

AuSPICA

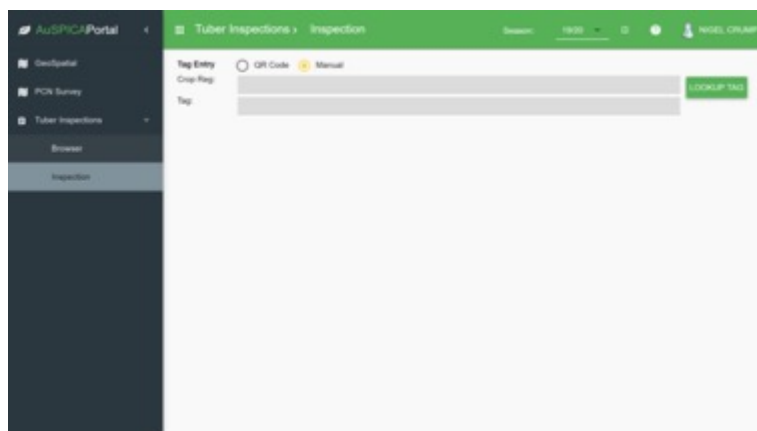
Newsletter July Edition 2020

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[AuSPICA Seed Tuber Inspection Now Online](#)



Seed tuber inspections go online; all certified seed potatoes under the AuSPICA program are now done using world leading online tuber assessment software. The immediate benefit is there is no longer paperwork to be managed by inspectors and growers as all seed lots inspections are emailed to the client. In the background, summaries of product certified per plot and evidence of compliance requirements are tallied and stored. This new technology adopted by AuSPICA further strengthens the traceability and compliance consistent with seed potato certification standards.

[Managing Blackleg in the AuSPICA Seed Scheme - A Success Story.](#)

In 2018/19 season, AuSPICA had identified the occurrence of several new bacterial pathogen associated the disease complex blackleg of potatoes. In some cases, the blackleg had caused significant crop loss of up to 40%, and in other cases tuber rots were observed. This prompted AuSPICA to take immediate action to mitigate the risk posed by the new bacterial pathogens.

INTERVENTION ACTIONS ADOPTED BY AuSPICA TO ADDRESS BLACKLEG

1. Reduce the total tolerance of blackleg in the Scheme
2. Adopt a zero tolerance specifically to the pathogen *Dickeya diathicola*
3. Laboratory test all suspicious symptoms of blackleg to support visual assessments.

AuSPICA has a zero tolerance to the pathogen *Dickeya dianthicola* due to the significance of this pathogen, and the crop loss reported in overseas experiences. This zero-tolerance approach also aligns with the blackleg tolerances in Western Australia.

Previous surveys had shown an associated with the incidence of *Dickeya* in seed

lots sourced from Tasmania. To stop *Dickeya dianthicola* entering the AuSPICA scheme, all Black Label seed from Tasmania is required to have a 400-tuber laboratory test to show the absence of *Dickeya dianthicola*. A copy of the laboratory report will need to be forwarded to AuSPICA when crops are submitted for certification.

In addition to *Dickeya dianthicola*, the tolerance for the old Blackleg has been revised to include the remaining new Blackleg species, *Pectobacterium parmentieri* (PP), *Pectobacterium carotovorum brasiliense* (PCB). New tolerances are as follows:

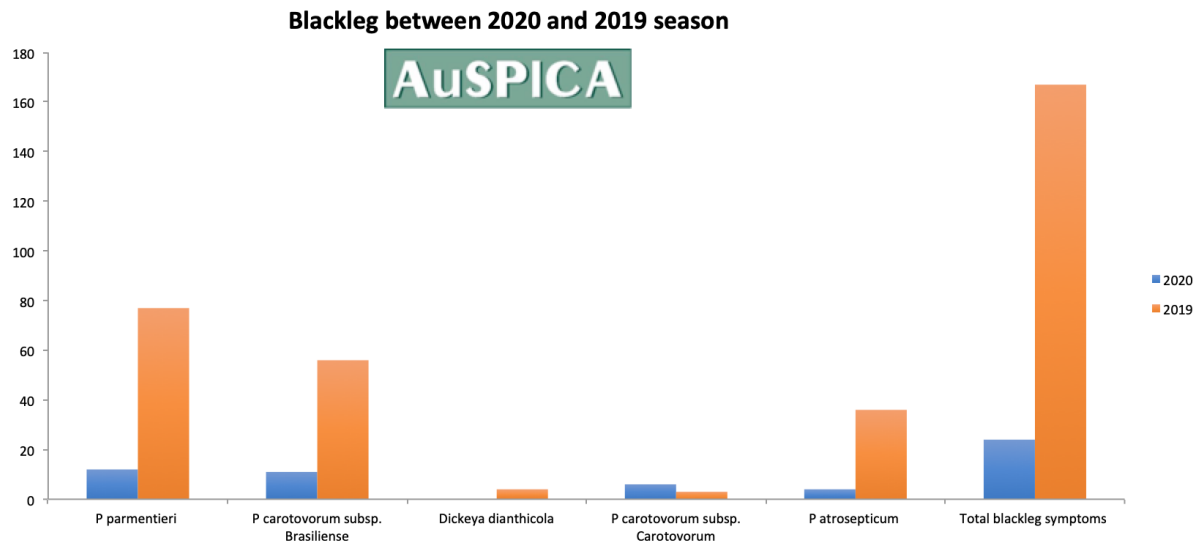
Field rating	Label	Previous Blackleg tolerance %	Revised Blackleg tolerance %
1	Black	0.01	0.01
2	Black	0.1	0.1
3	Red	2	1
4	Blue	2	2

The best way to reduce the risk of Blackleg related problems is to plant clean seed, and disinfest potato equipment between lots using a quaternary ammonium based disinfectant. Diseased plants can be rogued, provided all plant parts including tubers are removed from the field, however in some cases, potato tubers can be asymptomatic but still harbor the bacteria causing spread of the disease.

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION LEADING TO SUCCESS

During the 2019/2020 season crop inspections, AuSPICA collected a total of 24 plant samples that had symptoms of the new blackleg disease. All of these were negative to *Dickeya dianthicola* (DD). Of the tested samples, 19 samples were tested for all 5 pathogens (specific analysis) and 5 samples were tested for *Dickeya dianthicola* (DD) only. Although this is early days, this result is fantastic news as it highlights the success of the blackleg intervention implemented by AuSPICA. The industry as a whole must not be complacent, awareness must be maintained on the importance of this disease in particular the potential for widespread crop loss. Use of clean certified seed, supported with robust laboratory diagnostics, and an on-farm hygiene program are all key in the ongoing management of this disease. AuSPICA will continue to monitor the disease and adjust policy as required to ensure we best manage the disease with the seed

scheme.



[AuSPICA General Manager Appointed as a Director of the World Potato Congress](#)

Romain Cools, President and CEO of the World Potato Congress Inc. (WPC) announced that three new Directors are being appointed to its Board effective July 1, 2020. Dr. Nigel Crump, Australia and Mrs. Elven Huang, China are former WPC International Advisors and Mr. Bret Nedrow, USA are all welcomed additions to WPC bringing with them vast experiences in the global potato industry.

The Chair of Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority (AuSPICA), Kay Spierings was extremely supportive of Dr Nigel Crump's appointment as director of the WPC.

Dr Crump is the General Manager, of AuSPICA which is a not-for-profit and industry-based organisation in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales that provides seed potato certification and other professional services to the Australian potato industry.

"Dr Crump has an immense working knowledge of the potato industry on a national and global level and he will make a significant contribution the board of the WPC."

Dr Crump has a PhD in Agricultural Science and a diverse background in a number of sectors including science, industry and government. He has extensive experience in business process, service, operations, planning and policy making. Dr Crump has a strong background in formulating and implementing policy to support trade using good science-based rationale, particularly in relation to potato pest and disease issues.

