



Activity 1 – Public Information Report
August 2015



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About the report

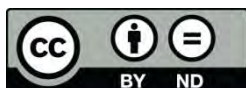
The *Exercise Haryana: Activity 1 – Public Information Report* was authored by Plant Health Australia (PHA) and endorsed by the Exercise Planning Committee. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of activities and the resulting outcomes. This document is the first of four to be produced to report on Exercise Haryana, all of which will be published on the PHA website when finalised.

Any feedback or questions in relation to the report, or the Exercise Haryana activities and outcomes can be directed to PHA through the details below.

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Overview

Exercise Haryana is a series of simulation exercises designed to test and improve preparedness and response capacity for a detection of Karnal bunt (*Tilletia indica*) in Australia. Karnal bunt is a serious exotic fungal pest of wheat, durum and triticale that impacts on the quality and marketability of the grains.

Haryana builds on the significant preparedness work already undertaken by the grains industry and a number of government agencies. It is being delivered through three separate activities during 2015-16. This document reports on the first of these, the public information activity, held on 17th of August 2015 at the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (Vic DEDJTR) office at Attwood, Melbourne.

Invitations to participate in the activity were sent to potentially Affected Parties for a Karnal bunt Incident, grain bulk handling companies, downstream users of grain and other relevant stakeholders, with 37 representatives attending the activity (full list of participants provided on page 8).

Plant Health Australia (PHA) was primarily responsible for the delivery of the Exercise Haryana program. PHA was supported by the Exercise Planning Committee, which had membership from GPA, PIRSA, DAFWA, Vic DEDJTR, DAWR, Viterra and GIMAF.

The activity was controlled and facilitated by PHA, with Vic DEDJTR providing evaluation services.

Objectives

The public information activity aimed to achieve objective 4 of Exercise Haryana “*Determine the strategy for communicating with stakeholders to support early response activities to a Karnal bunt Incident*”. To achieve this, three activity specific objectives were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. Specific objectives for the public information activity

Activity objective 1	Develop the core components of a communications strategy to engage stakeholders in relation to the early stages of a response to a Karnal bunt detection.
Activity objective 2	Test the ability to achieve desired communication outcomes in relation to a Karnal bunt response within the confines of the confidentiality arrangements of emergency responses under the EPPRD.
Activity objective 3	Assess the public information resources available to stakeholders that can be utilised in a response to a Karnal bunt detection.

Scenario

The scenario used for this activity was based on a simulated detection of Karnal bunt in a bulk handling facility on the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia. The scenario was set in the first few days of the incursion, in March 2016, where:

- Suspect Karnal bunt had been identified in grain from the bulk handling facility through morphological and molecular tests, with confirmatory identification underway at a second laboratory.
- Nineteen properties within a 100 km radius were identified as supplying grain into the suspect infected storage, but no delimiting surveillance had been undertaken on these properties.

- The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) had met once by teleconference and subsequently released endorsed talking points.

Sessions

Participants completed five separate sessions (Table 2) over the course of a day, led by the facilitator Dr Stephen Dibley (PHA). Each session was completed in groups with outputs developed by completing a template on supplied laptops for each session. In addition, participants toured the Vic DEDJTR incident control room to appreciate some of the available emergency response capabilities.

Table 2. Outline of the sessions undertaken by participants

Session	Overview of the session
1: Communications strategy	Participants were provided with the target audiences for a Karnal bunt detection and asked to determine the key communication objectives for each audience.
2: Social media mitigation	Participants were challenged with posts on Twitter that were either factually wrong (under the scenario) or contained information that should not be publically available, and asked to respond in an appropriate manner to minimise the potential impact to the response.
3: Communications case studies	Utilising personalised case studies of audiences in a Karnal bunt response, participants identified communication messages, timeframes, barriers and channels for each target audience.
4: Analysis of resources	A range of resources relating to Karnal bunt that could be used to support communication activities were provided to participants, who critically reviewed them to determine which audiences they are appropriate for and which communication objectives they address.
5: Generating material	Participants were provided the opportunity to develop communication materials, with each group being assigned an organisation and a type of resource to produce, given confidentiality constraints.

Outcomes and outputs

Outputs

Throughout the activity, participants worked in groups to produce a range of outputs that together will provide a foundation for developing public information material in a Karnal bunt response. The outputs of the group work were subsequently collated by PHA and provided to all participants.

