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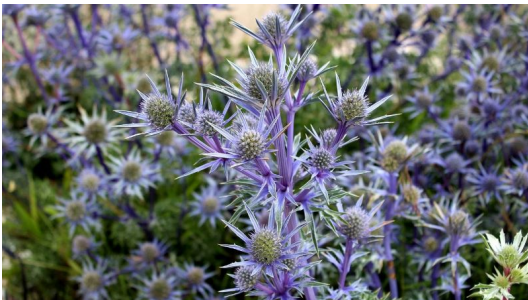
PHC Bulletin Newsletter



Updating you on recent activities of the Plant Health Centre

Issue 15, August 2024

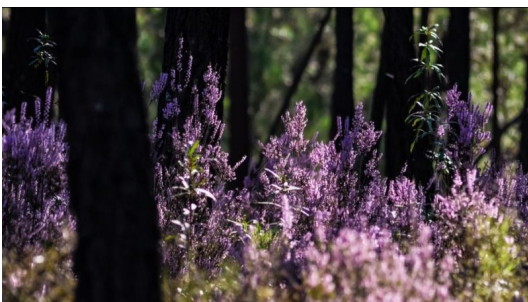
In this Bulletin



PHC News



Events



Publications



Project calls

PHC News



Welcome to issue 15

We hope you are enjoying the summer sun as we bring you the latest edition of our news bulletin!

We have 3 new [project calls](#) available for you to apply to. Are you interested in developing resources for plant biosecurity assessments, creating an assesment framework for novel crops or researching wireworm? Applications are open now.

We have recently welcomed Maciej Kaczmarek as Impact Officer for Agriculture. Maciej is a lecturer at SRUC and brings his expertise of crop pest and disease diagnostics for the Scottish Agricultural sector. He is looking forward to engaging with those in Agriculture to identify plant health needs that could be addressed through PHC projects.



Maciej takes over from Henry Criessen who has recently moved from SRUC to the University of the Highlands and Islands. We would like to thank Henry for all his great work at the PHC and wish him the best success for his new role!

In this issue we will update you on some recent events including Scotland's Plant Health Conference, our workshops with [Lauriston Agroecology Farm](#) and contribution at events like [Potatoes in Practice](#). We also bring you lots of exciting research outcomes from project

reports on our recently completed projects.

Linkedin

A reminder to follow our linkedin page so that you can keep up to date with our latest project calls, publications and events.

