



Using horticulture food safety schemes for export assurance

The department is working with the horticulture industry to examine whether there is duplication between food safety and quality assurance schemes (required for domestic market compliance) and plant export regulatory requirements.

We may be able to recognise these schemes to:

- *gain assurance that department requirements have been met*
- *reduce the time taken to collect evidence during accredited property and registered establishment audits.*

What audits cover now

Horticulture businesses undergo many audits from different organisations. These include food safety certifying bodies and various levels of government.

These audits often cover the same activities in relation to:

- cleanliness
- waste management
- pest management
- chemical use and storage
- product labelling
- traceability.

How we could streamline our audits

We are assessing commercial food safety schemes against export requirements to identify duplication. These include Freshcare, Global Gap, SQF and BRCGS.

Where there are overlapping requirements, we aim to recognise the scheme and associated audits. This would reduce the evidence required at departmental audits.

Longer term, we are also considering the use of third-party auditors. This is where auditors of food safety schemes would cover off on export requirements.

Potential benefits

Our aim is to reduce the time and cost of departmental export audits. At the same time we need to maintain the right level of assurance.

By making horticulture export audit processes more efficient, growers and packers will benefit from:

- reduced costs
- time saved
- less pressure in peak periods.



Working with industry

We will engage with:

- key commodity groups in the horticulture industry
- food safety standard owners
- certification bodies.

As part of our assessment we will observe food safety audits in the field. This will help us understand how the auditors assess and manage compliance with requirements.

We'll keep industry updated through industry bodies and our industry consultative committee.

Contact us

If you have questions about the trial email us at congestionbustingplant@agriculture.gov.au

Reforms in agricultural export trade

We are transforming Australia's agricultural trade export services:

- making more services available online
- streamlining processes for producers to export
- safeguarding Australia's reputation as a reliable, high-quality exporter.

More than half a billion dollars is being invested in trade reform initiatives. This includes \$328.4 million for the Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters package. It aims to grow and strengthen the agricultural export sector.

When fully implemented the reforms will reduce costs and the compliance burden on exporters.

The reforms will also ensure Australian products are of the highest standard and meet our trading partners' requirements.

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