The outputs were:

- A draft public information strategy framework.
- Holding statements and strategies for responding to social media posts.
- A critical analysis of a range of supporting materials for communications.
- A number of draft communication materials, such as media releases and websites, directly relating to Karnal bunt.

Anyone interested in the collated outputs should contact PHA through the details provided.

Key observations

Participants stayed highly engaged throughout the sessions and, by working together, produced a large amount of content including a public information strategy and communication materials. The day’s sessions resulted in an increase in the awareness of the potential impacts of Karnal bunt across the sectors and allowed participants to make new personal connections that would be valuable in a response situation.

Observations identified from evaluation and feedback are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Key observations on the sessions and activity outcomes

Topic	Key observation
Confidentiality and information delivery	Over half the communications materials produced contained information that did not align to the Talking Points, indicating that at least some participants were unclear on how to use the Talking Points when developing communications material.
	Most groups found it difficult to describe the infected location without either identifying the specific property or suggesting that the pest was much more widespread.
	It was difficult to support the early reporting messages in communications to growers since Owner Reimbursement Costs (ORCs) were not available or included in the Talking Points, due to the early stage of the scenario.
Resources to support communications	Supporting resources (e.g. fact sheets and websites) were found to be useful for communications to grain producers and their support services, grain processors and animal industries dependent on grain for feed, but did not contain the required messages for other audiences, such as the supply chain (movement and storage) or international markets.
	While resources often provided good information on Karnal bunt, they were often not appropriate to support communications activities due to their format, level of detail or focus (e.g. a diagnostic protocol).

Topic	Key observation
Social media	The introduction to social media activity highlighted the importance of this platform in response communications, and emphasised the need for further analysis and practice, including an exploration of appropriate roles, responsibilities and resource allocation that may be necessary in this area.
	There was no shared appreciation for the potential speed at which information relating to a response will appear on social media (from non-official sources), and as a result, the lack of supporting material and information that is available to respond effectively.

Table 4. Key observations on the delivery of the activity

Key observation
Participants successfully generated a framework that could form the basis of a public information strategy in a real response in the grains industry.
Participants reported an improvement in their ability to produce communication material as a result of the activity.
The resulting interactions and discussions between industry and government stakeholders was rated as valuable by participants, improving an appreciation of how different Affected Parties need to work together in a response.

Evaluation against objectives

The outputs and observations above demonstrate the activity objectives were tested across the planned sessions. This was supported by the evaluation outcomes (Table 5), where two of the three activity objectives were assessed as achieved, and the third tested and identifying a capability gap.

Table 5. Summarised outcomes of independent activity evaluation

Activity objective 1: Develop the core components of a communications strategy to engage stakeholders in relation to the early stages of a response to a Karnal bunt detection	
Achieved	Participants conducted a thorough analysis of target audiences and discussed the other key elements. All groups developed a communication strategy for their target audiences that contained the suitable core components, using the template provided.
Activity objective 2: Test the ability to achieve desired communication outcomes in relation to a Karnal bunt response within the confines of the confidentiality arrangements of emergency responses under the EPPRD	
Not achieved	The activity tested communicating within the confines of confidentiality arrangements, with most groups failing to limit content in the material produced to that provided in the approved Talking Points. While participants self-rated themselves as being confident in communicating within confidentiality restrictions, and identified key limitations resulting from confidentiality, products generated by five of the six groups were assessed to contain information not endorsed for distribution.
Activity objective 3: Assess the public information resources available to stakeholders that can be utilised in a response to a Karnal bunt detection	
Achieved	Participants assessed 19 resources (e.g. fact sheets, websites and manuals) against the communication objectives. Following collation of the analysis outcomes, a proportion of the resources were identified as appropriate to support Karnal bunt communication activities, but none provided universal coverage of all the key communication objectives identified.

Appendices

Participant list

Table 6. List of participants and their contact details

Organisation	Participants	Email addresses
Australian Chicken Meat Council	Vivien Kite	Vivien.Kite@chicken.org.au
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Acronym list

Acronym	Full name
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DAWR	Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
GIMAF	Grains Industry Market Access Forum
GPA	Grain Producers Australia
GPSA	Grain Producers South Australia
GRDC	Grains Research and Development Corporation
NSW DPI	New South Wales Department of Primary Industries
ORC	Owner Reimbursement Costs
PHA	Plant Health Australia
PIRSA	Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia
QDAF	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Vic DEDJTR	Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

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