

Access to technology at a competitive price is vital for a vibrant, competitive, advanced economy. Technology includes machinery, communication and chemistry. This submission is mainly about access to chemistry. Quite often, the size of the Australian market is too small for the chemical companies to bring in modern chemistry. This is exacerbated by our regulations regarding access to chemicals. This issue is further exacerbated in new and emerging crops and regions, especially northern Australia.

An example of how this issue has affected our farming and a potential industry follows.

When growing rice in the Ord River Irrigation Area, I discovered a disease that proved to be Rice Blast. Rice Blast is found in almost every rice growing area in the world other than Southern Australia. It is effectively managed through agronomic practices, resistant varieties and fungicide spraying. With no Blast in southern Australia, little work had been done in the selection for Blast resistance in Australian varieties, from which we had selected our seed stock. Also, the fungicides used worldwide for control of Blast in Rice, while used in Australia, are not registered for use on Rice in Australia. I quickly got onto a supply of the fungicide, and applied to the APVMA to be able to use it. It is critical to apply this chemical quickly once the disease is discovered to prevent disease spread and get effective control. I was warned by the APVMA officer not to use the fungicide until a permit was given. However, it took over two weeks to get the permit, and then any treated crop could only be sold on the domestic, not the export market. As we were growing for an export market, and we have very expensive freight to any Australia market while we had a freight advantage to overseas markets, this virtually prevented us treating the crop. This decision seems crazy, as the rest of the world trades in rice treated with this fungicide for Blast control. If anything, one would have expected a restriction on the sale of the product in the Australian market until protocols had been developed, but not the export market where those protocols are readily accessible. Personally we lost \$200k on this crop. We don't know if treating the disease would have been effective, but at least give us the chance. It will be difficult to get us to try rice again. AND we are the innovators here, always trying new things!

SOLUTION. Allow farmers to use chemicals on crops and for problems that they are registered in other countries/states providing those states have a proven track record in Agro-chemical registration and use. Eg Texas, California, Hawaii, Canada, UK. At present I understand we don't even allow trial data from trials outside of Australia to be used in the chemical registration process, making chemical registration very expensive for our small market and severely limiting the available chemistry available in Australia, much of which would have significant financial and environmental advantages for us.

SOLUTION. Allow the export/sale of any product providing any non-Australian standard chemical treatment of the crop/product is documented on the sale and export paperwork.

I don't believe these changes would have any adverse effect on our production or marketing, but would be effective in improving our competitiveness.

Regards

Robert Boshammer

Bosh Farming

