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PHC Bulletin Newsletter

Plant Health Centre
Scotland's Centre of Expertise

Updating you on recent activities of the Plant Health Centre

Issue 10, July 2022

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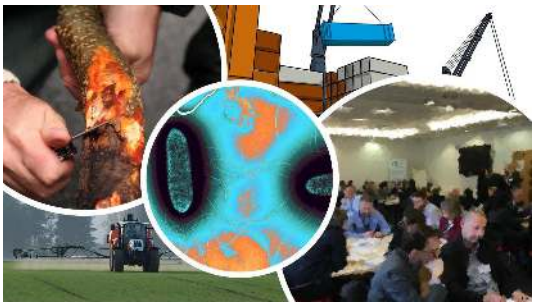

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Welcome to Issue 10

Welcome to the July edition of our news bulletin. In this issue, in addition to recent developments on plant health in Scotland, we will be keeping you up to date with our newest commissioned projects, talking about recent and upcoming events we are participating in - including the first International Plant Protection Convention (21-23 September, London), which has had the registration extended until 31st August, and ending with a blog all about taking steps for healthy forests in Scotland.

New guide to ash dieback and its management published by The Tree Council

The Tree Council has published a concise guide to ash dieback for homeowners or landowners in Scotland. The Guide for Tree Owners in Scotland provides helpful information for anyone responsible for managing ash trees and highlights specific policy and resources relevant to Scotland. It covers ash tree identification and health assessment, as well as how to decide what steps may be needed to meet your responsibilities.
It is important to remember that anyone with a tree on their land has a legal responsibility to ensure that any risk posed by the tree is kept within appropriate limits, particularly if they are next to a busy road, public pathway or community grounds. The guide includes;

- Visual ID guide to ash trees and ash dieback symptoms
- Summary of legal responsibilities
- Explanation of remedial management options
- Advice on seeking professional help
- Frequently asked questions

The guide is free to download on the Tree Council Website.

New demarcated areas for Phytophthora pluvialis

Two new Demarcated Areas for *Phytophthora pluvialis* came into force at midday on the 19th of July 2022 (see image above, a screenshot from the Scottish Forestry interactive map).
From the Scottish Forestry webpage on *P. pluvialis*:

- Demarcated Area No. 2 Notice comes into force on 19 July 2022 replacing The Plant Health (Phytophthora pluvialis) (Scotland Demarcated Area No. 1) Notice which was issued 8 December 2021. Demarcated Area No. 2 covers part of the region of Highland known as Ross-shire within

the boundaries shown in The Plant Health (Phytophthora pluvialis) (Scotland Demarcated Area No. 2) Notice.
- Demarcated Area No. 3 Notice comes into force on 19 July 2022 and covers part of the council area of Argyll and Bute within the boundaries shown in The Plant Health (Phytophthora pluvialis) (Scotland Demarcated Area No. 3) Notice.

The demarcated area boundaries can also be viewed on the Scottish Forestry interactive map.

Measures to eradicate and prevent the spread of Potato Cyst Nematode in the EU now in force

The "Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1192 of 11 July 2022 establishing measures to eradicate and prevent the spread of *Globodera pallida* (Stone) Behrens and *Globodera rostochiensis* (Wollenweber) Behrens" recently came into force.

The Regulation sets out measures for the purpose of eradicating the two Potato Cyst Nematode species (pests in the potato and bulb industries), and preventing their spread within the Union territory, including official detection surveys on production sites, the designation of infested production sites and infested specified plants, official monitoring surveys (annual and risk-based), eradication measures (and measures on infested plants), notification of PCN on a resistant variety and notification of new varieties resistant to PCN.

While we are on the topic of PCN, the PHC-led (Scottish Government funded) project 'PCN Action Scotland' that is addressing the future threat of PCN is running an open day on the 16th of August - see the Events section for more information.

More bark beetle controls introduced in the South East of England

Routine plant health surveillance activities carried out by the Forestry Commission found the tree pest *Ips typographus* – also known as the larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle, on spruce trees in Kent, Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex (they are considered a serious pest of Spruce trees). As a result, an expansion of the existing demarcated area is being introduced to cover parts of Hampshire. Within the demarcated area, the movement of susceptible tree material such as spruce wood, bark and branches is restricted.

