farmyard manure is higher in this mixed farming area than in the arable areas of the mainland east coast. Developing bespoke barley varieties suited to the locale was of interest.

The arable central and eastern belt was very different, with both feed and malting barley being grown in competition with other nations. Here there are more intense disease and pest pressures, and completing an Integrated Pest Management plan was one way discussed to incorporate better targeted chemical inputs and varieties with improved disease resistance. These, together with concerns about pesticide losses through legislation, were also picked up during the recent PHC surveys and workshops.

The Scottish Government Farm Advisory Service funded the event.

To find out more visit: <https://www.fas.scot/crops-soils/crop-health>

Image: Spring barley ready for harvest near Kilchoman. Credit – Fiona Burnett

A WATCHING BRIEF: GUATEMALAN POTATO MOTH

The Guatemalan potato moth (*Tecia solanivora*), originally from South America, has been in the Canary Islands since 1999 and in Spain since 2015. Potatoes from Spain are the main risk to the UK. Once present, both the crop and stored tubers may be affected but damage is often only visible when the larvae tunnel out of the potatoes to leave holes. The Centre has considered the available evidence and, following discussion with Scottish Government policy colleagues, has concluded that existing control measures specified in the UK Plant Health Risk Register remain appropriate to reduce the likelihood of risk from this pest.

Fact sheet: <https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/useful-links>

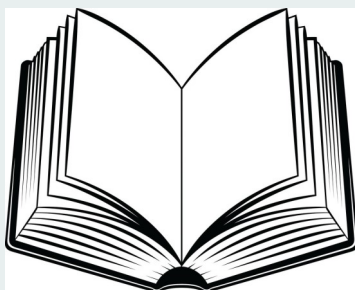
Risk Register entry: <https://tinyurl.com/GPM-Risk-Register>

Image: Guatemalan potato moth. Credit - Agroquivar.



STORIES TO SHARE?

We would like to hear from you as stakeholders about plant health or other plant-related stories for a feature in future newsletters.



Get in touch at:
info@planthealthcentre.scot

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANT HEALTH 2020

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations International Plant Protection Convention has approved an International Year of Plant Health in 2020, aimed at raising awareness to a global audience of the value of plants and the threats they are under.

This provides a fantastic opportunity to work across plant health sectors in Scotland, with Scottish Government, the Plant Health Centre and others planning relevant activities leading up to and including 2020.

To learn more visit <https://>



www.planthealthcentre.scot/useful-links

“Prof Gerry Saddler (Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland) and Prof Chris Quine (Sector lead for Forestry) introduce the Plant Health Centre at the Biodiversity Science Conference 2018, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh”. The report can be found at <https://www.planthealthcentre.scot/useful-links>

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WEB SITE AND TWITTER

There is only so much we can put in a newsletter so for more information on our activities please visit the web site or follow us on Twitter.

