

In a Capsule News



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Poppies... A Proud
Tasmanian Industry

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Welcome to the Summer Edition of In A Capsule News!

- Another year almost gone;
- Another growing season with its own set of unique conditions;
- Cool and wet, Winter and Spring.

Best estimates suggest 25% of the crop has been lost or growth impacted by flooding and/or heavy rain.

We recognise these severe weather events have placed and will continue to place many poppy growers and farmers generally under severe financial, emotional and mental stress.

You are not alone!

If you feel you or a member of your family, neighbours or friends are experiencing any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact:

[Rural Business Tasmania/Rural Financial Counselling Service on 1300 88 3276 for a free confidential chat.](#)

[Also Rural Alive and Well \(RAW\) can be contacted on 1800 729 827, again for a free confidential chat.](#)

HELP is there for you.

Now that Summer has arrived hopefully we can look forward to some warm weather and long hours of sunlight each day until harvest.

With crop maturity and harvesting rapidly approaching we feel now is the time to extend a timely reminder in respect of:

- Crop Security;
- Farm Safety
- Harvesting Preparedness
- Fire Safety during Harvest

CROP SECURITY

Our industry remains under intense media scrutiny and none more so than the past two to three years.

Much of such media scrutiny has attempted to discredit the Tasmanian poppy industry as being the cause of the illegal drugs crisis in the US.

Clearly, such allegations are ill-conceived and made without any working knowledge of the industry. We should however recognise that such heavy scrutiny will continue for the foreseeable future.

It is therefore imperative that we continue to stringently adhere to our strict crop security regulations.

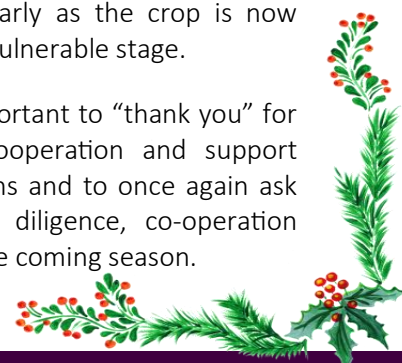
FENCES AND GATES

Please ensure all boundary fences are in good repair and boundary gates remain closed at all times. We realise the enormous temptation is to leave the gate open to allow easy entry and exit, particularly for irrigation purposes.

This is an open invitation for anyone and particularly for those who seek to discredit our industry to take a picture, post it on social media or worse still enter the crop unobstructed by a wide open gate.

Given the very high media interest in poppy industry matters it is critical that we are able to demonstrate that our crop security arrangements are effective and well managed, particularly as the crop is now entering its most vulnerable stage.

It is therefore important to “thank you” for your diligence, cooperation and support during past seasons and to once again ask for your ongoing diligence, co-operation and support for the coming season.





REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Please report suspicious behaviour in or about a poppy crop immediately or as soon as possible to the police, PACB Field Officer or poppy company field officer.

The importance of a very quick reporting/response of suspicious activity cannot be over-emphasised. If you see suspicious behaviour in or around poppy crops at anytime, including seeing an unauthorised person in your poppy paddock, contact Tasmania Police immediately on:

1800 333 000 (Crime Stoppers)
or **131 444** (non-emergency line)

It is of great assistance if you are able to provide as much detail as possible regarding a description of the person(s) and the vehicle(s) including make, model, colour and registration.

During Business Hours (Monday—Friday, 9am to 5pm) you can report suspected poppy interference/thefts or poppy related incidents to the Poppy Advisory and Control Board field officers.

If you suspect an interference has occurred you should notify your PACB field officer as soon as possible.

After Hours you can report suspected poppy interference/thefts or poppy related incidents to Tasmania Police.

For your information and assistance for when a report needs to be made, we have included contact details for PACB field officers below.

ROADSIDE REGROWTH

As an industry we are concerned with the amount of roadside regrowth which most certainly detracts from the image of a well managed industry.

At this stage it is important to remind harvesting and cartage contractors to ensure all machinery is air cleaned before it leaves the paddock and truck loads are securely sealed so that seed does not escape during transit.

We seek the co-operation of all contractors in this regard.

In the event machinery is not being cleaned down prior to leaving a paddock and growers become aware of such occurrence they are advised to notify their field officer or Poppy Growers Tasmania on **0418 133 234**.

