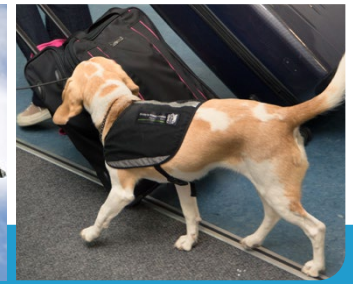




The BorderSpace

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



NZTD live for major airports!

In September, we reached the milestone of processing 100,000 travellers who had completed the New Zealand Travel Declaration (NZTD).

The trial phase for air passengers ended when NZTD went live at Auckland Airport on 22 August. The next step will be to extend it to regional airports, including military bases. This is expected to happen in mid-October.

A recent survey indicated most air travellers supported the digital initiative, citing convenience, efficiency, and a desire to move away from paper.

Some passengers indicated they didn't bring potential risk items as a result of filling in the online declaration before boarding. So, it's great to start seeing the new system generate biosecurity benefits.

We are looking at how NZTD declaration information can be used to facilitate biosecurity processing of low-risk air passengers. A recent trial at Auckland Airport involved manually identifying low-risk travellers who had completed a NZTD as they went through customs checks. The passengers were able to be risk assessed and, where eligible, directed to our express lane without lining up in the normal biosecurity lanes.

Meanwhile, NZTD trials have been extended for maritime visitors. The first phase of the maritime rollout will cover a trial of small craft and cargo, specialist, fishing, and diplomatically cleared ships. We know the NZTD system can operate live at maritime ports but need to test things further with more trial participants.

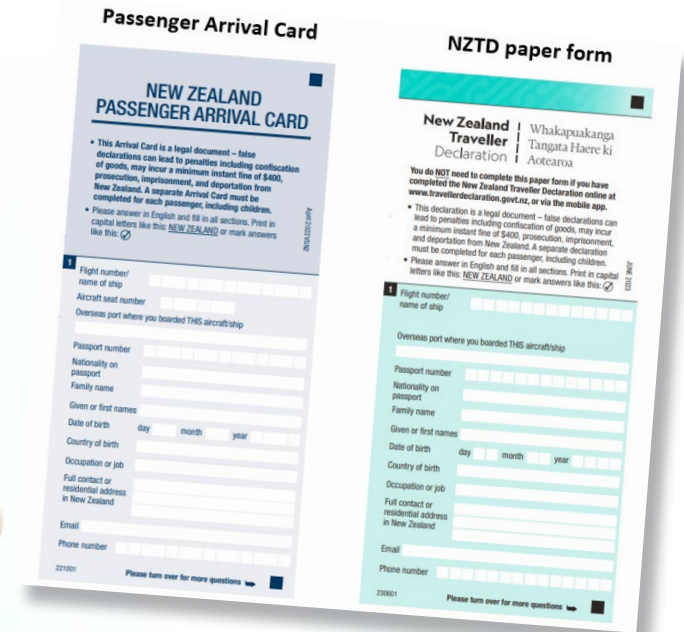
Paper-based declarations still available

Airlines now have a paper version of the NZTD available for passengers who haven't completed a digital declaration.

The version will eventually replace the existing passenger arrival card (PAC).

We expect there to be ongoing need for paper-based processing for travellers who don't have online access. The paper NZTD is very similar to the PAC (see right).

The current PAC will continue to be used by maritime travellers where required. A NZTD maritime version will be available in the future.



Digital declarations are now available for travellers arriving at New Zealand's main international airports – Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown and Auckland.

Algorithmic detection on its way

A new biosecurity algorithm will help our officers detect risk items in passenger baggage at Auckland Airport.

The algorithm will be running on our Rapiscan RTT110 baggage scanner from October.

It will support decision-making by our RTT operators by placing a box around items of interest on the viewing screen (see image on right).

