

UNITED KINGDOM SITUATION REPORT

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A review of the disease situation in autumn 2013 revealed that an additional 10,000 hectares of infected larch had been identified in the UK, mainly in the vicinity of previously known infections in south Scotland and Wales. Helicopter surveillance in 2013 allowed the Forestry Commission to pick up symptomatic stands at an early stage of disease development, and ground survey teams were used to confirm disease diagnosis, prioritizing the smaller outlying outbreaks.

The cooler and wetter summer in 2012 was considered to be more favorable to sporulation and the dispersal of disease in Britain than in the previous two years. A rapid increase in the expression of symptoms was noted by observers in spring 2013, and this is thought to be a result of disease spreading in 2012. The accompanying map shows the extent of the outbreaks of *P. ramorum* on larch in October 2013.

The findings of extensive areas of infected larch in south Wales and southwest Scotland meant that the current strategy of clearing trees on a site-by-site basis could not be achieved before the next sporulation period. Alternative regional strategies to contain and limit the impact of this pathogen have been developed for these areas.

In Wales a Core Disease Zone (CDZ) for larch was established in late 2012 where the presence of infection within this zone is particularly significant. Continuation of the clearance strategy within this zone would have required removal of 5,500 hectares of infected larch. An alternative strategy to control the movement of infected timber has recently been announced.

In the Galloway region of southwest Scotland there are 8-9,000 hectares of larch, of which 4,000 to 6,000 hectares are currently thought to be infected. A zoning approach has also been adopted here, where larch timber movement will be regulated within the infected zone. The disease outbreaks in this region are mainly attributed to the EU2 strain of the organism (unlike the disease in England and Wales).

Outside of the infected zones in Wales and Scotland there will continue to be a statutory requirement to fell infected material before the next sporulation period. Biosecurity arrangements apply to the movement of infected larch timber, but there are now no restrictions on movement of wood and bark from non-sporulating tree species harvested within the vicinity of an infected larch stand.

The extent to which damage has been observed in Wales and Scotland has been greater than the level of damage in the south of England, where the woodlands are smaller and where there are fewer blocks of contiguous larch woodland. Unfortunately, there are a small number of new infections in the northwest of England, where woodland blocks are more contiguous, and of concern is the possibility that the EU2 strain in Scotland will spread to England.

An industrial-scale system of heat treating bark as a phytosanitary treatment by composting has been developed by the bark industry. In trials, bark producers have repeatedly achieved core

temperatures in excess of 56°C for 30 minutes after turning bark rows. Research has been commissioned to look into appropriate methods to isolate and quantify levels of *P. ramorum* present in infected bark. An output from this work will be to investigate how heat treatment by composting affects the presence of live *P. ramorum* in infected larch bark.

Outbreak Map October 2013

