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Diagnostics
Diagnostic

PM 7/77 (2) Documentation and reporting on a diagnosis

Specific scope

This Standard presents requirements for documentation and reporting on a diagnosis.

Specific approval and amendment

Approved in 2006–09.
Revision approved in 2016–04

1. Introduction

This Standard is designed to be used in conjunction with the specific EPPO Standards of set PM 7 on Diagnostics.

While most individual EPPO Standards on Diagnostics are concerned with the diagnosis of individual pests and describe different methods which can be used to identify a pest, this Standard gives guidance on documentation and reporting on a diagnosis.

This Standard is mainly designed for:

- persons responsible for submitting samples for diagnosis
- persons responsible for documenting and reporting on a diagnosis.

This Standard is only concerned with the report from a laboratory to a Client. Although the Client may need to communicate the result of a diagnosis to other parties (e.g. NPPOs may communicate results to growers, traders, other NPPOs, international organizations) that type of communication is not covered by this Standard.

2. Documentation of a diagnosis

As part of quality assurance programmes and in order to enable traceability of the results of a diagnosis, laboratories should document all diagnostic tests conducted. The information which has to be recorded is presented in Table 1. It is recommended to keep documents for at least 5 years; however, this time may depend on national requirements.

3. Reporting on a diagnosis

In the diagnosis of plant pests, different levels of reporting exist. Depending on local administrative arrangements, reports may be generated by the laboratory for internal use (e.g. quality assurance purposes) or for a Client (e.g. the NPPO, grower, trader). The report may differ according to the Client and reports do not have to fulfil the same requirements. For example, simplified results may sometimes be reported to the inspection service of the NPPO. Minimum requirements for reporting are presented in the second column of Table 1. When the inclusion of some information in the report is noted only as optional, such information should be made available on request.

In the report, the result of a diagnosis should be reported accurately, clearly, unambiguously and objectively. It should be capable of being verified later by a specialist expert. In case of a dispute on a diagnostic result, an accurate report is one of the key elements that will be considered. Laboratories working under accreditation to ISO 17025 need to fulfil the reporting requirements of that Standard.

4. Acknowledgements

This Standard was prepared by the EPPO Panel on Diagnostics and Quality Assurance.

Table 1. Information to be recorded for documentation purposes and information to include in the diagnostic report issued by the laboratory

Information to be recorded	Information to include in a report
Information recorded on the sample:	
External sample reference number (when available)	R
Date of receipt, date of collection (when known)	R
Nature of the material (including scientific name of host, whether it is a culture of a pest, preserved/mounted specimen etc. as appropriate)	R
Internal sample reference number	O/R*
Origin of the sample (when known)	O
Number of units in the sample or quantity submitted to the laboratory	O
Magnitude of any infection/infestation (how many individual pests found; how much damaged tissue), where applicable	O
Condition of the sample (poor condition, alive or dead for insects and mites ...)	O
Any symptoms visible (with photographs if possible, preferably of the material as originally collected)	O
Methods used for the collection of the sample (when known)	O
Information recorded during diagnosis:	
Tests used for diagnosis and results obtained	R
Conclusion on the identification of the pest (scientific name of the pest)	R
Date(s) of the completion of the diagnosis	R
Date(s) of the start of the diagnosis	O
Whether the test was performed under accreditation	O
Controls used during testing	O
Number of units or quantity tested	O
Indication of the certainty or uncertainty of the identification	O
Identification of all authorized person(s) who took part in the diagnosis	O
Administrative information:	
Name of the laboratory	R
Identity of the Client	R
Name(s), function(s) and signature(s) of person(s) authorized to sign the report	R
Statement that the diagnosis is only valid for the sample that was received	R
Indication of the subcontracting laboratory, if applicable	O
Details of any special circumstances arising at any point in the diagnosis	O
Statement that the report should not be reproduced except in full, without written approval of the laboratory	O

R, minimum required information regardless of the accreditation status of the laboratory; O, optional note that laboratories working under accreditation according to ISO 17025 need to fulfil the reporting requirements of that Standard.

Other supporting documentation that can be gathered during diagnosis may be mentioned in the report such as: for morphological/morphometric methods, measurements, drawings or photographs of the diagnostic features (where relevant), if applicable the developmental stage; for biochemical and molecular methods, documentation of test results such as photographs of diagnostic gels, ELISA printouts of results, on which the diagnosis was based; for biological assays, photographs of symptoms or tables with test results; information on the availability of a culture of the pest or preserved/mounted specimens.

*Required when there is no external sample reference number.