

Sapere Review—Lessons Learned from the Response to Psa-V

As an industry we must learn from the Psa-V response to ensure we are in a much stronger position should a significant biosecurity incursion occur in the future.

In June 2014 KVH commissioned the Sapere Research Group to conduct an independent review of the ‘lessons learned from the response to Psa-V’. The Sapere Research Group was selected following a tender process.

The aim of the review was to identify lessons that could be taken forward to support future responses to new pest and disease arrivals that could impact the NZ kiwifruit industry.

The focus of the review was on the overall decision-making, information flows and systems and processes that were in place.

The Sapere team carried out the review based on background information leading up to and including the current National Psa-V Pest Management Plan (NPMP); and a series of interviews with a broad range of industry and MPI representatives who were present at the time of the incursion.

The review includes several recommendations for KVH and the industry to consider going forward. Many of the recommendations have already been put in place by the industry and KVH, while others are under action and some will result in new work. Overall this confirms KVH is focussed in the right areas.

Below are the recommendations from the review and how KVH proposes to address them.

KVH is seeking industry feedback from growers and the industry on this approach. Feedback can be sent to KVH by email info@kvh.org.nz or by post: PO Box 4246, Mount Maunganui by Friday 28 November 2014.

Recommendations from the review

- 1. The industry has a dedicated function that can unambiguously lead on biosecurity matters, represent the entire industry and engage with the Government. Core responsibilities should include assessing emerging risks, advocating for their management and planning for them should they arrive, coordinating any actual responses, liaising with other “like minded” industries and the financial sector, organising industry-wide biosecurity related research, and providing best practice science-based guidance on good hygiene and movement practices across the industry.**

Implemented—KVH was established in December 2010 shortly after Psa-V was identified in New Zealand. While initially set up to respond to Psa-V specifically, KVH has more recently been given the mandate to lead wider biosecurity on behalf of the kiwifruit industry.

KVH proactively undertakes readiness and response planning to prepare for future biosecurity incursions that might affect the industry. This includes assessment of emerging risk organisms; assessing their potential entry pathways and providing input to improve border biosecurity intervention where necessary; and working together with other horticultural industries and MPI to develop operational plans for specific organisms, such as fruit fly.

Research will be undertaken on organisms where necessary to ensure we fully understand the potential risks they present, and to look for control options.

KVH has been actively involved in recent incursions, including the discovery of illegally-imported kiwifruit material in 2013 and two fruit fly incursions in Whangarei in early 2014.

KVH will continue to fully implement the components of this recommendation.

2. The industry should continue work on response plans for the top unwanted pests and diseases under the Government Industry Agreement framework with the MPI.

Ongoing—from a list of almost fifty pests and pathogens identified as potential threats to the industry, KVH has developed a draft ‘top priority’ list using a risk matrix developed specifically for this purpose. Organisms identified as top priority threats will be the focus of readiness and response planning.

KVH initiated and participates in the Interim Fruit Fly Council, made up of representatives from horticultural industries and MPI to develop an Operational Agreement for fruit flies and reduce impacts to this sector of any future incursions. This includes managing detection, eradication and reducing production and market access impacts of an incursion. KVH will shortly develop readiness and response plans for other priority pests.

3. The industry should also continue to develop a high level generic response plan with sub chapters for key types of pests and diseases (e.g. bacteria, fungi, flying insects, crawling insects etc.) for use with all “new” pests and diseases for which there is no existing plan.

Ongoing—generic response plans will be prepared to cover each of the broad categories of bacteria, fungi, virus and arthropod to enable a response to any organism beyond those specifically anticipated.

4. Response plans should extend out past the initial response to the point where a legal pest management plan could take over if need be so as to at least cover any likely financial/compensation policies and need for legal powers like movement controls.

Proposal—KVH will clarify with MPI, growers and the industry the approaches acceptable for responding to incursions. This includes matters such as movement controls, compensation and other issues relating to pest management.

