Biosecurity Plan for the Berry Sector now includes all berries

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Over the last year, Plant Health Australia has worked with Berries Australia and technical experts to develop a biosecurity plan which includes all three berry industries, recognising the relationship between the berry industries and their shared biosecurity threats. The combined biosecurity plan was endorsed in March 2025, after extensive review by industry and government.

An industry biosecurity plan provides a framework for the coordination of activities and investment in biosecurity, enabling industry, government and stakeholders to better prepare for, and respond to, biosecurity threats. The biosecurity plan will be reviewed annually and updated when new information is available.

Previously the strawberry, Rubus and blueberry industries were covered by separate biosecurity plans, but in 2020 a joint Biosecurity Plan for the Berry Sector (Version 1.0), covering both strawberry and Rubus was developed. At that stage, the information in the Biosecurity Plan for the Blueberry Industry (Version 1.0) had not been reviewed since 2016, so could not be incorporated fully into the Berry Sector plan.

A major part of an industry biosecurity plans is the development of a Threat Summary Table (TST). This table is a compilation of all exotic pests and diseases (not present in Australia) known to affect the specific crop. Each pest or disease on the TST is given an overall risk rating based on four criteria; entry, establishment, spread potential, and economic impact. The risk ratings then inform the list of high priority pests for that industry, with any pest or disease with a high or extreme rating included as a high priority exotic pest. The development of a TST and assessment of each pest is a complex and time-consuming process.

As an example, the TST developed for the biosecurity plan for the Rubus and strawberry industries listed 330 exotic pests and diseases, which were all assessed and given a risk rating to identify the greatest risks to industry.

In 2024, the TST for blueberries was reviewed, identifying over 120 exotic pests and diseases. This information was incorporated into the new Biosecurity Plan for the Berry Sector (Version 1.4), and a list of high priority exotic pests for the berry sector was developed (see table). The list includes 32 high priority exotic pests, with 5 shared between all berry industries, and the remainder affecting either one or two berry types.

As well as identifying the high priority exotic pests for the berry industries, the biosecurity plan lists established pests of biosecurity concern, including those subject to interstate movement controls, for example fruit flies, or pests which are managed by growers through good biosecurity practices, such as Charcoal Rot in strawberries.

The plan also details current mitigation and surveillance activities being undertaken by both industry and government, and identifies available resources including contingency plans, fact sheets and diagnostic protocols, that have been developed for pests relevant to the berry sector. This helps to identify gaps in the sector's biosecurity preparedness, enabling prioritisation of biosecurity activities and allocation of responsibilities for undertaking specific actions. The combined biosecurity plan aims to reduce fragmentation and duplication of biosecurity activities within the berry industry.

When published, the Biosecurity Plan for the Berry Sector (Version 1.4) will be available on request from Plant Health Australia (admin@phau.com.au). For more information contact Angela at AngelaAtkinson@berries.net.au

Berry Sector High Priority Pest List
(in alphabetical order of pest type, and affected industry)

Affected industry	Scientific name	Common name	Risk
Invertebrates			
Acari (mites)			
Rubus, Strawberry	*Tetranychus turkestani*	Strawberry spider mite	HIGH
Strawberry	*Oligonychus ilicis*	Southern red mite	HIGH
Coleoptera (beetles and weevils)			
Blueberry, Rubus, Strawberry	*Popillia japonica*	Japanese beetle	HIGH
Diptera (flies and midges)			
Blueberry, Rubus, Strawberry	*Drosophila suzukii*	Spotted Wing *Drosophila*	EXTREME
Hemiptera (stink bugs, aphids, mealybugs, scale, whiteflies and hoppers)			
Blueberry, Rubus, Strawberry	*Halyomorpha halys*	Brown marmorated stink bug	HIGH (Blueberry) EXTREME (Rubus, Strawberry)
Blueberry, Rubus	*Homalodisca vitripennis* (with *Xylella fastidiosa*)	Glassy winged sharp shooter or GWSS	EXTREME
Rubus, Strawberry	*Lygus lineolaris*	Tarnished plant bug	HIGH
Blueberry	*Ericaphis fimbriata* (with Blueberry scorch virus)	Blueberry aphid	HIGH
Blueberry	*Scaphytopius acutus* (with Blueberry stunt disease)	Sharp nosed leaf hopper	HIGH
Rubus	*Euschistus conspersus*	Consperse stinkbug	HIGH
Strawberry	*Lygus rugulipennis*	Bishop bug, European tarnished plant bug	HIGH
Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths)			
Blueberry, Rubus	*Lymantria dispar* (*L.d. dispar, L. d. asiatica, L. d. japonica*)	Spongy moth complex	HIGH
Blueberry	*Argyrotaenia velutinana*	Red banded leafroller	HIGH
Blueberry	*Croesia curvalana*	Blueberry leaftier moth, rough skinned cutworm	HIGH
Blueberry	*Lymantria monacha*	Nun moth	HIGH

Affected industry	Scientific name	Common name	Risk
Thysanoptera (thrips)			
Blueberry, Rubus, Strawberry	*Scirtothrips dorsalis* complex (exotic species)	Chilli thrips	HIGH
Blueberry	*Scirtothrips citri (syn. Euthrips citri)*	California citrus thrips	HIGH
Rubus	*Thrips fuscipennis*	Rose thrips	HIGH
Strawberry	*Frankiniella intonsa*	Flower thrips	HIGH
Pathogens			
Bacteria (including phytoplasmas)			
Blueberry, Rubus	*Xylella fastidiosa*	Blueberry leaf scorch	EXTREME
Strawberry	*Xanthomonas fragariae*	Angular leaf spot	HIGH
Fungi			
Blueberry, Rubus, Strawberry	*Monilinia fructigena (syn. Oospora fructigena, Sclerotinia fructigena)*	Brown rot	HIGH
Blueberry	*Botryosphaeria cortices (syn. Physalospora cortices)*	Blueberry cane canker, blueberry stem canker	HIGH
Blueberry	*Botrytis pseudocinerea*	Grey mould	HIGH
Blueberry	*Godronia cassandrae (syn. Fusicoccum putrefaciens)*	Canker of blueberry, *Fusicoccum* canker	HIGH
Blueberry	*Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi (syn. Sclerotinia vaccinii-corymbosi)*	Mummy berry, cottonball disease	HIGH
Rubus	*Arthuriomyces peckianus*	Orange rust	HIGH
Strawberry	*Phytophthora fragariae*	Strawberry red stele root rot	EXTREME
Oomycetes (water moulds)			
Blueberry	*Phytophthora kernoviae (syn. P. kernovii)*	Phytophthora blight	HIGH
Blueberry	*Phytophthora ramorum*	Sudden oak death	EXTREME
Viruses and viroids			
Blueberry	*Nepovirus nicotianae*	Tobacco ringspot virus or TRSV	HIGH
Blueberry	*Nepovirus lycopersici*	Tomato ringspot virus	HIGH