Tomato Potato Psyllid Industry FAQS

At 15 May 2017

Economic Development,
Jobs, Transport
and Resources

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

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TOMATO POTATO PSYLLID FAQS

What is tomato potato psyllid (TPP)?

Tomato potato psyllid (Bactericera cockerelli) known as TPP, is an exotic plant pest which has an extensive host range of plants in the Solanaceae, Convolvulaceae, and Lamiaceae plant families. TPP is known to feed, live and overwinter/shelter on plants in at least 18 other families.

Adult TPP resemble small winged cicadas and are about 3mm long.

The body is brownish and has white or yellowish markings on the thorax and a broad white band on the abdomen. Wings are transparent and held vertically over the body.

There have been no confirmed reports of TPP in Victoria. TPP has only been confirmed as being present in Western Australia

What is CLso or "Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum"?

CLso "Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum" is a bacterium that causes 'zebra chip' disease in potato. TPP are known to transmit the bacterium.

Western Australian is continuing with tests to determine whether the bacterium is present. It has not been found in any samples to date.

There have been no confirmed reports of CLso in Victoria.

What crops does tomato potato psyllid (TPP) affect?

TPP attacks plants belonging to the Solanaceae family, which includes capsicums, tomatoes, eggplants, potatoes, tamarillos, and chillies.

TPP can also affect plants from the Convolvulaceae family, which includes sweet potato, and the Lamiacease family which includes spearmint and cat nip.

Brassica plants have also been identified as host plants of TPP. Brassica includes cruciferous vegetables, cabbages, or mustard plants.

The weeds nightshade, groundcherry, boxthorn, matrimony vine and field bindweed are also hosts of the pest.

A full list of host plants can be found on the Biosecurity SA PIRSA website.

Where did TPP come from?

TPP has been detected for the first time in Western Australia. The origin is unknown.

TPP is present in other countries including USA, Central America and New Zealand. It can spread through the movement of host plant material. It can also disperse through natural pathways such as flight, wind and human-assisted movement (movement of plant material).

How do I know if my plants have TPP?

If you grow a crop that is a host for TPP, look for insect life stages on the underside of leaves.

Signs of tomato potato psyllid include:

- Insects jumping from the foliage when disturbed.
- Severe wilting of plants caused by high numbers of psyllids feeding.
- Yellowing of leaf margins and upward curling of the leaves.
- White sugar-like granules (excreted by adults and nymphs), which coats the plant leaves and stems, and can lead to the development of sooty mould.
- Ants may be symptomatic of the presence of the white sugar-like granules.
- Stem death symptoms are similar to other potato and tomato disorders.

If you suspect TPP is present in your crop, please report directly to the department. Reporting TPP will help protect other growers and the Western Australia industry.

Images can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website.

What can I do to stop the spread of TPP?

It is critical that any person that brings produce into Victoria whether for private or commercial purposes, must adhere to the quarantine entry requirements that prohibit any host material entering Victoria that is sourced from any State or Territory that has not issued an area freedom certificate for TPP.

These restrictions are currently in effect, and can be found on the latest Industry Notice available at www.agriculturevictoria.com.au

Growers should practice sound farm biosecurity procedures to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests and diseases. More information on biosecurity is available at the Farm Biosecurity website.

Be vigilant in checking for signs of the psyllid and report any unusual symptoms to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 as soon as they have been identified.

How do I report TPP?

If you suspect you have seen a psyllid, we can connect you to an expert in exotic pests and diseases. Alternatively, you can email plant.protection@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

For advice on moving plant products (market access), contact your local Plant Standards Officer on 136 186 or market.access@ecodev.vic.gov.au. Growers are reminded that it is an offence under the Plant Biosecurity Act 2010 not to report a suspect case of tomato potato psyllid or bacterium.

Do I need to set up my own monitoring and surveillance for TPP?

Growers are urged to check their plants for TPP.

Agriculture Victoria biosecurity officers will inspect specific crops across the state, however the surveillance program will not cover all areas so we encourage growers to get involved through their own crop monitoring.

Surveillance of plants and crops can be undertaken by checking for signs of TPP on host plants and laying yellow sticky traps.

