

**Advice 02-2011 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the risk assessment of the presence of harmful nematodes in soil or growing medium stuck on topiary trees and tropical plants imported from third countries**

The Scientific Committee has assessed the risk associated with the presence of non-quarantine harmful nematodes in the soil or growing medium stuck on topiary trees and tropical plants imported from third countries in Belgium.

The Scientific Committee considers that ideally a Pest Risk Assessment (PRA) should be performed for each species of detected harmful nematodes. This requires notably to specifically know the ability of the harmful nematode to be introduced, to expand and to establish on the Belgian territory. However, such specific data are little or not available currently and their determination would require extensive research.

In general, the Scientific Committee considers that the risk posed by the presence of non-quarantine harmful nematodes in soil or growing medium stuck on topiary trees and tropical plants imported from third countries is a priori quite limited for cultivated plants and wild flora in Belgium. However, this risk could be significant to the infested plant, for some producers of plants and plant products in greenhouses and cultivated plants and wild flora of the southern countries of Europe to which the plants imported into Belgium would then re-exported.

The Scientific Committee proposes to allow importation into the Belgian territory of batches of plants infested with harmful nematodes whose presence in Belgium is proven, provided that these nematodes are neither virusvectors nor quarantine pests and are not mentioned on the EPPO lists (EPPO Alert List and Action List). Imported plants which are infested with harmful nematodes that are on the quarantine list should be destroyed in accordance with the legislation. Imported plants which are infested with nematodes on the lists of EPPO should be treated to significantly reduce the infestation. Imported plants which are infested with harmful nematodes whose presence in Belgium is not confirmed and which are not vectors of viruses, or of quarantine, nor listed on the EPPO lists can be placed on the market provided that the detection of these harmful nematodes is notified to the FASFC. Imported plants which are infested with virus vectors harmful nematodes (*Longidoridae* and *Trichodoridae*) should be analyzed to detect the presence of viruses. If a quarantine virus is detected, the infested plants should be destroyed in accordance with the legislation. If a non-quarantine virus is detected that is included on the EPPO lists, or if a non-quarantine virus is detected that is not on the EPPO lists and which is not present on the Belgian territory, the plants should be treated to significantly reduce the infestation. If a non-quarantine virus is detected, which is not on the EPPO lists and which is present on the Belgian territory, or if no virus is detected, plants could be placed on the market.

Different control methods are proposed but their respective efficiency in relation to the different detected harmful nematodes should be evaluated in detail.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".