

Potato Cyst Nematode: New requirement for permit applications

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

Effective 1 September 2021, you must apply for a permit to remove Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) host material from the PCN Control Area.

BACKGROUND

Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) is a microscopic, worm-like organism that lives in the soil and feeds on the roots of *Solanaceous* plants. It is a significant biosecurity threat that is currently present in Victoria. As PCN exists in soil, it can easily be spread by the movement of infected soil attached to plants, used machinery, and packages.

To control the spread of PCN in Victoria, subordinate legislation declaring Control Areas has been enacted under the *Plant Biosecurity Act 2010* to regulate the movement of host materials.

This means that the removal of any PCN host material from the Control Area is prohibited unless a permit has been issued by Agriculture Victoria.

KEY CHANGES

Effective 1 September 2021, anyone who operates land that is part of the PCN Control Area must apply for a permit to remove PCN host material from the land. Permits will no longer be automatically issued by Agriculture Victoria.

WHO NEEDS A PERMIT?

Anyone who operates land that is part of the PCN Control Area and wishes to remove PCN host material from this land will require a valid permit to do so.

PCN HOST MATERIAL

PCN host material includes the following:

- all PCN host plants and their products, including—
 - any plant or plant product of the *Solanaceae* family (excluding above-ground fruit); and
 - any root vegetables; and
 - any bulb; and
 - any seedling; and
 - any nursery plant or tree.

- any earth material, meaning soil, gravel, sand or rocks; and
- any packages or bulk containers, including anything in or by which host plants or plant products are contained, wrapped or packed; and
- any used equipment, including any vehicle associated with the cultivation, harvesting, handling, transport or processing of PCN host plants or plant products.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A PERMIT

To apply for a permit, download an application form (<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/potato-cyst-nematode>) and email it to Plant.Standards@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Alternatively, contact the Customer Contact Centre at 136 186 to have a one mailed to you, and follow the submission instructions on the application form.

Under the *Plant Biosecurity Act 2010* it is an offence to remove host material from a PCN Control Area unless in accordance with the conditions of a permit issued by Agriculture Victoria. The maximum penalty for this offence is currently \$10,900 for an individual and \$54,500 for a body corporate.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Landowners should notify anyone who operates from their land of the PCN status and the requirement to apply for a permit to remove PCN host material.

For further information, or to inform Agriculture Victoria that you no longer grow PCN host plants (including potatoes), have ceased operation or have since sold your property and no longer require correspondence, please email Plant.Standards@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please telephone Agriculture Victoria on 136 186.
