

## Plant biosecurity vital for Australia

Grain Producers Australia says the importance of plant biosecurity for Australia has been highlighted in a recent discussion paper from the Australian Farm Institute that focused on the research, development and extension effort supporting the country's biosecurity network.

The report noted that "Much of the success and continued growth of Australia's plant industries can be attributed to the relative absence of plant pests and diseases that are endemic in overseas locations", which GPA biosecurity spokesman Barry Large said is recognised and understood.

"In simple terms, there are many pests and diseases we don't have and don't want," Mr Large said.

"Plant Health Australia has actually identified 355 high priority pests across 28 plant industry biosecurity plans, with the vast majority of those pests only found in other countries.

"The fact that there are so many biosecurity plans means that every industry recognises the importance of both keeping exotic pests out of Australia and swiftly managing any incursions.

"There were over 550 research projects active during 2014 that directly support the development and enhancement of the national plant biosecurity system, covering areas such as pest management, diagnostics, crop improvement, surveillance, risk analysis and more.

"Farmers recognise that just as we often talk about risk of pests arriving from overseas, there are also risks at the individual farm level and accordingly on many farm gates today you will see warning signs asking visitors to respect farm biosecurity – it's that important," he said.

GPA is a member of Plant Health Australia and a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, which involves many responsibilities around policy, planning and management of biosecurity issues, including involvement in the current Exercise Haryana.

"The AFI report emphasised the importance of making sure we stay free of exotic pests and diseases, with one of the grains industry's techniques for preparedness being through Exercise Haryana, which is a planning process for managing an exotic disease incursion," Mr Large said.

"This is a massive exercise that began in mid-2015 and will run late into this year, involving planning and on-site simulation exercises from farms right through the supply chain across numerous organisations and agencies, involving hundreds of people.

"Just as good co-ordination is vital in managing biosecurity research, so it is when dealing with an actual incursion and already Exercise Haryana has assisted in working out what we do well and where we can improve.

"At every step biosecurity is vital for Australia and the grains industries recognise this," Mr Large said.

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**About Grain Producers Australia**

Grain Producers Australia (GPA) represents Australia's broadacre, grain, pulse and oilseed producers at the national level. Broadly stated, GPA exists to foster a strong, innovative, profitable, globally competitive and environmentally sustainable grains industry in Australia.