

STATEMENT TO INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

Monday 4 February 2013

National Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) Management

There is considerable conflict and confusion at present concerning the proposed national management of PCN. This statement and associated Question and Answer paper intends to clarify and address any concerns and possible misunderstandings the industry may have regarding the Risk-Based Regulatory Reform Model (RBM) for national PCN management, developed by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI), which is now under national consideration. The South Australian industry signed off on this model in December last year following industry consultation.

This current confusion has arisen due to recent opposition to the plan by AUSVEG.

Background

In 2010 AUSVEG undertook a series of nation-wide industry briefings on a new Australian National PCN Management Plan (ANPCN Management Plan) with the intention of receiving industry-wide endorsement. The plan was received as a 'Draft Final Plan' by the South Australian industry in May 2012. The document was lacking; including in terms of the responsibility of implementation, its long term management, the cost to growers and detail concerning procedure if a detection of PCN occurred. There was also no further 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. However, it is certainly acknowledged that the plan was a step in the right direction for national PCN management.

AUSVEG was to provide a final report to DAFF's Plant Health Committee (PHC) for endorsement by the Committee prior to its implementation by State regulators. It is our understanding that this did not occur until 21 January 2013. In order to advance the national management program, DPI Victoria developed a number of options including a preferred option, the Risk-Based Model for national PCN management.

Current Situation

Following meetings between Biosecurity SA (the South Australian Government's biosecurity regulator) and Potatoes South Australia to consider the best way forward with the Victorian proposal on 28 November 2012, stakeholders received a draft discussion paper and supporting document describing the options within this proposed arrangement.

The Risk-Based Model was considered to be the preferred option within the proposed national management arrangements and this was supported by the Board of Potatoes South Australia. South Australian stakeholders were given time to respond to the draft discussion paper, and all feedback was forwarded to Biosecurity SA. This concerned clarification of points only. A letter from Potatoes South Australia advising that the South Australian industry supported the Risk-Based Model was forwarded to Biosecurity SA on 14 December 2012. This endorsement by the industry is now at the South Australian Government's Ministerial level for official endorsement.

On 20 January 2013, Potatoes South Australia received a copy of a letter sent to the South Australian Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, the Hon Gail Gago MLC by AUSVEG. This

letter urged the Minister to refrain from endorsing the proposed Risk-Based Model. Potatoes South Australia liaised with Biosecurity SA and subsequently responded to AUSVEG stating that the South Australian industry supported this model and requested an explanation of its concerns regarding the limiting of trade in potatoes from South Australia across its borders.

No response has been received.

Clarification

Potatoes South Australia, as your peak industry body, has since liaised frequently and directly with individual stakeholders, DAFF and Victoria's DPI to appreciate the current conflict.

On the advice taken, on behalf of Potatoes South Australia, I confirm the following in regard to the DPI's proposed risk-based regulatory reform:

- It only addresses the regulatory component of the National PCN Management Plan
- It is a framework which will advance the endorsement and implementation of a National PCN Management Plan which covers the broader production and management issues
- It is science-based and uses appropriate risk-based methodology
- It is consistent with the proposed National PCN Management Plan and acknowledges this plan
- It removes inappropriate and unjustified area-wide quarantine controls (20 km zone)
- It reduces the current inappropriate and inconsistent regulatory burden placed on some growers
- In PCN-affected jurisdictions it regulates elements under the proposed National Management Plan which are high risk
- It encourages the establishment of Industry Codes of Practice for improved on-farm biosecurity to manage medium to low risks under the proposed National Management Plan
- It is consistent with international models including those implemented in Britain and USA
- There will be no increased regulatory burden on South Australian producers in terms of cost or time
- If adopted, it will not restrict trade but in fact support it

DPI Victoria has also offered to assist AUSVEG with its presentation of the National PCN Management Plan to the next Plant Health Committee meeting and progress its further development through the committee.

Potatoes South Australia will provide updates on developments and remain committed to the industry's best interests.

For further information or clarification please contact:

Robbie Davis
0427 084 319
robbiedavis@potatoessa.com.au