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17 October 2017

Dear

RE: Response to the UK policy review for *Hyphantria cunea* (Fall webworm)

Thank you for submitting views on the development of a UK policy position for *H. cunea* (Fall webworm). This letter is to notify you of the outcome.

Recommendations

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

- While it may be possible for univoltine populations of *H. cunea* to establish in the UK, they will be at the edge of their climatic range and little damage is expected, other than in very warm years. As all the measures to prevent entry or contain an outbreak at a national level would be very difficult to implement, non-statutory controls would seem the most appropriate action against this pest.

Background

Hyphantria cunea, which has many common names including fall webworm and American white moth, is a polyphagous defoliator of many deciduous trees and shrubs, having between one and four generations every year. Native to North America, this moth was accidentally introduced to Hungary in 1940 and Japan in 1945. Since then, it has spread in both Europe and Asia, occasionally causing outbreaks and severe damage. In 2014, two adults were trapped in the UK. Hence, the 1991 PRA has been updated to re-assess the suitability of the UK for establishment, as well as the potential for high levels of damage.

Summary of responses

Two responses were received, one from AHDB Horticulture and one from the Woodland Trust. AHDB Horticulture was in agreement with the recommendations recognising that the

risk to the wider environment was greater than that to the nursery industry which was likely to be more manageable. The Woodland Trust noted that recent captures in the UK suggested a pathway for entry existed and that the social and environmental impacts were unclear. This was particularly true should the pest develop a bivoltine lifecycle in warmer years or in urban heat islands. They would like to see a recommendation to conduct further primary research and experimental investigation to establish whether this pest, or similar species, could establish in the UK.

Key concerns

The woodland trust questioned whether the moth could establish and complete bivoltine lifecycles in warmer years leading to more significant damage. They would like to see a recommendation to conduct further primary research and experimental investigation to establish whether this pest, or similar species, could establish in the UK.

- The likelihood of the moth establishing a bivoltine population in the UK during warmer years and in urban heat islands was considered theoretically possible, though unlikely, during the development of the risk assessment and a very limited distribution of sites were identified as having such potential. Figure 5 in the appendix to the PRA (page 30) shows that, in the UK, only one 25 km grid square (around London) was theoretically suitable for two generations in only 1-2 years out of the 15 year time period assessed. Additionally, this map is based on the lowest thermal thresholds, i.e. the worst case scenario. Section 10 and Appendix 1 of the PRA sets out in more detail the reason for this assessment and associated uncertainties. Given the level of risk, this pest would not be considered a priority for further statutory research funding at this stage, especially as a large amount of research on thermal requirements is already available, as described in the PRA.

Next steps

The responses received support the conclusions of the UK PHRG and on this basis the UK will not take statutory against this pest. This conclusion will be reported to the European Commission.

I would like to thank 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 sincerely,

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

AHDB Horticulture

The Woodland Trust