

NEW MEASURES FOR PETUNIA SEED



The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is responsible for setting the import measures for imported seeds and live plant material in New Zealand. The import measures aim to prevent the entry of new pests and diseases that may threaten New Zealand's environment, economy, or human health.

MPI now require specific measures to be applied to prevent the entry of unapproved genetically modified (GM) petunias.

The import health standards for seed and nursery stock were amended under urgency, following a recall of unapproved GM petunias in a number of countries (including New Zealand), with the new measures coming into effect in June 2017. All importers of *Petunia* are required to comply with the new measures.

Why are the requirements changing?

MPI was recently made aware that GM varieties of *Petunia* exist in some countries. GM crops and their seeds are defined as new organisms under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. Under this act, import of any new organism into New Zealand (including GM crops) is illegal without approval from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

A list of GM petunia varieties would in other countries can be found [here](#).

What are the changes to the requirements?

A schedule specifically for *Petunia* seeds has been created in the import health standard 155.02.05: Seeds for sowing. All imported *Petunia* seed must now meet the requirements under the *Petunia* schedule which includes the requirement for:

- A phytosanitary certificate endorsed by the National Plant Protection Organisation of the exporting country. The full scientific name of the *Petunia* species and variety, plus the appropriate common name, must be specified on the phytosanitary certificate.
- A GM testing certificate, issued by one of MPI's approved GM Testing Laboratories to verify that the material being imported has not been genetically modified.

For more information on GM testing requirements, please refer to the [Seeds for Sowing import health standard](#) and the MPI [protocol for testing GM material](#).