

On-farm Quality Assurance Program



The elements of Graincare

The *Graincare* Code of Practice sets out the requirements to achieve accreditation under the program. It consists of 13 elements that establish a minimum quality standard for grain production:

- Paddock selection and preparation
- Crop management
- Persistent chemicals in soil
- Paddock, crop and grain treatments
- Obtaining and storing chemicals
- Inputs and service suppliers
- Harvesting and harvest equipment
- On-farm storage and handling
- Off-farm transport
- Training
- Internal auditing and corrective action
- Quality records
- Document control

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Graincare on-farm QA program

Graincare is an on-farm program designed to assist you in producing grain that will satisfy the quality assurance (QA) requirements of the market. *Graincare* is an **auditable Code of Practice**, which covers cereals, pulses and oilseeds, and was developed in partnership with the wider grains industry.

Graincare focuses on **food and feed safety**. This is the 'non-negotiable' quality requirement demanded by all customers, and is an area that requires rigour in any on-farm quality assurance program.

In order to become accredited to *Graincare*, growers will have to first register in *Graincare* and then undertake an external audit against the requirements of the Code.

The scope of Graincare

Graincare is based on HACCP principles (HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). HACCP is the internationally recognised method of managing food safety risks and is a critical component of any food safety plan. *Graincare* is structured so that, throughout the production process, growers are asked:

- to identify where a hazard has arisen that could compromise the food or feed safety of the grain that they are producing;
- to identify the most appropriate point in the production process for implementing a control measure for this hazard so that at the end of the production process the grain is safe to sell; and
- to record when a food or feed safety hazard has arisen and the control measures implemented, as well as the outcome of those control measures.

How Graincare works for you

Graincare recognises that growers already have a very good record of producing safe grain and aims to be flexible in not telling growers *how* they should manage food and feed safety risks. Instead, it provides growers with a simple and effective mechanism for satisfying customer requirements for food and feed safety quality assurance. The program leaves on-farm management decisions to growers, as they are experienced in grain production and are able to seek specialist advice when required to manage a food or feed safety risk.

“Graincare doesn’t tell you how to farm, it tells everyone else HOW WELL you farm.”



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The benefits of *Graincare*

Development of growers' farm business management skills in the area of food and feed safety.

Graincare focuses on Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), which includes practices such as cleaning storage facilities before filling them with grain, applying chemicals at recommended rates and ensuring that spray contractors are competent to perform the task asked of them. These practices help manage food and feed safety and minimise the risks that arise on-farm. Where a grower is not familiar with GAP principles, adopting *Graincare* will provide benefits through improved on-farm management practices. Where growers are already following GAP, few changes will need to be implemented in order to meet the requirements of *Graincare*. For most growers, existing records will cover the majority of the recording requirements for GAP in the *Graincare* program.

***Graincare* will maximise growers' marketing opportunities in terms of market access, price, or both.**

When a marketer or grower is marketing quality assured grain to a customer, they are marketing *confidence* – confidence for the customer that they are purchasing grain that is reliably and consistently safe. This is an important dimension for growers because customers want to be confident that the grain they purchase meets their specific requirements. Confidence assists them in maintaining their own competitiveness and minimising the risks of a food or feed safety incident in their production processes. Growers who can give customers this confidence will become preferred suppliers who have better access to markets and may be able to achieve better returns than their competitors. In some circumstances, growers may not be able to access markets if they are not quality assured.

***Graincare* will assist in minimising government regulation of on-farm food safety in the grains industry.**

Currently, Commonwealth and State Governments are prepared to give primary industries the opportunity to implement their own industry-based food safety mechanisms, rather than having to comply with strict regulatory-based mechanisms. If growers are able to demonstrate that they are producing safe food through industry-based programs like *Graincare*, then governments will not need to establish regulations that merely duplicate these programs.

***Graincare* will assist growers in understanding and satisfying the requirements of their customers.**

Growers, marketers, end-users and bulk handling companies within the grains industry have developed the specific requirements of *Graincare*. Other on-farm quality assurance programs and government representatives were also involved. *Graincare* is reviewed regularly in order to ensure that the program remains relevant to the changing needs of growers, their customers and the market.

Graincare is linked to QA programs in related primary industry sectors

Graincare realises that the majority of grain growers are mixed farmers who do not want to introduce a number of different quality assurance programs on their property for each product they produce, especially if these programs have conflicting requirements and make multiple audits necessary.

To overcome this problem, *Graincare* offers a **modular approach** to on-farm quality assurance appropriate for mixed farm enterprises. Different modules can be adopted according to the different commodities being produced on an individual property.

The LPA Quality Assurance CATTLECARE and Flockcare programs consist of the same three modules: Management, Chemicals and Livestock. As the requirements contained in the Management and Chemicals Modules are applicable to all farm enterprises, *Graincare* utilises these two modules and adds a Grain Module to complete the *Graincare* program. The National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme and "Freshcare" (a quality assurance program for fresh fruit and vegetables) also form part of this modular system.

The three *Graincare* modules are:

- **Management** (which is the same as CATTLECARE and Flockcare);
- **Chemicals** (which is the same as CATTLECARE and Flockcare); and
- **Grain.**

As an example of how this modular system will work, if a producer wishes to become accredited to both *Graincare* and CATTLECARE, then they would implement four modules: Management, Chemicals, Grain and Livestock. One trained auditor is able to audit all modules.



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