

APTRC_CoViD-19 comment

Australia, March 16, 2020



“At the national, community and personal levels, the response to COVID 19 is quite fluid, so further developments are expected as the pandemic affects more people – Australia’s current death toll from the virus is five.

The Federal government has formed a working body with the leaders of all states and territories, and is implementing mitigation strategies based on the best medical advice. This advice is itself being informed by analysis of measures being

applied in other countries.

The Australian Capital Territory and the State of Victoria have today each declared a State of Emergency, which enables the respective governments to apply and enforce required measures.

Nationally, all public gatherings of more than 500 people have been banned, and all incoming arrivals to the country must go into self-isolation for a period of 14 days. Significant government funds are also being pushed into the economy to mitigate the widespread loss of business and personal income as a range of industries and jobs become affected by reducing demand. Some of those measures will also reach tomato producing and processing businesses – the objective being for money to be spent to increase economic activity.

I have attached the first communications by our two processors, Kagome Australia and SPC, which indicate measures being taken at a corporate level. These measures and comments are typical of Australian industries and companies proactively meeting an evolving challenge; I expect these would be enhanced as the numbers affected by the pandemic increase, and as medical advice evolves.

Food logistics is currently being partially affected by public panic-buying of a small number of specific items; authorities and farmer groups are assuring people that there is no need for this reaction given 85% of Australia’s food is locally produced, without allowing for export volumes.

At this stage, processing tomato products are not among those being over-bought. The current season’s harvest is well underway during warm, clear days, and, as per the Kagome advice, we have sufficient stocks to meet some months’ demand. Logistic chains are still working, with little adverse impact”.

Peter Gray, APTRC