



13/2 Tantitha Street
(PO Box 45)
Bundaberg QLD 4670

P: (07) 4153 3007

F: (07) 4153 1322

E: bfvfg.info@bfvg.com.au

SUBMISSION:

REFERENCE: APPLICATION A1092

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
PO Box 7186
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

9th October, 2014.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

RE: APPLICATION A1092 TO FSANZ TO AMEND THE FOOD STANDARDS CODE 1.5.3 TO INCLUDE APPLES; APRICOTS; CHERRIES; HONEYDEW MELONS; NECTARINES; PEACHES; PLUMS; ROCKMELONS; SCALLOPINI, STRAWBERRIES; TABLE GRAPES & ZUCCHINI (COURGETTE) ON THE APPROVAL LIST FOR USE OF IRRADIATION

I am writing to advise the support of Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Cooperative Ltd (BFVG) to the application submitted by the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Q-DAFF) for amendments to food standards code 1.5.3 to include Apples; Apricots; Cherries; Honeydew Melons; Nectarines; Peaches; Plums; Rockmelons; Scallopini, Strawberries; Table Grapes & Zucchini (Courgette) onto the approvals list for use of irradiation as a pest disinfestation treatment for a phytosanitary purpose.

BFVG was established in 1948 as a not-for-profit membership based organisation, becoming a non-trading Cooperative in 1997. Representing and advocating our members' interests at all levels of Industry and Government, BFVG has grown to become the central contact point for Horticulture in the Wide Bay Burnett. The organisation represents the whole supply chain for the Production Horticulture Industry of the Wide Bay Burnett region - particularly for our grower and industry support members in the Bundaberg, North Burnett and Gympie Regional Council areas.

The Wide Bay Burnett produces well over 30 different major horticultural commodities, several minor commodity lines and supports award-winning, innovative and progressive value-add businesses. The industry of the Bundaberg Region alone employs over 5,000 people and has an estimated farm gate value over \$500 million, injecting over a billion dollars into the economy.

Businesses in the Wide Bay Burnett supply quality fresh and value-add products to the domestic and export markets with the Wide Bay Burnett now recognised as one of the largest, most diverse food producing regions in Australia. In recent years the region has seen significant expansion of commercial production in several commodity lines, Strawberries being one such commodity.

This highlights the considerable investment of many companies to increase their production, optimise the potential for year-round supply to consumers, and improve profit margins. However Biosecurity constraints remain an impediment to these goals. Irradiation for phytosanitary purpose is an effective means to overcome these constraints, providing a measure of Biosecurity surety to the destination market.

BFVG believes these approvals listed in Application A1092 will enable many producers, exporters and supply chain operatives to have enhanced access to Australian domestic and International markets under the ICA-55 protocol, and that Irradiation provides to them with an efficacious and sustainable additional post harvest disinfestation option.

Therefore I welcome the opportunity to have Food Standards Code 1.5.3 amended as outlined, allowing producers and exporters of these commodities less constrictive access to Australian domestic markets under ICA-55 and to Export markets. This will be another tool for these businesses to maintain (in some cases gain) market integrity, global competitiveness and profitability for their quality safe products.

CLEAN • FRESH • QUALITY

I trust the Q-DAFF application will be viewed favourably and assessed on the strong evidence provided which demonstrates irradiation as a safe, effective method for phytosanitary purposes.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Peter Hockings.

Peter Hockings
Executive Officer

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