



NEW ZEALAND

PLANT PRODUCTION
BIOSECURITY SCHEME

PPBS DOC #07

Scheme Rules

V1.0 - February 2020

PLANT PRODUCTION BIOSECURITY SCHEME

Scheme Rules

February 2020

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Updates

The Plant Production Biosecurity Scheme (PPBS) is a science-based framework to help producers identify, control, manage and avoid biosecurity risk. The scheme and standards are based on work undertaken early in 2018 in following experience early in the myrtle rust response that underscored the crucial role that plant producers play in early detection of pests, their containment and slowing their spread following a pest incursion. Subsequent discussions identified the opportunity to develop a systematic approach to plant production industry biosecurity risk management.

Revisions will be ongoing as PPBS experience and/or new science inform the need for change. Revisions published on the Scheme's website [to follow] and participants advised of the changes and new documents, so they can ensure that they are referring to the most recent documents.

Those wishing to provide recommendations for change should send these in writing to PPBS or by email to [in the interim office@nzppi.co.nz].

Acknowledgements

The PPBS acknowledges and is appreciative of the support of many industry members and stakeholders who assisted in the development of the scheme; funding from the Ministry for Primary Industry, Department of Conservation, Auckland Council and forestry and horticultural industry bodies, the guidance of project Steering and Working Groups, feedback and advice from industry members and stakeholders, and Kiwifruit Vine Health's generously allowing the PPBS to extract from and draw heavily upon their work and the Kiwifruit Plant Certification Scheme.

Disclaimer

While the PPBS's objective is to allow certification of plant producers and confidence that the plants they produce have been grown under conditions of high biosecurity risk and hazard management, there remains the possibility a proportion of plants may contain biosecurity pests. PPBS accepts no liability for claims regarding the presence of pests in any plants produced by registered and/or certified producers. While the objective of the PPBS standards and guidance is to minimise the potential risk pest, no party can guarantee that adherence to these standards and guidance will reduce such risk to zero.

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Scheme Rules

a description of the requirements for participation, the procedures governing the scheme, the duties of those appointed to manage the scheme and rights and responsibilities within the scheme.

Scheme Rules

1. Introduction

The Plant Production Biosecurity Scheme (PPBS) is a science-based framework to help producers identify, control, manage and avoid biosecurity risk.

All participants in the scheme demonstrate a commitment to improving producer and industry biosecurity performance.

Plant Producers who achieve Certification to the Core Standard and any applicable Specific Modules demonstrate their production is undertaken under conditions of strong biosecurity risk and hazard management. In doing so, they provide assurance that their plants have been raised in conditions that minimise the introduction and spread of pests.

2. Scope

This PPBS Scheme Rules document describes the requirements for producer participation in the PPBS; registration and certification to the Core Standard and Specific Modules.

Participation in the PPBS is open to all plant producers. A plant producer is defined as any person, business or entity engaged in producing plants or parts of plants for sale, their own use or for movement outside of the nursery, or nurseries where the producer operates over more than one site.

3. Documentation

3.1. Relevant Documents

The following are relevant documents for the PPBS

- PPBS Scheme rules (this document)
- PPBS Scheme Overview
- PPBS Hazard Management Checklist
- PPBS Core Standard
- PPBS Guidance
- PPBS Core Standard Nursery Manual Template
- PPBS Specific Modules – as developed from time to time

3.2. Document Control

Documents are identified with the date and a version number in the document footer. A change in the version number, e.g. 1.0 to 2.0 indicates a new version of a document, that is, changes in requirements. A change in the other digits e.g. 1.0 to 1.1, indicates a minor with no changes to the requirements.

Copies of current documents are available on the PPBS website. Scheme participants will be advised by email of changes and new documents, so they can ensure that they are referring to the most recent documents.

4. Producer Registration

Participating plant producers register with the PPBS. They supply entity details such as identity, location and contacts.

Additionally, producers supply and maintain (at least annually) a list of plant genera under production.

Registered producers are expected to implement a suite of basic biosecurity hazard management measures and undertake a self-assessment of their implementation on an annual basis and report completion of the same with the PPBS.

