

Your Levy At Work



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Provenance Propagation strengthens biosecurity and business systems with support from GrowConnex

At a glance

A levy-funded GrowConnex Extension Officer helped Provenance Propagation strengthen its biosecurity, traceability and day-to-day operations through advising on Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) accreditation and BioSecure HACCP certification.

Improved biosecurity and operational systems have resulted in stronger traceability, better hygiene management, more consistent monitoring and record keeping, and greater confidence across the business.

After witnessing the impact Panama disease had on Australia's banana industry, the team at Provenance Propagation recognised the importance of strengthening biosecurity systems before a serious pest or disease threatened their own nursery.

Specialising in premium grafted vegetable seedlings for growers across Australia, the business wanted to improve its biosecurity practices, strengthen traceability and formalise operational procedures to support long-term resilience.

To achieve these goals, Provenance Propagation engaged local levy-funded Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) Extension Officer Barry Naylor through GrowConnex.

Working closely with the nursery team, Barry identified opportunities to strengthen existing systems and guided the business through NIASA accreditation and BioSecure HACCP certification requirements. The process ensured new procedures were practical, fit for purpose and aligned with the realities of a busy production nursery.

"As a busy nursery, finding the time to strengthen our systems while maintaining day-to-day operations was challenging. Having access to expert advice, resources and ongoing support through GrowConnex made the process much more manageable and helped us successfully achieve accreditation," said Sandra McLennan, Nursery Operations at Provenance Propagation.

Practical support every step of the way

Through levy-funded Extension Officers like Barry, GIA provides practical, on-site support to production nurseries, helping businesses strengthen biosecurity, improve operational systems and adopt industry best practice.

During site visits, Barry worked closely with the team to understand the nursery's operations and tailor recommendations to its specific needs. Drawing on his experience managing production nurseries, he was able to bridge the gap between accreditation requirements and the practical realities of operating a commercial nursery.

Rather than navigating the accreditation process alone, Provenance Propagation had access to ongoing guidance, resources and support throughout each stage of implementation.

"One of the great advantages of working with our Extension Officer is that they take the time to understand your business and build a genuine relationship with your nursery. Working towards accreditation can seem overwhelming, but having someone guide you through each stage made the process far more achievable," said Sandra.

Stronger systems, stronger business

The accreditation process resulted in significant improvements across biosecurity, traceability and day-to-day nursery operations, strengthening the nursery's ability to manage risk, maintain compliance and support consistent production outcomes.

Material imports are now recorded more consistently, including supplier details, product information, quantities, dates and relevant batch information. This provides a clear chain of traceability from supplier through to use within the nursery, making it easier to verify what has entered the facility, where it has been used, and to identify affected materials quickly if an issue arises.

Hygiene practices have also been formalised and documented, with a stronger focus on preventing contamination from entering or moving through the production environment. For a propagation nursery, maintaining a clean and controlled production system is essential to supporting plant health, consistency and quality.

Monitoring activities are now approached more systematically, with checks documented, issues recorded and followed up, and responsibilities for completing and reviewing checks clearly defined. This creates a stronger feedback loop of observing, recording, assessing, acting and verifying.

Additional improvements and outcomes delivered through the accreditation process included:

Improvement	Benefit
Enhanced hygiene protocols	Reduced contamination and pathogen risk
Improved traceability systems	Greater visibility of materials from supplier through to nursery use
Stronger documentation and record keeping	Improved compliance and audit readiness
Clearer staff responsibilities and processes	More consistent operational performance
Increased staff awareness of biosecurity requirements	A more proactive approach to identifying and managing biosecurity risks
Industry accreditation	Increased customer confidence and external recognition

Embedding best practice

Since achieving accreditation, Provenance Propagation has continued to build on the systems introduced throughout the process.

The changes have strengthened how information is recorded, monitored and acted upon across the nursery, giving staff clearer processes and greater visibility of day-to-day operations.

The strengthened processes are designed to help staff recognise potential issues earlier, understand reporting and escalation procedures, and respond proactively before problems escalate.

By embedding best-practice systems into everyday operations, the business is better positioned to manage future risks while maintaining high standards of production and customer confidence.

Investing in long-term resilience

For Provenance Propagation, working with GrowConnex was about more than achieving accreditation. By strengthening the systems that underpin the business, the nursery gained greater visibility over incoming materials, stronger documentation, more consistent operational processes and increased confidence in managing biosecurity risks, while building resilience for the future.

"My advice to other nurseries is to start the conversation. GrowConnex provides practical support that's tailored to your business and helps you identify opportunities to strengthen your systems before challenges arise. Whether you're improving biosecurity, working towards accreditation or simply looking for better ways to operate, having expert guidance makes a real difference," said Sandra.

BioSecure HACCP helps businesses identify and manage biosecurity hazards through prevention and continuous improvement. NIASA provides a nationally recognised framework for production nursery best practice.

Ready to strengthen your nursery?

Whether you're looking to improve biosecurity, strengthen day-to-day operations or work towards NIASA and BioSecure HACCP accreditation, your local levy-funded GrowConnex Extension Officer can provide tailored support for your business.

Visit www.greenlifeindustry.org.au/talk-to-an-expert to connect with your local GrowConnex expert.

ENDS

The 'National Biosecurity and Sustainable Plant Production Program' (NY20001), funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery levy and matched by the Australian Government, is a horticulture initiative designed to support nurseries in strengthening biosecurity and sustainable production practices.