

GTA MARKET NOTIFICATIONS



Notice No. 02 of 23 – 17 March 2023

TOPIC: Outcome of the Grain and Plant Products Export Industry Consultative Committee Meeting 1 March 2023

DISTRIBUTION: GTA Members – primary contact list. Please circulate to all appropriate internal parties

1. Status Update

Grain Trade Australia is a member of the Grain and Plant Products Export Industry Consultative Committee (GPPEICC) representing the interests of GTA members.

The GPPEICC is the principal forum for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to consult with the grain, fodder, nuts, seed and timber industries on export inspection and certification, export market access and other relevant issues.

The most recent meeting was held on 1 March 2023 and issues of relevance to GTA members are outlined below.

2. Meeting Outcomes

DAFF Finance and Budget Issues

Industry debt levels with DAFF continue the trend of reducing, however the 90+ days overdue debt has increased in recent months. As always, industry is encouraged to pay due fees on-time or contact DAFF if their circumstances make payments by the due date difficult.

2022/23 December YTD revenue shows a significant increase over that forecast. This is expected to continue for the remainder of the FY resulting in a significant surplus. Unfortunately, DAFF could not provide expense figures for the meeting thus further assessment will be needed once they are made available. Industry members expressed their disappointment of the failure to provide financial results required to assess the overall plant program effectiveness.

The day after the GPPEICC meeting DAFF supplied to industry an Industry Advice Notice (IAN) of the final 2022/23 Grain and Plant Products exports cost recovery implementation statement (CRIS) outlining DAFF fees and charges for the 2022/23 year.

Strategic and Operational Matters

DAFF auditors have continued conducting onsite announced and unannounced audits at Registered Establishments. The most common form of non-compliance identified continue to be:

- a) Incomplete record keeping
- b) Pest control and
- c) Hygiene.

During recent visits by team members of the Grain and Seed Export Program to regional areas, it was noted that the hygiene of registered establishments is deteriorating which has led to suspensions of registered establishments. Industry is encouraged to maintain and improve performance in those areas to meet their legislative obligations.

The containerised grain inspection validity period extension (56 days from date of inspection) that was extended to 28 February 2023 has now ceased due to easing of shipping delays for the container trade.

GTA wrote to DAFF on behalf of industry regarding the requirement for mandatory quarantine and pre-shipment fumigation of grain for some markets. While a legislative requirements, fumigation prior to loading has caused some significant issue for industry. There is a mix of industry stakeholders fumigating prior to and following loading. A Working Group has been formed to review all issues and make recommendations.

The Accredited Grain Surveyor Assurance (AGSA) scheme due to start on 1 July 2023 is expected to be set-back due to previous delays incurred.

Work continues on the Grain Storage Assets and Management Standard. A pilot commenced in November 2022 continues to test the Standard against industry and DAFF requirements. GTA is working with DAFF to develop the Regulatory Assurance Framework for administering and monitoring compliance with the Standard.

The previous Technology for Assurance project to recognise industry innovation and cost-effective business practices for meeting regulatory requirements through exploring the recognition of industry systems and technology has now formally ceased. GTA has written to DAFF seeking over-recovered funds to further pursue technology and the need for over-arching management systems to assess future technology. A Working Group has been formed to review options to progress this on behalf of industry.

The next tranche of legislative amendments to the Plant Rules is scheduled for August 2023 and industry will be consulted on the proposed changes.

Digital Reforms and IT System Issues

Several changes have been made to enhance Exdoc, as recently announced to industry. Further changes will be made prior to June 2023, mainly new validation rules preventing users from entering data into fields, which are not relevant to grain exports.

DAFF are enhancing the integration between EXDOC with PEMS to automate the Request for Permit (RFP) authorisation of low-risk plant consignments. These updates will streamline the RFP authorisation process for exporters and expediate the permit and certificate process.

DAFF advised they will go live with Phase 1 implementation of e-Phyto on 2 April 2023, resulting in the exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates with Fiji through the IPPC ePhyto Hub. Industry sought a priority list of trading partners due for implementation of e-Phyto following Fiji given the need for industry to manage in commercial contracts over time the move from paper to paperless certificates. Since the GPPEICC meeting, DAFF have advised there will be a delay in implementation, with a timeline unknown.

3. Further Information

Contact GTA to seek further information on any of the above issues.

Further information on GPPEICC and its membership can be found at:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/partnerships/consultative-committees/gppeicc>