



## **MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

24 August 2021

### **MEETING MARKET REQUIREMENTS**

The Australian grain industry came together with an information-packed day at **the 48th Australian Grain Storage & Protection Conference on 24th August 2021**. As with last year's conference the Grain Storage & Protection Conference was again held exclusively online. Delegates were treated to a professional and information filled day and were encouraged and inspired to continue to support and engage in the work and objectives of the National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWPGP).

Conference Chair Gerard McMullen commented "this the 48<sup>th</sup> Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference is an important occasion and event in the calendar of the grain industry and supports the objective of science combined with stewardship within the supply chain to enhance the reputation of the Australian grain industry as a provider of a quality and safe product."

Grain Trade Australia's (GTA) Chair, Mr Andrew Goyder, opened the Conference welcoming delegates and noting that in 2021 sustainability and social license are the new "must haves" as far as the consumer is concerned and that neither are going away and in fact day by day the astute person in the street is indeed asking, where, what and how has the food on my plate got here.

Mr Goyder emphasised the industry and supply chain are under increased scrutiny; food safety and ethics are now increasingly under the spotlight. The world is watching what we do and what safeguards are in place, which is why events like today are so important.

#### **The industry experts**

Over 19 speakers and industry experts provided detailed information to more than 150 delegates on a range of communication and extension activities conducted and supported by various industry organisations such as the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

#### **The Insights**

- There was great discussion and debate on the role of government in regulating the use of agricultural chemicals and the current review into the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical Regulations. Delegates heard this is an important review of both current and future requirements for Australian agriculture and it is important the review delivers the appropriate outcome across all industries.
- Australia has been the world first to approve the use of several specific new chemical products for the grain industry.

- Industry and the Government are progressing the development of voluntary Standards applicable to all grain storage facilities and operators to facilitate innovation and to support the reputation of the Australian grain supply chain in international markets.
- National research is continuing on the resistance of the five major stored product pests to the fumigant phosphine. This is important research as delegates heard the Rusty Grain Beetle in Australia is developing strong resistance to phosphine. This research aids informed decisions on alternative treatments and changes to fumigation practices that support the increased efficacy of existing treatments.
- Having an integrated pest management system in commercial and farm storage is critical to the success in managing pests whilst ensuring the grain remains accepted in the market and by the final consumer.
- Continuing challenges remain in storing grain insect free, meaning hygiene and monitoring practices are critical to ensure the safe storage and integrity of grain. This means the quality of storages and their capability to provide a suitable gas tight environment for fumigation purposes is critical.
- Effective fumigation as well as being critical to prevent insect resistance importantly also supports market access and retention. Australia's fumigation practices can be improved in some areas.
- Our compliance with meeting market MRLs for a range of chemicals remains extremely high.
- There is increased global scrutiny of supply chains and high standards are expected and proof is required through audit processes and record keeping. These requirements will continue to evolve and change due to market preferences.

A clear message was that as market expectations increase and become more demanding there is a requirement for both industry and government to consider how to ensure supply chain participants are capable and trained in the necessary steps to be compliant. Extension services, information and training and having Standards to apply were considered critical tools the industry and its supply chain can aspire to. It was reinforced that further opportunities exist to work with the sector to develop specific extension material addressing issues such as the correct application of fumigants and the impact poor practices can have on market access.

International arrangements and networks between countries and governments were discussed and the science based / risk-based approach favoured amongst global associations and groups that support trade. It was noted Australia has been leading discussions in specific areas including non-tariff measures and their impact on the efficiency of the global movement and trade of grain.

### **The feedback**

Delegates tuned in from across the country to benefit from the insights and discussion during the panel sessions.

Mr David Ironside, Assistant Secretary Plant Export Operations Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment commented "it's great to attend the NWPGP as it delivers both government and the grain

industry a forum to hear and to discuss information that is critical to the sustainability of the grain supply chain. It provides leadership and stewardship to industry through access to presentation and speaker panels that were extremely knowledgeable and topical to current issues as well as providing the right balance between 'the science' and the realities of the market".

Mr Goyder said "GTA has a long association and history with the NWPGP conference and is proud to be involved as conference organiser. This conference is of immense value to the current and future reputation of Australia's grain and helps to cement and promote effective quality assurance throughout the grain supply chain. I should mention GTA is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday as a trade association this year and I look forward in two years to celebrate industry coming together at the 50th birthday of the NWPGP at the 2023 Conference".

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**Media Contact:**

Gerard McMullen, Chair NWPGP  
tel: **0419 156 065**