

RESPONSE TO CONSTITUENT QUESTION

ASKED BY: Mr Roger Jaensch MP

ANSWERED BY: Minister for Primary Industries and Water

QUESTION:

Tasmania is responding to the recent detection of potato mop-top virus, which was first detected in July this year. Constituents in my electorate, particularly potato growers, are keen to understand the amount of testing that has occurred ahead of the planting season, and as we move to managing potato mop-top virus, what support measures are being considered for Tasmanian potato growers?

ANSWER:

Thank you for your constituent question in Parliament on 25 September 2025 regarding support measures for the Tasmanian potato industry to manage potato mop-top virus (PMTV).

PMTV is a virus considered exotic to Australia that can impact the yield and quality of harvested potatoes.

As you know, since July this year Biosecurity Tasmania and the state's potato industry have been actively responding to a detection of PMTV in Tasmania.

Biosecurity Tasmania is now transitioning from a response to PMTV to industry-led management. This follows the National Management Group's resolution on 19 September that PMTV is not technically feasible to eradicate from Australia. Essentially, PMTV will become a managed pest within the potato production system.

The Government is continuing to support Tasmania's potato industry through the transition with the shared objective to slow the spread of the virus and support business continuity, including market access.

To help with the long-term management of the virus, we are providing \$200,000 for a research program which will be delivered over the next 18 months. This program, which will be led collaboratively by the Tasmanian potato industry and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, will support time-critical research to help farmers manage the virus and its vector powdery scab, projects include:

- A literature review and discussions with international colleagues working on PMTV;

- Isolation, identification and characterisation, to determine amongst other things, whether the Tasmanian sequence analysis indicates likelihood of more or less disease expression strains;
- Soil testing to understand prevalence and distribution of PMTV across production regions, and the development of a PMTV soil test protocol;
- Symptom expression and impact on major Tasmanian potato varieties and how this is influenced by management practices, growth temperatures, day length, and cold storage;
- Industry awareness and extension activities for on-farm adoption of management and control measures for PMTV and powdery scab, leveraging existing programs such as PotatoLink extension officers and expertise from other countries where PMTV is being effectively managed; and
- Seed testing support to certified seed testing organisation TasSeed prior to the 2026-27 season.

A new chemical, Emblem (or other registered products containing 500 g/L fluazinam) has also been approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for use by potato growers in Tasmania to suppress powdery scab.

Additional support will also be provided to the potato industry through TasFarmers as part of their existing 'Strengthening Biosecurity Outcomes On-Farm Project'.

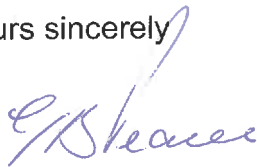
This support will help potato growers develop and implement farm biosecurity plans and other critical biosecurity measures within potato production areas.

Business Tasmania is also available to speak to affected growers about impacts to their business.

If you have constituents with questions, you can encourage them to reach out to directly to Biosecurity.Tasmania@nre.tas.gov.au or I can arrange for a member of the Biosecurity Tasmania team to contact them directly.

Thank you again for your query.

Yours sincerely



 APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Hon Gavin Pearce MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Date 13 Nov 25