Follow the page

-Katherine O'Donnell Plant Health Centre Communication Officer

Events



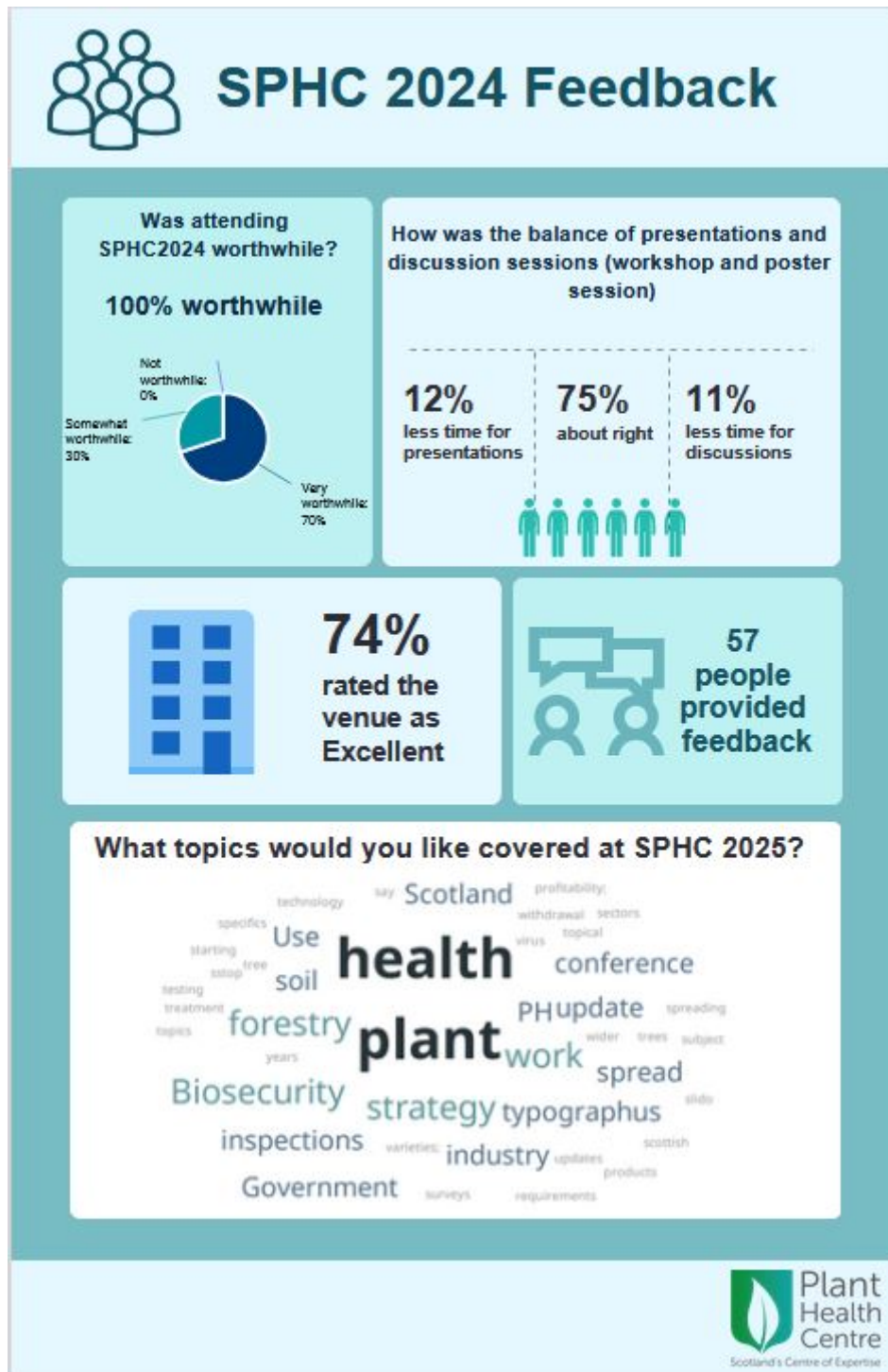
Scotland's Plant Health Conference 2024

Early in June the PHC in collaboration with Scottish Government, SASA and Scottish Forestry held Scotland's Plant Health Conference at Edinburgh's Dynamic Earth. The one-day conference was attended by around 150 participants from across the plant health sectors (Agriculture, Forestry, Natural Environment and Horticulture).

Scottish Government ran a participatory session on the draft Scottish Plant Health Strategy to ensure stakeholder feedback is included in finalising the Strategy. The conference provided an opportunity for networking across the plant health sectors and interactions between researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Participants learned about recent PHC funded projects including Phytophthora Prevention in Scotland and Resilience of Scottish Sitka Spruce Forests

Thanks to all those who provided feedback on the conference. We will be busy behind the scenes organising **SPHC 2025**. If you would like to have your say on the date and location

of the next conference **take part in our poll**



Lauriston Farm Update

Our partnership with Lauriston Agroecology Farm has continued to flourish. The PHC was at the farm for two recent workshops, a W.O.R.M.S. Appreciation Day on the 13th of April and Healthy Plant Communities on the 15th June. We have more activities planned with the farm coming soon.

Royal Highland Show

We jointly hosted an event at the Royal Highland Show with SEFARI Gateway (Centre of Expertise for Knowledge Exchange and Innovation) and EPIC (Centre of Expertise on Animal Disease Outbreaks). The event showcased work within the Scottish Government's

Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (ENRA) Research Portfolio focused on animal and plant health risks. Our sector lead for Forestry Chris Quine explained the contribution the Plant Health Centre makes and the synergies between the centres followed by the Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland closing the session on the importance of biosecurity for safeguarding farm, forest and natural environments



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Potatoes in Practice

The PHC joined the largest potato based field event in the UK on Thursday 8 August in Dundee. The future of potato crop production was a hot topic at Potatoes in Practice (PiP) hosted by the James Hutton Institute, in partnership with the SRUC (Scotland's Rural College) and Agrii. The event showcased a variety of demonstrations, trade exhibitions and cutting-edge research including a PHC funded project on accurate virus forecasts was presented by a member of the project team.

Publications



Integration of Plant Health Planning into the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

An overview of the nature of plant health threats to Scottish plant biodiversity highlighted that 241 plant genera important to Scottish biodiversity are likely hosts for known potential pest threats.

