



Community of Practice on Public Private Partnership

PPP COP

**September
30th, 2025**

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
(Bangkok time)

Guest Speaker

Session Topic

✓ **Strengthening Potato
Production through
Regional Collaboration &
Harmonised Phytosanitary
Conditions**



DR. NIGEL CRUMP

General Manager
Australian Seed Potato
Industry Certification
Authority (AuSPICA)

Director
Potatoes Australia Ltd



REGISTER NOW!

Contact Us:

✉ h.sonom@apaari.org
✉ ravi.khetarpal@apaari.org

🌐 www.apaari.org

APAARI PPP CoP – Seventh Session Summary

Theme: Strengthening Potato Production through Regional Collaboration and Harmonized Phytosanitary Conditions

Date: 30 September 2025

Platform: Zoom

Opening Remarks and Context

The seventh session of APAARI's Public–Private Partnership Community of Practice (PPP CoP) brought together experts, policymakers, and private sector representatives from across the Asia-Pacific to explore ways to enhance regional collaboration in potato production through harmonized phytosanitary measures. The session opened with a warm welcome from Ms. Homaira Jahan (technical officer, APAARI) who greeted participants joining from various countries. She reflected on the progress of the CoP, which continues to serve as a vibrant platform for advancing partnerships in agriculture and agri-food systems.

In her opening recap, Ms. Homaira summarized the key highlights from the sixth CoP session. She reminded participants that the previous discussion underscored how PPPs can move beyond mere contractual relationships to become shared journeys built on risk, responsibility, and reward. Three recurring themes emerged from that dialogue: the importance of trust and long-term commitment; the value of co-design and co-ownership of solutions; and the need to scale successful pilot projects to achieve system-wide transformation. She also recalled the emphasis on establishing fair governance structures and regional collaboration as essential drivers of sustainable innovation. With these reflections, she introduced the focus of the seventh session — a timely conversation on potato production, a crop of immense regional importance — and invited the APAARI Executive Director, Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, to share his remarks and introduce the keynote speaker.

Address by Dr. Ravi Khetarpal

Dr. Khetarpal thanked participants for their continued engagement and reiterated APAARI's commitment to growing the PPP CoP “as one big family.” He noted that the CoP series has progressively covered various dimensions of public–private partnerships and announced that the upcoming session would be organized in collaboration with CropLife International and STDF-WTO, signifying the growing synergy between global partners. Introducing the keynote speaker, he described Dr. Nigel Crump, General Manager of the Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Agency (AuSPICA), as “a globally respected expert in plant health, biosecurity, and phytosanitary harmonization,” whose work exemplifies the very spirit of public–private collaboration.

Keynote Presentation: Dr. Nigel Crump

Dr. Crump's presentation, titled “Strengthening Potato Production through Regional Collaboration and Harmonization of Phytosanitary Conditions,” was an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities in the potato sector. He began by

acknowledging that this was his first engagement with a regional platform in the Asia-Pacific on potato seed systems, describing it as “a huge opportunity to build a common understanding and trust.” He explained that the potato, the world’s third-largest food crop, plays a vital role in food and nutrition security, yet its productivity varies drastically across regions — from as low as five tonnes per hectare to over forty-five tonnes — primarily due to differences in seed quality. Dr. Crump outlined the two main seed systems: the formal system, characterized by certification, traceability, and regulated standards; and the informal system, which is typically farmer-managed, unregulated, and locally adapted. He stressed that both systems are valuable and coexist in many regions, but greater integration and harmonization are required to strengthen productivity and trade.

Discussing the concept of harmonization, Dr. Crump emphasized that phytosanitary collaboration goes far beyond export–import regulations. It is, in his words, “about building trust, consistency, and resilience between partners.” He explained that harmonized standards would bring multiple benefits — from reduced uncertainty and fewer trade disputes to improved market confidence and food security. Farmers, he noted, would gain access to cleaner, more reliable seed, resulting in higher yields and lower losses, while the supply chain would enjoy better risk management and resilience against climate-driven pest pressures. Dr. Crump shared numerous scientific insights on seed quality and disease management, pointing to pathogens such as potato virus Y, *Ralstonia* (bacterial wilt), and potato cyst nematode as significant constraints to yield and trade. He suggested that regional cooperation on diagnostic protocols, certification schemes, and capacity building could substantially mitigate these risks. “Harmonization,” he stated, “is not a one-off event—it’s a process of building trust, technical alignment, and institutional frameworks.” In his closing remarks, Dr. Crump proposed concrete steps to move forward: mapping seed quality baselines across the region, aligning testing standards, developing regional platforms under APAARI’s facilitation, initiating pilot projects—potentially starting with Australia—and investing in capacity building for certifiers, growers, and regulators. He invited countries in the region to collaborate, emphasizing that “participation is the key” and urging the public sector to provide leadership that could encourage greater private sector investment.