A management programme is in place, with Woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry being urged to increase their vigilance, and any sightings of the beetle can be reported via the TreeAlert online portal. Pheromone traps have been deployed across the south-east to monitor for potential beetle incursions from the continent. The Forestry Commission are encouraging landowners in the affected regions to remove stressed or weakened spruce and replant with other species to limit potential spread of *Ips typographus*.

Further information is available here.

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Risk Register additions and reviews

Diaporthe amygdali, a fungal pathogen causing twig canker of peach and potentially canker on blueberries and grapevines (although not well documented), has been added to the Plant Health Risk Register.

There are also UK Plant Health Risk register pests that have recently been reviewed: *Lonsdalea populi*, that causes cankers on poplar and willow. *Phymatotrichopsis omnivora*, a polyphagous fungus (found in countries warmer than the UK).

New risk-targeted inspection regime and new import inspection fees - Begins 22 July 2022

The following text is reproduced from an email circulated from the Scottish Government Plant Health Policy Team:

Following consultation with plant businesses across Great Britain imports of plants, plant products and other objects being imported to GB, a GB risk-targeted inspection system is being introduced. These changes came into effect on the 22 July and as a result a new inspection fee will apply for certain plants, plant products and other objects being imported into Scotland (GB) from the EU and rest of the world. Here is some information for your awareness.

What is the new GB risk-targeted inspection regime?
It is a new methodology to calculate the level of inspection frequency rates to address the risk of a particular plant, plant product or other object which poses a risk to GB biosecurity on goods being imported into GB. Certain trades will be subject to different percentage levels of checks and certain criteria must be fulfilled. The frequency of plant health checks can be increased temporarily if a pest/disease is detected, however, the percentage level of checks is reviewed annually.
For more details please see: Reduced Frequency Checks - UK Plant Health Information Portal (defra.gov.uk) and this is implemented via the Official Controls (Plant Health) (Frequency of checks) 2022.

The fees are being revised to ensure the import plant health checks (physical and identity) for both the EU and the Rest of the World are aligned with the new targeted risk-based inspection regime. To find out what the new fee would be in Scotland refer to The Plant Health (Fees) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2022 and note this should be read alongside the original legislation The Plant Health (Import Inspection Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

For more information on imports check the SASA import pages.

I hope that you enjoy reading the rest of our bulletin and, as always, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us (details at the end of this email) if you have any issues for plant health in Scotland that you would like to highlight or questions that you have about our work.

-Sonia Humphris, Plant Health Centre Manager

Events

I would like to start the Events section of this bulletin with a thank you to everyone who attended

Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2022, which was held at the Apex, Dundee on the 1st of June. The event was run jointly with the Scottish Government and partner organisations Scottish Forestry, NatureScot and the HTA. We think that the conference was a great success, with presentations from Industry, Academia and Government, and we were able to showcase many of the PHC's recent projects. It was obvious from the lively atmosphere that everyone was happy to be back meeting their plant health peers in person, and we look forward to next year's conference!

There are a few upcoming events that the PHC will be participating in that we would like to bring to your attention:

Potatoes in Practice 2022

PiP is the largest field-based potato event in the UK, hosted at the James Hutton Institute's Balruddery Farm, and this year it is being held on Thursday the 11th of August. Dr Philip Burgess will be giving a presentation titled 'Bringing "PCN Action Scotland" to Life', all about the PHC-led, Scottish Government-funded project addressing the future threat of PCN. Visit the PiP website for more information and to register (for free).

PCN Action Scotland Open Day

Continuing with the Potato Cyst Nematode theme, the PCN Action Scotland project partners (SRUC, Hutton, SoilEssentials, Scottish Agronomy and SASA) are hosting an open day at a trial site near the Finavon Hotel, Forfar on Tuesday the 16th of August. The project leaders will be speaking to visitors about:

- Demonstrations of resistant varieties
- Tolerance and Resistance comparisons
- Integrated Pest Management
- Chitinous soil amendment
- Groundkeepers and PCN Soil Sampling

