

Weed Seed Contamination in Imported Feed Grain Winning the Battle

New State Government quarantine protocols introduced in early 2006 for imported feed-grain have found that most imported grain is adhering to tighter rules regarding weed-seeds.

At the last meeting of industry participants of the Weeds in Feed Grain Working Group (WFGWG), quarantine officials from the Department of Primary Industries and Water announced that 73 container tests had found that only one importer had been identified with weed-seed contamination. This testing is part of a new initiative to monitor weed seed infiltration in imported feed grain.

During the first three months of new testing protocols, 1420 containers of grain were imported into Tasmania, amounting to 31-thousand tonnes of grain.

While there have been challenges, industry has responded exceptionally well to the changes in regulations. To have such a big volume of grain imported and for almost all of the grain to be free of weed-seeds is a vast improvement in the quality of grain being imported into Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government were advised on the need for transitional arrangements for grain that was bought on contract in 2005, and for improved communication to industry stakeholders to ensure all participants involved in the importation and use of grain have the opportunity to adhere to the new rules.

Quarantine officers are also working with grain importing companies to improve their testing skills to help prevent further incidences of weed-seeds in feed-grain. Quarantine have also completed a review of Level Two and Level Three grain handling facilities.

Advice from quarantine officers was that there will now be eight registered facilities that can handle the highest treatment criteria for imported feed grain. These Level Three facilities manufacture grain into stock-feed and flour-milled products.

The weeds in feed grain working group would continued to meet and monitor the progress with the new regulations and sampling procedures to ensure that communication with industry was maintained.



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2005/06 ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

A message from the Chairman

Over the past year TAPG has continued to work across a variety of issues and activities. This reflects both the breadth of the TAPG membership base and the number of issues and challenges facing Tasmanian Agriculture. TAPG has as its strength the broad range of member organisations and we must continue to use this attribute to support the growth and development of our agricultural industries.

Some information on these activities is contained in this report. Other work done by the organisation and the Board happens behind the scenes through the networks and contacts that TAPG has developed. TAPG has limited resources to undertake its direct work and activity and it is important that these resources be focused on the main priorities for the organisation. A review of these priorities will be undertaken in the new financial year and I commend all members to be involved in this process.

Les Murdoch
McCain Foods
Chairman TAPG



Launch of the TAPG and TFGA Report: Contribution of Agriculture to the Tasmanian Economy

Highlights for the Year

TAPG has continued to represent the broader agricultural industry on key issues.

- Completion of the industry and government working group effort to implement changes in the management regime for **weed contamination in imported feed grains**
- **Aerial spraying** industry support and representation of industry views to the DPIW code of practice review process
- Support responsible **chemical use in agricultural industries** including the development of a summary document on the use of chemicals in Tasmanian cropping operations. This also includes appropriate access to 1080 as a means of sustainable wildlife control for farmers and forestry operations
- Support the **Devonport Taste the Harvest Festival** with agricultural industry promotion, the Harvest Dinner and the Beyond the Farmgate Tours
- Providing a vital and unique forum for industry issues to be debated and resolved
- Developing the opportunity for **market access of Tasmanian potatoes into Japan**

Taste the Harvest Festival – March 2006

Taste the Harvest has now become the major regional food and wine event for the Northwest. It has a unique agricultural flavour and features supporting activities like:

- Farm gate bus tours
- Harvest celebration dinner
- Giant vegetable competition

TAPG continues to support this major northwest event to promote the agriculture sector. This has included support for the Beyond the Farmgate Bus Tours in the week leading up to the event and the Agricultural Marquee and displays at the Festival. Continued involvement comes from growers David Addison, Tim Burgess, Richard Bovill, Premium Fresh and Cherry Hill Coolstores with fresh produce and the Marquee participants this year were Simplot, Harvest Moon, Tasmanian Alkaloids, DPIW and Ashgrove Cheese.

A new initiative this year was the Harvest Dinner at the Deck Restaurant featuring a range of Tasmanian food and wine. The dinner was a great success and something to build on for the event.



Taste the Harvest patrons at the celebrity chef demonstrations with Steve and Josh



Part of the big crowd at the event

Crop Protection Practices in Tasmania A new report

TAPG has played a lead role in the preparation of a report on crop protection practices in Tasmania. It is designed to give industry, government and public some broad information on chemical use in cropping operations and demonstrate value of these industries and the potential threats that they can be exposed to. It also refers to various safeguards in place at a local and national level to support the industry.

The report was prepared by the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group with the support of the Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association and CroLife Australia.

Some of the main findings in the report are:

- **Restrictive or selective banning of registered pesticides could mean a loss of around 20 % annually from the State's agricultural production and food related industries**
- **By controlling insects, bacteria, fungi and weeds, pesticides help farmers produce higher quality goods, be more productive and be competitive in world markets**
- **Pesticides are just one of a number of tools used by farmers to prevent and manage pest and disease infestations as part of an integrated crop management approach**
- **All pesticides used in Australia are subject to rigorous testing before being approved for use**
- **The Tasmanian Government regulates which registered pesticides can be used in the state and can place restrictions on how and when they are used**
- **Maximum residue limits help monitor that a pesticide is being used as directed on the approved label**
- **Australian Government research shows that 99.9 per cent of Australian foods tested have no detectable residues or are below the maximum residue limits**
- **The Tasmanian Government monitors waterways and streams across Tasmania for pesticide residues**
- **The APVMA investigates any report of an adverse experience that occurs after the use of or exposure to pesticides**
- **Quality assurance programs and codes of practice help ensure farmers use pesticides correctly**
- **Stewardship protects people and the environment by reducing the risk of any unintended effects of pesticides**

TAPG Membership

Vegetable Processors:

- McCain Foods
- Simplot Australia

Fresh Fruit & Vegetables:

- Webster Fresh
- Harvest Moon
- Premium Fresh Tasmania
- Cherry Hill Coolstores
- Bovill Brothers
- Perfecta Exports

Dairy Processing

- Fonterra Australia
- Lactos
- Cadbury Schweppes

Industry Associations:

- Agricultural Contractors Association of Tasmania
- Australian United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (AUF)
- Agricultural Ground Sprayers Association of Tasmania
- Tasmanian Women in Agriculture

Growers:

- Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association

Government:

- Department of Primary Industries and Water

Services to Agriculture:

- Dobmac Agricultural Machinery
- Hills Transplants
- Impact Fertilisers
- Incitec Pivot
- Irrigation Tasmania
- Roberts
- Elders Webster
- Serve-Ag
- Agricultural Resource Management
- Serve-Ag Research
- Workforce Extensions
- Rural Development Services
- Agronico
- Tasmanian Quality Assured

Other Agricultural Processors:

- Botanical Resources Australia
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Tasmanian Alkaloids

Forestry:

- Forest Enterprises Australia
- Forestry Tasmania
- Gunns Limited
- Private Forests Tasmania

Aerial Spray Operators

- Air Spreaders Tasmania
- Ford Aviation
- Tasmanian Helicopters
- Osborne Aviation Service
- Helispud
- Jones Contracting Services



TAPG Aims

- Ensure the ongoing productivity and growth of the Tasmanian agriculture, forestry, food and related industries.
- Provide a cooperative forum for the promotion and increased recognition of all sectors of Tasmania's agriculture, forestry, food and related industries.
- Reinforce public confidence in the safety and quality of produce.
- Ensure the application of safe, efficient, sustainable and appropriate environmental practices.
- Provide a multi-sector approach to issues affecting the Tasmanian agriculture, forestry, food and related industries.

