

December 22, 2021

New robot traps pests for 80kms

The latest iteration of a pest and disease trapping robot has landed in the Adelaide Hills, ready to capture, identify and warn industry of any threats to horticulture farms and vineyards.

Deployed off the back of a trailer, the \$170,000 Sentinel 7 features a high-volume air sampler to collect airborne fungal spores, plus multiple suction traps that draw in insects within its immediate vicinity and migratory bugs from distances of up to 80kms with the help of wind currents.

Being delivered through Hort Innovation with 17 partner organisations as part of the \$21M [iMapPESTS](#) initiative, the Sentinel 7 will proceed to Naracoorte South Australia after an 8-week stint in the Adelaide Hills.

Hort Innovation Head of Research and Development Byron de Kock said the development of the Sentinel 7 marks the culmination of more than two years of work by scientists in collaboration with growers.

“Exotic or unwanted plant pests put the nation’s \$32B broadacre, horticulture and forestry industries at great risk,” he said. “Through this project, we have been able to create a purpose-built unit that has been refined through previous iterations and is mobile, easy to use and most importantly, really effective at detecting and trapping pests. The innovative device also boasts an automatic online dashboard that presents data to growers to review in real time.”

South Australian Research and Development Institute senior scientist, Dr Rohan Kimber, said that the launch of Sentinel 7 marks the evolution of a proof-of-concept idea about modernizing our approach to monitoring plant pests and diseases across Australia’s diverse growing regions.

“Sentinel 7 is a user-friendly, flexible and optimised mobile surveillance device that offers industry an opportunity to adapt to dynamic growing conditions and stay on the front foot of managing pests and diseases”

Adelaide Hills vegetable grower Richard Cobbledick said the iMapPESTS sentinel work offers an exciting glimpse into what could be a future where managing pest threats is so much easier.

“I’m really keen to see how the information generated by these high-tech devices can be extended to a system where I get a ping on my phone with a warning or alert to look out for a particular pest or disease,” Mr Cobbledick said.

“I’m looking forward to seeing how the technology develops and delivers to industry.”

iMapPESTS is led by Hort Innovation, through funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment as part of its Rural R&D for Profit program, with contributions from fellow Rural Research and Development Corporations, State Governments, research and data agencies, and industry representative groups.

For more information on this project including previous Sentinel versions, go to the [iMapPESTS website](#). **Media Contact:** Kelly Vorst-Parkes kelly.vorst-parkes@horticulture.com.au or 0427 142 537.