It is poor farm hygiene in the extreme if poppy seed is transported from one farm to another and roadside regrowth especially around farm entrances is a clear indication machinery is not being adequately cleaned before leaving the paddock.

PADDOCK REGROWTH

Paddock regrowth is also becoming more prevalent. The regulations which allow for poppies to be grown require the license holder to destroy any regrowth/volunteer poppies.

In the event this does not occur the PACB has the authority to require the license holder, or if that person does not own the land, the landowner to destroy any regrowth/volunteer.

Non-compliance with an order from the PACB could see a contractor authorised to enter the property and destroy the regrowth with the cost borne by the license holder and/or landowner.

To date this has never been invoked and we certainly hope that the PACB does not have to proceed down that path.

While the regulations form an integral part of this important equation, of equal importance is paddock health—farm hygiene—systemic mildew.

Poppy Advisory and Control Board

GPO Box 44, Hobart Tas 7001

Email: poppies@dpipwe.tas.gov.au

Licence Enquiries: (Mon—Fri 9am—5pm)
03 6165 4876

Business Hours (Monday—Friday 9am—5pm):

To report suspected poppy interferences/thefts or poppy related incidents please contact:

To report suspicious behaviour in or around poppy crops at any time please contact Tasmania Police.

PACB Field Officers:

South: Jonathan Doust 0417 048 083

North: 0438 048 087

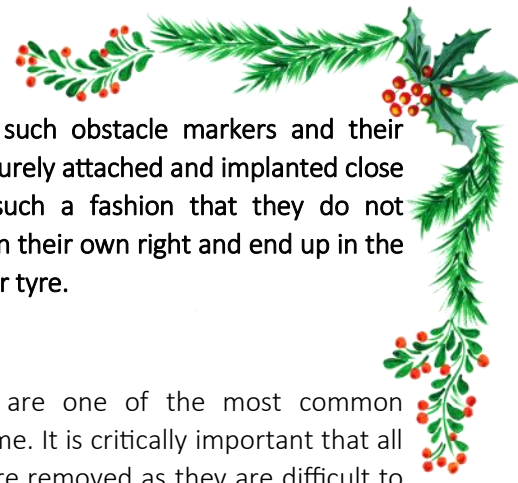
North West: Rodney McCarthy 0417 048 085

After Hours: To report suspected poppy interferences/thefts or poppy related incidents please contact:

Tasmania Police (24 Hours):

Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000

Non-emergency line: 131 444



FARM SAFETY

This is another very important matter that we passionately promote at this time of year.

At this very busy time of the cropping calendar when there are not enough hours in the day to complete the multitude of tasks at hand, please take a few moments to consider farm safety.

Farm/Workplace accidents extract an enormous toll on the person injured with the ripple effect on their family, other workers and the employer.

In fact, as with all farm/work accidents, the effect of a serious accident or fatality “on farm” has far reaching and life changing consequences. It can all happen in a split second.

All of the above leads to the one point—**Safety on Farm.**

PGT urges all involved in any form of farm activity to take extra care at this time of the year when all resources including the all important human resources are stretched to the very limit.

The intensive nature of the work and long hours required at this time of year beckon a timely reminder.

- Take time to rest and consider the task at hand;
- Tired people make mistakes.

Be safety conscious, take extra care with irrigation pipes and machinery, particularly in relation to overhead powerlines.

PREPARING FOR HARVEST

Each year during harvesting, contractors encounter various problems that cause machinery damage, lost time, inconvenience and unnecessary cost.

Typically these include:

- Electric fence pegs;
- Steel posts/star pickets;
- Unmarked irrigation hydrants;
- Water troughs;
- Stones;
- Stump holes

It is vitally important that paddocks are checked to ensure obstacles are clearly marked/identified.

High-vis reflective markers which are securely attached to a plastic/wooden/steel stake make excellent markers as they are highly visible and easily seen by the harvester operator.

It is important that such obstacle markers and their support posts are securely attached and implanted close to the obstacle in such a fashion that they do not become an obstacle in their own right and end up in the harvester front and/or tyre.

Electric Fence Pegs

Electric fence pegs are one of the most common hazards at harvest time. It is critically important that all electric fence pegs are removed as they are difficult to see and fit easily through the fingers of the harvester. These pegs cause significant damage, even to the point of entering the chopper box where damage, delay and significant cost is assured.

Stump Holes

Stump holes are also a hazard as the harvester front can easily be driven into the ground if a front wheel enters a depression unexpectedly.

