



Plant Exports - Regional Assurance Manager (RAM) Network Newsletter

January to March 2025



Here are some of the main trends the RAMs have picked up from industry this quarter:

- There is an estimated 5,000,000 tonnes of wheat still being held in storage, expected to be exported from Brisbane over the coming quarter.
- Grain exports continue from all Western Australian (WA) ports and container packing facilities following last season's third largest harvest on record. Bulk terminals have been loading vessels back-to-back and expect to continue doing so for most of 2025.
- Rice harvest is about to begin in Leeton, New South Wales (NSW) and Deniliquin, Tasmania, with yields expected between 470,000–480,000 tonnes. Quality is set to improve due to better weather and enhanced management of new varieties.
- Mung bean plantings have increased in Central Queensland (QLD). Although still a niche crop, packers are anticipating an up to 50% rise in intake compared to last season's strong volumes.
- East coast sorghum harvest is progressing well, despite rain events in Northern QLD. Yields near 2.3 million tonnes, with 95% bound for China.
- Cotton crops in the Wagga Wagga region of NSW are expected to match, if not surpass, last year's results in both quality and yield.
- Cotton picking is underway in the Darling Downs region of QLD. The 2024–25 cotton season is forecast to produce approximately 4.4 million bales, with the crop's total value – including both seed and lint – expected to exceed \$3 billion.
- Harvesting continues across several sandalwood plantations in the Ord River region of WA, as the land is being prepared for cotton planting. A significant portion of the harvested sandalwood is being exported.
- In Victoria, bulk in vessel log exports from Portland to India are ongoing, while exports of bulk woodchips are occurring more sparingly.
- Table grape production in the Sunraysia has reached its peak, with cold rooms quickly clearing as fruit moves steadily into all markets. A further 4–6 weeks of strong activity is still expected.
- Table grape exports from WA are continuing strongly following a successful season so far, with shipments to Asian markets expected to continue for another month.
- Citrus exports from QLD are forecast to be approximately 50% higher than last season.
- Blueberry farms in Northern NSW were impacted by Tropical Cyclone Alfred, but damage was relatively minor. Some greenhouses lost their plastic coverings, and several days of reduced sunlight created challenges for crop development.
- Hay exporters in South Australia are experiencing lower production volumes for export markets, with some facilities operating at less than normal capacity. Meanwhile, a significant volume of hay and straw is being sold domestically to northern regions of Australia.





Good news stories

Inspection continuity at grain facility

Management at a grain establishment recently sought assistance from their local RAM to address a pressing operational challenge. The facility, which operates 24/7 to load export grain vessels, anticipated a demanding schedule of back-to-back shipments following an abundant 2024 harvest. However, a sudden reduction in their team of AOs created a critical gap in personnel required to inspect export consignments.

The RAM promptly advised management of the importance of replenishing their on-site AO numbers to meet the facility's rigorous shipping schedule. As an interim measure, they recommended engaging self-employed third party AOs in the region or reaching out to the department to book a departmental AO for the inspections. A link to the [public register of Australian plant export authorised officers](#) on the department's website was provided to management, alongside guidance [on requesting a departmental inspection](#).

Taking this advice into account, management identified potential new candidates among their team to become authorised as AOs. The RAM worked alongside management and the new AO candidates, assisting with application submissions and collaborating with the Authorised Officer Program (AOP) to manage the processing of these applications. Coordination efforts also extended to liaising with the Plant Export Assessors (PEAs) to facilitate timely training and assessment delivery.

To date, the establishment has successfully maintained inspection operations, and the new AO candidates are progressing toward their authorisations. The RAM also provided information on the [reinstatement process](#) for former AOs, should they choose to return to their former roles.

The management and AO candidates expressed their gratitude for the prompt and thorough support provided by the RAM, whose efforts ensured the facility could continue meeting inspection requirements.