Reflections and Key Takeaways by Dr. Ravi Khetarpal

Dr. Khetarpal commended Dr. Crump’s “succinct yet comprehensive” presentation, noting that it clearly demonstrated how regional harmonization can enhance farmer livelihoods, strengthen supply chains, and reduce pest risks. He particularly appreciated the linkage between seed quality, certification, and disease management, as well as the emphasis on partnership, investment, and technical capacity. Calling investment “the key to harmonization,” he encouraged the CoP to explore ways to blend public and private funding to sustain innovation. Dr. Khetarpal remarked, “We are lucky to have this conversation—it’s time we talk more on such regional platforms,” underlining APAARI’s readiness to host more regionally focused dialogues on seed systems and trade harmonization.

Open Discussion and Exchange

The discussion session, moderated by Dr. Paul Taylor (Technical Coordinator, APAARI), generated several thought-provoking exchanges among participants. Dr. S.G. Abbas from the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council shared his positive experience with the use of South Korean potato seeds in Pakistan and inquired about the potential for potato value addition to increase farmer income. Responding to his question, Dr. Crump highlighted that potato is an exceptionally versatile crop, with processing opportunities ranging from crisps and chips to emerging innovations such as potato protein, potato milk, and even medicinal compounds. “Potatoes offer high-value opportunities,” he noted, “and the potential for economic diversification is immense.”

Dr. Ahsan Ullah from Bangladesh raised a pressing concern about the brown rot disease (*Ralstonia solanacearum*), which has been hampering Bangladesh’s potato exports. Dr. Crump acknowledged the severity of the issue, explaining that brown rot management requires strict traceability and the use of clean, certified seed. Drawing on examples from Kenya, he explained how yield recovery—rising from five to thirty tonnes per hectare—was achieved through rigorous seed system management and improved irrigation hygiene.

Dr. Khetarpal further inquired about the trade of Australian potato seed within Asia and whether sufficient Pest Risk Analyses (PRAs) were being undertaken by importing countries. Dr. Crump responded candidly that while trade feedback from countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia has been very positive, there remains “room for improvement” in regional PRA practices. He pointed out that countries often focus on managing symptoms like powdery scab rather than addressing the true underlying vectors, such as the mop-top virus.

A particularly insightful exchange came when Paul Taylor asked about the role of the private sector in the potato value chain. Dr. Crump explained that global food companies such as McCain and PepsiCo are strong drivers of clean seed demand because “their profitability depends on farmers’ productivity.” He added that while the private sector is ready to invest, it looks to public leadership to set the direction. “If we show leadership,” he said, “investment will follow.”

Session Summary and Closing Reflections

In his concluding summary, Dr. Paul Taylor noted that the discussion had reinforced several key points: potatoes are grown across a wide range of climates, which creates both opportunities and challenges for disease control and varietal adaptation; harmonized phytosanitary standards are essential for safe trade; and collaborative leadership is needed to guide private investment and regional capacity building. He underlined that all actors in the value chain — from farmers and processors to consumers — benefit from stronger plant health systems built on trust and collaboration. Dr. Crump, in his final remarks, expressed gratitude for the engagement and reiterated his openness to continue the dialogue through regional and bilateral initiatives. He also invited

participants to the World Potato Congress 2026, to be held in Kenya, as a platform to further advance these discussions on global potato trade and sustainability.

Conclusion

The seventh session of APAARI's PPP CoP demonstrated once again the platform's growing significance as a space for honest, technical, and forward-looking dialogue. The conversation illuminated the urgent need for regional harmonization of phytosanitary standards, stronger seed systems, and collective leadership to unlock the potential of the potato value chain in Asia-Pacific. As Dr. Crump aptly summarized, "Harmonization is about trust and collaboration—it begins with clean seed, shared science, and shared responsibility."