

Certified Seed Potatoes - Certification Officers Training Workshop

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Victorian Certified Seed Potato
Authority Inc

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Certified Seed Potatoes - Certification Officers Training Workshop

**A Bi-Annual National Training Program For Certification
Officers & Industry Personnel Conducted By VicSPA**

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Manager VicSPA

Russell Bell
Area Manager Gippsland

December 2008



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ViCSPA

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PT08001

Certified Seed Potatoes - Certification Officers Training Workshop

**A Bi-Annual National Training Program For Certification Officers And
Industry Personnel Conducted By ViCSPA**

Compiled by Keith Blackmore, Manager ViCSPA

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Funded by:

- ⊕ **HAL**
- ⊕ **ViCSPA**
- ⊕ **Attendees**

Assistance was provided by:

- ⊕ Russell Bell, ViCSPA - Joint convener
- ⊕ Department of Primary Industries Victoria, Toolangi. Dolf de Boer, Nigel Crump, Con Skyllas, David Beardsell and Brendan Rodoni provided specialist presentations. The Breeding Program under Tony Slater and Graeme Wilson provided the variety training and test plots.
- ⊕ PIW Tasmania
- ⊕ Dept. Agriculture Western Australia
- ⊕ Brenda Kennedy (ViCSPA) and Julie Blackmore (Department of Primary Industries) for Administration and hospitality
- ⊕ Dolf de Boer facilitated the attendance of six PNG officers through a Crawford Foundation project. An additional two officers were funded by their employer.

Report date: March 2008

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Media summary

Seed Potato Certification Training for Certification Officers & Industry staff

The ViCSPA Potato Seed Certification Workshop was successfully held from the 1st to 5th December 2008. The venue was the Primary Industries Victoria research station at Toolangi.

The bi-annual training workshop provides the essential knowledge and skills required by Certification Officers to effectively carry out their duties.

The seed potato certification schemes in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and Western Australia are the foundation of the Australian potato industry. These schemes also offer significant potential for increased export growth for certified seed potatoes and fresh potatoes. This training was different in that 8 officers from Papua & New Guinea attended the training.

The format of the training follows similar successful programs previously run by ViCSPA. Keith Blackmore has attended similar training programs in Scotland and Canada. Russell Bell recently attended the Canadian Food Inspection Agency training for Certification Officers at the University of Guelph.

All aspects of the training week were successfully completed:

- ⊕ All participants successfully completed their competency assessments for rules and processes associated with tuber and field inspections. Issues addressed included, improved knowledge of variety identification, best practices for inspection, plant diseases, and the National Standards and tuber quality assessment.
- ⊕ The choice of guest speakers proved informative and rewarding for those attending. These talks added an extra depth to their knowledge of potato diseases and viruses.
- ⊕ All Attendees successfully identified 9 varieties in a field assessment of the variety identification skills learnt. Many also correctly identified the mixtures in the assessment plots. A summarised description of varieties in the scheme was provided to all Attendees.
- ⊕ A field trip to Gippsland and Colac gave additional practical experiences for the international guests.

Technical Summary

The aim of the workshop is to facilitate the uniform application of standards to produce quality certified seed potatoes for all Australian domestic and export markets.

The National Standard for Seed Potato Certification schemes (© HAL) is used by all official seed schemes in Victoria and South Australia (ViCSPA), NSW, Tasmania and Western Australia. The National Standard outlines the minimum requirements for crops being grown for Certified seed production. In the field the listed requirements include that stocks must be derived from a pathogen tested nucleus, rotations, isolation, seed eligibility, disease levels (fungal, bacterial and virus diseases) and variety mixes. Tuber standards include pests, diseases, defects and size parameters. A standard official label is used by all schemes to indicate stocks that have fulfilled the National Standard.

Over the last ten years ViCSPA has conducted six workshops for Seed Potato Certification officers from around Australia. The workshops have been attended by Certification staff from all schemes as well as the ViCSPA staff, Victorian Department of Primary Industries Officers and processing company staff. As mentioned previously 8 officers from PNG also attended this years training.

The workshop covered by this report was held over five days in early December 2008. Fifteen people from four states and PNG attended the workshop.

Workshop objectives:

1. To bring together people involved in field inspection of Certified seed crops from all Australian Certified seed schemes and or seed potato growers or industry professionals
2. To improve knowledge of and ability to identify potato varieties in the field
3. To review best practice methodology for inspection of Certified seed crops
4. To improve attendees knowledge of the identification of plant diseases
5. To further the implementation of the National standards in Australia
6. To improve our knowledge of and methodology of conducting tuber quality assessments

The workshop program included:

- ⊕ Shared experience from the existing knowledge of those in the group
- ⊕ Specialist lectures from ViCSPA and D P I Victoria
- ⊕ Variety training plots at Toolangi for use in training for variety identification and to assess skill levels on test plots.
- ⊕ Competency based assessments of the class-room subjects
- ⊕ Speakers notes

An evaluation of this workshop by Attendees gave a very positive feedback for the program with no suggestions for changes to the program. Suggestions from the previous course evaluations have been implemented. For this course the variety plots were planted on the front lawn of the Primary Industries offices at Toolangi. This made them very accessible and with little time wasted moving between the field and lecture room. The workshops assist in the uniform implementation of the National Standards for Certified seed potatoes as well as focusing on developing variety identification skills and disease identification skills

All Attendees successfully completed the workshop, which included competency assessments for field and tuber inspections and variety identification plots.