Stones

Stones in poppy crops have become an issue as more ground is developed for cropping. Rocky outcrops previously left unplanted are now getting developed and included in the sown area. Often there are stones remaining with potential to cause machinery and tyre damage.

During the past harvest several harvester tyres were significantly damaged by stone, causing delay to the harvest and costing many thousands of dollars in repairs.

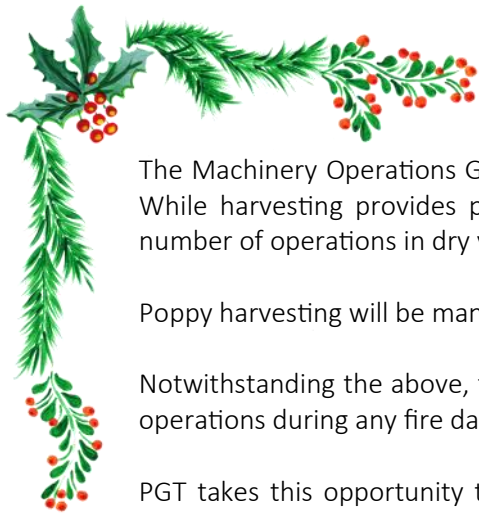
Contractors may well choose to invoice growers to contribute to the cost caused by this type of unnecessary damage.

FIRE SAFETY DURING HARVEST

The fire season is rapidly approaching and fuel load is abundant as a result of ideal conditions over the winter and spring period.

PGT together with other stakeholders have met with senior management of the Tasmanian Fire Service over the winter months to debrief on last season with particular emphasis of the effectiveness of the Machinery Operations Guideline.

All stakeholders had input into the review of the Guideline and have now been advised that with some amendments, industry will be permitted to operate machinery during periods of Total Fire Ban in accordance with the TFS Machinery Operations Guideline for the coming season.



The Machinery Operations Guideline is to provide guidance for all machinery to work safely in dry vegetation. While harvesting provides part of the motivation, prevention of ignition from other machinery during any number of operations in dry vegetation is the greater reason for developing this procedure.

Poppy harvesting will be managed by your field officer and will only proceed in accordance with this guideline.

Notwithstanding the above, the poppy company and/or farmer has the right to delay or to suspend harvesting operations during any fire danger period.

PGT takes this opportunity to acknowledge and support the Tasmanian Fire Service with their very onerous responsibility of ensuring the safety of all Tasmanians and their property from the devastation of fire. Your co-operation and support in this regard will be greatly appreciated by all concerned.

We have included a copy of the TFS Machinery Operations Guideline in this newsletter for your information.

Michael Nichols
President

Retirement

I actually did retire for a few months in early 2017, however prevailing circumstances being what they were back then, I was asked to come back for six months until a new Chief Executive could be appointed. Six years later that appointment has now actually happened. I am delighted that the Board has secured the services of such an accomplished operator in the form of Howard Nichol.

Some may recognise these words from the December 2016 edition of In A Capsule. My sentiments have not changed, so I will repeat what I wrote at that time.

As this is my last "In a Capsule" as Chief Executive of PGT prior to my retirement on the 31st December 2022, I would like to take this opportunity to say a very special "thank you" to the Committee of Management and members of Poppy Growers Tasmania for your support over the past 36 years. It only seems like yesterday; how the years have flown since I first commenced.

I consider I have been privileged to be able to represent, assist, advise and advocate on behalf of Tasmanian poppy growers in particular and Tasmanian farmers generally.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the management and staff of our world class poppy companies. I will be forever grateful for their assistance and advice so freely given.

To my successor, Howard Nichol, my best wishes for what I consider to be the best job in the world.

On behalf of Noreen and myself, "thank you" once again and please accept our best wishes for a wonderful Christmas. Stay safe and may 2023 and beyond be full of good seasons, joy and happiness.

Keith Rice



Above: New Chief Executive Howard Nichol, left, with Keith Rice at the 2022 RBT Annual General Meeting.



*Merry
Christmas*

On behalf of the Committee
of Management
and Staff of Poppy Growers
Tasmania, may I take this
opportunity to wish one and
all a very happy and safe
Christmas and our very best
wishes for a successful
harvest and prosperous
2023!

