



## GRAINS COMMITTEE 2010/2011

**Mark Hoskinson (Chair)**  
[mhh1@bigpond.com](mailto:mhh1@bigpond.com)

**Peter Cannon (Deputy Chair)**  
[peterj cannon@hotmail.com](mailto:peterj cannon@hotmail.com)

**Mark Swift**  
[markswift@gmail.com](mailto:markswift@gmail.com)

**Rod Hatty**  
[rodhatty@harboursat.com.au](mailto:rodhatty@harboursat.com.au)

**Martin Honner**  
[mhonner@activ8.net.au](mailto:mhonner@activ8.net.au)

**Jock Munro**  
[the\\_brae@bigpond.com](mailto:the_brae@bigpond.com)

**Ross Durham**  
[radurham@skymesh.com.au](mailto:radurham@skymesh.com.au)

**Rob Eassie**  
[robeassie@hotmail.com](mailto:robeassie@hotmail.com)

**Jason Hunt (Young Farmer)**  
[jrfhunt@hotmail.com](mailto:jrfhunt@hotmail.com)

## NSW FARMERS' STAFF

**Ben Mason**  
**Policy Manager**  
**Cropping and Business, Economics and Trade**  
T: 02 8251 1827  
[masonb@nswfarmers.org.au](mailto:masonb@nswfarmers.org.au)

T: 02 8251 1700  
F: 02 8251 1750  
Level 25, 66 Goulburn Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000

Member Service Centre  
1300 794 000

[www.nswfarmers.org.au](http://www.nswfarmers.org.au)

Dear Grain Grower Members,

Unfortunately the mouse plague continues to affect many areas, as does the shortage of mouse baits. The live cattle export suspension to Indonesia also risks the trading relationship between Indonesia and Australia.

Please read on to see how NSW Farmers is working for you.

Kind regards

Mark Hoskinson

**Chairman – NSW Farmers' Grains Committee**

## Live cattle ban threatens wheat exports to Indonesia

Grain growers in NSW are concerned the decision to suspend live cattle exports to Indonesia could jeopardise Australia's biggest bulk wheat export trade.

Indonesia received 32 percent of the top 10 countries receiving Australia's bulk wheat exports last financial year, making the country the largest importer of local grain. NSW Farmers' Grains Committee Chair Mark Hoskinson is concerned the recent decision to ban live cattle exports could strain bilateral trade relations.

"Indonesia is a valuable market for grain growers and imports almost a third of Australia's wheat exports – compared to our next biggest markets Japan and South Korea, which import 11% and 10% respectively of the top 10 countries," Mr Hoskinson said. "Indonesia is one of the most rapidly expanding and lucrative wheat export markets with the potential to continue growing. "It is the fourth most populous country in the world with an increasing appetite for Australia's prime agricultural produce," he said.

NSW Farmers' has repeated its call to the Federal Government to immediately reopen the live cattle export trade to accredited abattoirs.

"Adopting a thorough process of inspection and accreditation will allow trade to resume and ensure no more Australian cattle are subject to cruelty in Indonesia," Mr Hoskinson said.

"If we don't immediately reopen the trade to Indonesia we can unfortunately expect a flow-on effect in other agricultural export commodity markets, which could be devastating for Australian wheat exports," he said.



## MICE CONTROL

- As all grain growers would already know, there is currently a widespread mouse plague in most broadacre cropping areas of NSW. As well as across the entire Australian East Coast grain belt.
- NSW Farmers considers that a lack of supply of Zinc Phosphide based chemicals as a major cause of the inability to adequately control escalating mice numbers. The major Zinc Phosphide based chemical “Mouseoff ZP”, produced by Animal Control Technologies Ltd (ACTL). ACTL was reporting 2-3 week delays for the delivery of Mouseoff ZP in mid May. NSW Farmers has been receiving reports of delays as long as 6 weeks. This is occurring whilst the sowing window is rapidly closing and grain growers are waking up in the morning to discover their crops have been devoured. Presently “Mouseoff ZP” is the only product registered for broadacre application “in-crop”.
- Bromodiolone is only registered for perimeter baiting, however is not registered for use within the crop, and as such is ineffective once the mice get into the crop.
- This combined with sowing intentions indicating increased acreage over the previous record 2010 crop will only exacerbate the problem. In NSW every cropping region in the State is at risk to some extent, but the areas most at risk are the Riverina, Central West and South West, a combined area of approximately 3 million hectares (or approximately 60% of the total cropping area) within NSW alone. As a result NSW Farmers considers the potential scale of the problem has been underestimated, and the potential demand for chemical will only increase as a result.

## What the Association is Seeking

- Coordination between DPI and the LHPA network to make sites available to be used as regional baiting stations, at which farmers can have their own grain mixed with zinc phosphide to be used as bait.
- NSW Farmers is in discussion with the NSW DPI, 4Farmers and ACTL to seek better availability and price for mouse control.
- That mice are declared a pest animal, (considering the much appreciated contribution by the NSW Government towards combating the recent locust plagues), with control coordination and chemical provision services, it is anticipated that a similar approach towards mice will optimise their control.

## Background

- The inability to access chemical control for the increasing mouse problem has caused serious frustration among the Association’s members. An application (supported by the Association) by WA based company 4farmers for an emergency use permit (EUP) to allow for the mixing of raw chemical at designated sites was successful on 23 June. Subsequently a bait mixing station at Walbundrie was established. The baiting station enables farmers to have their own seed treated with zinc phosphide to be used for control of mice.
- Unfortunately now that the Emergency User Permit has been obtained, NSW Farmers has been made aware that there is a shortage of the Zinc Phosphide active constituent, coming out of 3 factories in India. As a result of the lack of available active constituent, 4Farmers have only set up the one baiting station. This will

continue to have a lagged effect through the industry, with delays of more than 4 weeks foreshadowed.

