



Media Release (Long version)

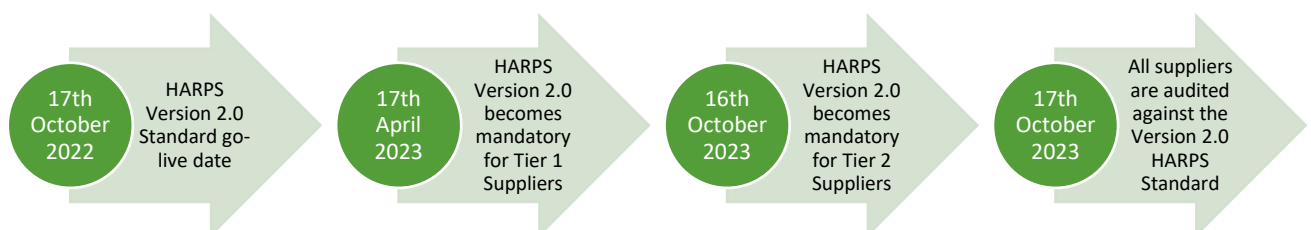
Title: HARPS Version 2.0, launching 17th October 2022

The HARPS Version 2.0 Standard launches on Monday 17th October 2022. The Version 2.0 Standard will assist suppliers in meeting retailer requirements, and relevant Australian Laws. The revised standard is accompanied by additional support tools for growers and suppliers, including guidance for each element and how to achieve compliance. The standard also incorporates guidance developed by the Fresh Produce Safety Centre.

The HARPS Retailer Committee said, “Version 2.0 of the HARPS Standard has been in development since early 2019 and reflects the foundational nature of the GFSI benchmarked standards, whilst building upon these requirements to ensure safety, quality, compliant products that customers expect when purchasing their fruit, vegetables and nuts in-shell.” Each element within the Standard has been reviewed, discussed and debated by the HARPS Technical Advisory Group (H-TAG), a group comprised of Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers, as well as a diverse group of industry representatives, including auditors, trainers and peak industry body representatives. The H-TAG have provided recommendations for improvements to the Retailer Committee. Notably, feedback received following a public consultation period closing in early 2021 and recent pilot audits to test the standard, have been important components of the development process. This has helped to ensure elements are practical and realistic and identify the most appropriate support tools to assist implementation by suppliers, and particularly Tier 2 growers.

Throughout the process, specific attention has been given to the requirements for Tier 2 growers, who are often less well-resourced than Tier 1 suppliers. This includes detailing which elements are relevant to Tier 2s, guidance for growers currently using Freshcare as their GFSI benchmarked standard and providing a 12-month transition period (instead of the six-month timeline for Tier 1s).

Following the 17th October launch, Tier 1 suppliers will have six months to transition to Version 2.0, with a mandatory transition date of 17th April 2023. Tier 2 suppliers are permitted 12 months to transition, with a mandatory transition date of 16th October 2023. Any new suppliers to HARPS from 18th October 2022 will require an audit against the Version 2.0 Standard. The graphic below provides an overview of the launch date and transition timelines for Tier 1 and Tier 2 businesses.



In addition, short and easy-to-follow training guides have been developed to help businesses update their existing QA processes and systems to the Version 2.0 Standard. Transition training will be

available on the HARPS website. If you require more comprehensive training, you can visit the training page on the HARPS website to find a trainer in your state or capital city.

Tristan Kitchener, from One Direction ANZ, the entity responsible for the ongoing management of HARPS said, “We’re delighted that the HARPS Retailers continue to support the process of working collaboratively to accept a single common standard, rather than their own specific standards, given the non-competitive nature of food safety and the need to meet legislative requirements. There are significant efficiencies gained by having one audit that satisfies multiple retailers’ requirements and having a business model established whereby producers and industry can engage directly with retailers as a collective group.”

The Version 2.0 Standard, updated Scheme Rules and other Technical Documents, including easy-to-use templates, are available in the Document Library on the HARPS website. For further information or to raise an enquiry, go to www.harpsonline.com.au or call the HARPS Helpline on 1300 852 219.