



From the Editors

Welcome to the October issue of See, Contain, Report for 2025. Transitional facilities (TFs), TF operators (OPs) and Accredited Persons (APs) play a crucial role in the sea cargo pathway by providing secure locations with trained and knowledgeable staff to manage uncleared risk goods. New Zealand is well known as a world leader in biosecurity. By working together, we deliver strong and better biosecurity.

In this issue, we spotlight a fascinating snake discovery by an AP at a TF in Napier and the quick response from Biosecurity NZ's snake handling team. In our feature article, "Strengthening the Frontline – An Auditor's Perspective," we hear from Tauranga-based biosecurity auditor, Anita Wells, who provides an important reminder of hygiene management at TFs. We also hear from the MPI Learning and Development team, who have been busy rolling out refreshed training packs for APs and OPs.

If you have a great story you would like to share with Biosecurity NZ, other OPs and APs nationwide, or if you have any questions or issues you would like highlighted, please contact us: Pauline Williamson (pauline.williamson@mpi.govt.nz), Janine Mayes (janine.mayes@mpi.govt.nz) or Phil Hodgson (philip.hodgson@mpi.govt.nz).

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide regular updates on the management of containment or transitional facilities by OPs, APs, and other staff. This and previous issues are available on the Biosecurity NZ website. [Resources for transitional and containment facilities](#) | [NZ Government](#)

Discovery at the Border: An Exceptional AP Find

Greg Sorensen: Regional Quarantine Officer (greg.sorensen@mpi.govt.nz)

On the first day of spring in sunny Napier, Hawke's Bay, Biosecurity NZ quarantine officers received an unusual report. AP, Cindy Dixon, at the TF Pickmee Fresh, in Hastings had discovered a snakeskin at the front of a shipping container while unloading. Cindy immediately closed the container and contacted Biosecurity NZ.

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The snakeskin found at the entrance of the shipping container

Hastings, known for being the "Fruit Bowl of New Zealand" due to its abundant orchards and vineyards, its world-class wine, and its famous outdoor activities, had an unexpected visitor - or at least a trace of one.

Quarantine officers promptly contacted Biosecurity NZ's Animal Health Incursion team. In response, Senior Incursion Investigator Lisa Maria dispatched two certified Biosecurity NZ snake handlers, Mark Eames and Loren Bryant, to assist with the safe unloading of the container.



Biosecurity snake handlers, Mark Eames & Loren Bryant

Once the container was reopened, the goods were carefully removed. Starting from the top, the goods were placed on the floor for inspection. Using snake hooks the handlers did not take long to spot a live, active snake. The snake was safely captured, placed into a snake bag, and then secured in a plastic container. The team continued to inspect the remaining crates. No other snakes were found, but several pieces of shed snakeskin were discovered and collected.

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The snake was identified as Reptilia: Colubridae, *Platycephalus plinii*, commonly known as a Banded Racer. This was its first recorded interception of *Platycephalus plinii* in New Zealand, and only the second snake to arrive here from India.

Platycephalus plinii is native to India and Pakistan, where it thrives in forests, rocky areas and open landscapes. It's a skilled climber and often found in grass, bushes. It can also be found in houses, farms, parks and gardens.

It is an active hunter, killing its prey by constriction. Its prey consists of small mammals like rats, mice, shrews, bats, frogs, lizards, birds, and worms. Adults reach around 1.5m in length.

What a find by Cindy and her team of APs at Pickmee Fresh Ltd, whose quick thinking and decisive action played a key role in this biosecurity success. Their efforts showcase the strength and responsiveness of New Zealand's biosecurity system, helping to keep our country snake-free and safe.



Platycephalus plinii secured inside the snake bag

Strengthening the Frontline – An Auditor's Perspective

Anita Wells: Biosecurity Auditor (anita.wells@mpi.govt.nz)

Hygiene management at TFs has become a key focus as this is one of the most commonly non-compliant findings identified during Performance Based Verification (PBV).

It is the responsibility of the OP to maintain a robust hygiene management system that ensures the facility remains clean and free from biosecurity risks at all reasonable times. This includes preventing the accumulation of debris, dunnage, packaging materials, soil, or other waste that could pose a biosecurity threat or provide refuge for pests. Maintaining the hardstand area is particularly important, as it helps prevent contaminants from collecting in cracks in the container pad.

The TF manual must outline the hygiene management procedures in place to achieve these outcomes.

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Before containers arrive at the TF, the container hardstand area should be inspected to ensure cleanliness. Items such as machinery or pallets should be cleared from the devanning area, and any nearby open drains covered to prevent pests from escaping. Once devanning has been completed, all sweepings from inside the container, along with any contamination found on the hardstand, must be collected and placed in the secure, lined biosecurity bin. Waste must be disposed of through a Biosecurity NZ-approved system, in accordance with the procedures in the TF manual.