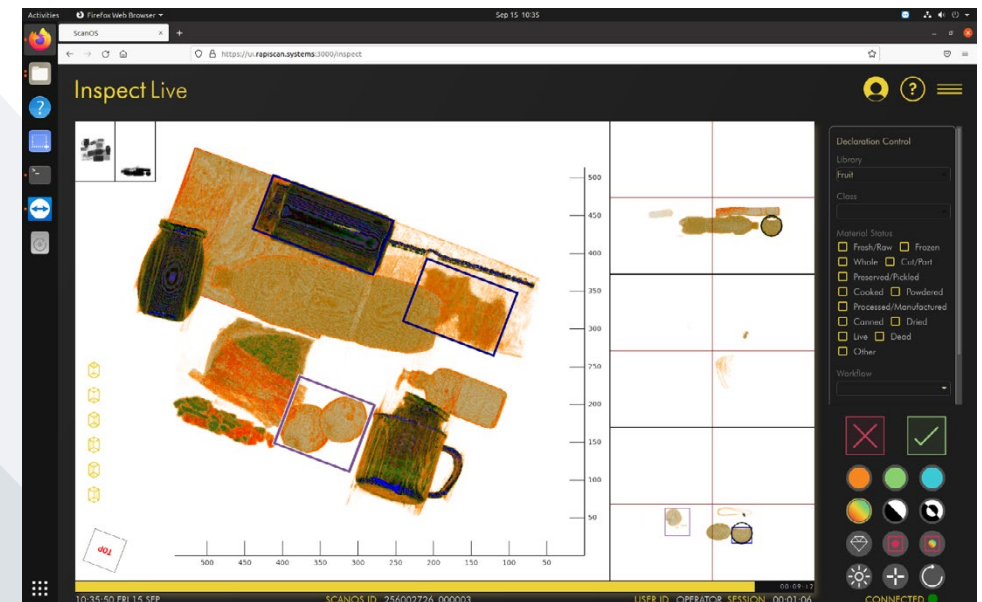
Biosecurity NZ and our Australian counterparts have been working with the scanner manufacturer (Rapiscan) to build the algorithm. It is already detecting priority biosecurity fruit and meat commodities that our officers regularly seize at the border.

Priority fruit includes fruit-fly hosts such as apples, pears, oranges, and mangoes. Meat items include duck necks, chicken feet, salami, and pork.

The biosecurity algorithm will also be installed on a second RTT110 unit, which will scan mail at New Zealand Post's new Auckland Processing Centre (APC).

The scanner has been undergoing testing at Auckland's International Mail Centre. It was shifted to its new home at the APC in September. The APC is due to start operation in 2024.

Boxes generated by the biosecurity algorithm indicate fruit, meat and a jar inside this suitcase.



The Rapiscan RTT110 baggage scanner.

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

Biosecurity protects your business, the environment and the economy.

Join now

thisus.nz/biosecurity-business-pledge

Bumper cruise season expected

We're anticipating a busy 2023/24 cruise season.

This season will see 57 cruise vessels from 20 major lines make journeys to New Zealand, an increase of nearly 30% from the 2022/23 season. There will be 1194 port calls, compared with 988 during the last season. And two new lines – Disney and Virgin – will make their debut visits this season.

There has been a lot of effort since the end of last season to alert cruise lines to their biosecurity requirements. The focus of this engagement has been on two risk areas – topside (above the waterline) and biofouling (below the waterline).

Cruise lines wanting to voyage to New Zealand during the 2023/24 season must demonstrate they meet biofouling requirements for "long-stay" vessels or operate under an alternative approved system for managing both topside and biofouling risk.

Topside risk is largely managed under the ISO-accredited Recognised Cruise Line Programme (RCLP).

The RCLP provides assurance that lines are meeting their biosecurity requirements. Those that gain full approval benefit from fewer gangway interventions, resulting in a faster and smoother passenger experience at New Zealand ports.

...continued overleaf

Cruise ship biosecurity – what we look for

Under the Recognised Cruise Line Programme (RCLP), Biosecurity NZ evaluates a range of cruise line processes for managing biosecurity risk. The areas we look at are:

- **Refuse management** – e.g. use of steam sterilisation to clean bottles and containers used with food.
- **Pest and provision management** – e.g. evidence of treatment for live plants, regular monitoring of pest traps and pest management processes in place for provisions.
- **Passenger management** – e.g. restrictions on serving whole fruit and honey, and evidence that passengers start receiving biosecurity announcements two days prior to arrival.
- **Biosecurity awareness** – e.g. evidence of crew training.

2022/23 SEASON

99.7%

CRUISE PASSENGERS COMPLIED WITH
BIOSECURITY REQUIREMENTS



THIS SEASON

57

CRUISE VESSELS
EXPECTED TO VISIT
NEW ZEALAND

1194
PORT CALLS

↑ 30%

Bumper cruise season expected...continued

To get approval, cruise lines submit information on their procedures for managing biosecurity risk at the beginning of the season.

The submitted information is evaluated against the craft risk management standard for vessels and accepted best practice. The initial evaluation is followed by physical auditing and other onboard checks of arriving vessels – for example, we might check whether whole fruit is served at the buffet while cruising in New Zealand waters (only cut fruit is permitted). These checks continue throughout the season.

Passengers also face gangway checks, including inspections and screening of baggage by our mobile x-ray machines or by detector dogs.

This season, vessels approved under the RCLP will face gangway checks across all ports, with a focus on first ports of arrival and places where passenger exchanges occur.