5. Certification Options

5.1. Introduction

Plant producers can apply for certification under three options (referred to as schedules) to suit the structure and the management of their entity. When determining the most appropriate schedule the following shall apply:

- Only one certification is allowed per producer entity.
- Producers applying for certification must have effective management control over the entity that certification applies to and be responsible for all activities that take place in relation to that entity.

5.2. Schedules Available

Certification Schedule description are provided below and the flow charts in Section 6.6 of the PPBS Overview will assist producers in determining the most relevant schedule.

Schedule A: Individual Producer Certification

Schedule A covers producers that are a single entity that have a centrally managed production process over either single or multiple nursery sites.

Examples include:

1. A producer operating on a single nursery site where the owner or manager is responsible for all decision-making and production tasks for the site.
2. A producer operating over multiple sites where the owner or manager is responsible for all decision-making and production activities on all sites.
3. A family owned nursery with across multiple sites where the sites are managed collectively. Decisions on production activities are made and action collectively and/or individuals have specific activity areas of responsibility across all properties.

The criteria for Schedule A are as follows:

1. Participating producers must be a single entity. This certificate will belong to the entity which applies for certification.
2. For land under production that is not owned by the producer, some form of written agreement must be in place that confirms the relationship between the owner of the land and the producer.
3. The producer is responsible for all activities that takes place on the nursery sites they own, manage and/or lease.
4. All activities are centrally managed by an individual or management team.

5. Where any production tasks are not carried out by the manager (or a member of the management team) then staff are working under instruction, and either not making decisions or decision-making rights has been clearly delegated.

Schedule B: Group Certification

Schedule B allows for more than one entity to apply for certification under the same certificate. The lead organisation applying for group certification must be arranged as a single entity.

Examples include:

1. An NGO engaged in ecosystem restoration gaining certification on behalf of producers that it's in partnership with.
2. An industry group gaining certification on behalf of its members.
3. A Regional Council gaining certification over a number of nurseries that it supervises which are engaged in production of plants for regional parks.

The criteria for Schedule B are as follows:

1. The lead organisation applying for certification must be a single entity and represent a group of producers. Within that collective each producer is responsible for their own production location(s).
2. The lead organisation applying will be the owner of the certificate
3. There must be a formal agreement with all members of the group with the lead organisation

Schedule C: Accreditation / Equivalence

Schedule C enables the scheme to recognise quality assurance systems and standards operated by third parties. A producer, or an accreditation scheme provider can apply for the Scheme to recognise "equivalence". This is applicable where a producer is part of an alternative quality assurance scheme, which achieves the same or greater level of biosecurity risk management as the Core Standard or Specific Module, and where that scheme includes an independent audit requirement.

Producers that are certified to the recognised scheme can seek certification to the PPBS.

6. Requirements to Gain Certification

6.1. General

Once the schedule that is relevant to a producer has been determined their inspection and auditing requirements specific to each schedule these are summarised in the table below.

Annual inspection and auditing requirements – internal and external					
Responsibility	Action	Refer section	A Individual	B Group	C Equivalence
Producer	Self-assessment		Y	X	Y
Internal auditor for group certification	Nursery inspections		Not applicable	Y all sites	Not applicable
	Quality management system audit		Not applicable	Y	Not applicable
Certification body	Quality management system audit		Not applicable	Y	As required by recognised scheme
	Nursery inspections		Y	$\sqrt{n} + 1$ where n= number of producers	As required by recognised scheme
	Unannounced inspections		10% of certified producers	Not applicable	As required by recognised scheme
	Unannounced audits		Not applicable	$\sqrt{n} + 1$ of certified lead organisations	Not applicable

6.2. Requirements to gain certification under Schedule A

Assessment issues to achieve and maintain certification are categorised into three levels. These are Criticals, Majors and Minors. The following are the requirements and individual grower must meet during any internal or external inspection to gain and maintain certification under schedule A.

- 100% of the Criticals and 90% of the applicable Majors
- There are no minimum requirements for Minors, however all Minor assessment points will be audited.

6.3. Requirements to gain certification under Schedule B

To gain certification under Schedule B the requirements specified in 6.2 above must be met by each individual producer within the group.

In addition, a quality management system (QMS) must be developed by the lead organisation that meets requirements specified [TBC]. The documented QMS will detail processes and controls to assess and manage

producer members of the group schedule. When you're audited externally the QMS and associated activities must be sufficient to demonstrate that there are adequate processes and controls in place to assess and manage producer members.

