

Building Biosecurity Capacity and Resilience Project

Introduction

Increased climatic variability and severe weather events, whether flood, drought or fire, are now continuously changing the biosecurity risk profile of NSW vegetable industries.

Biosecurity incursions can have a significant impact on the production and profitability of vegetable growing businesses. By combating biosecurity risk factors, NSW vegetable growers build greater resilience that flow-on into significant economic advantages for rural communities, particularly agribusiness that supports them locally.

Through greater awareness of potential threats, and increased monitoring of pest and disease incursions, industries can be better prepared to proactively mitigate the number and severity of established on-farm biosecurity challenges and reduce the risk of introduction of new threats into NSW growing regions.

Proactively managing biosecurity through good planning, daily farm operations, and by integrating into other on-farm seasonal checks and monitoring systems, such as soil, water, nutrition, spray and seed/propagation material management, can significantly reduce the need for more expensive responsive measures.

The Project

The project aims to:

- ✓ Raise awareness of priority pest and disease threats to the vegetable industries of NSW and the critical pathways and conditions that increase the risk of incursion, spread and severity.

The biosecurity risk profile is continuously changing.

- ✓ Deliver a significant step-change in the use of on-farm biosecurity measures by providing practical information on both proactive and responsive best management practices.
- ✓ Build a vegetable specific surveillance program across growing regions, engaging with key private, commercial and agency on-farm advisors, as well as leading growers, to encourage monitoring and exchange of information on pest and disease pressures.
- ✓ Develop a pest and disease diagnostics program to support the surveillance program and evaluate the value to industry of early detection.

Project activities

The project will:

- ✓ Develop the surveillance and diagnostics program in collaboration with industry on-farm advisors. It will arm this critical stakeholder group with easy-to-use tools, protocols and procedures to pilot the free programs. It will support them through collaboration workshops via the project coordinator and local agency partners.
- ✓ Prepare a comprehensive "go to" library of biosecurity resources for both advisors and growers. These resources will focus on increasing the resilience of NSW vegetable by being better prepared to identify risks and respond proactively to severe weather events.



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- ✓ Roll-out an extensive program of awareness and educational events, including research and emerging technology guest speakers in:
 - Identification and best management practice response to pest and disease threats.
 - Integration of biosecurity into “typical” farm operations and management decisions.
 - Implementing Integrated Pest and Disease Management (IPDM), including opportunities for safe chemical use and cultural and biological strategies.
 - Surveillance, sampling and diagnostic methods, including using results to inform growing region and/or individual farm decisions.
- ✓ Learn the latest, or assist in training delivery to growers, in research and development and advanced technologies to arm industry with the right information to pass-on to growers, especially during heightened risk periods.
- ✓ Become part of a network of service providers and leading growers across vegetable growing regions of NSW where you can collaborate on seasonal challenges and exchange on methods being used to address these in a regular, safe and trusted forum.
- ✓ Have access to an easy-to-use surveillance and reporting platform that will provide enhanced regional-based understanding of emerging threats before they become wide-spread and impact the profitability of growers and your business.

Why get involved?

Advisors who are providing on-farm advisory services to vegetable growers in agronomy, soil and fertility management (organic or in-organic fertiliser), irrigation management, and pest and disease control (IPDM and/or chemical spraying advice) are encouraged to get involved in the project, as are grower “champions”, through joining the project’s NSW Vegetable Biosecurity Community of Practice (CoP).

By joining the CoP, you will have opportunity to:

- ✓ Advise the project on the resources you need to ensure your service is up to date on matters of biosecurity and proactive management of the critical risk pathways of soil, water, nutrition/compost, chemical usage and people management.
- ✓ Participate in training, or assist in training delivery to growers, to identify and assess priority pest and disease threats in relation to seasonal conditions.
- ✓ Participate in surveillance and diagnostic sampling training, as well as free access to diagnostic testing for clients.

A more resilient and prepared vegetable sector delivers long-term benefits to your business.

For more information

The project is motivated to work side-by-side with local service providers, to ensure the project reflects what is needed to better arm you with information to build your capabilities or assist in communication and training of the growers with which you engage.

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Proactively address biosecurity challenges in response to climate variability and extreme weather conditions.

