



GRDC SafeWork Australia Phosphine Investment

Summary of Steering Committee Workshop 6 June 2025

1. Introduction

SafeWork Australia (SWA) will implement new phosphine exposure regulations on 1 December 2026, changing the Time Weighted Average (TWA) of 0.3 ppm to a Worker Exposure Limit (WEL) of 0.05 ppm. Along with changing the Short-term Exposure Limit (STEL) of 1 ppm to a Peak Exposure limit (PEL) of 0.15 ppm.

On June 6, 2025, eighteen industry representatives participated in a GRDC-led workshop in Melbourne, marking the initial planning phase of a strategic GRDC investment aimed at identifying key issues related to phosphine regulation and use across both pre and post farm gate sectors. The workshop served as an invaluable platform for participants to exchange ideas, share experiences, and collaborate on developing solutions. By fostering a cooperative environment, attendees were able to generate innovative strategies addressing both immediate concerns and long-term objectives beneficial to the broader grains industry.

Additional stakeholders will be engaged to contribute towards achieving industry outcomes, potentially forming several technical Working Groups.

2. The GRDC Investment

GRDC and Queensland Department of Primary Industries (QLD DPI) are collaborating on the investment: *“Optimising post-fumigation protocols for phosphine, aligning to new health and safety standards and reducing post-farmgate costs to growers”*.

The objective is to generate reliable scientific data to guide regulations and product usage for venting phosphine after its application.

This will be achieved through three key outputs:

Output 1: *“Data package for phosphine label update submission to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)”. Generation of trial data for submission to the APVMA to support updated phosphine fumigations to support the new SWA limits.*

Output 2: *“Updated or develop new fumigation procedures for inclusion within an Australian Standard”. Including an agreed methodology for testing phosphine levels of grain loads on-farm and at receival sites.*

Output 3: *“Cost effective, on-farm testing protocols for measuring phosphine levels upon outturn”. Develop on-farm post fumigation testing protocols for use prior to grain transportation, preventing rejection upon delivery at the receival site. The protocol will define how, where and when phosphine levels are measured.*

The investment involves both laboratory and field scale trials, with Bulk Handling Companies (BHCs) offering storages for the latter research. Based on findings of the studies, and subsequent industry discussion, the proposal for an Australian Standard will be reviewed to assess the overall benefit of this approach to industry.

3. Post Farmgate / Industry Issues

In addition to the GRDC investment *Optimising post-fumigation protocols for phosphine, aligning to new health and safety standards and reducing post-farmgate costs to growers* discussed during the workshop, a range of other matters affecting stakeholders along the supply chain were raised.



These include:

- Managing APVMA/SWA expectations that the industry will implement the new SWA limits before the investment is completed by 2030.
- The industry's request for a review of the SWA decision.
- The industry developing agreed protocols to manage outcomes of the investment, including an agreed strategy to assess deliveries, recording of phosphine levels, and procedures for rejecting deliveries.
- A range of other actions industry needs to utilise to show industry compliance with the new SWA limits, such as potential revision to Commodity Vendor Declarations (CVDs) to capture phosphine readings, communication of industry requirements to all stakeholders and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements of the new SWA limits.