

NMI submission to Senate Committee



Australian Government

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20 July 2011

The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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RE: Submission to the inquiry into operational issues in export grain networks.

Please find attached a submission by the National Measurement Institute to the Committee's inquiry into *Operational issues in export grain networks*.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Laurie Besley 
Chief Executive and Chief Metrologist
National Measurement Institute

SUBMISSION TO The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport

FROM National Measurement Institute
PO Box 264
Lindfield NSW 2070
Australia

DATE 20th June 2011

RE: Inquiry into operational issues in export grain networks

The information provided below is mostly relevant to the Inquiry's term of reference:

- (e) the absence of uniform receipt, testing and classification standards and practices and any implications for growers and/or for Australia's reputation as a quality supplier

The National Measurement Institute (NMI) is a division within the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). NMI is Australia's peak measurement body responsible for biological, chemical, legal, physical and trade measurement.

In 2008, the *National Measurement Act 1960* was amended to provide for the Commonwealth to administer trade measurement nationally. Prior to that, trade measurement was administered by the States and Territories with the Commonwealth involved under a Ministerial agreement. The definition of use for trade in the National Measurement Act (and previously in State and Territories legislation) embraces measurements made of a quality parameter that can determine the unit price and therefore the consideration for a transaction in a commodity being traded.

For some years NMI has been working with the grain industry through its Grain Quality Measurements Committee to address concerns about grain protein and moisture measurements. NMI has introduced a metrological control system for grain protein measuring instruments used at grain receival sites that comprises:

- A national standard for protein measuring instruments (NMI M8),
- Pattern approval under the Act for protein measuring instruments, and
- Verification of protein measuring instruments.

NMI has also developed a calibration infrastructure based on a collaborative survey of grain protein reference instruments in order to develop whole grain primary Australian Certified Reference Materials for wheat and barley.

NMI has initiated and provides the secretariat for a technical committee on 'Instruments for quality analysis of agricultural products' within the International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML) and has almost completed the development of an international standard for grain protein measuring instruments.

OIML is also revising its recommendation R 59 on the metrological characteristics of moisture meters for cereal grains and oilseeds. NMI plans to publish a national standard for grain moisture measuring instruments and intends to adopt OIML R 59 once the revision is finalised. In the next two years NMI will also be working on an international project coordinated by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures to ensure that certified reference materials are available worldwide to calibrate instruments for the determination of the level of moisture in cereal grains.