6.4. Requirements to gain certification under Schedule C

To gain certification under Schedule C are determined by the recognised scheme.

7. Inspections and Auditing

7.1. Schedule A

Self-assessment

A self-assessment using all critical sections (Critical, Majors and Minors) of the PPBS checklist must be completed every year by the producer applies certification. This must be undertaken in advance of the external inspection. The checklist will be completed according to the table below:

Checklist completion			
	Not applicable (N/A)	Met	Not met
Critical	Justify why N/A	Y if met	Comment why not met and action required to meet
Major	Justify why N/A	Y if met	N if not met Comment why not met, and action required to meet (if relevant)
Minor	Justify why N/A	Y if met	N if not met comment why not met (no comments required)

Producer inspections by Certifying Body

During (external) inspections, the Certifying Body assessor will use the complete the PPBS checklist and determine whether each assessment point has been met and will also undertake relevant production area inspections. In the checklist, all applicable points will be assessed as met or not met, and comments will be provided for the Criticals and applicable Majors.

Where more than one nursery site is inspected the results will be collated onto one checklist so non-compliance on one nursery site will impact on all nursery sites.

Results of the inspections will be made available to the producer after the inspection.

Certifying Body assessors will be required to meet the requirements of [TBC].

7.2. Schedule B

Internal Producer/Nursery Inspection

Under Schedule B, each producer member will be internally inspected by the lead organisation each year using the PPBS checklist.

Where more than one nursery site has been identified by an individual producer the results collated into one checklist so that a non-compliance in one nursery site will impact all nursery sites of that producer.

7.2.2 Internal Quality Management System Audit

The lead organisation's Quality Management System will be audited each year

Internal auditors/inspections will meet the requirements specified in [TBC].

Producers gaining certification under Schedule B do not have to complete a self-assessment using the checklist unless it is specifically required under the lead organisation's quality management system.

7.2.3 External audits of lead organisation by certification body

All production quality systems, processes and sites must be assessed before certification decision can be made.

- a) **Quality management system** - the certifying body will audit the QMS annually using a checklist based upon the QMS checklist available on [TBC]
- b) **Producer/nursery inspections** - the certifying body will complete producer inspections according to Section 6.1 above.
- c) **Off-site and on-site QMS audits** – an off-site assessment of a QMS consists of a desktop review of the QMS by the certifying body before the audit, including reviewing the records of the internal assessment, internal register and approved producers register.

The on-site assessment consists of an on-site audit of the remaining content of the QMS checklist, plus verification of any information assessed off-site and the management system works on-site.

The lead organisation has a right not to send documentation to the certifying body they considered to be confidential. All records and documents that are not reviewed during the off-site inspection will be reviewed during the on-site inspection.

7.3. Schedule C

Inspection and auditing requirements under Schedule C are determined by the recognised scheme.

7.4. Unannounced Inspections/Audits

The certifying body will carry out unannounced inspections on 10% of Schedule A certified producers annually. During this unannounced inspection only the Critical and Major issues on the checklist will be assessed. The assessor will go through relevant issues on the checklist and determine whether or not each point has been met and will also undertake relevant site inspections.

In addition, a portion of QMS's ($\sqrt{n+1}$) (Schedule B) will have an unannounced audit annually.

Any non-compliance found during an unannounced audit or inspection will result in the same actions as during annual inspections – refer Section 8.

Certificate holders will usually be given 48 hours' notice of an unannounced inspection/audit. Certificate holders may not intentionally avoid unannounced audits. If for justifiable reasons the producer cannot accept this notice they will be sent a warning letter indicating that if they are not available for next unannounced inspection audit, a suspension may be applied. If the second visit cannot take place due to a non-justifiable reason, a suspension of the certificate will be issued.

7.5. Inspection Timing and Duration

The first and subsequent certifying body inspections will be carried out at times that are determined using the guidelines below and always with a view to verifying as many points as possible on the site. The flexibility and inspection times detailed below gives the ability to verify multiple activities and/or multiple sites.

