

Horticulture Export Industry Consultative Committee – Meeting Update

Updates on key projects and issues are summarised following each committee meeting.

Meeting 31 held on 16 March 2023 - Summary

The committee met on 16 March 2023 in person and via teleconference to discuss Horticulture Export Operations, market access activities, the Horticulture Exports Cost Recovery Arrangements, and relevant information technology projects. Routine operational updates covering audit and assurance activities, horticulture inspections, the Authorised Officer program and Request for Permit volumes were provided for information out-of-session.

Horticulture Exports Program

The committee received updates on the work of the Horticulture Exports Program, including the following.

- The department is updating the crop monitor e-learning courses for inclusion on the in-house training system. All new courses (excluding citrus) are on track to be rolled out later this year.
- Following consultation with industry members earlier this year, the department will now send the phytosanitary guidelines review to Registered Establishments and the Regional Assurance Managers for comment.
- The department is currently undertaking a review into the application process for Accredited Properties, including an examination of the processes, systems, documents, skills, and training required both under the *Export Control Act 2020* and the Export Control Rules 2021.

Market access

Australia and India have agreed on new market access for Australian Hass avocados to India, as announced by the Senator the Hon Murray Watt, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Trade on 15 March 2023. Successful completion of ten trial Hass avocado shipments to India will be required before the trade protocol with India is finalised for broader trade.

Plant import risks analyses

Since the last meeting, the following plant import risk analyses have been completed: okra from India, oriental melon and rock melon fruit from Korea, and apples from Pacific Northwest states of the USA. Further information is available from the department's [Plant commodity/country and pest risk analyses](#) webpage.

Plant Export Reform

The Busting Congestion for Plant Exports program will simplify processes for plant exporters and industry participants involved in the production, treatment and logistics of exporting plant and plant products. The committee noted the progress of four projects relevant to horticulture products:

- Harmonised Regulation – While the approach was taken to identify viable opportunities for harmonising regulation, detailed discovery work has demonstrated limited benefits for industry. The Executive Board accepted the recommendation to close this project.
- Industry Systems Recognition – The department now recognises current food safety and quality certification to a Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) approved scheme. A post-verification plan has been developed to measure and evaluate the outcomes of the project. The Executive Board accepted the recommendation to close this project.
- Packhouse Grower Supply Model – The report on the grower supplier model pilot, conducted from March to August 2022, was shared with industry members. The pilot has been extended for the 2023 citrus growing season, with three new citrus participants onboarded to participate in the pilot. Given the success of the pilot, the department has commenced developing policy and plans for implementation in early 2024.

- Technology for Assurance – Detailed discovery work has found that technology needs further development before being integrated into the phytosanitary assurance pathway. Work with the eco-systems team has reached a point where specific subject matter expertise is required to implement the transition of phytosanitary treatment results from a vapour heat treatment provider's software into the Plant Export Management System (PEMS) via an Application Programming Interface (API). The Executive Board accepted the recommendation to close this project, with outstanding project deliverables to be absorbed into other projects.

Further information is available from the department's [Busting Congestion for Plant Exports](#) webpage.

Digital Systems update

The 19 February 2023 EXDOC release updated the business rules to validate the transport mode for discharge ports to minimise the likelihood of error in the Request for Permit (RFP).

The October-December 2022 Plant Export Management System (PEMS) release included the following enhancements: a new 'inactive' status to the accredited property data, the address and postcode of an accredited property displayed on the inspection screen, and an amended calibration record for in-transit cold treatments.

The January-March 2023 PEMS release included the following enhancements: a new invoicing capability for in-transit cold treatment certificates issued by the department, upgraded search functionality for Request For Permit (RFP), Inspection and Search for User, automation of the apply Original and Copy stamp to in-transit cold treatment calibration certificates for China, and integration of PEMS with vapour heat treatment establishments to capture treatment readings digitally.

For additional information on the above summary please contact your industry HEICC representative.