

## **Information Paper for CPM 20**

### **Agenda item 22.3**

#### **International Association of Horticultural Producers, AIPH**

### **Introduction**

AIPH demonstrates a multi-faceted leadership role in global phytosanitary governance. Following a survey of its members in 2021, AIPH identified a need for an industry-wide coordinated approach to plant health management in horticulture production. AIPH is leading the development of a Unified Framework, an audit-based standard rooted in HACCP and Systems Approach principles designed to harmonise international biosecurity. This extensive involvement spans the coordination of a new Plant Health Forum, and the submission of technical reports to IPPC meetings to facilitate cross-border trade.

AIPH provides additional plant health support to its members by monitoring and reporting on EPPO and EFSA pest risk assessments for critical threats such as *Xylella fastidiosa*, alongside developments in CITES CoP20 to implement artificial propagation codes and digital traceability. AIPH facilitates industry capacity building via the IPPC Plant Health Campus and collaborates with BGCI on the Illegal Plant Trade Coalition to mitigate illicit trade risks.

Collectively, these diverse activities ensure that the ornamental horticulture sector maintains high-level compliance with international quarantine regulations, chemical registration updates, and global conservation frameworks.

### **Developing a Unified Framework for an International voluntary audit-based standard for Plant Health management in ornamental horticulture production.**

A DRAFT Unified Framework for developing an International voluntary audit-based standard for Plant Health management in ornamental horticulture production has been developed by AIPH and distributed for initial review. The first stage of review is undertaken by the core group of representatives of the 6 current plant health industry management standards. AIPH prepared a Terms of Reference for the core group which will later extend to a larger Plant Health Forum that engages with industry practitioners, plant biosecurity professionals, national trade body representatives, NPPO liaisons, and IPPC representatives.

The Unified International Framework for Plant Health management provides a robust, audit-based framework for nurseries and horticulture businesses to proactively manage biosecurity risks across the entire plant supply chain. This document serves as the essential guidance for developing internationally accepted, audit-based Plant Health management standards rooted in the HACCP and Systems Approach principles. This structure successfully integrates the audit-based process with the comprehensive systems approach, providing a clear blueprint for national standards development that is acceptable to regulatory authorities for cross-border trade approval.

This Unified Framework integrates the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) methodology with a comprehensive Systems Approach to create a voluntary, verifiable management system. It is based on the top 6 voluntary Plant Health management standards currently in use in ornamental horticulture production in countries around the

world. It is structured into five sequential parts, guiding a business from initial policy commitment (Part I) and administrative setup (Part II), through the core risk assessment and control measures (Part III), to daily operational procedures (Part IV). Crucially, the final part (Part V) ensures that the system remains current and effective through formal audit, non-conformance management, and continuous management review.

A standard for Plant Health management that is developed in adherence to this framework is likely to ensure compliance with stringent national and international phytosanitary requirements, help secure trade approval across borders and assist in protecting the integrity of the global horticulture industry.

### **AIPH Plant Health Forum**

The AIPH Plant Health Forum is an international group being established by the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) to collectively contribute to progress on collaborative biosecurity efforts within the global ornamental horticulture industry. The Forum will build upon the findings of the 2021 AIPH Plant Health Survey and subsequent research, which identified a need for an internationally accepted voluntary standard for plant health management. By bringing together key stakeholders, the forum aims to strengthen biosecurity, facilitate safe trade, and support the goals of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

The primary purpose of the International Plant Health Forum is to develop and promote a high-quality, internationally recognised standard for voluntary audit-based plant health management in the ornamental horticulture sector. This initiative seeks to:

- **Strengthen Biosecurity:** Improve biosecurity practices globally by providing a framework for businesses to manage and mitigate plant pest and disease risks.
- **Facilitate Safe Trade:** Create a system that gives operators confidence in their international supply chains by identifying suppliers who adhere to a robust plant health standard.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Foster public-private cooperation between horticultural trade bodies, National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs), and the IPPC.
- **Guide National Schemes:** Provide a clear roadmap for national and regional trade bodies to develop and implement their own effective plant health management systems.

The forum's work will focus on the following key activities:

- **Analyse Existing Standards:** Conduct a detailed examination of the six voluntary plant health schemes identified in the AIPH research, documenting their common criteria and best practices.
- **Develop an International Voluntary Standard:** Use this analysis to establish a Unified Framework for an International, Voluntary, audit-based Standard for Plant Health Management for ornamental horticulture. This standard will be based on the 10 criteria defining a high-quality national standard for plant health management (see original document for details [International Association of Horticultural Producers \(AIPH\) report - International Plant Protection Convention](#).) and should align with the principles of the IPPC.
- **Seek Consensus:** Engage with an international panel of industry practitioners, biosecurity professionals, and representatives from the five schemes to achieve consensus on the proposed standard.

- **Promote and Facilitate Adoption:** Utilise AIPH's global member network to advocate for the acceptance and widespread adoption of the new international standard by horticultural businesses and trade bodies worldwide.
- **Liaise with the IPPC:** Provide updates and recommendations to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) to ensure the standard is well-integrated with current systems and protocols. Open discussions to consider appropriate channels for acceptance and integration of the proposed International Standard into regulatory mechanisms.

The forum will consist of a diverse group of members to ensure a wide range of expertise and perspectives. This will include:

- **AIPH Leadership:** Representatives from AIPH to chair and guide the forum.
- **Industry Practitioners:** Experienced professionals from ornamental horticulture businesses.
- **Plant Biosecurity Experts:** Researchers and specialists in plant pest and disease management.
- **National Trade Body Representatives:** Members from the national horticultural trade organisations whose schemes were identified in the AIPH research.
- **NPPO Liaisons:** Representatives from National Plant Protection Organisations to provide regulatory guidance.
- **IPPC Representatives:** Members from the IPPC to ensure alignment with international phytosanitary goals.

The forum's key deliverables will be:

- A detailed report outlining the common criteria of existing high-quality voluntary standards for plant health management.
- A finalised, universally agreed-upon framework for an International Voluntary Standard for Plant Health Management for the ornamental horticulture industry.
- A strategic plan for the implementation and global uptake of the standard.
- Regular informational papers and presentations to update the CPM on progress and outcomes.

## **Further action for AIPH, NPPOs, and IPPC**

AIPH will lead on the establishment and management of an International Plant Health Forum to continue the development and promotion of a Unified Framework for an International voluntary audit-based standard for Plant Health management in ornamental horticulture production. A standard for Plant Health management that is developed in adherence to this Unified Framework is likely to ensure compliance with stringent national and international phytosanitary requirements, help secure trade approval across borders and assist in protecting the integrity of the global horticulture industry.

With this Information Paper, AIPH looks to IPPC to make recommendations for participants in the Plant Health Forum. Further AIPH seeks the support of IPPC to work with AIPH and the Plant Health Forum in considering and defining methods and processes that recognise the proposed Unified Framework for a Plant Health Management Standard and that integrate this into current systems and protocols. In this way, AIPH can lead the global ornamental horticulture sector in collaborating with NPPOs to strengthen biosecurity and facilitate safe trade in horticultural produce.

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