

Australian Truffle Industry Association

“The National Voice for the Australian Truffle Industry”



TruffleCare™ Industry Best Practice

TruffleCare™ is a whole of supply chain continuous improvement, best practice program that is based on the successful Australian Olive Industry's Code of Best Practice.

The TruffleCare™ 'Test and Trial' Pilot Program encompasses a selection of seven (7) key business risk management elements (Sections), matched to participant roles in the supply chain, including truffle growers, graders, consolidators and marketers.

The program will initially focus on sustainable production and marketing of Australian (mature-ripe) Black Winter truffles (*Tuber melanosporum*), pending development of maturity standards for other truffle species approved for production in Australia.

TruffleCare™ signatories (participants) are not expected to be initially proficient or compliant in all program areas, rather they are encouraged to undertake ATIA accredited training programs and work systematically towards achieving full compliance over time.

Section 2: Food Quality Requirements

In this newsletter edition we will take a closer look at Section 2: Food Quality Requirements.

Factors that impact on the quality of harvested truffles are well established and include:

- **Avoid harvesting immature truffles** – always check truffle in-ground for mature-ripe aroma and colour development before lifting, noting that truffle dogs will be able to smell immature truffles, so harvesters need to be instructed to mark but not lift truffles before formal maturity assessment by a trained assessor.
- **Avoid chemical contamination** – ensure truffles are not contaminated by extraneous chemical residues from historical land use - test soil and truffles in accordance with the ATIA national truffle sampling and testing protocol.
- **Time is of the essence** – fresh truffles have a limited shelf life, depending on the stage of maturity when harvested, when stored under optimal temperature conditions this could be 7-14 days – maintain the ‘cool chain’ from harvest to the end-user in order to maximise shelf life.
- **Determine an objective best-before-date (BBD)** – taking into account the truffle species, stage of maturity when harvested, regional and other environmental influences, packaging methods used, and cool chain management - use retained samples to validate best-before-dates.
- **Avoid unscrupulous traders** – in low production years buying and selling of lesser quality truffles to fill orders may occur – as part of your due diligence, independently assess any ‘third party’ truffle supply to ensure that it is fresh, ripe and aromatic.



Compliance with Product Quality Standards

All participants in ATIA's 2024 TruffleCare™ 'Test and Trial' Pilot Program are expected to undertake an ATIA sensory training workshop to ensure truffles meet the minimum quality parameters of the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft).

TruffleCare™ Signatories who are producers or marketers of Australian fresh truffles and who have undertaken 'approved assessor' training will be eligible to apply the new Australian Premium Truffles™ Quality Assured Trademark symbol to complying batches of correctly labelled Australian fresh truffle product, whole truffle or pieces that meet the quality specifications of the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft).

Further details on the Australian Industry Standard will be published in a future newsletter, and we look forward to unveiling and launching the trademarked Quality Seal at our 2025 National Conference.

Initially the use of this Trademarked Quality Seal will be restricted to Australian Black Winter Truffles (*Tuber melanosporum*), pending development of maturity standards for other truffle species approved for production in Australia.

To be eligible to apply the ATIA Quality Assured Australian Premium Truffles™ Quality Seal, each batch of truffles must be assessed by an ATIA accredited assessor as meeting the quality and maturity specifications of the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft), including the stage of truffle maturity, be assigned a unique batch number, record harvest and packing dates, and an objective Best Before Date determined (verified using retained samples), with an approved label affixed to the package.

Clear records of where the finished product is to be dispatched also need to be made and maintained for traceback purposes (for internal use only). When requested, a copy of the Product Quality Register must be forwarded to the TruffleCare™ Administrator for verification purposes.

ATIA vigorously defends its Intellectual Property (IP) including unauthorised use and misuse of its Trademarks and will seek legal remedy where this occurs.

Authorised use of the ATIA logo will be underpinned by random surveillance of truffle products for sale in the Australian marketplace, and establishment of a consumer 'hot line' to ensure product and label compliance with the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft).

TruffleCare™ Signatories must also:

- Maintain financial membership of the ATIA.
- Undertake as a minimum training requirement, the ATIA Introductory Truffle Sensory Assessment & Grading Training Program.
- Consistently meet the requirements of the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft) and ATIA TruffleCare™ COBP Compliance Requirements (Ref: COBP Manual Appendix 4).
- Use the ATIA Quality Assured Trademark and Quality Seal in accordance with the stated terms and conditions of use (Ref: TruffleCare™ Manual Appendix 2).



ATIA's Truffle Sensory Assessment Training Program

ATIA Sensory Training Workshops are currently in the planning phase and will be rolled out from early 2025 - further details will be published in a future newsletter.

A pilot on-line sensory training workshop will be provided to TruffleCare® 'Test and Trial' Pilot Program participants in early 2025. A Truffle Sensory Training Program launch will be held at the ATIA Annual Conference which will be held in April 2025; to be followed by a roll-out of a series of half-day on-farm face to face workshops during the 2025 truffle season.

The primary objective of this sensory training program is for participants to be able to assess maturity of the Australian Black Winter Truffle (*Tuber melanosporum*), in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft).

The training program will include:

- Identifying the aroma spectrum of Australian black truffles at various stages of maturity, using the Truffle Aroma Wheel;
- Determining whether a truffle is ready to lift based on aroma, colour and maturity stage – immature, early-mature, mature-ripe and advanced-mature (over-ripe) sensory attributes;
- Identifying truffle sensory and physical defects;
- Objectively assessing aroma, colour sensory attributes of the truffle and prepare a truffle sensory descriptor; and
- Determining whether a batch of Australian black truffles qualifies to have the Australian Premium Truffle™ verification Quality Seal applied.

Future TruffleCare™ Newsletters

In future TruffleCare™ Newsletters we will provide further details on the truffle sensory training workshops, the Australian Industry Standard for Truffles© (ATIA 2024-draft), as well as other elements of the TruffleCare™ Industry Best Practice program including those relevant to truffle graders, consolidators and marketers.

ATIA will also provide further updates on the TruffleCare™ 'Test and Trial' Pilot Program that is currently underway. It is not too late to express your interest and join the Pilot Program this season. You can access the Application Form by clicking the Apply Now button below.

We are currently planning our 2025 National Conference including the unveiling and launch of both our Australian Premium Truffle™ verification Quality Seal and Truffle

Sensory Assessment Training Program. We also look forward to sharing more information about next year's National Conference with you very soon!

Katherine Faul
President
Australian Truffle Industry Association

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Our mailing address is:
P.O. Box 325, Oberon
NSW 2787, Australia
