**Cooperative Research Centre
for National Plant Biosecurity**

Plant Industry Biosecurity Communications Toolkit

CRC70036

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Table of contents

1. Introduction

Plant Health Australia (PHA) and the Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity (CRCNPB) have identified that a robust and viable communications framework spanning plant industries and the general community is essential to manage plant pest or disease incursion risks and control measures.

This Toolkit is a part of a larger industry-driven project to develop a national plant health communications strategy framework to help enhance biosecurity awareness and behaviours across Australia's plant industries and growers.

The project has included an extensive review of previous agricultural biosecurity communications campaigns to identify the critical components of effective strategies. The strategies reviewed provide information on communicating biosecurity messages and reaching different audience segments, including Indigenous and culturally diverse growers. A copy of this review is available from PHA.

This Toolkit details effective communications tactics and a framework to inform the construction and implementation of communications activities. It is available to industry organisations to assist in the creation or conduct of communications activities to help mitigate biosecurity risks and therefore meet some of industries' obligations under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed.

This project has been managed for the CRCNPB by PHA with assistance from the Queensland and Western Australian Governments.

2. The Communications Toolkit

This Toolkit sets out a sequential 'step-by-step' approach to guide the identification of key factors and tasks for the construction of a co-ordinated activity or campaign by an industry group.

It can be either used as a whole or certain elements can be extracted according to need.

Working through each of the Toolkit actions on page 5, with consideration for the needs and objectives of individual organisations, will assist effective planning for any communications activity.

Additional guidance on key ingredients is detailed on page 6.

Toolkit actions are also described beginning page 6.

An example of a campaign planning and operational document is provided on pages 14-16.

Toolkit Action	Toolkit Sub-action	Toolkit Output	Toolkit Outcomes
1. Identify and set agreed objective(s)	1.1 Match objectives to desired timeframes	List of agreed objectives with timeframes and partner's needs	Clear and measurable understanding of task
	1.2 Consider campaign costs and identify budgets		
	1.3 Match objectives to possible industry partner needs		
2. Identify and define target audience(s)	2.1 Identify target audiences and any special target audiences (eg NESB or regional areas)	Lists of categorised audiences and their needs	Audience segments and their needs defined
	2.2 Identify stakeholders		
	2.3 Identify any awareness gap(s)		
3. Consider and develop evaluation process(es) to meet project need	3.1 Select evaluation and feedback method(s)	Evaluation method and tools	Campaign evaluation process
	3.2 Select evaluation tools - consider use of industry survey material (from PHA or industry partner)		
	3.3 Compile document to record evaluation data against each activity		
4. Develop key messages	4.1 Consider campaign objectives and required attitudinal and behavioural change	List of key messages	Agreed campaign key messages
	4.2 Check existing PHA and industry specific key messages		
	4.3 Nominate a range of key messages, select five and refine for target audience(s) with any partners.		
5. Consider resources required for activity (matched to timeframes), Identify possible partnerships and leverage mechanisms with stakeholders and key influencers	5.1 Consider internal resources available and required	Listed resources and agreed shared roles and responsibilities	Agreed partnership and key influencer resources and commitment
	5.2 Consider external resources available and required		
	5.3 List range of possible industry partners and key influencers, their needs and potential contributions		
	5.4 Meet with partners and key influencers, outline plan and gain buy-in		
	5.5 Identify possible leverage mechanisms (e.g. materials in newsletters, attend event etc)		
6. Establish communication channels	6.1 Identify and list internal channels and external channels	Databases of channels and their contacts	Communication and distribution process
	6.2 Identify key influence media and general media		
	6.3 Convert lists into databases (with contact details) for use in communications activities		
7. Determine and develop communication tactics and tools	7.1 Assess existing or previous industry activities/campaigns and select key elements	Defined and developed tactics and tools	Communications tactics and tools to implement
	7.2 Assess other industry campaigns and adapt key or suitable elements		
	7.3 Develop innovative ideas/materials – use ideas from Communications Tools in Framework document		
	7.4 Develop materials for any special audiences (e.g. NESB)		
8. Finalise campaign elements, timelines and budgets	8.1 Position campaign elements into a Communications Plan template	Campaign ready to conduct	Campaign and evaluation process

3. Key ingredients

There are a number of possible and essential ingredients and tactics to consider in the design, construction and implementation of communications activities.

The list below has been developed from assessment of existing biosecurity communication campaigns and from best-practice communications plan design.

