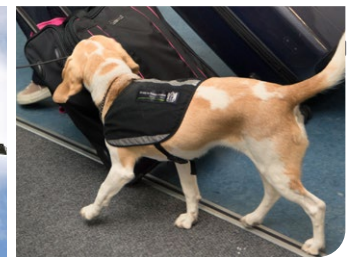




The BorderSpace

Working together to secure New Zealand's borders from biosecurity threats



Mail scanner installed



Our first 3D mail scanner is now installed at Auckland's International Mail Centre (IMC) – a significant milestone in our plans to revolutionise biosecurity screening in this pathway.

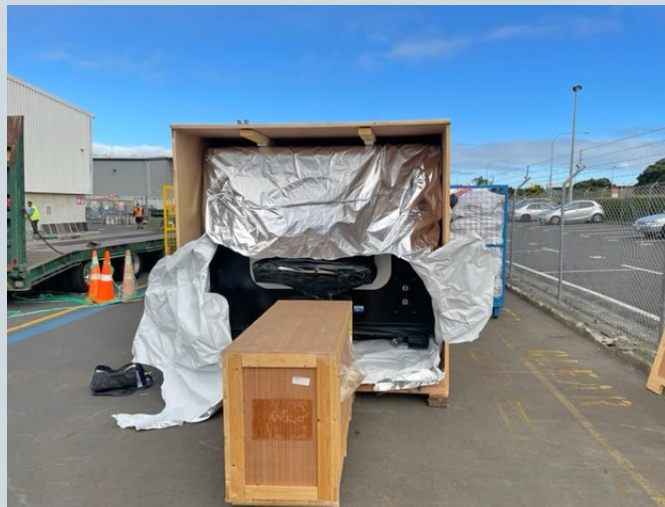
It isn't operating quite yet. At the time of writing, we still had to hook it up to a computer server and install the lead-lined shrouding that will manage radiation levels without blocking mail.

All going well, trials will begin shortly. We have trained three very keen officers to carry them out. They are steadily collecting a range of risk goods and packaging types for the trials.

As readers of **The Border Space** will be aware, 3D screening is two to three times better at detecting certain biosecurity threats than traditional 2D x-ray images. The technology can also be programmed to automatically detect threats.

The new scanner will initially undergo trials at the IMC. Later this year, it will move to New Zealand Post's new Auckland Processing Centre, near Wiri.

We have funding to install up to four 3D scanners in the new processing centre.



Calling all biosecurity champions

NEW ZEALAND BIOSECURITY AWARDS

KO TĀTŌU

THIS IS US

Entries open soon!

ThisIsUs.nz

Bolstering the ranks

We're continuing to bolster our frontline ranks as international borders reopen.

We are planning to train 40 new officers in Auckland this year. Twelve new recruits are already undergoing cargo clearance training in Auckland. They are due to graduate on 15 July. We have selected another 13 recruits to start training in July and will be on the hunt for 15 trainees to start in September. The July intake will focus on passenger duties. The September cohort will be split between the two pathways.

Looking at the rest of the country, we have started advertising for 14 new positions in Timaru (1), Dunedin (2), Queenstown (3) and Wellington (8). The Timaru and Dunedin roles will be based at the regional ports and focus on cargo. The remaining 11 positions will rotate between pathways but will have an initial focus on passengers.

Last year, we successfully recruited nine new officers for Queenstown and eight for Wellington.

We also have three new trainee detector dog handlers in Auckland and one in the pipeline for our southern region. The new Auckland handlers are expected to graduate this month. They have already been paired with dogs.

The recruitment drive will put us in strong position to respond to increased demand for biosecurity processing. During the height of the pandemic, we seconded many of our frontline passenger staff to other positions in Biosecurity NZ and the wider ministry. Some of these seconded positions have since become permanent, creating recruitment opportunities. Other officers have shifted into new border roles following the recent reorganisation of our services, resulting in frontline vacancies.

Biosecurity NZ currently employs 395 border officers who work on rostered shifts. We also have another 90 staff who have a border role, but don't operate under a roster. These are mostly desk jobs, but also include trainers and some other roles undertaken by warranted officers.



The latest cohort of trainee quarantine officers for our northern region started in April (photo includes three recruits who have since left the programme).

Digital declarations planned for next year

The introduction of a digital arrival card is in our sights for late next year.

