

Debarking- Quality Assurance Programme

Start date: October 2024

Updated as at: December 2025



Project purpose and link to strategy

Phyto is focused on ensuring market access solutions for New Zealand's log exports. To that end, in 2023 Phyto initiated an independent audit of debarking assets in New Zealand in support of MPI's overall response to pest interception data originating from work carried out on a range of log consignments, phytosanitary treatment options and arrival ports in China.

One of the outcomes of that work was a sector commitment to develop a robust ISO 9001 quality assurance programme across all debarking assets in New Zealand.



Project description, method and scope

This project involves engaging and working with the debarking sector to improve log quality outcomes by developing a practical and effective quality assurance programme across all debarking assets in New Zealand.

In order to achieve this outcome, Phyto and IVS facilitated a series of technical and policy workshops with debarking operators across New Zealand.

Broad consensus on issues was agreed and documented. These included standard procedures for log output quality checks, quality system details and review mechanisms.

The scope of this work involved developing and documenting 'the quality assurance programme', the underlying scheme document, liaising with MPI, exporters and key supply chain partners (eg, marshallers)



Project objectives

The objectives of the quality assurance programme are;

1. A compulsory quality assurance programme that delivers improved log outputs from debarkers
2. Regular log output monitoring for bark. Particular focus is on the ICPR 2% (average) and 5% (maximum) thresholds.
3. To collect, analyse and interpret the monthly log audit data
4. To provide independent oversight of the scheme.
5. Regular independent systems audits.



Project stakeholders

Stakeholders of this project include MPI, log exporters, forest owners, debarking operators, IVAs and marshallers.



Implementation and milestones

Background - auditing

The first quantitative audits commenced prior to December 31, 2022. Remaining audits were scheduled with operators through the months of January, February, March, April and May 2023.

Exact timeframes depended on log and auditor availability.

All audits were completed by mid-May 2023.

Interim assurance report

An interim report was made available to Phyto on 3 May 2023. The results demonstrated that the 5% (maximum bark remaining on any individual log) threshold was being adhered to throughout all of the audits completed.

Final assurance report

All site reports were completed as part of the final report summarising the projects objectives, methodology and results. In consultation with Phyto the final report was submitted in May 2023.

Industry QA Programme

As part of the Industry's ongoing work with MPI and its focus on quality, a review of the quantitative audit work completed by Phyto and the qualitative work completed by MPI was conducted. The observations and conclusion from this work were shared with industry as was a draft Official Assurance Programme (OAP) that industry was asked to consult on.

One of the outcomes of this work was a commitment from Phyto, its members and the debarking sector to develop a Quality Assurance System across all debarking assets in NZ.

Implementation

To facilitate an effective and compulsory QA programme, Phyto engaged with debarking operators and IVS to facilitate discussion and consensus around policy wording, quality systems detail and standard procedures for regular log output monitoring and reporting.

Phyto also engaged an independent quality auditor to complete an audit of each sites QA system and log output process/results. Work improvements based on these independent audits were communicated and accepted by all debarking operators as part of registering under the compulsory scheme.

Another round of independent auditing is scheduled for Q2 2026.

Progress indicator