1. Clearly articulated objectives and evaluation processes need to be in place from the outset
2. Industry communications need to use partnerships with stakeholders and key influencers
3. All relevant existing networks need to be accessed and leveraged
4. Distribution of agreed key messages should be through a wide range of communication channels and tools, including face-to-face, with an emphasis on existing networks. What current face-to-face contact do you have with growers, such as QA or farm management training? Can your biosecurity messages be incorporated into these contacts?
5. Distribution channel databases need to be maintained, regularly updated and shared with the project team - (with due regard to privacy requirements)
6. There should be a sustained delivery of consistent messages over a significant yet strategic period of time
7. Innovative materials delivered through partners can be extremely effective in extending the reach among audiences
8. NESB, Indigenous and discrete communities/sectors (eg hobby farmers) require special materials
9. The internet should now be fully utilised in all communications activities
10. Industry (at all levels) require regular input and feedback methods – annual surveys of industry member's (both bodies and individuals) attitudes and behaviours to the Toolkit and the communication activities should be conducted.

4.   Toolkit actions explained

4.1. Setting objectives

Setting communication objectives clarifies the desired communication outcomes for each industry and audience. The key objectives for any biosecurity communications activity should be:

1. increased awareness of biosecurity needs by target audiences and stakeholders
2. increased numbers of people who modify their biosecurity behaviour

These objectives are measurable targets to work towards, and the communications will be considered as successful if they are realised. Specifically:

1. There will be increased awareness:
   - about what biosecurity means
   - that growers can call 1800 084 881 to report something unusual that they've seen
   - that the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed exists and that there are industry obligations around being signed up to it
   - that PLANTPLAN exists, setting out incursion management procedures and response arrangements
   - that industries have National Biosecurity Plans in place outlining priority pests
   - that plant industries are working collaboratively and communicating consistent messages about biosecurity
   - that groups throughout the community are taking action to improve plant biosecurity
   - that plant industry groups and stakeholders have distinct roles and responsibilities
   - that everyone has a role to play in plant biosecurity

2. More people will modify their behaviour to:
   - look for anything unusual regarding plant health and pests
   - call 1800 084 881 or notify an expert about something unusual that is seen
   - apply best practice around plant/crop management and biosecurity
   - engage in debate and discussion on biosecurity risks to plant health
   - Search for sources of information, such as www.farmbiosecurity.com.au

4.2. Identify and define target audience(s)

Target audiences are the groups and individuals that plant industry biosecurity information needs to reach. Defining who these audiences are will help to determine what communications activities are needed to get messages to them.

Growers are the most obvious target audience. But are there other audiences or organisations involved in the industry that can have an impact on biosecurity? Consider audiences such as:
- peri-urban or non-commercial producers
- regional centres relevant to your industry
- non-English speaking producers
- local communities and the general public
- suppliers

- agronomists/researchers
- school children
- high profile individuals
- key influence media
- indigenous groups
- local, state and Australian Government agencies
- travellers

Stakeholders are those groups or individuals who have an interest or involvement in biosecurity communications activities. Engagement with stakeholders is vital to the success of communication, and leveraging their networks is crucial to delivering information. Relevant stakeholders need to be identified and their contact details recorded in a database.

Stakeholders may also be potential partners and may be interested in getting involved in communications activities, providing additional funding or personnel.

Existing and potential stakeholders fall broadly into the following categories:
- Plant industry associations and groups
- State farm organisations, National Farmers Federation
- government (including Australian, state, local - primary industry, environment, health, education/research)
- farm consultants
- agronomists
- crop protection companies and bodies (Syngenta, Bayer, Crop Life Australia, etc.)
- farm produce suppliers (CRT, Elders, Landmark, etc.)
- AQIS
- Nurseries and their associations
- Non-government organisations (NGOs) /community interest groups (Landcare, Coast Care, Garden Clubs and Seedsaver networks, etc.)
- Indigenous communities, including Land Councils, service providers, clans/families
- Community groups relevant for special audiences, such as NESB or hobby- and peri-farmers groups

4.3. Consider and develop evaluation processes

There are a number of evaluation measures available. The best indicator of the effectiveness of a campaign is to survey growers about their biosecurity awareness and practices before and after the campaign to determine to what extent their biosecurity understanding and behaviour has changed. Formal surveys can be expensive and have low return rates, though there are other ways to evaluate communications activities, including determining the number of:

- members subscribing to newsletters or publications
- members contributing subscribing to newsletters or publications
- producers aware of industry bodies and recognising key messages and key pests
- media releases developed and released and the number of media monitoring clips mentioning key messages or organisations involved
- articles appearing in the media
- website accesses/week
- field days where materials are used
- producers/businesses/stakeholders that materials are distributed to
- promotional materials (brochures, posters, flyers) distributed and displayed
- journalists briefed
- feedback on industry adoption experiences

Another method of evaluating your communications activities and the level of biosecurity awareness amongst your members and growers is to conduct annual formal surveys

4.4. Develop key messages

Communication activities need to include a set of agreed key messages. The key messages can be adapted to suit different industries and different target audiences.

For messages to be effective in reaching the target market they need to be relevant, consistent, sustained and applied strategically at appropriate times. This approach also leverages on the investments already made in campaigns by other biosecurity stakeholders.

The review of previous communications campaigns highlighted that there is value in maintaining a set of key messages over time, rather than changing them. The most successful campaigns have been those that have been long running, such as the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS – see www.daff.gov.au/aqis/quarantine/naqs). Previous campaigns analysed as part of this project often use the overarching message "if you see something unusual/fruit fly etc, report it to XXX". There is value in maintaining this vigilance and message about reporting to keep the messages consistent.

Messages are also most effectively received when they are linked to a relevant 'hip-pocket' issue. Messages delivered in novel ways also help to gain traction. Research into attitudes of peri-urban farmers suggests that messages should refer to maximising profit and sustainability. Messages for Indigenous audiences should be linked with a cultural motivator e.g. 'caring for country'.

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Other messages or tag lines that may be useful to incorporate into communication materials include:

- Healthy crops = healthy farms
- Protecting crops protects the bottom line
- Plant biosecurity is everyone's responsibility
- Community surveillance is vital
- If you see a suspected pest or disease, report it to1800 084 881(or other contact if relevant)
- The exotic plant pest hotline is 1800 084 881
- Plant Health Australia is working with <insert industry group name> across Australia to reduce the risk of pest and disease incursions

4.5. Consider resources required for activity

Estimates of campaign costs will be required to develop budgets, determine the reach of the campaign and identify the required resources. Each component of the campaign will need to be costed.

Internal industry communications practitioners or external Public Relations agencies can be used to provide advice, estimates and quotes.

4.6. Establish communication channels

There are a number of communication approaches that can be used by industry to effectively target their primary and stakeholder audiences. They vary in their relative cost and production timeframe. These activities are described as a communication mix, which is made up of a range of tools and channels, including:

Direct approaches:
- field days and meetings
- extension officers
- workshops
- stakeholders/key influencers

Indirect approaches:
- Broadcast media – TV, radio and newspapers (paid advertising as well as community announcements)
- Electronic – websites and electronic newsletters
- Print – such as flyers, brochures, posters and fact sheets

4.7. Determine and develop tactics and tools

Communication strategies and activities in plant and animal industries have made use of a range of different communication tools. They range from standard to novel in nature. All are aimed at achieving 'cut-through'.

These tools can be used by any industry, but examples of some of the more successful tools identified in the assessment are:

- Surveillance Kits developed for National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) included key messages, identification tools of a Fire Ant ID booklet and card. This identification kit could take different forms, e.g. book mark, postcard with magnet. Distribution could be direct mail, media insert, industry publications etc.
- Development of a Biosecurity "Most Unwanted" list. (Queensland DPI&F developed a "Most Wanted" list as part of their messaging). This is adaptable to all states and industries and provides a catchy hook for ID cards and can be used seasonally by various industries in the media.
- On-farm biosecurity training and biosecurity manuals, such as those developed by PHA for the grains and apple and pear industries.
- Use of "community watch groups" encouraging involvement and ownership of community (potentially more effective in metropolitan areas than regional locations). Community surveillance is consistently identified as being vital for successful control of incursions.
- Direct mail to target audience of pest ID booklet and card to promote awareness of campaign, events and key messages (NFAEP).
- A bookmark targeting travellers was direct mailed with car registration renewals with the message "Do not travel into SA with fruit and vegetables" (PIRSA 2007-08 Fruit Fly Campaign). 2 million bookmarks also produced for schools, tourism outlets and interstate.
- Convenience advertising (posters on the back of toilet doors) placed in 40 venues as well as roadhouses, shops, motels leading to SA borders (used in PIRSA Fruit Fly Campaign). Effective if targeting traveller audience.
- School Kits developed to engage school children in search for pests (Fire ant nests in NFAEP)
- Face to face visits from biosecurity officers. The NAQS "Topwatch" campaign reached 71% Indigenous/Torres Strait Islanders and 74% pastoralists this way. This is effective in remote areas with small, geographically spread numbers of target audience.
- Communications materials such as mugs, paperweights, pens, caps, t-shirts. These were used in NAQS "Topwatch" campaign. Can be successful if only reaching relatively small numbers, otherwise could be perceived as not effective value for money.
- Postcards and posters (a previous PHA campaign resulted in 23% recall from producers)