The initiative will be part of a major upgrade to the New Zealand Traveller Declaration (NZTD), which was introduced in March to support the reopening of the air border.

Air travellers currently use the NZTD to submit vaccination details and other health-related information prior to arrival in New Zealand.

Cabinet has approved funding to develop the system to handle more travellers and to improve existing border processes. This includes extending the NZTD to travellers crossing the maritime border (Tranche 2) and introducing digital customs, immigration and biosecurity declarations (Tranche 3).

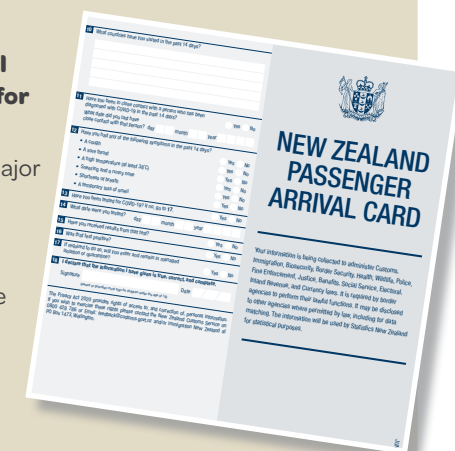
If all goes to plan, this will see the end of the clunky, old-fashioned, paper-based arrival card.

NZ Customs is leading the work, but Biosecurity NZ is closely involved. We see digital declarations as a key part of our own digital border programme. Advance information from travellers has the potential to automate aspects of our risk assessment in conjunction with the work we are doing with 3D scanning technology.

There is a lot to be done with very tight timeframes. Scoping of the requirements is underway, including considering whether facial recognition and other biometric technology can be used to facilitate border processing. There are also legal issues to consider, such as the extent declaration information can be shared between agencies.

The plan is to have Tranche 3 completed by October 2023.

As always, **The Border Space** will report on progress.



Airport watch

International air passengers are on the rise with the easing of border restrictions. Here's a quick snapshot of what's happening at New Zealand's main airports.

Christchurch

Christchurch officers are currently processing around six flights on busy days. There is still a way to go to reach the pre-pandemic peak of 22 arrivals a day.

Air New Zealand resumed services from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne on 28 February. Fiji Airways started on 14 April. Jetstar expects to return in late June. And Emirates is planning to restart from December.

There is likely to be a big jump in passenger arrivals in July with Air New Zealand expected to expand existing trans-Tasman services and begin flights from Fiji and the Gold Coast.

We are seeing almost full loadings on Air New Zealand and Singapore Airline flights. Initially, there was an influx of Kiwi travellers returning home. We are now seeing more holidaymakers. The return of Jetstar should see more business travellers.

Auckland

Auckland officers are reporting a gradual increase in passenger traffic. At the time of writing, Jetstar, Air Tahiti Nui and Aircalin had resumed services. Cathay Pacific is expected to return shortly, and United Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines are likely to be back by the end of the year.

Officers are currently processing around 27,000 passengers a week, with Sunday being the busiest day. During the border shutdown, they were checking 200 to 400 passengers a day. Prior to the pandemic, they were processing 18,000–22,000.

Auckland Airport expects passenger numbers to rise to 80% of pre-pandemic levels by Christmas.

There is currently construction underway in the international terminal, which has meant rejigging our processing area to cope with increased demand and a reduction in floor space.

Wellington

Wellington Airport saw its first international arrival since last year's trans-Tasman bubble on 31 March with Air New Zealand resuming flights from Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney (10 flights a week).

This was followed by Fiji Airways, which resumed operation twice a week between Nadi and Wellington. There was a big jump from 12 to 27 flights a week on 23 May when Qantas re-started services from Melbourne and Sydney.

Traffic increased again on 1 June when Jetstar re-introduced flights from the Gold Coast. We are expecting further increases from Air New Zealand in July. This will see flight numbers reach more than 60% of pre-Covid levels with an estimated 44 flights a week. Prior to the pandemic, there were 69 flights arriving in Wellington.

Local officers report most passengers have been families reuniting, but business travellers have started to increase.

Queenstown

Quarantine officers greeted the arrival of QF121 from Sydney on 23 May – the first scheduled international arrival in Queenstown for 330 days.

Jetstar followed suit on 2 June. Air New Zealand is scheduled to re-start trans-Tasman services on 24 June, and we expect to see Virgin back in November.

