

Facts



Information

www.consumer.tas.gov.au

Hotline : 1300 65 44 99

Trade Measurement in Primary Industries

Farm inputs and outputs are invariably measured. Fuel, fertiliser, seed, milk, grain, beef and wool are just a few examples.

Accurate measuring instruments and proper measurement practice ensures confidence in the measurement system and minimises transaction costs. It is a means of ensuring farmers get what they pay for and receive payment for the full quantity of goods they produce. Australia's measurement system provides a system that guarantees measurements can be made uniformly throughout the country. This ensures trade is carried out on an equal basis regardless of the trading partners. It also is a basis for trade, nationally and internationally.

The provisions of the *Trade Measurement Act 1999* apply to weighing and measurement procedures that are carried out for the purpose of trade, where financial transactions are based on the quantity. These requirements don't affect day-to-day measurement tasks involved with running a farm.

Trade measurement Inspectors operate throughout the Tasmanian marketplace conducting audits, spot inspections and accuracy checks on products sold by weight or measure, and equipment. They monitor compliance with Trade Measurement legislation as well as investigate non-compliance.

Scales

Many primary producers have scales on their properties for the use of weighing wool, livestock etc. and these do not need to be of an approved type, nor are they required to be certified. However, when a measurement is to be used as the basis for a transaction, that is for the purpose of trade, approved and certified scales must be used.

If a weighbridge is used it must also be licensed as a public weighbridge unless it is owned and used by a party to the transaction.

Fuel Meters

Bulk fuel sales must be made using an approved and certified meter. Inspection and audit programs conducted by trade measurement Inspectors routinely check meters for accuracy. All points of the fuel distribution network are monitored including bulk terminals, distributors and service stations throughout the State.



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Milk Tanks

Milk tanks used to determine the quantity of milk must be of an approved type and certified as correct. It is also important to remember that if any repair work is carried out on the tank or it is moved for any reason it should be recalibrated. Small errors in level can result in significant measurement errors.

Quality Measurement

Quality measurements are becoming increasingly more important in determining the price and ultimately the amount paid to farmers. While these are generally outside of the scope of trade measurement legislation, provisions of the *Commonwealth Measurement Act 1960* may apply. Examples are:

Protein Measurement in Grain

The protein content in grain is often an important factor in determining the price for crops, particularly wheat. This depends on the market for the grain, many uses requiring a higher protein percentage. This has led to the development of methods of measuring the protein content so that primary producers can be confident in the readings recorded by bulk handlers and storage facilities.

The Grain Quality Committee, a sub-committee of the National Measurement Institute, published a National Standard for grain protein measuring instruments in 2003.

Since 1 July 2004 any new protein measuring instruments installed for trade use have been required to be of an approved type and certified under trade measurement legislation.

The Grain Quality Committee is currently looking at other grains besides wheat and how protein measurement can be determined in other crops.

Moisture Content in Grain

This has become an important issue for many Tasmanian farmers. In order for grain to be stored safely it must be sufficiently dry and significant variation in moisture meter readings can occur. In conjunction with the National Measurement Institute and the Grain Quality Committee, Tasmanian officials are working to develop a more consistent system.

Further Information

For further information please visit the following web sites:

www.consumer.tas.gov.au

www.measurement.gov.au

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