

Profile Series: Border Interventions on Import Pathways

This series is intended to provide the kiwifruit industry with a greater understanding of how risks are managed at the border. It is important to remember the border is just one layer of the biosecurity system, a summary of the entire system is provided in the report “The NZ biosecurity system and how it operates” which can be found on the KVH website (www.kvh.org.nz/NZ_Biosecurity).

Cruise ships

Cruise ships are a major source of tourism for New Zealand and as an industry sector, have more than doubled in size over the last five years (Cruise New Zealand). In the 2013-2014 cruise season, more than 200,000 cruise passengers entered New Zealand borders presenting a biosecurity risk to be managed. These cruise ships enter New Zealand waters from Australia or the Pacific Islands—regions harbouring high-risk pests and diseases including fruit flies, which are the greatest biosecurity threat to New Zealand’s horticultural industries.

This document provides an overview of:

- The range of measures MPI employ to mitigate the biosecurity risk cruise passengers present
- Areas of KVH engagement for increased intervention

What are the risks?

The most significant risk that cruise ships present is passengers bringing fruit contaminated with unwanted organisms off the vessel and on to shore. Fresh produce accounts for 76 percent of risk items intercepted by detector dogs on this pathway.

The number of cruise ships visiting the Port of Tauranga has increased by over 1100 percent in the past 20 years and is expected to continue growing, with 2014/15 looking to be the biggest season ever. In the 2013/2014 cruise season 84 cruise ships visited Port of Tauranga, bringing in over 211,000 passengers and crew.

Year	Number of cruise ship visits
1992/1993	7
2013/2014	84
2014/2015 (<i>expected</i>)	112

How are risks being managed?

1. En-route officers process passengers, inspect stores and communicate biosecurity messages
MPI and New Zealand Customs work together to manage the risks that cruise ships present to our borders. At the cruise ship’s last overseas port prior to New Zealand at least one, and up to three officers, will board the ship and complete passenger processing en-route to New Zealand. The officers assess biosecurity risk of the passengers and the ship itself. Passengers are risk profiled and complete arrival cards, and the ship’s stores are inspected for risk items and pests. Any risk items should be detected at this stage and biosecurity messages communicated to passengers.
2. Passengers only disembark with bottled water
Upon arrival at port, passengers are allowed to disembark with only bottled water. To reduce risk, fruit served at meals during the cruise is peeled and cut to discourage passengers attempting to take it ashore.

3. Increased intervention for first ports of arrival

MPI take a risk profile-based approach to cruise ships, as they do for other border pathways, and apply a level of intervention that corresponds to perceived risk. For cruise ships the risk is considered greatest for the first New Zealand port of arrival and decreases for subsequent ports thereafter.

4. All vessels met by MPI

Regardless of the risk profile, all vessels are met by an MPI officer in port. Low-risk vessels may be subject to spot checks and hand searches, while high risk vessels receive more comprehensive searches (that sometimes includes detector dogs) on a higher number of passengers.

Areas of KVH engagement on this pathway

Over the past 12 months KVH has been engaging with MPI for increased border interventions on the cruise ship pathway. Interventions being sought include:

- Increased use of detector dogs on this pathway. MPI have responded to this request and are now using dogs for all first port of arrivals and many second ports of arrival. Detector dogs have been used on 150 cruise ship visits resulting in the interception of 500 biosecurity risk items, of which 76 percent were fresh produce.
- KVH are also advocating for the requirement that all fruit and vegetables loaded onto cruise vessels bound for New Zealand must comply with the New Zealand Import Health Standards for fruit and vegetables. KVH believe this would be an effective approach to risk mitigation of cruise ship passengers, reducing reliance on border intervention measures and the potential impact of risk items that do manage to enter our borders unchecked.