



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# Plant Health & Biosecurity Strategy 2020-2025

Mid-Term Report  
December 2022





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# Acronyms

<b>AAI</b>	Assistant Agriculture Inspector
<b>AFBI</b>	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
<b>BCP</b>	Border Control Post
<b>BTSF</b>	Better Training for Safe Food
<b>DAERA</b>	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland)
<b>EFSA</b>	European Food Safety Authority
<b>EPPO</b>	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation

<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation
<b>FRM</b>	Forest Reproductive Material
<b>GLAS</b>	Garden, Landscape and Amenity Sportsturf Show
<b>IAS</b>	Invasive Alien Species
<b>ICOP</b>	Import Controls Operations
<b>IPPC</b>	International Plant Protection Convention
<b>ISPM</b>	International Standards on Phytosanitary Measures
<b>NBDC</b>	National Biodiversity Data Centre
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NPPO</b>	National Plant Protection Organisation
<b>NPWS</b>	National Parks and Wildlife Service
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OPM</b>	Oak Processionary Moth
<b>PCN</b>	Potato Cyst Nematode
<b>PP</b>	EU Priority Pest
<b>PRA</b>	Pest Risk Analysis
<b>PRAU</b>	Pest Risk Analysis Unit
<b>PSD</b>	Plant Science Division
<b>PSSRC</b>	Policy and Strategic Studies Research Call
<b>PZ</b>	Protected Zone
<b>RKN</b>	Root Knot Nematode
<b>SASA</b>	Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture
<b>TRACES</b>	Trade Control and Expert System
<b>QP</b>	Quarantine Pest



# Introduction

This Mid-Term Report on the Plant Health and Biosecurity Strategy 2020-2025 marks the halfway point in the delivery of a key strategy for all stakeholders in the sector.

This report outlines our achievements as the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) for Ireland to date under this strategy, as well as outlining some of the key next steps in our work to the end of this strategy term.

## Key achievements include:

- Investment in and upgrade of facilities at Border Control Posts;
- Establishment of a Pest Risk Analysis Unit (PRAU) in the Department;
- Expansion of plant health surveillance capability and network;
- Roll out of plant health awareness initiatives in support of International Year of Plant Health and first International Day of Plant Health;
- Development of web-based resources including technical guidance, pest data sheets and newsletters.

## Some of the important next steps for us include:

- Implementation of a new Plant Health Governance Structure
- Development of Contingency Plans for EU Priority Pests of importance to Ireland;
- Development of a Plant Health Communications Plan to guide our communications and awareness raising initiatives;
- Review of our plant health surveillance programme

Under this strategy implementation, I look forward to working with plant health partners and stakeholders to strengthen Ireland's favourable plant health status during the remainder of this strategy.

Ms Louise Byrne  
Chief Plant Health Officer  
National Plant Protection  
Organisation  
Ireland



# Plant Health and Biosecurity a snapshot of 2021!

**5** plant health disciplines for which PSD is the National Reference Laboratory: Insects & Mites; Bacteria; Fungi & Oomycetes; Viruses, Viroid's & Phytoplasmas; and Nematodes



**8,172**

Inspections for  
Protected Zone Pests

**18,840**

Inspections for  
Priority Pests

**7,647**

Inspections for  
Quarantine Pests



**2573**

Samples for Protected  
Zone Pests

**212**

Samples for  
Priority Pests

**280**

Samples for  
Quarantine Pests



consignments of plants, plant products  
and other objects subject to import  
control, of which



consignments were subject  
to physical inspection

**>1500**

Professional Operators  
registered

**>160**

Authorised Professional  
Operators to issue plant  
passports



**17**

Trader Notices and  
Newsletters issued in  
2021

**18**

Factsheets  
published  
on website





**54**

Irish companies registered to produce wood packaging material in line with ISPM15



**39**

published peer reviewed scientific articles co-authored by PSD staff since 2020



**125**

the number of interceptions at Border Control Points in 2021

**19**

contributions to EPPO Standard on diagnostics and monitoring

**48**

new methods to detect important pests since 2020

**4,500**

for a range of pests, including *Erwinia amylovora* and Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus

**14,343**

tests performed for plant health including seed testing & pests & diseases;

**9,843**

on seed lots including testing germination rates, purity, seed health & viability.



**8**

different seed commodities tested including cereals, forage grasses, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, vegetables, trees & wildflowers

**20**

Pest Risk Analyses (PRAs) completed by the PRAU since 2020



**>500,000**

the interactions on social media following the case of an interception of oak processionary moth



## Scope

The Plant Health and Biosecurity Strategy 2020-2025 sets out the importance of plant health and biosecurity for Ireland as well as aiming to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of the risks to plant health in Ireland, and their role and responsibilities to reduce that risk. It focuses on working closely with key partners including other government departments and agencies, industry, local authorities, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), the scientific community, educators and all citizens.

## Objectives

The objective of the strategy is to minimise the threat posed to plants by the potential introduction and establishment of plant pests and diseases.

The strategy aims to provide cohesion and coordination, as well as a road map for delivery of specific, achievable, targeted actions which will be facilitated through wide collaboration and an agreed implementation plan.



## Principles



## KEY STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

# Recommendations

## Preparedness

## Capacity

## Awareness

Develop Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) capability in line with best international practice.

Identify and implement the structures, capacity and capability required for a robust plant health & biosecurity system.

Develop closer cross divisional alignment within the Department in the area of plant health.

Develop and maintain a risk register for Ireland and use this to identify gaps in: regulation, surveillance, contingency plans, management by industry and research.

Develop, validate and implement new detection and identification methods, as well as delivering on diagnostic needs.

Develop and maintain existing networks including those from the Department, industry, NGOs, landowners and the public (e.g., through citizen science), to provide information on the distribution of pests and their host species.

Review and refine current approaches to surveillance and monitoring and make improvements such as implementing enhanced risk - based surveillance for early detection in line with international best practice and scientific evidence.

Coordinate the establishment of training initiatives to ensure that stakeholders employed in plant health are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to discharge their duties.

Define roles in plant health (including regulatory, industry, NGOs, public, etc.), leading to greater awareness of plant health risks and the development of collaborative solutions.

Devise management strategies (including contingency plans) to maintain and enhance our plant health status and minimise the impact of disease outbreaks through coordinated rapid response.

Develop cooperation and participation in collaborative third level education research and development targeted at securing Ireland's plant health status.

Devise public awareness campaigns to include national events such as for the International Year of Plant Health 2020 (as per Resolution agreed at UN General Assembly).

Develop further cooperation between the Department and other organisations within Ireland and abroad, such as the EPPO and EFSA in the area of plant health risk anticipation.

Develop general and pest-specific Contingency Plans to ensure close collaboration and a focused approach across agencies and the wider public to pest incidents or outbreaks.

Support appropriate education initiatives at all levels from primary schools to higher education.

Improve scientific links between academia, industry, the Department, Teagasc, NGOs.

Ensure close inter-departmental cooperation and exchange.

Facilitate focus of Plant health related Research projects.

# About this report


This 2022 Mid-Term Report on the Plant Health and Biosecurity Strategy 2020-2025 summarises the Department's progress and achievements for 2020, 2021 and to date in 2022.

Progress is reported against the strategy recommendations under each of the three key strategic principles of:

- **Risk Anticipation**
- **Risk Surveillance and Management, and**
- **Risk Awareness and Communication**

Information on key achievements to date, as well as next steps as part of strategy implementation is provided.

Finally, for each of the recommendations case studies are provided to give an insight into progress and achievements to date.