- Display materials for use at field days, agricultural events (Animal Health Australia campaign)
- E-newsletters can be an effective way of reaching a diverse stakeholder group to keep them informed of strategies and activities in other plant sectors. A "Biosecurity news" newsletter template could be compiled by PHA (with input from industry groups and key stakeholders) that can be regularly distributed to selected industry and community databases on need
- A "pest alert" template to enable detailing of seasonally potential threats / priority pests and diseases, identification and reporting process
- The internet can be used to place materials on websites, as well as distribute information via electronic newsletters. Think about links to stakeholder websites (such as www.farmbiosecurity.com.au) or in stakeholder e-newsletters.

Other media based activities
- A specific "week" or "day" to reinforce awareness of a particular pest (e.g. NFAEP) can be created. This can be run as a local/regional sub-campaign and provides a media hook for media to leverage stories. This works particularly well when there is an incursion to be controlled, about which there is already some base awareness
- Media releases – develop a calendar of media releases about particular pests/events
- Encourage regular contact with key media at local level to raise awareness and build relationships
- Establish and maintain a database of key industry media contacts for your industry
- Negotiate regular columns in rural weeklies e.g. QCL, The Land, Countryman (to profile local industries and biosecurity concerns)

NESB and Indigenous Communications
- Use of community "enablers" or key influencers ensure that messages are effectively relayed to target NESB audience. Materials for NESB audiences can be delivered at workshops in English but printed in their language.
- Indigenous messages are best delivered face to face. Use clear English for written messages. Materials should include images of Indigenous staff/audience, with consideration for cultural sensitivities. This can be done in consultation with your local Indigenous cultural organisation.
- Use Community Service Announcements on radio using a respected indigenous identity.

4.8. Sample Communications Mix

As described above, there are a number of tools and tactics that can be adopted and used by industry. These are presented as a Sample Communications Mix to display the range of activities that can occur and the associated evaluation methods. These include communications for the target audiences of producers and other external stakeholders.

Target Audiences	Communication Activity	Evaluation
Primary industry groups	Industry specific on-farm tool kit for improved awareness and identification of exotic pests.	Increase in number of producers aware of and recognising key messages and key pests.
	Calendar of media releases, highlighting seasonal requirements, particular risk times for each industry.	Media releases developed and released. Number of media monitoring clips mentioning key messages or your industry/ organisation.
	Editorial in industry newsletters/magazines	Number of articles appearing Number of responses to articles
	Central website as exchange hub for sourcing information, with web content also available to all other industry web sites. Content to include communications materials	Number of accesses/week
	Display materials (posters, ID kits) for use at field days and events	Number of field days where materials are used. Monitor feedback. Demand for copies of material from other organisations
	Design templates for posters with similar messages as on-farm kit for distribution to industry key influencers (farm suppliers, grain delivery receival points etc)	
	Information on www.farmbiosecurity.com.au	Number of hits to that page (liaise with PHA)
Peri-urban producers	General on-farm identification kits translated into plain language. Distribution through CMAs, Local Councils and local NESB industry groups. Posters made available at events.	Number of producers that on-farm kits distributed to. Number of posters distributed and displayed
Indigenous Producers & community	On-farm identification kits designed with Indigenous audience in mind using Indigenous images and in plain English	Number of kits distributed. Reports of calls to Exotic Plant Pest Hotline.
Public	Media	Number of clips in regional & metro media.
Key influence media	Briefings by PHA and industry about campaign to key media.	Number of media briefed
Govt agencies, SFOs.	E-newsletter Biosecurity news. Face to face briefings to ministers by state and federal government stakeholders.	Number of meetings Number of subscriptions to e-newsletter.
All other stakeholders	E-newsletter Biosecurity news. Stakeholders to be sent copies of on-farm kit for crops in their region/state.	Number of subscriptions to e-newsletter.

