

Fruit fly outbreak in Loxton: how will it impact the transportation of grapes this vintage?



Queensland fruit fly. Photo: James Niland [CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Seven fruit flies (also known as Queensland fruit fly, or Q-fly) were detected in Loxton, in South Australia's Riverland, in December 2018 prompting restrictions on the movement of winegrapes within the outbreak area and associated suspension zone.

Winegrapes are a host for fruit fly. A 1.5km outbreak area was established around the detection point, with an additional 15km suspension area established beyond that.

The quarantine period was set, and then extended, until at least 25 March 2019.

Vinehealth and Primary Industries and Regions SA provided factsheets and maps of the suspension zones, laid out

movement conditions and requirements for grapegrowers, wineries and processing facilities, transporters, as well as information on how to clean harvesters and how to deal with winegrape maturity samples.

Ian Macrae, senior viticulture officer at CCW Co-operative Limited in Berri, spoke to *Grapegrower & Winemaker* about how the outbreak would impact the transportation of local grapes during vintage.

"We've got about 30-32 growers inside the quarantine area/suspension zone, and all of that fruit has to come out of the zone to our main receiving winery, which is in Berri. The requirements are that the vineyards need to get area freedom certificates to get the fruit out of that suspension area. Each load needs to have a plant health certificate to accompany the load moving out of the area. Those plant health certificates have to be received by the receiving winery," Macrae outlined, adding that the certificates had been organised by CCW for its growers.

At the time of publishing, there was no requirement to cover grape loads, but there was a warning for transporters not to overfill grape bins or trucks to minimise the risk of spillage.

Macrae agreed the conditions would make transporting this vintage's winegrapes a bit more complicated than usual, but he added that Accolade and CCW were organised.

"We're used to moving fruit interstate. We're used to area freedom certificates and generating plant health certificates; the paperwork is not something we're unfamiliar with," he said.

Macrae added, "there is a winery located inside the fruit fly area and a lot of their fruit comes from Loxton [also within the area] so there will be no [special/unusual] requirements for those [already] inside the area."

While the Riverland is fighting to protect against fruit flies, Northern Tasmania was officially reinstated as a Pest Free Area in early January, opening the door to domestic trade.

Minister for Agriculture David Littleproud and Senator for Tasmania Steve Martin welcomed the news as a positive step forward for the local horticultural industry.

"No fruit flies have been detected in Northern Tasmania in the past six months thanks to eradication efforts and movement restrictions have been lifted," Littleproud said.