Yellow sticky traps can be purchased from most hardware or gardening stores.

Place yellow sticky traps on wires or stakes just above the crop canopy within five metres of the crop edges. If the crop has already been harvested, place the sticky trap in vegetation surrounding the field.

Collect the sticky traps after one week and if you have concerns about the pest insects on your sticky trap then please contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Why is Agriculture Victoria conducting surveillance?

The surveillance program aims to confirm that Victoria is free of TPP.

Victoria's Area Freedom Certificate for TPP will ensure growers are able to continue trade with other states and territories (except WA) and overseas markets.

Confirming Victoria's Area Freedom Certificate is of the utmost importance and all growers are encouraged to welcome Agriculture Victoria's Biosecurity Officers if they approach your property to conduct surveillance.

If you have not yet been contacted by Agriculture Victoria regarding the surveillance program then please contact the relevant Sector Commander for your area:

- Northern and South East - Tony Carbone, 58335224 / 0429418245
- South West - Ryan Cook, 52264076 / 0417163840

Will my property be inspected?

Agriculture Services and Biosecurity Operations (ASBO) biosecurity officers will survey 220 crops across Victoria in order to confirm that Victoria is TPP free.

Biosecurity officers will attempt to contact property owners to schedule an inspection time.

A department officer will return after a minimum of seven days to collect the sticky traps for testing.

Will detections only be based on sticky traps, not live psyllids on plants?

Any detection of psyllids, at any life stage, will be counted as a detection. Surveillance includes visual inspections of crops and plant as well as the use of sticky traps.

If samples are taken from my property, who will be undertaking the diagnostic testing and how confident can I be with the results?

All testing will be performed in an approved and accredited state government laboratory at AgriBio, Bundoora using nationally approved diagnostic protocols.

What happens if TPP is found on my property?

If TPP is detected, Agriculture Victoria will work with individual property owners on a treatment process which is appropriate to their business and to minimise the impact of the pest for the rest of Victoria.

All property information is confidential. In the case of a positive detection, the public will likely be notified that the psyllid has been detected in Victoria once a positive test is confirmed, but the identity of the grower/landowner and specific location of the property would remain strictly confidential.

What has been done so far to combat TPP?

TPP is an emergency plant pest and Agriculture Victoria is working as a priority with industry to ensure it does enter Victoria on interstate produce.

ASBO surveillance teams are inspecting properties across Victoria and will be installing sticky traps.

Agriculture Victoria has imposed restrictions on the importation of host material sourced from any State or Territory.

FAQS FOR THE GROWER IF TPP IS DETECTED

How long will the grower not be able to trade for?

This is not yet known and will be context specific (ie it will depend on each particular situation). Any restrictions on trade will be dependent on the extent of detection in Victoria, and other states, and will likely be guided by existing interstate and intrastate restrictions placed upon trade with other states at that time.

National biosecurity expertise and industry and government decision makers may be consulted/involved in decision making (ie. for a significant new detection outside of WA).

The aim is to identify and develop risk mitigation measures that are acceptable in order to enable businesses to continue to trade. Work is being done to identify these.

If the grower is not able to trade, will there be compensation?

There are currently no arrangements for compensation through Plant Health Australia or the Australian Government. Owner reimbursement costs (ORCs) are available for eligible businesses whose industries are covered by Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) (ie signatory parties) for national cost shared responses.

When a pest is deemed not eradicable (ie. established) it is no longer subject to national cost shared arrangements under the EPPRD, and ORCs no longer apply. More information can be found on the Plant Health Australia website.

Will there be a quarantine radius set up around the detection area?

This is context specific and dependent on the extent of the pest if detected elsewhere in Australia and Victoria. A quarantine radius or zone may also be decided through a National Committee. Generally the aim is to minimise the regulatory burden on business whilst managing the risk of spread.

Will the grower be able to trade interstate?

This is not yet known and will be context specific. Any restrictions on trade will be dependent on the extent of the pest in Victoria and Australia and the nature of any interstate and intrastate restrictions placed upon trade with other states at that time.

National biosecurity expertise and industry and government decision makers may be consulted/involved in decision making (ie. for a significant new detection outside of WA).