The duration of an inspection will allow enough time for an opening meeting, evaluation of all relevant requirements, completing the checklist and presenting the results back to the producer. Generally, this will take between 3-8 hours. Factors that may impact on the audit duration include whether it is a Schedule A or B inspection, whether it is an initial inspection, the number of sites, whether contractors are used, how much information is provided by industry groups and the general preparedness and organisation of the producer being audited. Requirements under Schedule C are determined by the recognised scheme.

First Inspections

Inspections will take place after the PPBS registration forms have been completed and the PPBS has confirmed registration with the producer.

For first inspections, records will be assessed covering a minimum of three months prior to the date of the first inspection, or from a date that enables the assessor to establish compliance through a growing cycle if this is longer.

If relevant fieldwork is not taking place at the time the first inspection the certifying body may defer inspection of relevant sections until this activity is taking place.

Timing of Subsequent Inspections

A certificate will be valid for 12 months from the first inspection. After the first inspection subsequent inspections will take place no sooner than four months before the expiry date of certificate and no more than four months after the date of the certificate.

After the first two annual inspections, inspection frequency may be varied on a performance basis. Subsequent inspection frequency may then be increased for poor performers or reduced for high performers.

Desktop Review

To reduce the amount of time spent on site, a desktop review of documentation may be undertaken by the certifying body prior to the nursery inspection. Desktop reviews may include the self-assessment, risk-assessments, procedures and other documentation.

The grower has the right not to send documentation to the certifying body if it is considered confidential. All documents and records and parts of the checklist that are not reviewed during the desktop review must be reviewed during the on-site inspection.

Whether a desktop review is undertaken is agreement between the certifying body and a producer, and if agreed the desktop review must be completed within four weeks of the on-site inspection.

7.6. Extending certification scope

Should a producer add new nursery sites a desktop review will be undertaken to verify that that operations at the new site and between the new site and existing sites meet the standard and assess whether an on-site inspection is required.

8. Non-compliance

8.1. Schedule A

If a producer does not meet the requirements to maintain certification then this will result in either a non-compliance being issued or a suspension depending on the severity of the issue(s) identified.

Non-compliance

When one of the Critical assessment points is not met or more than 10% of the Majors have not been met a non-compliance will be issued. This will be given provisionally at the time of the inspection/audit is completed. The producer then may be given a period to correct the non-compliance. Generally, this will be up to 30 days. When the non-compliance poses an immediate and serious threat to the integrity of the producer's biosecurity risk assurance a suspension will be issued immediately with no time given for corrective action.

For first inspections however, the time for dealing with non-compliance will be three months. If non-compliances are not addressed within three months in a complete full inspection is required before certification can be granted.

Suspension

Suspension will be applied when:

- a) An applicant fails to carry out acceptable corrective actions within the timeframe given for a non-compliance
- b) A non-compliance is identified during an audit process that poses a serious and immediate biosecurity risk.
- c) A non-compliance to regulatory or a customer requirement relative to the PPBS, or evidence of ineffective management of an incident or a series of incidents.

The length of the suspension will be determined by the certifying body depending on the reasons for issuing a suspension. If a producer resolves the non-compliance and provides evidence satisfactory to the certifying body, then the suspension can be lifted. If the suspension is not resolved in the required timeframe, no longer than 12 months, then the certification will be cancelled.

A producer may ask for self-imposed suspension if they recognise are not meeting the relevant requirements. The length of time they have to correct issues we need to be agreed upon with the certifying body. Lifting of the self-imposed suspension will be upon provision of satisfactory evidence to the certifying body. A self-declared suspension will not change the expiry date of a certificate nor will it allow the producer to avoid paying relevant fees as they become due.

During the suspension, the producer cannot claim Certification and is required to advise their customers of the suspension.

Cancellation

A producer's certificate will be cancelled when

1. Satisfactory evidence can be not provided to the certifying body to resolve a suspension
2. The certifying body links evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust in regard to meeting the PPBS requirements
3. Where there is a contractual non-conformance, for example not paying fees

The cancellation of certification means a producer will not be allowed to use the PPBS logo and this status will be noted on the PPBS website. In addition, the producer may not re-enter the PPBS program for a minimum of 12 months from the date of cancellation.