**Key Strategic  
Principle 1:  
Risk  
Anticipation/  
Preparedness**

# Progress Update:

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
1	Develop Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) capability in line with best international practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Department Pest Risk Analysis Unit (PRAU) established and two staff recruited</li> <li>• The PRAU has adopted the EPPO Express Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) Template for the structure of Ireland's (IE) PRAs to fully align our approaches with accepted international practices</li> <li>• 20 IE PRAs have been completed</li> <li>• The PRAU has participated in two International PRAs as part of the EPPO PRA Development Panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with other risk assessors in the Department and other organisations to share best practice internally and nationally</li> <li>• Continue prioritising and completing PRAs</li> <li>• Adopt best practice risk assessment practices in other decision-making processes in Plant Health</li> </ul>
2	Develop and maintain a pest risk register for Ireland and use this to identify gaps in: regulation, surveillance, contingency plans, management by industry and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of other NPPO plant pest risk registers completed; the PRAU has opted for a register of factsheets covering EU and IE regulated pests, in addition to the evaluation of emerging pests</li> <li>• 18 plant pest factsheets have been published on the Department website risk register</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue development of a Plant Risk Register and publishing of factsheets</li> <li>• Continue PRAU input into identifying gaps in regulations, surveillance and contingency plans</li> <li>• Pursue research funding opportunities to develop an open access user-friendly tool for evaluating the threat of alien species establishing on the island of Ireland under current and future climate scenarios</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
3	<p><b>Review and refine current approaches to surveillance and monitoring and make improvements such as implementing enhanced risk - based surveillance for early detection in line with international best practice and Scientific evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PRAU has collaborated with the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) to list the 20 EU priority pests and 23 Irish Protected zone pests on their database, and to trigger “alerts” if a record is submitted</li> <li>• The Department contributed to 19 EPPO Standards on diagnostics and monitoring, ensuring that best practice feasible methods are used based on scientific evidence</li> <li>• Risk prioritisation completed for commercial consignments of plant and plant product imports from Third Countries</li> <li>• Agreed processes with Revenue Commissioners for plant health inspections of personal/postal plant consignments</li> <li>• Notification introduced for high-risk commodities from EU</li> <li>• The Department recruited plant health inspectors for imports of high-risk commodities</li> <li>• Appointed national contact to liaise with EPPO on potential Plant Protection Products resistance cases</li> <li>• Participate in EPPO Working Group to develop an electronic database of extrapolation for minor uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise a cross-divisional National Plant Health Surveillance Plan to guide the implementation of Annual and Multiannual Surveillance Plans</li> <li>• Continue to contribute to EPPO standards development regarding diagnostics and monitoring</li> <li>• Progress the Department/DAERA funded project (ADAPTFORRES) which commenced in 2022 which will identify best practice forest surveillance methods</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
4	<p><b>Devise management strategies (including contingency plans) to maintain and enhance our plant health status and minimise the impact of disease outbreaks through a coordinated rapid response</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of ICT Systems to support trade flows and underpin an efficient plant health control system</li> <li>• Integration of dedicated plant health import control capability within the newly created Import Controls Operations (ICOP)</li> <li>• Significant investment and upgrade of infrastructure and equipment at all Border Control Post (BCP) facilities</li> <li>• Export trade supported through increased capacity and capability in meeting International phytosanitary legislative requirements</li> <li>• 54 Irish companies are currently registered in Ireland to produce wood packaging material to the FAO IPPC International Standard for the Regulation of Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (ISPM No. 15) thus facilitating the export of goods worldwide from Ireland on compliant pallets and crates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop plant health ICT systems, for example launch and embed the use of ePhyto to support trade in plants and plant products</li> <li>• Continue ongoing engagement with Revenue, HSE and other Department control divisions on development and implementation of the EU Customs 'Single Window' system to further enhance efficient border controls</li> <li>• Continue ongoing collaboration with EU Commission and Member States to ensure effective operation of the TRACES IT system</li> <li>• Continue the implementation of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme, which recognises equivalence between FRM production systems in participating countries</li> <li>• Continued engagement in the Interagency Group on Official Controls Checks at Import</li> <li>• Implement the development of contingency plans for EU Priority Pests in 2023</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
5	<p><b>Develop further cooperation between the Department and other organisations within Ireland and abroad, such as the EPPO and EFSA in the area of plant health risk anticipation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department represents IE at numerous EPPO, EU, and FAO expert groups in Plant Health policy</li> <li>• PRAU staff are members of the EFSA Alpha Horizon Scanning Working Group</li> <li>• A member of the PRAU was nominated to the EPPO PRA development panel for 2022 and has facilitated the unit in participating in 2 International collaborative PRAs to date</li> <li>• In October 2022 the PRAU convened the first national meeting of risk assessors with legislative roles for evaluating threats posed by alien invasive species to the island of Ireland</li> <li>• PRAU staff are a member of the EFSA Network on Plant Health Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Actively participate in EPPO Working Group and Working Party to enhance efficacy evaluation of Plant Protection Products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department collaborates closely with DAERA on issues of plant health concern</li> <li>• Department staff to continue active participation in EPPO/ EU expert groups on Plant Protection</li> <li>• Continue to explore opportunities for collaboration with other NPPOs in relation to awareness raising, sharing of resources, and communications initiatives</li> <li>• Continue to explore opportunities for collaboration with risk assessors across other Government Agencies</li> </ul>



# Risk Anticipation/ Preparedness Case Studies:

## Establishment of a Pest Risk Analysis Unit (PRAU)

In 2020 the Department PRAU was created in Plant Science Division, through the appointment of two new Pest Risk Analyst roles. PRAU staff carry out/or coordinate several activities across the Department's Plant Health Strategy including:

1. Horizon scanning for emerging plant health threats
2. Risk evaluation
3. Risk communication

## Services Provided

- **Horizon scanning:** Continuous monitoring for emerging potential plant pest threats via Europhyt, TRACES, scientific literature, international working groups, trade journals and citizen science
- **Pest Risk Analysis:** Risk assessments on threats posed by specific plant pests or trade pathways international guidance
- **Risk management recommendations:** Options for regulatory phytosanitary measures to protect against the introduction of new pests e.g. awareness raising, regulation, research etc

## Why undertake a Pest Risk Analysis (PRA)?

- Under International trade laws, phytosanitary measures against trade must be technically justified and PRA is the accepted method to justify regulation of pests and pathways
- Ireland utilises phytosanitary measures on plant trade to a relatively high degree. We currently have the highest number of recognised Protected Zones (23) of any EU member state. These exist to prevent pests which have already established in the EU from entering and establishing in Ireland

## Since inception the PRAU has:

- Created an All-Ireland Network for Invasive Species Risk Assessors (invasive & plant pest species) which met for the first time in 2022
- Launched a Pest Risk Register of [plant pest factsheets](#) for Ireland
- Completed 20 express PRA's and published 18 pest information factsheets
- Represented Ireland on EFSA's Alpha Horizon Scanning Working Group
- Contributed to 2 international PRA's through the PRA Development Panel of EPPO
- Launched a co-project with the National Biodiversity Data Centre to trigger alerts for 20 Priority Pests & 23 Protected Zone Pests

## An Insight into Import Controls Operations

Within the Department's Import Control Operations conduct imports controls on plants, plant products and other objects from non-EU countries. These controls are vital to prevent the introduction of pests and diseases which could prove detrimental to Ireland's plant health status, biodiversity and the agri-food economy.

