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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No flies on finalist for biosecurity award

Bill Casey of Ulverstone, Tasmania, who grows pyrethrum daisy for its valuable insecticide, is the latest finalist announced in the national Biosecurity Farmer of the Year Awards being sponsored by Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia.

Mr Casey works for Botanical Resources Australia (BRA), a major player in contracting pyrethrum growers in Tasmania, providing agronomic and other crop advice to growers as well as harvesting, transport and storage logistics.

BRA has recently expanded its operations from northern Tasmania onto the mainland. Come summer, the white fields of daisies, so familiar in Tasmania, will be a common sight around Ballarat, Victoria, with combine harvesters reaping the growing number of fields of flowers in the district.

The waters of Bass Strait, summer fire restrictions and flood weren't the only barriers to be overcome. Stringent biosecurity standards had to be met to allow plant material for processing and machinery back into Tasmania.

With markets across the US, the European Union, Asia and the Middle East, BRA provides more than 60 per cent of the world's annual supply of pyrethrum, so there's a lot at stake. Mr Casey says the key factor to successful adoption of quarantine procedures as well as other aspects of good management is well planned and continuous communication between the project managers, BRA staff, pyrethrum growers and harvesting contractors.

"Aspects of biosecurity are always an agenda item at the annual review and planning meeting between BRA and our contracted harvesters and have been accepted as just another item of general business," he said.

"We also have a strong working relationship with Quarantine Tasmania and Biosecurity Tasmania staff for all aspects of our biosecurity and quarantine activities."

Pyrethrum is by far the most commonly sold and most effective 'natural' insecticide in the world and is produced by the plant *Tanacetum cinerariifolium*.

Pyrethrum insecticide is effective against a very broad range of insects, including public health insects (such as mosquitoes, flies and cockroaches), agricultural insects (such as aphids, caterpillars and stored grain insects) and others such as lice and ticks. It is even used to manage head lice in children and bed bugs.

For more information on Farm Biosecurity visit www.farmbiosecurity.com.au

Another reason for its popularity as an insecticide is that it breaks down quickly, especially in sunlight, so it does not persist in the environment.

BRA understands the biosecurity requirements for the importation of a large quantity of plant material from Ballarat to Tasmania and considerable work was conducted to prepare a comprehensive risk assessment for approval by Biosecurity Tasmania.

Mr Casey treats biosecurity as a means of reducing the risks of increased production costs. He said: "It's a kind of insurance, and as with all risk management, such as fire insurance, there are some immediate costs and perhaps some extra work, but the benefits from risk management far exceed the costs and time involvement."

He encourages biosecurity measures to be considered as a part of the normal cost of production and to be embraced by all levels of an organisation, from individual farmers to industry and government.

Judges for the award praised Mr Casey's work for recognising the importance of biosecurity, both for BRA farming activities as well as for the future growth and prosperity of the pyrethrum industry.

The judges were impressed by the clear passion that he has for maintaining the future of a small and tight-knit industry by implementing biosecurity measures. "Nobody wants to be the known as the one who introduced a weed or disease into Tasmania from the mainland," he said.

The Biosecurity Farmer of the Year Award is backed by Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia – the organisations established to coordinate the growing government–industry partnership in plant and animal biosecurity. It forms part of the Australian Farmer of the Year Awards co-hosted by Kondinin Group and ABC Rural. As in past years, separate winners will be selected in the categories of plant biosecurity and animal biosecurity.

Winners of all categories in the Australian Farmer of the Year Awards will be announced at a ceremony in Sydney on 7 September.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, contact Sharon Abrahams, PHA, on (02) 6215 7711. Photos of harvesters and fields of daisies are available.

Further Information

The Farm Biosecurity Initiative

Farm Biosecurity, a joint program managed by Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA), is a national education and engagement campaign which provides producers with information and tools to reduce the risk of diseases, pests and weeds. Producers are encouraged to check their properties regularly and if they see anything unusual to call the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline** on **1800 084 881** or the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline** on **1800 675 888**. For further information visit www.farmbiosecurity.com.au.

Animal Health Australia

AHA is an innovative partnership involving the Australian Government, state and territory governments, major livestock industries and other stakeholders. We work with our members and stakeholders to strengthen Australia's national animal

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health system and maximise confidence in the safety and quality of Australia's livestock products in domestic and overseas markets. For further information, visit www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au or call (02) 6232 5522.

Plant Health Australia

Plant Health Australia is the national coordinator of the government-industry partnership for plant biosecurity in Australia. As a not-for-profit company, we service the needs of Members and independently advocate on behalf of the national plant biosecurity system. Our efforts enhance Australia's plant health status, assist trade, safeguard the livelihood of producers and support the sustainability and profitability of our plant industries and the communities that rely upon them. For further information, visit www.phau.com.au or call (02) 6215 7700.

Hotlines

The Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881) and the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline (1800 675 888) are free-call telephone services provided for people to report unusual plant and animal pests and diseases. The hotlines allow callers to directly report suspect detections to an area where action can be taken by knowledgeable staff.



For more information on Farm Biosecurity visit www.farmbiosecurity.com.au