Project recommendations

- biosecurity should be incorporated into national biodiversity strategies as is the case in New Zealand and Australia
- National Parks and protected areas should become exemplars for biosecurity
- large-scale tree plantings plant health should embed biosecurity across the multiple actors involved in them

[Read the Report](#)

Potential of Biocontrol for the Sustainable Management of Plant Diseases in Scotland: Opportunities and Barriers

This project aimed to clarify the current status of microbial biocontrol in Scotland. By synthesizing insights from a stakeholder workshop and a literature review, it found that microbial biocontrol holds significant potential for sustainable plant protection in Scotland. Despite available commercial options and active research, current uptake is very low.

Project recommendations

- enhanced knowledge exchange and comprehensive guidance to improve stakeholders' understanding of microbial biocontrol agents (MBCAs)
- developing a new regulatory framework to simplify MBCA registration

Read the Report

Interdisciplinary Analysis of Plant Health Threats to Arable and Horticultural Crops in Scotland

This project analysed emerging plant health threats to both arable and horticultural crops in Scotland and developed several recommendations for various audiences.

Project recommendations

-For Policy Advice and Regulation:

- Maintain and publish an active list of present and emerging plant pest diseases (PPD) in Scotland, potentially in collaboration with organizations like CABI
- Publish data on PPD interceptions at Scottish ports
- Integrate emerging PPD considerations into governmental agricultural support programs

-For Farmers, Agronomists, and Agricultural Practitioners:

- Prioritize early detection and management of high-risk PPDs
- Diversify crop production systems to enhance resilience

-For Research and Development:

- Conduct biophysical and socioeconomic modelling to anticipate future changes in Scotland's crop production and identify potential areas for novel crops
- Collect detailed life history and ecophysiological data on PPDs for invasion modelling

Read the Report

Understanding Crop Producers' Perceptions Around Crop Health Decision Making and the Impact of that on Key Metrics such as Pesticide Usage

Increasing the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) on Scottish farms can improve resilience against pests and diseases, enhance crop yields, and reduce environmental impact. The project aimed to enhance IPM knowledge, identify barriers to its adoption, and understand the varying perceptions among farmers. The study found that farmers' willingness to adopt IPM depends on their risk tolerance, particularly concerning pesticide use.

Project recommendations

Tailored support programs and incentives can help mitigate economic risks and encourage broader adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

Read the Report

Biosecurity for plant health: better justification of precautionary measures

Despite the agreement that 'prevention is better than cure' in plant health, translating this into precautionary actions often falls short. This project engaged experts and reviewed literature to understand why precautionary measures are not widely adopted and sought ways to justify and encourage their implementation.

Project recommendations

Findings highlighted that practitioners need trusted intermediaries to interpret high-quality evidence and case studies to build confidence in adopting long-term precautionary practices.

[Read the Report](#)

Understanding a new health threat to Caledonian Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

A new health threat to Caledonian pine which is manifesting itself in the form of unusually abundant blackened cankers and dieback of shoots and branches, particularly in the lower crown was investigated.

You can also read our recent [blog](#) on the threat of *Curreya pithyophila* with recommendations for managing Scots Pine.

[Read the Report](#)

All PHC publications can be viewed on our [website](#) and also on the Zenodo [Scottish Plant Health Community](#)

Project calls



Developing resources for appropriate plant biosecurity assessments and implementation in natural habitats

Create a prototype resource which provides specific, clear biosecurity advice to conservation practitioners so that they can produce a bespoke biosecurity management plan relevant to their conservation project, this could include advice on plant provenance, plant production, plant/seed collecting, planting, and machinery use.

Maximum funding available: **£30,000**

Developing an assessment framework to identify plant health benefits and risks for emerging novel crops in Scotland.

Create a systematic framework for the evaluation of plant health risks and benefits for emerging/novel crops in Scottish agriculture that will also be suitable for use when considering the introduction of species in the natural environment, horticulture and forestry sectors.

Maximum funding available: **£30,000**

Understanding the risk to Scotland's plant health arising from wireworm (click beetles) and the monitoring and Integrated Pest Management requirements.

Obtain an up-to-date data set on which wireworm species are present in Scotland, along with information on locations and risk factors to establish the foundation for on-going species monitoring in future. The project will lead to updated advice and guidelines on integrated pest management.

Maximum funding available: **£30,000**

Application deadline: **12pm on 30th August 2024**

Apply Now



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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



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