Supporting Tasmania's seed exports



RAMs continue to demonstrate their commitment to assisting industry and fostering new networks across government, state departments, and businesses to facilitate Australian plant and plant product exports. In Tasmania, where there is a thriving native seed export industry, the RAMs have been instrumental in providing support.

Traditionally, native seed exporters have relied on the Tasmanian State Department of Natural Resources and Environment for export inspection services. Recognising an opportunity to educate industry about the different export pathways available to them, the local RAM initiated contact with several companies, organising meetings to introduce the RAM network and its role in ensuring smooth export operations.

One business, specialising in seed cleaning rather than seed exporting, recently sought assistance from their local RAM regarding the process to register their facility as an export registered establishment with the department. Aiming to add value to their operations by offering export inspection services on-site, the company also asked about the third-party AO authorisation process. The RAM shared detailed insights into the programs and provided information on how the establishment may opt to have an onsite staff member complete the application, training and assessment processes to become an AO or engage the services of a self-employed third-party AO.

Following a decision to establish their own on-site AO, the RAM facilitated collaboration between the exporter and AOP to support the candidate's training and assessment. Additionally, the RAM seized the opportunity to advise the company about how they might incorporate electronic data interchange (also known as EDI) and phytosanitary certificate printing capacity onsite to improve efficiency. The client currently has the phytosanitary certificates managed by a freight forwarder, who uses the department documentation centres to print and post certificates, resulting in delays and added costs.

The RAM extended their support further by sharing contact details and information with other businesses that could benefit from these services. These efforts reflect their dedication to supporting industry growth and ensuring Australia's exports continue to flourish in an increasingly competitive global market.

Successful resolution for pellet consignment

A recent challenge involving a consignment of containerised lucerne pellets bound for New Caledonia has highlighted the importance of timely intervention and collaboration. A RAM was contacted by a client seeking assistance with a consignment for a new customer. The consignment had not been authorised by Assessment Services Export because it was missing a passed empty container record.

The client explained that customer had arranged the container for loading, transport and shipping themselves and the client had not become aware of the container issue until the consignment could not be authorised. As the container was already in transit to the port, the client was hopeful that their RAM could explain what the options were to rectify the issue.

The RAM promptly contacted the Grain and Seed Export Program (GSEP) to advise of the issue and seek approval for the client to transfer the product from the non-approved container to an approved container. Whilst the RAM was discussing the issue with GSEP, the client's customer had contacted the importer in New Caledonia.

The importer then sought approval from New Caledonia's National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) to have the consignment imported without a phytosanitary certificate and the approval was granted. The client passed this information on to the RAM as they were again not sure how to proceed.

Working closely with the client to review the documentation provided by New Caledonia's NPPO, the RAM drew on their skills and experience to determine that it was necessary to seek approval from GSEP to export the consignment without the request for permit being authorised. This approval was granted.

Further measures will now be taken by GSEP to determine if this it was an isolated waiver to importing country requirements or if the details for importing lucerne pellets to New Caledonia need to be amended in the Manual of Importing Country Requirements (Micor) to assist industry with any future shipments.

Thanks to the swift action from the RAM, the client avoided significant costs and successfully exported their customer's consignment. The client appreciated the assistance the RAM provided them to address this complex challenge.



Mobile Bulk Loading (MBL) in Newcastle



Management at an establishment in Newcastle worked closely with their local RAM when using a mobile bulk loader to load canola meal for export in bulk vessels at the Port of Newcastle for the first time.

Establishment management had received approval from GSEP to undertake mobile bulk loading operations. Upon reviewing past consignments and conducting a review of the establishment's operations, GSEP identified several issues, including documentation errors made by AOs in their inspection records. The RAM was made aware of these issues and took the opportunity to provide assistance during the first load out using the mobile bulk loading system. The RAM conducted a 'toolbox talk' with the AOs to clarify the requirements and provided example inspection records to demonstrate acceptable inspection documentation.

