

**MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

17<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**GRAIN HYGIENE & PROTECTION FOR MARKET ACCESS**

It was with great enthusiasm that the Australian grain industry was able to meet face to face over an information-packed two days at the **49th Australian Grain Storage & Protection Conference** on the 15th and 16th June 2022. Delegates were treated to a professional and information filled two-day program and were encouraged and inspired to continue to support and engage in the work and objectives of the **National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWP GP)**.

NWP GP Chair Gerard McMullen commented “the 49th Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference is an important occasion and event in the calendar of the grain industry and supports the objective of science combined with stewardship within the supply chain to enhance the reputation of the Australian grain industry as a provider of a quality and safe product.”

Grain Trade Australia’s (GTA) Deputy Chair, Ms Michelle Kerr, opened the Conference welcoming delegates and noted in 2022 the Australian grain supply chain has been under significant pressure with all export shipping-based supply chains at capacity. Ms Kerr commented “when a supply chain is under stress this is the perfect time to consider and perform a risk assessment into the intricacies of grain hygiene, chemical residues and fumigation”.

Ms Kerr said “the industry and supply chain whilst operating to capacity will remain under increased scrutiny; and that food safety and ethics are now increasingly under the spotlight. It is important to be aware the world is watching what we do and what safeguards are in place, which is why events like the Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference are so important”.

**Industry experts**

Over 30 speakers and industry experts provided detailed information to more than 160 delegates on a range of communication and extension activities and research conducted and supported by various industry organisations.

**The Insights**

- There was great discussion and support for cross sector and Government engagement and input into the stewardship of the industry use of grain protectants and fumigants throughout the grain supply chain.
- The role of government in regulating the use of agricultural chemicals and the current review into the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical Regulations was debated with the views of the post farm gate and the production sector shared with delegates.
- Delegates were provided an update from industry and the Government on the progress of the joint development of voluntary Standards applicable to all grain storage facilities and operators to facilitate innovation and to support the reputation of the Australian grain supply chain in international markets.
- Insights into new technologies that are becoming available to the grain supply chain including flow chain image assessment technologies that allow real time grain quality assessment to support value-based decisions.

- National research is continuing on methods to manage the resistance of the five major stored product pests to the fumigant phosphine. This is important research as phosphine is the key tool for the disinfestation of pests in stored grain. This research, including the fumigation and treatment of silo bags aids informed decisions on alternative treatments and changes to fumigation practices that support the increased efficacy of phosphine treatments.
- A call for further review and education into the process of venting grain post a phosphine fumigation to increase supply chain efficiency and to ensure a safe working environment.
- Continuing challenges remain in storing grain insect free and without any deterioration of grain quality, which is critical to ensure the safe storage and integrity of grain. Delegates were informed of research being performed to assist industry to better understand the impact of heat and moisture on the germination capability of barley following storage.
- There is ever increasing global scrutiny of supply chains and high standards are expected from the Australian grain industry. Delegates were informed of the Government role of supporting trade through its agricultural agencies including the National Residue Survey, an integral component of ensuring Australia's grain conforms to international Maximum Residue Limits for chemical residues.

A clear message that continued industry stewardship, education and awareness is critical to ensure the ever-demanding market expectations are satisfied. Extension services, information and training and having Standards, including grain storage Standards are critical tools for the industry. Getting back to face-to-face industry events such this Conference reinforced further opportunities exist to work within the sector to develop specific extension material addressing issues such as the correct application of fumigants and the impact poor practices can have on market access.

### **The feedback**

Dr John Ackerman, General Manager Trade and Market Access for Grains Australia commented "Grains Australia is pleased to provide funding for the NWPGP and support the Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference as it provides both government and the grain industry a forum to meet and to discuss information and innovative science that is critical to the sustainability of the grain supply chain. The Conference provides leadership and stewardship to industry through access to industry experts on topical and current issues as well as providing the right balance between 'the science' and the realities of the market".

Mr Pat O'Shannassy CEO of Grain Trade Australia said "GTA has a long association and history with the NWPGP and the Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference and is proud to be involved as conference convenor. The global grain market is becoming more complex and must be able to adapt to changing requirements especially demands of environmental, social and governance. This annual two-day forum is of immense value to the current and future reputation of Australia's grain and helps to cement and promote effective quality assurance throughout the grain supply chain. It was great to see so many delegates attend and provide input, as well as the valued support of the many sponsors of the Conference. I look forward with great anticipation to celebrate industry coming together at the 50th birthday of the Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference and the NWPGP at the 2023 Conference".

### **About the Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference:**

*The Australian Grain Storage and Protection Conference is convened by Grain Trade Australia (GTA), chaired by the National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWPGP) which is funded by Grains Australia.*

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