



Netherlands Food and Consumer  
Product Safety Authority  
*Ministry of Agriculture,  
Nature and Food Quality*

# NVWA

## Annual phytosanitary report 2017

*Abstract*



The Netherlands Food and Consumer Products Safety Authority (NVWA) safeguards plant health in the Netherlands. One of our goals is to prevent the introduction and to limit the spread of regulated plant pest and diseases. To accomplish this task, the NVWA carries out phytosanitary inspections at import, monitors the presence of quarantine organisms in plant production chains and the natural environment, and inspects outgoing consignments of plant products. Knowledge of the biology of the regulated organisms is indispensable for risk-based monitoring of plant health. The NVWA also oversees elimination of regulated organisms in case of outbreaks. Trade of plant products is facilitated by certifying that the whole country, certain areas, production chains or consignments do not harbour regulated plant pests or diseases. The current report provides an overview of the inspections that were carried out and the associated findings of quarantine organisms in 2017, describes measures to eliminate those organisms, lists the current pest status of all regulated plant pest and diseases, and signals potential new treats. Plant production is important for the Netherlands. For example, the area used for production of flower bulbs and potatoes covers a total of 26.000 and 162.670 hectares, respectively. A significant amount of products are actually produced here, but in addition many products from elsewhere are shipped to other destinations via the Netherlands. In total, the trade flow fruits and vegetables amounts to 3,0 million tons of fruits and vegetables and 7,4 billion pieces of ornamental plants (including cuttings).

When a shipment does not comply with the phytosanitary requirements laid down by the importing country, a **notification** shall be sent to the exporting country. The number of notifications of interceptions of quarantine pests sent by the Netherlands to countries outside the EU was similar in 2017 and 2016, amounting to 358 and 337, respectively. The number of notifications relating to incomplete phytosanitary certificates declined in 2017. The number of interceptions of quarantine pests at the EU level continued to decline in 2017. One explanation for this decline is the stricter EU policy which has, among other things, led to import bans on products from countries with a history of non-compliance. This seems to have triggered improvements in Ghana and countries in Southeast Asia. In contrast to the decreased number of interceptions of several organisms, other organisms were intercepted more often in 2017, such as *Phyllosticta citricarpa*, *Bemisia tabaci*, *Spodoptera littoralis* and *Spodoptera frugiperda*. For the latter organisms, European emergency measures are imminent due to an outbreak of *Spodoptera frugiperda* in large parts of Africa. The number of notifications that the Netherlands received from non-EU countries increased significantly in 2017. This was due to the frequent interception of harmful organisms and the interception of prohibited products. Especially the number of nematode findings in perennial plants is noteworthy and requires improvement. Noteworthy are several shipments in which quarantine organisms were detected by third countries after transit via the Netherlands. Due to the large trade volumes, the Netherlands receives relatively many notifications from other EU countries. The interceptions of *B. tabaci* by the United Kingdom on potted plants remain of the main concern.

The **ornamental plant sector** is very diverse and includes both the production of plant propagation material and end products. The production of plant propagation material is organized on an international scale. In 2017, the number of interceptions of regulated plant pests and diseases on incoming shipments decreased to 109 from 174 in 2016. This approaches the level of 2015 when 93 interceptions were made. Specifically, *Thrips palmi*, *Spodoptera littoralis*, *Liriomyza huidobrensis* and *Bemisia tabaci* were often intercepted. This corresponds with the findings of 2016. These species are well-adapted to the conditions in greenhouses in the Netherlands. After a notification about *Viteus vitifoliae* in a shipment of *Vitis* plants track-and-trace took place and this organism was successfully eliminated after destruction of the original batch. PSTVd was detected at a production site of *Solanum muricatum*. The earlier outbreak of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 1 in rose seems almost eradicated, since only one company was found to be infected after the monitoring period in 2017. In the monitoring programme of the NVWA (Fytobewaking), quarantine organisms such as *Hirschmaniella* spp. and *Opogona saccheri* were detected. *Bemisia tabaci* and *Liriomyza*-species were intercepted during inspections in unregulated products at import. In addition to a total of 60,000 shipments approved for export in 2017, 14,500 shipments were rejected, mainly due to the presence of insects or soil.