Dr Crump is actively involved in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Specialized Section on Seed Potatoes, representing Australia. Dr

Crump is a Deputy Chair of the UNECE group.

The Australian Potato Industry will benefit from Dr Crump appointment to this international role.

Australia is expected to host the WPC in Adelaide in 2023.

[Knowledge Hub Shed Poster - Get One Now!](#)



Dr Steve Johnson "signs off" on the first AusPICA Knowledge Hub shed poster on physiological age of seed potatoes.

This informative poster is available to all seed and affiliated members and is \$22 for non members.

Contact: auspica@auspica.org.au

[Australian representatives to the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe \(UNECE\)](#)

Dr Nigel Crump and Nellie Malseed represented Australia in the recent UNECE Seed Potato Specialized Section on the Standardization of Seed Potatoes in June. Due to COVID-19 the forty-seventh session was held via teleconference and

chaired by Ms Hannah Kortemaa (Finland). Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States and Zimbabwe.



Dr Crump is a Deputy Chair of the UNECE group and presented a draft guide on minituber production that was collated by a working group.

This minituber guide utilises previous international work on the UNECE Seed Potato Standard and International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM). Delegations were requested to provide photos for the final version of this guide. The meeting discussed the Revision of the Standard for Seed Potatoes and a working group of Australia, Finland, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom will continue work and revisions to the standard to be presented in September 2020.

A discussion, lead by the United States on the draft bacterial testing methodologies survey was had. The survey surrounds the methods used by seed potato authorities on the testing of bacterial pathogen groups (Blackleg, *Ralstonia*, *Clavibacter*). This survey is in its final stages of editing and will be sent out to countries for completion.

[Crop Scouting for Commercial Potato Growers](#)

How does AuSPICA help commercial potato growers identify disease pressures and assist decision making?

As you already know AuSPICA works largely with seed potato growers all over Australia, what you might not know about is the crop scouting they do for commercial potato growers as well.

AuSPICA has trained staff in identification of potato diseases and pests, general crop scouting on commercial fields is often needed to identify and assess crop health, knowing how your crop is growing is crucial for decision making. With proper plant diagnostics, identification of potato crop issues or stresses will give the tools needed to ensure the grower knows exactly what they are dealing with and what to expect during the crops growing stages.

Often when scouting a potato crop samples may be taken and sent to laboratory for verification this is to be sure what we are seeing checks out with the proven test results. Potato pathogens and diseases can be expressed in many ways and it is important to be sure what you are dealing with to make expert decisions. AuSPICA always aims to get to the bottom of an issue and find solutions and farming practices to mitigate risk, spread and reoccurrence.



AuSPICA works closely with the potato industry so the agronomists performing the crop scouting are often aware of the season and the disease pressures in each area, this benefits the commercial grower as AuSPICA can often provide knowledge and guidance when assessing the health of a crop while also understanding the conditions and weather patterns that are likely to persist. Contact AuSPICA today for an assessment on your commercial potato crops health.

[AuSPICA donates minitubers to Vanuatu](#)

Through collaboration with Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness Project, AuSPICA has donated \$10,000 (AUD) worth of potato seed to Vanuatu and provided technical workshops to advance sustainable potato production, address food security and dietary health concerns in Vanuatu.

There is currently a small potato industry in Vanuatu, on multiple islands including Tanna and the donated potato minitubers will be beneficial in enhancing the food security for the country. This donation is especially important at this time as the country has been terribly damaged due to Cyclone Harold and many food crops were destroyed.

AuSPICA donated minitubers of 12 varieties that are potentially suitable for production and use in Vanuatu. These 12 potato varieties will be grown at several sites in Vanuatu and their performance will be evaluated to determine those varieties that are more suited to local conditions. This donation was made possible through collaboration with the Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness Project and the establishment of



the evaluation field sites involved leadership from DARD.