Queenstown Airport expects international traffic during the winter to be around 75% of pre-Covid levels.



A Qantas flight is welcomed to Queenstown during last year's trans-Tasman "travel bubble".

Cruise pathway reopens

Our officers are preparing for the return of cruise ships following the recent government announcement that New Zealand's maritime borders will open on 31 July.

We have been meeting with cruise lines and agents to discuss biosecurity requirements.

As mentioned in the last issue of **The Border Space**, the existing accreditation scheme will continue, although it has been renamed as the Recognised Cruise Line Programme. The change avoids confusion with the term "accreditation" as we move to adopt an internationally recognised quality management approach for evaluation and auditing.

Cruise lines who wish to be part of the scheme must submit documented processes and outline how they will manage biosecurity risk above the waterline. A selection of vessels from each line intending to come to New Zealand will face rigorous evaluation and auditing. The outcome will determine the overall verification approach for each line.

Officers will monitor performance and compliance – both at the port of first arrival and other stops around the country.

Vessels that are not part of the Recognised Cruise Line Programme should expect greater scrutiny.

Cruise ships have not been able to visit New Zealand for nearly two years now. To ensure our biosecurity requirements are top of mind, our officers will have a very visible presence at arriving ports, especially at the beginning of the season.

As with previous seasons, officers will carry out onboard checks prior to passengers leaving the vessel. Mobile x-ray machines and detector dog teams will again be used on gangways to screen passengers as required.

Our cruise ship accreditation scheme is now called the **Recognised Cruise Line Programme**

The 2019/20* cruise season

43 ships made **200** voyages, spent **901** port days in New Zealand and carried **282,920** passengers.

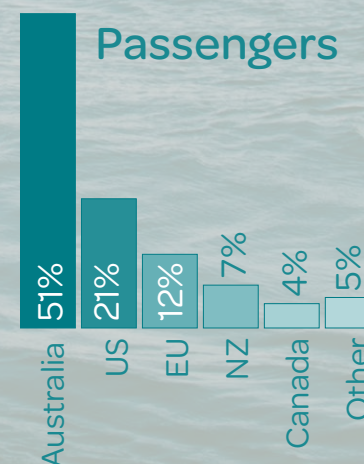
The largest cruise ship to visit carried a total of **5680** passengers and crew, and the smallest **92**.

Cruise ships visited **15** New Zealand ports.

Auckland, Dunedin, and Wellington had **112** visits each.

Fiordland and Tauranga had **100** visits each.

All other ports had **78** visits or less.



* The maritime border closed to cruise ships in April 2020.

BMSB season wrap-up

The 2021/22 brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) season finished on 30 April.

While the number of live interceptions is slightly up on last year, there continues to be no evidence of any established BMSB population in New Zealand. This suggests the range of interventions we have in place before, at and after the border are continuing to work well.

There were 62 live bugs intercepted in New Zealand during the 2021/22 season (compared with 48 in 2020/21). The interceptions were mostly associated with imported cargo.

The number of live interceptions has dropped considerably over the last three years. This is largely due to the introduction of import rules that make it harder for BMSB to enter New Zealand on risky cargo such as vehicles, machinery and parts from countries with established stink bug populations. Such cargo must be treated before arriving in New Zealand during the BMSB season.

Biosecurity NZ further tightened its border controls during the just-completed season. This included introducing targeted alerts on additional goods associated with BMSB detections. Consignments covered by the alerts underwent full inspection to rule out the presence of live bugs.

Improved reporting and monitoring also allowed officers to better target goods that pose the greatest risk. For example, there was a greater focus on air cargo during the season following increased BMSB detections in this pathway.

BMSB season comparison

2021/22	Live	Dead	Total	Events*
Border	39	2908	2947	192
Post Border	23	9	32	20
Grand Total	62	2917	2979	212
2020/21	Live	Dead	Total	Events*
Border	32	922	954	277
Post Border	16	16	32	18
Grand Total	48	938	986	295

* Separate detection events (any number of bugs)



Officers supervised devanning of containers. **2360**

They focused on both high and lower risk commodities from countries with stink bug populations.

We carried out **4337** verification checks of breakbulk (uncontainerised) new vehicles and machinery. There were no BMSB finds in this pathway.

