



Government Industry Agreement for Biosecurity Readiness and Response

Sector-based Councils: September 2023 Bulletin

This semi-regular update from the GIA Secretariat is intended to provide a general overview of the key matters considered by GIA governance bodies in the preceding month. It is not intended to communicate formal decisions by any of the parties, nor everything that happens within GIA. If there are any questions, or further information is required please contact steve.rich@gia.org.nz

Fruit Fly Council (FFC): 1 September 2023

FFC reviewed progress on its work programme and specifically considered the following matters:

- Automated Fly Traps - Council approved an extension to the number of traps included in the current trial, noting that the end goal is that, if their usefulness is proven, the traps be available to use as a Response tool.
- Consideration of Other Fruit Flies of economic significance - Council agreed to bring the development of an impact rating system for other fruit flies of economic significance (not covered by the existing OA) into the wider GIA Partnership's Pest Identification and Beneficiary Categorisation (PIBC) project.
- Council discussed a proposal to fund a PHD student to work on Fruit Fly Reproduction Cessation, with further work scoping required before decisions are made.
- Matt Dyck and Brad Siebert gave Council an update following their attendance at the recent Australian Fruit Fly Conference and meetings with the representatives of the Australian National Fruit Fly Council.
- FFOA signatories seek to understand the mechanics of compensation under the Biosecurity Act, and how it intersects with decision making at Response Governance. In conjunction with the BMSBC (which has similar membership and approach to the compensation issue) a workshop of the MPI compensation team and industry signatories is to be held as a means of making initial progress.

Livestock Sector Biosecurity Council (LSBC) - Biosecurity Act review Workshop: 8 September 2023

Following discussion at the recent LSBC meeting, members met for a dedicated workshop about options for the review of the Biosecurity Act. The meeting was broad ranging, but in summary key areas discussed were:

- **Classifying Organisms:** Discussion revolved around the proposal to classify organisms beyond 'unwanted organism' designation. The Australian EADRA organism categorisation was seen as potentially useful.
- **Improving Decision-Making:** Support was expressed for more guidance, but concerns were raised about decisions being elevated outside of MPI, potentially undermining the GIA partnership.
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi Partnership:** Clarity about the involvement of Māori in the Act/guidance was deemed essential, and comparisons with other legislation were suggested.
- **Sharing Biosecurity Powers:** Risk-based services were acknowledged, and the Food Safety model was suggested as an exemplar for managing risks. Opportunities for industry involvement in long-term management were discussed.
- **Government Coordination:** More clarity in defining risks and issues was seen as necessary for effective coordination between central and local government.
- **Industry Coordination:** Participants sought more information on GIA structure proposals and emphasized the need for mechanisms to transition between GIA response and long-term management.
- **Import System:** More details were requested for a comprehensive comment.
- **Border Improvements:** Managing risks associated with cleared goods post-border was highlighted, especially when issues become apparent after clearance.
- **Funding:** The importance of cost recovery from non-signatory beneficiaries was reiterated, with a focus on using available levy funds collected for readiness, response, and recovery.
- **Compensation:** Consideration was given to varying compensation provisions and their link to risk profiles of activities. Ensuring fairness and equity in compensation was emphasised.
- **Clarifying Purpose:** While the idea of purpose statements was supported in general, participants sought more information about their linkage to other legislation.
- **Enforcement and Compliance:** Tracing exacerbators and causes was discussed, and the need for infringement options for post-border activities raised.
- **Interaction with Other Legislation:** The importance of interactions with other legislation like the Animal Products Act and EPA approvals was emphasised, especially in cases like M. bovis.
- **Implementation, Monitoring, and Review:** The need to see relevant policies before commenting was highlighted, along with a call for greater commitment to regulatory stewardship.
- **Other Comments:** Questions were raised about system governance and the potential for the Biosecurity Board's role in legislation. Mandatory use of the Biosecurity Database (Farms Online) and information sharing clarity were mentioned.

Plant Biosecurity Council (PBC) - Review of Biosecurity Act: 18 September 2023

PBC held a similar meeting to the LSBC workshop noted above, with considerable overlap between the output of the two meetings. In summary, PBC discussed the following:

- **Classifying Organisms:** The discussion focused on the proposal to classify organisms beyond the 'unwanted organism' designation. MPI's preference to handle this in policy rather than legislation was noted, emphasising flexibility in managing organisms.
- **Improving Decision-Making:** Participants discussed the need for more clarity and guidance but suggested that these aspects should not be included in the Act itself. Existing guidance from Biosecurity New Zealand was unevenly applied and should be revisited.
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi Partnership:** The Act's silence on this partnership was acknowledged, and it was proposed that any inclusion should come with clear guidance. Questions about potential conflicts between Crown obligations to GIA and Māori were raised.
- **Sharing Biosecurity Powers:** Concerns were raised about risk-based verification and the potential exposure of GIA to increased risk at the border. Delegated powers and funding for performance-based verification were discussed.
- **Enabling Government Coordination:** The need for central and local government coordination was recognised, especially in addressing specific issues like the spread of wallabies.
- **Enabling Industry Coordination:** Participants supported changes to the framework but emphasised the importance of better information and consultation. The flexibility to extend an Operational Agreement (OA) beyond readiness and response was favoured, but perhaps without imposing all pest management costs on the industry.
- **Improvements for the Import System:** More detailed information was requested to provide comments. Protection was considered a priority over easy importing.
- **Improvements at the Border:** Specific details were lacking, and it was suggested that previous incursions should inform updates in the law. The germplasm pathway was highlighted as an area needing attention.
- **Funding:** The need for equitable, efficient, and effective funding was emphasised. Clarity and consistency in funding mechanisms were called for, particularly in cases like carbon farming.

Xylella Working Group: 26 September 2023

- As an adjunct to MPI's Operations Research project on vector establishment in the NZ environment, XAG agreed to co-fund MPI staff attendance at several meetings with mana whenua in high-Xylella risk areas. Objectives are to gather knowledge on endemic host/vector behaviour and establish survey protocols for the same. It is likely an industry representative will also attend these meetings to ensure relationships extend beyond MPI and the contractor running the project.
- While still under development, the focus of this year's workplan is expected to be engagement and communications across the broad range of stakeholders identified by the host, strain, vectors matrix report. This is likely to include a Xylella forum among interested parties discussing science, threats, impacts and formulating next steps.
- The meeting agreed to engage a new Xylella Technical Lead to keep the group abreast of Xylella developments.

- Parameters and scope of a response OA will be discussed at a dedicated meeting on 17 October.
- The group will next meet early December 2023.

Solanaceae Biosecurity Working Group: 27 September 2023

- The SBWG confirmed its new focus as a standing body that maintains a watching brief over the threat posed by Solanaceous pathogens, positioned for action in the event of the threat profile changing in a material fashion and/or the agreement among Parties that further readiness activity is warranted.
- An OA to reflect the above is being developed and it will include the ability for parties (or a subset of parties) to initiate and fund projects as needed.

GIA Operations Limited Board Meeting: 29 September 2023

- Secretariat performance objectives for 23/24 were discussed.
- A proposal to arrange a visit to comparable Australian organisations, Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia, along with relevant industry and Governmental organisations.
- The Board met with Biosecurity NZ's new Chief Biosecurity Officer, Pete Thomson, to discuss priorities, including Biosecurity System Review and Act Review.
- A draft GOL Board Charter was noted for future discussion.
- Forthcoming Annual Board and Annual Shareholder meeting arrangements were discussed.