Warm regards,

Michael Nichols
President

Tasmanian Fire Service—Machinery Operations Guideline



Tasmanian Government



Tasmania Fire Service

for further information on your bushfire safety needs

Free-call 1800 000 699 or visit fire.tas.gov.au








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Bureau of Meteorology Website – bom.gov.au

Download the App – bom.gov.au/app/

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MACHINERY OPERATIONS TABLE

If the local wind speed is above the threshold, suspend operations until conditions moderate.

RH%	Average Wind Speed (KPH)							RH%
	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	
5	31	35	38	40	40	43	45	5
10	35	38	40	43	43	46	49	10
15	38	40	43	45	45	49	53	15
20	40	43	45	48	48	52	56	20
25	43	45	48	50	50	54	58	25
30	45	48	50	53	53	57	61	30
35	48	50	53	56	56	60	64	35
40	50	53	56	59	59	63	67	40
45	53	56	59	62	62	66	70	45

* These weather combinations relate to a Grassland Fire Danger Index (GFDI) of 35.



This Guideline provides fire safety measures for machinery operations in or near dry vegetation, and specifies criteria for when fire weather conditions warrant stopping machinery operations. This Guideline is endorsed by Tasmania Fire Service as suitable bushfire risk mitigation practices.



1800 000 699
fire.tas.gov.au



MACHINERY OPERATIONS BAN

The use of certain machinery and practices can be restricted during the **Fire Permit Period** and on days of **Total Fire Ban**. When conditions warrant, Tasmania Fire Service will ban machinery operations with an explicitly worded Total Fire Ban declaration.

RECOMMENDED MACHINERY OPERATING PRACTICES

IMPORTANT: The following practices should be adopted when using engines, vehicles, equipment or machinery in areas that are within, or in close proximity to dry vegetation and similar combustible materials. If you require further information contact TFS on 1800 000 699.



Plan

- Establish a fire prevention and emergency response strategy for staff, contractors and machinery operators.
- Be aware of potential ignition sources from the machinery being used.
- Adopt a regular maintenance program, both before and during operations, paying particular attention to wearing parts, bearings and engines.
- Aim to ensure machinery is free from faults and mechanical defects.
- Ensure combustible residues on machines are kept to a minimum, especially in areas of high fire risk, such as engines, exhausts and brakes.

Prepare

- Prior to commencing operations, check the fire weather forecast on the Bureau of Meteorology App or website (bom.gov.au).
- Have ready access to telephones and UHF radios.
- Machinery operators should have appropriate firefighting clothing and a plan for the protection of themselves, their equipment and the community.
- Have ready access to operational firefighting equipment, such as:
 - Fire extinguisher,
 - Knapsack, and ideally
 - A 250 litre transportable firefighting unit.
- Drive on tracks and park in cleared areas to prevent fires starting from hot exhausts.
- Provide 3 metres clearance around and above stationary machinery or engines, or remain with the equipment while running.

Monitor

- Monitor current weather observations from the Bureau of Meteorology App or website (bom.gov.au).
- Suspend operations when weather reaches the thresholds shown in the Machinery Operations Table.
- Monitor fire information and advice through TasALERT (alert.tas.gov.au).

Respond

- If a fire starts phone 000 immediately.
- Attempt to put the fire out if safe to do so.
- In the event of a fire, and if safe to do so without causing additional fires and endangering your own life, locate the machinery to a fuel reduced area, in an attempt to prevent fire spread.

MACHINERY OPERATIONS TABLE

The table below uses the **average wind speed (km/h)** for a range of different **temperature (°C)** and **relative humidity (RH%)** combinations to decide when machinery operations should cease.

To use the table:

- Obtain the relative humidity (RH%), temperature (°C) and wind speed (km/h) values from the nearest suitable weather station.
- Use the temperature values (rounded up to nearest 5°C) and relative humidity (rounded down to nearest 5%), to work out which is the threshold wind speed in the table.

If the local wind speed is above the threshold, suspend operations until conditions moderate.

EXAMPLE: Refer to the highlighted areas on the table.

1. Temperature: 25°C.

2. Relative Humidity: 17% rounded down to 15%.

3. For this combination of Temperature and Relative Humidity operations should stop when the average wind speed goes above 33 km/h.

RH%	5	10	15	20	25
TEMPERATURE (°C)	15	31	35	38	40
20	29	33	36	38	40
25	27	30	33	36	40
30	25	28	31	33	35
35	23	26	28	31	33
40	21	24	26	28	30
45	19	22	24	26	28
RH%	5	10	15	20	25

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