

NZGSTA Newsletter March 2020



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**COVID 19: Essential businesses**

**The Government has provided information on “essential businesses”. They are: “Primary industries, including food and beverage production and processing”**

- “Any entity involved in the packaging, production and processing of food and beverage products, whether for domestic consumption or export
- “Any entity involved in relevant support services, such as food safety and verification, inspection or associated laboratory services, food safety and biosecurity functions”

This means the seed industry and those that support them can continue to operate. However, it has made clear that that this is a privilege and not a right. Significant lobbying took place with Cabinet to allow the primary sector and its support industries to retain “Essential business status” as 90% of the primary sector is export related activity rather than domestic food supply. Given that there has been no time to put clear regulations in place for every industry sector, MPI have stated that this a time for the primary sector to show leadership and take all the necessary steps to ensure it does not become one of the sources of Covid-19 spread. Productivity is absolutely secondary to worker and public health. If it is shown to occur that your place of work has caused covid 19 infection to spread then expect your business to be immediately shut down.

You must be able to answer all the questions asked of you in the attached document on protecting your workers and the public. This is not only in the place of work but also at home and the way your workers get to their place of work. If you cannot show control in all these environments then you should cease operating

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**“Primary industries, including the seed sector, and any entity involved in relevant support services”**, the Government has now released its registration form/page for organisations to complete/register. See also the accompanying press release.

The register is available at: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/covid-19-essential-primary-sector-service-registration/>

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has set up a register for safe practice in the sector as New Zealand moves to National Alert Level Four in response to COVID-19, says Director-General Ray Smith.

“Alongside Minister O’Connor I met with more than 90 sector stakeholders by conference call yesterday,” Mr Smith says.

“It was an extremely constructive meeting and I know that everyone who took part wants to do their best for New Zealand as we meet the COVID-19 challenge.”

Mr Smith says MPI requires safety assurances from operators that their processes protect workers and the public by limiting interactions between staff and reducing the potential spread of COVID-19.

“The Government’s declaration of essential services approves those operating in the primary sector, but we just need to verify that operators are following safe practices.

“We are asking eleven critical questions about how you intend to stop any spread of COVID-19 (please [see service registration here.](#)),” says Mr Smith.

There are a couple of simple questions operators can ask themselves before registering:

1. Do you have five or fewer people (including the owner) working at each business site?
2. Can you achieve social distancing measures between staff in your workplace, including travelling, to and from work?
  - If you answer **YES** to both of those questions, then you do not need to fill in the form.
  - If you answered **NO** to either of these questions, you **MUST** fill in the form.
  - If in doubt, fill in the form.

“Production chains should work to achieve separation between staff and adopt mitigation measures, such as protective gear and equipment, where possible,”

says Mr Smith.

Mr Smith says MPI will do its best to advise and support the sector over the coming days and weeks.

“We are asking businesses to be registered by 5:00pm on Friday 27 March 2020. They should keep operating and are expected to already have health procedures in place.

“We’re all working together to ensure that our vital food production sectors can operate safely,” says Mr Smith.

Primary sector businesses may contact MPI at 0800 00 83 33 or [info@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:info@mpi.govt.nz) for further details on registering or the registration process.

**For media enquiries, please contact May Tien, Principal Advisor MPI Communications, at [may.tien@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:may.tien@mpi.govt.nz).**

### **Protecting workers and the public**

How do your production processes protect your workers and the public by reducing the potential spread of COVID-19?

Specifically:

- How are you ensuring that workers and others at work are observing social distancing to and from work, during work and during rest breaks?
- What personal hygiene steps have you put in place for workers to reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work?
- What existing, or additional personal protective equipment could you introduce that would reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work?
- What steps are you taking to limit access to your plants apart from essential workers?
- How are you isolating staff, or parts of your processing plants, so that virus spread would be contained should it occur?
- What arrangements have you put in place for staff to report any illness and remove themselves from work?
- What arrangement have you put in place for staff to report any suspected exposure to COVID-19?
- What actions would you take should a staff member be suspected of or confirmed as having COVID-19?
- How do you ensure that staff at particular risk of COVID-19 identify themselves and are isolated from work?
- How will you ensure that your workers observe ‘*stay at home*’ rules at the conclusion of each working day?