More than **80** carrier vessels underwent BMSB surveillance on arrival.

As mentioned in a previous issue of **The Border Space**, it has been pleasing to see shipping lines adopt more proactive measures to reduce BMSB risk, including carrying out additional surveillance during transit. Vessel crew were responsible for most of this season's border interceptions.

BMSB remains a serious biosecurity threat. We will thoroughly review the 2021/22 season to determine any targeting and other operational changes for the coming season. Biosecurity NZ will also continue to monitor the risk posed by countries that have known BMSB populations and make changes to import rules as required.

Coming into our fifth BMSB season, our operations have become very streamlined. However, we are always looking for ways to operate smarter and more effectively.

The 2022/23 season will start on 1 September.



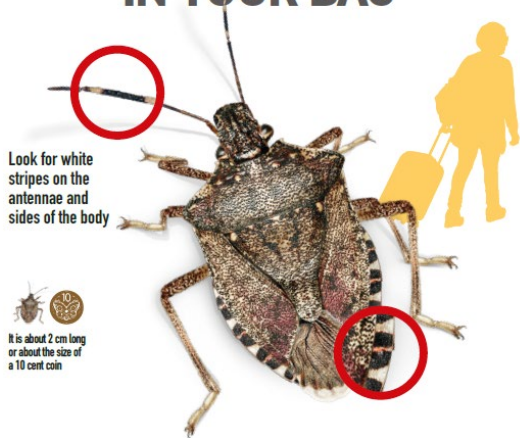
BMSB border operations – 2021/22 season

- **More than 80 carrier vessels underwent BMSB surveillance on arrival.** An additional 1189 vehicles were inspected from eight vessels identified as higher risk. There were no BMSB finds, allowing the cargo to discharge. We used our robotic "Bug" inspection tool to check the undersides of vehicles of interest. The Bug uses thermal technology to help identify BMSB aggregations.
- **There was good communication with the shipping lines throughout the season.** Vessel operators passed on information regarding crew inspections and fogging (with insecticide) en route. This helped inform vessel risk assessments prior to arrival.
- **There were 343 surveillance visits of Auckland and Christchurch air freight facilities during the season.** The surveillance did not find any evidence of BMSB. Most facilities had high BMSB awareness and were welcoming of both the planned and unplanned visits.

Ko Tātou This is Us



IF YOU FIND BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG IN YOUR BAG



Look for white stripes on the antennae and sides of the body



It is about 2 cm long or about the size of a 10 cent coin

CATCH IT. REPORT IT.

HELP PROTECT NEW ZEALAND

0800 80 99 66 | biosecurity.govt.nz/stinkbug

Partnering to protect our environment and industries from brown marmorated stink bug. Join us in helping to protect New Zealand.



Winter stink bug campaign

A new campaign is underway to encourage New Zealanders to stay alert for brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) during the winter months.

The campaign started in May and will run until at least the end of June.

Winter is the hibernation season for BMSB, making it more likely for the bug to be found in enclosed spaces and indoors. That's why the campaign targets online shoppers and home renovators. In contrast, our summer campaigns are usually geared towards local gardeners.

Biosecurity NZ has been running winter awareness campaigns since 2014. Research on the effectiveness of previous campaigns has led to some tweaks to this year's approach, which will use digital ads and a refreshed poster for airports and other locations.

We have simplified the airport messaging to say, "If you find brown marmorated stink bug in your bag – Catch It. Report It. Help protect New Zealand."

Previous airport signage used puns and more complicated grammar, making it harder for non-native speakers of English to understand. We wanted a simple, clear call to action. The bit about helping to protect New Zealand also has emotional appeal, which we know helps motivate action among the targeted audiences.



The Biosecurity Business Pledge is a partnership helping all New Zealand businesses take a proactive approach to their biosecurity practices.

Biosecurity protects your business, the environment and the economy.

Join now: thisisus.nz

Hubbing could ease supply line stress

We're encouraging greater use of "hubbing" sites by transporters to relieve port congestion and supply chain delays.

This follows discussions with key industry players to understand and address supply chain issues. Ports and transport operators are facing shipping delays due to the Ukraine conflict and COVID-19-related lockdowns and staff shortages.

Contributing to the congestion, "just in time" ordering of goods is no longer the norm. Importers are now ordering in bulk, resulting in goods being consolidated and vessels carrying a much higher volume of containers. We are concerned the congestion could encourage unauthorised container movements and storage.

