

16th September 2026

The Confidentiality Manager
International Trade Section
Australian Bureau of Statistics
PO Box 10
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Via email: international.trade@abs.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Meeting Request — timely and reliable grain export information

Grain Trade Australia (GTA) seeks a meeting with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to discuss opportunities to improve the timeliness, reliability and accessibility of Australian grain export information.

About GTA

GTA is the focal point for the commercial grains industry in Australia. We facilitate trade and promote an efficient, equitable and open trading environment through leadership, advocacy and commercial services across the grain value chain.

Our members are drawn from grain production, trading, storage and handling, transport, processing, stockfeed and food manufacturing, and exporting. GTA members are responsible for more than 95 per cent of grain storage and freight movements in Australia, while more than 95 per cent of grain contracts executed nationally refer to GTA grain standards and/or trade rules.

Importance of timely export information

ABS export statistics are an important and widely used source of objective information about Australia's grain trade. Grain-market participants rely on these statistics to understand export activity, prepare supply-and-demand estimates and make informed commercial and operational decisions.

The value of this information is, however, significantly affected by the period between the export activity occurring and the relevant statistics becoming available. Grain markets can change quickly, particularly during harvest and periods of strong export demand. Information published after a substantial delay may no longer provide an accurate picture of current market conditions.

More timely export information would assist market participants to:

- develop more current and reliable assessments of export activity;
- identify changes in commodity and destination demand;
- improve commercial, operational and logistical planning;
- support efficient use of port, storage and transport infrastructure; and
- make decisions using a consistent and authoritative source of information.

In addition to publication delays, industry users have identified issues that can affect the reliability and usefulness of the available data. These include:

- inaccuracies in information entered by exporters, freight forwarders or their agents;
- material understatements or overstatements of export volumes;
- delays in identifying and correcting errors; and
- the suppression or delayed release of some commodity, state, load-port and destination information for confidentiality reasons.

GTA acknowledges the ABS's statutory confidentiality obligations and the importance of ensuring that published statistics do not identify individual businesses or disclose commercially sensitive activity. We are interested in exploring whether information could be published more quickly at an appropriately aggregated level while maintaining those protections.

Proposed discussion

GTA would welcome the opportunity to better understand the collection, validation, confidentiality and publication processes applying to grain export statistics and to discuss practical options for improving the currency of the information available to users.

Matters for discussion could include:

- the reasons for the current period between export activity and publication;
- opportunities to shorten publication timeframes;
- whether preliminary or provisional export information could be released earlier and subsequently updated;
- whether high-level or aggregated information could be published more frequently;
- options for establishing a regular and clearly communicated publication timetable;
- measures to improve the accuracy of information submitted by exporters, freight forwarders and their agents;
- processes for identifying, notifying users of and correcting material errors promptly;
- whether alternative aggregation or confidentiality arrangements could allow information to be released earlier; and
- any legislative, systems or resourcing constraints affecting more timely publication.

GTA would be pleased to assist the ABS in engaging grain exporters and other relevant industry participants to improve data quality at the point of entry and to test practical options for more timely reporting.

Our objective is to support an informed and efficiently functioning Australian grain market by improving access to current, reliable and appropriately aggregated export information while preserving necessary confidentiality protections.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with the relevant ABS officers at a mutually convenient time. Please contact GTA Operations and Projects Manager Tim Ross, 0417 475 115, Tim.Ross@graintrade.org.au to arrange the discussion.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to constructive engagement to discuss these opportunities.

Yours faithfully,



Pat O'Shannassy
Chief Executive Officer

Ends: