

Application A1092 – Irradiation of Apple, Apricot, Cherry, Nectarine, Peach, Plum, Honeydew, Rockmelon, Scallopini, Strawberry, Table Grape and Zucchini (Courgette)

Comments from the Victorian Departments of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and Health (DH)

Due date of submission – 9 October 2014

The Victorian Departments of Environment and Primary Industries and Health (the departments) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Application A1092 which seeks approval to irradiate apple, apricot, cherry, nectarine, peach, plum, honeydew, rockmelon, scallopini (squash, summer squash), strawberry, table grape and zucchini (courgette) for phytosanitary purposes. These commodities are potential hosts to fruit flies and other regulated pests.

The departments note that the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has continued to suspend the use of fenthion and dimethoate for the disinfestation of a number of food crops.

The departments thus recognise that providing alternate safe and effective phytosanitary treatment options is important and accept the review published by FSANZ in February 2014 on the nutritional impact of phytosanitary irradiation of fruits and vegetables. The review concluded that phytosanitary doses of irradiation do not pose a nutritional risk to the Australian and New Zealand populations. The departments also accept FSANZ's assessment of the safety of irradiation of fruits and vegetables. In addition, we note that the applicant is requesting the same dose ranges (150 Gy to 1 kGy) and conditions (including mandatory labelling) as currently prescribed for tropical fruits, persimmons, tomatoes and capsicums in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Phytosanitary treatments that are safe and effective are important for biosecurity purposes. Permitting the irradiation of these fruits and vegetables will allow for continued access to markets and may lead to increased domestic and international trade.

In accordance with the above, the departments support the application made by Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for approval to irradiate apple, apricot, cherry, nectarine, peach, plum, honeydew, rockmelon, scallopini (squash, summer squash), strawberry, table grape and zucchini (courgette) for phytosanitary purposes.