Cruise season facts

- The summer cruise season runs from October to April.
- Most cruise vessels arrive in the south and travel north.
- Each vessel has an average of three to five port stops per voyage.
- Cruise vessels arrive from Australia and the Pacific, carrying an average of 2000 passengers.
- Disembarking passengers are either day trippers that return to the vessel after visiting or those that end their voyage in New Zealand.
- Passengers permanently leaving a vessel can receive infringement notices for failing to declare risk goods.
- Most cruise ships are from large commercial lines such as P&O Cruises, Carnival and Royal Caribbean. The remainder are boutique and exhibition cruises.
- Some vessel operators choose to gain full biosecurity clearance at the first port of arrival, which allows them to move freely around New Zealand. This involves removing all risk goods. We expect seven vessels to gain full biosecurity clearance this season.
- Compared with air travellers, cruise passengers are far less likely to carry food in their baggage.
- Our interventions to manage biosecurity risk in the cruise pathway work well. Performance surveys for the 2022/23 season showed that 99.7% of cruise passengers were compliant with biosecurity requirements before leaving our control areas.

Aussies to take hard line on biofouling

Starting in December, Australia plans to take a harder stance on enforcing rules regarding hull cleanliness.

The move demonstrates that New Zealand is not alone in introducing a strict approach to managing biofouling, which has the potential to spread unwanted marine organisms.

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) introduced new biofouling requirements in June 2022.

Vessels arriving in Australian waters have to demonstrate proactive management of hull cleanliness. This can be done by either introducing a biofouling management plan, cleaning all vessel biofouling within 30 days prior to arrival in Australia, or implementing an alternative management plan approved by the department.



DAFF is taking a phased approach to introducing the new requirements. So far, it has taken an education-first approach to enforcement. This approach finishes on 15 December. Information about the policy is available on the [DAFF website](#).

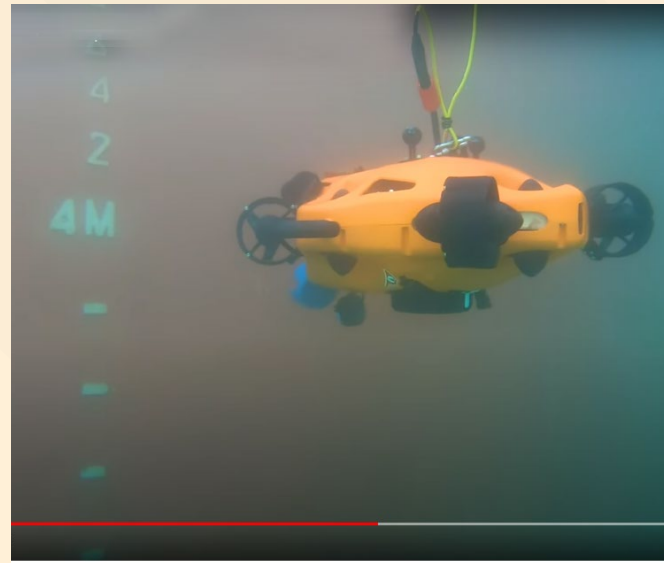
Underwater hull scanner trialled

Underwater inspection robots could soon check for biofouling on vessel hulls, including cruise ships.

Biosecurity NZ staff recently attended a demonstration of the Seasam Hullscan remotely operated vehicle (ROV) at Auckland's Queens Wharf, organised on behalf of Carnival Cruise Line.

ROVs could provide a cost-effective replacement to the traditional dive surveys that cruise lines and other vessel operators use to determine hull cleanliness.

At this stage, we don't have any intention of acquiring the expensive equipment ourselves, but we are very supportive of vessel operators, such as Carnival, exploring the option. We have outlined our requirements for any inspection report generated by the underwater technology.



The Seasam Hullscan in action.



Biosecurity New Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

Recruiting biosecurity detector dogs

Biosecurity New Zealand's detector dog team plays an important role in protecting New Zealand from unwanted pests and diseases.

We're inviting the public to contribute dogs to join our team, to complement our world-class dog breeding programme.

It takes a special mix of qualities to be a successful detector dog.

We need dogs that:

- are a pure or cross beagle, labrador or hunting breed;
- have a strong play or food drive;
- are good around people and well-socialised;
- are aged 12 months to two-and-half years.

Dogs are assessed by a trainer and then have a two-week trial before they are accepted into our training programme.



Find out more about contributing a dog: mpi.govt.nz/recruiting-dogs

If you have questions or wish to contribute a dog:
detector.dog@mpi.govt.nz

Stink bug season underway



The 2023/24 brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) season kicked off on 1 September with the return of seasonal biosecurity measures aimed at preventing the entry or establishment of this invasive pest.

The eight-month season will run until 30 April 2024. It covers the colder months of the northern hemisphere. This is when BMSB hibernate, often finding their way into enclosed spaces in imported vehicles and other cargo.

Our Animal and Plant Health team recently concluded a review of the 2022/23 BMSB season, determining that no changes were necessary to the current import rules.

