

Biosecurity – Challenges and Opportunities.

Paul Zalai, Director FTA, speaks to Andrew Christie, Director – Andrew Christie Consulting.

1. PAUL ZALAI – As a consultant, you work across import and export supporting industry with biosecurity compliance, how would you describe the current industry climate?

The climate is full of both opportunity and challenge, particularly for Australian importers. BMSB and other emerging risks continue to cause changes to biosecurity policy and procedure, and it can be challenging to keep up. There is no doubt that we will see new and evolving risks into the future, and these too will drive change and put additional pressure on industry and governing bodies.

I think communication will continue to be a challenge. As trade volumes increase and industry races to be on the front foot, risks are changing, and governing

bodies will require additional assurances. How we manage this will be a challenge for all of us.

2. PAUL ZALAI – Do you have any advice for industry members in terms of meeting these challenges and staying ahead of the game?

Be organised. Leaving anything to the eleventh hour in the current climate (and even more so, into the future) will most certainly end in disaster. Have your paperwork in order, ask questions early and be aware of your obligations when requesting an inspection.

Be aware. Policies and requirements may change over time, advanced knowledge of this means you will be better prepared for the change.

Be flexible. Be open to changing your internal practises and procedures to better suit what is required of you as an importer. If you need support as to how you can maximise efficiencies, seek advice from a consultant or industry representative.

3. PAUL ZALAI – You mentioned the current industry climate is also full of opportunity, what opportunities do you see in the near future?

The combination of increase in risk and increase in workload, brings opportunity for innovation and ways to better manage risk and demonstrate greater assurance. Over the last 18 months, I have been developing an App (B.I.E.R.S – Biosecurity Import Export Reporting System) to increase efficiencies in process and reporting.

I see opportunities for B.I.E.R.S and technologies like it, to support industry

with managing their own workload and biosecurity requirements whilst also supporting the Department of Agriculture with management of risk and assurance of compliance.

I believe the future holds enhanced collaboration between industry and governing bodies when it comes to managing risk whilst facilitating trade in ever increasing volumes. This is a long-term vision, but it requires us to start thinking about it now. The opportunities, the risks and the mitigation strategies. It is quite exciting.

4. PAUL ZALAI – Tell us more about B.I.E.R.S, and how it is supporting industry.

B.I.E.R.S, in its entirety is designed to act as a conduit between industry activity and biosecurity requirements and provide fast and efficient reporting.

The first release of B.I.E.R.S is focussed on imported cargo fumigation with Methyl Bromide. It calculates fumigation rates and equilibrium percentages and reports passed and failed fumigation outcomes. B.I.E.R.S completely removes the need for a manual/paper-based fumigation reporting system and allows multiple pages of information to be recorded and stored, reducing time and decreasing the number of entries recorded with errors.

B.I.E.R.S provides fumigators and the Department of Agriculture, real time reporting through the fumigation dashboard and access to data such as total methyl bromide use, which was once a completely manual and often, inaccurate calculation.

The first release is in the final days of testing (thanks to a handful of industry participants).



5. PAUL ZALAI – What have been some of the early successes and challenges of implementing something like this?

Scoping the requirements of the system was my first and biggest challenge. B.I.E.R.S needed to provide industry (in this case, fumigators) with efficiency and provide additional benefit and also needed to satisfy the needs of the Department of Agriculture and provide the required assurances that risk is being managed and policy is being followed.

Back and forth with both end users was tedious but absolutely necessary to ensure a product that adds value. Then there is the cost, innovation can be costly.

One of the biggest successes so far has been industry take up and offers to get involved and support the process. I have been well supported by industry and the Department of Agriculture, which really demonstrates the appetite for innovation and change.

B.I.E.R.S has processed over 800 fumigations. I am very pleased about that.

6. PAUL ZALAI - What additional functionality do you have planned for B.I.E.R.S?

I am currently working on increasing the capacity of the fumigation function. This means including heat and sulphuryl fluoride treatments and to increase dashboard access and usability for depots, freight forwarders and transport companies.

Next cab off the rank will be working closely with the Department of Agriculture to identify possible opportunities for industry to demonstrate assurance and automated reporting requirements for inspection functions.

I plan to continue engaging with the Department and working closely with industry to identify prospects for mutually beneficial opportunities to increase efficiency and manage current and emerging biosecurity risks.

7. PAUL ZALAI – How can industry find out more about B.I.E.R.S?

I will be sure to keep industry engaged and up to date as B.I.E.R.S progresses, however I welcome anyone to contact me via phone or email should they wish to know more about B.I.E.R.S and how it may help their organisation.

“ *Be open to changing your internal practises and procedures to better suit what is required of you as an importer* ”

Do you need assistance with...

Biosecurity

- Biosecurity import commodity research and analysis
- Illegal logging
- Biosecurity approved third party arrangements
- Biosecurity Approved Premises
- Biosecurity import permits
- Biosecurity compliance
- Biosecurity training and assessment

Piece level Screening

- Designing screening processes using x-ray, metal detector and ETD.
- Investigate and propose the most appropriate equipment.
- Provide start to finish processes for export cargo
- Develop Standard operating procedures
- Provide insight into legislation in relation to piece level screening
- Provide assistance in attaining either off Airport RACA or Accredited Cargo Agent status

**If your answer is YES,
we can help**



Phone: 0409 447 987

andrew@andrewchristieconsulting.com.au

andrewchristieconsulting.com.au

