

Dear Growers,

The 2021/2022 season has been a challenging year for blueberry rust (BBR) control in Tasmania, with the total number of infected properties across Tasmania increasing to 21 (as of 23 May 22). This season was also the first time that BBR was detected in the south of the state and in private (or home) gardens. The Tasmanian blueberry rust containment strategy commenced in 2017 and focussed on management techniques that were aimed at reducing the risk of movement of the disease within the state. The strategy also involved working closely with industry to ensure measures were in place to support continued Australian domestic market access for Tasmanian blueberry products. Biosecurity containment strategies include triggers that, if met, require a review of the planned actions. Several of the triggers for a review of a containment strategy have now been met with BBR. Accordingly, Biosecurity Tasmania (BT), in close consultation with industry, will be undertaking a technical review to assess the suitability of the current blueberry rust containment-based approach.

Commencing in June 2022, the technical review will provide both a comprehensive assessment of the current containment plan, as well as recommendations to the Tasmanian Government for a course of action to support the longer-term future for the blueberry industry. The technical review will be facilitated by BT and be undertaken by a Government/Industry based Reference Group with technical expertise and industry knowledge. Membership on the Reference Group will include representatives from Fruit Growers Tasmania (FGT), the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA), the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) and blueberry growers.

The review will also be seeking feedback from as many individual growers as possible, ensuring that key issues concerning trade and market access, production impacts and costs and regulatory burden are adequately captured and reflected in the review's recommendations. The technical review will be completed before the commencement of the 2022/2023 season. Growers are encouraged to provide their input into the review by emailing Biosecurity.Planthealth@nre.tas.gov.au

More information on blueberry rust in Tasmania is available at [Blueberry rust | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania \(nre.tas.gov.au\)](#)

Remember if you suspect that your plants may be infected with blueberry rust, please call Biosecurity Tasmania on (03) 6165 3777.

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