*Liriomyza trifolii*  
interception



## Staff

Since 2019 there has been considerable recruitment of specialist and administration staff delivering plant health import controls. The plant health team implementing controls at the Border Control Posts (BCP's) consists of 1 Agricultural Inspector, 16 Assistant Agricultural Inspectors (AAI) and 1 Forestry Inspector. The Agriculture Inspectorate team as the official plant health officers are assisted in the controls by approximately 40 Clerical Officer Portal Inspectors (COPI), who perform documentary checks, and assist in physical checks.

The checks known as 'official controls' are carried out in three steps: Documentary Check, Identity Check and Physical Check.

All consignments are subject to documentary check with risk-based approach applied to identity and physical checks.

## Infrastructure

Plant health controls are required to be carried out at designated Border Control Posts (BCP's) which have been designed and registered to EU specifications. There are now three designated plant health BCP's located at Dublin Port, Dublin Airport and Rosslare Port. Dublin port is the main BCP in terms of trade and volume and the operation here works on a 24/7 basis facilitating the trade in plants and plant products and other objects.

The physical inspection process involves a forensic examination of commodities for presence of pest and diseases. The inspections are carried out by plant health inspectors who are qualified and technically trained, and regular training and continued professional development is central part of ensuring staff are fully equipped to carry out their functions and role.

Controls are carried out on various regulated timber and wood products with imports mainly of hardwood of ash, oak and walnut. In addition to timber products targeted controls on wood packing are carried out to ensure to compliance with ISPM 15. There are also other ports where different products, in particular bulk consignments of wood products, can be brought in.



*Elasmopalpus lignosellus*  
lesser Cornstalk borer



### Information Management and Technology

Information Management Systems were developed by the Department for Import and Export Certification to support business processes to facilitate trade with third countries including the UK as a result of their decision to leave the EU.

### Communications with the Industry

The Department implemented a range of stakeholder engagement initiatives to support the agri-food section of which plant health was a part of, including Department Trader Seminars, checklists for businesses, outreach activities, media campaigns and stakeholder meetings.

### Import Interceptions

The presence of a harmful organism accounted for 46% of the 125 import interceptions in 2021. Common pest interceptions included regulated pests such as Non-European tephritidae and *Liomyza trifolii*.

### Reasons for Rejection of consignments in 2021:



# Key Strategic Principle 2: Risk Surveillance and Management



# Progress Update:

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
6	<p><b>Identify and implement the structures, capacity and capability required for a robust plant health &amp; biosecurity system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Governance Structures in place including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plant Protection and Biosecurity Committee</li> <li>- Plant Health Regulatory and Standards Committee</li> <li>- A range of sub-groups including: Communications, Contingency Planning, Emerging Plant Pest Review, Surveillance Sub-Group, Plant Health Trade - Imports and Exports</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increased capacity of plant health staff through targeted recruitment of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new scientific laboratory staff including a plant pathologist, bacteriologist, molecular biologist, entomologist, and nematologist since 2020</li> <li>- establishment of the Pest Risk Analysis Unit with two staff</li> <li>- increased plant health capacity and capability as part of the Import Control Divisions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Introduced a multi Control Plan for Pest Surveillance</li> <li>• The Department carries out plant health surveillance on EU Priority Pests (PP), EU Quarantine Pests (QP) and EU Protected Zone Pests (PZ):</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of new Plant Health Governance structure</li> <li>• Continued engagement and co-operation across Divisions in relation to effective implementation of plant health policy and legislation</li> <li>• Continued focus on a review of risk-based Plant Health surveillance programme</li> <li>• Continued development and implementation of strategies and plans for the management of outbreaks of harmful organisms</li> <li>• As part of multiannual surveillance, 40 QP surveys are planned in 2023.</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual surveillance is carried out on the EU PP pests that are capable of establishing in Ireland (15 out of the 20)</li> <li>- As part of its multiannual surveillance programme, 10 QPs were surveyed for in 2020, which rose to 36 pests in 2022.</li> <li>- The Department continues to survey for Ireland's 23 PZ pests.</li> <li>• Implement management strategies and plans to minimise the impact of disease outbreak and provide information and support to growers and owners</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Develop, validate and implement new detection and identification methods, as well as delivering on diagnostic needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labs have developed 48 new methods to detect important pests since 2020</li> <li>• Three new plant pest diagnostic methods accredited since 2020 bringing total number of methods to four</li> <li>• Increased use of plant health survey techniques such as the new trapping approach introduced for the survey for the Priority Pest Emerald Ash Borer</li> <li>• Sticky traps used for a variety of pests in glasshouses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued work to validate new detection and identification methods</li> <li>• Continued work to ensure all official control diagnostics are carried out in line with quality system requirements</li> <li>• Continue to work closely with stakeholders who require phytosanitary export testing, to ensure testing service is available</li> <li>• Continued oversight and review of survey methodologies and implementation</li> <li>• Implementation of a statistically sound and risk-based pest survey approach for the quarantine pest <i>Xylella fastidiosa</i></li> </ul>

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Achievements to date</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Coordinate the establishment of training initiatives to ensure that stakeholders employed in plant health are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to discharge their duties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training modules and examinations have been developed and rolled out to over 160 authorised professional operators who are authorised to issue plant passports; ongoing training support is provided through trader notices, website information, factsheets and newsletters</li> <li>• Lectures in plant health and horizon scanning are given annually in three universities to undergraduate and postgraduate students</li> <li>• Plant Science Division provide information days and tours of laboratory facilities to horticultural educational programs such as Munster Technological University and Teagasc</li> <li>• Training events held in early 2020 for Professional Operators on the new Plant Health Regulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forge links with third level institutes for the development and delivery of tailored continuous professional development courses to Department inspection staff</li> <li>• Continue to support professional operators in the field through training and ongoing information dissemination as part of surveillance work and interaction with the Department</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Develop cooperation and participation in collaborative third level education research and development targeted at securing Ireland's plant health status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert staff provide lectures to students at Queens University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin</li> <li>• Department staff are involved in developing several proposals for competitive research funding since 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department will continue to build strong links with third level institutes and seek to maximise research and development opportunities relating to plant health</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department staff have participated in 6 EUPHRESKO projects since 2020. EUPHRESKO Projects support coordination and collaboration in the area of phytosanitary research. Current projects with Department participation include “Preparedness in biological control of priority biosecurity threats” and “Range expansion of bark beetles in the genus Ips (ECLIPSE)”</li> <li>• Department staff involved in recently completed Department/ DAERA funded research on ash dieback mitigation (NEXCELSIOR)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to pursue plant health research opportunities such as through the Department Policy and Strategic Studies Research Call (PSSRC)</li> <li>• Continued participation in EUPHRESKO projects</li> <li>• Pursue opportunities for participation in multi-disciplinary research projects related to plant health</li> </ul>
10	<p><b>Develop general and pest-specific Contingency Plans to ensure close collaboration and a focused approach across agencies and the wider public to pest incidents or outbreaks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department has established a risk assessment network with other public bodies on island of Ireland, which can be used to build collaboration between the Department, NPWS, AFBI, DAERA, National Biodiversity data centre</li> <li>• Contingency Planning Sub-Group established under the new Plant Health Governance Structure, which will link in with the Plant Health Stakeholder Engagement Group to ensure engagement with external stakeholders as part of policy development</li> <li>• Generic Plant Health Contingency Plan developed</li> <li>• Staff have been trained in Contingency Planning through the BTSF Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Contingency Plans for the highest risk (15) pests from the EU priority pests</li> <li>• Consultative engagement with stakeholders on the development of Contingency Plans</li> <li>• Publication of Contingency Plans on the Department website in Q3 2023</li> <li>• Development of Contingency Plans for Ireland’s Protected Zone Pests</li> </ul>

