



THE KIWIFRUIT CLAIM

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KIWIFRUIT CLAIM CONCERNED ABOUT INCREASING BIOSECURITY RISKS

With climate change increasing the risk of foreign sub-tropical pests to the horticulture industry, it is more important than ever that the government gets serious about its responsibilities to safeguard New Zealand's biosecurity, Kiwifruit Claim chairman John Cameron said today.

A new report yet to be released by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) predicts climate change will have a serious effect on the prevalence of exotic pests, with consequences for horticulture (including kiwifruit), animals and even our native plants like Kauri, Pohutukawa and Titoki.

Like the Queensland fruit fly outbreak in Auckland's Grey Lynn in February this year, other Australian pests and diseases could gain a foot-hold in New Zealand if temperatures warm sufficiently. This would wreak havoc on kiwifruit crops, grapes, tomatoes, kumara, maize, wheat and many other common crops which are a large part of New Zealand's export market.

News of the report has spurred calls for increased protection at the border. The February fruit fly outbreak in Auckland's Grey Lynn may not have been caused by the same type of negligence that the Claim says caused the Psa outbreak, but it is another clear demonstration of biosecurity failures in New Zealand and the need for officials to be held accountable if and when they are negligent.

"Let's just hope we can contain the increasing biosecurity risks posed by climate change. If there are future outbreaks, we hope they don't have the same devastating impact on New Zealand as the 2010 Psa outbreak, which the government's independent advisors said may have cost our country \$885 million," Mr Cameron said.

The class action plaintiffs are Strathboss Kiwifruit Ltd for growers and Seeka Kiwifruit Industries Ltd for post-harvest operators. The Claim has 212 plaintiffs claiming \$376 million in compensation from the government. They allege negligence by biosecurity officials allowed Psa into New Zealand and that that led to the devastation of the kiwifruit industry. The government denies the claim and says it should not owe any duty to take reasonable care on biosecurity matters. The Kiwifruit Claim was launched on 29 September 2014 and filed in the High Court at Wellington on 28 November 2014. The claim's legal team includes Alan Galbraith QC, Matthew Dunning QC and LeeSalmonLong.

Further information on The Kiwifruit Claim can be found at www.thekiwifruitclaim.org.

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