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TO:
Consultations
Ministry of Primary Industries
PO Box 2526
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New Zealand
plantimports@mpi.govt.nz

SUBMISSION ON: Suspension of Unused or Out-of-Date Nursery Stock Import Pathways

SUBMISSION FROM: Spring Botanicals Ltd

About Spring Botanicals Ltd

Spring Botanicals Ltd (SBL) is a horticultural farming business focused on growing botanical ingredients for the New Zealand Distilling Industry. Spring Botanicals was established in 2016 on a property located in Taranaki and follows the principles of Permaculture and Regenerative farming practices.

Angelica Root (Angelica archangelica)

Spring Botanicals commenced with growing and supplying Angelica Root (**Angelica archangelica**) initially for Begin Distilling Ltd then expanding the offering to a small group of NZ Distilleries. These Distillers found that the Taranaki grown Angelica Root is considerably different to imported Angelica Root containing far more volatiles and flavonoids. There was instant demand for more Angelica Root and with this success it became apparent that SBL would not be able to produce enough Angelica Root to match the demand from even a small number of New Zealand Distillers so has had to limited supply to Begin Distilling Ltd only.

Recognising that there is a huge potential New Zealand and export demand for New Zealand grown Angelica Root (as well as other botanicals), SBL is working together with Begin Distilling Ltd and Venture Taranaki on growing trials for Angelica Root (**Angelica archangelica**). This is part of the Te Puna Umanga Venture Taranaki (Branching Out growing trials) aiming to develop a Gin Botanicals growing industry in Taranaki.

Juniper Trees (Juniperus communis)

Spring Botanicals is working with Begin Distilling Ltd, Venture Taranaki and Massey University researching the potential to grow Juniper Trees (*Juniperus communis*) in New Zealand. The first Juniper Tree growing trials generated from this project are being undertaken at the Spring Botanicals Property in Taranaki and Massey University Campus in Palmerston North.

Consultation

Biosecurity New Zealand is seeking feedback on two proposed changes to the import health standard Importation of Nursery Stock.

The proposed changes are:

1. Reformatting the standard to make it more user-friendly
2. Suspending plants-for-planting pathways (import of plant genus from a specific country) that are not used and/or are out of date.

Biosecurity New Zealand has a list of plant genus which have not been imported in the last 11-25 years. They propose to suspend pathways for these genera (including assessing

emerging pest threats for the genus) and are seeking feedback on any plant genera or species proposed for suspension that the public may have a viable and valid interest in importing, including understanding the demand for and opportunities for New Zealand for the plant species.

These changes should ensure:

- The standard is useable
- Biosecurity New Zealand can focus on the pathways that are important to the sector and which will have positive impacts and benefits to New Zealand.

Even if pathways are suspended or revoked, plants could be imported again after a review and consultation on new import requirements.

Spring Botanicals Ltd Submission

A key to creating world class spirits is the use of quality botanicals. New Zealand has the potential for local sourcing of ingredients providing freshness, quality, cost benefits, reducing food-miles, establishing provenance and the development of a unique New Zealand essence to our brands.

Gin is by far the most common spirit produced by New Zealand Distilleries. Traditional gins typically have botanicals such as Juniper cones (**Juniperus communis**), Coriander Seed (**Coriandrum sativum**), Angelica Root (**Angelica archangelica**) and Orris Root (**Rhizoma iridis**). Other botanicals used commonly in the spirits industry can include Cassia (**Cinnamomum cassia**), liquorice (**Glycyrrhiza glabra**), Wormwood (**Artemisia absinthium**) Anise (**Pimpinella anisum**), Cardamom (**Elettaria cardamomum**), Cinnamon (**Cinnamomum verum**), peppercorns, aniseed, almond, caraway, fennel, ginger, nutmeg, and many more.

As recently as 2016, none of these ingredients were grown in New Zealand and were all imported. There is now a healthy research and growing programme to locally source these botanicals. Spring Botanicals Ltd is actively working with Begin Distilling Ltd, Te Puna Umanga Venture Taranaki (Branching Out growing trials) and Massey University, on various programs for building a botanicals industry within Taranaki and other regions in New Zealand. Orris Root, Coriander Seed and Angelica Root are now being produced commercially to supply to New Zealand distilleries and for other uses in the Food & Beverage industry. Growing these botanicals locally has provided high-value diversification opportunities for farmers for both local and export opportunities.

Gin must contain juniper in significant quantities, and so the ability to grow and harvest from **Juniperus communis** in New Zealand will have a significant impact on the New Zealand spirits industry. A recent review of go / no-go on the Begin/SBL/VT/Massey Juniper Project concluded that it will be a longer-term programme, but there is a compelling argument to continue. In the next 10 years or so we must be research-focused to establish genetic-diverse stock suitable for New Zealand conditions, understand how to propagate in volume and determine regimes for commercial growing, processing systems etc. We will need plants and plant material from overseas to compare with Juniper trees grown from seeds imported into New Zealand in the 1980's. Since 2011 *Phytophthora austrocedri*, an aggressive pathogen of juniper and cypress trees, has been causing dieback and fatality in the juniper industry overseas. We will therefore need to have an appropriate importation protocol in place in future.

Spring Botanicals Ltd supports:

Spring Botanicals Ltd supports the proposal to reformat the import health standard Importation of Nursery Stock to make it more user-friendly and align it with modern standards.

Spring Botanicals Ltd does not support:

Spring Botanicals Ltd does not support the suspension of pathways that may be important for the establishment of the spirits botanicals industry in New Zealand. These include **Juniperus**,

Cinnamomum, Angelica, Iris (potentially impacting Orris root), **Pimpinella, Cinnamomum, Glycyrrhiza, Artemisia** which are on the Biosecurity New Zealand suspension list.

The spirits botanicals industry in New Zealand is just beginning an exciting phase of growth, and it is important for Biosecurity to be aware of and support the retention of plant material importation protocols relevant to the distillation industry.

Yours faithfully



Mark James

Director, Spring Botanicals Ltd