



Onion Industry Biosecurity Statement

July 2020

Onions Australia is strongly committed to ensuring the onion industry effectively reduces the potential for incursions of emergency plant pests and diseases that could adversely impact on a range of issues, including domestic and international trade, market access, public health, food safety and the Australian environment..

The onion industry is also strongly committed to ensuring responses to any pest incursions that may occur are undertaken as rapidly and effectively as possible to minimise costs to growers, the industry, other plant industries, government parties and the wider community.

Onions are grown in most states of Australia, but South Australia and Tasmania together produce 71 per cent of the Australian crop. Key onion production locations are the Lockyer Valley in Queensland, north-eastern regions of South Australia and the Adelaide plains, and the Devonport/ Launceston region of Tasmania. The total area planted to onions is largest in South Australia, as is the average planting per farm.

The main type of onion grown in Australia is the traditional brown onion, which accounts for 79 per cent of fresh production. Onion production is during late spring, summer and autumn. Planting starts around April through September, harvesting from August to March, and storage supplies the market for the winter months.

The onion industry is covered by version 3.1 of the onion biosecurity plan. A biosecurity manual for growers was produced and launched in 2018.

INDUSTRY BIOSECURITY PLAN – ONION INDUSTRY

The onion industry through Onions Australia is working with Plant Health Australia (PHA), and a range of government agencies to develop a comprehensive national approach to managing biosecurity risks in the onion industry.

The National Industry Biosecurity Plan for the onion industry, consistent with PHA's *National Industry Biosecurity Planning Guidelines*, was officially published in October 2018 following endorsement by Government and Industry. Copies of the plan have been made available to key industry

representatives. Work is expected to commence on a review of the National Onion Industry Biosecurity Plan in 2023.

The National Industry Biosecurity Plan comprises an introduction and four other key sections.

The threat identification section has involved the development of a priority pest list, developed through the identification, analysis and prioritisation of numerous exotic pests and exotic pathogens.

The risk mitigation section outlines a range of pre-emptive strategies at the national, state, regional and property levels to ensure the exclusion/management of serious plant pests.

The contingency plans and response management procedures section details key industry contacts and communication procedures, relevant counselling and financial counselling providers. These Contingency Plans underpin, and will be used in conjunction with the general management structures of PLANTPLAN. Each contingency plan includes pest or industry specific details relating to the management/control/eradication of individual pest threats.

The awareness section identifies a range of existing fact sheets or other sources of information for the high priority pests identified in the priority pest list. Where no existing fact sheets or information was available on particular pests, fact sheets were developed.

Onions Australia will work with Plant Health Australia and provide appropriate resources to the ongoing maintenance and reviews of the plan.

PEST CATEGORISATION

Onions Australia commits to ensuring appropriate industry technical experts will be available to participate in Categorisation Groups to consider pest categorisation or funding weight calculations for Emergency Plant Pests with multi-industry impacts.

NATIONAL DECISION MAKING PROCESSES/PLANTPLAN

Onions Australia has endorsed PLANTPLAN (Australian Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan) and will use this document to work effectively with government parties to manage any agreed responses to an EPP.

Onions Australia will ensure senior and qualified industry delegates are available at short notice to participate in meetings of the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests and the National Management Group and to take up roles in Local Control Centres or the State Coordination Centres. Onions Australia will also ensure all delegates participate in relevant training delivered through Plant Health Australia's National Emergency Plant Pest Training Program.

BIOSECURITY AWARENESS

Onions Australia has been involved in promoting biosecurity within the onion industry. Biosecurity information features regularly at our national conferences, and in our written communications with growers – including our annual magazine and monthly e-newsletters.