As with previous seasons, vehicles, machinery and parts from identified risk countries must undergo treatment or other approved measures before being shipped to New Zealand. The same requirements apply to sea containers arriving from Italy, which has a large established BMSB population.

There are also no changes to the list of 38 high-risk countries (Schedule 3 countries) targeted for BMSB management. Among these, cargo from the United States, Japan, Italy, and Germany have been identified as posing the highest risk of carrying BMSB aggregations during the 2023/24 season.

Australia recently added Uzbekistan to its own list of high-risk countries after reports of a small BMSB breeding population. New Zealand currently does not receive any cargo from Uzbekistan so has not taken a similar step – for now at least.

Similar to previous seasons, quarantine officers will conduct a range of checks across various entry pathways to ensure compliance with biosecurity requirements.

The following provides a brief summary of our planned operations for the 2023/24 BMSB season, much of which has become routine in recent years.

...continued overleaf

Stink bug season underway...continued

• General cargo

Quarantine officers will again carry out additional inspections of general cargo from Schedule 3 countries. We will also focus on countries on our watchlist, such as the UK, and those with native populations, including China. And, to ensure we are not missing anything, we will continue our sea container audits. We anticipate targeting 5000 full containers for auditing during the season.

• Breakbulk cargo

All vessels arriving in New Zealand with breakbulk (uncontainerised) BMSB-risk cargo will be subject to deck-by-deck surveillance. The extent of surveillance will be influenced by reports provided by crew. We are interested in hearing about sightings of bugs during the voyage or signs of treatment failure. We continue to work with agents to encourage proactive reporting by vessel operators.

• New vehicles and machinery

We plan to inspect some 3750 new vehicles and 700 new machinery items during the BMSB season. Underside inspections will again involve the use of "The Bug" – a robotic device equipped with a thermal camera (see image below right).

• Detector dog surveillance

Detector dog teams will conduct surveillance at Auckland's express freight facilities and New Zealand Post's International Mail Centre. As with previous seasons, we intend to employ dog teams to scrutinise air passengers and their baggage arriving at Auckland Airport from high-risk countries such as the United States.

• Educating air passengers

Officers and support staff will meet flights and offer information about BMSB to passengers arriving on high-risk flights – particularly from the United States, Canada, and Japan. Information will include advice on what to do if a traveller discovers BMSB in their luggage.



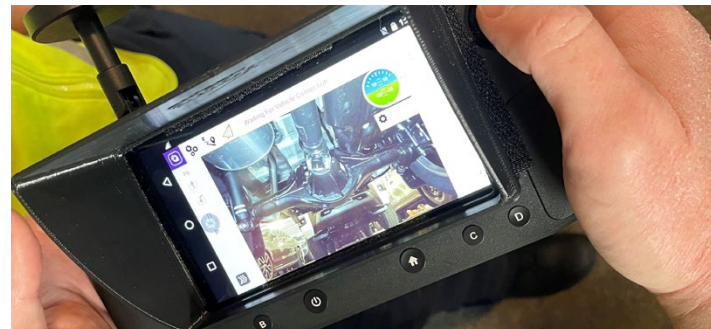
THE BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG COULD BE IN YOUR GARDEN

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 SNAP IT REPORT IT

0800 80 99 66



BMSB alert

Brown marmorated stink bug is a highly invasive pest that is known to damage more than 300 plant hosts. We don't want it in New Zealand!

The bug starts to gather in enclosed spaces in late autumn, continuing over winter. This increases the likelihood of it hitchhiking to New Zealand in imported cargo, particularly vehicles, machinery and equipment.

Our economy would take a major hit if BMSB established in New Zealand. An assessment by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research in 2018 found the value of horticulture exports could drop by up \$4.2 million as the result of a BMSB incursion.

Building BMSB awareness

Work is underway to prepare the latest public awareness campaign for the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) summer season.

The summer campaign will run from November to March. It follows a successful 11-week winter campaign.

The awareness campaigns target audiences most likely to find BMSB in their normal activities. For summer, this includes online shoppers receiving items from overseas and gardeners. For our winter campaign, we focused on online shoppers and DIY audiences, as BMSB seek shelter indoors during cooler months.

Recent stats show our winter campaign had a good reach and engagement rate. Based on this, our summer campaign will have similar messaging. It includes a close-up photo of a BMSB for easy identification, and a clear process to report the pest.

People who think they have spotted a BMSB are asked to catch it, snap it (take a photo) and report it using Biosecurity NZ's exotic pests and diseases hotline 0800 80 99 66.

Revised vessel standard expected soon

A revised craft risk management standard for vessels will be released shortly to provide greater maritime biosecurity protection and make it easier for operators to comply.

The intention is to merge two existing craft risk management standards – CRMS-Biofoul and CRMS-Vessels, which separately cover above water and underwater biosecurity risks of arriving vessels. The underwater threats relate specifically to marine growth (biofouling) on vessel hulls.

