



# Biosecurity Fact Sheet

## Brassicaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia

February 2018



### Key points

- The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is reviewing the import conditions of four vegetable seed groups to safeguard Australia from exotic pests and diseases.
- On 14 February 2018, the department released the *Draft review of import conditions for brassicaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia*.
- Comments on the draft report are welcome by 19 April 2018.

### Rationale for the review

In recent years, seed-borne pathogens have increasingly been reported outside their known geographic distribution, partly due to the increasing globalisation of the vegetable seed trade. Seed industry production practices are also changing and seed lots are now produced and multiplied in various countries. As such, this has increased the likelihood of the seeds' exposure to pathogens and the introduction of pathogens to new areas (including Australia).

This change in risk profile has prompted the department to review the existing import conditions for vegetable seeds, for sowing in Australia, to ensure they adequately address biosecurity risks.

This review of import conditions for brassicaceous crop seeds is the third in a series of vegetable seed policy reviews. Brassicaceous vegetable crops include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, bok choy and similar green leaf vegetables; it also includes canola, mustard seeds, watercress, radish and wasabi, to name a few.

Other families of vegetable seeds being reviewed by the department are Apiaceae (carrot, celery, parsley, etc.), Cucurbitaceae (cucumber, melon, pumpkin, etc.) and Solanaceae (capsicum, eggplant, tomato, etc.).

The review of the vegetable seed pathway for a number of vegetable seed crops, including brassicaceous crop seeds is funded under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper as part of strengthening biosecurity surveillance and analysis.

### Brassicaceous Crop Seeds Industry

Australian producers rely on the overseas supply of seeds for brassicaceous vegetable crop production. In 2015–16, Australia's main brassicaceous crops production (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower) was valued at \$310.7m.

The gross value of production figures for brassicaceous crops for 2015–2016 are:

- Broccoli—\$210.0m
- Brussels sprouts—\$16.3m
- Cabbage—\$42.6m
- Cauliflower—\$41.8m

The gross value of Australian agriculture was \$56 billion in 2015–2016, with vegetables identified as one of the most valuable crop types at \$3.6 billion.

The value of fresh vegetable exports in 2015–2016 was \$232 million.

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015–16); Horticulture Innovation Australia—Australia Horticulture Statistics Handbook (2015–16).

## Progress of the review

The draft report identifies two quarantine pests associated with brassicaceous crop seeds for sowing, these being *Colletotrichum higginsianum* and *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *raphani*.

The draft report proposes mandatory measures in addition to Australia's standard requirements for the importation of seeds for sowing from all sources, and include:

- Mandatory fungicidal treatment (off-shore or on-shore) for seeds of *Brassica oleracea* (such as cabbage, cauliflower), *Brassica rapa* (such as bok choy, turnip), *Eruca vesicaria* (such as rocket) and *Raphanus sativus* (such as radish) as specified in this review.
- Seed lots treated off-shore to be accompanied by an official government Phytosanitary Certificate endorsed with the additional declaration that the consignment has undergone mandatory treatment in accordance with Australian import conditions.

Not all brassicaceous crop species reviewed were found to be affected by these quarantine pests. The draft review proposes that the seeds of crop species not affected by these quarantine pests continue to be imported under Australia's standard requirements for the importation of seeds for sowing and will not require the additional measures of mandatory testing or treatment.

## Next steps

Public comment on the draft report is welcome by 19 April 2018.

The final report will be published after consideration of stakeholder submissions.

Stakeholders can make their submission and gain further information about the review via the department's website: [agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/plant/brassicaceous-crop-seeds](http://agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/plant/brassicaceous-crop-seeds).

Stakeholders interested in receiving further updates on biosecurity risk analyses are invited to subscribe via the department's new online [subscription](#) service. By subscribing to [Biosecurity Risk Analysis Plant](#), you will receive Biosecurity Advises and other notifications relating to plant biosecurity policy, including this risk analysis.



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