

## **Feb 2021 – Xylella Measures Q&A**

### **Q. What are the new measures?**

Under the new measures, imports of the highest risk host plants (*Polygala* and *Coffea*) are only allowed from countries where *Xylella* is known not to occur.

The existing requirements applying to the import of other host plants (Olive, Almond, Lavender, Rosemary and *Nerium oleander*) from countries where *Xylella* is known to occur have been strengthened. Imports will only be permitted under certain conditions, including inspections of the place of production and the surrounding area, testing, pre-export inspections and a one-year quarantine period prior to import.

The existing requirements for plants from countries where *Xylella* is not known to occur, which include annual official inspection, with sampling and testing of the plants, are to be maintained.

### **Q. Why are you introducing them?**

The aim of these measures is to enhance the level of protection against the risk of entry of *Xylella* into Great Britain via imported plants. This will protect GB biosecurity generally, i.e. plants/trees growing in the wider environment, and protect GB businesses which trade in *Xylella* host plants from the impact of restrictions which would be imposed following an outbreak of *Xylella*.

### **Q. Why are you taking a different approach to the EU?**

Within Europe, outbreaks of *Xylella* have occurred in Italy, France, Spain, Germany and Portugal. The uncertain distribution and ongoing findings in other European countries indicate an ongoing risk of disease spread. However, the current baseline for GB legislation is the previous EU emergency decision (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/789), which fails to account for the long latency period, the evidence of movement of *Xylella* in traded plants and the increase in the number of outbreaks within Europe.

### **Q. Is there Xylella in the UK?**

The pathogen is not known to be present in the UK, but we remain concerned about the possibility of *Xylella* arriving in the UK on high risk hosts, such as olive, and those plant species commonly associated with outbreaks in the EU. The long latency period of *Xylella* means that, without additional requirements, it could be carried into non-infected countries via imports of plants, long before the infection is identified.

### **Q. What are the associated risks of Xylella?**

*Xylella fastidiosa* ("*Xylella*") is a bacterium which causes disease in a wide range of woody commercially grown plants such as grapevine, citrus, olive and several species of broadleaf trees widely grown in the UK, as well as many shrubs and herbaceous plants. The Government's rationale to intervene is to protect the benefits to society created by potential *Xylella* host plants that would be lost as a result of this disease.

**Q. How do these measures relate to the ones that were introduced in April last year/why are these measures being introduced now?**

Earlier *Xylella* measures in April last year had been developed on the basis of a UK pest risk analysis and following consultation with the Plant Health Advisory Forum and individual businesses. Stakeholders supported the measures. Given the UK's relationship with the EU it has only been possible to introduce such measures as agreed now the transition period has ended, while also taking into account the ongoing risk associated with *Xylella*.

The measures being introduced will be GB wide, following consent from the devolved administrations. These reflect the required measures as regards the desired level of protection for plants imported from countries and areas where *Xylella* is present, while also avoiding unnecessary new burdens for those countries where *Xylella* is not present. In addition, options are included where there is a high level of assurance that imports are from areas where *Xylella* is not present.

**Q. What are the host plants of *Xylella* that the regulations refer to?**

The list is available in table 5 at : <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/uploads/Xylella-hosts-risk-levels3.pdf>. Stronger requirements apply for certain hosts (eg olive) as described in the regulations. This host list, and related legislation, will be updated as needed in response to changing risk profiles and will be based on Pest Risk Analyses and decisions will be taken at the UK Plant Health Risk Group. We will engage with stakeholders ahead of any amendment to the regulations.