The RAM also visited the establishment to provide guidance about satisfying the requirements to use mobile bulk loaders. The RAM highlighted areas of the establishment where improvements could be made to allow for more thorough inspection practices. The exporter was very receptive to the suggestions offered by the RAM and stated they will arrange for changes to be made to site machinery.

Through collaboration between the RAM, management at the establishment and AOs, skills, knowledge and practices were improved and compliance with departmental requirements was achieved.

This reflects the power of partnership, ensuring all parties are well-positioned for a thriving future in exports.



RAM Round up

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has recently amended the requirements for in transit cold treatment (ITCT) of citrus and table grapes exported to Japan. Refer to [IAN 2025-13](#) for more information.

RAMs met with industry about changes to prescribed grain and plant products instructional materials and to discuss what the changes mean in practice. Changes were implemented on 28 April 2025. Refer to IAN [2025-12](#) and [2025-17](#) for more information and access to updated instructional material.

From 8 March 2025, India's tariff arrangement for lentil exports have been updated. Refer to [IAN 2025-08](#) for more information.

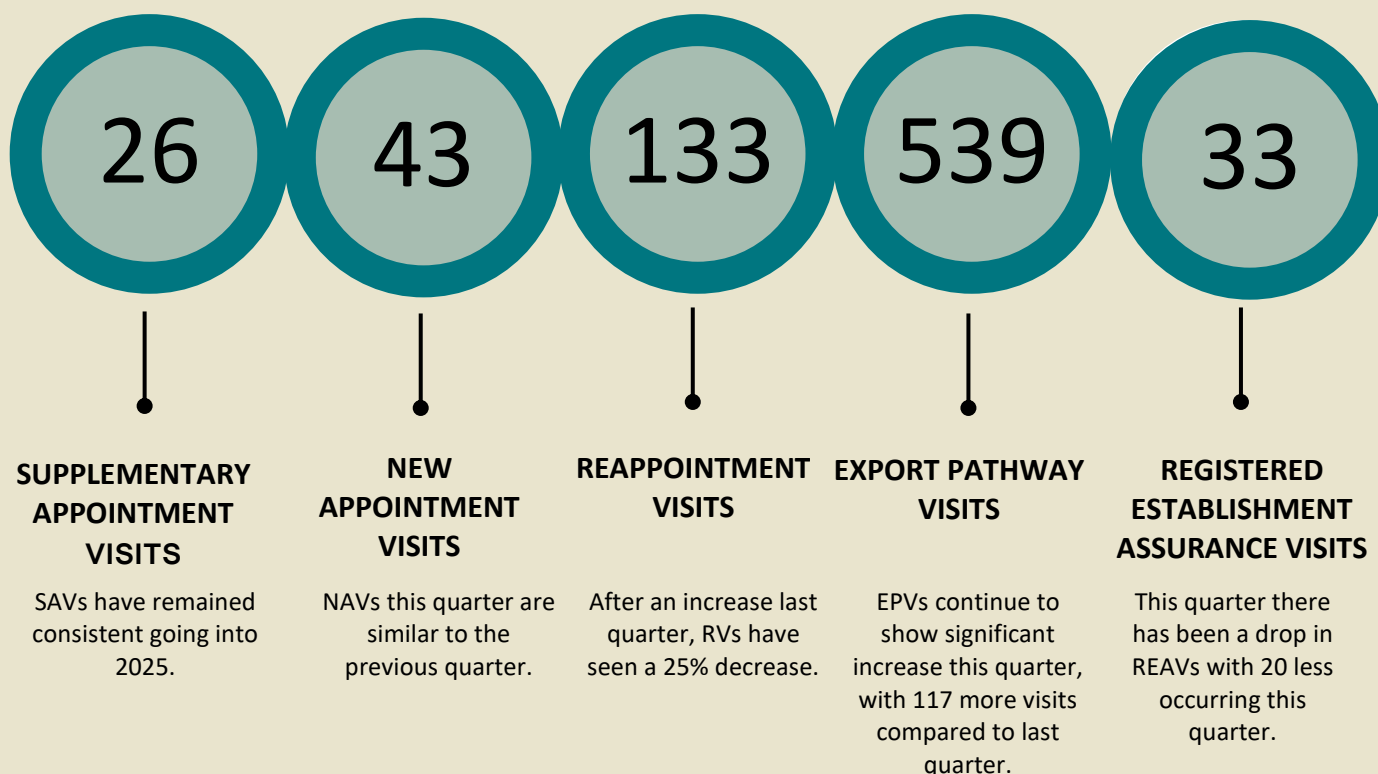
In March 2025, 100 industry representatives gathered in Toowoomba for the Australian Cotton Shippers Association's inaugural Post Farm-Gate Forum. The event brought together logistics firms, shipping lines, merchants, ginneries, and warehousing companies to collaborate and develop solutions to the cotton industry's challenges in the year ahead.



