

AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd

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Strategic Agrochemical Review Process for Pistachios

Growers of horticultural crops frequently suffer from a lack of legal access to crop protection products. The problem is that whilst their crops are valuable, they are too small individually for agrochemical companies to bear the high cost of registering pesticides for use on them. It is also a problem in larger crops where a problem may only be localised. The new factor affecting pesticide access is the shrinking number of agrochemical companies and the increasing reliance on generic, older pesticides, with little new technology being made available.

Growers are increasingly trapped in a situation where they face severe losses from diseases, pests and weeds if they do nothing to protect their crops, or face penalties if they use a product that is not registered or available via a permit.

The pistachio industry is very aware of the possible consequences that can occur from the use of unregistered or non-permitted pesticides. These can include;

- Produce with unauthorised pesticide residues present
- Rejection of produce from local markets
- Temporary exclusion from market access
- Rejection of produce from export markets
- Jeopardising of export trading arrangements
- Fines and penalties

The aims of the project are to assist all horticulture industries, including pistachios to protect their crops from diseases, insects or weeds by providing access to pesticides that they currently do not have legally available to them by obtaining minor-use permits on their behalf. The project will undertake the assessment of pesticide suitability, resistance, IPM, residues and exports in its evaluations.

AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd in association with Horticulture Australia Ltd and many horticultural industries have developed a new approach to address future pesticide requirements in horticulture - a Strategic Agrochemical Review Process. The new, more focussed strategy will greatly assist in negotiations with pesticide manufacturers to ultimately achieve an increase in sustainable registrations for a wider range of commodities. As a result there will be more timely generation of registrations and permits for clearly identified crop protection needs, many of which may also assist the expansion of effective IPM strategies.

The needs identification process involves a workshop with key growers and stakeholders from each industry to critically review and assess:

- The current list of diseases, insects and weed problems for each crop.
- The current range of pesticides legally available for use against these challenges
- Any potential new risks to the industry

This assessment will provide a list of key diseases, insects and weeds for each crop that are of major concern to industry. Against these threats it will identify the pesticides, pesticide group, withholding

period, registered/permitted uses and overall suitability (IPM, residues, efficacy, trade, environment) for the task. If any pesticides are unsuitable for the designated task, then possible alternative pesticides and their IPM suitability will be nominated. This will give industry and the APVMA a clear picture of any gaps in the existing pest control options, and note the potential to address gaps with effective IPM compatible pesticides.

The second stage in the process involves addressing the identified gaps (where acceptable pesticides are not legally available), by determining new pesticide control options using:

- Critical selection criteria for potential alternatives and/or new pesticide
- Domestic and overseas information and resources that provide options and assist decision making
- Manufacturer support

Overseas information will include residue work, technical strategies in pesticide use, information on field efficacy and strategic fit within crop protection programs that can be transferred and modified to suit Australian conditions and requirements. This comprehensive approach should lead to substantial financial savings for the Australian industry, with improved availability and technical information for effective, relevant pesticides.

The final list of pesticide solutions for each problem in pistachios will have the benefit of:

- IPM compatibility, wherever possible
- Improved scope for resistance management
- Sound biological profile
- Residue and trade acceptance domestically and for export

At the end of the process, the analysis will provide the pistachio industry with sound pesticide options for the future that the industry can pursue for registration with the manufacturer, or minor-use permits with APVMA.

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