Almost 90% of the exotic marine species already in New Zealand are likely to have arrived here as biofouling on the submerged surfaces of international vessels.

Combining the two documents into a single craft risk standard will make it easier for industry to determine what they have to do to meet New Zealand's biosecurity requirements.

Significant proposed changes include:

- Clarification of acceptable measures for ensuring a vessel has a clean hull.
- Extension of the time a "short-stay" vessel can remain in New Zealand from 20 to 28 days.
- Simplification of biofouling thresholds.
- Specification of minimum reporting requirements for vessel biofouling inspections.
- Separate requirements for cruise vessels.
- Updated requirements for managing flighted spongy moth complex (formerly known as Asian gypsy moth), including changes to risk areas and risk periods.

The proposals follow formal consultation from June to August last year. We received feedback from a range of stakeholders, including international shipping companies, industry groups, underwater service providers and scientific consultants.

Focus on vessel inspection reports
The new craft risk management standard for vessels will have strong focus on improving hull inspection reports.

Biosecurity NZ uses these reports, along with other documents, to make biofouling risk assessments.

While the shipping industry has a good track record of

providing essential documentation for risk assessment purposes, there have been some issues with the quality of vessel inspection reports. For example, images of hull surfaces can be unclear, and crucial information can be missing.

We have also received inspection reports suspected to be fraudulent, but such cases are rare.

Minimum reporting requirements for vessel biofouling inspections will improve consistency, helping Biosecurity NZ make better decisions about biosecurity risk. It will also speed up vessel processing, reducing delays for operators.

Voluntary approval scheme
In addition to the minimum reporting requirements outlined in the new standard, Biosecurity NZ plans to set up a voluntary approval scheme for third-party inspection providers.

The voluntary scheme will be a world first. It will help raise the quality of reporting and improve operational processes. The shipping industry will benefit from greater consistency and predictability around the quality of reporting they can expect from a provider.

Approved providers will be subject to auditing to ensure they remain compliant. They will lose approval status if they are unable to fix any identified problems.

As this scheme is intended to be voluntary, we acknowledge some providers may not be keen to sign up. However, there has been considerable interest from inspection providers, and we expect demand from the shipping industry will provide strong incentive in the future.

We estimate it will take the industry a while to adjust and prepare for the biofouling reporting changes and the introduction of approved inspection providers. For that reason, the plan is to have a lead-in period of 18 months. Existing assessment processes will also remain in place during the lead-in period. However, we plan to provide feedback to vessel operators on whether their documents and other evidence of hull cleanliness will meet the new requirements when they are enforced.

Revised vessel standard expected...continued

Extended vessel visits

We are proposing to extend the time vessels can remain in New Zealand under "short-stay" rules from 20 to 28 days.

The change recognises the impact of port congestion and other supply chain issues on vessel itineraries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with increased understanding of risks associated with biofouling.

During the submission process, the shipping industry expressed their concerns about the difficulty of completing itineraries within the 20-day time limit due to unforeseen delays, and being subject to strict long-stay requirements without the ability to prepare accordingly.

We estimate the changes will allow more than 200 additional vessels each year to complete their itineraries under short-stay requirements, reducing costs and delays.

We are confident that the short-stay time limit extension will not increase the biosecurity risk, particularly when considered alongside the introduction of clearer and more stringent vessel reporting requirements.

The extension for short-stay vessels does not change existing biofouling threshold requirements. Short-stay vessels are permitted to arrive with a slime layer, gooseneck barnacles, and small amounts of early-stage fouling organisms on their hulls. Vessels that stay longer than 28 days are only permitted to have gooseneck barnacles and a slime layer.

Vessels that do not meet these requirements may be directed to conduct a hull inspection on arrival, face itinerary restrictions or be directed to leave New Zealand waters and prove they have a clean hull before returning.

The use of different rules for short and long-stay vessels recognises that biofouling risk increases with the amount of time exposed to the maritime environment.



Cargo Programme

Dedicated auditing team

We are recruiting a dedicated team of specialist auditors to enhance our verification of high-risk biosecurity operations managed by the industry.

We are looking to fill 13 new positions following a successful trial that involved five specialised officers auditing Profile 1 and 2 transitional facilities (TFs), which have the highest risk or greatest complexity to manage.

The officers involved in the trial also conducted audits at places of first arrival for international aircraft and vessels (PoFA). And they studied to become qualified as lead auditors under international quality management standards.

The trial effectively demonstrated the value of having dedicated auditors within our recently introduced performance-based verification programme. The new team will play a vital role in collecting data on how TFs and PoFA are handling their biosecurity responsibilities. This will provide us with national oversight, including clear data on compliance trends.

