

## Technical Note

### **Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine notes finding of *Ips cembrae* bark beetles in the Pest Free Area of Scotland and welcomes immediate suspension of trade in larch logs from this area.**

Scottish authorities have confirmed the finding of a small number of *Ips cembrae* coniferous bark beetles, intercepted in pheromone lure traps in the Pest Free Area (PFA) in western Scotland. Following this confirmation Scottish authorities have suspended issuing Phytosanitary certificates for the movement of roundwood of larch from the PFA into Ireland.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has been informed that a total of six *Ips cembrae* bark beetles have been caught in four traps in the PFA. Scottish Forestry's Tree Health team has carried out ground surveys around each site and no evidence of any breeding populations has been found. Wider surveillance is being carried out, including drone surveys, for this pest which can affect stressed larch trees.

A spokesperson for the Department commented: ***"Plant health controls are fundamental to the protection of Ireland's forest health status. The suspension of the trade of larch logs into Ireland from the PFA closes off the most significant potential pathway for the movement of the pest from Great Britain into this country. This is an appropriate measure pending the outcome of further surveillance by the Scottish authorities."***

Many regulated plant pests and diseases found elsewhere are still not present in Ireland. The Department implements a strict plant health regime in order to protect this favourable plant health status. Ireland's Protected Zone status (pest freedom) includes six bark beetle species including *Ips cembrae*. Northern Ireland shares with Ireland the protected zone status for the six bark beetle species.

The Department spokesperson added that ***"One of the key principles of the Department's Plant Health and Biosecurity Strategy is risk-based surveillance for early detection in line with international best practice and scientific evidence in support of early detection of pests and diseases. We are keeping in very close contact with our counterparts in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland as this situation develops. It is vitally important that all forest stakeholders remain vigilant at all times and report forest health concerns as a matter of urgency."***

The suspension of the movement of roundwood of larch does not affect the trade involving the export of roundwood logs from Ireland into the UK nor does it affect the import of spruce logs from the Scottish PFA. There have been no consignments of larch logs from Great Britain into Ireland in 2022. Unprocessed conifer logs are not permitted to be imported into Ireland from any other area of Great Britain or indeed any other Country.

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