



THE KIWIFRUIT CLAIM

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How PSA infected pollen spread in New Zealand

The High Court in Wellington has heard evidence from pollen importers, Kiwi Pollen, who imported the shipment of anthers and plant material that is the subject of the trial seeking to hold the Government to account for the losses incurred during the PSA incursion.

The Kiwifruit Claim is very appreciative of Kiwi Pollen giving evidence on what happened to the shipment from Shaanxi Province in China once it was given biosecurity clearance to enter New Zealand, Kiwifruit Claim spokesman John Cameron said today.

“Kiwi Pollen’s evidence establishes the multiple ways in which the infected shipment of plant material could have spread PSA - the very nature of pollen means it is very easily spread on the pollen extraction machines, bees, the wind, on orchard equipment, and vehicles,” he said.

“The fact is, MPI gave biosecurity approval for the shipment to enter the country, in breach of its own regulations.

“MPI’s own internal procedures restricted the importation of plant material, except in tightly controlled circumstances plant material was required to be quarantined for 6 months and inspected.”

“Once in New Zealand, the shipment of anthers and other plant material was immediately transported to Kiwi Pollen’s pollen milling facility in Te Puke,” said Mr Cameron.

“Kiwi Pollen’s Kairanga orchard, and its neighbouring orchard, Olympos were the first reported orchards to be infected with PSA in 2010.”

“The Court heard in evidence today that Kiwi Pollen co-owner Jill Hamlyn was surprised to open the shipment and find black supermarket bags full of anthers, and not finely milled pollen. However, despite the shipment containing prohibited plant material, MPI had not given Kiwi Pollen any instructions on how to handle the shipment.”

Mr Cameron added “When the anthers and plant material arrived at Kiwi Pollen, they were put into the freezer and were later put through a cyclone machine to mechanically extract the pollen from the dried anthers.”

“The leftover anther and milling waste was disposed of. It may have gone into the general waste.”

“There were no standard industry practices at the time regulating the pollen extraction and hygiene processes, which meant that there were multiple opportunities for the cross contamination of pollen harvested from different orchards, or different countries.

“The anthers from the Shaanxi shipment were processed into pollen using the same equipment that was used to process New Zealand pollen for commercial use,” said Mr Cameron.

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