



MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fifty years of focus on Grain Hygiene & Protection

The National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWPGP) convened in Melbourne on 7-8 June 2023 for the 50th occasion of the annual **Australian Grain Storage & Protection Conference**.

This is an important industry event, where delegates learn, review, and discuss the latest research and activities focussing on protecting grain hygiene and safety – part of ensuring the enviable quality reputation of the Australian grain industry continues.

Opening the conference, Grain Trade Australia (GTA) chair Andrew Goyder welcomed almost 160 delegates and described the transition from the NWPGP's original focus at its formation in 1973 to the great range of issues and responsibilities covered by the NWPGP of today. Mr Goyder said 50 years is a fantastic milestone for any organisation, and real testament to the dedication of all the people involved.

"Today, the NWPGP provides management and leadership to the entire grain industry in the areas of post-harvest grain storage and hygiene, chemical use and outturn tolerances, international and domestic market requirements and chemical regulations," Mr Goyder said.

"It coordinates and provides the Australian government with industry views on chemicals in use on grain and associated products, as they relate to market access domestically and for exported commodities, and it does these things with involvement of all sectors in the supply chain – a great example of the industry working together," he said.

NWPGP Chair Gerard McMullen said conference participants included growers, marketers, bulk handlers, transporters, processors, researchers, technicians, service providers and regulators, with discussions from 33 presentations centred on the latest scientific research, technology, stewardship, market and regulatory developments around prevention and control of pests that impact stored grain.

"The Australian grain crop is bigger, and our production area is expanding into just about every Australian climatic zone, while at the same time the insects that damage stored grain have become more challenging to control," Mr McMullen said.

"The requirements of our customers and management techniques within the supply chain have become more particular, which means we require continual improvement in pest control, great awareness of stewardship in promoting grain quality for market access and ongoing education across the industry in all these things.

"No single part of the industry holds the responsibility for grain hygiene – it is a collective responsibility that requires cooperation, knowledge, and ongoing action across all sectors, which is why the NWPGP operates the way it does and why so many people from industry and government come together each year for the Australian Grain Storage & Protection Conference.

"This conference is convened by Grain Trade Australia and chaired by the NWPGP, with investment from Grains Australia, along with conference sponsorship and support from commercial participants – this breadth of involvement is one of the keys to its enduring success," he said.

The Insights:

- The challenges of insect resistance to existing treatments and techniques are ongoing, pointing to the need for increased focus by the industry on continuous improvement in what people do – this means continued research, continued education, and continued adoption of industry best practice by all storage operators whether large or small.
- Market requirements in grain stewardship and transparency are increasing – all players in the supply chain need to be aware of these things and how individual actions in one part of the supply chain can impact grain quality, value and industry reputation.
- The grain industry needs improved systems to highlight its commitment to standards and meeting quality requirements.
- Growth in on-farm storage to service both domestic and export supply chains is an important focus for ongoing extension of knowledge in both techniques and equipment for hygiene management.
- On-farm investment in grain storage and transport must be appropriate to generate the greatest value for investment, more effectively managing pests with available tools and adapting to new techniques as they emerge.
- Expansion of grain cropping area into tropical regions of Australia brings new challenges that can be met by both adapting existing knowledge and developing new techniques appropriate to the environment.

About the Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference:

The Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference is convened by Grain Trade Australia (GTA), chaired by the National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWPGP), with investment from Grains Australia.

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