



Submission to:

Grains Industry Western Australia (GIWA)

**WAFarmers comment on GIWA 2016 Western
Australia Barley Standards Review**

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Prepared by:

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WAFarmers welcomes the opportunity to comment on the provisional recommendations on the 2016 Western Australia Barley Standards Review. As background, WAFarmers is the state's largest and most influential rural advocacy and service organisation. WAFarmers represents around 3,000 Western Australian farmers from primary industries, with the majority being grain growers. As the largest WA rural advocacy group, our members are responsible for approximately 35 per cent of the overall grain production in WA.

WAFarmers encourages GIWA to maintain thorough assessments about aligning WA receival standards with GTA standards. Throughout the provisional recommendation document, there were references to the GTA standards compared to the WA standards. The reasons for these differences are usually based on significant differences in production systems and environmental stresses. However WAFarmers is disappointed that certain aspects of the GTA standards, specifically Falling Number and Rapid Visco Analyser (RVA) are not being considered in these changes. The proposed changes throughout the document that WAFarmers do not agree with are based around aligning WA receival standards with GTA standards. However in the WAFarmers initial submission, we proposed that the GTA standards regarding Falling Number and colour be considered or researched for implementation in WA.

With regard to brightness, colour, falling number, pink stain, ryegrass, snails, and weed seeds, WAFarmers offer the following comments:

Brightness, Colour and Falling Number

WAFarmers Grains Section is disappointed that the comments regarding colour and falling numbers have not been included for consideration in the provisional recommendations. A number of the recommendations are based on bring Western Australian standards into alignment with GTA standards, however there was no indication that falling numbers should be considered.

WAFarmers understands that there are some markets with specific colour standards; however the market research should also include an element of education of that market, as to how colour isn't an accurate indicator of sprouted grain tolerance. WAFarmers welcomes additional research on market standards on brightness/colour requirements; however this research should also include how Falling Number and Rapid Visco Analyser (RVA) can be used to meet specific market standards.

Pink Stain

WAFarmers welcomes the proposed changes to feed barley receival standards, to have allowances for pink stained barley. The proposed standard of 1 per BPM has allowances for barley with pink stain to be deliverable.

Ryegrass

WAFarmers accept that the current ergot limit isn't adequate to meet certain market requirements. However WAFarmers asks that market evidence about the current standard, and failings to meet market requirements, be provided to support this. If the evidence indicates that there is an issue with the current standard meeting market requirements, WAFarmers would

accept a stepped progression to reduce the standards. WAFarmers will await additional research before the proposed stepped reduction in ergot standards be implemented.

Snails

WAFarmers accepts that snails are a potential risk for market access. Therefore WAFarmers accepts that a review of standards is required to meet these markets. The change from 10 to 5 per 0.5L for the 2016/17 season receival standards is important in an effort to reduce risk in meeting market requirements. However WAFarmers does not accept that the barley receival standards should move to be in line with GTA standards, as the standards do not reflect the agronomic practices currently required in certain parts of WA. If the standards are to be changed, WAFarmers would like a report on changes to market access as a result of the adjusted receival standards. No further changes below 5 snails per 0.5L will be accepted until adequate market information is made available.

WAFarmers would also like to comment that at the GIWA Autumn forum, it was explained that certain markets have a premium for higher quality production, or certainty of production. WAFarmers is of the opinion that traders should be passing along pricing signals from high value markets, with strict receival standards, which would provide an incentive for growers to focus on agronomic practices to meet these market standards. For example, China have a certain market premium when compared to Middle Eastern markets, however there are stricter standards applied to that market.

Weed Seeds

WAFarmers does not accept that WA weed seed receival standards need to be adjusted to align with GTA standards. WAFarmers would like market information, as well as a comparison of the current standards compared to the proposed standards to be provided before the standards are to be adjusted. WAFarmers considers that the current standards are adequate to meet the current market standards, as there has been no feedback to farmers to the contrary.

Conclusion

WAFarmers asks that all proposed changes to receival standards be accompanied by market information and economic analysis. The analysis needs to include information on how the current receival standards are no longer adequate to meet market requirements. These changes will give farmers confidence, as well as market feedback about how on-farm practices are meeting export market requirements. However, the potential increased cost of production on farm to meet tighter market standards needs to be reflected in prices received by the farmer.

WAFarmers accepts that standards may need to be adjusted to meet markets; however these changes need to be based on market information, as opposed to trader feedback.