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Achievements to date</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Improve scientific links between academia, industry, the Department, Teagasc, NGOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department staff are regularly in contact with academic staff at universities, Teagasc and AFBI</li> <li>• Department staff co-authored more than 39 peer review scientific articles with several international scientific organisations since 2020</li> <li>• Department staff presented research findings at international conferences in the USA and several EU Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Stakeholder Engagement Sub-Group is being developed to engage with external stakeholders on plant health policy and implementation</li> <li>• Continue conducting research and publishing peer review scientific articles</li> <li>• The Department Plant Science Division identifying other opportunities to build links with Third level Institutions</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	<b>Facilitate focus of Plant health related Research projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department support for a new research project, ADAPTFORRES, which includes a significant forest health aspect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department participation on the project Steering Committee to guide and advise as required</li> <li>• Continue Department co-supervision of PhD candidates relating to plant health</li> </ul>

# Risk Surveillance and Management Case Studies:

## Annual Plant Health Surveys

The Department carries out annual comprehensive plant health surveys for a range of pests with a view to maintaining Ireland's high plant health status and to comply with Irish and EU legislation. There are three main categories of pests that the Department survey for:

- Quarantine Pests
- Priority Pests
- Protected Zone Pests

## Quarantine Pests

Quarantine Pests are pests, which are not present in the Union territory, or are under emergency legislation if they are present, and have the potential to establish and cause significant damage in terms of economic, environmental and social impacts. The Plant Health Regulation also sets out a long list of Union quarantine pests (over 250), which must be included in a multiannual survey plan of five to seven years.

## Priority Pests

The Plant Health Regulation sets out a list of 20 priority pests (those pests whose potential economic, environmental or social impact is the most severe for the Union territory) for which the Department is required to conduct mandatory annual surveys. The Department carries out annual surveys for 15 of these pests, which could potentially establish in Ireland. For the other 5 pests the host plants are not present in Ireland and/or the climatic conditions are not suitable for the pest to establish.

## Protected Zone Pests

These are pests that are no longer regulated in the EU as they have become widespread, however they have not established in Ireland even though they could establish if they were to enter the territory. Ireland has Protected Zone status for 23 harmful organisms. To justify Ireland's Protected Zone status, the Department must conduct national surveys for the presence of these pests.

In surveys for the above regulated organisms and for general plant health monitoring purposes,

a network of observation points, pheromone traps, bait logs and sampling points are distributed around the country in nurseries, garden centres, public and private forests and public and private parks is used.



Forest Health Observation Point

## Plant Health and the Seed Potato Certification Scheme

One of the requirements of the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine Seed Potato Certification Scheme is that the land used to produce certified seed potatoes must be tested and found free from Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN). Land is considered to be free from PCN when upon laboratory examination representative soil samples taken from the land are found to contain no viable PCN cysts.

PCN belong to the genus *Globodera* - there are two PCN species:

PCN is a parasite that invades root tissue of the potato crop. It may be commonly known as eelworm. If PCN is found to be present a Potato Cyst Nematode Prevention Notice is sent to the landowner and the parcel is prohibited from growing potatoes and other listed host crops for a minimum of six years. The land must receive a clear PCN test before it can enter potato production again. EU PCN Directive 2007/33/EC requires all seed potato land to be PCN tested and 0.5% of ware potato land to be tested annually.

The Department Seed Certification staff also carry out the annual Ring Rot & Brown Rot Survey.

This takes place between the period September and February. The Root Knot Nematode (RKN) Survey is carried out concurrently. Brown rot is caused by the bacterium *Ralstonia solanacearum*. The disease can be seen most vividly in the tuber, with a brown staining present on the vascular ring. Ring rot is caused by the bacterium *Clavibacter michiganensis*. Similar to brown rot, ring rot is most evident in the tuber. The initial symptom is a soft cheese like rotting of the vascular ring. Both diseases are potentially very damaging and the survey is important in maintaining Ireland's disease free status.

The Department carries out both the surveillance and testing for regulated pests of potato.



*Globodera rostochiensis*  
(yellow cyst nematode)



*Globodera pallida*  
(white cyst nematode).

(Images from AHDB Encyclopaedia of pests and natural enemies in field crops; copyright of SASA)

## Management of Pest Outbreaks:

### Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

- In June 2020, there was a finding of the harmful organism Oak Processionary Moth at a public park in Dublin by a member of the public
- Ireland has a Protected Zone status for this Moth
- Further investigations revealed that this tree was imported from another EU Member State and was planted in the Spring of 2020
- The nest was removed within 6 hours, and formally identified by the lab. All Oak trees from the imported batch were destroyed
- An intensive survey was carried out in the surrounding area and there were no other findings
- New import regulations in relation to import of Oak were introduced – requirements for certain height, certain width, free from OPM
- There were over 500.000 interactions on social media following the case of this interception




## Erwinia amylovora (Fireblight)

- Fireblight is a highly contagious disease caused by the bacterium *Erwinia amylovora*
- The disease affects members of the *Rosaceae* family including Apple trees, Pear trees and related ornamentals such as *Cotoneaster*, *Sorbus*, *Crataegus*, *Photinia* and *Pyracantha* and can kill susceptible varieties within one growing season
- Ireland has a Protected Zone status for Fireblight, which means Firelight is no longer regulated in the EU as it has become established in most Member States, however it has not established in Ireland even though it could establish if it was to enter the territory



- Ireland carries out an annual survey for Fireblight
- If Fireblight is found, all host plants within a 500m of the infected plant must be destroyed and a buffer zone of 5km must be established
- In August 2022, there were six cases including one in Dublin; there was a finding of Fireblight on a *Sorbus aria* tree in a housing estate in Dublin
- The Department carried out an information campaign in the area – over 800 houses were visited and supplied with an information leaflet on Fireblight
- Over 160 trees and shrubs destroyed from roadside, public areas, and private gardens within the infected Zone (500m)
- All the plant material was destroyed by incineration
- A 5km buffer zone was established. Plant health surveys took place within the 5km buffer zone
- There were no other findings of Fireblight within the buffer zone
- This area will be closely monitored over the next 5 growing seasons





