



2022 AUSTRALIAN GRAIN STORAGE & PROTECTION CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

This File Note lists outcomes agreed by the 2022 Australian Grain Storage & Protection Conference (Conference), hosted by the National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWPGP) in Melbourne on 15-16 June 2022. Agreed outcomes, major discussion points and findings are listed numerically in no order of priority.

There were over 160 attendees at the Conference, representing all sectors of the grain supply chain.

To provide comment on this document or to comment on any NWPGP related matter, please contact the Chair NWPGP, Gerard McMullen via email at gerard@mcmullengrainagricultural.com.

A. Headlines

- The Conference continues to be well attended and meet the needs of industry.
- Market access compliance with chemical Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) remains high.
- Further extension activities with key sectors particularly those involved in chemical use and advocacy is planned to assist understanding of the implications of chemical use on market access.
- Industry management of chemical use and resulting residues is improving due to improved management processes.
- The 50th conference of the NWPGP will be held in 2023.
- As they both are retiring and this was their last NWPGP Conference, a special note of thanks was made to Greg Daghish and Philip Burrill. Their valued work in the grain storage, research and extension areas over many years and their contributions to the grain industry was acknowledged.

B. Official Welcome

The Deputy Chair of Grain Trade Australia (GTA), Michelle Kerr, opened the Conference. GTA provided a commitment to continue to support the activities of the NWPGP, including:

- Administration of the NWPGP and organising the annual Conference which continues to be strongly attended by representatives of all sectors of industry and a range of government stakeholders; and
- Working with Grains Australia who fund the Chair NWPGP, on promotion of the NWPGP and its deliberations through various industry publications and on the GTA website.

The Deputy Chair commented on the number of participants representing all areas of the supply chain, noting that in 2022 the Australian grain supply chain has been under significant pressure with all export shipping-based supply chains at capacity. Michelle 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. She also noted 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.

C. Continued Role of the National Working Party on Grain Protection

The attendees were advised that Grains Australia has started a formal consultative approach with industry and stakeholders to examine the processes of the functional aspects of trade and market access matters, including the NWPGP to ensure they add value to the industry.

A number of administrative tasks were also discussed and **agreed**:

- 1) That the 2022 Conference outcomes be documented and distributed to all attendees.
- 2) That the outcomes of the 2022 Conference be placed on the NWPGP page on the GTA website and forwarded by GTA to all invitees, attendees and the wider grain industry via a GTA Member Update. See <http://www.graintrade.org.au/nwpgp>.
- 3) The NWPGP Strategic Working Group (SWG) be responsible for developing the agenda and making arrangements for the 50th NWPGP annual Conference, to be held in 2023 in a suitable location. Industry feedback on agenda items and other matters related to the Conference was encouraged in order to develop an agenda of relevance to the industry.
- 4) A note of thanks was provided to:
 - i. GTA staff for their continued support of the NWPGP; and
 - ii. SWG members; and
 - iii. All sponsors of the 2022 NWPGP Conference, especially the Gold Sponsors as listed on the Conference agenda.

It was further **agreed**:

- 5) That the SWG continue to operate and provide oversight of relevant NWPGP activities, including addressing industry issues as they arise.
- 6) NWPGP Working Groups be formed as required, and existing ones continue to address matters of relevance.

D. Communication & Extension Activities

The Conference was provided with details of a range of communication and extension activities conducted and supported by various industry organisations such as the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC):

- As part of the GRDC RD&E Strategic Plan, significant investment occurs in a range of activities covering grain storage, chemical use and grain hygiene.
- Current and future directions of the Grain Storage and Extension Project were outlined:
 - A large number of storage workshops for growers and other storage operators have been held throughout the year and these are planned to continue.
 - Uptake of good storage practice onfarm continues, using information such as that on the stored grain website.
- Advocacy on compliance with label directions, including export market quarantine treatments, especially for the use of fumigants, was discussed at length. It was noted that opportunities exist to work with all sectors to improve awareness of the impact of chemical use on market access.

It was **agreed**:

- 7) That the Chair NWPGP continue to liaise with relevant industry stakeholders on any matter relating to activities discussed under the auspices of the NWPGP.

E. Government and Regulatory Update

The Conference was provided with an update on a range of matters dealing with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and other international and domestic regulations:

- An outline of the regulations that apply in Australia, how Australian and Codex MRLs are developed and reviewed was provided.
- The significant input in Codex matters from Government and the benefits of that input to maintain MRLs of importance to industry was acknowledged.
- Participation in the National Residue Survey (NRS) is low in some industry sectors. The importance of industry participation in the NRS was extensively discussed, as a requirement under the industry Code of Practice, to assist submissions to overseas governments on proposed changes to MRLs, and as an audit of the effectiveness of industry management systems.
- Co-ordinated industry input via the NWPGP into developing the Australian Government position on various overseas MRL changes continues to be vital and participants were encouraged to contact the Chair NWPGP for input into that process.
- The NRS provided results of the monitoring program in the last 12 months, showing high compliance with MRLs for the domestic and export sectors.
- The impact of the recommendations of the current review of the Australian Agvet chemical regulations was outlined, with further advocacy on the potential negative impacts on industry to continue.
- Government activities within the Australia Pacific region and other regions on chemical matters continues, with efforts to assist key markets to develop or harmonisation existing regulations outlined.

