

From: Stephen Goodwin/Marilyn Steiner [mailto:mands@ceinternet.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 27 July 2009 8:37 AM
To: Holmes, Sue
Subject: Food safety submission

Dear Sue,

At the national conference of the protected cropping industry conducted in Sydney last week, a Tasmanian greenhouse tomato grower made a good point during a workshop. I asked him to email it to me as I think it very relevant to your enquiry. He is concerned about and critical of the current state of QA in the context of its impact on food safety. I hope it isn't too late to receive this.

Kind regards,

Stephen

Stephen Goodwin

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From: Nick Cracknell [mailto:nj.scracknell@bigpond.com]
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2009 8:18 PM
To: mands@ceinternet.com.au
Subject: Quality Assurance

Dear Stephen,

As you are aware I raised this issue at the AGM of our recent conference and as requested I forward the following thoughts to enable you to follow up.

Firstly, let me preface my comments by stating that Cracknell Tomatoes wholeheartedly support the concept of all growers producing produce, totally safe for human consumption, meeting customer requirements and the individual documented specifications of various stores/wholesalers, and complies with the relevant regulatory requirements. I'm sure that the vast majority of growers are committed to Quality Assurance and strive to improve their operation to consistently meet customer expectations now and into the future. By subjecting ourselves to bi-annual/annual audits we can gauge our progress against recognised bench marks to ensure that our business practices comply in all necessary areas.

As an industry we have been dictated to by two leading supermarkets and to the best of my knowledge little or no consultation has taken place with growers.

As a consequence we are continually seeing the "Goal Posts" moved as our two major supermarkets jostle to see who can have the most prescriptive set of requirements for their suppliers.

A grower supplying both chains is required to have separate Q/A manuals and undergo separate audits to achieve the same result (time consuming, costly and unnecessary). Obviously generic guidelines that meet everyone's requirements would be much easier. Surely the purpose of Q/A is to ensure that good quality and safe produce reaches our consumers and that growers are complying with all necessary regulatory requirements. Individual customer product specifications would naturally be included in the manual.

Given that this situation will continue to become more of a headache to growers I feel it is time for our Association to approach the appropriate Government Department, who I believe, should be driving Quality Assurance Issues.
Working with Industry, Growers and Regulatory Bodies, I believe this approach will allow more input from those effected and might reign in the ever increasing costs of compliance and farm audits.

Regards Nick Cracknell

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