

INFORMATION FOR WOODLAND OWNERS – *Phytophthora ramorum* INFECTED LARCH WOODLANDS IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

The following Note gives information about the grant support that is available to assist all private woodland owners in Scotland where they have been served with a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) for larch trees infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*.

Please also see details of the “Management Zone” below where we will not issue SPHNs.

The spread of *Phytophthora ramorum* is being monitored closely and the details of this support may be subject to review and change at any time.

Background

Phytophthora ramorum is a fungus-like pathogen first detected in the UK in 2002 but not seen in Scotland outside the nursery trade until 2007.

Its global host range is wide (>130 plant species) and until 2009 was mostly found to be infecting shrub species such as Rhododendrons (particularly *R. ponticum*), Viburnum, Pieris etc.

As it has caused significant damage to oak trees in parts of the USA, it is also referred to as Sudden Oak Death, but this is a misnomer in the UK, where it has only very rarely affected our native oak. Several other tree species, including some conifers, are susceptible.

In the UK, the trees on which the pathogen is known to sporulate (reproduce) are sweet chestnut, ash, holm oak and Japanese larch. The latter is particularly vulnerable and experience to-date has shown that they will die quickly when infected.

P. ramorum was first detected on Japanese larch in south west England in 2009 and was found in Japanese larch in West Scotland in 2010.

The latest information on *P. ramorum* can be found on our web site at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pramorum>.

Serving a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN)

The Management Zone

The Plant Health (Forestry) (*Phytophthora ramorum* Management Zone) Order 2014 became law on 5th June 2014. This Order applies only to an area designated as the “Management Zone” in the South West of Scotland. You can see the boundary of this zone on our website.

Forestry Commission Scotland Plant Health Inspectors will no longer issue SPHNs for infected trees discovered **within** the Management Zone. Movement of any larch

material from within the management zone to any site external to it is controlled through this order.

If you wish to move timber from inside the management zone to a site outside the Management Zone then this must only be to an authorised processor.

When woodland outside the Management Zone has been identified as infected, Forestry Commission Scotland will serve notice using powers under the Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005. We will serve this Notice on the woodland owner.

The woodland owner is then legally bound to carry out the actions defined in the SPHN.

Forestry Commission Scotland Conservancy staff will liaise with you to discuss the requirements of the SPHN and the timetable to be followed.

Time is of the essence in responding to the requirements of SPHNs. Felling infected Larch trees and those around them and applying the specified biosecurity measures will be the minimum requirement under the Notice.

Once you have completed this minimum requirement you will have the choice of:

- leaving the felled trees on site; or
- converting those trees into roundwood products and selling them to processing facilities licensed to handle Phytophthora-affected wood. This may allow you to recover some income from sale to offset the costs of meeting the requirements of the SPHN. It is also a valid way of removing the felled trees from the site even if it would not make a profit.

All the road movement of timber from site and its subsequent processing has to be operated under the Phytophthora Licence System.

Grant Support

Grant support is available for sites that have been served a SPHN. The Restocking – Delivering Diversity and Resilience in Woodlands grant is also available on land within the designated management zone for *P. ramorum*.

Information on grant support can be found at

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/tree-health/>

Approved Agents

A list of approved agents for woodland owners in Scotland will be maintained on the FCS website at: <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/grants-and-regulations/forestry-grants/technical-support/forestry-related-options>

If you wish to apply to become an approved agent please complete the pre-qualification questionnaire also available on this web page.

Description of work required for Agent Services capital items

A woodland owner can decide to engage the assistance of an agent to help manage the process depending on the owners' situation and wishes. The agent must be one chosen from the approved list provided by Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS).

This list contains the names of those agents who have been successful with their pre-qualification questionnaire and are therefore suitably qualified and experienced to give advice and organise the work required.

The landowner will be paid by Forestry Commission Scotland upon successful completion of the specified services. You will be responsible for paying for the work organised by the agent. It is also your responsibility to ensure the biosecurity measures prescribed in the SPHN are adhered to by all parties.

Forestry Commission Scotland will not get involved in discussions or disputes between responsible persons, agents and contractors except in so far as to ensure compliance with the SPHN.

It is recommended that you arrange an appropriate contract with your nominated agent for the services and the clearance work to be provided.

The following gives a description of the three levels of service that can be expected from approved agents. Please remember that only 1 type of service is allowed per SPHN. Infected sites within the management zone are not eligible for agent services capital item grants.

Advisory: Advice and information only

The agent will visit the owner to discuss his/her minimum obligations under the SPHN. The advice will include the options for taking the support payment for clearing or felling immature/inaccessible/uneconomic larch, and the recovery and marketing of wood through the road haulage and timber processing licence system (see: www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-849e4r).

After this visit the owner can make the choice of organising the work themselves or using the other levels of service from the approved agent.

Advice on:

- The requirement of the SPHN;
- The clearance payments, what they are and what they apply to;
- The realistic options for undertaking the work and the likely costs to the landowner.
- Approved Agent to supply written confirmation of the service provided to accompany grant claim.

Compliance: Advisory visit and organising work to meet the minimum requirement of the SPHN.

In addition to the advisory visit, the agent will organise and supervise contracts for work to meet the minimum requirements of the Statutory Plant Health Notice.

If the landowner decides to retain the agent, after initial advice, to organise the clearance work, the agent will provide the following additional services as quickly as possible:

- Making an application for the *Phytophthora ramorum* grant funding;
- The sourcing and contracting of competent and trained resource to undertake the work;
- Agreeing costs, in writing, with you before work takes place;
- Supervision of the work including ensuring that Health and Safety measures are met;
- Assistance to claim the *Phytophthora ramorum* grant funding.
- Written confirmation of the services provided to accompany grant claim.

Harvesting and Marketing: Advisory visit and full service to achieve SPHN requirements and organisation and supervision of extraction, transport and sale of timber in accordance with Health and Safety and road haulage/timber processing licence procedures.

Where the trees to be cut and their location offer an opportunity to recover marketable produce then you have the choice to do so. In this case, the agent will provide the following services

- Making an application for the *Phytophthora ramorum* grant funding;
- The sourcing and contracting of competent and trained resource to undertake the work;
- Agreeing costs, in writing, with you before work takes place;
- Supervision of the work including ensuring that Health and Safety measures are met;
- The measuring and marketing of produce;
- Organising licences for haulage and secure despatch;
- Chasing timely payment for you.
- Assistance to claim the *Phytophthora ramorum* grant funding.
- Written confirmation of the services provided to accompany grant claim.