The New Plant Health Regime

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Existing EU Plant Health Law

- At EU level, responsibility for plant health lies with Directorate General Health & Food Safety (DG Sante).
- In collective terms, this legislation is commonly referred to as the **Community Plant Health Regime** (CPHR).
- This legislation was designed to protect European agriculture and forestry from the potentially damaging effects of non-native harmful organisms by stopping the entry into and spread of the same within the EU.
Plant Health Regime Review

• **2008**: the EC asked the Commission to conduct an evaluation of the EU plant health regime

• **2010**: this review was completed. Key conclusions were:
  1. To focus more on prevention in light of increased imports of high risk commodities into the EU;
  2. For the prioritisation of harmful organisms at EU level across all MS;
  3. For better measures for controlling the presence and natural spread of harmful organisms which manage to enter EU territory;
  4. For modernised and upgraded measures central to control movement of plants within the EU, namely plant passports and protected zones

• **2013**: based on the 2010 recommendations, the Commission proposed a new EU Plant Health Law, as a key component of the Food and Feed Safety Package
The New Approach: Smarter Rules for Safer Food

- Package of measures to strengthen the enforcement of health and safety standards for the whole agri-food chain.
- Modernised and simplified, more risked-based approach.
- The current body of EU legislation covering the food chain consists of almost 70 pieces of legislation.
- Will cut this down to only 5 pieces!
Extensions to Scope

Official Control Regulations
Regulation 882/2004 Food & Feed Law

- Animal health
- Plant health
- Plant reproductive material (including seeds)
- Common Financial Framework
Key elements of proposals

- More pro-active emphasis on prevention and preparedness
- Greater recognition of global context
- Risk targeted
- Need for public awareness of threats
- Need for partnership working between official services and other stakeholders
- Need for greater collaboration between Member States
Plant Reproductive Material (including seeds)

- No longer in scope
- European Commission announced in December 2014 it would be undertaking no further work at this stage on PRM.
- PRM will probably need to be revisited but unlikely to be any implementation in near future
Key elements of proposed new Plant Health legislation

- Faster decision making on new risks
- Better risk targeting
  - Regionalisation
  - Shift from produce to plants for planting
  - New & emerging trades
- More collaboration between inspectorates
- Prioritisation of regulated organisms
Pest Prioritisation

Priority pests
(<10% of Q pests)

EU Q-pests
(inc. some of the 250+ transferred from old directive)

Protected Zone Q-pests
(regional significance)

Annual surveys
Contingency plans

Regulated non-quarantine pests
(‘quality pests’)
Some Key Points of New PH Regulations

• More directed action when outbreaks occur
• Registration of companies (‘Operators’)
• Improved plant passporting - mandatory for all plants for planting
• Imports – allowed unless there is a proven risk
• Phytosanitary certificates - required for all living plants (and parts of)
• Extension of ‘TRACES’ database
• Designation of Plant Health EURLs
Requirements of EURsLs (Article 91)

- Designation will:
  - Follow a public selection process
  - Be limited in time and with a minimum of five years or reviewed regularly

- EURs will:
  - Operate in accordance with the standard EN ISO/IEC 17025
  - Be impartial and free of conflict of interests as regards the exercise of their tasks as EURs
  - Have appropriate confidentiality obligations in place
Requirements Continued….

• Have or **have contractual access** to suitably qualified and trained **staff** and **support staff** as appropriate;

• Possess or have access to the **infrastructure, equipment** and **products** necessary to carry out their assigned tasks

• Ensure that their **staff** have a good knowledge of
  • international standards and practices
  • the latest research developments at national, EU and international level

• Be equipped or have access to the necessary equipment to perform their tasks in emergency situations

• Be equipped to comply with relevant biosecurity standards
Tasks & Responsibilities (Article 92)

• EURLs shall contribute to the improvement and harmonisation of methods of analysis, test or diagnosis to be used by official laboratories and of the analytical, testing and diagnostic data generated by them.

• EURLs shall be responsible for the following tasks insofar as they are included in the reference laboratories’ annual or multiannual work programmes established in conformity with the objectives and priorities of the relevant work programmes adopted by the Commission.

• EURL shall publish the list of the NRLs designated by the MS.
EURL Tasks

• Provide NRLs with **details and guidance of methods** of laboratory analysis, test or diagnosis, including reference methods

• Provide reference materials to NRLs

• Organise regular inter-laboratory comparative testing or proficiency tests

• Coordinate practical arrangements necessary to **apply new methods**

• Conducting **training** courses for the benefit of **staff from NRLs** (and others as/if required)

• Provide scientific and technical **assistance to the Commission**

• providing information on relevant research activities to NRLs

• Collaborate with **laboratories in third countries** and others e.g. EFSA

• Assist with the diagnosis of outbreaks in MSs by carrying out confirmatory diagnosis, characterisation etc
Tasks Continued……

• Co-ordinate or perform tests to verify the quality of reagents and/or lots of reagents used for the diagnosis

• Establish and maintain reference collections of pests of plants and/or reference strains of pathogenic agents;
  • *EURL may establish and maintain reference collections and reference strains by contractual outsourcing to other official laboratories and to scientific organisations*
  • Only directly linked to their remit

• Up-to-date lists of available reference substances and reagents and of manufacturers and suppliers of such substances and reagents.
Timetable: Current Position

• Plant Health: EC position was agreed at Coreper in July and approval given for submission to trilogue
• Negotiations will start in September with the aim of agreeing the Regulation by end December?
• If there is a final decision on the plant health proposal by end 2015, regulations come in to force mid/late 2016
• Three - five year transition period
• Implementation by 2018 earliest (2019-20 realistic?)