

## Questions and Answers

### The Victorian Department of Primary Industry's proposal for a national Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model for Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN)

The following information aims to clarify and address concerns and possible misunderstandings regarding the national Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model for the management of Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN)

- ***What is the purpose behind the risk-based management proposal?***

The Victorian DPI's proposed national Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model seeks to remove the existing quarantine controls being imposed on growers and businesses that are unjustified, whilst continuing to regulate PCN infested and linked properties. This revised approach to PCN management is based on science, an appropriate risk-based methodology and is consistent with the proposed National PCN Management Plan.

- ***Will the movement of interstate produce be restricted into Victoria?***

No, the proposal aims to facilitate trade whilst still maintaining a high level of biosecurity protection. It is reasonable to expect that all jurisdictions will confirm their commitment to science-based biosecurity measures. If these basic principles break down and unjustified barriers to trade are implemented, then industry is likely to be adversely affected. Should this occur, it is unrealistic to expect Victoria or its growers to accept the increased and unnecessary controls imposed on them without reciprocal restrictions on that jurisdiction.

- ***Is the proposed National PCN Management Plan developed in consultation with industry being ignored?***

No, all states and territories have invested a significant amount of time in the development of the National PCN Management Plan and remain supportive of this initiative. The Victorian DPI has offered to assist AUSVEG present the proposed National PCN Management Plan to the next Plant Health Committee (PHC) meeting and also progress it through the committee. However, given the time it will take to adopt and implement the Plan, an interim review of regulatory controls is required to reduce unnecessary burden on industry. This is consistent with, but a separate matter to the progression and acceptance of the proposed National PCN Management Plan.

- ***Is AUSVEG due to present the NPCN Management Plan and speak at the next PHC meeting in March 2013?***

PHC did not receive a request from AUSVEG to present the proposed National PCN Management Plan to the committee until 21 January 2013. The Chair of the PHC has confirmed that the next PHC meeting will be held via teleconference. This arrangement is unlikely to be conducive to a formal presentation of the National PCN Management Plan, but an overview and initial discussion is scheduled. A full presentation of the plan is on the agenda for the June 2013 face-to-face meeting of PHC.

- ***Why has the proposed Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model been developed for managing PCN?***

As a result of delays and uncertainty around the endorsement and release date for the final National PCN Management Plan, and concerns raised by sectors within the Australian potato industry, the Victorian DPI developed the proposed Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model for PCN.

The Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model was developed to support adoption of the key components of the proposed National PCN Management Plan through the adoption of a science-based model which reduces unnecessary regulatory burden on growers and industries within the supply chain. The draft National PCN Management Plan was considered when developing its proposed model. In November 2012, DPI presented four options for regulating PCN control to PHC, including the National PCN Management Plan as published on the AUSVEG website.

The proposed Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model was endorsed in principle at PHC with the agreement that NSW (absent) and all states provide a final position and/or additional comments back to the Victorian DPI by 14 February 2013.

- ***Is it correct that the Victorian DPI is planning to introduce the proposed changes on 6 February, and have other state agricultural departments or industry associations had time to consider the proposal?***

The proposed Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model was presented to DQMAWG on 11 September and PHC on 7 November 2012 where it received in principle support. A three page summary for interstate industry engagement was sent to PHC on 10 December 2012 for distribution to its members in accordance with the nationally agreed process.

The decision/comment date (Thursday 14th February) for agreement on the adoption of the proposed Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model is consistent with the 60 day notification timeframe required for proposing changes to quarantine trade requirements and subject to adoption, will be implemented as soon as possible.

- ***Does the Victorian DPI's proposed Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model favour Victoria?***

The proposed regulatory reform, if accepted, acknowledges interstate area freedom certificates and does not impose further requirements for testing and certification by other states to access Victorian markets. The reform also allows for recognition of testing undertaken across Australia (where it is sufficient to demonstrate pest status) and seeks to remove area wide quarantine controls based on an arbitrary distance from infestation while continuing to regulate known infested and linked properties to manage biosecurity risks.

- ***Is the Victorian DPI approach a divergence from the Industry endorsed ANPCN Management Plan?***

No, it has only accelerated the process of advancing PCN management nationally through the adoption of a science-based model which reduces unnecessary regulatory burden on growers and industries within the supply chain. Also, it is appropriate for the Victorian DPI to separate the regulatory framework for which it is responsible from the broader production and industry management issues which must still be progressed by industry through the National PCN Management Plan. This regulatory framework is also the responsibility of each state's regulatory body; in South Australia, this is PIRSA's Biosecurity SA.

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