The Stats

RAMS VISITS

NATIONAL TOTALS

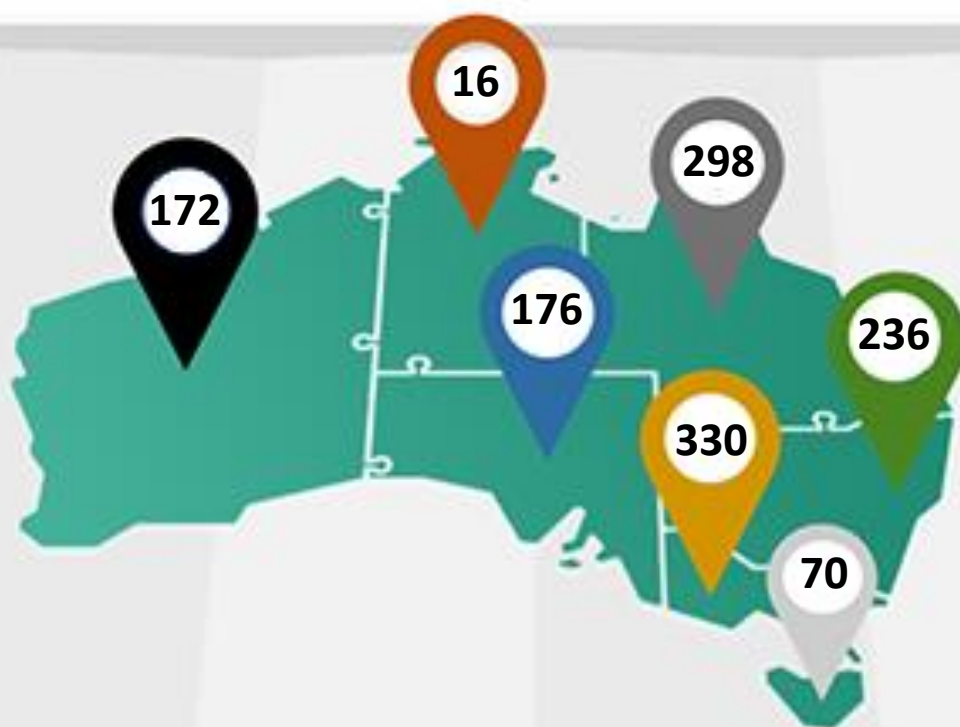


RAMs completed a total of **774** visits over the past quarter. Here is the breakdown of visits based on state and visit type.

	SAV	NAV	RV	EPV	REAV
SA	1	12	12	86	3
VIC	0	3	21	124	9
QLD	4	4	22	148	4
NSW	7	9	33	90	6
WA	14	15	45	70	5
TAS	0	0	0	16	3
NT	0	0	0	5	3

RAMs received a total of **1298** **Client Contact Calls** in the
January – March 2025 quarter.

Here is a breakdown of where those calls came from.



The Regional Assurance Manager network was part of the Australian Government's Modernising Agricultural Trade initiative, a government plan to improve the way we regulate Australia's agricultural trade to better support our exporters.



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