



NEWSLETTER

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Since the last newsletter, the NBCN has been active with deployment in many responses and also the velvetleaf and pea weevil responses continuing.

NBCN members have been deployed on these two responses and they have also attended recent introduction training to specialist roles at Field Response Headquarters. Fifty seven people attended this two-day course in Auckland and the overall response to the course was very positive.

Currently MPI is managing over 40 responses. Although there was a recent fruit fly interception at the border, we are hopeful that this Christmas will be a relaxed and quiet one for us all.

As New Zealand's borders become busier, the risks of unwanted pests arriving here are increasing. We are determined to keep improving how we work, and are developing the skills and tools required to do this work. Concepts such as the NBCN are seen as key enablers for MPI to be effective in responses. We rely on your skills and experience to build on what we already have and the success of recent responses has given both MPI and AQ the confidence in the abilities of you all.

MPI is committed to the concept of the NBCN, and for that reason 2017 will see some positive changes in how we relate to NBCN members. If your organisation would like a presentation from the NBCN then please do not hesitate to contact me, Mike Langford or Richard Calvert from AsureQuality. These presentations will give you an update of what's happening in the New Zealand Biosecurity area and also what we are up to within the NBCN. We are very happy to 'tailor' these to suit your staff.

Finally, on behalf of AsureQuality and MPI, Peter and I would like to wish you and your families a safe and Merry Christmas and hope you have the opportunity to relax with your friends and family. We would like to once again thank you for your commitment to the NBCN throughout 2016 and look forward to working with you or meeting you again in 2017.



*Andrew Sander
Manager, NBCN, Ministry
for Primary Industries*



*Peter Stratford
Preparedness & Response
Manager, AsureQuality*

Are there questions or information that you would like to know about the NBCN or the NZ biosecurity scene?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXb2ic-kroc>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkIe9QQNELE>



COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

We would like to wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. We look forward to working with you all during 2017.



MPI offers reward for 'wanted' bird

A \$1,000 reward is on offer to Bay of Plenty residents who report sightings of an aggressive pest bird, the red-vented bulbul.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is working in partnership with the Department of Conservation and local authorities to eradicate the red-vented bulbul bird, an introduced pest that's native to Asia and has spread into Australia and the Pacific.

MPI Response Manager Brad Chandler says the bird is renowned for the damage it inflicts on fruit and vege crops.

"It's not a bird we want in the Bay of Plenty with its extensive kiwifruit industry and other horticultural crops. In addition, it competes aggressively with native birds for food and is known to chase and attack them."

Mr Chandler says a single red-vented bulbul bird was found and removed near Te Puke earlier in the year. Now the Ministry has received an as-yet unverified report of a single bird being spotted near Katikati.

"We are very keen to hear from anyone who believes they have seen one of these birds. We're taking this seriously and there's a \$1,000 reward on offer for information that leads directly to a successful removal by a member of our response team.

"If you think you've seen a red-vented bulbul, please report the sighting to 0800 80 99 66 – MPI's 24/7 Exotic Pest and Disease hotline. A good indication of location as well as a photo would be fantastic."

Red-vented bulbuls are a medium-sized bird around the size of a starling (20cm in length – body and tail). They are generally dark brown/grey coloured with a lighter chest and rump, a small crest (upstanding feathers) on their head, and significantly, a very distinctive crimson-red patch of feathers beneath their tail.

"This red patch is the key identification feature," Mr Chandler says. "If people have seen a bird with these crimson-red feathers beneath the tail, we'd like to hear from them.

"I can't stress enough how much of a pest these birds are and how significant the threat they pose to horticulture. They may appear cute or novel, but they're anything but."

In recent years MPI has eliminated small populations of the bird from areas in Auckland. Although red-vented bulbuls are established in Australia and on some Pacific islands, they are not likely to have flown to New Zealand but it's possible they have stowed away on large-sized sea vessels.

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MPI introduces new mobile biosecurity x-ray machines

The Ministry for Primary Industries will introduce two new mobile biosecurity x-ray machines this summer to help keep fruit fly and other destructive pests out of New Zealand.

The purchase follows MPI's introduction of a new mobile x-ray last year to screen the bags of cruise ship passengers arriving at North Island ports.

"The additional mobile units give MPI greater flexibility to wheel out x-ray screening for fresh fruit and other biosecurity goods across the whole country," says MPI Detection Technology Manager Brett Hickman.

"This year their use won't be restricted to cruise ship passengers. They'll go to where the action is.

'For example, they will provide backup for our fixed biosecurity x-ray units at airports and Auckland's International Mail Centre.

"We've already used one to scan international mail items while an existing permanent x-ray machine was undergoing repairs."

He also expects to see them used for screening express freight items and if for any reason MPI needed to set up a special biosecurity clearance area.

One of the mobile units is due to head to its base in Tauranga this week. The other two units will be based in Auckland and Dunedin.

"We'll be able to deploy the machines from these bases at short notice to wherever they are required," says Mr Hickman.

MPI currently owns and operates 28 fixed x-ray units for baggage scanning at international airports, military bases and the Auckland International Mail Centre.

Introductory Response Training 2016

The NBCN sits within the Readiness Work Programme. The programme aims to assess and improve organisational readiness and response capabilities, identify opportunities for improvement and strengthen inter and intra-agency collaboration, coordination and performance.

Many different types of organisations from all over New Zealand with a huge range of skills are part of the NBCN. In the event of a biosecurity outbreak these organisations will pool their skills together so we have the right field resources at the ready to provide the best response. Members also require training and this is offered on an annual basis through the NBCN training programme.

To introduce the concept of the NBCN and also what happens in a response at FHQ, training was held in Auckland on 23 and 24 November and was attended by 56 staff from MPI, AsureQuality, Regional Councils, NBCN and Government Industry Agreement (GIA) partners.

AsureQuality leads most of MPI's field operations and this year's training looked at enhancing the deployment capability within MPI, while providing increased and augmented support to AsureQuality at field headquarters (FHQ). The two-day course covered four workshops; Introduction to Operations Management, Introduction to Tracing, Introduction to Logistics and Introduction to Permitting. While this course was introductory, it was the first step for many in the journey to being part of the NBCN. The fruit fly response in Auckland 2015 was used as a scenario and base for the training.

The two fruit fly responses in 2014 (Whangarei) and in 2015 (Auckland) highlighted AsureQuality's skills, and the work it does in a biosecurity response. It also helped identify how MPI can better deploy its own staff to support responses at the Field HQ. The NBCN training is a part of a staged learning process and participants will continue their learning through other training and learning opportunities. The training will also be used as a pilot for future NBCN training to ensure key people receive relevant training for their particular areas of expertise.

If you would like any further information in regards to NBCN training, please do not hesitate to contact either Andrew, Mike Langford or Richard Calvert.

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Did you know that MPI?

- Employs 2,200 people to "Grow and Protect New Zealand"
- Administers over 50 acts of Parliament
- Completes over 30,000 fishing patrols and inspections every year
- Inspects over 140,000 vehicles and machinery every year
- MPI's dogs sniff baggage of over 5 million travellers every year
- Oversees animal welfare in zoos and wildlife parks
- Currently manages or is responsible for over 40 responses
- X rays over 35 million mail items every year
- Manages biosecurity risks across over 700,000 containers
- Works with over 660 wine exporters to ensure their wine is 'good to go'
- Does more than 20,000 lab tests annually looking for insects, phytoplasmas, viruses, viroids, mites, fungi, bacteria and other unwanted organisms.

Plus much more...

If you or your company is interested in becoming a member of the NBCN please contact us.

National Biosecurity Capability Network

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