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5. Example of a small targeted industry Communications Plan

Raising plant biosecurity awareness in the 'x' industry

5.1. Set communication objectives

- Inform growers and industry about how important biosecurity is to profitable primary industries. Focus on 'their best interests'.
- Tell growers and industry about their shared responsibility through on farm biosecurity and awareness of specific plant pests and diseases.
- Promote strong plant industry organisation as a key biosecurity measure.
- Educate growers and stakeholders about process of reporting a suspected emergency plant pest.
- Communicate the proactive work that industry people, bodies and stakeholders do behind the scenes.
- Promote PHA, the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) and relevant Industry Biosecurity Plan.
- Develop relationships with industry representatives who may be involved in emergency responses.

5.2. Define target audiences

Primary:
- Industry (growers and their representative bodies)
- Stakeholders (supply chain members, govt agencies, advisors)

Secondary:
- General community

5.3. Establish evaluation

Methods to evaluate the communications strategy against stated objectives will be:
- Client satisfaction – conduct survey in three months time
- Monitor completion of projects and partnerships
- Number of media releases/stories published within six month period
- Number of attendees at meetings
- Number of subscriptions to newsletters (and any feedback)
- Number of hits to the industry web pages

5.4. Refine key messages

- Protecting market access is everyone's responsibility
- Successful biosecurity will underpin the economic performance of our industry
- Find out about specific on-farm biosecurity needs for our industry
- We must report suspected emergency plant pests/diseases. Make sure you know how to.
- Industry and government agencies are here to help

5.5. Craft communications actions and tactics

- Work in partnership with peak industry bodies and government agencies
- Provide information package about plant pests
- Conduct media campaign – to publicly reinforce partnership and information provision approach

5.6. Communications activities template

	COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES	Target Audience	Responsible person	Status & timeframes
Actions	**Work in partnership with peak industry bodies and govt agencies**			
	• Develop and finalise agreed communications plan and required resources, allocations and responsibilities with industry, stakeholders and government agency • Information Package – Prepare and publish agreed information fact sheet/s and materials about what is being done to protect industry. Develop distribution plans • Feature Article – write and pitch article about activity to industry magazines and newsletters • Advertisments - in regional papers (rural supplements, use to leverage stories below) • Web feature - on industry and stakeholder websites about biosecurity initiatives in industry and general awareness messages	Growers Stakeholders		
Actions	**Provide information package about plant pests**			
	• Brochure/Fact Sheet/Post card/Poster - to promote awareness of plant pests and disease and biosecurity issues. • Distribute and work information through industry associations, networks, resellers'front-counters', advisors, schools. Include on-farm biosecurity strategies.	Growers, industry, tourists, local community		
	• Event management - work with regional media officers in ensuring plant biosecurity messages are included in industry events and field days etc			
	• Checklist - develop checklist steps to follow if there is a suspect an emergency disease outbreak. Consider running a mock exercise, invite media and industry leaders	Industry, media		
	• Six month advertising schedule – negotiate with industry magazine so as to get free editorial and build relationship media	Growers, media, stakeholders		
Actions	**Conduct media campaign**			
	• Contact local and key influence media – brief them on campaign and advertising and story opportunities • Media Release - launch campaign, promote awareness of biosecurity issues and encouraging the community to report suspect pests • Media Release – Identify pest priorities and damage they can do – highlight industry's work in protecting industry from pests, include PHA materials • Media Release – A 'checklist story' – spell-out what to do if you suspect an emergency disease outbreak on your property. Include positive information about diagnostic process and costs.	Growers, industry, stakeholders, community		

6. Conclusion

Once the communications campaign is planned, there are a number of things that can be done regarding implementation:

1. Undertake the activities
2. Engage a professional communications consultant to implement it, or assist in implementing it. The planning undertaken using this toolkit will give the consultant a comprehensive brief of what is required. Their time and expertise comes at a cost, but will add to the reach and impact of key messages.
3. Discuss needs and aims with PHA. There may be opportunities for PHA to help deliver communications campaigns or coordinate communications messages with a relevant industry, there-by reducing duplication and generating cost savings.

If you have any questions about the toolkit, its development or its usage, please contact PHA's Communications Manager, Jim McGrath, at jmcgrath@phau.com.au.