5. All response plans should explicitly consider how best to assist those affected by the pest or disease concerned, including any likely compensation, particularly in the early stages of the responses.

See comments 2, 3 and 4 above.

6. The industry pastoral care arrangements organised through Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated should continue. More support should be provided to all those undertaking leadership roles during actual responses in future, in addition to the support provided to orchardists and others affected.

Proposal—Through NZKGI the industry now has a unique pastoral care framework that has brought awareness and recognition to the reality and seriousness of grower well-being during a rural crisis. This was achieved by creating support networks where they once didn’t exist and tapping into existing networks.

This framework, while formulated for the Psa-V crisis, has the potential to be applied not only to other kiwifruit industry crises, but also to other horticultural and primary industries.

Going forward KVH will continue to work with NZKGI to ensure this support network is ongoing and made available to all those in the industry affected by a response or crises—including those undertaking leadership roles during future responses.

This support component will be formally captured in all readiness and response planning and operational agreements for future industry crises.

- 7. The “biosecurity insurance” type benefits from the industry’s extensive new breeding programme should be explicitly acknowledged and considered with any future changes to this breeding programme.**

Proposal—this recommendation is not KVH’s direct responsibility. However we will work with plant breeders to ensure they are fully focused on breeding more Psa-tolerant varieties.

The commercialisation of the Gold3 variety is a good example of the breeding programme and its consideration of new varieties with greater tolerance.

- 8. The industry should become more open to learning from other sectors and from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) in managing current and future pests and diseases.**

Ongoing—the industry has built a much more actively-engaged relationship with MPI and other primary industries over the last four years. This has been through participating in ongoing GIA working groups, the Fruit Fly Council and responses to incursions, such as the Queensland Fruit Fly.

KVH is also reviewing the other horticultural industries’ biosecurity plans, including the approach taken in Australia.

- 9. Efforts should continue to identify best practice management and hygiene practices for the management of not just Psa-V but other potential pests and diseases. This guidance should emphasize the risks around a new pest or disease being in New Zealand and spreading for some time before it is actually discovered so as to provide a clearer justification for industry players to embed such hygiene practices as “business as usual”.**

Ongoing—grower education of Psa-V best practice management and industry compliance with the NPMP remains an important part of the overall KVH function. While movement controls and orchard hygiene priorities may differ between regions, its important growers continue to maintain best practice—not just for Psa-V control, but other pests and diseases that could already be present in New Zealand. KVH will continue to promote this message and the benefits of best practice, including orchard hygiene, and develop industry best-practice guidelines.

- 10. A review should be undertaken of the last remaining movement-related controls covering the Bay of Plenty region in the Psa-V Pest Management Plan to assess their likely compliance rates and therefore effectiveness and fairness.**

Proposal—the initial National Psa-V Pest Management Plan (NPMP) is in place for a three-year term, after which it is reviewed. Prior to this review, KVH intends to assess the NPMP and its effectiveness through an industry survey. Information from the survey will be assessed and incorporated into the NPMP going forward. In addition, KVH is actively reviewing all current protocols to ensure they are still appropriate.

- 11. KVH should continue with its comprehensive communications approach during adverse events (such as the recent fruit fly find in Whangarei) but should better target its more “ongoing” communication efforts to critical times of the kiwifruit growing season so as to**

ensure industry engages when they really need to (and do not switch off completely outside adverse events).

Proposal—KVH will consider options for its regular communication channels, including reducing the weekly *KVH Bulletin* to a fortnightly publication, particularly during the quieter or less-critical growing seasons. It will also look at implementing more targeted communications (i.e. regional and seasonal communications).

KVH has conducted surveys about what communications growers and the industry prefer in the past. It will carry out another survey before the end of 2014 providing options and seeking feedback; and implement a new communications strategy based on this feedback in 2015.

KVH will continue to upload regular, topical news and ongoing activity to its blog pages on the website on a regular basis. It will also continue to contribute to regular industry publication such as the *Kiwifruit Journal*, *Orchardist* and regular *Zespri* publications.