The Biosecurity Business Pledge – Partnering to Protect

Jo Darby: Manager Engagement Programmes (Jo.Darby@mpi.govt.nz)

The **Biosecurity Business Pledge** is a network of forward-thinking companies committed to strengthening New Zealand's biosecurity system. Together, members share knowledge, tools, and practical steps to reduce risk and protect the businesses, communities, and natural assets that underpin our economy.

Pledge members recognise that biosecurity is not an area of competition; it's an area where we succeed collectively. For a nation whose prosperity relies heavily on trade, tourism, and the unique value of our natural environment, protecting these advantages through strong biosecurity practices is simply good business. It builds capability, preparedness, and resilience across supply chains and sectors.

By joining the Pledge, your business demonstrates leadership and commitment to safeguarding New Zealand's future. Members gain access to peer networks, tailored tools, and shared insights that support better risk management while also helping to protect the resilience of our exports, workforce, and economy.

The power of this collective approach was on full display during **Biosecurity Awareness Month in August**. With the support of Pledge members, biosecurity messages reached audiences nationwide through LinkedIn, Facebook, podcasts, newsletters, and more. Engagement with Pledge resources far exceeded expectations, with downloads and shares showing strong interest and uptake. More importantly, businesses led by example demonstrate to customers, partners and peers that biosecurity is a shared responsibility and a cornerstone of sustainable business.

Biosecurity Awareness Month was a genuine collective success, highlighting what can be achieved when businesses unite around this vital cause.

For more about the work of the Pledge, or to access freely downloadable resources, visit bbpledge.nz.

Empowering Biosecurity Through Learning - A Message from MPI's Learning and Development (L&D) Team

Learning and Development Team: (APTraining@mpi.govt.nz)

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The L&D team has been busy behind the scenes rolling out refreshed training packs for APs and OPs.

These updated packs include everything Biosecurity NZ approved training providers need: clear presentations, easy-to-follow facilitator guides, resource books, practical activities, and assessments that help reinforce key biosecurity knowledge. It's been designed to make training more engaging, with an applied and practical focus across delivery.

One of the most exciting advancements has been the integration of digital assessments for both AP and TF operator training. This shift is a game changer to save time, reduce paperwork and improve accuracy across the board. It has been very well-received so far.

A major refresh of the TFO training programme was also shared in August, with input from our biosecurity partners during a dedicated Train the Trainer Day held in Auckland. Feedback from our Biosecurity NZ approved training providers and auditors within Biosecurity NZ helped shape the content to reflect real-world challenges and ensure the training hits the mark. On top of that, a new training programme has been mapped out for APs working in the air baggage space to meet specific operational needs.

All these updated training programmes have now been published and are currently in use. A big thank you to everyone who shared their insights and feedback throughout this process. Your contributions have helped shape these important updates and ensure the training resources remain fit for purpose.



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Strength in Partnership: The Role of the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) in NZ's Biosecurity System

Bagus Perdana (Goose): Relationship Manager, GIA Partnerships, Office of the Chief Biosecurity Officer, (bagus.perdana@mpi.govt.nz)

New Zealand's biosecurity system is built on layers, each one designed to prevent, detect, and respond to threats that could impact our environment, economy and way of life. One of the most unique and powerful layers is the partnership between Biosecurity New Zealand and industry groups under the Government Industry Agreement for Readiness and Response (GIA).

The GIA framework gives the Crown and Industry a chance to work together to deliver better biosecurity outcomes. It's quite unique to New Zealand. In many countries, when a biosecurity risk breaches the border, the government often leads the response alone, with industry having little say, despite being directly affected. In contrast, New Zealand's approach is built on collaboration.

At its core, the GIA is about asking: *"How can we work together?"* It's a proactive model that involves joint planning, readiness, and response. The goal is to be prepared for priority pests or diseases that might arrive. If they do arrive, it's a combined effort to respond swiftly and effectively.

One example of this collaboration is the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Council. The Council is the governance and coordination body established to implement the BMSB Operational Agreement. The BMSB Operational Agreement, first signed on 13 July 2017 and renewed in 2023.

The Operational Agreement outlines shared goals such as:

- Raising public, importer and tourist awareness of entry pathways
- Rapid detection and eradication of BMSB post-border
- Improving readiness and response plans through targeted research and development
- Planning for long-term management and impact reduction
- Enhancing community support for response activities

Signatories and the parties making up the BMSB Council are:

- Ministry for Primary Industries
- Apples and Pears New Zealand Incorporated
- Kiwifruit Vine Health Incorporated
- Vegetables New Zealand Incorporated
- Tomatoes New Zealand Incorporated

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- Horticulture NZ
- New Zealand Avocado Growers Association
- New Zealand Winegrowers Incorporated
- Seed and Grain Readiness and Response Incorporated
- Summerfruit NZ

Recently, Biosecurity New Zealand and the BMSB Council along with other GIA industry partners ran Exercise Harvest Shield 2.0, a joint simulation designed to test readiness for a potential BMSB incursion. This exercise highlighted the strength of the Crown–Industry relationship and the continuous improvement projects that underpin our biosecurity system.

