



24/12/20

RE: Submissions for A1193 submitted by Queensland Government “Irradiation as a phytosanitary measure for all fresh fruit and vegetables.”

To FSANZ,

Momack Produce is an Australian family owned asparagus farming company that produces for the domestic and export markets. The company started with just 12Ha of land outside Koo Wee Rup and is now proudly one of Australia’s leading asparagus producers.

Asparagus is an extremely perishable crop, suited to a limited number of growing regions in Australia. Our growth can in part be attributed to the pride we take in sustainable production practices with soft farming techniques. We are stewards of the land for the next generation.

Currently, the only common biosecurity treatment available to protect asparagus producers from the spread of pests and associated disease is Methyl Bromide. The commercial impact on product quality is severe. Product should be held at 0-2 degrees and fumigation requires the product to be heated to damaging temperatures above 15 degrees for hours at a time, drastically increasing product wastage.

As growers committed to sustainability and quality, it is devastating to see our quality sacrificed with a harsh and damaging process that applies an ozone depleting gas which is highly toxic for insects. While the gas dissipates rapidly ensuring product is safe for consumption, it remains a concern for work-place health and safety with organisations such as Fair Trade banning it from use in their certified products.

There is however another end point solution that recently became available to us locally through the development of an X-Ray phytosanitary irradiation treatment facility in Melbourne. It is cold chain friendly, chemical free, ozone friendly and soon to be carbon neutral with the installation of a renewable energy source at the facility.

The only barrier to utilising this treatment is a lack of food standards. We strongly urge FSANZ to approach this treatment and proposal from a scientific perspective. We as an industry will be able to deliver consumers high quality produce and demonstrate to them the benefits to the environment.

Sincerely

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