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Improved biosecurity measures for cruise sector

New biosecurity measures for cruise ships this summer will both improve screening and offer a better experience to disembarking passengers, Cruise New Zealand says.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is working with the cruise sector to introduce new measures to manage biosecurity risks, especially fruit fly.

More biosecurity detector dog teams and portable x-ray machines at North Island ports will screen disembarking passengers. MPI will also work with cruise companies to identify when ships have sourced risk items like apples and bananas from New Zealand or other reputable suppliers, reducing the need for surveillance.

Cruise New Zealand General Manager Raewyn Tan says the improvements are vital, given the expected 33% jump in cruise passengers to 267,800 for the 2015-16 season.

The cruise sector is totally supportive of the need to protect New Zealand's biosecurity, she says.

"However, it's vital for passengers' disembarking experience – and to maximise their onshore time – that we are able to process large numbers of people as efficiently as possible. That is why we have been pleased to work closely with MPI, to help them understand how ships are communicating biosecurity messages to passengers, and identify where food items are being sourced," Ms Tan says.

The cruise sector hopes that by working in partnership with MPI, screening costs to both the government and cruise lines will be minimised.

"We have been working with MPI on this initiative for some time, and we look forward to continuing to find ways to develop processes to our mutual benefit and to protect New Zealand's environment," she says.

About Cruise New Zealand

Cruise New Zealand is the industry association of New Zealand's cruise sector. Cruise New Zealand has been the driving force in attracting cruise lines to New Zealand since 1994, and has played a major part in building New Zealand's world renowned reputation as a cruise-friendly destination.



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