



30 January 2017

## **Notice to shipping lines - Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Europe**

For the last few years, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has put in place seasonal measures to safeguard Australia's industries and environment from one of the most significant plant pests—the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB).

These stink bugs attack around 300 different plant species and could seriously harm our \$8.7 billion horticulture sector. They are also an environmental pest and a nuisance to humans, as adults enter vehicles, homes and factories in large numbers in autumn months, looking for shelter over winter.

The department's measures have targeted vehicles, vessels and machinery shipped from the United States (US) between September and April, following unprecedented interceptions on goods from the US in 2014. The measures have included mandatory treatment of target cargo prior to departure, and increased inspections and surveillance at Australian seaports.

The measures have proved successful in keeping Australia free from this damaging pest; this success is largely due to the cooperation of shipping lines, port authorities, importers and manufacturers.

### **The situation in Europe**

We are aware that BMSB is now spreading throughout Europe, so we are monitoring vessels and cargo arriving from European ports, particularly from areas with established BMSB populations such as Northern Italy. To date, there have been low levels of detections on vessels/cargo arriving in Australia. However, should this change, we may need to introduce more stringent measures similar to those implemented for high risk cargo from the United States.

### **How you can help**

To avoid the need for stronger action, the department is seeking the assistance of shipping lines to minimise the risk of the bugs hitching a ride on vessels and cargo from European locations where BMSB are prevalent.

While Australian importers are required to ensure goods arrive in Australia free of contamination, you and/or your clients may also wish to consider taking further preventative actions, as set out below. These can not only help prevent BMSB from entering Australia, but they may also alleviate the need for inspection and treatment on arrival in Australia, resulting in faster clearances and reduced costs.

Actions may include:

- ensuring shipping containers are cleaned and free of biosecurity contamination (eg. live animals, plant and animal material, insects, and soil)
- covering goods during transport from manufacturer to port
- securing potential contamination points (e.g. door and window seals where goods are stored, and cabins and nooks within the goods themselves)

- treating target goods prior to loading, using the treatment conditions listed on the department's website at [www.agriculture.gov.au/import/before/pests/brown-marmorated-stink-bugs/season-measures](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/before/pests/brown-marmorated-stink-bugs/season-measures)
- physically segregating treated and untreated break bulk goods both on the wharf prior to loading and on the vessel – this will help avoid the risk of cross-contamination and is particularly important if goods are stockpiled at any point
- using traps to indicate any sign of infestation – a simple trap can include a bright lamp at night with a bucket of water containing detergent underneath.

### **More information on BMSB**

Adults are 12-17 millimetres long and mottled with a faint reddish tinge. While there are species of stink bugs that look similar, adult brown marmorated stink bugs have distinctive black and white banding around the edge of the abdomen with white bands on the last two antennal segments.

Further information on the bugs is available at [www.agriculture.gov.au/import/before/pests/brown-marmorated-stink-bugs](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/before/pests/brown-marmorated-stink-bugs).

The department would like to thank you in advance for assisting with Australia's defence against BMSB. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss other ways you can help, please contact us at [airandseacargo@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:airandseacargo@agriculture.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



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