In addition to TFs and PoFA, the team will also evaluate and verify cruise vessels under our Recognised Cruise Line Programme. They will also conduct comprehensive audits of high-risk biosecurity management systems, such as the procedures in place for managing grain imports.

Our plan is to have six auditors based in the South Island and seven in the North Island.

Increasing our border ranks

There continues to be lots of activity in our recruitment and training space, with an increase of 81 quarantine officers across New Zealand expected by the end of the year.

This will include 56 officers in Auckland, 11 in Wellington, 10 in Christchurch and four in Queenstown. The increases are part of ongoing efforts to boost our border capacity as international travel continues to rebound.

In recent months, 25 new quarantine officers have joined our border ranks, with others currently in training. In early August, 19 officers from our second cohort for the year graduated in

Auckland, where they will be based at the international terminal. Our third cohort of six officers also graduated in August. Two will be based in Christchurch and four in Wellington.

We congratulate all our graduates on their significant achievement. They have been through a rigorous training programme covering a wide range of technical knowledge, including biosecurity risks, legislation and communication.

We have two more cohorts underway this year and another round of recruitment is planned. Cohort four, comprising 24 trainee officers, had their orientation week in August and have started their training for passenger clearance in Auckland. They will graduate in mid-November. A special mention goes to Stephen Clement, who is the cohort's acting chief quarantine officer. We offer this role as a growth opportunity for people who have opted for our leadership career pathway.

The fifth and final cohort for the year began their training on 11 September and will graduate in December. The group of 19 is

made up of seven trainees in Wellington, eight in Christchurch and four officers in Queenstown.

Looking ahead, we will shortly be recruiting again for our first 2024 cohort, which will be based in Auckland.

New target evaluators meet increased demand

In addition to our new quarantine officers, 15 target evaluators graduated in August, joining the biosecurity whānau within the cargo area in Auckland.

The graduates have undergone a demanding three-month training programme to provide the first level of screening for imported cargo. Their role involves checking importation documentation, and clearing cargo or issuing directions for further actions, such as cleaning or treatment.

The graduates increase our team of target evaluators to 62, with 57 in Auckland, four in Christchurch and one in Hamilton. This includes seven new positions that have been created to meet an increase in workload over the last three years. They will be deployed in November – in time for the busy part of the new BMSB season.

Staffing levels for target evaluations will next be reviewed in February 2024 to ensure they are meeting demand.



Above: Newly graduated Wellington officers with family and biosecurity whānau.



Left: Bolstering the biosecurity frontline – Auckland graduates from the second cohort of trainee quarantine officers.



Biosecurity NZ has 15 newly graduated target evaluators to help screen imported cargo.

FMD risk from Indonesia reassessed

The likelihood of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) arriving from Indonesia is diminishing, resulting in further adjustments to our emergency border measures for goods and travellers arriving from this country.

Sea containers

Biosecurity NZ introduced verification checks for all arriving containers from Indonesia in July 2022, following news of an FMD outbreak in that country. The checks saw officers supervise the opening and unloading of containers at transitional facilities (TFs). This supervision was in addition to routine biosecurity checks conducted by accredited TF staff.

In October last year, we reduced the checks to 10% of arriving containers after determining the long transit time for sea cargo significantly lowered the risk of FMD.

The FMD risk from sea cargo has reduced further since the peak of the outbreak due to the introduction of a vaccination programme in Indonesia for potentially affected animals and the absence of spread to neighbouring countries. We now believe that the risk of FMD arriving in New Zealand from Indonesia is comparable to that from other Southeast Asian countries.

As a result, our officers no longer carry out the additional verification checks, but all containers continue to undergo scrutiny by accredited staff working at TFs.

Low levels of imported risk goods from Indonesia support this move. There have been no meat or animal products imported from Indonesia since October 2022.

The removal of the verification requirements will allow officers to be allocated to other duties, including clearing passengers at busy international airports and cargo verification checks for brown marmorated stink bug.

Officers will continue to randomly audit sea containers from all countries, including Indonesia, that have undergone checks at TFs.

Arriving air passengers

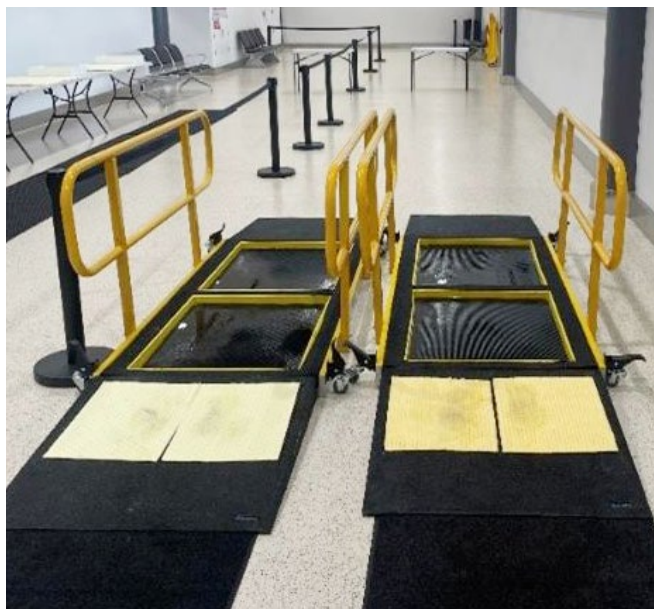
We have also made changes to the enhanced screening for air passengers arriving from Indonesia.