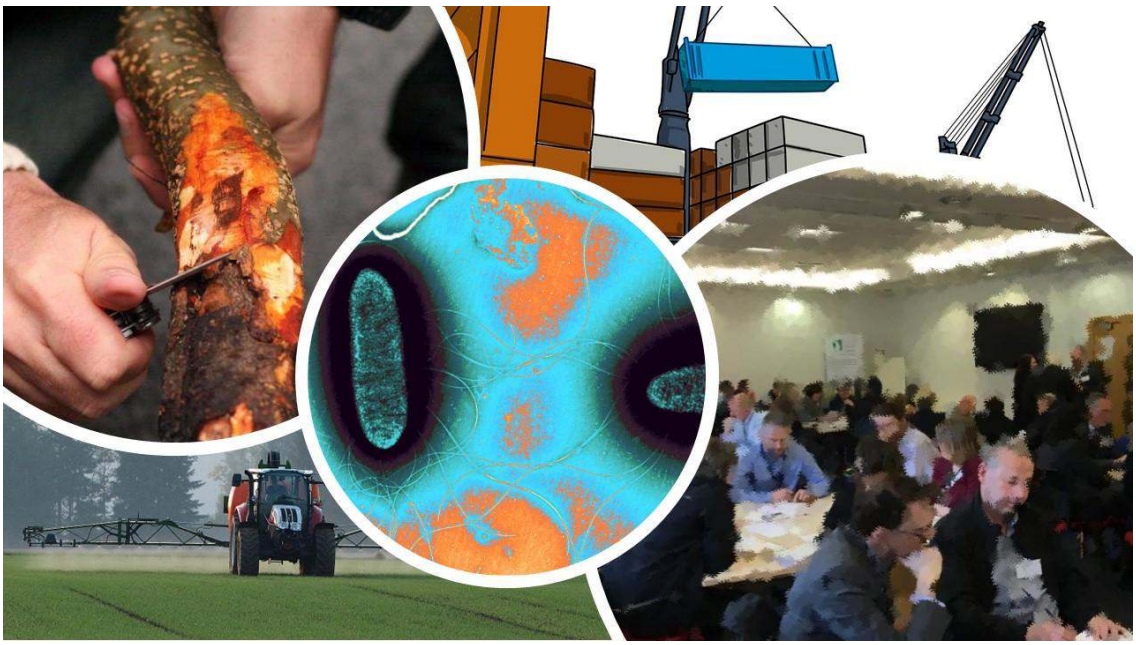
Registration is free (via Eventbrite), and the event will run from 10am to 3:30pm, with repeated tours in the morning and afternoon.

International Plant Protection Convention

The International Plant Health Convention was one of the main legacies of the International Year of Plant Health 2020. It was originally planned to be held in Finland in 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The IPHC will now take place from 21 to 23 September 2022 at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre in London. The Plant Health Centre will be there, participating in an exhibition space alongside other institutions that all work together to protect UK biosecurity, and we look forward to talking all about our current work and upcoming projects with a wide breadth of plant health stakeholders and the public. The registration for the event has been extended to the 31st of August.

Current Projects



Several commissioned projects have 'kicked-off' since our last bulletin, so we thought we would give you a quick run-through of what they are all about:

PHC2021/06 - A Targeted Analysis Of The Impact Of Insecticide Withdrawals In Scotland, In The Context Of Alternative Control Options
Project partners: ADAS, SRUC and Forest Research

Insecticides are commonly used in Scottish agricultural, horticultural, forestry production, and for amenity and natural environment management purposes. Over the last 10 years, approximately 50% of UK insecticide active substances have been withdrawn due to increasing concern over human health and environmental impacts. Some of these losses will be mitigated by using alternatives but their practicality and cost under Scottish conditions is unknown. Given the likelihood that regulatory restrictions on pesticide usage will not be reduced, widespread adoption of IPM might offer a way to reduce reliance upon at risk pesticides.

This project will deliver an expert review of available literature to identify the insecticides of concern to Scotland and their association with current practices. This targeted review will identify available alternatives and their efficacy, and any interdependencies and evidence gaps will be identified. A key outcome of this call will be case studies of the alternative methods adopted by stakeholders to mitigate the impact of insecticide withdrawal, combined with desk-based and expert opinion and analysis on their efficacy, practicality and cost.

PHC2021/08 - Action Research To Gain A Deeper Understanding Of Large-Scale Biosecurity Risks To Scotland
Project partners: Forest Research, University of St Andrews and St. Andrews Botanic Gardens

Three projects (PHC2019/04/05/06) were conducted in 2020/21 that investigated large-scale biosecurity risks to Scotland from several supply-chains and planting approaches. This project was commissioned, within the original scope of the aforementioned projects, to conduct further research with a strong likelihood of strengthening and expanding their findings. This project seeks to engage with hard-to-reach actors and the wider sector through their membership organisations.

