



## Brassicaceous crop seeds for sowing import conditions review Communiqué for meeting on 11 April 2018

On Wednesday, 11 April 2018 the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) met with representatives of the Australian organic industry, to discuss concerns raised with regards to the [draft review of import conditions for brassicaceous crop seeds for sowing](#) that has been released for stakeholder consultation. Representatives from the peak vegetable industry body AUSVEG, and the peak seed producers group, the Australian Seed Federation, also participated in the meeting.

The key issue discussed was the proposal for mandatory fungicide treatment for several species of brassicaceous seeds, and the need for suitable alternative options for organic producers and seed suppliers. Industry's desire is to find commercially viable options that do not compromise Australia's biosecurity.

### Vegetable seed policy review

- Due to recent changes to the biosecurity risks associated with imported seeds, the department is conducting a review of import conditions for a number of groups of vegetable seeds for purposes of sowing, to ensure that import conditions adequately address the potential biosecurity risks.
- Further information about the vegetable seeds policy review can be found on the department's website: <http://agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/plant-products/seeds-for-sowing/vegetable-seeds-policy-review>.

### Brassicaceous seeds for sowing draft review

- The department released a draft report of the review of import conditions for brassicaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia for a 60 day consultation period, closing on 19 April 2018.
- The draft report identified two fungal pathogens that are of quarantine concern to Australia, *Colletotrichum higginsianum* and *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *raphani*.
  - A fungicidal treatment was proposed for seeds of four species (*Brassica oleracea*, *Brassica rapa*, *Raphanus sativus* and *Eruca vesicaria*) to manage the risk of introducing these pathogens into Australia and to protect Australia's vegetable industry.
  - The report found that the remaining 26 species reviewed do not present a risk, and seed treatments are not required.
  - The draft report also proposed additional, alternative options such as sourcing seed from pest free areas or pest free places of production, and as seed produced under a systems approach.

After further feedback from the organic industry sector, the department will consider alternative equivalent options that do not involve chemical treatment, or that use substances permitted by the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce. These alternative options include, but are not limited to, testing of seed to demonstrate absence of the pathogens of quarantine concern, and use of hot water treatment. Other options proposed by the organic industry will also be considered by the department.

### Next steps

- The department will consider all feedback received during the comment period when developing the final report.



- The department will continue to liaise with the organic industry following the conclusion of the formal consultation period on 19 April 2018, with a view to identifying alternative commercially viable risk management measures that address the biosecurity risks.
- The department supports the organic industry establishing a technical working group to allow for further discussion on possible alternative treatments and other related matters.
- The final report will recommend a number of options that industry can choose from when importing brassicaceous seeds for sowing.
- The department anticipates reviewing these import conditions in the future as new treatment and testing options become available.