

Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostic Standards – Meeting 18

Communiqué

The Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostic Standards (SPHDS), who reports to the Plant Health Committee (PHC), provides national leadership to sustain and improve the quality and reliability of plant pest diagnostics in Australia. SPHDS delivers on the [National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Strategy \(NPBDS\)](#), which aligns with Schedule 4 of the [Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity \(IGAB\)](#).

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries hosted SPHDS members and advisers at the AgriBio facilities at La Trobe University, Melbourne on 12th to 14th May 2014. At this meeting, SPHDS reviewed or finalised activities undertaken since the previous meeting in October 2013, as described below against the key themes of the NPBDS.

Key outcomes

1. Developing diagnostic capability to identify High Priority Pests

- PHC endorsed four protocols (European canker, Colorado potato beetle, Glassy winged sharpshooter and Red Turpentine Beetle) developed by SPHDS as National Diagnostic Protocols (NDPs).
- SPHDS submitted two protocols (Huanglongbing and Mal Secco) to PHC for endorsement as NDPs.
- The Diagnostic Standards Working Group (DSWG) finalised another three protocols (American serpentine leaf miner, Russian wheat aphid and Grapevine leaf rust) at SPHDS 18. These will now be submitted to PHC for endorsement.
- The DSWG completed a scheduled five-year review of NDPs 1-6. This includes investigating options to update NDP1 – Apple Brown Rot to differentiate between new species of *Monilinia*.
- The current status of protocol development is 27 endorsed NDPs and 67 NDPs under development (25 in draft, 23 under review, 16 in edit following review and 3 finalised ready for endorsement).
- SPHDS completed a desktop review of available information relating to the molecular identification of 28 fungi on the High Priority Pest (HPP). This will be extended to all pests on the HPP list.

2. Enhancing the National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN)

- SPHDS again coordinated the Annual Diagnosticians Workshop (ADW) for 2014 in Melbourne. Feedback has been very positive and a final report is available on the website (<http://plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/resource-hub/documents/workshop-reports-and-outcomes/annual-diagnosticians-workshop-2014/>) for NPBDN members. SPHDS initiated planning for the ADW 2015 at SPHDS 18.
- Round one of the Laboratory Residential program coordinated by SPHDS is complete. Further details of the successful activities are available on the [website](#) for members. Feedback on the program has been very positive.
- SPHDS assessed round two applications under the Laboratory Residential program, with nine applications being awarded.
- Governance rules for the NPBDN, a NPBDN charter and a governance summary were endorsed in March 2014 by PHC. These are available on the [website](#) for members. Further governance documentation has been identified for development over the next twelve months.

- The Professional Development Working Group (PDWG) facilitated training to NPBDN members in phylogenetics (associated with the ADW 2014) and identification of beetles of biosecurity concern.
- The PDWG will assume responsibility for the Advanced Diagnosticians' Development framework (ADDf). The ADDf provides specialist taxonomic training to plant diagnosticians across all jurisdictions.
- The National Professional Development Framework for the NPBDN was updated. Professional development identified for 2014 - 2016 includes training in the identification of aphids and whiteflies of biosecurity concern and molecular diagnostics of Ascomycetes.

3. Implementing quality management systems

- Round two of the national proficiency testing program coordinated by SPHDS has been successfully completed, and planning for round three was finalised.
- The Accreditation and Resources Working Group (ARWG) reviewed the [Biological Testing ISO/IEC 17025 Application Document, Appendix F: Plant Health Diagnostic Testing](#).

4. Facilitating the development of relevant national information systems that support diagnostics

- SPHDS members provided input into the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre's (PBCRC) business plan for the sustainable future of the Pest and Disease Image Library (PaDIL).
- SPHDS is developing a strategic approach to ensure the long-term viability of reference collections, including linkages to the Australian Plant Pest Database (APPD).

Other

- SPHDS reviewed recommendations and actions of the NPBDS and provided advice to PHA as part of the current review of the overarching National Plant Biosecurity Strategy (NPBS).
- SPHDS is reviewing the supporting documents of PLANTPLAN relating to the protocols and procedures for the collection, transport, diagnosis and confirmation of Emergency Plant Pests (EPPs)
- The next scheduled face-to-face meeting of SPHDS is 7-9 October 2014 in Sydney.

Further information

Further information about SPHDS and its activities can be found at the [NPBDN website](#) or provided by your [local SPHDS representative](#) or the SPHDS Executive Officer at sphds@agriculture.gov.au.



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