

## Pilot nursery feedback

### Treeline Native Nursery, Kaharoa, Rotorua

Treeline Native Nursery is based in Kaharoa, Rotorua and specialises in growing bulk quantities for revegetation and restoration projects, landscaping and farm plantings. It supplies local authorities, the Department of Conservation, subdivision projects, private landscaping, farm planting, community and landcare projects.

Treeline staff member, Debbie Porter, who did most of the Plant Production Biosecurity Scheme work, said Treeline took part in the pilot because its team believe that biosecurity has an important part to play in nurseries but was not currently being done well.

“Having a biosecurity scheme within the horticulture sector is paramount to establishing standards and guidelines that we all follow to protect our places of work, establish confidence between individual businesses, and to future proofing.”



*Diane (left) and Debbie from Treeline Native Nursery with Diane (right) of Asure Quality*

### The Process

She said the pilot scheme was workable but it took some time to integrate with the nursery’s processes as it involved completion of a lot of forms throughout the day such as visitor record books, incoming stock forms and dispatch forms.

“We were already doing the checks, but just did not have not paper trail to prove this. New things take time to train people, change mindsets and allow dedicated time to complete forms.”

She said while completing the Nursery manual and protocols, she found the websites recommended at the Pilot Workshop the most valuable e.g. NGIA <https://www.ngia.com.au/> and KVH <https://www.kvh.org.nz/>.

“Due to Australia already having established biosecurity measures in place in the horticulture/nursery sector, and the PSA scare a few years ago, they had already developed supporting information and guidelines which in turn gave me excellent information to complete the process.”

Treeline used the Nursery Manual template as a basic guide and as well as the KVH manual. She found John Liddle from the scheme very approachable and proactive with checking on progress and needs.

### **New systems introduced**

The pilot scheme enabled Treeline to identify a potential biohazard in the fact the nursery didn't have an isolation area so incoming plants and stock were never put into an isolation area for a full check before being introduced into the nursery. Since establishing an isolation area, Treeline has noted incoming pest issues on plants arriving from other nurseries.

Treeline also implemented other new processes as a result of the pilot scheme such as:

- Records of visitors
- Paperwork to show the incoming and dispatching of plants and products
- A plant batch recording process
- Offsite seed collection protocols
- A complaints register
- Crop monitoring procedures
- Tool hygiene

### **Staff response**

Deb said it took staff some time to get used to the new processes.

“Any changes or introduction of new processes requires a lot of training and education and is always met with some resistance, so changes have taken time, but the benefits are showing and with more time staff have adapted well, and now a normal part of everyday processes, e.g. regular tool hygiene.”

### **Suggestions to improve the scheme**

Debbie suggested that more guidelines be developed to help answer different sections in the nursery manual.

### **Potential benefits**

She said it was too soon to tell whether implementing the scheme's practices and guidelines would improve Treeline's productivity. Implementation of all the processes and paperwork, production has decreased business as usual productivity in the short term.

“But then I can see that in the future by identifying risks earlier, for example through crop monitoring, should decrease the time and effort later of treatment or loss of crop on a larger scale.”

She said the biosecurity scheme would add value to Treeline and give it a competitive advantage: “Biosecurity is such an important part of protection for the nursery sector, and future proofing. A biosecurity scheme will instil confidence, within the nursery sector and nationally, that appropriate monitoring, precautions, procedures and actions are being taken to meet the required standards. This will in turn produce a high quality, disease and pest free plants for introduction into the environment. I think it will give us a competitive advantage, as I see regional councils and people in general acknowledging the benefits of suppliers who follow the standards and achieve this NZQA qualification.”

Debbie said the scheme would potentially reduce Treeline’s business risk in knowing that its plants can be moved safely around the country but this will be dependent on other nurseries and the transporting companies also following biosecurity procedures.

**Recommend to others?**

She recommended that all nurseries undertake the scheme and said it ought to become a compulsory requirement to be able to sell plants in the future.

“I really don’t want to see too many restrictions, financial implications, put onto the nurseries in the scheme e.g. testing for phytophthora for Kauri die back, which is a huge time and financial commitment, when any Joe Blogs is able to sell Kauri without testing.”