Recommendation

The uniform application of the National Standard for the official certified seed potato schemes is important for both the domestic and export industries. It is also vital that those assessing the certified seed potato crops have the latest information about diseases and pests and their identification. The attendance of government professionals and industry personnel also makes the most of the considerable effort put into the running of the workshop.

It is recommended that the next ViCSPA Potato Seed Certification Workshop be held in December 2010. This is part of an on-going strategy by all of the Australian seed schemes and supported by the Seed Potato Advisory Group to ensure that their staff have relevant and up to date skills and knowledge for their duties. The course also allows growers and industry professionals to gain field identification skills and seed production knowledge.

Communications/extension activities

An article with photo will be submitted in the magazine 'Eyes on Potatoes'.

Additional Commercialisation and/or Intellectual Property issues

N/A

Attached: 1. Workshop program
 2. Evaluation form,
 3. List of delegates



The variety training plots also included assessment plots with variety mixes.



A full day was spent at the Department of Primary Industries Knoxfield centre with specialist lectures and laboratory visits.

Attachment 1: WORKSHOP PROGRAM

| Date | Program |
|---|--|
| Monday December 1 st Location Toolangi Potato Research Station – stay at Healesville all week | Interstate delegates arrive mid morning at Melbourne. Transport will be provided from Melbourne airport. We suggest that all delegates that are flying in aim for arrival about 9.30 am. Travel to DPI Toolangi. 11.00 Accredited laboratory inspection Lunch & Welcome 1.00 Introduction 1.20 Accreditation of laboratories. Graeme Guy 2.00 Basic concepts of Certification KB 2.45 Afternoon tea 3.05 Key variety differences - Field practice variety Identification R. Bell |
| Tuesday 2 nd Location Department of Primary Industries Knoxfield | Morning 8.30 Travel to Department of Primary Industries Knoxfield 9.20 Welcome and introduction – Doug Marshall, Chairman ViCSPA Board 9.30 PCN – Nigel Crump 10.00 Morning tea 10.30 What's happening in Thorpdale / Australia – harmonization of rules 11.00 Laboratory diagnostics for PCN – Con Skyllas 11.45 Bacterial Wilt / New diagnostics - Nigel Crump 12.15 Lunch 1.00 Late blight – Dolf de Boer 1.30 Potato Viruses/ sample handling - Brendan Rodoni 2.30 Afternoon tea 2.45 Virus symptoms 3.15 Significant fungal diseases – Dolf de Boer 4.15 Travel to Healesville 7.00 Workshop Dinner at Healesville |
| Wednesday 3 rd Location DPI Toolangi | Morning 8.45 Field work in variety plots 9.30 Field inspections: Application forms, equipment, hygiene, timing of inspections, causes of rejections, use of Laboratory diagnosis 10.30 Tuber inspection - to the National Standards - Russell Bell 11.30 Tuber inspection workshop with "hands on" exercises – Russell Bell Afternoon 1.00 Tuber inspection Competency Assessment - Russell Bell 2.00 PCN / Sampling RB 3.30 Field work in the variety plots |
| Thursday 4 th Location DPI Toolangi | Morning 8.45 Field identification practice + All 10.30 Field inspection methods 11.30 Greg - PNG Talk Afternoon 1.30 Photos – field symptoms. 2.00 PCN sampling / Farm hygiene – RB 2.30 Variety practice – review 3.45 Variety test plots 6.30 Workshop BBQ for PNG guests |
| Friday 5 th Location DPI Toolangi | 9.00 Photos of diseases etc 9.30 National Standards & Field inspection review 10.30 National Standards & Field inspection competency 11.15 Course evaluation & certificates 11.45 Blackleg - Dolf de Boer 12.30 BBQ |

ViCSPA Certification Officers Training Workshop, December 2008

How could this be improved? _____

10. Brendan Rodoni - Virus Disease Issues

Content
V good – good – fair – poor –

Presentation
V good – good – fair – poor –

How could this be improved? _____

11. Dolf de Boer – Late Blight

Content
V good – good – fair – poor –

Presentation
V good – good – fair – poor –

How could this be improved? _____

12. Dolf de Boer - Fungal diseases

Content
V good – good – fair – poor –

Presentation
V good – good – fair – poor –

How could this be improved? _____

13. What topics would you like to include in a future workshop?

14. Catering

Comments:

Name (optional): _____

Thank you your critical comments – it will assist us in continuing to develop an effective training program

Attachment 3: List of delegates

| NAME | COMPANY |
|--------------------|---|
| Keith Blackmore | VicSPA |
| Russell Bell | VicSPA, Gippsland |
| Daniel Grayling | VicSPA, Ballarat |
| Pauline McPherson | VicSPA, Gippsland |
| Andrew Hayton | VicSPA, South Australia |
| Bruce Fry | VicSPA, Otways |
| Phil Beveridge | Vegetable Centre – Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research |
| David Tooke | Senior Technical officer, Intensive Plant Research Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia |
| Sharon Elphinstone | Elders, Pakenham |
| Nic Gowans | VegCheque Officer – South West Victoria Department of Primary Industries |
| Geoffrey Kopiwa | FPDA, Mt Hagen |
| Paul Siwie | FPDA, Mt Hagen |
| Kiage Nema | FPDA, Goroka |
| Joe Koima | FPDA, Mt Hagen |
| Tiga Wauwe | FPDA, Mt Hagen |
| Michael Atuai | FPDA, Goroka |
| James Kirpe | FPDA, Goroka |
| Greg Liripu | FPDA, Goroka |