<b>Sectors</b>	<b>Entities providing essential services (including their supply chains)</b>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation services for essential workers and people who need to be isolated/quarantined</li> </ul>
<b>Border</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customs New Zealand, Immigration New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries</li> </ul>
<b>Building and construction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building and construction related to essential services, critical infrastructure, or immediately needed to maintain human health and safety at home/work</li> </ul>
<b>Courts, tribunals and the justice system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courts of New Zealand and tribunals</li> <li>• Critical Crown entities (eg Electoral Commission)</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<p>At level 3 only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and educational facilities (e.g. ECE centres)</li> </ul>
<b>Fast-moving consumer goods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses involved in the supply, delivery, distribution and sale of food, beverage and other key consumer goods (but not takeaway shops)</li> </ul>
<b>Financial services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banks, insurers and other financial institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospitals, primary care clinics, pharmacies, medical laboratories, care facilities</li> <li>• Ambulance services</li> <li>• Mortuary services</li> </ul>
<b>Local and national government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any entity involved in COVID-19 response or that has civil defence/emergency management functions</li> <li>• Key public services</li> </ul>
<b>Primary industries,</b>	

<b>including food and beverage production and processing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging, production and processing of food and beverage products</li> <li>• Food safety and verification, inspection or associated laboratory services, food safety and biosecurity functions</li> <li>• Veterinary and animal health/welfare services</li> </ul>
<b>Public safety and national security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency services</li> <li>• Security and intelligence services</li> <li>• Justice system</li> <li>• Public safety and national security roles</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any entity (including research organisations) involved in COVID-19 response, hazard monitoring, resilience, diagnostics for essential services</li> </ul>
<b>Social services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welfare and social services, including NGOs, which meet immediate needs (further guidance will be provided)</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and logistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport services</li> <li>• New Zealand Post and courier services</li> <li>• Any small passenger service vehicle driver – including taxis and ride-share services</li> </ul>
<b>Utilities and communications, including supply chains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity, gas, water, waste, fuel, telecommunication services, internet providers and media</li> </ul>

### **Brassica seed exports top Australia**

In a positive trade and phytosanitary development for exporters of brassica seed (*Brassica rapa*, *Eruca vesicaria* and *Raphanus sativus* seeds) to Australia MPI has accepted a DNA analysis report, commissioned by the Association (prepared by Landcare Research) regarding *Collectotrichum higginsianum* strain. MPI accepts that NZ is free from this fungi. Country freedom means that exporters do not have to treat their seed for *C higginsianum* before shipping to Australia.

Separately, New Zealand has already been declared free of *Fusarium*

*oxysporum f. sp. raphani*.

### **NZ seed exports worth nearly \$240m**

Export seed sales grew to \$239.4m (FOB) in calendar 2019.

According to the latest trade data, from StatsNZ, seed exports values have grown 38% from \$173m five years ago.

Whilst NZ exports more than 30 different seed types internationally pasture seed and vegetable seed were the key export categories. Ryegrass and clover provided \$ 109m in sales. And carrot seed, radish and beet seed and other brassica seed contributed \$108m.

Major export destinations include Continental Europe, Australia, the USA, China and Japan. Together they account for around 75% of the total exports.

### **Pea growing ban over**



MPI has ended its 4-year ban on pea seed production in the Wairarapa region. The move follows eradication of the pea weevil pest. Peas are an important commercial crop. New Zealand produces 62,000 tonnes of peas, which earns \$50 million in domestic sales and \$84m in exports.

### **Proprietary seed sales up**

Latest market data from the NZ Plant Breeding & Research Association show over 9200 tonnes of perennial, hybrid, Italian and annual ryegrass seed were sold domestically in calendar year 2019, up 2% on five years ago.

Different ryegrass types comprise 86.5% of grass seed sales by volume. White clover comprises 7% of the legume sales by volume. Lucerne sales have 1.5% of the legume seed market.

### **EPA reassess neonicotinoids**

EPA has determined that grounds exist to reassess approvals of substances containing neonicotinoids used in New Zealand.

EPA says: "The decision that grounds exist to reassess neonicotinoids was made based on significant new information relating to their environmental and human health impacts. This new information includes recent reports from

international regulatory agencies including the European Food Safety Authority, European Chemicals Agency Committee for Risk Assessment and Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency”.

### **International Year of Plant Health**



2020 has been designated as International Year of Plant Health. The Association participated in the NZ launch of IYPH2020 at Parliament on 18 February.

IYPH is a United Nations initiative that seeks to raise awareness of protecting plant health to protect the environment through to boosting our economic development.

NZ Grain and Seed Trade Association president, George Gerard said those in the grain and seed sector fully support the IYPH initiative as ensuring plants are protected from pests and pathogens is crucial for maintaining NZs successful agricultural base.

“Industry is constantly monitoring for risks and routinely we are working with MPI and others to avoid any plant pests or diseases breaching the border as their presence risks NZ agriculture, people’s livelihoods and NZs food security”.

### **GIA Partnership**

In a gazettal notice issued in December the Minister for Biosecurity, the Hon Damien O’Connor approved the Seed and Grain Readiness and Response (SGRR) Incorporated as the organisation to represent the arable sector to join the GIA biosecurity partnership.