There is agreement with industry that greater use of hubbing could provide relief. Introduced last year, the hubbing concept allows containers to be stored at interim locations prior to their delivery at the destination nominated in clearance instructions. In a nutshell, hubbing provides more options for transporters to move containers from congested ports, allowing supply chains to flow smoothly.

We are looking at a national approach that will ultimately provide hubbing options for all imported sea containers.

There are currently 64 sites nationwide either approved to hub containers or in the process of applying for authority.

We have made it clear to industry that our intelligence and targeting team is continuing to identify unauthorised hubbing sites and that offenders face enforcement action.

We encourage organisations potentially in breach of the rules to contact us. There will be no penalty if you come forward. If you would like to apply for hubbing authorisation, please contact your regional Biosecurity NZ office or email container.hubbing@mpi.govt.nz.

Imported containers – what the law says

There are strict biosecurity requirements to ensure imported containers do not arrive in New Zealand with contamination. There are also measures in place to check and clean containers on arrival at a transitional facility (TF) if needed.

All imported goods including containers are deemed "uncleared" under Section 2 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) until clearance is given. Under Section 16B of the Act, it is the duty of any importer to comply with the associated import health standard. Under

Section 25, all parties handling risk goods must follow any Biosecurity Authority/Clearance Certification or direction from Biosecurity NZ. Importers should take all reasonable steps to communicate biosecurity requirements to anyone who deals with their uncleared risk goods.

Containers must move directly from ports to authorised TFs. It is an offence to do otherwise. Biosecurity NZ is responsible for monitoring compliance and enforcing the rules.

TF verification approach on the move

Our new auditing and reporting approach for transitional facilities (TFs) is steadily spreading throughout New Zealand.

The performance-based verification (PBV) approach replaces traditional inspection-based audits, providing clear information on whether a TF is performing or not.

PBV auditing is now in place in Christchurch, Wellington and Tauranga. We expect to start training officers to undertake verification visits in Northland and Waikato shortly. The plan is to cover the entire country by the end of this year.

We have received positive feedback from TF operators on the new reports. Our feedback is they give a very detailed picture of performance, leaving no doubt as to whether a facility is doing what it takes to protect New Zealand.

Digging deeper into the numbers, as of mid-May, 172 TFs have shifted to the PBV system, which gives individual facilities either an acceptable or unacceptable outcome. **Results so far show 85% of TFs are performing at an acceptable level.**

The PBV approach incentivises facilities to improve their game. Good compliance can lead to fewer verification visits. On the other hand, those that receive an unacceptable outcome face additional verification visits in the future, potentially incurring cost. There may also be additional costs if our verifiers need to visit the facility to check corrective action plans have been completed as agreed.

Given that time is money, a TF operator can reduce the length of verification visits by being prepared. This includes providing access to required documents and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.

TFs are an importance aspect of New Zealand's cargo biosecurity system. Authorised and audited by Biosecurity NZ, they provide a secure location to hold, unload and inspect uncleared goods. There are 3902 TFs in New Zealand.

Further information on how PBV works and how to prepare for a verification visit is available on the [Biosecurity NZ website](#).

High alert for FMD

An outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Indonesia has highlighted the importance of strong border and other biosecurity protections.

Biosecurity NZ has been on high alert since the outbreak was announced in early May.

Officials are closely monitoring the situation and are working with counterparts in Australia and Indonesia to ensure that entry pathways into New Zealand are well managed.

We are continually assessing the risk and will strengthen biosecurity requirements if needed. As it stands, we have some of the strongest FMD measures in the world, including the range of checks our officers carry out at the border.

There are currently no direct flights between Indonesia and New Zealand, which helps lower the risk. New Zealand does, however, receive cargo, mail, vessels and travellers from Indonesia.

New Zealand imported some \$1.5 billion of goods from Indonesia in 2021 across a range of products – from clothing to agricultural commodities. Imports included palm kernel extract (PKE), a livestock feed supplement. Most Indonesian imports have very low or negligible risk of FMD, such as timber and plant products.

Existing regulations do not allow high risk imports from Indonesia of germplasm or live animals capable of transmitting FMD virus. Nor is Indonesia approved for the import of meat from pigs and ruminant animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and deer.