One final reflection, given the critical role of the border frontline network, we would like to acknowledge the vigilance and commitment of border officers, vessel crews, port staff, airport personnel, APs and OPs. Their efforts in identifying and reporting BMSB at the border are a vital part of our biosecurity layers and frameworks.

Last season, 40 live BMSB were reported by the border frontline network across New Zealand. This figure is a testament to the growing biosecurity awareness and sense of responsibility among those working at the frontline.

This level of commitment provides assurance to our industry partners, growers, farmers, and everyday New Zealanders that those operating at our borders and import facilities understand the importance of awareness in protecting Aotearoa from BMSB.

The GIA model stands out as a testament to what can be achieved when Government and Industry work together. It's not just about managing risks; it's about building resilience through partnership.

Review of the Vehicle, Machinery and Parts Import Health Standard (VMP.IHS)

Abigail Durrant: Senior Adviser: (Abigail.Durrant@mpi.govt.nz)

Biosecurity NZ is reviewing the Vehicle, Machinery and Parts Import Health Standard to make sure its requirements remain fit for purpose. The proposed changes include:

- Adding Uzbekistan to the list of countries that are required to treat goods for brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB)
- Aligning requirements for used parts with those for used machinery
- Requiring treatment for used boats with water ballast systems
- Allowing new non-fully enclosed trailers to use a manufacturer's declaration to be excluded from BMSB requirements
- Introducing post-treatment requirements for used wires, cables and ropes
- Updating definitions

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- Improving the format and structure of the standard

We held engagement sessions with stakeholders and industry groups in June 2025. We now invite your feedback on the proposed changes.

You can find the consultation documents on the Ministry for Primary Industries website: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/consultations/review-of-the-vehicles-machinery-and-parts-import-health-standard/>

Please send your feedback to vmp.consultation@mpi.govt.nz by **COB 10th November 2025**.

New Inbox for TF Enquiries and Support

Phil Hodgson: Senior Adviser (phillip.hodgson@mpi.govt.nz)

We have a new national inbox for all TF specific enquires and support requests. You can contact our team at TFSupport@mpi.govt.nz. The team at the other end of this inbox can make sure that your request is dealt with appropriately and forwarded onto the local verifier if needed. This inbox replaces the old FacilityApprovals@mpi email address. Please still use SeaContainer@mpi.govt.nz for your AP-related enquires and applications.

Reminder: Notify Biosecurity NZ of Nominated Delegate (ND) Changes at PoFA and TFs.

Pauline Williamson: Team Manager, Border Facilities (pauline.williamson@mpi.govt.nz)

Under Section 40 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, any *person*, defined broadly to include the Crown, a corporation sole, or any group of individuals (incorporated or not), may apply to be approved as the operator of a TF.

When a corporation is approved as the TF operator, there must be a nominated business representative (Nominated Delegate (ND) to act as the primary point of contact for all biosecurity matters. This individual effectively serves as the “face and mind” of the corporation in its biosecurity responsibilities.

The decision to appoint a ND is at the discretion of the corporation, but the ND must have sufficient authority and understanding of biosecurity regulations to ensure compliance.

When there is a change of ND at a TF, the new ND does not need to go through a formal application process. **However, it is essential that the facility's operating manual is updated to reflect the change and Biosecurity NZ is notified.** This can be done by sending an email to TFSupport@mpi.govt.nz.

Know your Enemy – White Rot Fungus – *Phanerochaete chrysosporium*

Phil Hodgson: Senior Technical Adviser (phillip.hodgson@mpi.govt.nz)

White-rot fungi can affect many tree species.

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They are characterized by their ability to break down the lignin, cellulose, and hemicellulose of wood, affecting the structural integrity of the timber. The name "white rot" derives from the white colour and rotting texture of the remaining crystalline cellulose from wood degraded by these fungi.

What am I Looking For?

You can identify this fungus by looking for black lines on the growing margin. This may look like part of the wood grain, but they won't follow the natural flow of the wood.



Another telltale sign is the loss of colour in the wood. This discoloration happens as the fungus digests lignin, the compound responsible for the wood's colour and structural integrity.

The striking contrast of black lines against pale wood, known as spalting, adds a unique visual appeal that makes the material highly sought after by artisans and woodworkers. This natural patterning transforms ordinary timber into a decorative element, ideal for crafting furniture, bowls, and other artistic pieces. Despite its attraction to woodworkers, wood products contaminated with fungus pose a serious biosecurity threat to New Zealand

Inspection During Devanning

Be especially vigilant during the devanning process, paying close attention to wooden pallets, packaging materials, and any manufactured wood products. These items are common carriers of fungal growth and may show early signs of spalting or other wood decay.

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White Rot on Vases from Fiji



White Rot on Oak

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