

Recommendation of the Working Group on the Annexes of the Council Directive 2000/29/EC – Section II – Listing of Harmful Organisms as regards the future listing of *Rhagoletis completa* Cresson¹

Current regulatory status

Rhagoletis completa is currently regulated in Annex I, Part A, Section I of Council Directive 2000/29/EC as organism not known to occur in the Union territory.

Identity of the pest

The biology of *Rhagoletis completa* is well-known. Identification is only possible on the basis of adults.

Distribution of the pest

The organisms is present in 8 EU Member States.

Potential for establishment and spread in the PRA area

The host plants (*Juglans* spp.) - either wild or in orchards - are widely distributed in the PRA area, which constitutes an important element for the establishment of this organism in the EU. In addition, the regions in the PRA area where *Juglans* spp are observed present biogeographic similarities favourable to *R. completa*. The absence of natural enemies within the PRA area further reinforces the probability of establishment of *R. completa* in new regions. The probability of establishment is thus considered to be high.

Potential for consequences in the PRA area

In its area of current distribution, and particularly in the EU, *R. completa* causes significant damage to species of the *Juglans* genus, which are plants of agricultural importance. Without treatment, 90% of the walnuts are infested. Externally, the damage is reflected by blackish spots on the green skin of the husk (exocarp). The maggots feed on the inner flesh of the husk (pericarp), making it black, soft, moist, sticky and adherent to the ripening walnut (endocarp). In very severe attacks, the maggots totally destroy the pericarp, leaving only a black, dried up exocarp around the ripe nut. The infestation may cause blackish marks on the nut shells and reduce the value of commercial walnuts. In the event of early attacks, the development of the grain (kernel) is severely inhibited and the fruit falls. It is also difficult to separate the shells from the kernels and, without adequate cleaning, direct marketing is not possible.

In orchards where *R. completa* is present and is normally not controlled, 100% of walnut trees are infested, inducing walnut yield losses of 80%. In conventional agriculture and under the action of phytosanitary treatments, the extent of the negative effect is more limited (<10% yield loss). Specific monitoring programmes should be considered to support producers in the application of phytosanitary products based on its level of presence. In organic agriculture, with the active substances currently authorised, the potential losses and associated additional costs are greater than

¹ Scientific basis for the recommendation: Pest Risk Assessment prepared by France

in conventional agriculture. In addition, specific funding is required to develop research associated with the development of new control methods and the training of producers. These conclusions are liable to be applied to all parts of the PRA area where *R. completa* is present, with greater economic consequences in major walnut-producing areas, such as: France, Romania, Spain, Italy. In the PRA area, yield losses in walnut and shell equivalents of 50% would lead to economic losses of 300 million euros (producer price).

Recommendation

The main pathways for introduction into and within the PRA include the natural spread of adults, hitchhiking behavior and, to a lesser extent, fruit transport (husk and walnut).

R. completa has not reached the limits of its potential area of distribution given the distribution of walnut trees, its host plant, and official declarations of the presence of this insect in the PRA. The geographic, biological and climatic factors are uniform in the PRA area where *Juglans* spp is present and are not an obstacle to its expansion.

However, given the already wide distribution in the Union territory, and the fact that eradication is no longer possible, the species do not meet the conditions of Union Quarantine Pests.

The Working Group recommends the deregulation of this organism.²

² The non-European *Tephritidae* listed under Directive 2000/29/EC may be subject to an overall risk assessment , including as well *Ragholetis completa*.