



Submission: Sustainable Biosecurity Funding

November 2022

Name: _____

Submission

Australian Grape and Wine Inc (Australian Grape & Wine) strongly supports the collective views of the plant industry members of Plant Health Australia, that Government must pursue a more equitable funding model for biosecurity.

Australian Grape & Wine commends the Government for its commitment to new measures aimed at increasing protection from pests or diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading in Australia. The proposed Biosecurity Amendment Bill is a key step to enhance Australia's ability to manage risks related to pests and diseases through strengthening border measures and increasing penalties for non-compliance. Australian Grape & Wine strongly supports the sentiment from the Government to increase data sharing and provide grants for dealing with risks posed by diseases and pests. Meaningful reform in biosecurity will require a significant increase in investment in biosecurity services and system change.

Appropriate capacity and capability across plant biosecurity departments at all levels of government is essential in protecting the prosperity and sustainability of our industries. The frequency of pests evading border biosecurity is rapidly escalating, and lead agencies are not appropriately resourced to deal with the increasing workload.

In terms of the wine sector, we are proud of our comparatively favourable pest and disease status. At the same time, we are gravely concerned of the increasing risk. Exotic pathogens such as Xylella, grapevine viruses and their respective vectors are of most concern. These are often difficult or impossible to detect early enough to eradicate, so vigilance at the border is the best defense. Significant disincentive to bring in infected planting material is essential.

Escapee pests that make their way beyond border control, not only devastate agricultural production, but they impose serious economic burden on Federal and State Governments and agricultural industries who manage on shore activities, incursion containment and emergency response. Through the plant health levy, the wine sector dedicates significant resources towards responses as well as preparedness and planning. Although insect pests are not a major market access concern to winegrapes once processed into wine, the sector continues to contribute to the cost of response plans as they arise. Given this significant contribution by industry, involvement in decision making should extend beyond emergency response across the full biosecurity spectrum.

The wine industry welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.

Considering the potential funding options and opportunities outlined in the discussion paper, as well as from your experience, what elements do you think a sustainable biosecurity funding model should include? Are there elements that should not be included; if so, why?

Exotic pests and diseases are unwelcome by-products of the movement and trade of goods. Importation or spread of serious pests and diseases has direct and uncompensated impacts on others and an external societal cost. The funding that relates to exotic pest and disease responses currently operates under a beneficiary pays

arrangement, thereby subsidising an external cost of international trades and passenger movement. There is concern amongst our industry participants that the diminution in capacity of State jurisdictions is impacting their ability to manage biosecurity risk and that lack of surge capacity limits their ability and appetite to pursue emergency response plans.

Biosecurity is well accepted by the wine industry as a shared responsibility, however not all system participants are contributing in appropriate proportions. The decision by the Government not to proceed with the Onshore Biosecurity levy calls for an alternative mechanism, where biosecurity risk is appropriately resourced, appropriate risk management is incentivised and the 'risk creator' bares a fair proportion of the cost.

The concept of 'risk creator' should capture all those involved in the importation supply chain from the point of loading of the container or packaging the product for export in the country of origin.

How would your proposed model operate at a practical level and who would it apply to?

Australian Grape & Wine supports the Craik review's principles that both risk creators and risk beneficiaries should contribute to the cost of biosecurity in appropriate proportions and that governments should contribute to the cost of risk management measures in proportion to the public good accruing from them.

Unlike the current funding model, a model that targets risk creators would generate price signals that contribute towards behavioural change. This has the significant advantage of reducing the ongoing costs that their actions impose on Governments and affected animal and plant industries. This could also facilitate greater flexibility for risk creators in how they manage risk at the same time as encouraging greater innovation and investment in novel approaches to manage risk.

How would your proposed model impact you and others? What would be the benefits or disadvantages to you and/or other stakeholders?

Primarily, costs associated with exotic pests should fall primarily upon those who have control over the level of risk. A model that shared the costs more equitably will benefit agricultural sectors who are currently bearing a significant cost burden from activities they have little or no influence over.

Is the proportionality between those who contribute to the funding system and those who benefit the most, right?

No, as above.

How could the Commonwealth Government improve efficiency in the biosecurity system (consistent with meeting our Appropriate Level of Protection)?

With an additional funding source, the Government could increase investment in biosecurity protection at the border through greater resourcing for compliance and the implementation of new detection technologies.

A national funding strategy should also consider how states and territories apply biosecurity regulations. Post border, many biosecurity processes are inconsistently applied from state to state. This lack of harmonisation across states is a constant source of frustration. A possible solution is a national biosecurity law that states could be encouraged to implement through their legislation in much the same way that national work health safety laws have been integrated.

What other investments or actions could the Commonwealth Government make or take to sustainably support the delivery of biosecurity activities?

Australian Grape & Wine has identified the following areas for potential investment:

- Strengthened border security and compliance measures
- Surge capacity for states to deal with multiple incursions
- Uptake of technologies that reduce the risk of entry and spread of pests and diseases, especially those that are difficult to detect visually
- Availability of advanced border detection and surveillance measures
- Development of national diagnostic protocols
- Funding support for technologies that reduce the spread of endemic pests of significance
- Modern traceability systems
- Information systems to capture geographic data
- Assistance with preparedness and planning efforts for exotic pests.

Contact

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