

Your Levy At Work



Greenlife Industry Australia

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The critical role of extension officers in enhancing biosecurity in production nurseries

Extension officers play a critical role in supporting production nurseries by guiding them through complex biosecurity regulations and sustainable practices to ensure long term success and resilience both on a nursery level and for the broader industry.

Achieving the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) and implementing BioSecure HACCP can give production nurseries an edge – safeguarding plant health and biosecurity leading to increased productivity and profitability.

Barry Naylor, one of Greenlife Industry Australia's (GIA) most experienced extension officers, brings over 40 years of horticultural expertise as a second-generation nursery professional. He has dedicated his career to enhancing nurseries' biosecurity measures, particularly in Queensland, by helping them integrate BioSecure HACCP and other best practices into their operations.

"Biosecurity is about more than protecting plants; it's about safeguarding the industry. By integrating proactive measures like BioSecure HACCP, nurseries can stay ahead of potential risks and ensure long term success," Barry said.

Extension officers' role in biosecurity

Under the strategic levy-funded project, National Biosecurity and Sustainable Plant Production Program (NY20001), Barry's expertise helps nurseries reach NIASA and BioSecure HACCP standards. By doing so, nurseries can efficiently manage water, energy, and growing media, while maintaining the highest quality—ultimately enhancing biosecurity, productivity, and resilience both at the nursery level and across the broader industry.

"Nurseries face increasing pressures to manage biosecurity risks, including pests, diseases, and weeds. My role is to support them with proactive solutions that

safeguard long-term plant health and profitability,' Barry said.

Key components of BioSecure HACCP

BioSecure HACCP is a robust biosecurity management system focused on four core areas.

- managing exports – ensuring that nurseries meet export standards
- site surveillance – continuous monitoring of nursery sites for biosecurity risks
- crop monitoring – regular checks on plant health, pests and disease pressures
- dispatch management – ensuring safe and compliant delivery processes of nursery stock

Barry emphasises the comprehensive nature of BioSecure HACCP.

"It covers all the critical touchpoints of nursery operations, from monitoring crop health to ensuring safe dispatch," Barry said.

"It's about building a comprehensive system that not only meets standards but actively protects and enhances the value of every plant that leaves the nursery."

Tools for success

By working with extension officers like Barry, nurseries not only achieve essential accreditations but also implement best management practices that enhance plant production.

The extension officers can point nurseries to a range of tools and resources that can help them navigate regulations and practices.

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Barry points to the Audit Management System (AMS) as a great example. This is a digital tool that streamlines record keeping and enhances biosecurity.

“The Audit Management System empowers nurseries to not only meet accreditation standards but to elevate their entire operations,” Barry said.

It’s a practical tool that turns data into actionable insights, helping businesses strengthen their biosecurity and improve overall efficiency.”

Using AMS, in real time nurseries can track critical data, such as pesticide applications and pest pressures. Growers can analyse the data to identify trends and make informed decisions, allowing them to implement proactive biosecurity measures before issues escalate.

AMS is not only a tool for compliance but also a catalyst for operational improvement. By having access to real time data, nursery managers can more easily identify vulnerabilities, streamline process and reduce waste. Ultimately this leads to healthier plants and more profitable operations.

Success through collaboration

Barry’s hands-on approach ensures that nurseries are not only meeting their accreditation requirements but are also adopting best management practices that drive strategic success.

“I work with growers to improve plant health, reduce biosecurity risks and increase profitability through smarter, more efficient practices,” Barry said.

A core aspect of Barry’s role is guiding nurseries in aligning with NIASA and BioSecure HACCP standards, which strengthens biosecurity while boosting marketability and competitiveness. By meeting these benchmarks, nurseries can confidently promote their plants as biosecure, healthy and resilient.

The value of extension officers

Funded by Hort Innovation under the *National Biosecurity and Sustainable Plant Production Program’ (NY20001)*, the nationally mobilised network of extension officers ensures that nurseries in every state and territory have access to the expertise needed to thrive.

To improve your plant production processes, contact the GIA extension officer in your area:

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