In particular, we no longer require travellers arriving directly from Bali to use a dedicated baggage carousel and risk assessment lane at Auckland Airport.

The move reflects confidence in our officers and current screening processes to identify passengers and goods that may carry FMD, including travellers who may have had potential contact with infected animals and those in higher-risk occupations.

We know 99.3% of passengers on indirect flights from Indonesia accurately declare their travel history. This gives us further assurance that our officers can identify and process these passengers accordingly.

We are continuing to disinfect footwear from passengers arriving on direct flights from Bali, using a footbath at the Auckland Airport arrival gate. Travellers also face additional risk assessment questioning by officers. And we still target travellers from Bali



with biosecurity messages throughout their journey, from booking to departure at Denpasar Airport, during the flight, and at the carousel.

We encourage travellers arriving directly from Indonesia to wear closed-toe shoes for their flight back to New Zealand, rather than open-toe footwear like jandals. This will speed up the process for disinfecting footwear.



FMD in South Korea

Enhanced border measures to mitigate the risk of FMD are also in place for air passengers arriving from South Korea.

South Korea reported a new FMD outbreak in May. As a result, we introduced extra risk assessment questions and inflight announcements for passengers travelling on direct flights from South Korea.

Biosecurity NZ is closely monitoring the situation in South Korea, which has experienced FMD outbreaks before. The World Organization for Animal Health does not consider South Korea to be free from FMD.

From the frontline

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

Finger shock

Queenstown officers were shocked to find what appeared to be a human finger in an x-ray tray in August. Yes, finger, as in what's normally attached to a hand!

The macabre mystery was solved when a passenger returned to collect what turned out to be his spare prosthetic digit. There were no biosecurity issues.



Not your average salami

Except for the whale image on the packaging, this looks like your average salami. It was declared by a traveller arriving at Queenstown Airport after a trip to Europe. According to the ingredient list (which was written in Norwegian), the product not only contained pork (which travellers are not allowed to bring into New Zealand), it was 50% Vagehval – minke whale. Some meat products, including whale meat, are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and may be prohibited or require official documentation to be imported. The salami was referred to DOC and destroyed.



Stop monkeying around!

This monkey sculpture made from a whole coconut, with additional googly eyes and ears, was one of two found in baggage carried by a passenger at Auckland Airport recently. The passenger was offered treatment for the quirky creations but declined, so both figures were destroyed.



Concealed seeds

Our Auckland Airport team also foiled an attempt to smuggle in a range of seeds destined for the garden. The seeds had been concealed in small bags within other bags of rice, fenugreek and dried vegetables. Arriving from Nepal in August, the passenger was fined and put on an alert list.



Worm snack destroyed

It was a sorry end for this bag of home-dried mopane worm, declared by a passenger arriving at Auckland Airport from Zimbabwe. Mopane worms are a species of emperor moth and native to southern Africa. They feed principally on mopane tree leaves, hence their name. If you're partial to dried worms, these make a tasty, high-protein snack. Unfortunately, as a biosecurity risk item, these worms were destroyed.



Queen of gems unearthed

A beautifully presented gift pack held a hidden treasure and a biosecurity risk.

Declared by a passenger arriving from Fiji at Queenstown Airport, the package contained an oyster shell. On inspection by a quarantine officer, the shell was found to be in sea water and, when shucked, to contain a pearl. To be allowed into New Zealand, shells must be clean

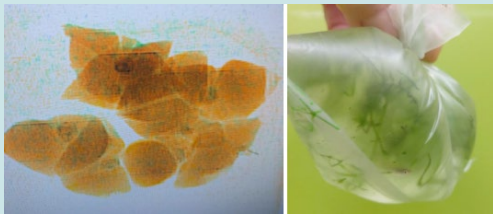
and dry, and cannot contain anything living. The shell was confiscated and destroyed. The passenger did not go home empty handed – they were able to keep the pearl.



