



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Recommendation for interceptions and findings of *Pseudococcus meridionalis*, a mealybug, on produce

March 2015

This is the result of a brief assessment of readily available literature which indicates that statutory action against this organism is unlikely to be appropriate.

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| Species / Taxonomic group | <i>Pseudococcus meridionalis</i> Prado (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae), a mealybug. This species was first described in 2011 and belongs to the <i>Pseudococcus maritimus</i> complex. |
| Reason for assessment | The UK has intercepted this mealybug twice on blueberries (<i>Vaccinium</i> sp.) originating from South America. The first interception was in November 2013 on blueberries from Argentina and the second in January 2015 on blueberries originating from Chile. |
| Pest distribution | <i>P. meridionalis</i> is currently only known from Chile and Argentina, however the similarity of this species to others within the <i>P. maritimus</i> complex, including the very widely distributed glasshouse mealybug <i>P. viburni</i> , means it may be more widely distributed than currently reported. |
| Hosts | Broadly polyphagous, hosts grown in the UK include plum (<i>Prunus domestica</i>), grapevine (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) and pear (<i>Pyrus</i> spp.). |
| Pest status | No quantitative reports of damage from this species have been found, it is likely to be similar to that caused by <i>P. viburni</i> and infestations may cause loss of vigour in the plant, with honeydew production encouraging the growth of sooty moulds. The status of this species as a vector of other diseases is unknown. |
| Potential distribution and impact | The current distribution of <i>P. meridionalis</i> indicates that the UK climate would be unsuitable for establishment outdoors. The relatedness to the widespread <i>P. viburni</i> indicates it is likely to be able to establish under protection, however spread would be limited and impacts are very unlikely to be greater than those caused by <i>P. viburni</i> . |
| No statutory action is recommended on produce because: | |
| It is unlikely to be able to survive outdoors in the UK. | |
| Transfer from produce to glasshouse crops is unlikely. | |
| In the event of introduction, impacts are unlikely to be greater than those caused by the widespread <i>P. viburni</i> . | |