The **fruits and vegetable** sector covers the whole chain from seed production to field or greenhouse production of the fruits and vegetables. The industry is characterized by large volumes of imports and exports of plant products. The import of citrus fruits from South Africa to the EU was again a difficult point in 2017. The ongoing discussion has resulted in stricter requirements for citrus black spot and citrus cancer as of 1 January 2018. From this date onwards, the False codling moth (*Thaumatotibia leucotreta*) is regulated on all products, which might lead to a considerable number of interceptions on, for example, citrus and pepper fruits. In 2017, the number of interceptions at import for this sector was comparable to previous years. At the end of 2017, Tomato chlorosis virus was discovered at several tomato growers. This virus can be transmitted by both greenhouse whitefly and tobacco whitefly. For the time being, the Netherlands focuses on disease control during the production season and will try to eliminate the virus when the cropping cycle is restarted. In addition, a survey will be carried out in tomato, bell pepper, eggplant and chili pepper. No quarantine organisms were found in the regular monitoring programme of the NVWA in 2017. During inspections in non-regulated products, several quarantine organisms were found, including *Bemisia tabaci* and *Spodoptera* caterpillars, particularly on herbs from various countries of origin and on non-regulated vegetables from Surinam.

The main activities with regard to regulated organisms in the **arable crops sector** are focused on the production of (seed)potatoes. Potato is an important crop due to intensive cultivation, extensive production and many (inter) national transport movements. Various pest and diseases can cause (phytosanitary) problems in potato cultivation, including potato cyst nematodes (PCN), *Meloidogyne chitwoodi*, brown rot, ring rot and wart disease. Brown rot is present in surface waters in some Dutch areas. This is why the NVWA maintains an irrigation ban for ware potatoes and starch potatoes in these areas. In any case, a ban on the use of surface water applies to seed potatoes. In 2017, brown rot was detected in one batch of seed potatoes. Track-and-trace revealed that this contamination was probably introduced via surface water that flooded the fields during a summer storm in 2015. Ring rot was not detected in 2017. On the other hand, the number of *M. chitwoodi* and *M. fallax* findings reached record levels. Most findings originate from known contaminated areas, but as of 1 January 2018 three new designated areas have been established for these nematodes. The presence of increased virulence of *Globodera pallida* has already attracted attention and there are indications of a similar problem in *Globodera rostochiensis*. PSTVd was not detected in potatoes in 2017, but was found in seeds of *Solanum sisymbriifolium*, which is used as a trap crop for PCN. *Solanum sisymbriifolium* was not known to host PSTVd prior to this finding. The so-called 'teeltvoorschriften' are aimed at prevention and these requirements for cultivation practises contribute to pest and disease control in the Netherlands. In 2017, the delineation of the wart disease prevention zones was evaluated, while an update of a number of prescriptions was initiated.

A large portion of production within the **flower bulb sector** is destined for export and therefore, in addition to the EU requirements, the phytosanitary requirements of third countries play a major role. Such requirements mainly focus on viruses and soil-bound pests. In 2017, 71,946 consignments were inspected during a total of 8,244 inspections. The rejection rate was 0.84%, which is very similar to previous years. A relatively large number of consignments were rejected because of the presence of soil, which can partly be explained by the wet weather conditions during harvest. Export certification is primarily based on visual observations, but importing countries increasingly use laboratory tests in their inspections. In order to prevent interceptions of latent virus infections, the BKD enables the testing of propagation material for the presence of *Arabidopsis mosaic virus* and *Strawberry latent ringspot virus*. This approach was highly successful and no infections were detected in the verification samples that were taken before export in 2017.