**Key Strategic  
Principle 3:  
Risk Awareness &  
Communication**

# Progress Update:

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
13	Develop closer cross divisional alignment within the Department in the area of plant health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Plant Health Governance Structure (details outlined in recommendation 6 above)</li> <li>• Specialist training and knowledge sharing occurs across divisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to embed and implement the new Governance Structure</li> <li>• Maximise ICT and data management opportunities to enable good governance and support decision making in plant health policy</li> <li>• Through the plant health Communications Group, a focus will be on integrated communications across plant health policy, with initiatives developed to target specific audiences</li> <li>• Continue with specialist training and knowledge sharing across divisions in the Department</li> </ul>
14	Develop and maintain existing networks including those from the Department, industry, NGOs, landowners and the public (e.g., through citizen science), to provide information on the distribution of pests and their host species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the implementation of the requirements of the EU Plant Health Regulation, and Official Controls Regulation applying to plant health, the Department has engaged very closely with a large number of stakeholders, enhancing greater stakeholder awareness of plant health</li> <li>• Irish Risk Assessor Network for Biological Organisms launched</li> <li>• Department staff are on Committee of the Society of Irish Foresters and Committee of Society of Irish Plant Pathologists</li> <li>• In conjunction with The Tree Council of Ireland, “A Landowner’s Guide to Managing Roadside Trees” was produced and launched in October 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Stakeholder Engagement Group is being launched to engage with external stakeholders on plant health policy and implementation</li> <li>• Further explore opportunities to support Professional Operators to meet their obligations under EU Plant Health Regulations, such as through education and training opportunities</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
15	Define roles in plant health (including regulatory, industry, NGOs, public, etc.), leading to greater awareness of plant health risks and the development of collaborative solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new governance structure includes a Plant Protection Communications sub-group which will have a focus on further developing plant health awareness raising campaigns tailored to the needs of our stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department will continue to explore opportunities to develop plant health awareness campaigns in cooperation with bodies such as the IPPC, EPPO and EFSA, as well as national government agencies</li> </ul>
16	Devise public awareness campaigns to include national events such as for the International Year of Plant Health 2020 (as per Resolution agreed at UN General Assembly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department promoted the International Year of Plant Health through a series of events including webinars, planting of commemorative trees, newsletters, attendance at stakeholder events and information provided through our social media channels</li> <li>The Department promoted the 'Don't Risk It!' Campaign as part of the International Year of Plant Health, and continue to promote that international campaign as part of our outreach initiatives to stakeholders</li> <li>'Don't Risk It!' is promoted at border control points through a poster series to provide information to the travelling public</li> <li>The Department promoted the first International Day of Plant Health, 12 May 2022</li> <li>The Department participates in public events such as Bord Bia Bloom 2022, where our education stand was awarded a Bronze medal, the National Ploughing Championships 2022 and GLAS 2022</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and implementation of a Plant Health Communications Plan, maximising opportunities to engage with stakeholders at industry related events</li> <li>The Department will continue to attend events which provide an opportunity to engage with stakeholders at events to increase awareness of plant health policy</li> <li>Continue to develop and integrate plant health communications initiatives including newsletters, trader notices, social media presence and website information</li> <li>The Department will continue to promote the International Day of Plant Health</li> </ul>

	Recommendations	Achievements to date	Next Steps
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant Health newsletters are issued to stakeholders - 'Horticulture and Plant Health Links' and 'Forest Health News' as well as Trader Notices issued as required</li> <li>• The Department website continues to be a focal point of reference for plant health information</li> <li>• Developed and promoted an awareness raising campaign to highlight the role of pesticides in food production systems</li> </ul>	
17	<p><b>Support appropriate education initiatives at all levels from primary schools to higher education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department Plant Science Division staff lecture in University College Dublin</li> <li>• The Department Plant Science Division organise tours of laboratories for horticulture educational institutes to raise awareness of Plant Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the new Governance Structure, the Communications Campaigns Sub-Group will develop a Plant Health Communications Plan to guide our communications initiatives with stakeholders</li> <li>• The Department Plant Science Division are currently identifying other opportunities to build links with Third level Institutions</li> </ul>
18	<p><b>Ensure close inter-departmental cooperation and exchange</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PRAU has collaborated with the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) to have the 20 EU priority pests and 23 Irish Protected zone pests listed on their database, and to trigger "alerts" if a record is submitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department will continue to explore opportunities for inter-departmental cooperation and exchange with other Government Agencies</li> <li>• Under the North/South Ministerial Body the Department continue to work closely with DAERA on plant health issues such as policy, research and diagnostics</li> <li>• The Department will continue to work closely on scientific research and diagnostic method development with Northern Irish colleagues in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute</li> </ul>



# Risk Awareness & Communication Case Studies:



## International Year of Plant Health 2020 – 2021

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) chose the year 2020 to raise awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, and boost economic development. The year was extended into 2021 due to the pandemic.

16 January 2020 - In January, President Higgins planted a native oak tree in the Phoenix Park to launch the International Year of Plant Health in Ireland. While Covid-19 impacted some of the planned events, communications continued online to promote plant health.



The Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity Senator Pippa Hackett planted a tree in a National School in Dublin to mark Tree Day on the 1st Oct 2020.

Due to the impact of Covid restrictions, planned in-person activities had to move online. The Department adapted its plans through participation in online conferences and training seminars, a focus on social media campaigns, information dissemination through its website and newsletters and articles in horticulture publications.

A closing webinar was held in June 2021 where the Minister of State Pippa Hackett was joined by Ralf Lopien, an international champion for the IYPH and Diarmaid Gavin, Advocate for IYPH.

## Don't Risk it!



**Pests and diseases can hide on plants.  
Please do not bring home plants,  
seeds, fruit, vegetables or flowers.**



Developed by the European Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO), and used as part of the International Year of Plant Health, the Department promote a “Don't Risk It!” awareness raising campaign targeted at tourists and commercial businesses who are bringing plants, plant products and other high risk items made of plant material into Ireland from abroad.

Our objective is to highlight the social, environmental and economic impact of bringing in infected plant material or quarantine pests and diseases into Ireland. These impacts can be enormous. For example the olive industry, valued at 10's of millions of Euro, in particular in Italy has been devastated by *Xylella fastidiosa*, a disease of South American origin, thought to have been brought into Europe on coffee plants from South America. The risk pathways for entry into Ireland for these quarantine pests and diseases include commercial and private travellers.

The Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine carries out physical checks on all regulated and high risk consignments of commercial products from outside the EU, however it is not physically possible for the Department to check every piece of hand luggage that comes through the airports and ports. Therefore, by educating the public of the risks by targeting the commercial importer to the amateur gardener to the window box herb grower, we will generate awareness of the serious issues and hopefully reduce the number of unchecked plants and plant products stowed away in people's luggage.



Don't Risk It posters at Dublin Airport baggage reclaim area



## World Potato Congress – bringing together industry stakeholders

The 11th World Potato Congress was held in Ireland in 2022 with more than 900 delegates attending from over 60 countries. The central theme of the Congress was “**The Changing World of the Potato**” which brought together delegates from the Business, Science and Development communities to discuss the future role of the potato in global nutrition and food security.

Over the four days of the congress, the programme included over 60 international expert speakers addressing the challenges and opportunities in the global potato sector, focussing on health and nutrition, sustainability, food security, innovation and development.

Officially opening the Congress, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue T.D. acknowledged that the potato industry, like many others, had undergone changes over the last number of years but central to the success of the sector has been the commitment to quality and dedication to excellence. Although the potato industry in Ireland is small it is one of the most technologically developed in the world with a cohort of professional growers and packers who supply premium local food to consumers.

In his keynote presentation Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said that potatoes could contribute even more to world history and global food security, and total production of the food crop could double in the next 10 years. *“Potato will become one of the advantage crops in the global food security system when the yield of other cereal crops is close to the limit”* Qu said.

At the Congress, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) named Diarmaid Gavin as the FAO Goodwill Ambassador for Ireland.

