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Exporters working to improve efficiency at ports

The Australian Grain Exporters Association (AGEA) today launched the AGEA Australian Grain Vessel Protocol – an innovative new tool that will assist exporters to reduce ships failing survey.

Ships arriving in Australia for purpose loading grain for export are required to be inspected and approved for both suitability for carrying grain and compliance with phytosanitary requirements. Ships failing survey is resulting in cost imposts and operational inefficiencies for Australian exporters and port terminals.

Australian requirements are among some of the most stringent in the world and with the growth in Australian grain exports, the industry has seen a higher than acceptable level of ships failing survey.

Rosemary Richards Executive Officer AGEA said that "the Vessel Protocol will provide the export sector with a tool to assess the ships suitability ahead of its arrival at the Australian port and take corrective action if required to avoid delays when the ship arrives to load grain. This is a great example of the export sector taking the initiative to deal with a problem that has been imposing costs and inefficiencies on the sector."

AGEA has partnered with RightShip to develop and implement this initiative. RightShip is an independent company formed in Oct 2001 to deliver ship vetting and risk management services globally. It is the largest global provider of third party vetting services.

The Vessel Protocol is based around development of data to support a rating system and education program. The Protocol will require ships to complete the AGEA Australian Grain Terminal Questionnaire that will be analysed and assessed by an independent party (RightShip). Over time this will enable the development of Industry best practice guidelines and Improved risk rating reports for individual ships.

The protocol is expected to result in fewer days lost and lower costs which will benefit all in the grain supply chain. Rosemary Richards said that "exporters will benefit from fewer unexpected survey failures and this should assist to improve returns to growers and other supply chain participants". Over time as data is collected, the protocol will improve the ability to predict likelihood of future failure and will provide the analytics and insight to facilitate an efficient and effective export industry.

The protocol will have broader industry benefits by reducing supply chain interruptions, provide a framework to quantify emerging risk areas, deliver improved port throughput without incurring capital expenditure and enabling benchmarking of industry performance.

AGEA said "we believe this initiative will assist to underpin Australia's reputation as a safe and reliable trading nation".

The protocol will be available to all exporters or those chartering ships.

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