Plant health in the **tree nursery sector** is closely intertwined with plant health in forests, gardens, street plantings and parks in the so-called **green space**. Infections in nurseries may have major implications for natural areas and vice versa. The bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* poses a concrete threat to the industry. The emergency measures imposed by the EU - which are currently applied to large-scale outbreaks

in Italy, France and Spain - would have a very significant impact on trade and this requires a high level of awareness among stakeholders in the industry to avoid introduction of the disease in the Netherlands via planting material. During surveys in natural areas, no quarantine pests were found in 2017. Several quarantine pests were detected in tree nurseries, but all of these were pests known to be present in Europe and which are only regulated on specific plant species, such as fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*). Attention should be paid to the requirements that apply to protected areas (Zona Protecta, ZP). The Netherlands cannot meet the ZP requirements for all products, so for example no *Castanea* can be shipped to the United Kingdom which originates the Netherlands. As of January 1, 2018 the ZP requirements for *Prunus*, *Ulmus*, *Pinus* and *Palmae* have been extended. In 2017, the Fuchsia gall mite (*Aculops fuchsiae*) was detected in two private gardens, and eradication measures have been carried out.

**Packaging wood** is considered a phytosanitary risk due to the hidden presence of harmful organisms inside the wood. Despite of the ISPM 15 requirements for treatments of wood, several living insects are detected in packaging wood each year. In 2017, the Netherlands inspected packaging wood of more than 2,700 shipments - this number includes shipments for which an inspection is not obligatory – and found that 2.5% of these shipments were non-compliant with the ISPM 15 requirements. Most non-compliances were caused by the absence of a correctly applied mark. In addition to the inspections of the shipments, insect traps were placed in the vicinity of high-risk locations (locations with imports of natural stone from Asia, waste wood or firewood). No quarantine pests were found in these traps. During monitoring activities in Nuenen - where one specimen of *Monochamus galloprovincialis* was caught last year - no new specimens were detected and we concluded that there is no indication for the existence of a population, which is the case in one forested dune area in Noord-Holland.

The National Reference Centre (NRC) of the NVWA is a centre of expertise for regulated plant pests and diseases and for organisms that pose a new threat to plant production in the Netherlands. The NRC has knowledge of the biology of these organisms and the expertise required to develop, validate and implement a diverse array of detection and identification methods. The **annual diagnostic report** provides background information on new findings and the implementation of new methods. More than 12,000 samples were analyzed in 2017. These samples were collected during inspections or they were submitted by other laboratories, industrial partners and private individuals. At the end of 2016, the NRC obtained accreditation under ISO17025 on the basis of a flexible scope, which strengthens the possibility to bring the broad activities of the NRC under accreditation. High demands are placed on diagnostic procedures and new knowledge obtained from research is essential to meet future demands. The investigated organisms are often new in the Netherlands or may not even occur here. The NRC is also working on implementation of new technologies, such as Next Generation Sequencing. In 2017, special attention was paid to the bacterium *Ralstonia solanacearum*, the fruit fly *Ceratitis quilicii*, the fungi *Phyllosticta citricarpa* and *Monilinia polystroma*, the nematodes *Xiphinema americanum* and *Radopholus similis*, and the viruses *Tobacco ringspot virus* and *Tomato Chlorosis virus*.

The pest status of regulated organisms can be used to substantiate export guarantees of Dutch plant products. The main changes with regard to the **pest status** of regulated organisms are related to three outbreaks in 2017 and concern a change from the status “Absent” to “Transient: actionable, under eradication” for *Aculops fuchsiae*, *Tomato chlorosis virus* and *Tomato ringspot virus*. As of 1 January 2018, PSTVd is no longer regulated as an IAI organism and eradication measures will no longer apply to the production of ornamental plants. The pest status for ornamentals will therefore change from transient to present. In addition, the published list of organisms has been supplemented by the organisms which are regulated in the EU as of January 1, 2018. The most important additions being *Bactericera cockerelli*, *Keiferia lycopersicella* and *Saperda candida*; none of these species occur in the Netherlands.



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