



## November PineNet Newsletter

A short newsletter for November before we head into December

November 2019



### Pine needle blight pathogen gets weaker in New Zealand

New Zealanders are used to hearing about plant pathogens that arrive here and wreak havoc. But for the first time, a New Zealand study has revealed that one introduced plant pathogen appears to have become weaker since it arrived here 50 years ago – possibly to make sure it doesn't kill off its host.

The *Dothistroma septosporum* fungus, which infects pine trees, first appeared in New Zealand in the 1960s. It causes Dothistroma needle blight, one of the worst foliar diseases of pine trees worldwide. Infected trees lose their needles, grow more slowly, and can even die.

In the [study](#) published in the scientific journal *Microorganisms*, researchers compared four isolates. The fungal strains collected in the 1960s were much more virulent than the strains from the 1990s or 2000s.

Researchers also tested how the fungal strains reacted to copper (the main control method in commercial

plantations) and found they had not developed resistance.

“Given that in New Zealand pine forests, trees are sprayed with copper fungicide sprays at most every two to three years, and only when certain thresholds of disease symptoms are exceeded, the selection pressure exerted by these antifungal compounds in the forest environment may be minimal compared to frequently sprayed agricultural crops,” co-author Lindsay Bulman, a science leader at Scion and the Bio-Protection Research Centre, said.

Prof Bradshaw said this was all good news for New Zealand foresters. “It means the disease is not as destructive here as it can be elsewhere, or as it was when it first arrived, and also suggests that copper spray is still an effective control.”

It’s relevant to note that the average rate of copper application is 1 gram per tree and that many stands are only sprayed once or twice during a 30-year-rotation and in some cases not at all.



## How effective is your biosecurity: growers put on the spot

Lots of interesting initiatives happening in Tauranga, read The Channel [newsletter](#) here.

## Biosecurity Award Winners announced

The [awards winners](#) were announced in October, with the Supreme Award going to Te Arawa Lakes Trust for their Te Arawa Catfish Killas programme.



## Annual reporting on surveillance by MPI 2019

*Surveillance* is published as Ministry of Primary Industries authoritative source of information on the ongoing biosecurity surveillance activity and the health status of New Zealand's animal and plant populations in both terrestrial and aquatic environments. Check out the [full surveillance reports](#) here.

## Check pine blocks for wild kiwifruit

Wild kiwifruit can readily establish in any scrub, native bush or forestry block close to producing orchards. They seem to prefer an association with pines and routinely are four to five times more prevalent in pine blocks compared to native bush.

<https://www.kvh.org.nz/newsroom/id/2145>



## Dr Brian Richardson awarded lifetime achievement award at National Science Awards

**Dr Brian Richardson** was acknowledged with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his 36 years in biosecurity research. Brian's stellar career has featured domestic and internationally significant work as well as pest-, vegetation- and sustainable forest-management. His achievements have included international recognition, with an award from the USDA Forest Service for technology transfer, acknowledging his research on spray modelling software, used to determine pesticide drift and efficacy.

Brian has also served as a Senior Executive within Scion and now works as a Principal Scientist, where he focuses on research relating to forest protection, particularly in the areas of biosecurity and pest management.

**Dr Roya Rezanavaz** was awarded Early Career Researcher Award, and the Team Award also went to Scion's Extrusion Plus team. Great work and recognition for Scion and its people.

<https://www.scionresearch.com/about-us/news-and-events/news/2019/cri-science-celebrated-at-national-science-awards>

## Remember to complete the survey on biosecurity

Some of you may have received an email from FOA directly about taking part in a Landcare survey to better understand biosecurity measures taken in the primary sector.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Biosecurityandgrowers>

## Interesting videos and online news

Stink bugs – could our most feared pest be making its way to New Zealand. Listen to this [podcast](#) (24 minutes).

New [detector dogs](#) for adding some cute to you day.



Forest Owners Association  
Level 9, 93 The Terrace  
Wellington, New Zealand  
PO Box 10986, Wellington 6143.  
[www.nzfoa.org.nz](http://www.nzfoa.org.nz)

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