



MEDIA RELEASE
7 December 2009

Emergency registration process works.

A successful fast-track registration of a new tool to fight the devastating potato psyllid shows that emergency regulatory powers are working.

The government recently declared a special emergency under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act to allow a product already available in New Zealand to be used on potatoes.

AGCARM chief executive Graeme Peters said the emergency registration showed that a process set up to find solutions in a crisis worked well.

The potato psyllid is estimated to have cost the industry up to \$47 million in lost crops. The psyllid is a vector for *Liberibacter*, a disease which causes zebra chip in potato tubers as well as yellowing and plant death. These diseases can drastically reduce the quality and yield of a crop.

Under the emergency registration, an agrichemical already approved for use on other pests affecting capsicums, tomatoes and cucumbers could be used to fight psyllids on potatoes.

“The potato psyllid is spreading rapidly and early signs of its presence are being reported again by growers this season. Growers and the wider industry face a second year of losses which the industry as a whole will find difficult to absorb,” Mr Peters said.

The normal HSNO 100-day approval process would not be able to deliver a decision before the end of April 2010, which is too late for growers.

Industry sought a ministerial declaration of a special emergency to allow a speedy approval for the agrichemical spiromesifen. The approval was gazetted in November and will apply only until 30 April 2010.

Mr Peters applauded the quick action taken by the government, in particular Agriculture Minister David Carter, the Environmental Risk Management Authority and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

“The potato industry has already suffered significant losses due to this nasty pest. It is good that the government acted so swiftly to allow growers to use the most effective and up-to-date technology to fight the spread of the potato psyllid.”

Agcarm is the industry association for companies which manufacture, distribute and sell products that keep animals healthy and crops thriving. Initiatives of the organisation include providing safe and sustainable animal health and crop protection technology for the future of New Zealand, and educating the community about the industry’s contribution.

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