PLANT AND ENVIRONMENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Suspect rust on citrus

The notifier reported apparent rust on the trunks of lemon trees, and blue spots on leaves in his citrus orchard in Gisborne. No rust pustules or symptoms were observed on the samples sent to the laboratory. Lab testing has confirmed *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* on the leaf samples. This species is already established in New Zealand and occurs on many cultivated plants including citrus.

Beetle larvae in imported citronella candle holders

A member of the public notified MAF about citronella candles with bamboo handles that were infested with insects. The offending items were purchased in mid-2010 from a store in Auckland. Specimens were identified as *Chlorophorus annularis* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae), an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993. An investigation revealed that four consignments came into the country in 2010 but were not stopped at the border since wooden handles were not declared at the time of import, leading to their misclassification as low-risk consignments. As the items were neither treated nor accompanied with a phytosanitary certificate they were deemed unauthorised goods. Out of a total of 1404 candle holders, 273 were recalled and destroyed at the importer's expense. The rest had already been sold.

New egg parasitoid of *Listronotus bonariensis*

AgResearch notified MAF of a previously unrecorded egg parasitoid of the Argentine stem weevil, a serious pest of New Zealand pastures. While preparing an experiment it was found that a significant proportion of the weevil eggs were parasitised. The parasite was identified as *Stethynium* sp. (Hymenoptera: Mymaridae). Species of this genus are best known worldwide as parasitoids of leafhopper eggs. There are several native species, but their host associations are not known. This parasitoid is minute, and inhabits the soil surface. Further actions to manage potential risk are not considered desirable, because it may be an unrecognised native species, it would be very difficult to reliably determine its distribution and how long it has been in New Zealand, its risk status is likely to be outweighed by its benefit status, and there is no acceptable or practical means of eradication.

The MAF Investigation and Diagnostic Centres (IDCs) are accountable for the investigation and diagnosis of suspect exotic pests and diseases. In the plant and environment sectors IDC has investigators and scientists based in Auckland and Christchurch. IDC provides field investigation, diagnostic testing and technical expertise for new pests and diseases affecting plants and the environment. IDC also conducts surveillance and response functions, and research and development to support surveillance and incursion response activities.

Swarms of stinging insects suspected from log carrier ship

A swarm of flying, stinging insects was noticed invading the Tauranga Bridge marina, apparently after the back door of a recently berthed log carrier ship was opened. The ship was found to have made a first port call elsewhere in New Zealand before arriving at Mt Maunganui. The insects were ants identified as *Hypoponera eduardi*, a species which is widespread throughout New Zealand.

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