From the frontline... continued

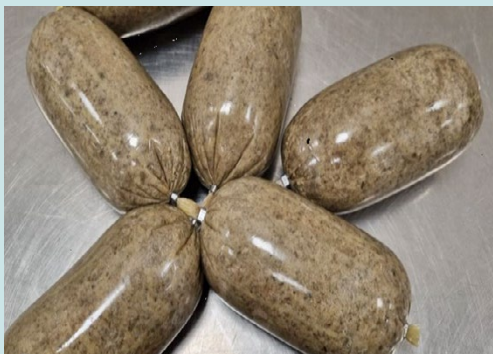
Detour for live fish

Recently, a parcel of live fish had an unexpected detour. The fish were meant to travel between cities in the United States, but went drastically off course, somehow ending up at the Auckland International Mail Centre. Needless to say, the parcel was urgently redirected back to its country of origin.



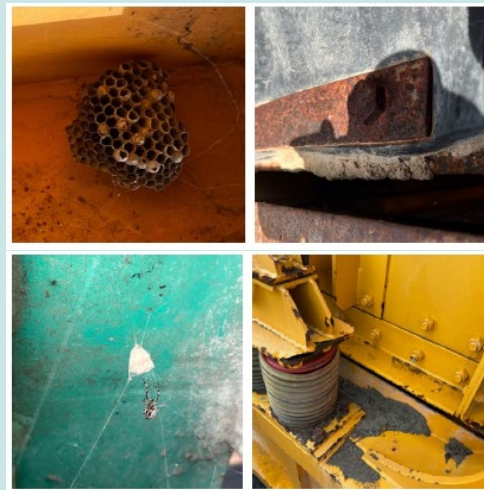
Haggis in baggage

Our Auckland Airport team intercepted 3kg of homemade haggis after the passenger arriving from the UK declared it when collecting his delayed baggage. The Scottish delicacy is made from offal (liver, heart and lungs, usually of sheep), suet, oatmeal and seasonings, and then packed into a sheep's stomach and boiled. With no labelling, there was a possibility the haggis contained pork, and therefore posed a biosecurity risk. It was destroyed.



Equipment provides perfect hiding place

A large shipment of tunnelling equipment arriving from Argentina to Auckland was in dire need of treatment. The equipment arrived in July at the port in 14 containers. An inspection found live spiders, soil and plant material, egg casings and wasp nests. Almost all of the equipment required treatment by way of a steam clean, fumigation and vacuuming before it was released.



Seeds for opium?

Our new detector dog Mable had her first significant find at the International Mail Centre recently, sniffing out a whopping 1.5 kg poppy seed pods in a package from Scotland. Poppy seeds in this quantity could be used to produce opium. This makes them not only a biosecurity risk, but a prohibited customs item. The find was referred to NZ Customs.



Dog paw stopped in its tracks

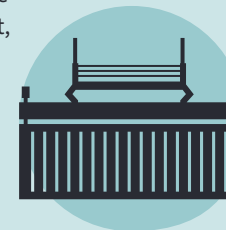
It was declared as a taxidermised dog paw in a package sent from the United States. The taxidermy job was obviously a fail as the paw was emitting an overpowering wet dog smell! The importer was given the option to treat the item before release, reshipe it or have it destroyed. As we didn't receive a reply, the item was destroyed.



Case of mistaken identity

Animal droppings found in a shipping container at a Wellington transitional facility recently raised alarm bells.

On further investigation by our border team, it was suspected that a snake was the likely culprit. A trained snake handler was called out, who found remains of an undetermined animal. The remains were later identified as a cat, not a snake.



Sorcery at work

It seemed like a straightforward case, with a passenger arriving at Auckland Airport from Vancouver declaring pet food.

X-ray screening and a baggage search, however, revealed some more sinister items. These included dried sage bundles with burnt stems wrapped in faeces-contaminated feathers, shells containing insect excrement and eggs, mugwort leaves and seed pods, tree bark – and books on witchcraft!

Both mugwort and sage are well-known witchcraft herbs, with mugwort burned or smoked to achieve a trance-like state.

The plant material, feathers and shells were destroyed, and the passenger was fined for their indiscretion.



Border activity for July/August 2023

	July-22	July-23	August-22	August-23
Passenger				
Total arrivals	308,106	510,658	310,389	459,122
NZ/Australia	239,065	340,084	238,538	301,288
Rest of world	69,041	170,574	71,851	157,834
Risk items seized	4,467	9,554	8,090	9,744
Risk items treated or destroyed	4,162	8,945	7,621	6,901
Infringement notices	265	585	290	608
Mail				
Mail items screened	1,166,971	1,101,597	1,329,765	1,253,387
Mail items requiring further inspection	1,927	1,938	2,360	1,794
Risk mail items treated or destroyed	354	265	506	238
Sea Containers				
Sea containers arrivals	58,245	55,342	59,475	58,206
Sea containers inspected	2,443	3,340	1,893	2,837
Cargo				
Cargo lines of interest to MPI	16,765	17,230	19,581	19,657
Cargo lines inspected	4,986	4,970	6,303	5,684
Cargo lines treated, reshipped or destroyed	925	759	1,068	1,246



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