

**Sub-Committee of Experts on the
Transport of Dangerous Goods**
(Nineteenth session,
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agenda item 6)

TRANSPORT OF INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES

Chapter 2.6 Infectious substances

Inclusion of plant pathogens as infectious substances

Transmitted by the expert from Australia

In reviewing the requirements of Chapter 2.6 of the UN Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods for the transport of infectious substances of class 6.2, the question has been raised in Australia as to whether plant pathogens (in addition to animal and human) should be regulated as dangerous goods, to supplement quarantine controls, given the potential economic costs associated with crop devastation by exotic plant pathogens. This is of course a serious concern for Australian agriculture and quarantine authorities.

It would appear to be clearly within the scope of the Model Regulations to consider substances that may pose a risk to the environment, such as plant pathogens. It also seems logical that the controls associated with the transport of human and animal infectious substances could be extended to cover plant pathogens. These controls would include:

- allocation of a new UN number for 'infectious substance, plant' and a new entry in the dangerous goods list
- assignment to class 6.2, pathogen name to be included on the transport document with the PSN, UN No and class
- allocation of packing instruction P620 (some consideration would need to be given to whether this suited all pathogens)
- classification to the new UN Number would need to be made on the basis of risk of serious plant disease and ease of transmission during transport on advice from quarantine or national agriculture authorities, as it would not be possible to draw up an international list of pathogens
- plant pathogens would include micro-organisms such as viruses, viroids, bacteria and fungi and would not include organisms

The advantage of listing plant pathogens as dangerous goods would be to obtain internationally acceptable forms of packaging, package marking and documentation to augment existing quarantine controls.

The Experts of other member states are requested to consult with their national agriculture, quarantine, plant protection or customs agencies as to their views on this proposal. We intend to submit this proposal to December 2001 meeting of UNCETDG if support is obtained.
