



Media Release
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SEPWA calls for barley growers to be vigilant to manage WA's export reputation

The South East Premium Wheat Growers' Association (SEPWA) warns the current push for permanent registration of glyphosate use on barley could threaten WA's export reputation. To minimise risk, growers need to protect their predominant export markets through strictly adhering to CBH segregations on glyphosate treated barley

SEPWA growers focus strongly on quality and their international markets like China, since nearly all the grain produced in the Esperance Port Zone is exported. Grains bring around \$700 - \$900 million to the Esperance Shire each year and export barley is worth around \$200M to Esperance growers.

A recent article in the Financial review noted the divide of opinions on the permanent registration of glyphosate use in crop topping of feed and malt barley prior to harvest between the largest exporting state, WA and the Eastern states.

WA's grain exports represent around 40% of Australia's grain exports and WA is the major producer of malting and feed barley to China.

Currently there is a temporary permit in place for the use of Glyphosate on barley for feed grain only. SEPWA has been closely monitoring this discussion as the State Government funded project "Barley Brand Development for Asian Consumers" has highlighted the export reputation this topic represents.

Earlier in 2018 SEPWA growers visited China to learn more about WA's main customer of export barley which currently buys around 80% of WA's annual crop.

To date WA feed barley has often been sold at premium into the Chinese malting market for more budget conscious brewers. This represents a value gain of \$10-20 USD over the true export feed grain price. This mid-market segment has served WA barley growers well to date, and the full consideration of glyphosate use on feed barley needs to be carefully considered in context of this.

SEPWA committee member and Munglinup grower, Gary Walter said SEPWA has been given clear feedback that glyphosate use on malting barley was extremely undesirable by end users in the Asian brewing industry.

"Given this clear advice, SEPWA has continued to keep a close eye on national discussions around the push for registration on both feed and malting barley and we see this as real potential to cause export reputation risk," Mr Walter said.

“While glyphosate detection has not caused any issues in the export market to date, the CBH move to segregate declared glyphosate applied feed barley sends a positive message to our customers.

“WA is clearly an export dependent state and our reputation for a quality product has served us well.

“The segregation of glyphosate applied feed barley enables the protection of this market reputation yet provides the avenue for those farmers who absolutely need to crop top the ability to do so,” Mr Walter said.

“The close monitoring and testing of deliveries in the CBH system also provides a safe guard on our reputations and a reminder to growers to be vigilant in their declarations.”

SEPWA is also conducting field research this harvest to better understand drift risk factors and detections. This adds to previous testing work done by SEPWA at the local Esperance Downs DPIRD research station which showed the accuracy of testing to precisely detect applications.

As part of the project work SEPWA has actively participated in the national discussion as the economic loss appears to be less in the Eastern states market where there is strong local feed demand base.

Mr Walter attended the National Glyphosate working group meetings earlier this year and was one of the few grower representatives who voiced concern about possible market implications and loss of export value.

“We hope this alternate view will positively influence the working group to more closely consider market implications beyond the farm gate,” he said.

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