

Risk-based potato reform model seeks 'clean' break

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THERE has been considerable, and unnecessary, conflict and confusion in the past few months about the proposed national management of potato cyst nematode.

But in mid-February, there was industry and regulatory level endorsement by Queensland, the Northern Territory, Victoria, and South Australia of the Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model for national management of the pest, developed by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

It is understood that Tasmania and New South Wales will endorse the model in due course.

This model is an interim review to reduce the unnecessary, inappropriate and inconsistent regulatory burden on the potato industry value chain.

It is a positive step towards control and ultimate eradication of any infestation, protecting the industry from potentially great economic losses which will occur if the pathogen is not officially controlled.

In a similar decision to other

jurisdictions, South Australia has agreed to a two-month implementation and consultation period to enable any legislative change and allow for industry consultation concerning possible regulatory changes.

For us, it is business as usual in an industry contributing \$440 million to SA's gross food revenue and producing 80pc of the nation's fresh washed market.

The model is science-based, employs risk management methodology, is cost-effective, removes unjustified area-wide quarantine controls (20-kilometre zone), encourages improved on-farm biosecurity to manage medium to low-risk events, and is consistent with international models including those implemented in Britain and the United States.

It also supports interstate trade without external trade impacts.

It is important to understand that the Victorian DPI has effectively separated the regulatory framework, for which state and

territory governments are responsible, from the broader management and production issues which must be progressed under the proposed Australian National PCN Management Plan.

This framework is consistent with, and acknowledges, the proposed national management plan which has been under development for more than 10 years, with significant investment by all states and territories.

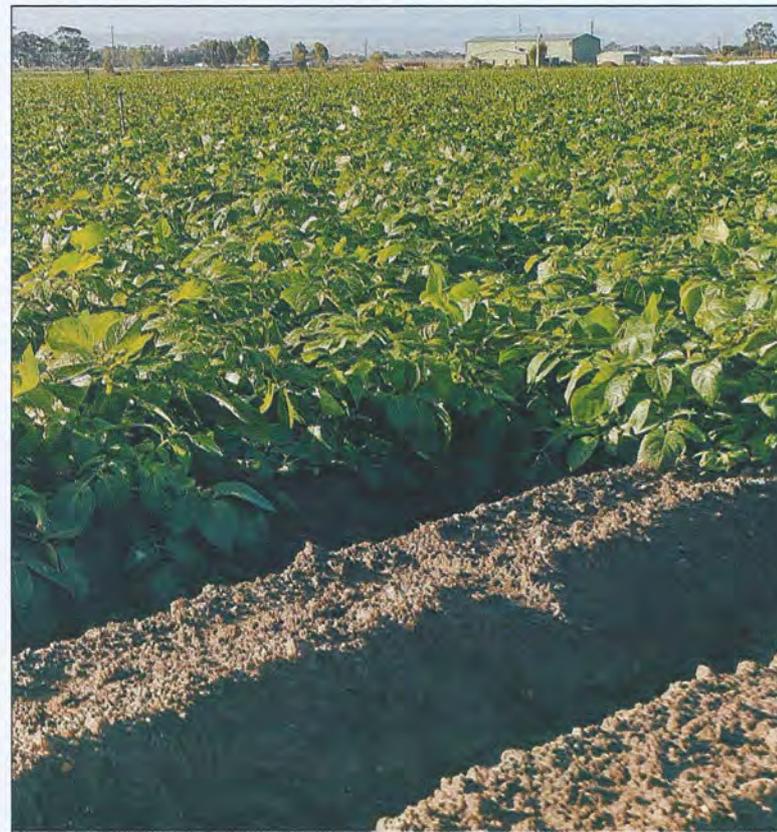
Again in line with other jurisdictions, SA remains supportive of this initiative but seeks further input and consultation at an industry level.

The proposed management plan is considered to be lacking in implementation responsibilities, long-term management, cost to growers, and details concerning procedure if there was a detection of potato cyst nematode.

It is widely considered to be incomplete and in draft form.

More importantly, there has been no provision for a meaningful consultative process with industry, allowing for its concerns to be addressed and incorporated into a revised plan. The plan was neither agreed to nor endorsed by the Australian potato industry.

The endorsement of the risk-



▲ By endorsing the risk-based regulatory reform model, the process of managing potato cyst nematode will accelerate.

based regulatory reform model will accelerate the process of managing potato cyst nematode nationally.

The management plan in its current incomplete form will be presented at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's plant health committee meeting mid-year and a working group comprising industry and

state and territory government, delegates will discuss its further development and progress.

Potatoes South Australia will ensure that the industry receives sufficient time for proper consultation during this period, allowing for eventual endorsement and roll-out of a final national management plan which can only be for its betterment.