



GrainGrowers Policy Position- Biosecurity

Australia's biosecurity system needs to remain responsive to new and emerging threats in an increasingly complex global environment and maintain a risk-based approach to assessing, prioritising and resourcing.

Background

Australia has a chequered history when it comes to biosecurity. Rabbits, prickly pear, cane toads and fire ants are some of the more well-known infestations that have challenged both our native flora and fauna populations and our agricultural production and productivity.

In recent years there has been a two-part effort by all stakeholders to address issues within Australia's biosecurity system.

Firstly, there has been a more controlled and targeted approach by governments (at all levels) to identify pests and weeds of a local, state and national significance and allocate resources accordingly. This has replaced the previous ad-hoc approach, which was hindered by duplication and unclear lines of responsibility.

Secondly, there has been a clear shift in the responsibilities between different levels of government, industry as a whole and private landowners. This has created a system (referred to as 'beneficiary pays') where government is responsible for prevention and, at times, eradication (funded through taxes); industry is responsible for eradication and containment (funded through industry levies such as Plant Health Australia); and private landowners are responsible for asset protection (self-funded or through grants at a regional level).

This system has allowed each stakeholder to focus on their key responsibilities and create a clear funding source for each level of responsibility.

Our Position

Australia's biosecurity system protects our rich natural assets and helps underpin our agricultural production and exports to trading partners. To ensure it remains responsive to new and emerging threats in an increasingly complex global environment there is a need to maintain a risk-based approach to assessing, prioritising and resourcing biosecurity activities. This requires planning, funding and vigilance at a national, regional and farm level.

GrainGrowers supports in principle the current system of biosecurity and the delineations of responsibility (while questioning the current level of funding). GrainGrowers is also supportive of the work of Plant Health Australia, working in partnership to ensure Australian grains remain free from the burden of major plant related biosecurity incursions.

This will also ensure that the Australian grains industry remains profitable through maintenance of its international reputation as a supplier of high quality, clean products.