

## Warning to importers over potentially devastating stink bug pest

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The bug has the potential to devastate the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture sectors. Photo credit: File

Importers have been delivered a stark warning from authorities about new biosecurity rules.

The new import rules came into effect in July, and aim to keep the brown marmorated stink bug out of New Zealand.

The bug has the potential to devastate the horticulture and viticulture industries, but Biosecurity NZ is concerned some importers and shippers may be unaware of the new rules.

"The importing industry needs to be aware that high-risk cargo that hasn't been treated before arrival will not be allowed to come ashore in most instances," said spokesperson Paul Hallett.

Biosecurity NZ formally issued the new import rules on July 22. They require off-shore treatment of imported vehicles, machinery and parts from 33 identified risk countries, and all sea containers from Italy during the stink bug season.

In the past, only non-containerised vehicle cargo from risk countries required treatment before arriving in New Zealand.

"We can give advice on approved off-shore treatment providers where necessary. Industry should also be aware that sensitive goods that would be damaged by fumigation or heat-treatment can be managed by on-arrival inspection in some cases," said Hallett.

He said Biosecurity NZ would work closely with the industry to address any operational concerns about the changes, and was optimistic the rules will reduce clearance delays for cargo this season.

"There will be a lot less treatment required on shore, which should speed up the time it takes to get cargo released once it arrives in New Zealand."

Similar to previous years, this season would see increased surveillance and inspection of arriving vessels and cargo from countries with established stink bug populations.

Last season, Biosecurity NZ turned away four contaminated vessels from New Zealand waters and intercepted 151 live stink bugs at the border.

The stink bug season runs from September to April.