

QUARANTINE & BIOSECURITY REVIEW

Submission from the Victorian Wine Industry Association

April 9, 2008

To: Chair of the Review Panel, Mr. Roger Beale AO

The Victorian Wine Industry Association (VWIA) is the peak body that represents the winegrape growing and winemaking industry across the state of Victoria. This representation takes the form of membership (accounting for 90% of the state's crush) and through the structure of the Association, whereby each region (21) and the major grapegrowing organization in inland Victoria (the Murray Valley Grape Growers Association) each have a seat on the VWIA Council.

Biosecurity is of significant importance to the Victorian wine industry (and hence the national wine industry). It is a matter of enabling assurance of biosecurity for production and marketing purposes. The Victorian wine industry accounts for 22% of export sales – as further market growth is anticipated.

This paper is divided into the following sections:

- Issues of concern to the VWIA as they relate to Quarantine and Biosecurity practice
- Rationale for adequate biosecurity measures:
 - to promote viable production of wine grapes in Victoria
 - to support the marketing image of Victorian wine production
- resources that VWIA has identified as necessary for adequate Quarantine and Biosecurity measures

Issues of concern to the VWIA as they relate to Quarantine and Biosecurity practice

1. Quarantine
 - a. The VWIA is concerned about how the national phylloxera protocols fit within the jurisdiction of quarantine – is there a consultative approach with the National Vine Health Steering Committee?
 - b. Is there an awareness on behalf of AQUIS about the national phylloxera protocols and the requirements within the system?
2. Phylloxera
 - b. The Victorian wine industry was decimated by the spread of the phylloxera pest in the 1900's, and has taken over 30 years to recover – both in production and market position. Recent detection of phylloxera on 3 properties within Victoria over 3 years has raised considerable concern within the industry as to whether the national phylloxera protocols are recognized and adhered to.
 - c. The VWIA adopts a collaborative educative approach with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, however, as an industry organisation, we accept that the industry is under threat again if the issue is not recognized as an issue of national importance.
3. Threat of incursion of major pests
 - d. Adequate and state-of-the-art quarantine measures are essential for minimize the risk of incursion of pests such as Glassy winged leafhopper, and diseases such as Pierce's disease.
 - e. If these threats were to be realized, the Australian wine industry would be decimated.
4. Management of disposal of quarantined product by AQUIS
 - f. Is the Review Panel aware that quarantined product – removed at Tullamarine Airport, and disposed of at Sunbury, may then sit for 2 days before being buried? Such product, collected by birds, has the potential to introduce significant risk to wine producers in the Sunbury region (as well as other agricultural pursuits).

Rationale for adequate biosecurity measures:

1. To promote viable production of wine grapes in Victoria
 - a. The Victorian wine industry is worth in excess of \$1B to the Victorian economy through domestic and export sales, plus the economic contribution of winery tourism, employment, support of the service industries, etc.
 - b. The Victorian wine industry has collaborated on vine health, biosecurity, knowledge development and market development to achieve this outcome.
 - c. The Victorian wine industry works to minimize biosecurity risk to the sector to ensure it remains viable and prosperous.
2. To support the marketing image of Victorian wine production
 - d. The Victorian wine industry has undertaken considerable education on sustainable practices
 - e. Victorian wine has a 'clean, green image'.
 - f. The VWIA has undertaken a significant project (funded by DAFF) to develop tools that will promote further adoption of sustainable business practices in the vineyard and the winery.
 - g. Resources are necessary to ensure that consumer awareness is raised about the difference between an outbreak of a pest (e.g. phylloxera) and a disease outbreak (such as Mad Cow's disease).
 - h. Sustaining and evidencing this image can only be supported by adequate biosecurity measures driven at a national level in collaboration with the states.

Resources that VWIA has identified as necessary for adequate Quarantine and Biosecurity measures

1. The VWIA wishes to emphasise the need for appropriate resourcing to support Quarantine and Biosecurity measures. The programs and identification of resources can be delivered at a national level, in partnership with the state governments, and industry groups.
2. When a pest incursion does occur, it is essential that clean, certified rootstocks are available to assist producers to recover – this will require resources in planning and infrastructure at a national level

The Victorian Wine Industry Association is an active organization that promotes industry education, innovation and ownership. The VWIA does not seek to have government assume this role, however, at a national and state level, there is great capacity for governments to facilitate resources into technology, knowledge development, consumer awareness programs, development of suitable industry protocols, and infrastructure that support the maintenance of strict quarantine and biosecurity measures.

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