

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

08 August 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Response to the UK policy review for *Rose rosette virus* and its vector *Phyllocoptes fructiphilus*

Thank you for submitting views on the development of a UK policy position for *Rose rosette virus* (RRV) and its vector *Phyllocoptes fructiphilus*. This letter is to notify you of the outcome.

Recommendations

The UK Plant Health Risk Group (PHRG) review presented the following recommendation:

- RRV is highly destructive with the potential to cause large economic, environmental and social impacts if introduced to the UK. Statutory action against findings is justified and regulation of the pest advised.
- Furthermore the UK PHRG considered that regulation at the EU level may be warranted and that if so an EU wide risk assessment would be required. The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) is currently preparing a Europe-wide PRA on RRV.

Background

This rapid PRA shows that RRV is a very damaging pest and can be lethal to many species of the genus *Rosa*. RRV is spread by the microscopic mite *Phyllocoptes fructiphilus*, and has the potential to cause large economic, environmental and social impacts in the UK.

Summary of responses

Two responses were received, one from the Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC) and one from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). The RHS broadly agreed with the risk assessment and the JNCC supported the recommendations, emphasising in particular that it was good to see due consideration being given to wild *Rosa*.

Key concerns and government response

- The RHS suggested further work to obtain data on material imported via internet trading and passenger baggage would improve confidence in the rating for likelihood of importation via plants for planting.
 - The PRA considered the import of all plants for planting, whether commercial trade, internet trading, or passenger baggage. Unfortunately, data on the amount of plant material traded through the internet or carried by passengers is almost impossible to obtain. Therefore, within the scope of this rapid PRA, it was considered that these pathways could not be assessed separately as the uncertainties were too high for a meaningful analysis. We agree that, if such data were to be collected in the future, revision of the PRA to explicitly consider the pathways of internet trading and passenger baggage would be appropriate. It is also worth noting that there is a Europe-wide PRA currently in preparation by EPPO, which will re-assess the pathways and risks from a European perspective.
 - It may be reassuring to know that Defra has also prepared some publicity material to raise the level of awareness of Rose Rosette Virus, available through the Plant Health Portal.

Next steps

The responses received broadly support the conclusions of the UK PHRG on this basis the UK will take statutory action against findings and encourage an EU wide risk assessment and regulation.

I would like to thank all those responding for taking the time to submit views on the consultation. Your comments have been very valuable in helping to develop a policy position on this pest. I hope this letter demonstrates the reasoning behind our decision and that we have sought to find a solution which reflects the current position and the views expressed from different stakeholders. We will be pleased to continue engaging with you about this pest.

If you have any views about how this review was handled, or its outcome, please let me know.

Yours faithfully,

Richard McIntosh

Assistant Chief Plant Health Officer

Defra

T: +44 (0)208 026 2396

M: +44 (0)7767 357817

richard.mcintosh@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Recipients: Organisations listed below (excludes responses from private individuals)

The Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC)

Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)