Vinehealth AUSTRALIA

BIOSECURITY ALERT
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MAROONDAH PIZ: NEW PHYLLOXERA DETECTIONS

Victoria's Maroondah Phylloxera Infested Zone (PIZ) boundary has been extended to the north, following new detections of phylloxera in the existing zone. The extension was gazetted on 30 March 2017 and was announced by Agriculture Victoria yesterday. The extension captures four additional vineyards in the Yarra Valley region. Updated phylloxera zone maps can be found here: http://www.vinehealth.com.au/biosecurity-in-practice/maps/phylloxera-management-zones.

While the new detections were found within the existing PIZ boundary, the Maroondah PIZ was extended to maintain a 5km buffer zone between an infested property's boundary and the PIZ boundary. The size of the extension appears large, as it encompasses national and state forests and aligns with main roads. The Healesville-Kinglake Rd was the first main road to the north, therefore the Maroondah PIZ has been extended to this point.

This latest boundary extension is the sixth expansion to the original Maroondah PIZ, which was established in 2006 following the first detection of phylloxera in the region. The previous extension to the Maroondah PIZ was in April 2016.

CEO of Vinehealth Australia, Inca Pearce, says another extension to this PIZ boundary is concerning, and highlights the importance of implementing farm-gate hygiene practices, monitoring vines routinely and reporting any suspect vine decline early to limit spread. "Phylloxera doesn't respect vineyard boundaries or state borders. We must work together nationally to ensure we stop the spread of phylloxera," Inca said.

"Vinehealth Australia recognises the need to act with urgency to respond to a constantly evolving biosecurity environment, with trends in trade, tourism, climate change and business ownership increasing the extent and nature of biosecurity risks. These new detections underscore the urgency."

Grape phylloxera is a small insect that lives on the roots of grapevines. Once established, death of own-rooted vines is inevitable. "South Australia has some of the toughest controls in the world designed to prevent phylloxera incursions. We invest heavily in protocols, surveillance and research to keep SA phylloxera free," Inca said.

Vinehealth Australia conducts a rolling surveillance program, where each region is surveyed every 3-5 years using a combination of aerial imagery and vineyard inspections. Vinehealth is also working with state regulators to strengthen plant quarantine standards, investing in cutting-edge research to improve phylloxera detection methods and implementing a communications strategy to raise awareness of phylloxera and farm-gate hygiene practices.

The new phylloxera detections underline the importance of farm-gate hygiene.

Phylloxera on a matchstick. Photo courtesy of Agriculture Victoria (Rutherglen).

Phylloxera adult. Photo courtesy of Agriculture Victoria (Rutherglen).

Inca says the new infestations also illustrate the importance of vineyard owners and managers having an intimate knowledge of the health of their vines. “If your vines are declining, investigate quickly to identify the cause. If you suspect a phylloxera infestation, you must notify your state agricultural department or Vinehealth Australia,” she says.

“And it’s imperative that vineyard owners, managers, staff and all visitors respect state plant quarantine standards and implement best practice farm-gate hygiene on every property. Biosecurity is a team game and we are only as strong as the weakest link.

“Vineyard owners, wineries, contractors and carriers must understand the regulations and documentation required for the movement of grapes and grape materials, machinery and equipment, diagnostic samples, soil, cuttings, rootlings and potted vines, within and between states. And ensure all people who visit your property clean and disinfest their footwear on entry and exit, in accordance with the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfestation Protocol.”

Vinehealth recommends vineyard owners and managers check they align with the top 10 best practice farm-gate hygiene steps, outlined in a downloadable poster on its website: http://www.vinehealth.com.au/media/Vinehealth-best-practice-farm-gate-hygiene-poster-black-A3.pdf

And in the wake of this incursion, Vinehealth says it is imperative that vineyard owners and managers check any links they may have with businesses operating in the extension area. Vinehealth welcomes calls about the Maroondah PIZ on (08) 8273 0550.

For a copy of the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfestation Protocol visit: http://www.vinehealth.com.au/media/Vinehealth-Footwear-and-Small-Hand-Tools-Disinfestation-Protocol-White-A3.pdf

For interactive maps showing Phylloxera Exclusion Zones (PEZ), PRZ and PIZs across Australia’s grapegrowing regions visit: https://maps.phylloxera.com.au/virtual/pmz/

For information about movement requirements for phylloxera risk vectors visit: http://www.vinehealth.com.au/essentials/regulations-and-policies/phylloxera-regulations/

Or: http://www.vinehealth.com.au/essentials/regulations-and-policies/national-phylloxera-management-protocol/