Early observations have shown that the potatoes planted have emerged and the potato crops are currently actively growing. A participative evaluation program for the 12 potato varieties is being established involving all the project partners.

AuSPICA will continue to support Vanuatu in developing a sustainable and productive potato production using high health seed potatoes.

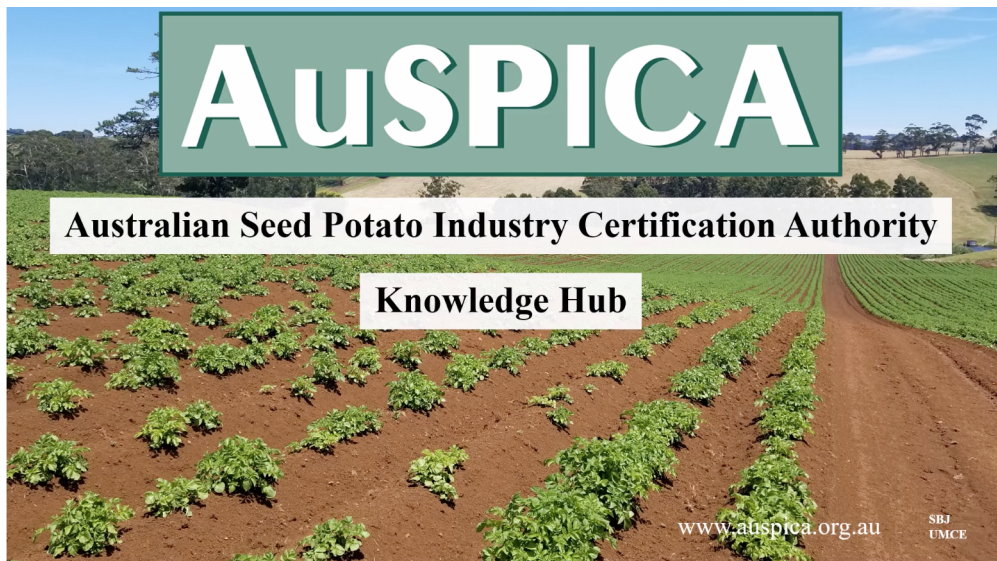
Vanuatu is a country that has shown it has an ability to grow potatoes as a cash crop and provide a locally grown food crop. The development of sustainable food security that includes alternatives to rice is crucial in lowering the incidence of diabetic retinopathy which is one of the main causes of blindness in Vanuatu.



[AuSPICA Knowledge Hub](#)

The AuSPICA Knowledge Hub is available online. The aim of this site is to provide a single site with the latest potato related information and technology.

Access to the website will be for Affiliated Members and Certified Seed Grower members who pay an additional annual fee (details on our [website](#)).



<https://www.facebook.com/AuSPICAPOTATO/videos/947911672272023/>

The Knowledge Hub includes allows access to the specific AuSPICA created educational tools and materials, including videos and fact sheets on a range of topics. These topics include

- Seed cutting and handling
- Disease and pest facts (e.g. Fusarium Dry Rot Information Sheet)
- Physiological age
- Seed selection
- Blight management
- Best Practices

Furthermore, if there is a topic that you are especially interested in or would like to learn more about, feel free to send us an email and we'll ask our extensive group of potato experts.

In addition to the Knowledge Hub, there will be other activities including access to visiting potato experts from around the world, where you'll be able to ask questions in person.

<https://www.auspica.org.au/membership-options/>

[My Experience with A&L Laboratories in Canada - Mitchell Gorman AuSPICA Certification Officer and Agronomist](#)

The opportunity to travel abroad to Canada with the task of learning some of the latest and best agricultural science is not often given, however on the 8th of February this year I was on a plane headed overseas to do just that. While I was in Canada for 2 weeks, I spent most of my time with the team at A&L laboratories, I also attended a Level 2 Soil Fertility Workshop while I was there that was presented by the A&L founder and CEO Greg Patterson. This workshop gave me the tools to

better understand A&Ls soil reports and recommendations as it aimed to underpin the reasons and benefits of each nutrient while also showing how each calculation was made and why.

