



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Department of
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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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1 June 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Rapid Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) on *Scaphoideus titanus*

I am writing to seek your views on a UK Pest Risk Analysis for *Scaphoideus titanus*. A link to the rapid PRA can be found at the website given below:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/pest-risk-analyses/>

We would welcome your views and comments on the PRA and the proposals for future action.

In submitting any comments you may wish to focus on the summary, key uncertainties and conclusion sections of the risk assessments and to consider the following:

- Are any factual corrections required?
- Your view on the appropriateness of the suggested proposals for future actions?
- Can you provide any additional information (or links to other sources of information) that may help address uncertainty identified in the assessment/management measures?
- Are there any risks that have not been adequately considered?
- Have you reviewed the risk assessment and consider that you have nothing further to add?

This review applies to the UK and is being conducted by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, with the agreement of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Government. The objective of this stakeholder engagement is to gather views from all interested sectors on the UK position. We will take all comments made into account in developing the UK position.



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Background

Scaphoideus titanus, also known as the American grapevine leafhopper, is an insect native to North America that develops exclusively on grapevines (*Vitis* spp.). It was introduced into Europe in the 20th century, most likely through the movement of infested planting material, and is now found in many wine-growing regions of Europe. While the leafhopper itself causes little direct damage, it is of concern as it is the primary vector of Grapevine flavescence dorée (FDp), a disease that poses significant risks to commercial vineyards.

Vitis planting material including propagating material (e.g. canes, scions, rootstocks) and ornamentals (e.g. potted plants) are the primary pathway assessed for this PRA. The UK imports a large amount of *Vitis* planting material annually from the EU, including grafted rootstock for vineyards and mature ornamental plants for retail, each posing different levels of phytosanitary risk due to varying likelihood of pest association and opportunity of transfer to other grapevine hosts. Hitchhiking via vehicles and machinery is possible, but unlikely as a pathway for entry, given current import regulations and uncertainty regarding the likelihood of the pest remaining with the vehicle over long distances. Other pathways, such as grapes or non-*Vitis* plants, are not considered significant. Overall, the *Vitis* planting material is considered the primary pathway and is rated as moderately likely.

The UK presents suitable conditions for the establishment of *Scaphoideus titanus*, both in terms of host distribution and climate. *Vitis vinifera*, the primary host, has a wide distribution across England and Wales due to commercial vineyards and naturalised *Vitis* populations. Climatically, the UK falls within the suitable range for *S. titanus* development, as indicated by historical records from North America and modelling studies using CLIMEX. These models suggest that southern grape-growing regions of the UK are particularly favourable for establishment, although development in the UK may be slower and less optimal due to lower average temperatures. Overall, outdoor establishment of *S. titanus* in the UK is rated as likely. *Scaphoideus titanus* can only complete its lifecycle on *Vitis* spp., and as vineyards are not grown under protection, *S. titanus* is not considered a pest of protected cultivation. Establishment under protection is rated as very unlikely.

The potential impacts from *S. titanus* alone are likely to be negligible, however its potential impacts as a vector enabling the spread of a damaging phytoplasma are significant. In regions where FDp is present, the economic consequences have been severe, with yield reductions of up to 92%, increased vine mortality, significant losses in grape quality and marketability, and indirect costs associated with control measures. Similar damages could be expected in the UK viticulture sector, but overall impacts would be limited by the smaller viticulture industry and restricted climate suitability. Potential economic impacts in the UK are rated as medium.

Due to the leafhopper's narrow host range of *Vitis*, any damages to the wider environment are unlikely, especially where *Vitis* is not a key component to the UK ecosystem. Potential environmental impacts are rated as small.

As viticulture in the UK is a growing industry, potential damages by FDp may impact employment, revenue, tourism, and cause reputational damage to UK wine production. Potential social impacts are rated as medium.

The control of *S. titanus* with insecticide applications and removal of infected vines remain the best control options for managing FDp in mainland Europe. *Scaphoideus titanus* has never been fully eradicated from any region where it has become established. Therefore, exclusion remains the preferred option. Requirements for plants for planting of *Vitis* may not always apply if FDp is not officially present in the source region, creating potential gaps in protection due to the wider distribution of *S. titanus*.

For containment and population suppression, close monitoring is necessary. Techniques include visual inspection of plants and sticky traps for nymphs and adults. Insecticide application is most effective when timed to target third-instar nymphs, typically requiring two area-wide treatments. Cultural control, including sucker removal, pruning, debris destruction, and clearing of wild or abandoned *Vitis*, also plays an important role in management.

Recommendations for action

Due to the potential impacts for the UK, we are recommending statutory action against *Scaphoideus titanus*. Any consideration of future regulation will take account of the outcome of negotiations of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement.

All responses should be sent to plantpestrisks@defra.gov.uk

Responses should be received by **24 August 2026**.

Information provided in response to this stakeholder engagement, including personal information, may be made available to the public on request, in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental information Regulations 2004 (EIRs)

If you do not wish your response, including your name, contact details and any other personal information, to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the stakeholder engagement. Please note that if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, this will not count as a confidentiality request. Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for the information under freedom of information legislation. However, we cannot guarantee that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

Yours faithfully,

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