- ACTL received an emergency permit on 7 June to enable the use of unsterilized grain in the preparation of zinc phosphide bait (Econobait). ACTL is currently producing Econobait using certified seed, however ACTL has reported that there has been little uptake of this product due to farmer concerns about introducing weeds such as herbicide resistant ryegrass. On this basis it can be concluded that Animal Control Technologies' bottleneck is the lack of sterilised grain, not the lack of zinc phosphide.
- NSW Farmers Executive Council passed a motion on 7 June calling for the State Government to ensure that mice be declared a pest animal when in plague proportions, supply materials to landholders for the controlling of mice when in plague proportions.
- NSW Farmers has also asked the DPI if there is research that has been done or could be done to determine the possibly impact of mice in the Spring season.

## Human Health Issues

- Mice are one of the many different animals that can harbour *Leptospira* bacteria in their kidneys.
- Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease of humans and animals. It is caused by *Leptospira* bacteria that are found in infected animal urine and animal tissues.
- Transmission can occur after contact with infected animal urine or flesh, soil, mud, or water that has been contaminated with animal urine, or by eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water.
- For more information see the NSW Health website  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/leptospirosis.html>

## What NSW Farmers is doing

A 4Farmers application for an emergency use permit for the use of zinc phosphide was lodged with the APVMA in April. NSW Farmers supported this application. While the original application was

to allow farmers to mix the zinc phosphide, OH&S concerns restricted this and therefore a revised application was lodged for the mixing of zinc phosphide bait at identified locations. One has been established at Walbundrie Co-op in the Riverina where growers can take their own grain to be treated.

### Meeting with NSW WorkCover

NSW Farmers met with representatives of the Office of Environment and Heritage and WorkCover on Thursday 23 June to discuss the current situation with chemical control of mice.

The meeting noted the emergency permit recently approved by the APVMA for production of zinc phosphide mice bait at the specified site of Walbundrie by 4Farmers.

Workcover was principally concerned with the use of non accredited chemicals as suggested in the 7:30 report on 20 June 2011. WorkCover will be putting together general information on the use of chemicals for the control of mice and have asked that NSW Farmers facilitate the distribution of material among farmers.

## Dual-purpose crops research strategy

As part of an extensive review of its dual-purpose crops research investment and to develop a national research strategy, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) is surveying growers and advisers in mixed farming zones about their use of dual-purpose crops and their plant breeding and agronomic investment priorities.

Results from the survey will play a pivotal part in building a future national research strategy aimed at assisting mixed farmers in extracting maximum value from dual-purpose crops, which can be grazed in the early vegetative stages before continuing on to produce grain.

In response to the growing trend of incorporating livestock back into cropping systems for risk management, economic and crop management purposes, the GRDC is undertaking a Dual-Purpose Crops Review.

The GRDC plans to develop a new dual-purpose crop investment plan, the framework for which will be governed by the review and feedback from growers and advisers.

The GRDC needs information about where these crops are being grown and by whom, and how they are being managed, so future RD&E efforts will help improve those production systems.

The review will also help to determine the ideal characteristics required of dual-purpose crops for various regions and whether there is a requirement for further improvement in terms of plant breeding for all crops that can be grazed, including wheat, barley, canola, oats and triticale.

New investment in the GRDC's dual purpose/mixed-farming portfolio, based on stakeholder feedback and review panel recommendations, will be developed late in 2011, with work relating to the strategy to begin in 2012.

## **GrainCorp Port Terminal Access Undertaking to ACCC**

The 2011 GrainCorp Port Terminal Access Undertaking accepted by the ACCC on 22 June 2011 proposes continuing the general approach of the 2009 Undertaking but incorporates a number of changes.

Significant differences between the 2009 Undertaking and the 2011 Undertaking are:

- a three-year term (subject to commencement of publish-negotiate-arbitrate and dispute resolution provisions commencing from 1 August 2011)
- measures within the 2011 Undertaking to strengthen the non-discrimination and no hindering access provisions including:
  - a requirement for GrainCorp to provide the ACCC with a copy of the terms on which it provides services to its Trading Division
  - clarification that the non-discrimination provisions apply to shipping stem maintenance
  - improved processes required of GrainCorp when it varies its Port Terminal Service Protocols (PTSP)
  - an ability for the ACCC to issue an objection notice if it forms the view that a variation to the PTSP is material and raises concerns regarding the nondiscrimination; and
  - no hindering access provisions of the undertaking

- an ACCC information gathering power
- measures to promote efficient capacity use and to increase confidence on the part of access seekers that the first come, first served system for the allocation of capacity occurs in a non-discriminatory way. These include:
  - a conditional 50 per cent refund of booking fees for the return to the stem of capacity booked at peak periods
  - publication of more detailed information on stocks at port more frequently
  - improved customer notification arrangements regarding the opening of GrainCorp's shipping stem and changes to capacity available at GrainCorp ports
- the standard terms available to access seekers as set out in the Indicative Access Agreement in (Schedule 5 to) the Undertaking have been updated to reflect the agreements negotiated by GrainCorp with customers in March 2010
- the PTSP have been updated in line with the variation process undertaken in April-May 2010.