



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

helpline@defra.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

18 January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

## Regulating the seed of certain *Solanum* species

I am writing to notify you of the proposed changes to regulate the seed of certain *Solanum* spp. imported from any third country. These changes would take effect by November 2024.

### 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.

*Solanum sisymbriifolium*, also known as sticky nightshade, is currently being used as a trap crop in potato rotations. Sticky nightshade stimulates the hatching of potato cyst nematodes (PCN), such as *Globodera rostochiensis* and *G. pallida*, though it is resistant to infestation, preventing reproduction of the hatched nematodes. The extent of sticky nightshade use in the UK has been estimated to be around 100-300 hectares.

### Issue

The seed of sticky nightshade has recently been found to harbour the regulated non-quarantine pest, potato spindle tuber viroid (PSTVd). There is a significant risk that this pest could then transfer to potatoes. We therefore plan to regulate the seed of sticky nightshade as a host of PSTVd, requiring official testing to certify freedom from PSTVd.

Other *Solanum* species may be used as a trap crop in potato plantations and may also be a risk. We plan to require a Phytosanitary Certificate for all seeds of *Solanum* species (unless already required) to address this risk. Checks on the impacted species would increase from 1% to 5%.

For more information on the proposed measures, please see Appendix A.



INVESTORS  
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Any comments should be sent to [plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk](mailto:plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk) by **29 February 2024**.

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

Richard McIntosh  
Assistant Chief Plant Health Officer  
Defra  
T: +44 (0)208 026 2396  
M: +44 (0)7767 357817  
[richard.mcintosh@defra.gov.uk](mailto:richard.mcintosh@defra.gov.uk)