



# Biosecurity Update - Smelly and unwanted

## Work continues in an effort to stop the brown marmorated stink bug taking hold in NZ

Sophie Badland

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**THE BROWN marmorated stink bug (BMSB) is one of the most unwanted exotic pests for the New Zealand wine industry and many other horticultural crops. Damage from its feeding makes fruit unsaleable, and when frightened it emits a pungent volatile chemical that smells like sweaty socks or rotting coriander and has the potential to cause taint in wine. BMSB continues to make its way around the world and is regularly intercepted at our border. As the end of the high-risk season nears, here is an update on this most unwanted pest and the activities of the BMSB Council who work to prevent its establishment in New Zealand.**

### MORE SPREAD

BMSB has expanded its range in South America, with researchers from Argentina reporting several finds of adult BMSB in Buenos Aires. This means there are now two southern hemisphere countries posing a BMSB risk to New Zealand – the pest has been established in Chile since 2017.

Over the latest high-risk season (since September 2024), Australia has been responding across the country with enhanced surveillance to detections in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. These detections are associated with known entry pathways, and as yet there is no evidence of established breeding populations in Australia. In February 2025, an adult BMSB was also found in a border surveillance trap in Tasmania, with a second one found very close by a month later. Enhanced surveillance is now also in place in Tasmania and authorities are considering treatment options.

In light of these detections, NZ Winegrowers continues to work closely with Biosecurity New Zealand and other industry partners via the BMSB Council (set up under the Government Industry Agreement for biosecurity readiness

and response) to understand if there is increased risk to New Zealand and how that risk is best mitigated.

The BMSB Council currently has 10 partner organisations – Biosecurity New Zealand, NZ Apples & Pears, NZ Avocado, Summerfruit NZ, Vegetables NZ, Processed Vegetables NZ, Kiwifruit Vine Health, Seed and Grain Readiness and Response, Tomatoes New Zealand and NZ Winegrowers. The Council has an annual workplan with several projects under way. These focus on developing public and grower awareness of BMSB, access to control tools that can be used in a BMSB response, surveillance for early detection and work with international partners to enhance our readiness and understanding of the pest.



The brown marmorated stink bug is about the size of a one dollar coin



BMSB trap in a park in Santiago, Chile

Two of the current projects are described below:

## TESTING TRAPS AND RESPONSE

Aerodynamic wind-vane traps (developed by Plant & Food Research) were incorporated into the BMSB surveillance programme in New Zealand two years ago. These traps had tested well for BMSB capture in Italy where BMSB population levels are high. To try to determine their efficacy for early detection purposes (where BMSB population levels are low), BMSB Council representatives travelled to Chile last year and alongside staff from the Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero established 15 aerodynamic traps in and around Santiago, where BMSB was detected in 2017. Standard sticky panel traps were also set up for comparison purposes. Final reporting and data on trap captures across the high-risk season in Chile is due by the end of the month, but results are looking promising.

In August the BMSB Council will be running a BMSB response simulation

focused on an incursion at a major place of first arrival – the Port of Tauranga. The simulation will test the operational response planning and help to identify gaps and improvements. Participants from industry, the Port, local iwi, Biosecurity New Zealand and Australian biosecurity agencies will be involved. This is the Council's second simulation; the first was at a horticultural site in Hawke's Bay three years ago and provided many learnings which have since been picked up in new projects and incorporated into revised plans.

## PREVENTION MEASURES

Help ensure BMSB does not establish in New Zealand:

- If you are travelling overseas, check your luggage carefully to ensure you aren't bringing back any hitchhikers, or anything harbouring a biosecurity risk.
- If you receive any international parcels or goods purchased online, open them in a small, enclosed room so you can capture and contain anything

that might crawl or fly out.

- Keep your eyes open in the vineyard. Walk the rows when you can and look for signs of pest and disease. Ensure you and your staff know what BMSB looks like.
- If you are importing vineyard equipment from overseas, open it up in an enclosed space such as a shed or garage. Thoroughly inspect it before use to ensure there are no insects present. Open all compartments, use a torch if necessary, and check underneath too.

If you think you see a BMSB – or anything else unusual – catch it, snap it (take a photo), and report it to the Biosecurity NZ hotline on 0800 80 99 66 and to New Zealand Winegrowers Biosecurity Team ([biosecurity@nzwine.com](mailto:biosecurity@nzwine.com)).