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## **Submission on MPI proposed amendments to import requirements for *Solanum lycopersicum* (tomato) seeds for sowing**

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### **Introduction**

1. Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed amendments to the import requirements for tomato seeds for sowing. This submission is supported by:
  - Katikati Fruitgrowers Association
  - Process Vegetables NZ
  - Vegetables New Zealand Inc.
2. The horticulture industry is valued at \$6.73 billion, employs more than 60,000 people, and grows fruit, berries and vegetables on 80,000 hectares of land. It is an integral part of the regional economies in Northland, Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, Manawatu, Marlborough, Nelson, Canterbury and Central Otago.

### **Background**

3. New Zealand has an important tomato industry which includes both fresh tomatoes and tomatoes for processing. The process tomato industry is valued at about \$8.6 million and is a key input to many New Zealand grocery staples such as tomato sauce, baked beans in tomato sauce, spaghetti in tomato sauce and others. These staples maintain their popularity in part due to the low cost afforded by local production from New Zealand grown ingredients.

4. Biosecurity threats that increase the challenge of tomato production threaten not just the sustainability of grower's operations but also food affordability for consumers.
5. Imported seed is very important to the New Zealand vegetable industry, particularly tomatoes. It is critical that seed coming into the country is clean to protect growers from biosecurity threats, which often relies on robust testing. If inadequately managed, imported seed can be a risk pathway for seed-transmitted viruses such as Pepino Mosaic Virus, a pathogen that can affect tomatoes.

### **Submission**

6. HortNZ supports the conclusions drawn in the Risk Management Proposal.
7. HortNZ supports increased tomato seed testing for Pepino Mosaic Virus, within the conditions set out in the IHS. This testing improves the likelihood of detection (95% confidence of 0.1% infestation from a 3000 seed lot), without being excessively burdensome on the importation of seed, already one of the most significant costs for tomato production.
8. HortNZ notes that the increased testing aligns with the testing requirements for other viruses in tomato seed, notably tomato brown rugose fruit virus and tomato mottle mosaic virus, reflecting a more standardised approach to virus testing.
9. HortNZ welcomes the opportunity to discuss our submission.

**ENDS**