Overall, the opportunity to learn with A&L laboratories increase knowledge, built relationships and improved my experience in soil nutrition. I am looking forward to the task of improving the knowledge and breaking the stigma around soil nutrient reports being scientific jargon, we can all help each other to improve our knowledge as an industry.

A&L Laboratories Canada is a large agricultural testing facility in London, Ontario. AuSPICA has been closely learning the techniques and developing a relationship with this organisation for the last 10 years. The facility has the capacity to test over 5000 soil samples for nutrient analysis per day and during their busiest periods often reaches this number.



AuSPICA has been learning and adapting some of the techniques used in Canada to bring the potato growers in Australia some of the most efficient ways to soil sample their fields for nutrient analysis. Over the last few years AuSPICA has been Site specific soil testing with many growers, with each soil test being sent to A&L for analysis and nutrient recommendations.

The purpose to my trip to Canada was to improve my knowledge in the data given to Australian farmers from this site-specific soil sampling, while also learning about future technologies in the agriculture industry.

A key component to soil fertility

One of the aims of the soil test recommendations is to ensure the soil has fertility to grow the crop and while trying to reach the yield goals predicted by the farmer. Each recommendation has incorporated into it the amount of nutrients needed to build up the soil quality to its optimum fertility while also applying the amount that will be taken out of the crop.

For example in a hypothetical situation a potato crop may require 18kg per acre of magnesium to grow (this is the amount that will be removed from the soil just to grow the potato crop), the soil may be deficient in magnesium by 20kgs per acre, the grower may wish to address the magnesium deficiency over four years so will be adding 18kgs/acre for the potato crop plus 5kgs/acre ($20\text{kg}/4\text{years} = 5\text{kgs}$) to

improve the fertility. For the next four years each crop that is grown the fertiliser that is required to grow that crop is added plus the 5kgs/acre to improve the paddocks magnesium deficiency. At the end of the four-year period the magnesium is no longer deficient as it has been built up over time. The grower will now only need to apply the amount of magnesium that is being removed growing the crop to keep their soil fertile.

Situations like this occur often in many fields and often vary across the paddock with individual build up programs required to ensure the paddock is at its maximum fertility. AuSPICA in conjunction with A&L can offer this service to ensure you are keeping your paddocks in their best condition.



Innovative farmers conference

While I was in Canada I also attended one day of the Ontario innovative farmers conference which has guest speakers from across Canada talking about new techniques and knowledge in the agriculture industry, some of the topics included aiming to have continuous root growth to increase soil microbial activity, aiming to reduce glyphosate use, and the benefits from planting a diverse species rather than monoculture production. The conference was very informative and covered some great topics I look forward to learning more about for Australian practices.

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Mental Health First Aid



All AuSPICA field staff are accredited Mental Health First Aid trained. Each year **1 in 5 Australians** will experience a mental illness, AuSPICA staff are trained in the skills and confidence to have supportive conversations with their co-workers and others that they may be concerned about.

Mental Health First Aid training is important due to increasing support for those in the AuSPICA community as well as knowledge about mental health to reduce stigma.

Certified Seed Potato Labels - Information and Value

AuSPICA uses four different coloured labels which are used to identify different end uses & plant health status of seed potato lots. All crops are visually inspected twice during the growing season, & a tuber inspection is completed postharvest to determine the seed stock compliance with the conditions of the Scheme. All crops must be grown in fields that are known to be negative to PCN. All crops that are being sold as certified seed must have a laboratory test for Potato Virus Y. AuSPICA annually conducts surveillance for PSTVd to ensure there is scientific evidence to support the statement that PSTVd is known not to occur in the certified seed potato production. All crops have a zero percent tolerance for restricted diseases. On each label, it is stated that AuSPICA does not test for variety, which means there is no compulsory laboratory testing done for variety identification, which is only done on visual inspection of the growing crop. DNA based analysis can be used to support visual inspection when required.