8.2. Schedule B

In the case of a QMS, all actions associated with non-compliances, suspensions and cancellations of producer member's certificate will be the responsibility of the QMS, not the certification body. This includes:

1. Imposing non-compliances (associated timeframe and time close out of warnings)

2. Imposing suspensions (scope of suspensions, evaluating evidence to close out suspensions and lifting of suspensions)
3. Managing self-imposed suspensions
4. Imposing cancellations
5. In instances where issues are identified by the certification body against the QMS, the same types of actions as detailed in Schedule A will apply the level of action taken will be at the discretion of the certification body based upon the severity of the non-compliance and the confidence they have in the system being audited.

8.3. Schedule C

Non-compliance actions and requirements under Schedule C are determined by the recognised scheme.

8.4. Contractual Obligations

A breach of any of the PPBS certification rules or contractual obligation by certified producers or QMS's will result in appropriate actions, that is, non-compliance, suspension or cancellation. Examples of these types of breaches include but are not limited to false communication by the producer regarding PPBS certification, PPBS logo misuse, payment is not made according to contractual conditions etc.

Certificate holders are required to advise PPBS, either directly, or via the certifying body, and as soon as practical of any incidents that may affect their PPBS certification, including investigations made by customers, regulators or any incidents that may result in the suspension.

8.5. Certification body timeframes once non-conformances are resolved

The decision by certification body on whether or not a certification will be granted/maintained once any outstanding issues have been resolved will be made within 14 days.

9. Certificates

Certificates are valid for one year from the date certification is granted (except in circumstances where performance-based auditing extends such a period, and all where suspensions or cancellations have been applied).

Certificates may be extended by up to 4 months, however the anniversary date will remain the same. Extensions are applicable under the following circumstances:

- The certifying body is required to observe a certain part of a production process or a particular member of a group
- The certifying body has resource constraints
- The certifying body all producer is unable to participate in an audit due to circumstances beyond their control, example natural disaster, medical reasons

Under a 4-month extension circumstance, all fees must be paid for the next year prior to this being granted. The inspection/audit must take place within the extension period that is granted

If the certificate expires and an inspection takes place within 12 months of expiry date, the producer can re-enter the program without the need for full inspection if they can provide justification as to why the certificate lapsed. Upon re-entry the date can either be set as the previous anniversary date, or a new cycle can start from the date of meeting the PPBS requirements.

10. Appendix 1 - Producers Rights and Responsibilities

10.1. Applying /registering for PPBS Certification

Producers register with the PPBS and sign a PPBS License Agreement.

10.2. Ongoing Communication with Certification Bodies

Producers and QMS's are responsible for maintaining the certification and communicating with the certification body in advance of their certificate expiry date allowing sufficient time for the inspection to take place and the certification reconfirmed prior to expiry.

If audit times cannot be agreed with the producer or QMS after three attempts by the certification body and the anniversary date has passed, the producer's certification will be suspended.

10.3. Notifications and appeals

A producer/QMS may appeal a non-compliance in cases where they feel they can provide justification for not accepting. This appeal must be lodged with the certification body as soon as possible and writing to allow sufficient time to resolve the issue prior to the original timeframe. If the issue cannot be resolved with the original timeframe the issue may be escalated to the next level of non-compliance as would happen if the appeal had not been lodged.

If the producer/QMS has a complaint/appeal against the certification body they must in the first instance contact the certification body who will have a complaints/appeals procedure to follow. If the grower considers the issue they have raised has not been satisfactorily resolved the next step is to contact the PPBS.

10.4. Transfer of Certificate in the Event of a Producer Selling their Nursery or Change in Management of the Nursery

If a property is sold, or there is significant change in the management of the entity, the PPBS certificate is not immediately transferable to the new owner or manager.

The certificate holder for the property is required to advise the certification body of such changes within a reasonable timeframe. The decision to transfer certificate to the new owner or manager will be made on a case-by-case basis by the certification body in conjunction with the PPBS program manager.

10.5. Suspension from the PPBS program

If a producer is suspended from the PPBS programme, during the suspension period the producer will not be allowed to use the PPBS logo and this status will be noted on the PPBS website.

10.6. Use of the PPBS logo and certificate

Producers use the name and trademark (to follow) logo "PPBS" according to the PPBS License Agreement.

11. Appendix – certification body service level agreement

To Follow

12. Appendix - PPBS License Agreement

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To Follow