

Horticulture New Zealand has called for a bolstering of the country biosecurity measures after a single male Queensland fruit fly was found in a surveillance trap near Auckland.



The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is investigating the find, which was made late afternoon on Feb. 16 in the suburb of Grey Lynn and formally identified the following day.

MPI chief operations officer Andrew Coleman said only the one male insect had been trapped and this did not mean New Zealand had an outbreak of fruit fly.

"The Queensland fruit fly has been detected five times before in northern New Zealand - in Whangarei and in Auckland. In all cases MPI carried out thorough surveillance and no further flies were found," he said.

Coleman added the MPI had responded swiftly and field teams starting work yesterday setting additional fruit fly lure traps to determine if other flies are present in the area, and if other flies are there, preventing any spread of the pest out of the area.

"It is vital to find out if this insect is a solitary find or if there is a wider population in Auckland," he said.

"This insect, if established here, could have serious consequences for New Zealand's horticultural industry. It can damage a wide range of fruit and vegetables and could lead to restrictions on trade in some of our horticultural exports."

The MPI said it had now placed legal controls on the movement of fruit and some vegetables outside of a defined circular area which extends 1.5km (1 mile) from where the fly was trapped in Grey Lynn.

### **Spread of pest in Australia 'out of control'**

Since the find, Horticulture New Zealand has called for the reinstalling of 100% x-rays of passenger bags at the country's international airports until at least the end of summer.

The organization said in a release this detection was the fourth in three years and put New Zealand's NZ\$5 billion (US\$3.8 billion) horticultural industry at risk.

"So far it is only one fly. And we fully support the Ministry for Primary Industries' response to this threat," HortNZ president Julian Raine said.

HortNZ requested the public back the Ministry's efforts, especially in the exclusion zone areas, as it said the pest would also have big impacts on home gardeners.

It added it was laying the blame for this breach on Australia's inability to control the pest, claiming the country's biosecurity protection within its own state borders was 'seriously breaking down.'

The group said that last week the residents of Adelaide were told of the second detection of Queensland fruit flies in their city in less than two months, while seven flies found in the last detection.

"South Australia is supposed to be a Queensland fruit fly free state. Obviously the spread of this pest is out-of-control in Australia and the interstate regulators are powerless to stop its progression south," Raine said.

The Queensland fruit fly can only come from Australia and some Pacific islands, most likely via a passenger coming off a plane or on a consignment of imported fruit.

"Reinstating the 100% x-ray of passenger bags coming from across the Tasman would go a long way towards helping us improve our protection and lower this risk," Raine added.

"It is not acceptable to go through this drama every summer. New Zealand horticulture deserves better protection."

HortNZ added the cost to the horticultural industry would be two-fold, involving the destruction caused by the pest and the ongoing cost of attempting to control it as well as the cost of international markets closing to New Zealand's products.

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