

Date: 11 February 2016

Dear Gerard

## RE: Response to the policy review on the Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*)

Thank you for submitting views on the review to develop of a UK policy position for the Japanese beetle (*P. japonica*), a polyphagous EU listed pest of many trees and plants. This letter is to notify you of the outcome of that review.

### Review recommendations

- Continued statutory action against findings in line with existing EU obligations.
- Work with EPPO and European partners to develop measures in the event of an outbreak.
- Stakeholder monitoring for the pest.

### Background

The Annex IAll listed status of this pest in the EU Plant Health Directive (2000/29/EC) means that it is considered a harmful organism which is known to occur in certain areas of the EU and which Member States must take action to prevent introduction and spread. Following reports of the first incursion of this species in mainland Europe, consisting of large numbers of adults in an area near Milan, Italy in autumn 2014, the future status of this pest may need to be revised. The UK policy review was initiated to further assess the risk *P. japonica* poses to the UK now that it is present in mainland Europe, especially with regard to pathways, establishment and potential UK impacts.

Continued statutory action was considered appropriate as following the findings in Italy the likelihood of this species entering and establishing in the UK is considered to have significantly increased, given the volume of trade in plants between the UK and Italy. If the Japanese beetle were to become established outdoors, the prospects for eradication are considered poor, due to the broad host range and difficulty of controlling the soil-dwelling larvae. This means that continued exclusion provides the best protection.

## **Response summary**

Two responses were received, one from the Woodland Trust and one from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). The RHS supported the risk assessment, the Woodland Trust did not specifically state support or not though broadly speaking the response was a positive one supporting further investigation into a number of factors.

## **Key concerns and government response**

*Further investigation into the UK climate suitability and the impacts on hosts already under pressure from diseases such as ash dieback or acute oak decline would be beneficial.*

Reducing uncertainty around the potential for establishment and the impacts of the Japanese beetle in the UK was a key issue in developing the PRA. Consideration of the available information on the conditions the insect experiences in its native range and areas where it has been introduced, along with known impacts were used to produce the PRA. As with all PRAs, we will keep the situation under review. If new information were to become available that enabled us to make a more accurate judgement on establishment, or any other aspect of the PRA, we would update the document in response.

*An information campaign for potential importers of affected hosts would be useful.*

In addition to statutory activity, such as inspections at points of entry, the UK Plant Health Service will continue working with stakeholders and their members to monitor for this pest. To support this activity the Japanese beetle is considered a priority for creating publicity material such as a pest alert/factsheet to raise awareness with importers and other stakeholders of the risk.

## **Next steps**

Thank you for taking the time to submit views on the review. Your comments have been very valuable in confirming the policy position on 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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Chief Plant Health Officer

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**Recipients:**

The Woodland Trust (WT)

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)