

The borders are closed but has our biosecurity risk gone away?

KVH is calling upon growers to ensure that on-orchard biosecurity for kiwifruit pests and pathogens is not forgotten and most importantly to keep an eye out for any unusual vine symptoms during harvest and report these to KVH for follow up.

If an incursion were to occur now - while the country is facing an unprecedented human health and economic challenge - the impact could be severe says KVH Biosecurity Manager, Matt Dyck.

While borders are closed, cruise ships berthed, and incoming trade a trickle of its usual volume, biosecurity risk still exists, especially from the spread of kiwifruit pathogens that may already be here in their latent (not showing symptoms) form. Coronavirus has clearly illustrated the challenge of managing pathogens during the latency period, where they can spread silently between asymptomatic hosts. The same logic applies to plant pathogens except the latent phase can be much longer than 14 days and extend out to months or even years.

For some of our most significant threats like *Ceratocystis fimbriata*, the pathogen impacting kiwifruit in Brazil, we don't even know how long the latency period in kiwifruit is but we look to other hosts like Eucalypts where it is thought to be about seven months for new plantings. Our challenge is to apply biosecurity practices all the time so that if this or any other pathogen were to arrive, we





wouldn't be spreading it around unknowingly.

We can't afford to lock down plant material movements, these underpin the growth of our industry. But, by applying certification standards and embedding biosecurity practices across the plant production chain we can increase our confidence that these movements are safe. Should failures occur, we need robust traceability systems to know where infected material may have gone and where it came from originally. These are some of the key principles behind the proposed pathway plan (read more about this on the KVH website) to ensure safe movements of risk goods across our internal industry pathways.

Underpinning all these principles is the need for growers to report any unusual vine symptoms so that KVH and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) can follow up and undertake diagnostic testing. Growers should take reassurance that in almost all such cases there is no cost to the grower and no resulting restrictions that impact their operation. Even if a response was to be launched the grower would likely be eligible for any losses under the Biosecurity Act.

The earlier we detect the presence of a new biosecurity threat the earlier we can act to contain it, which gives us the very best shot at eradication.

CALL KVH 0800 665 825