



2025 AUSTRALIAN GRAIN STORAGE & PROTECTION CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

This File Note lists outcomes agreed by the 2025 Australian Grain Storage & Protection Conference (Conference), hosted by the National Working Party on Grain Protection (NWPGP) in Melbourne on 4-5 June 2025.

There were 200 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

- This was the 52nd annual conference of the NWPGP and the increasing number of delegates highlights the importance it plays in the grain industry.
- Compliance with domestic and export market chemical Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) continues to remain at high levels.
- Industry management systems, supported by the science combined with communication activities at all stages of the supply chain continues to maintain the reputation of the Australian grain industry as a provider of a quality and safe product.

B. Official Welcome

The Chief Executive Officer of Grain Trade Australia (GTA), Pat O'Shannassy, opened the Conference and emphasised the industry continues to be under scrutiny, especially for food safety and sustainability. Value for industry, growers and all other businesses that make up the industry include the grain product, customer confidence and reputation of industry.

GTA provided a commitment to continue to support the ongoing 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 means.

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

Attendees heard of the key role that the NWPGP undertakes in assisting industry to manage outturn of grain to ensure that it meets market contractual and regulatory requirements, while being free of live stored grain insects. This includes liaison with the many stakeholders involved in providing technical advice and tools to meet those ever-increasing challenges.

This includes a range of advocacy activities with groups the conference attendees heard from, including:

- A range of extension activities provided by various industry sectors.
 - This includes the valuable funding provided by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) to support the Stored Grain Extension team. Those stakeholders assist industry to take the findings of core research and apply it to the practicalities of storing and managing grain throughout the supply chain.
- The use of on-farm storage continues to increase, with growers using storage for a range of purposes including harvest management, and marketing grain throughout the year.
 - The GRDC Stored Grain Extension team has played an active and important role in providing key messages for the management of grain in on-farm storages.
- The role of agronomists and other grower advisors in assisting growers to understand the impacts of chemical use on market access.

D. Research Activities

The Conference was given an update on a range of research activities undertaken on behalf of industry by the private and government sectors. This included activities funded by GRDC, but also other sectors of industry:

- The management of grain quality in storage, including the impact of temperature on Falling Number in stored wheat.
- Challenges to manage insect pests both in-crop and post-harvest were outlined.
- As well as chemical control methods, the audience heard from several speakers on the range of non-chemical control methods such as aeration and hygiene used to manage grain quality and the insect-free status of stored grain.
- An update on the distribution and frequency of insect resistance on-farm and in commercial grain storages to a range of chemicals in Australia was provided. Options being used by industry for management of those insects, involving various chemical treatment strategies and non-chemical treatments were outlined.
- Industry participants agreed the Insect Resistance Management Strategy and the need for industry compliance with that strategy is a requirement. .
- A new publication, Phosphine Best Management Practices was released which provides key principles and practices to assist industry in disinfesting stored commodities when using phosphine.
- Research funded by the GRDC on behalf of growers to progress work on revision of the phosphine label to ensure it is up to date with clear instructions that assist insect management and meets current usage obligations on-farm was outlined. This research includes elements to be managed on-farm for compliance with the proposed Safe Work Australia Workplace Exposure Limits (WEL) for airborne contaminants, specifically the proposed significant WEL reduction for phosphine.

E. Government and Regulatory Update

Conference attendees were provided with an update on a range of matters dealing with domestic and international regulations and activities. These included key issues affecting the supply chain of:

Domestic

- The chemical review process and importance for providing safe food undertaken by the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) was outlined.
- A number of key chemicals for the industry are currently being reviewed or are planned for review in the near future by the APVMA. The processes to be undertaken, and the need for industry involvement in feedback of the proposed decisions, was highlighted as a critical outcome for continued access to those chemicals.
- Results of the past year National Residue Survey (NRS) testing program for the domestic and export sector were outlined in detail. The results showed a continued industry compliance with market requirements as per previous years, although some improvements for particular commodities and chemicals were highlighted.
- The role and importance of industry participation in the NRS program was outlined, including as a requirement under the industry Code of Practice, to assist submissions to overseas governments on proposed changes to MRLs, as an audit of the effectiveness of industry management systems, and to assist resolution of market violations as they arise.
- A key focus for the Australian storage sector is compliance with obligations for methyl bromide use under the Montreal Protocol. The discussion also included industry compliance with export regulations when importing countries mandate use of fumigants such as methyl bromide prior to export. Industry was encouraged to review and improve processes in that area to meet their obligations.

Export

- The role of the Australian Government in the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) meetings and activities and the benefits of that input to maintain the registration of chemicals and MRLs of importance to industry was described and acknowledged in the conference.
- While there are ongoing concerns with the timelines for review of chemicals at CCPR, there is a need to continually advocate for improvements to the regulatory system and the role of industry, and the Australian government in that activity was outlined.
- A number of recent MRL changes in export markets were outlined and the need for continued industry vigilance in meeting those market MRLs was highlighted. The importance of industry improving advocacy through changes to the industry Code of Practice, and the opportunities for systems such as the Grain Storage Assets and Management Standard were outlined.