



SECRETARY

Ref: EC19-000568

Mr Pat O'Shannassy
Chief Executive Officer
Grain Trade Australia
Via email: pat.oshannassy@graintrade.org.au

Dear Mr O'Shannassy

The recent drought has seen consecutive years of poor seasons and low grain production in the eastern states of Australia. This has increased interest in importing bulk grains for stockfeed and milling.

Although soil moisture in many of our cropping areas this year is better at this stage, continuation of the poor production conditions experienced in 2018-19 remains possible. This will depend on spring of course which is only a short time before harvest for those planning for cereal supplies in 2020 and considering the possibility of a continuing domestic shortfall.

The decision to import grain is a commercial decision for each importer. We do not consider commercial factors in decisions to issue an import permit.

The department has strict requirements which must be complied with to manage the biosecurity risks of importing bulk grain. The department's decision to approve an import permit for bulk grain is based solely on whether these biosecurity risks can be managed. Importers must be able to demonstrate they meet import conditions and can manage the risks around importing grain before a permit is issued. As part of the assessment process, the department undertakes comprehensive audits of the biosecurity arrangements proposed within industry supply chains. This includes assessment of storage, transport and processing operations, cleanliness and contingency planning and standard operating procedures across the supply chain that must be documented and assessed before the permit will be issued. Assessment of import permit applications against these requirements is complex and can take some time.

For these reasons I am encouraging you to assess your need for imported bulk grain and make appropriate arrangements soon. It is clear to us that by the time there is a high level of confidence about the forthcoming harvest there will not be time to approve and receive imported grain until well into 2020. Anyone who has made an import application or is considering doing so should make an urgent assessment of their realistic needs and act accordingly in the very near future.

For more information about importing bulk grain for stockfeed and milling visit agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/plant-products/importing-bulk-grain.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daryl Quinlivan

11 July 2019