It was **agreed**:

- 8) Industry should continue to respond to the Chair of the NWPGP or directly to regulatory authorities regarding any comments on Trade Advice Notices or similar chemical issues.
- 9) Industry be encouraged to increase participation in the NRS.
- 10) That the Conference fully endorses the continuation of the Grains Australia funded project enabling the NWPGP Chairman on behalf of the Australian grains industry:
 - i. To provide input to and attend as required, international forums such as Codex; and
 - ii. To actively liaise with the NRS and national regulatory organisations such as the APVMA on chemical related matters.
- 11) That through the Grains Australia funded project, the NWPGP Chairman will:
 - i. Continue to liaise with industry to provide input to the NRS on matters relating to chemicals raised through SPS and other international processes; and
 - ii. Continue working with NRS to facilitate the establishment and or maintenance of overseas MRLs as requested by industry.

F. Insect Infestation Trends, Resistance & Grain Treatments

Insect species detected:

- An overview of the insect species detected in various locations in the last year was provided. There were no major differences than in recent years other than an increase in infestations where higher moisture grain is held.
- The outcome of research on infestations detected in various commodities and locations was provided.
- The general consensus was that storage treatments on-farm (various methods) were improving, given the importance of controlling insects at the source rather than at some point further down the supply chain where control may be more problematic.

Stored grain treatments applied:

- No significant departures from prior year treatments have occurred or been required to control insects. A mix of treatments continue to be used to manage storages to prevent infestations in grain.
- It was emphasised that compliance with recommended label rates was not only a regulatory requirement but also needed to adequately control all life stages of insects.

Insect Resistance:

- An update on the distribution and frequency of insect resistance in various storage types and locations to a range of chemicals in Australia was provided.
- The increased resistance to grain protectants needs further attention.
- A range of current and alternative resistance management strategies to maximise the use of current insect treatments were suggested to the Conference attendees.
- Industry was encouraged to participate in the resistance testing program by sending in samples for testing at no charge.

It was **agreed**:

12) The Post-Harvest Chemical Usage Recommendations and Outturn Tolerances document for 2022/23:

- i. Be revised as per the outcomes of the 2022 NWPGP Conference via liaison with the co-authors (NRS and Grain Producers Australia); and
- ii. Is placed on the GTA website and distributed to industry.

G. Storage Update

The Conference was advised:

- On-farm storage continues to increase, with growers in general being more informed in good grain husbandry techniques.
- Appropriate storage types to manage insects and grain quality using techniques such as aeration continue to be adopted.
- The Australian Standard AS2628 for sealed storages, enabling fumigation for insect control, remains a key focus for introducing new storages on-farm.
- In sectors of the supply chain, including on-farm, a number of larger silos continue to be installed that do not meet this Australian Standard, requiring an insect management strategy other than fumigation.
- Several presenters provided insights into new technologies that are becoming available to the grain supply chain to manage and identify quality in storages and quality changes that may arise.

H. Market Access

A range of topics were covered under this item. These included:

- A presentation on the impending changes in export legislation and the performance of industry to meet importing country quarantine requirements, including freedom from stored grain insects.
- Discussion on changes to Australian market MRLs.
- Key market MRL changes, including those at Codex.

- On-farm chemical usage was discussed and how the trade can access that data (ideally through a database) so the trade can better manage compliance requirements and have access to more information when conducting risk assessments.

National Residue Survey (NRS) Results:

- An outline of the results from the program from 2021/22 to date was provided.
- Compliance with MRLs continues to be at a very high level as per recent seasons, with some marked improvements for specific chemicals.
- Changes to chemicals included in the residue screen have occurred following industry consultation.

It was **agreed**:

- 13) That the Conference fully endorses the NRS Grains program including the recent changes to the program.
- 14) That the Conference fully supports:
 - i. The activities of the NRS relating to pesticide residues, MRLs, and relevant market requirements, including those raised through WTO SPS and other international processes.
 - ii. The current NRS responsibility of providing market access advice and action to facilitate the establishment of overseas MRLs as requested by industry.
- 15) To continue to support the requirement for industry to outturn grain containing protectants at half the MRL for all existing grain protectants (ROL – recommended outturn limit).

I. Fumigant Issues

- An update on the progress of development of recommendations and research required to alter the phosphine label was outlined.
- Issues associated with industry compliance with the phosphine label, including venting of fumigant and resulting residues were discussed at length.
- Various research activities were outlined reviewing the modes of action of various fumigants.
- The use of sulfuryl fluoride as a break fumigant for phosphine continues, with further research into its use outlined.
- Correct use of other fumigants was highlighted, including the need for alternating chemicals to manage resistance.

It was **agreed**:

- 16) That a phosphine best management practices document would be created and made available for industry use.