



Seed + Grain Readiness & Response

To whom it may concern

Seed and Grain Readiness and Response Incorporated (SGRR) is the biosecurity entity for New Zealand’s arable sector. It was established in 2020 through a partnership of key arable industry groups - Federated Farmers Arable Industry Group, United Wheat Growers of New Zealand, the Foundation for Arable Research, the New Zealand Flour Millers’ Association, and the New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association.

SGRR exists to represent the interests of growers, processors, and distributors of arable crops in national biosecurity decision-making. As a signatory to the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) for Biosecurity Readiness and Response, SGRR is responsible for preparing for and responding to biosecurity incursions affecting the arable sector.

At present, only arable biosecurity response work carried out by SGRR is funded through the enactment of the Biosecurity (Response - Arable Crops Levy) Order 2023. This letter seeks your feedback on a proposal to amend this Order to allow the levy to support both readiness and response activities, aligning with SGRR’s obligations under the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) for Biosecurity Readiness and Response.

The levy can be viewed on the Government of New Zealand Legislation website [Biosecurity \(Response—Arable Crops Levy\) Order 2023 \(SL 2023/78\) \(as at 23 December 2023\) Contents – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Why this change?

As noted above, while the levy order permits the collection of funds to pay for *response* costs, it does not allow funds to be collected for *readiness* activities, even though SGRR has had a responsibility to do this work since March 2020. SGRR has previously relied on contributions from member organisations to fund these readiness functions. This is unsustainable and inconsistent with the arrangements of other GIA sectors.

Summary of proposed amendment

We are proposing a formal amendment to the Biosecurity (Response—Arable Crops Levy) Order 2023 to expand the permitted use of levy funds. Specifically:

Current Levy Purpose	Proposed Amendment
Funds response activities only	Funds both readiness <i>and</i> response
Use restricted under clause 5(1)	Clause 5 amended to permit readiness spend

This means the levy’s current scope of spending would be updated to cover both readiness and response. There will be no change to:

- The existing levy framework (i.e. levy collection still applied at first transaction)
- Levy rates, current levy caps, collection method or record-keeping obligations

- The maize biosecurity levy will remain switched off until a maize-related response requires it to be switched on.

What sort of readiness activities would be covered by levy funds?

Amending the levy to include readiness would remove the ongoing need for member contributions to cover readiness associated costs. Levy funds would support:

- The SGRR Arable Readiness Operational Agreement
- Targeted readiness activities for high-risk arable pests
- Surveillance, diagnostics, and potential incursion pathway analysis to enable early detection
- Technical workshops and communication tools to improve readiness
- Developing response strategies and operational plans

This investment would ensure the sector is better positioned to detect and respond to threats early, supporting future responses and reducing associated response costs.

Consultation process

SGRR is inviting feedback from all levy payers, member organisations, and affected stakeholders. Consultation will run until the 15 February 2026.

Key questions for feedback

1. SGRR is made up of five organisations, please indicate the name of the organisations to whom you pay a membership or levy.
 - Seed and Grain New Zealand
 - Foundation for Arable Research
 - United Wheat Growers New Zealand
 - Federated Farmers Arable Industry Group
 - New Zealand Flour Millers Association
2. Do you support updating the **Arable** Biosecurity Levy so that levy funds can also be used for readiness activities alongside response activities?
3. Do you agree that **Arable** Biosecurity Levy money already collected should be available for readiness if the levy settings are updated?
4. Do you support updating the **Maize** Biosecurity Levy so that levy funds can also be used for readiness activities alongside response activities?
5. Do you agree that **Maize** Biosecurity Levy money already collected should be available for readiness if the levy settings are updated?

You can provide your feedback via:

- **Email:** info@sgrr.org.nz
- **Website:** Visit www.SGRR.org.nz
- **Online form:** A submission form is available on the SGRR website or via the QR code here.



What happens next?

Following the close of consultation on 15 February 2026 the following steps will be taken.

1. SGRR Board will review submissions and provide a summary of responses to levy payers
 - a. If submissions do not support, there will be no change to the current Levy Order.
 - b. If submissions support including readiness, we proceed with points 2-4 below.
2. Submit a formal levy order amendment application to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)
3. Seek Cabinet approval to amend the Order in Council
4. Notify all levy payers of the final decision and any implementation timeframes

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely



Ivan Lawrie
Chair, Seed and Grain Readiness and Response Inc.
Info@sgrr.org.nz

Glossary

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the protection of people, animals, plants, and the environment from harmful pests, diseases, and invasive species. It involves preventing, detecting, and controlling organisms that could cause damage to agriculture, native ecosystems, or public health.

In New Zealand, biosecurity is governed by the Biosecurity Act 1993, which provides the legal framework for preventing, managing, and eradicating pests and diseases that could harm the country's environment, economy, and human health.

Government Industry Agreement (GIA)

GIA operates as a partnership between primary industry and government to manage pests and diseases that could badly damage New Zealand's primary industries, economy, and environment. Under GIA, Signatories, like Seed and Grain Readiness and Response (SGRR), share the decision-making, responsibilities and costs of preparing for and responding to biosecurity incursions. By working in partnership, industry and government can achieve better biosecurity outcomes.

Questions

Why are there two different biosecurity levies, Maize and Arable, under the same levy order?

There are two levy streams in the Biosecurity (Response – Arable Crops Levy) Order 2023 because the legislation had to reflect two separate industry groups with different value chains, different risk profiles, and different “first point of sale” structures.

1. **Arable Crops Biosecurity Levy** set at a rate of 0.1% on all harvested seed or grain (except maize) – shared equally between growers (0.05%) and merchant or processor (0.05%).
2. **Maize Biosecurity Levy** set at a rate of \$0.25 per 10,000 seeds on hybrid seed sales – shared between the seed company (\$0.0625), seed merchant or distributor (\$0.0625) and the maize grower (\$0.125). In the case of direct sales from the seed company to the grower, the seed company will collect the levy due from the grower (\$0.125 per 10,000 seeds) and pay the levy of the seed company plus seed merchant or distributor (\$0.125) – a total of \$0.25 per 10,000 seeds.

What is the difference between biosecurity readiness and a biosecurity response?

Biosecurity readiness refers to being prepared to respond effectively to a potential pest or disease incursion before it occurs. Formally, it involves having plans, systems, resources, and partnerships in place to detect, contain, and manage an unwanted organism quickly and efficiently. For SGRR, much of this work focuses on weeds, pests and diseases that are considered to be at ‘high risk’ of arriving here, for example brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB).

Biosecurity response activities are what is involved in understanding and managing an incursion. Such activities will not be carried out without agreement from both MPI Biosecurity and the affected parties (e.g. SGRR).

Why was ‘readiness’ not included when SGRR got started?

In 2015, when discussions to establish a biosecurity organisation to represent the arable industry began, the funding model agreed was suitable. 10 years and multiple responses later, SGRR has developed, created solid relationships through GIA, and has identified that readiness activities are just as important to the industry as response.

What activities have SGRR been involved in up until now?

Since its formation, SGRR has actively participated in four biosecurity responses in partnership with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and other GIA partners: tomato red spider mite in 2020, pepino mosaic virus in 2021, black-grass 2021 (ongoing), fall armyworm (2022) and black-grass 2025 (ongoing). These activities have demonstrated the critical role SGRR plays in protecting the arable sector, while also highlighting the financial and operational need to ensure readiness capability is maintained between responses.