



Increasing the vegetable and fresh potato Emergency Plant Pest Response levies to a positive value for contributions to the Tomato potato psyllid Response

Current situation

In February tomato potato psyllid (TPP, the psyllid) was detected in commercial and backyard crops across the Perth metro area. Our industry has never had to deal with this pest before, although it is found around the world in places such as the U.S.A., Central America, New Zealand and Norfolk Island.

The psyllid has been detected in multiple locations in Western Australia, with the majority of detections having been in the Perth metropolitan area.

The psyllid causes 'psyllid yellows' in solanaceae crops and commonly vectors a bacterium (CLSo) that causes Zebra chip in potato. This bacterium has not been detected in Australia so far.

Eradication activities were undertaken in late March. As the potato and vegetable industry's representative for the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (the Deed), AUSVEG endorsed these eradication activities and agreed to attempt to raise the vegetable and fresh potato biosecurity levies to contribute to the response.

Eradication activities have been cost-shared at a ratio of 80:20 respectively between governments (the Federal government and all state governments) and affected industries that are signed to the Deed (Nurseries & Gardens, Processed Tomatoes, Vegetables, Potatoes).

Based on the extent of spread, in late April it was decided that the psyllid cannot be eradicated from WA. Following this decision, a 12 month industry/government cost-shared Transition to Management (T2M) program was endorsed. The program will conclude in May 2018.

A T2M program is a structured way of winding down an eradication response and handing management of the pest to industry in order to ensure that it has the tools and resources it needs to effectively manage the pest.

On completion of the T2M phase:

- We will know if CLSo is carried by our TPP population;
- We will have guidance material to manage TPP at a farm level;
- We will have a national plan to guide management of TPP now, and into the future;
- We will have interstate compliance protocols for produce grown in affected regions; and
- We will have begun Australian research on the biology and management of our endemic population.

Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development staff who will work on the T2M plan will be supported from the industry by National TPP Program Coordinator Alan Nankivell, who will lead development of the National Management Plan and contribute to farm management guidance material. Importantly, this role is funded for three years, ensuring that initiatives that are begun during the T2M phase can be continued by the Coordinator throughout the life of the project.

Increasing the vegetable and fresh potato Emergency Plant Pest Response (EPPR) levies

The vegetable and fresh potato industries have Emergency Plant Pest Response (EPPR) levies set at the rate of zero per cent for vegetables and zero cents per tonne for fresh potatoes, which were put in place in 2012 following extensive industry consultation.

The EPPR levies provide a mechanism for the vegetable and fresh potato industries to fund preparedness and eradication activities to reduce the threat of exotic plant pests.

AUSVEG intends to request that the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (the Minister):

- increase the vegetable EPPR levy from zero per cent to a positive rate of 0.01 per cent of the value at the point of sale; and
- increase the fresh potato EPPR levy from zero cents per tonne to a positive rate of 10 cents per tonne at the point of sale.

If successfully increased, it is intended that funds accrued by the EPPR levies will contribute to paying costs relating to TPP eradication activities, and a 12 month Transition to Management program.

When added to collection of the R&D levies this would increase current levy collection from vegetable growers from 0.5 per cent to 0.51 per cent and from fresh potato growers from 50 cents per tonne to 60 cents per tonne.

It is AUSVEG's intent that the EPPR levies run at the above rates for approximately three years. As soon as possible after costs are repaid to the Federal Government, the levies will be reduced to zero per cent for vegetables and zero cents per tonne for fresh potatoes.

Other horticulture industries will contribute to the TPP response, which totals over \$5.1million and will be cost shared between government and industry at a ratio of 80:20.

It is expected that an EPPR rates of 0.01 per cent for vegetables and 10 cents per tonne for fresh potatoes will accrue approximately \$187,000 and \$130,000 annually (respectively) based on 2016/2017 figures and fluctuations in total farm gate sales over recent years.

Estimated costs for small, medium and large vegetable farms

Small farm (\$100,000 in cash receipts) = \$10.00 per year contribution

Medium farm (\$450,000 in cash receipts) = \$45.00 per year contribution

Large farm (\$3,000,000 in cash receipts) = \$300.00 per year contribution

Estimated costs for small, medium and large potato farms

Small farm (50 tonnes of potato production) = \$5.00 per year contribution

Medium farm (500 tonnes of potato production) = \$50.00 per year contribution

Large farm (5,000 tonnes of potato production) = \$500.00 per year contribution

This notification process will be followed by an objection period. Vegetable and fresh potato industry levy payers will be notified of the 30 day objection period, during which levy payers may provide any feedback. Levy payers may lodge objections to AUSVEG or the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Following the objection period AUSVEG must formally advise the Department of:

- Any objections received;
- How each objection was resolved, or reasons why the objection should not affect the setting of the levy at the proposed rate;
- Or that no objections were received.

For more information please contact:

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