The details printed on a domestic AuSPICA Seed Certification label



A	QR code	Scan for seed lot details
B	Label reference number	The last digits of the certification label have a unique reference number that can be fully traced. The entire number is repeated at the bottom of the label (e.g. 101).
C	Crop Registration number	Unique crop registration reference number that is managed through the Cert Master database (e.g. 48817).
D	State of origin	State of Australia in which the crop was grown (e.g. VIC).
E	Variety	Listed as Public or Private (which may include PBR)
F	Variety Name & accession	Variety name & may include any clone reference (e.g. Atlantic).
G	Field rating	Field rating issued to the crop during field inspections based on plant health standards published in the AuSPICA conditions (e.g. rating 1).
H	Gen (Generation)	Field generation (e.g. GEN 4).
I	Grower Name	Business that produced the certified seed potatoes additional information may be provided if packed by a different business (e.g. A SEED GROWER).
J	Date Packed	Growers must enter the date the certified seed was packed on the label.
K	Date Printed	The label expires 12 months from date of printing. Exception is green label that is only valid for 14 days post printing date (e.g. 07-05-2020). Refers to AuSPICA growers accredited to do conduct their own post-harvest inspections (e.g. NO), except for minituber producers there are currently no QA growers in the AuSPICA seed scheme.
L	QA Grower	Unique documented evidence that references the compulsory laboratory testing for Potato Virus Y (e.g. 432B).
M	Virus testing survey number	Unique reference to documentation that provides evidence of compulsory soil sampling & laboratory testing for PCN (e.g. 13777).
N	PCN tested	
O	Conditions & definitions	Refer to the back of every certification label.

O Refer to other side of label for definition of certification and growers declaration

AuSPICA provides seed potato certification and a range of other professional services to the Australian potato industry
www.auspica.org.au email auspica@auspica.org.au Tel: (+61) 03 5962 0000

AuSPICA
PRODUCE OF AUSTRALIA

For more information, [click here](#)

Yellow crop markers available for purchase

Plastic coated fibreglass crop markers are available for purchase through your local inspector.



Nutritional deficiencies looking purple



Sometimes nutritional deficiencies give off a purple hue, not to be confused with the disease Purple Top, which is caused by a pathogen called a Phytoplasma. If you're not sure, take a sample, or call your local inspector.



[Fusarium Dry Rot Information Sheet](#)

Fusarium dry rot of potato is a post-harvest disease that causes losses in storage of both seed and commercial potatoes. In the last few seasons, there have been increased reports of dry rots in store so this article is a timely reminder on this disease issue which can be proactively managed.

There are 3 key areas that contribute to dry rot management. These areas are mainly focused of preventing disease development.

1. Bruise management
2. Use of fungicides
3. Storage conditions



For an information sheet on Fusarium dry rot, [click here](#)

This information sheet is an example of what is provided on the AuSPICA [Knowledge Hub](#)

[UNECE Potato Pest, Disease and Disorder Online App](#)

AuSPICA has worked with a



To access the app, click here: <https://hort.azurewebsites.net/>

software developer (Software Objectives) to produce the UNECE Pest, Disease and Disorder Guide as an online publication. This can be accessed on your phone, tablet or laptop and is available for free. AuSPICA will be working with the UNECE to ensure this online app is available as an international resource. Please send any feedback on additions, improvement etc.

Meet the Team

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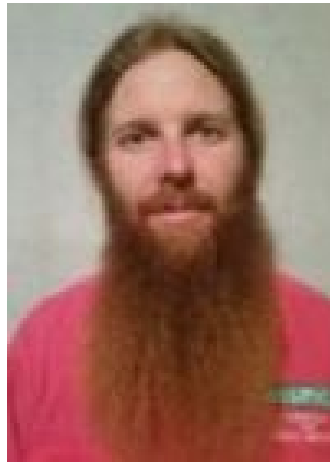
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