



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

10 December 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Stakeholder engagement on the regulation of *Tomato ringspot virus* and *Tobacco ringspot virus*

I am writing to notify you of a proposed change on the regulation of *Tomato ringspot virus* and *Tobacco ringspot virus*. These changes would take effect by May 2025.

Background

The phytosanitary import regime in Great Britain is not static and is kept under continuous review to ensure that it continues to address any biosecurity risk posed to the UK, and that it meets our WTO obligations by being risk-based.

Tobacco ringspot virus is currently regulated as a GB Quarantine Pest (“QP”), with no associated special requirements, as a result all host commodities must be free from this pest. *Tomato ringspot virus* is currently regulated as a GB Regulated Non-Quarantine Pest (“RNQP”) which are only regulated when identified in association with specific plants for planting.

Proposal

We plan to update the regulation of these two pests following the conclusion of some recent risk assessments (provided alongside this cover letter).

Recent risk assessments have concluded that *Tobacco ringspot virus* is present in GB and no longer meets the criteria to be a GB QP. We therefore propose to remove *Tobacco ringspot virus* from the QP list and instead regulate it as an RNQP. In this case, we plan to regulate seed of *Glycine max* (soybean), fruit propagating material and fruit plants intended for fruit production of *Vaccinium* spp. (such as blueberry) and vine propagating



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material of *Vitis* spp. (grapevine) as RNQP hosts of this virus. As a result, these plants would need to be free from this pest to be imported into, or moved within, Great Britain.

We also propose to remove propagating material of ornamental plants and other plants for planting intended for ornamental purposes of *Pelargonium* spp. (geranium), *Malus* spp. (apple), and *Prunus* spp. (stone fruit) as hosts of the RNQP *Tomato ringspot virus*. As a result, they would no longer need to be free from this pest to be imported into, or moved within, Great Britain. We then plan to add fruit propagating material and fruit plants intended for fruit production of *Rubus* spp. (such as raspberry) and *Vaccinium* spp. and finally, vine propagating material of *Vitis* spp. as hosts of *Tomato ringspot virus*. These plants would need to be free from this pest to be imported into, or moved within, Great Britain.

Any comments should be sent to plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk by **18 February 2025**.

Comments provided in response to this letter, including personal information, may be made available to the public on request, in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental information Regulations 2004 (EIRs)

If you do not wish your response, including your name, contact details and any other personal information, to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your comments. Please note that if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, this will not count as a confidentiality request. Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for the information under freedom of information legislation. However, we cannot guarantee that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

Yours faithfully,

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