# Annex I

## National Surveillance Programme

The Department carries out annual comprehensive plant health surveys for a range of pests with a view to maintaining Ireland's high plant health status and to comply with Irish and EU legislation. There are three main categories of pests that the Department survey for:

### Priority Pests Surveillance in 2021

There are 20 EU Priority Pests, 15 of which could potentially establish in Ireland if they were to enter the territory. In 2021, the Department carried out carry out annual surveys for 14 of these pests. In 2022, all 15 Priority Pests of relevance to Ireland were surveyed for. To date there were no findings of Priority Pests in Ireland. The results for the Priority Pests surveyed for in 2021 is presented in the following table:

Priority Pests	Number of Inspections	Number of Visual Inspections	Number of Samples taken	Positives
<i>Agrilus anxius</i>	31	0	1	0
<i>Agrilus planipennis</i>	30	0	42	0
<i>Anoplophora chinensis</i>	619	4424	1	0
<i>Anoplophora glabripennis</i>	615	3423	1	0
<i>Anthonomus eugeni</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Aromi bungii</i>	461	901	0	0
<i>Bactericera cockerelli</i> (Sulc.)	13	273	0	0
<i>Bursaphelenchus xylophilus</i>	85	0	71	0
<i>Conotrachelus nenuphar</i> (Herbst)	371	406	0	0
<i>Dendrolimus sibiricus</i>	158	0	6	0
<i>Popillia japonica</i>	568	3367	4	0
<i>Rhagoletis pomonella</i>	358	360	0	0
<i>Spodoptera frugiperda</i>	18	18	0	0
<i>Xylella fastidiosa</i>	551	1786	86	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3880</b>	<b>14960</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>0</b>

## Quarantine Pests Surveillance in 2021

The Plant Health Regulation sets out a long list of Union quarantine pests (over 250), which must be included in a multiannual survey plan of five to seven years. The number of surveys carried out for Quarantine Pests has risen from 10 pests in 2020 to 36 pests in 2022. The results for the 22 Quarantine Pests surveyed for in 2021 is presented in the following table.

Quarantine Pests	Number of Inspections	Number of Visual Inspections	Number of Samples taken	Positives
Atropellis spp.	70	0	0	0
Beet curly top virus	20	20	0	0
Ceratocystis platani	7	7	0	0
Chrysomyxa arctostaphyli	81	0	0	0
Davidsoniella virescens	26	0	0	0
Diabrotica barberi Smith & Lawrence	27	0	0	0
Diabrotica undecimpunctata Howardi Barber	1	0	0	0
Diabrotica virgifera zeac Krysan Smith	6	0	0	0
Fusarium circinatum	74	0	0	0
Keiferia lycopersicella (Walsingham)	16	27	0	0
Liriomyza sativae	364	364	0	0
Meliodogyne chitwoodi	42	0	42	0
Monochamus spp. (non-European)	70	0	14	0
Phytophthora ramorum non-EU isolates	615	5092	83	8
Pissodes strobi	81	0	2	0
Rhynchophorus palmarum (L.)	4	5	0	0
Rose rosette virus	286	288	3	0
Scolytidae spp. (non European)	72	0	131	0
Synchytrium endobioticum	0	200	0	0
Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus	14	19	5	0
Tomato leaf New Delhi Virus	7	7	0	0
Tomato ringspot virus	388	648	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1645</b>	<b>6002</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>8</b>

## Protected Zone Pests Surveillance in 2021

Ireland has Protected Zone status for 23 harmful organisms and must survey for these pests annually. The following table shows the results from Ireland's 2021 Protected Zone surveys.

Name of the PZ	Relevant pest	Category	Number of inspections	Number of samples	Number of non-compliances	Reason for non-compliances
Ireland	<i>Paysandisia archon</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	8	0	0	NA
Ireland	<i>Bemisia tabaci</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	1,861	0	0	NA
Ireland	<i>Liriomyza bryoniae</i> , <i>Liriomyza trifolii</i> <i>Liriomyza huidobrensis</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	2,075	4	0	NA
Ireland	<i>Rhynchophorus ferrugineus</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	8	0	0	NA
Ireland	Beet Necrotic Yellow Vein Virus	Virus, viroids and phytoplasmas	252	252	0	NA
Ireland	<i>Thaumetopoea processionea</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	268	24	0	NA
Ireland	<i>Leptinotarsa decemlineata</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	1,461	0	0	NA
Ireland (except Galway city)	<i>Erwinia amylovora</i>	Insects, mites and nematodes	1,470	1,470	12	Positive sample finding
Ireland	<i>Ips amitinus</i>	Insects and mites	72	131	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Ips cembrae</i>	Insects and mites	72	131	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Ips duplicatus</i>	Insects and mites	72	131	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Ips sexdentatus</i>	Insects and mites	72	131	0	N/A

Name of the PZ	Relevant pest	Category	Number of inspections	Number of samples	Number of non-compliances	Reason for non-compliances
Ireland	<i>Ips typographus</i>	Insects and mites	72	131	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Dendroctonus micans</i>	Insects and mites	72	131	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Cephalcia lariciphila</i>	Insects and mites	45	0	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Cryphonectria parasitica</i>	Fungi and oomycetes	25	14	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Gilpinia hercyniae</i>	Insects and mites	81	0	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Entoleuca mammata</i>	Fungi and oomycetes	16	0	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Gremmeniella abietina</i>	Fungi and oomycetes	75	15	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Thaumetopoea pityocampa</i>	Insects and mites	25	8	0	N/A
Ireland	<i>Dryocosmus kuriphilus</i>	Insects and mites	25	0	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>			8127	2573	12	

# Annex 2

## Plant Health Trade Statistics - Imports

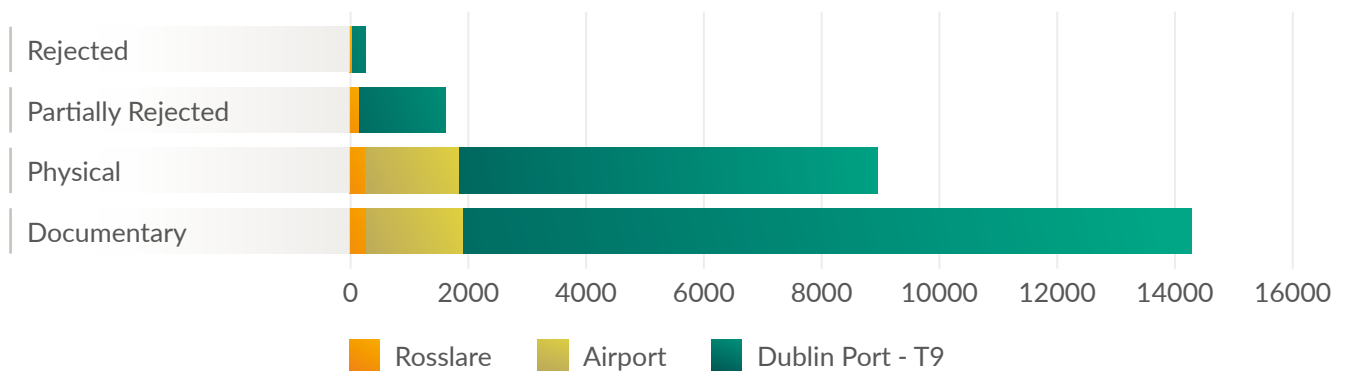
Phytosanitary certification plays a vital role in the safe trade of plants globally and protecting the world's plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests.

