

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

5th April 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Proposal for a future policy approach for solanaceous pospiviroids
(Citrus exocortis viroid, Columnea latent viroid, Pepper chat fruit viroid
and Tomato planta macho viroid)**

I am writing to seek your views on a future policy approach for solanaceous pospiviroids (Citrus exocortis viroid, Columnea latent viroid, Pepper chat fruit viroid and Tomato planta macho viroid), taking account of conclusions from the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) opinion, which considered the risk of these viruses. A summary of EFSA's findings and their relevance to GB is enclosed. A link to the EFSA opinion can be found at the webpage given below:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2330>

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

In submitting any comments you may wish to focus on the summary and conclusions of the EFSA opinion summarised in the accompanying document, 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?

The proposal is that the following should be considered for GB regulation:

- Citrus exocortis viroid (CEVd)
- Columnea latent viroid (CLVd)
- Pepper chat fruit viroid (PCFVd)
- Tomato planta macho viroid (TPMVd)

The EFSA opinion also refers to Mexican papita viroid. However, since the publication of the EFSA opinion it has been concluded that Mexican papita viroid and Tomato planta macho viroid are the same viroid. The main objective of regulation of these viroids should be to protect commercial production of tomatoes and peppers. These viroids also infect a range of ornamentals, however it is proposed that specific regulation of pospiviroids in ornamentals is not appropriate as they are generally symptomless and extensive testing would be required to establish whether ornamentals were infected. Also there are few instances where infection in solanaceous food crops has been linked to infected ornamentals.

All pospiviroids being considered for regulation here naturally infect tomatoes, elicit similar symptoms, and the EFSA opinion states that 'significant yield losses may result from pospiviroid infection in tomatoes and the impact is therefore expected to be major'. Therefore, it is considered that as these pathogens can cause significant damage to tomato and pepper crops and are absent from GB (all outbreaks have been eradicated), listing and introducing special import requirements in the GB Phytosanitary Condition Regulation (PCR) would be justified.

The four viruses are all currently GB provisional quarantine pests. It is proposed that the four viruses will be listed as GB quarantine pests, and will be regulated on all hosts and pathways. Specific requirements are being proposed for seeds of *Solanum lycopersicum* L. and its hybrids, seeds of *Capsicum* spp., plants intended for planting of *Solanum lycopersicum* L. and its hybrids and plants intended for planting of *Capsicum* spp. Details of these can be found in the accompanying document.

This review applies to GB and is being conducted by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, with the agreement of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government. The objective of this consultation is to gather views from all interested sectors on the GB position. We will take all comments made into account in developing the GB position.

All responses should be sent to plantpestsrisks@defra.gov.uk

Responses should be received by **28th June 2023.**

In your response could you state:

- Whether you agree with the recommended approach
- If not, what your preferred position would be and why

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

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