



OIA26-0384

30 June 2026

Cher Ryker

fyi-request-34698-01d57707@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Cher Ryker,

Thank you for your email of 14 May 2026 requesting information relating to the Painted Apple Moth Project. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 4 June 2026 the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) extended the time limit to respond to your request to 3 July 2026.

Your specific questions and my responses to these are outlined below:

1. *West Auckland Regional Operations – Please provide the overarching operational documents for the 2003 West Auckland aerial spraying program, specifically including:*

The complete regional flight path maps for all low-altitude dispersal flights conducted during the 2003 calendar year.

Maps of the Painted Apple Moth Project Aerial Spraying in 2003 are provided in Appendix One. These are arranged chronologically by spray round, in line with the schedule provided in Appendix Two.

The formal schedule and logged dates of all aerial spraying operations executed over the West Auckland region during this period.

The table in Appendix Two sets out the schedule and logged dates of the Painted Apple Moth Project Aerial Spraying in 2003.

The government's stated objectives and operational parameters for targeting this specific geographic zone.

The goal of the project as established by MPI was to eradicate painted apple moth (PAM). To meet this aim, implement control and monitoring methods were developed to be:

i) Cost effective

ii) Scientifically valid

iii) Compliant with regulatory and government policy requirements

iv) Acceptable to the community

v) Meeting the special needs of vulnerable individuals

vi) Take account of the special status of Māori

vii) Take account of impacts on the environment

A targeted aerial spray programme was undertaken in areas where ground-based control methods were not sufficiently effective in controlling painted apple moth. The boundaries of the target areas were defined from a combination of surveying, trapping programme results, population modelling and expert scientific advice.

In March 2003, the boundaries of the target area were increased from 8,000ha to 10,600ha due to positive finds and trap catches outside of the known infested area. This enabled a buffer zone of 1km in aerial application of infested areas, such as around any finds of PAM life stages and trap catches.

2. *Kelston Airspace & Targeted Localized Data - In addition to the regional data, I require highly localized operational logs for the suburb of Kelston. Please provide: The specific flight paths, altitudes, and spray logs for the airspace directly above and immediately surrounding the residential address of 6 Kelkirk Street, Kelston, during the 2003 operations. The precise dates and times that aerial dispersal occurred directly over or adjacent to this specific Kelston address.*

The maps and schedule provided for section one of your request show the extent of records located by MPI showing when the aerial spraying took place over Kelston.

The specific spray rounds that took place over Kelston in 2003 were spray rounds 14 to 20, which took place from 7 January 2003 to 14 May 2003. After 14 May 2003, the spray programme was reduced in scale significantly to focus on areas with active sites and suitable buffer area.

MPI does not hold any records with the specificity to say exactly when the flight path took the aircraft over 6 Selkirk Street, Kelston, or at what altitude the aircraft would have been at. Therefore, this portion of your request is refused under Section 18(g)(i) of the OIA – *The information requested is not held by the department, and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department.*

3. *Bio-Insecticide Composition and Drift Modeling - To accurately understand the environmental reality of these operations, please provide: The exact chemical and biological composition (including all active agents, inert ingredients, and adjuvants) of the bio-insecticide(s) utilized during the 2003 West Auckland operations.*

The exact formulation of Foray 48B is considered commercially sensitive. Release of product ingredients would jeopardise New Zealand's access to this and other pest management products in the future. However, the Ministry and the supplier did recognise there is strong public interest in the formulation of Foray 48B. This fact sheet is provided on the MPI website and is publicly available: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/30357/direct>

Therefore, this portion of your request is refused under Section 9(2)(b)(ii) – *To protect information where the making available of the information would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who is the subject of the information.*

The environmental drift models or dispersal radius calculations utilized by the Ministry to predict how the bio-insecticides would settle into residential zones, specifically within the Kelston area

The report, "Recommendations for Aerial Application of Foray 48b to Control the Painted Apple Moth" is attached as Appendix Three. This report informed planning and monitoring of the aerial spray runs, and there were times when spraying was halted due to wind conditions that might have caused drift outside the target areas.

Additional publicly available academic work used to inform modelling is listed below:

- [Richardson B 2002. Evaluating targeted aerial spraying for insect control. New Zealand Plant Protection 55: 168–171.](#)
- [Richardson B, Thistle H 2002. The role of aerial application simulation models for pest eradication operations in urban environments. Pp 125-135 in Defending the green Oasis: New Zealand Biosecurity and Science.](#)
- [Eds Goldson, S.L. and Suckling, D.M. Christchurch, New Zealand, NZ Plant Protection Society Inc.](#)

Some information has been withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- Section 9(2)(a) – *to protect the privacy of natural persons.*
- Section 9(2)(b)(ii) – *to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who is the subject of the information.*

MPI is satisfied that, in the circumstances of this case, the withholding of the information is not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make the information available.

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Ministry for Primary Industries at Official.InformationAct@mpi.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Spelman
Commissioner Biosecurity Intelligence, Systems and Response