



MEDIA RELEASE

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SEED POTATOES FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND VICTORIA GAIN MARKET ACCESS TO INDONESIA

Certified seed potatoes from South Australia and Victoria have been approved for market access to our nearest neighbour, Indonesia, at recent bilateral trade discussions held in Melbourne.

Market access to Indonesia enables certified seed potato growers in South Australia and Victoria to supply the Indonesian market with potentially 85,000 tonnes of certified seed potatoes with a market value of \$AUD110m annually.

The agreement signed by Australia and Indonesia is the result of a near decade long collaboration between industry groups (ViCSPA, Potatoes South Australia), certified seed potato growers, exporters, state and federal governments and Indonesian agencies. The result is a win for certified seed potato growers and is a demonstration of what can be achieved when strong relationships and collaboration is built between industry and government, at all levels.

The Seed Certification Scheme operated by ViCSPA provides complete traceability and documented evidence which supports the high health status of certified seed potatoes produced in South Australia and Victoria. The ViCSPA Seed Certification Scheme is on par with the world's best and the ViCSPA Board has invested heavily in developing robust database management systems which underpin the certification scheme to trace all seed plots submitted for certification. The robustness of the ViCSPA seed certification scheme has been integral to this pursuit and subsequent success of new markets such as Indonesia. The ViCSPA scheme has highly trained certification officers for crop inspections and uses modern crop monitoring systems to certify seed potato crops. Indonesian officials audited both the ViCSPA seed scheme and the seed production areas. It is gratifying that they were impressed with the comprehensiveness and professionalism of the ViCSPA Seed Certification Scheme and the quality of the seed potatoes that are the result of the strict protocols adhered to.

The Chair of ViCSPA, Kay Spierings said, "ViCSPA is delighted that as an independent, industry based organisation, ViCSPA continues to be recognised as a leader in seed potato certification. The export potential of the Indonesian market is significant and we look forward continuing our strong collaborative relationships to build further opportunities for our growers." Dr Nigel Crump, General Manager, ViCSPA said, "On the back of the recent success, ViCSPA will continue to strive for excellence in our seed certification program to maintain existing markets and pursue new markets. Recently, with a grant from Agriculture Victoria, we have developed a geospatial software tool that has been integrated with the existing seed potato certification database".

“Importantly, the collection of geospatial data that relates to the field used to produce seed potato crops enhances the evidence of data that is required to support market access and subsequent trade”, he added.

For ViCSPA, the long history of soil sampling and laboratory testing all fields used to produce certified seed for pests and disease such as Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) and the ongoing leaf testing program for monitoring levels of Potato Virus Y were critical in securing market access to Indonesia. Surveillance of this type provides strong evidence to support claims made on the supply of high health certified seed potatoes.

Robbie Davis, CEO Potatoes South Australia stated that the industry was thrilled at this long-awaited protocol and that it provided a valuable new market. She said, “Of critical significance, the high quality of seed potatoes and professional approach by seed potato growers in South Australia and Victoria were major contributing factors in securing the trade. Strong collaboration has been key.”

It is envisaged that there will be ongoing exchange of knowledge and capacity building between Australia and Indonesia and plans are already underway for ViCSPA to run pest and disease workshops in Indonesia later this year. It is important that the Indonesian and Australian potato industries work together into the future to continue to foster ‘business-to-business’ trade and improve potato production in both countries.

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