



## SDQMA41 Communiqué

The Subcommittee on Domestic Quarantine & Market Access (SDQMA) held its forty-first meeting in Darwin at the Berrimah Research Farm (1-3 October 2013). The northern location provided an opportunity for the Subcommittee to focus on plant biosecurity issues in the Darwin and Katherine region, and the associated challenges of managing biosecurity in the Territory.

A workshop was also held in conjunction with SDQMA41 to focus on the impacts of changes to fruit fly regulation in New South Wales and Victoria on the domestic trade system (1 October 2013).

An overarching theme throughout the meeting and workshop was consideration of the future and ensuring that appropriate market access and regulatory arrangements are in place to enable the continuation of effective and efficient management of plant biosecurity in Australia. The need for such thinking was highlighted through discussions on:

- Developing and reviewing plant biosecurity regulations, protocols and procedures for the interstate movement of plants and plant products;
- Capturing lessons learnt from Government and Industry programs to inform and guide future action; and
- Streamlining existing processes between the Commonwealth, States and Territory Government agencies and Industry, where practicable.

Despite challenges such as increasing resource constraints within the plant biosecurity sector, as well as the growing complexity of biosecurity systems and the science that supports them, the Subcommittee is confident heading into the future as they continue to work cooperatively to deliver on national biosecurity outcomes. Specific issues considered by the Subcommittee at the meeting are detailed below.

### Amended ICA Protocol & HACCP for ICA-17

Amendments to the ICA for *Splitting Consignments and Re-consigning Original Consignments of Certified Produce* (ICA-17) were proposed and endorsed. These changes include:

- A requirement for all persons altering certification to be accredited to do so;
- A requirement for all wholesaler and merchants to verify all plant quarantine entry conditions have been met prior to re-consigning a whole or part consignment to a new destination; and
- The verification of certificate accuracy prior to splitting or re-consigning a consignment.

### Use of ICA Labelling on Uncertified Produce

The issue of whether ICA labelling should be allowed on packaging for uncertified produce. SDQMA agreed to leave the current situation of marking uncertified packages with ICA labelling unchanged, under the proviso that states monitor and report back to the Subcommittee if there is a problem in the future.

### Potato Cyst Nematode Reform

At the meeting, members noted progress towards adoption of the Risk Based Regulatory Reform Model for PCN management. As of 1 November 2013, the new legislative framework for PCN management will become effective (except for WA).



### **Presentation – BioSecure HACCP**

The Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) were invited by the Subcommittee to present on the BioSecure HACCP pilot trial that is now being run between nurseries in Queensland and Victoria. BioSecure HACCP could potentially provide an alternative approach to certification to enable market access through the recognition of Industry knowledge and best practice as an effective means treatment against regulated pests and diseases. The trial will run for six months, from October 2013 to April 2014, and subject to its successful completion, the system may be adopted across Australia. Prior to determining this, the Subcommittee will visit a BioSecure HACCP accredited nursery in Queensland during the next meeting of SDQMA (scheduled for April 2014), to view the system in operation.

Heading into the future, the Subcommittee expressed support for more Industry-run initiatives, like BioSecure HACCP.

### **Presentation – Banana Freckle Emergency Response**

With one of the Subcommittee's focuses for the meeting being on biosecurity in the Northern Territory, a presentation was provided to members on the Banana Freckle emergency response currently being undertaken by the Territory. The presentation provided an overview of the operational phase for eradication.

### **Presentation & Field Exercise – Fruit Flies, Mangoes & Market Access**

A presentation was also provided on research to develop alternatives to chemical disinfestation for fruit flies, for mango market access from the Katherine region. Results from this study will assist in demonstrating the impact of interventions to suppress fruit fly populations in and around mango orchards, as part of a systems approach.

SDQMA face-to-face meetings provide an invaluable opportunity to increase communication between government agencies and with industry, create interstate contacts and undertake field activities to view the operational aspects of issues, systems and sites discussed and managed by the Subcommittee and its Working Groups. With the meeting in Darwin, the Subcommittee took the opportunity to visit a Northern Territory mango packing shed, to complement the presentation. The focus of the field exercise was on gaining a greater understanding of the complexity of Industry processes to support market access and the range of steps taken to meet interstate regulatory requirements.

### **Presentation – NSW Soil Testing**

NSW gave a presentation on a new method for collecting soil that could potentially be used for PCN laboratory testing. This method is designed to be less labour intensive than the current soil coring method used, by collecting soil in the harvester as potatoes are being dug up. SDQMA are currently investigating whether this method could provide equivalence to the 10x10 VICSPA soil coring method.

### **Member, Observer and Working Group Reports**

Each Member, Observer and Working Group Chair was invited to provide the Subcommittee with an overview of the activities that had been undertaken since the previous meeting. These reports were well received, with members appreciating the opportunity to discuss the activities of each agency.



SDQMA's Working Groups remain an important component of the national plant biosecurity management system and continue to provide the technical input and advice needed to support national action. Some of the key activities and achievements of the working groups are described below.

*Certification Services Working Group (CSWG):*

The role of CSWG is to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of national plant health certification schemes (including the Interstate Certification Assurance Scheme – ICAs) and to facilitate the harmonisation and continuous improvement of national plant health certification systems.

At the meeting members gave extensive consideration to possible means of improving timeframes for progressing ICAs.

*Domestic Fruit Fly Working Group (DFFWG):*

The DFFWG provides a focal point for technical issues relating to fruit fly management at the state and national level. A major focus of the group in recent times has been fruit fly quarantine zones and consideration of the impact of flight distances of fly species on the size of these zones. This is an ongoing issue.

*Quarantine Domestic Working Group (QDWG):*

QDWG is responsible a number of important communication activities to raise awareness of interstate quarantine requirements amongst the travelling public, including the placement of amnesty bins in airports, in-flight quarantine announcements, and the management of the Quarantine Domestic website and hotline.

At the meeting, members noted that this group would also be releasing an updated version of the *Traveller's Guide to Australian Interstate Quarantine* in December 2013. Members also noted a media release on the quarantine risks posed by online shopping.

### **Changes in Membership**

Members thanked the representatives from South Australia, Western Australian and Tasmania for their efforts and achievements through SDQMA, as this was their last meeting on the Subcommittee. New members from these jurisdictions have been, or will be, appointed, and their contact details will be made available on the Domestic Quarantine website shortly ([www.domesticquarantine.org.au](http://www.domesticquarantine.org.au)).