The risk of PKE carrying FMD is low. There are strict import health standards in place for all countries that supply PKE. Requirements include the use of high temperatures during processing.

The FMD threat

- FMD is considered one of the most serious livestock diseases in the world. It affects cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, buffalo, camels, sheep, goats, deer and pigs.
- The disease can kill young animals, cause production losses and lead to significant trade restrictions.
- A study by the Ministry for Primary Industries in 2015 estimated an outbreak in New Zealand could see the economy take a \$16 billion hit.
- **New Zealand has never had an outbreak of FMD and is officially recognised as free of the disease by the World Organisation for Animal Health.**



From the frontline

A selection of interesting interceptions and other border activity...

Cow urine seized

The reopening of the border to travellers around the world has seen a jump in interceptions at international airports.

One of the more interesting was two bottles of cow urine, seized at Christchurch Airport on 28 April.

A female traveller arriving from Singapore did the right thing in declaring the commercially packaged urine.

One of the accompanying passengers explained it was going to be used for “prayers”. Cow urine is regarded as a purifying agent under some Hindu religious practices and is even used as medicine (including as a treatment for COVID-19).

After a full inspection of all the baggage carried by the group, the urine was seized and later destroyed. It could have carried serious animal diseases such as FMD (foot and mouth disease) and bovine brucellosis.



Auckland snake alert

Three suspected dead snakes in an air container turned out to be less serpentine than first thought.

Upon closer examination, they were determined to be another slippery creature – most likely eel.

Arriving in an air container from Singapore in early May, the specimens were very desiccated, making identification difficult.

Aware of the risks posed by snakes (both dead and alive), cargo officers secured the goods. One of our specialist snake handlers from the Auckland Airport team helped collect the specimens.

The remains were disposed of in a quarantine waste bin.



Snake in a jar

Staying on the snake theme, this item (right) recently showed up on an x-ray image at Auckland’s International Mail Centre.

Yes, it is a preserved snake – a ball python to be precise. The snake was declared correctly and didn't pose any biosecurity threat. However, it was destroyed for failing to comply with the rules for trading endangered animals.

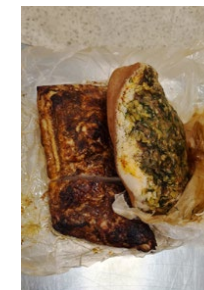


Unclaimed pork

Auckland officers intercepted home-processed pork in an unclaimed bag from a flight arriving from Dubai in May.

As is the case with all baggage left on the carousel, officers carried out a full inspection. A Russian student later claimed the bag. He had taken someone else’s bag in error. He collected the correct bag after realising his mistake outside the terminal.

He avoided a fine, as there was no documentation to suggest he had falsely declared the pork.



The unclaimed pork product.

Many mangos

It’s common for our airport-based officers to seize mangos from international passengers, but not 5kg’s worth!

That’s what happened in late May at Christchurch Airport when a woman arriving from Singapore presented officers with a large box full of the exotic fruit.

As the traveller had no official import documents, the ripe mangos (ideal for fruit flies) were seized. After being checked for larvae and other signs of fruit fly, the fruit was disposed of as quarantine waste.



Border activity for March/April 2022

	March-21	March-22	April-21	April-22
Passenger				
Total arrivals	11,882	65,864	47,047	125,281
NZ/Australia	7,471	53,139	41,865	105,596
Rest of world	4,411	12,725	5,182	19,685
Risk items seized	259	627	512	1,335
Risk items treated or destroyed	239	597	502	1,213
Infringement notices	6	35	36	58
Mail				
Mail items screened	1,828,609	1,296,549	1,605,550	1,236,655
Mail items requiring further inspection	4,021	2,749	3,487	2,164
Risk mail items treated or destroyed	793	529	636	336
Sea Containers				
Sea containers arrivals	71,708	62,847	64,235	57,924
Sea containers inspected	2,682	2,899	3,043	2,419
Cargo				
Cargo lines of interest to MPI	23,449	21,431	21,874	18,686
Cargo lines inspected	6,573	5,615	5,912	5,428
Cargo lines treated, reshipped or destroyed	1,716	1,481	1,465	1,300



Steve Gilbert
Central/South Regional Commissioner
Biosecurity New Zealand



Mike Inglis
Northern Regional Commissioner
Biosecurity New Zealand