

## Alerts

Alerts provide information about significant changes to import conditions. Keep informed of alerts by following individual import cases.

Emergency measures: Tomato mottle mosaic virus

### Effective from 5 November 2019

The purpose of this notification is to advise of an emerging risk, *Tomato mottle mosaic virus* (ToMMV), and the actions that the Department of Agriculture is taking to manage this risk in tomato and capsicum seed for sowing imports.

#### Key changes:

1. The department is planning to introduce emergency measures on 19 November 2019 to reduce the likelihood of introducing ToMMV to Australia.
2. Addition of PCR test for ToMMV for tomato and capsicum seed for sowing using a department approved protocol.
3. Department approved protocols for ToMMV and other information related to ToMMV can be found on the [Department of Agriculture website](#).
4. Laboratory test reports and/or phytosanitary certificate additional declarations must include a statement that testing for ToMMV and *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* (ToBRFV) was conducted using primers and protocols approved by the Australian Department of Agriculture. Laboratory reports and phytosanitary certificates related to testing for ToBRFV that were issued prior to 19 November 2019 will not require this detail.

#### Scope

These emergency measures apply to all permitted species of tomato and capsicum seed listed in the following BICON Cases:

- Tomato seed for sowing
- Capsicum spp. (requiring testing) seed for sowing

#### Emergency measures

##### Prior to 19 November 2019

Seed consignments that are shipped to Australia prior to, or on 18 November 2019, will be allowed entry into Australia under the existing arrangement (no mandatory test required for ToMMV, existing testing requirements for other pathogens remain).

Commercial documentation will be required to confirm the shipping date to Australia.

##### From 19 November 2019

Consignments that are shipped to Australia on or after 19 November 2019, will be subject to mandatory testing for ToMMV. This testing may be done offshore at any laboratory able to perform the required test or onshore at a department approved laboratory.

Seeds must be tested using a department approved PCR test and found free of ToMMV with a sample size of 20,000 seeds for large seed lots (or 20 per cent for small seed lots).

Phytosanitary certification will be required to attest to the testing requirements, and/or corresponding laboratory reports (that link to the phytosanitary certificate and seed lot) confirming that the seed was found free of ToMMV. Laboratory reports must confirm that the testing protocol is approved by the Australian Department of Agriculture.

The laboratory report must state:

1. The seed species tested,
2. That a minimum seed sample was tested,
3. A statement that testing for Tomato mottle mosaic virus was conducted using primers and protocols that were on the Australian Department of Agriculture list of approved primers and protocols at the time of testing. For approved primers and protocols, please refer to the department's webpage for [Tomato mottle mosaic virus](#).
4. The test result confirming freedom from ToMMV,
5. The lot/batch number(s), and these numbers must match the phytosanitary certificate,
6. The date, the laboratory name and address.

Where phytosanitary certification is not presented or not accepted for ToMMV testing, consignments are subject to onshore testing in Australia at a sample size of 20,000 seeds for large seed lots or 20% of the seed lot by weight for small seed lots to verify freedom from ToMMV.

If any sub-sample returns a positive result on any targeted pathogen, the seed lot will not be permitted entry into Australian territory.

**New additional requirement in laboratory report and additional declaration**

Consignments that are shipped to Australia on or after 19 November 2019, an additional statement will be required for ToMMV and ToBRFV.

A statement that testing for *Tomato mottle mosaic virus* and *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* was conducted using primers and protocols that were on the Australian Department of Agriculture list of approved primers and protocols at the time of testing.

For approved primers and protocols, please refer to the department's webpages for [Tomato mottle mosaic virus](#) and [Tomato brown rugose fruit virus](#).

Laboratory reports and phytosanitary certificates related to testing for ToBRFV that were issued prior to 19 November 2019 will not require this detail.

**Testing for all pathogens for tomato and capsicum seed for sowing imports**

All testing may be performed using the same seed sample, so only a total of 20,000 seeds or 20% of the seed lot by weight is necessary to perform all required testing for tomato and capsicum seed for sowing imports.

**Background**

ToMMV is a member of the Tobamovirus genus. It is transmitted through propagative materials (seeds, plants for planting, grafts, cuttings), and spreads locally by contact including direct plant-to-plant contact, contaminated tools, hands, or clothing and by bees. Tobamoviruses can remain infective in seeds, plant debris and contaminated soil for months. It has plant disease resistance breaking capabilities for commercial cultivars of tomato.

ToMMV naturally infects tomato and capsicum resulting in unmarketable fruit. On tomato, symptoms include severe necrotic lesions, chlorosis, leaf distortion, mottle and systemic crinkling symptoms and fruit necrosis. Disease incidences of up to 87% have been reported. On capsicum, symptoms include foliar mottle, shrinking and necrosis.

ToMMV is not known to be present in Australia

**Import permits**

- All current import permit holders will be notified of the emergency measures.
- Import permits will be varied to reflect the emergency conditions. The department plans to vary all affected import permits by 19 November 2019.

**Further Information**

Please contact Plant Import Operations on 1800 900 090 or email [imports@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:imports@agriculture.gov.au) (please title the subject line of the email with "Tomato and Capsicum seed emergency measures, Plant T2".)

**This Alert applies to the following Cases:**

- [Tomato seed for sowing](#)
- [Capsicum spp. \(requiring testing\) seed for sowing](#)