



FEIJOA DO NOT APPEAR AT RISK OF MYRTLE RUST

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has carried out an assessment of the risk of feijoa (*Acca sp.*) being infected with the fungal disease myrtle rust and concluded that there is a very low to negligible risk.

Based on evidence collected as a result of the biosecurity response and advice from international experts, MPI has concluded that feijoa does not appear to be susceptible to myrtle rust or carry any significant risk of transmitting the disease to uninfected myrtle plants.

Since myrtle rust was first detected in mainland New Zealand in May 2017, there has not been any detection of myrtle rust infection in a feijoa plant.

Over the course of the response, MPI has surveyed more than 5,000 feijoa plants from nurseries and gardens where other myrtle species are infected with myrtle rust. To date, none of those feijoa plants sampled have been infected.

Outside of the response, there is a lack of overseas evidence to indicate that feijoa are susceptible. International myrtle rust experts have not seen any infected feijoa in countries where the disease is present. In addition, researchers have attempted to infect feijoas in controlled conditions and those plants did not develop symptoms.

FEIJOAS AND THE MPI CONTROLLED AREA

In the initial stages of MPI's response to myrtle rust, feijoa plants, being a myrtle species, were treated as susceptible on a precautionary basis. MPI has now determined that the movement of feijoa plants or plant material (including fruit) presents low risk and all restrictions on their movement have been lifted.

To help contain myrtle rust to known areas of infection, in June this year MPI introduced a Controlled Area and restricted the movement of plants from the myrtle family out of that defined area. The Controlled Area extends 10km from the known infected areas in Waitara, Taranaki and is still in place.

Under the original controls, it was unlawful to move feijoa plants or plant material out of the Controlled Area. It was also unlawful to move feijoas off individual properties that had legal controls in place (Restricted Places).

On Tuesday 12 September 2017, MPI amended the controls to exclude feijoa. Feijoas may now be moved freely within and out of the Controlled Area. Feijoas may also now be moved from Restricted Places.