An official launch and signing ceremony was held on 25 March in Wellington.

SGRR represents the Foundation for Arable research, NZ flour Millers, Association, Federated Farmers Arable, United Wheatgrowers and the NZ Grain & Seed Trade Association.

### **Grain and Seed exports worth almost \$240m**

According to the Government Statistician’s trade data for the 2019 calendar year, earnings from seed exports were nearly \$240 million, compared with \$173

million achieved five years earlier.

Herbage seed (ryegrass, clover and other grasses) account for 45 per cent of total seed exports by value. Vegetable seed has 45per cent share and cereals made up the balance.

Major export destinations include Continental Europe, Australia, the USA, China and Japan. Together they account for around 75% of the total exports.

### **Seed certification project**

Progress is now under way with the development of a new Seed Certification information System (SCIS).

This project is not only about new software but also a review of the policy settings for the administration of seed certification schemes in New Zealand and a restructure of the SQMA organisation to make it fit for purpose in applying these policies.

In February the SQMA selected and engaged Provoke, a Wellington-based IT service provider to redevelop the SCIS. Work is progressing well with the first stage of the project which is to carry out the planning of the project and the design of the application. If the design is accepted by the Steering Group, development will start in late April with the aim to have a new system being piloted in early 2021.

Part of the development will be regular testing workshops from late May onwards for completed builds. Industry representatives will be approached to participate in these workshops to ensure fitness for purpose and user acceptance

In the face of becoming financially autonomous and needing to be fit for purpose in applying a range of policy settings as to be determined by industry, the current SQMA has been wound up and re-established with a new constitution and new name. It is now known as the NZ Seeds Authority.

Finally, additional new monies of \$250k have had to be found to fund the new SCIS development on top of capital previously secured from grants and contributions received from SQMA, SFFF, Herbage Seed Section of Federated Farmers and NZGSTA (a \$150k contribution from accumulated association funds was approved by members at the 2019 AGM).

Half of this \$250k is to be contributed directly by growers and the other half by seed merchants.

Please note that the seed merchant contribution -as tabled below- is going to be implemented by Asurequality as soon as practical.

<b>Crop type</b>	<b>rate</b>	<b>Projected cost per lot</b>
Proprietary small seed	0.42 cents /kg	\$44.10 (10.5t)
Commodity small seed crops and re- export ryegrass spp. multiplications	0.116 cents /kg	\$12.18 (10.5t)
Cereals and pulses	\$1.31/t	\$52.40 (40t)

### **NZGSTA Grains & Pulses forum 2020**

**PLEASE NOTE THE GRAIN & PULSES FORUM HAS BEEN CANCELLED FOR JUNE 2020. WE WILL REVIEW AT THE END OF MAY.**

### **Seed Technology Course 2020**

A 2020 Seed Technology Short Course covering topics ranging from seed quality assurance and current issues in seed production to seed drying and seed storage to organic seed production and strategies for plant protection is being presented by Professor John Hampton (Lincoln University) and Professor Phil Rolston (Foundation for Arable Research).

The course is being run at Lincoln University from Monday 22 June 2020.

For enquiries please contact John Hampton Email: john.hampton@lincoln.ac.nz Phone: 03 423 0909

### **NZGSTA Conference October 2020 – Queenstown**

**PLEASE NOTE THE DECISION TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE THIS YEAR WILL BE MADE IN MAY 2020.**

### **International Cereals and Bread Congress**

**The 16th ICC Cereal and Bread Congress has been postponed to 6-8 January 2021 due to COVID-19.**

### **New member - Agrecruit**

The Association is the national trade body comprising around 80 member companies. Its members are involved in a range of activities including: research and development, seed production, seed multiplication, seed processing and sales and marketing.

The Association is working to foster the best business environment for our grain and seed industry members and is pleased to announce the following company has applied to join the NZGSTA.

All members are being notified of this application here through this newsletter. If you have any reason as to why AgRecruit should not be a member please contact us now.

### **Seeds of Success - a History of the Association**



"*Seeds of Success*" (now discounted) – a history of the Association written by Dave McKinnon is available for purchase from the Association.

You can place orders on the [NZGSTA site](#) from \$20.00 per book.

The book is ideal as a gift to domestic and overseas customers, and for anyone interested in the history of the trade.

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#### **Meeting Schedule of NZGSTA Executive Council for 2020**

**to be held at the Seed Industry Office unless otherwise stated:**

- 9am. 19 May 2020 in ChCh
- 9am, 21 July 2020 tbc
- 9am, 20 Oct 2020 tbc

Please advise Thomas Chin of any matters you wish to have discussed at a meeting.

Phone: 03 349 8430  
Email: [thomas.chin@seedindustrynz.co.nz](mailto:thomas.chin@seedindustrynz.co.nz)

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