AFAS
10 YEARS OF COLLABORATION

Biosecurity

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The Beginning

• Methyl Bromide (MB) has long been the most widely used quarantine pre-shipment treatment.
• However its application has not always been conducted effectively.
• In 2000, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture (the department) identified that ineffective MB fumigations were a key biosecurity risk.
• Investigation to find out why treatments were failing identified lack of adequate training as the major cause.
• With the view that addressing the issue at its source was the best solution, the concept of the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) was born.
AFAS Aims

• The department decided to develop a scheme that improved the efficacy of MB fumigations through:
  • Training of MB fumigators and counterpart government agency officers in the MB fumigation best practice,
  • Registration system for acceptable treatment providers,
  • Establishment of a compliance monitoring program that included:
    • Regular treatment provider compliance auditing,
    • Annual joint system reviews (JSR), and
    • Ongoing non-compliance reporting and investigation.
Initial Implementation

- Following negotiation and agreement, in 2002, the department and the Indonesian Agriculture Quarantine Agency (IAQA) embarked on implementing AFAS in Indonesia.
- With fumigator and IAQA officer training conducted throughout 2003, AFAS officially commenced on 15 June 2004.
- Upon commencement there were 16 Indonesian AFAS registered treatment providers.
- Today that number has grown to approximately 128.
AFAS Expansion

• Following the 2004 implementation of AFAS in Indonesia, AFAS has also been implemented in the following countries:
  • Malaysia – December 2005
  • Thailand – March 2006
  • India – September 2006
  • Papua New Guinea – November 2008
  • The Philippines – December 2008
  • Vietnam – April 2011
  • Sri Lanka – June 2012

• AFAS implementation activities have also been conducted in China, Fiji, Chile, Peru, New Zealand and OIRSA (representing 9 central American countries)
AFAS Global Footprint

AFAS countries: implemented and undergoing implementation
AFAS Management

- Over the eight fully operational AFAS countries there are currently approximately 600 registered treatment providers.
- In conjunction with our AFAS counterpart agencies, JSRs are conducted annually in each country.
- JSRs include reviewing AFAS management and training systems and outcomes as well as the auditing of selected treatment providers.
- 41 AFAS JSRs have been conducted across the eight AFAS countries.
- JSRs have included more than 570 treatment provider audits.
AFAS Effectiveness

AFAS Country MB Fumigation Failures

AFAS Country MB Fumigation Failures

Linear (AFAS Country MB Fumigation Failures)
Collaboration

• Throughout the life of AFAS the department has worked closely with quarantine agency officials in all AFAS countries:
  • Preparing and conducting fumigation and audit training;
  • Registering treatment providers;
  • Conducting JSRs;
  • Participating in Quarantine Regulators Meetings; and
  • Communicating on a regular basis on issues relating to failed methyl bromide fumigations and all things AFAS related.
Collaboration

- Whilst the government collaboration has been vital to the implementation and ongoing maintenance of AFAS, the contributions of the fumigation industry contractors utilised by the department have also been invaluable to the schemes success.
- Their leadership in the development and delivery of AFAS training and technical guidance during JSR auditing helped lay the foundations for the schemes success.
Training

• The original intent for Australia to train all fumigators was determined to be impractical;
  - so in-country training teams were established and the train the trainer package was developed.

• It was also originally intended that every fumigation should be supervised by an accredited fumigator;
  - this was changed to a requirement that every company have a registered fumigator and that technicians receive in-house training.

• I consider this has failed and we should reconsider how we deal with this;
  - we understand Philippines now provides unassessed practical fumigation training for technicians and India is developing a bridging course.
Manufacturers, Exporters and Brokers

- We have also learnt that AFAS cannot be implemented without the cooperation of manufacturers, exporters and brokers;
  - they must be involved in the planning and implementation of AFAS.
- After implementation treatment providers must work together to prevent demands for fumigation shortcuts;
  - the government can play a strong role in this.
  - it is the fumigator that pays the price for failed treatments.
Change from Bilateral to Multilateral Arrangement

- We have learnt that the existing bilateral arrangements work well for movement of cargo from your countries to Australia but in most cases the same standards are not applied for other countries;
  - even if they have an AFAS.
- This two standard system causes unnecessary problems for treatment providers and regulators and needs to be addressed.
- The International Cargo Cooperative Biosecurity Arrangement (ICCBA) which has been developed and adopted by seven countries will begin to address this;
  - the first meeting is being held straight after this conference.
The Future

• Governments around the world are becoming increasingly aware of the biosecurity problems caused by unwanted movement of pests and disease.

• Working together we can address the biosecurity risks and reduce unnecessary delays and costs for exporters and importers.

• Although future methyl bromide use will be limited we will find and use alternatives and you as treatment providers need to adapt to the challenge.

• The future is bright if you accept the challenge.

• I look forward to seeing how far we get in the next ten years.