PHC2021/08 will implement an Action Research approach, delivered through workshops co-designed with network organisations, to better understand current plant biosecurity risks in several sectors, to identify their plant health knowledge needs, and to begin to embed biosecurity training within existing organisations, programmes and processes.

The outcomes of the project will be:

- An enhanced understanding of the knowledge and training needs of different sectors and the identification of biosecurity actions that will fill some of the gaps identified by PHC2019/04/05/06
- The identification of further training needs and potential approaches to address the problems identified
- A legacy of close working relationships between the PHC and several network organisations, key to future plant biosecurity research or training delivery activities

PHC2021/05 - Biosecurity For Plant Health: Better Justification Of Precautionary Measures
Project partners: Forest Research, SRUC and University of St Andrews

Whilst it is generally agreed that 'prevention is better than cure' in plant health, translating such logic into precautionary actions does not always happen. Precautions can be encouraged in a variety of ways – through development of implementable actions, risk assessments, encouragement of best practice, and general appeals to adopt approaches which prevent future losses. However, this does not adequately address risky behaviour. Whilst better information may not be sufficient to change practices, there is a weakness in our ability to justify precaution. This project seeks to address this gap by considering whether there are different approaches, or additional information which might be considered.

Drawing upon and summarise existing literature, in addition to engagement with experts and practitioners with knowledge of existing sectoral practices in Scotland, UK and internationally, as well as gap analysis, the project will generate a better understanding of the rationale for taking precautions and an improved evidence base with which to justify taking action, answering four main questions:

- What are the current barriers to adopting precautionary measures?
- How can barriers be reduced?
- What are the limitations of the current risk assessment process?, and
- What are the priority areas for action and further research?

Blog Spot

Taking Steps for Healthy Forests in Scotland - blog by Stephen Cavers (UKCEH) and Ruth Mitchell (James Hutton Institute), who are both members of our Science Advisory and Response Team. This blog was originally written for the International Year of Plant Health, but this is its first appearance in our bulletin.

Scotland's Caledonian pinewoods and Atlantic oakwoods (or Celtic rainforests) are some of the most distinctive and valuable habitats of their kind anywhere in the world. Each is dominated by a characteristic tree species: Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) in the former, and oak (*Quercus petraea, Q. robur*) in the latter. The trees support a diverse community of species that depend on them and the environment they create. For example, estimates suggest 2300 different species may rely on oak, of which 326 occur only on oak trees. These enduring fragments of our more forested past are precious and need care to see them through the changes ahead.

And the changes are likely to be substantial. Shifts in the climate alone would be a lot to handle, but the trees also face particular challenges in the form of new pests and diseases. For Scots pine, the fungal pathogen *Dothistroma* (*D. septosporum*) and, for oaks, the disease Acute Oak Decline pose specific new threats. As we have seen already in other species, with the near-complete loss of elms in the UK due to Dutch elm disease and more recently the ongoing loss of many Ash trees to Ash Dieback, new pathogens can cause major changes in our forests.

But the news is not all bleak. Research has shown that these resilient trees have a lot of potential to adapt to new conditions. With sensitive management, they can be encouraged to regenerate and the younger trees are likely to be more suited to the current climate; keeping this cycle of regeneration going will be a key part of resilience to future challenges. At the same time, there are ambitious new targets to create more woodland. By getting the new trees from the right sources and planted in the right places, we can give the new recruits the best chance of a long, healthy life. Larger overall populations of Scots pine and oaks will also mean a better chance that the species as whole, and everything that depends on them, will thrive in future Scotland.

Of course, none of these woodlands are pristine and all have been touched by human activity in the past. Quite rightly, they continue to be enjoyed by people today, more often for leisure now than the industry they might once have seen, but still a vital part of Scotland's economy. Today, our forests are a major attraction for tourists, with Glen Affric alone receiving more than 100,000 visitors per year, whilst Rothiemurcus may see 250,000. It seems likely that 2020, with higher numbers of domestic visitors due to the pandemic, will have seen a big increase in people getting into the forest. With luck, this will convert more to become regular visitors, to understand the simple steps to keep out the pathogens, and to learn the value of some of our most precious ecosystems.

You can find this blog and others penned for the Centre on the PHC website.

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The Plant Health Centre is a virtual centre of expertise funded by Scottish Government through RESAS (Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division) to help tackle plant health challenges for Scotland