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Farmers welcome WTO appeal

NSW Farmers' Association has welcomed the decision by the Federal Government to appeal a World Trade Organisation (WTO) move to allow New Zealand apples to be imported into Australia.

Australian apple growers have long held concerns about the introduction of diseases such as Fire blight, European Canker and the Insect Apple Leaf Curling Midge if New Zealand apples were imported to Australia

The WTO panel decided the Import Risk Analysis (IRA) underpinning Australia's scientific requirements regarding the import of apples is not sufficiently supported by scientific evidence and that the requirements are unduly trade-restrictive.

Federal Agriculture Minister, Tony Burke and Federal Trade Minister Stephen Smith said in a joint statement they believe there are adequate grounds for appealing the WTO decision.

NSW Farmers' Association Horticulture Committee Chairman, Peter Darley, says the WTO decision is concerning for the industry.

"We, as an industry, must continue to fight against the importation of New Zealand apples, to ensure new pests and diseases, such as Fire Blight are not introduced into Australia," Mr Darley said.

"I welcome the decision by the Government to appeal the WTO decision, helping secure our horticulture industry," Mr Darley said.

"The Association has worked continuously with the Government and Apple and Pear Australia on this matter and will continue to represent our Members following the WTO decision," Mr Darley said.

The Association will be meeting with Apple and Pear Australia Limited later this week, following a briefing from the Government.

"This decision affects the whole industry and it is important we, as an industry, continue to keep the Australian industry free from pests and diseases," Mr Darley said.

Current scientifically based import restrictions will remain in place until an outcome of the appeal is found.

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