

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

12<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

## Rapid Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) on *Phytophthora pluvialis*

I am writing to seek your views on a UK Pest Risk Analysis for *Phytophthora pluvialis*. A link to the rapid PRA can be found at the website given below:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/pest-risk-analyses/>

**We would welcome your views and comments on the PRA and the proposals for future action.**

In submitting any comments, you may wish to focus on the summary, key uncertainties, and conclusion sections of the risk assessments and to consider the following:

- Are any factual corrections required?
- Your view on the appropriateness of the suggested proposals for future actions.
- Can you provide any additional information (or links to other sources of information) that may help address uncertainty identified in the assessment/management measures?
- Are there any risks that have not been adequately considered?
- Have you reviewed the risk assessment and consider that you have nothing further to add?

This review applies to the UK and is being conducted by The UK Plant Health Services. The objective of this consultation is to gather views from all interested sectors on the UK position. We will take all comments made into account in developing the UK position.

## Background

*Phytophthora pluvialis*, an Oomycete pathogen, was detected in Cornwall in September 2021. Subsequently, additional findings have been made elsewhere in England, and in Scotland and Wales. Prior to the UK detections *P. pluvialis* was only known to be present in New Zealand and the Pacific Northwest (PNW) of the USA. In New Zealand it causes a disease known as red needle cast, primarily on radiata pine and Douglas fir, causing premature needle loss and loss of increment growth but trees recover. In the PNW it causes very minor damage on Douglas fir and tanoak and is part of the native forest mycota.

*Phytophthora pluvialis* is already present in the United Kingdom, in the PRA area, but is considered to have a limited distribution across the UK and is the subject of official control. With the current plant health measures that are in place the likelihood of further entry via various pathways is assessed. Entry via pathway (1) traded **plants for planting** is considered as **very unlikely** (medium confidence); pathway (2) **non-traded plants** as **unlikely** (low confidence); pathway (3) **timber/WPM** as **very unlikely** (high confidence); pathway (4) **cut conifer foliage** as **very unlikely** (medium confidence); pathway (5) **seeds** as **unlikely** (low confidence); or pathway (6) **soil and contaminated forestry machinery** as **very unlikely** (but low confidence).

Natural spread via spore dispersal is likely to occur at a moderate pace (medium confidence). Spread in trade may be faster with plants for planting (medium confidence) but is thought to be lower through movement with wood /logs (low confidence) and cut foliage (high confidence).

Based on uncertainty about host range, and the contrast in symptoms on affected trees in the UK compared with other established areas, **economic impact** is rated as **large**, and **environmental and social** as **medium**, but both with low confidence due to lack of data.

## Recommendations for action

The PRA concludes that eradication efforts are judged unlikely to succeed based on the number of findings already made. Short-term options for consideration include: (1) Containment of outbreak areas (2) Controlled timber movement from affected sites (3) Host removal on severely affected sites (4) Monitoring tree recovery and environmental triggers to understand the impacts of *P. pluvialis* over time.

Medium to longer-term management options include: (1) Use of silvicultural treatments to reduce the likelihood of severe disease expression and spread. (2) Deployment of disease suppression compounds which reduce disease prevalence such as Phosphoric acid and copper oxychloride. (3) Breeding for resistance as a long-term option for high value hosts e.g. Douglas fir and western hemlock.

Due to the developing situation, no final judgement has been made on whether this pest meets the criteria for a Quarantine pest. It is recommended current management options

continue and evidence from all options, plus ongoing research will be reviewed after 6-12 months to update disease management and assess the UK situation.

All responses should be sent to [plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk](mailto:plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk)

Responses should be received by **04 August 2022**.

Information provided in response to this consultation, 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 response to the consultation. 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)