A Phytosanitary Certificate is an official document issued by the NPPO (National Plant Protection Organisation) of the country

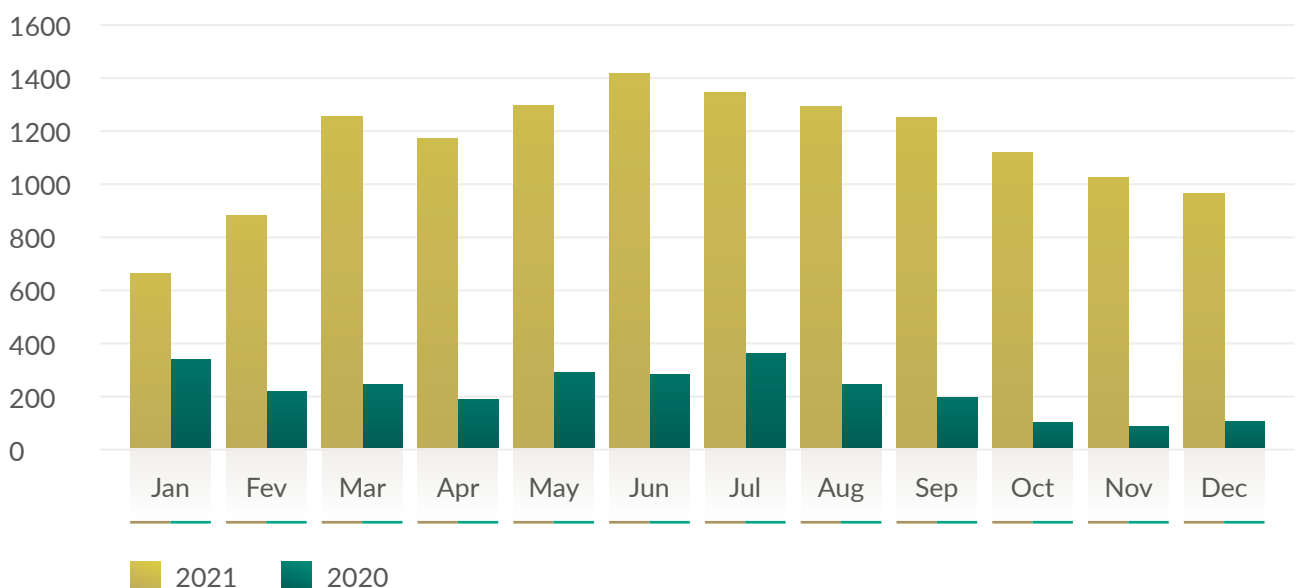
of export to the NPPO of the third country of destination certifying that the consignment of plants, plant products or other regulated articles are considered free from harmful and quarantine pests and conform with the phytosanitary regulations of the importing country.

In 2021 a total of 14,278 consignments of plants, plant products and other objects were subject to official controls of which 8,942 consignments were subject to physical inspection.

Breakdown of consignments across all BCPs 2021



Comparison of Total Plant Health consignments by month 2020 vs 2021

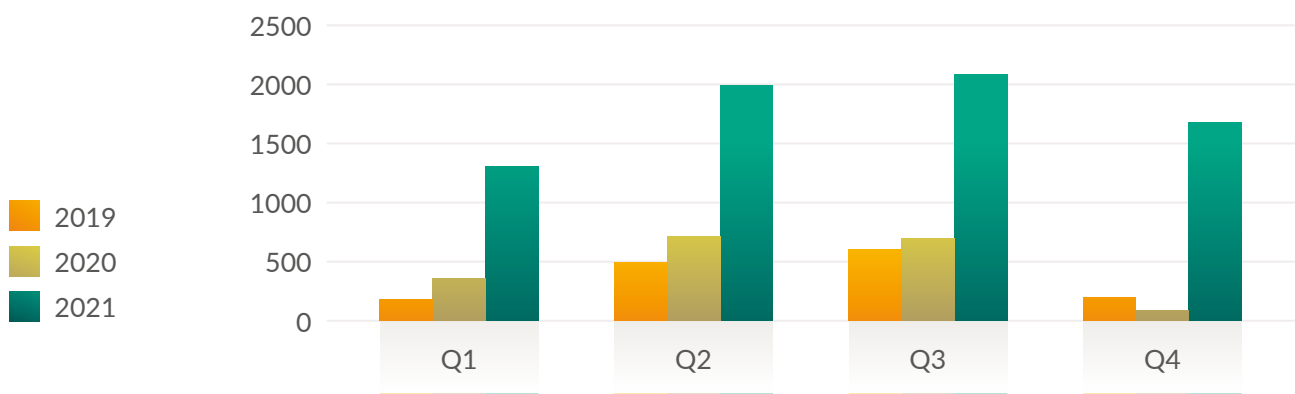


## The following is a breakdown of data by the new Border Control Point:

### Dublin Port

The introduction of new import requirements for plant products under the new Plant Health Regulation on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2019, Regulation (EU) 2016/2031, introduced SPS checks for virtually all plant products from third countries. This resulted in increased consignments subjects to checks in 2020 compared to 2019.

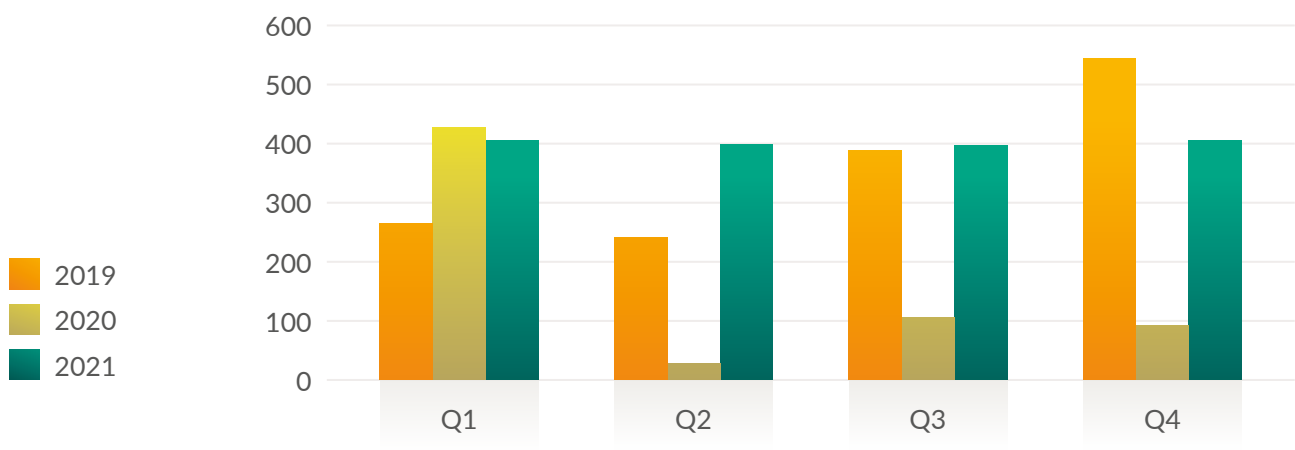
### Third Country Physical Consignment Check - Plants & Plant Products - Dublin Port



### Dublin Airport

At Dublin Airport BCP an increased volume of consignments was evident in Q1 of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. This was due to the increased number of commodities that require SPS checks due to the legislative changes as mentioned above. For Q2-Q4 of 2020 a sharp decrease in consignments attributed to the impact of COVID 19 and the consequential shut down of commercial flights entering the country. In 2021 a return of commercial trade was evident following the pandemic.

