Reducing uncertainty in post-border weed risk assessment by changing the role of the weed distribution score

Jackie Steel
Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Agribio, 5 Ring Road, Bundoora, Vic 3083, Australia
(jackie.steel@depi.vic.gov.au)

Summary Of the three main components commonly found in weed risk assessment systems: invasiveness, impacts and distribution; the latter arguably contributes the most to uncertainty in the results of the assessment. This presentation discusses the types of uncertainty introduced to post-border weed risk assessment by the distribution score component. A case study of the Victorian Weed Risk Assessment system illustrates the effects that this uncertainty has on the utility of weed risk assessment for making decisions about weed management priorities. A solution to reduce the negative influence of the distribution component is suggested. That is, to remove the distribution component from the weed risk assessment score and ranking/risk categorisation process. It is proposed instead to restrict the use of distribution data to considerations of appropriate weed management approaches, feasibility of control, and cost:benefit analysis as part of the overall weed risk management framework.