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Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali  
Direzione General dello Sviluppo Rurale, DISRV,  
Via XX Settembre 20  
00187  
Roma  
Italy

Dear Mr Faraglia,

## **Establishment of a pest free area for *Thaumetopoea processionea***

I am writing to you regarding the recent establishment of the Pest Free Area (PFA) for *Thaumetopoea processionea* in the Pistoia nursery district as well as some parts of the municipality of Montemurlo in Tuscany. Firstly I would like to thank Mr Cesaroni for providing a copy of the Italian decree regarding these PFAs.

Unfortunately, the information included in the decrees is not sufficient to enable us to determine whether the PFA has been established in accordance with ISPM 4. In order to allow us to consider whether the PFA meets UK requirements, I have set out below a number of questions to which we would like answers to.

- What general surveillance or monitoring surveys are being conducted by the plant health services in and around the pest free area?
- You reference 200 surveys that have been conducted over the past 2 years. Could you provide some more information in regards to the methodology that was used in particular:
  - where exactly the surveys took place
  - when the surveys were conducted

- what was surveyed
  - how was it surveyed
  - any other information you think is relevant
- It also mentions that *Quercus spp.* are only present in urban areas and in sporadic form outside of nurseries. Has there been any specific surveillance done on these plants? If so, can you provide the same information as mentioned in the previous question.
  - In order to maintain area freedom could you please provide information relating to the established phytosanitary measures that are in place such as movement restrictions in and out of the infested area, control measures and any awareness raising campaign that have been undertaken.
  - Justify the reasoning for establishing a 1 km buffer zone. The Annexes Working Group (AWG) in November 2010 highlighted that any buffer zone should take into account the rate of spread, pests' biology and geographical location and that a buffer zone of 4 km was deemed too small.
  - Are there any legislative requirements that require any pest finds to be notified to the Italian NPPO?
  - Do inspections take place of host material that is imported into the uninfested area?
  - Can you confirm the date when the PFA was established?
  - How will you ensure that no plants are grown at any point of their lives outside the PFA?

Please also include any further information that you believe can objectively demonstrate that the PFA area has been established in accordance with ISPM No. 4.

In addition, it would be helpful for enforcement purposes, to receive a list of nurseries that have been officially approved to export oak trees from the PFA and the codes we would expect to see on plant passports.

Until we have been able to conclude that oak trees exported from the PFA will meet the requirements of our legislation any oak trees imported to the UK on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019 from that area will be treated as non-compliant and imports will therefore not be permitted. I would be grateful if you could inform your industry of this, to avoid issues on arrival in the UK.

If you would prefer to discuss the points raised in this letter, I would be more than happy to arrange a meeting, phone call or video conference with you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Spence', written in a cursive style.

Professor Nicola Spence

UK Chief Plant Health Officer

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