

Biosecurity Bites

Southern Issue

WINTER 2017

Submissions invited on Proposal for Regional Pest Management Plan

The Proposal for the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan has been notified for public submissions. Animals and plants declared as pests can threaten the natural environment and livelihoods. We need to make sure the right rules are in place to manage existing pests and new pests.

We want to:

- Protect biodiversity and the natural environment
- Protect production activities from the impact of pests
- Be able to better respond to pests as soon as they get here
- Be better equipped to respond to changes in climate and land use, new tourism opportunities, changes in freshwater habitats and water movement.

Some of you have been involved in community discussions to date and responded to last year's discussion document. You can now make a submission on the resulting Proposal. The Public Notice at www.ecan.govt.nz/pests tells you how to do this. Submissions close on 3 July 2017.

Plan to import new strain of rabbit calicivirus



Environment Canterbury is part of a national consortium of agencies leading a programme that proposes to import and release a new strain of rabbit calicivirus, RHDV1 K5. The consortium includes regional councils, Federated Farmers, the Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand. It is targeting a release date of March 2018.

The targeted release timeframe is later than first anticipated, as further work has been required to address the regulatory requirements that will allow the legal importation of the new strain.

Before it can be imported and released, approval is required from the Ministry for Primary Industries under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act and the Biosecurity Act.

The revised timeframe will allow the consortium to learn valuable lessons from the Australian release, which is currently underway. A successful release of this new strain would help landholders achieve control objectives in the Regional Pest Management Plan.

Boneseed - Be on the lookout

Boneseed is an evergreen shrub that can grow up to three metres tall with dull green, toothed leaves covered with a cottony down. Daisy-like flowers are produced in bright yellow clusters from late winter until late summer. Up to 50,000 seeds per plant can be produced in a year and can remain viable for up to 10 years. Seeds are mainly dispersed by birds and water.

Tolerant of dry, infertile soils, boneseed can establish in coastal areas where its vigorous growth will displace desirable plants, shade out native seedlings and reduce or prevent public access to coastal and beach areas. It is highly flammable and will regenerate prolifically after fire.

The Biosecurity team would like to hear from you if you have seen boneseed.



Boneseed



Boneseed flower



Stop the spread of pests: Keep it Clean!

If it can move, it can carry diseases, pests and weeds. For this reason vehicles and machinery pose a high biosecurity risk to farms and should be managed accordingly. To stop the spread of pests, make sure all vehicles and machinery visiting your property are clean. You should also limit the number of vehicle access points and keep track of who has entered. Simple actions like these can greatly reduce the risk of a new pest incursion to your farm.

New officer



Kristi Andreassen Biosecurity Support Officer

Kristi joined the Biosecurity team in September last year, having moved to New Zealand from the Sunshine Coast. She comes from a long background of mining/construction administration and more recently in aged care. Kristi is loving living in New Zealand, especially seeing snow for the first time. She is a rugby league fan who enjoys exploring the country. Kristi is based with the Northern team at Amberley, and undertakes the administration role for the three Biosecurity teams.

Saffron Thistle



Saffron thistle is an unusual thistle with yellow flowers and glossy, sharp-tipped leaves. Flowering from December to April, it has bright yellow flowers with purplish veins, rather than the purple flower seen on Scotch, nodding and other thistles commonly found in Canterbury. Spread by stock, water, vehicles and in soil to other locations, seed can remain viable for up to 8 years. Once established, saffron thistle forms dense stands, preventing stock movement, competing with pasture species and reducing stock-carrying capacity. Animals can suffer injuries to the eyes and mouth from the sharp spines which also get stuck in wool. While saffron thistle is found at several locations in North Canterbury, there is only one confirmed site in South Canterbury. Recently, however, we have had a report of another possible site thanks to the keen observation skills of a local farmer. A sample has been sent to the Allen Herbarium at Landcare Research to confirm the identification. The Biosecurity team would like to hear from you if you spot this prickly pest.

Be on the lookout for the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is asking the community to be on the lookout for the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug. Adults are about 1.7 centimetres long, with a distinctive brown shield shape. The underside is white/tan, and the legs and antennae are brown with white banding. Young nymphs are yellowish brown, mottled with black and red. Older nymphs are darker, with the banding pattern on legs and antennae starting to appear.



If you find one, catch it and call MPI on 0800 80 99 66.

What's the Southern Biosecurity team up to?



The distinctive black seed of African love grass

The last few months have been busy for the Southern team, with many gorse, broom, rabbit and wallaby inspections undertaken and control work carried out while the weather is favourable. This season's Total Control operations are finished until next spring, with hundreds of hectares covered over several sites controlling plants such as African love grass, wild thyme and bur daisy. African love grass in particular has required much work because it covers 130 hectares and is very difficult to spot. The plant seeds every six weeks and requires intensive searching as its only distinguishing characteristic is its distinctive black seed head.

In the winter months the team will be controlling nassella tussock around Kurow and South Canterbury, where around four weeks' grubbing is required to control the 43 known sites. Nassella is a major threat to farms in South Canterbury because it is extremely adaptable and can thrive in open grasslands. Unpalatable to stock, nassella will displace other plant species. Mature plants can produce up to 120,000 seeds which are dispersed by wind, water, stock, clothing and machinery.

Your local representatives

Did you know there are Pest Management Liaison Committees of local representatives in the Kurow and South Canterbury areas? Their role is to work with Environment Canterbury and the community to implement the Regional Pest Management Plan and make recommendations that will help Environment Canterbury manage pests in the district and across the region. If you would like to discuss a pest issue, you can contact the local chair: Kurow, **Peter Reid** on 03 436 0216, or South Canterbury, **Peter Moynihan** on 03 614 3822.

Who do I call?

For all pest enquiries, please contact Environment Canterbury's Southern Biosecurity team in Timaru on 03 687 7800 or email biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz