



Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics Communiqué – SPHD34

The Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD) held its 34th meeting in Canberra, ACT, on 17 – 18 May 2022. Issues considered by SPHD as part of the meeting are detailed below:

▪ **Material Transfer Agreements**

SPHD Members discussed the significant impact that Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs) have had on National diagnostic processes, and how Australian collections are more likely to require MTAs into the future.

▪ **Implementation of the National Plant Pest Reference Collections Strategy (NPPRCS)**

The Reference Collection Implementation Plan Working Group (RCIPWG) provided a report to the Subcommittee and recommended that its future work around national plant pest reference collections be reviewed as part of a funded workshop that will focus on the development of reference collection standards. RCIPWG also reported that two-way communication with the Council of Heads of Australian Entomology Collections (CHAEC) has now been implemented, this was recommended as part of the NPPRCS report. The RCIPWG provided advice that SPHD should liaise with the Subcommittee for National Plant Health Surveillance (SNPHS) in order to harmonise protocols pertaining to the lodgement of voucher specimens.

▪ **Enhancing the National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Network (NPBDN)**

SPHD heard from the Network Implementation Working Group (NIWG) that Covid-19 had caused significant delays to the provision of the workshops that are recommended through the Professional Development Framework. The joint Annual Diagnosticians' and Surveillance Workshop planning is underway and is due to be held in Melbourne from 30 August to 1 September 2023. The call for abstracts will be advertised on NPBDN shortly as will the call for applications for diagnostic residentials. The substantial interest in the face-to-face *Miridae* and *Lygaeoidea* workshop, held in late March/early April 2022, has NIWG planning new training opportunities for NPBDN members. NIWG is expanding the expertise within the working group and seeking nominations to be a member. SPHD also heard the NPBDN report and the continued membership numbers who have joined the network.

▪ **National Diagnostic Capacity (Diagnostics Protocol Working Group – DPWG)**

The DPWG provided a report on the workshop for the importation and domestic movement of viable organisms for diagnostics. Several topics were discussed by SPHD for further exploration at the importation and domestic movement of viable organisms for diagnostics workshop 3. The Subcommittee noted the DPWG update that all final National Diagnostic Protocols, including the five recently endorsed NDPs, are available on the NPBDN website - <https://www.plantbiosecuritydiagnostics.net.au/resources/>

- **Implementing quality management systems: Proficiency Testing**

The DPWG reported that further delays caused by COVID-19 meant that the latest round of the proficiency testing program had been delayed. The Subcommittee further reported that the Australian Government (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) reviewed the national plant health testing program and provided an interim report which was welcomed by the DPWG and the Subcommittee.

- **National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Strategy Update (NPBDS)**

SPHD acknowledged the progress made by Plant Health Australia to establish the National Plant Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Group to oversee implementation, reporting and review across the suite of national plant biosecurity strategies. The update highlighted the importance of effective coordination to successful implementation of the National Plant Biosecurity Diagnostic Strategy.

- **Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI) update**

The Program Director of PBRI, Jo Luck, provided an update to the Subcommittee on the biannual PBRI Symposium held at the National Wine Centre on 11 and 12 May 2022.

- **Date of Next Meeting**

SPHD35 will be held from 11–12 October 2022 in Perth, Western Australia.