

On-farm biosecurity for the tea tree industry



Farm biosecurity is the protection of your property from the entry and spread of harmful exotic pests, diseases and weeds. Biosecurity measures implemented on farm also play an important role in protecting the Australian tea tree industry from exotic pests that affect plant industries overseas. Keeping Australia free of exotic pests provides a real trade benefit domestically and internationally. In addition, early detection and response to new pests and diseases can increase the chance of eradicating them and reduce their impact on your plantation and the industry in terms of crop losses and unnecessary costs.

Six easy ways to protect your property

- Be aware of biosecurity threats to your plantation.
- Ensure your seedlings are pest-free, and preferably certified.
- Maintain good plantation hygiene.
- Check for pests and diseases frequently.
- Abide by biosecurity legislative regulations.
- If you see anything unusual report it.

What are the risks?

New and potentially damaging pests and diseases can be brought onto your plantation in many ways such as people, machinery, equipment and planting material. By implementing simple preventative measures in your day-to-day operations, you will help reduce the risk of a new pest establishing on your property.

What do staff and visitors bring to your property?

Plant material, soil and pests can easily be carried between properties and regions on peoples clothing and footwear. To help protect your plantation:

- Have biosecurity signs in clear view.
- Ensure that staff, contractors and consultants and anyone entering your plantation knows about your biosecurity requirements. These messages should be included in visitor induction sessions, handouts or operating procedures.
- Ensure people's footwear and clothing are clean before entering the plantation.



Adequate planning is essential for on-farm biosecurity.



When entering a property, notify the owner or office and check their biosecurity requirements.



Biosecurity signs serve to alert people of the potential impact of their visit and remind them that they share the responsibility for maintaining biosecurity.



- Ask that people stay to paths and designated roadways as much as possible when moving around the plantation.
- Keep a record of visitors which includes where they have come from and where they are going next.

Are vehicles and machinery coming onto your property clean?

Soil and plant material containing pests, diseases and weeds can be carried on vehicles and equipment such as tractors, harvesters, sprayers and field bins. Protect your plantation by:

- Inspecting vehicles and machinery before allowing them onto your plantation.
- Providing designated parking areas for visitors.
- Providing wash-down facilities including a hard pad and high-pressure water.

Is your planting and propagating material safe?

Always source planting material from reputable nurseries that have systems in place to ensure the supply of high quality, pest and disease-free material. Thoroughly inspect material on arrival and maintain a register of your propagation material to allow products to be fully traced if there is a problem.

How closely should you look at your crop?

Regular monitoring is a core part of your plantation management practices and gives you the best chance of spotting something new soon after it arrives. New pests, diseases and weeds will occasionally enter and establish in your crop but the earlier you detect a new pest, disease or weed, the better the chances of eradication. To increase your chances of detecting something new:

- Know the normal pests associated with tea tree so you know if you spot anything unusual.
- Investigate all trees that are not performing or are showing pest symptoms, and get them checked out if you are not sure why.
- Record all surveillance activities.



Regularly washing down of machinery and vehicles will reduce the risk of inadvertently spreading pests and diseases.



Develop your own farm biosecurity kit and keep it in your vehicle so you can use it as you move around.

More information

General biosecurity information and checklists can be found at farmbiosecurity.com.au and pest fact sheets for the tea tree industry can be found at phau.com.au

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