

## **Grain biosecurity focus for 2014**

Grain Producers Australia says the nation's grain growers should make enhancing biosecurity arrangements around their farms a priority task in 2014.

GPA's biosecurity spokesman, Barry Large, said the market signal is very clear that customers want to know more and more about what pests and diseases might be present in grain exporting countries, what steps are taken in prevention or control and what risk management is in place to assist customers.

"We saw in 2009 where concerns from the importing country were enough to completely stop the canola trade to China: the potential costs are huge, the effort to resolve a situation can take years and be ongoing," Mr Large said.

"I hosted representatives from China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine on my farm in Western Australia when market access was regained for canola to China last year.

"Their firm view was that biosecurity in the grain supply chain begins on-farm, with the message reinforced as we visited other canola growers in the region.

"From a key customer country they wanted to see what strategies farmers had in place to prevent the entry and spread of pests, which in turn generates confidence about grain as it enters the export supply chain – the crucial first step."

GPA worked with Plant Health Australia to create the Farm Biosecurity Manual for the Grains Industry and works directly with PHA's five grains biosecurity officers to help raise awareness amongst grain growers about biosecurity, the risks to farm livelihoods and the essential steps growers should take.

"One of the fundamentals is to create awareness, both on-farm and for people visiting farms who may carry weed seeds or other material on their clothes or vehicles," Mr Large said.

"As a first step it's as simple as farmers putting up biosecurity signs, which are available free of charge, to advise people entering farms of biosecurity importance and to direct where they go.

"Along with GPA's southern region director, Michael Schaefer, I have visited numerous field days in Western Australia and South Australia to talk with growers about biosecurity over the past year.

"This is about benefit and potential cost to our industry, so it's vital that the message on biosecurity gets through and starts with action at farm level."

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