



Biosecurity Act Overhaul – Frequently Asked Questions

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About biosecurity

What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity is about preventing pests and diseases from getting into New Zealand or helping stop their spread if they do get here. Every New Zealander has a role to play, whether you're a grower, farmer, mountain biker or nature lover, biosecurity affects you.

Good biosecurity practices protect our taonga, the things we value and the wellbeing of our country.

What are the benefits of good biosecurity practices?

All New Zealanders are encouraged to undertake good biosecurity practices for many reasons, here are some examples:

- It keeps our incredible country safe from pests and diseases.
- It protects our taonga species and many of the things that are unique to our Maori and national cultural identity
- It protects our way of life so we can enjoy our unique environments and the food we eat.
- It helps protect our primary industries from pests and diseases by encouraging primary industry producers to regularly review their biosecurity practices, which in turn protects their business, boosts productivity and enhances their way of life.

About New Zealand's biosecurity system

Why does New Zealand need a biosecurity system?

Our biosecurity system is in place for a number of reasons. Here are just a few of them:

- So New Zealanders, our plants and animals, and our unique natural resources, are kept safe and secure from potential harmful pests and diseases from other countries.
- To ensure our primary industry export products meet export requirements and are fit for their intended use.
- To provide New Zealand exporters with access to international markets.

Does our biosecurity system just cover New Zealand?

Biosecurity is practiced at a local, regional, national and global level.

Global: Managing risk offshore, developing international standards and rules, trade and bilateral agreements, monitoring emerging risks, setting import health standards.

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National: Intercepting biosecurity risks at the border, verifying compliance with the rules. National readiness, surveillance, response and management.

Regional: Eradication, containment and control of pests and diseases within and between regions.

Local: Protecting our taonga and the places that we value.

What can New Zealanders do to help protect our country from pests and diseases?

We're all responsible for protecting New Zealand from pests and diseases. We encourage all New Zealanders to take personal responsibility for biosecurity to ensure our unique environments and the value of our primary industries are maintained.

It takes all of us to protect what we've got. Find out more about what you can do to protect our country from pests and diseases [here](#).

About the Biosecurity Act 1993

What's the Biosecurity Act 1993?

The Biosecurity Act provides the legal framework for the Ministry for Primary Industries and others to help keep harmful organisms out of New Zealand. And the framework for how we respond, and manage them, if any do make it into the country. It covers:

- pre-border risk management and standard setting
- border management
- readiness and response
- long term pest management.

Who's responsible for implementing the Act?

Biosecurity activities are split between MPI, other government departments and regional councils.

MPI oversees the implementation of the legislation, manages national surveillance programmes, border biosecurity systems, responses to incursions and several national control programmes such as the 'Check, Clean, Dry' campaign and the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme.

What does the Act cover?

The Act provides a legal framework for MPI and others (e.g. OSPRI) for the exclusion, eradication and effective management of pests and diseases that could cause harm to the environment, economy, human health and social and cultural values. It also provides the framework for how we respond, and manage pests and diseases, if any do make it into the country.

You can find out more information about the Act, here: [Biosecurity Act information](#)

Where can I find a copy of the Act?

You can find a copy of the Act 1993 [here](#).

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About the Overhaul

Why is the Act being overhauled?

The Act has served us well, however it's been 26 years since the Act became legislation and a lot has changed. There are new pressures on the system and it doesn't support the seamless and efficient management of risk through the whole biosecurity system as well as it should.

We're experiencing significant year on year increases in the volume of people and goods coming to New Zealand; we've seen a global technology revolution; our climate is changing – all of these things have increased our biosecurity risk.

This is exactly why we need to update the Act, so we can ensure our biosecurity system remains robust and resilient. Our lifestyles, culture, livelihoods and unique environment depend on it.

Who'll be involved in the overhaul?

MPI is working with Māori, industry, environmental groups and other key stakeholders to look at what changes might be needed to the Act – both for now and for the future.

Are there any key issues you'll be focusing on?

The Terms of Reference sets out the scope of the overhaul. This includes issues with the Act, such as:

- Incorporating an overarching purpose statement and set of guiding principles;
- How Te Ao Māori is reflected in biosecurity regulation;
- Clear and consistent roles and responsibilities across the biosecurity system;
- How the system is funded, including for biosecurity responses;
- The setting of import requirements;
- Striking the right balance between enforcement and incentives; and
- Addressing gaps in the legislation that biosecurity responses and other events have revealed.

More details are in the Terms of reference document on the MPI website, on the [Biosecurity Act 1993 overhaul webpage](#).

When will stakeholders get a chance to have input into the overhaul?

We have started working with key stakeholders, including industry, environmental groups, our Treaty partners and representatives of wider Māori interests to talk about the main issues and possible changes that could be made to the Act.

Will MPI look at recent incursions and take them into account during the overhaul?

Yes, we will be looking at how recent incursions were managed, what worked and what didn't work, relating to certain aspects of the Act.

Are GIA partners going to have to pay more for biosecurity responses?

At this stage we don't have all the answers. We want to include industry stakeholders in those conversations. What we can say is, funding won't stop, but it'll be managed better. Government will continue to contribute its share.

What about compensation? Is that going to be reviewed too?

As part of the overhaul of the Act we will be reviewing how compensation is managed and will take on board learnings from the *Mycoplasma bovis* outbreak.

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How does this review relate to Biosecurity 2025?

A review of the Act was identified as an initial project as part of Biosecurity 2025's **Build resilience** programme of work. Its focus is to work together to develop people, assets and networks underpinned by a fit-for-purpose regulatory framework. You can download the [Biosecurity 2025 Implementation Plan](#).

Where can I find out more information about the overhaul?

Up-to date information about the review can be found on the MPI website, here: www.mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/legislation/biosecurityactreview

Tranches

Why is MPI doing the overhaul in two 'tranches'?

The biosecurity system, and the Act that underpins it, is crucial to our economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing. There are some aspects of the Act that we want to address quickly, to ensure that any immediate issues can be resolved promptly. But there are other aspects of the overhaul that need time for us to have meaningful conversations.

For that reason, we will be progressing this work on two different timeframes.

What will MPI be looking at during each 'tranche' of the overhaul?

We will be looking into issues that impact our economic outcomes first; with a view to public consultation being concluded by the end of 2019. And we will be looking at issues that impact our environmental, social and cultural outcomes over a longer timeframe, with a view to public consultation in the second half of 2020. This longer timeframe will give us time to ensure that we have canvassed these complex issues with those most directly affected by them before working with the wider public.

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