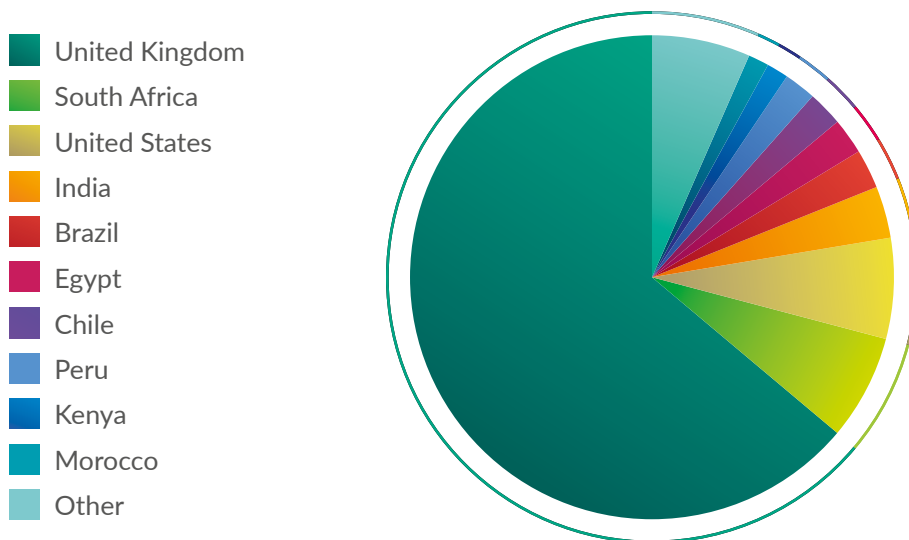
### Third Country Consignments - Plants & Plant Products - Dublin Airport



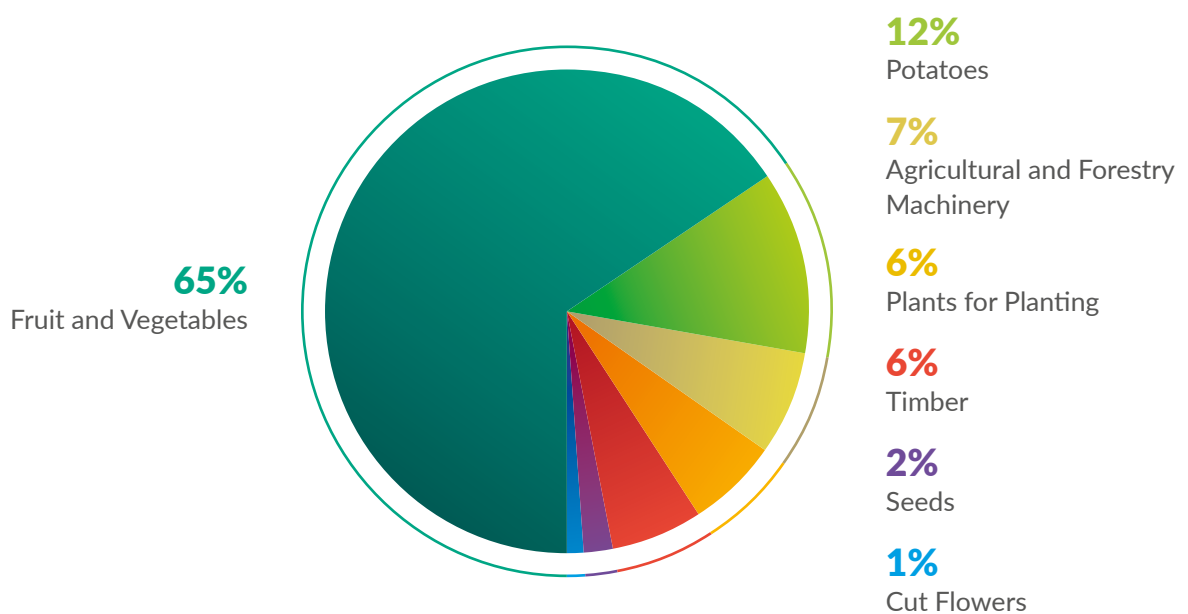
## What countries do Ireland import plant health commodities from?

Produce is imported from approx. 60 different countries with various fruit and vegetable commodities representing 65% of consignments.

### Top 10 and other



## What plant health commodities are imported (2021)?

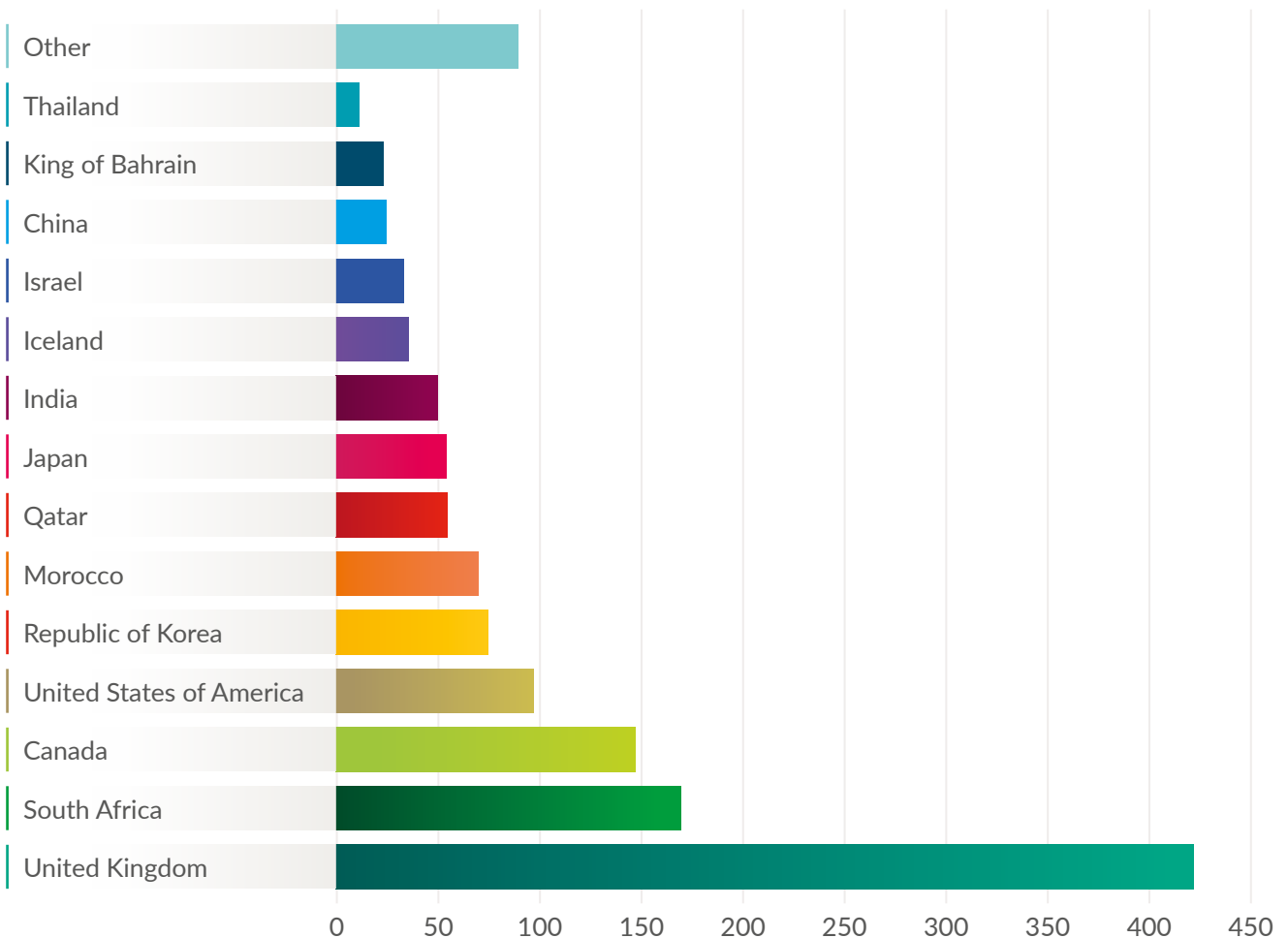


# Annex 3

## Plant Health Trade Statistics - Exports

The Department is responsible for the export certification and issuance of phytosanitary certificates for plants, plant products and used agricultural and forestry machinery. From 2023, Ireland will begin to issue electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhyto) for countries that have agreed to adapt this method of exchange. A total of **2053** phytosanitary certificates issued for exports to third countries in 2021.

### Countries that Ireland export plant health commodities to (2021)







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Bia agus Mara**  
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