

| IOXYNIL UPDATE

| INTERNATIONAL NEWS

| NO TEARS FOR ONIONS



INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

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WHITE ROT DISEASE DEVELOPMENT

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Bejo Quality Onions

Redwing

- ▶ Late red with exceptional skin quality and storability.
- ▶ High percentage of single centres.

Pinnaroo

- ▶ Early intermediate PLK producing globe shaped bulbs with very good skins.
- ▶ Good bolting tolerance, sowing from mid-June into July.

Red Label

- ▶ Early intermediate with excellent colour and yield.
- ▶ Good skin quality and moderate storability.
- ▶ Extremely uniform

Briella

- ▶ Excellent quality late variety with a dark brown colour.
- ▶ Very productive with good storability.

For more information on these or our other quality onion varieties, please check our website www.bejo.com.au or contact your local representative.

WELCOME

Welcome to Volume 36 of the annual Onions Australia magazine – often referred to as our industry bible.

In this edition we have gone back to grass roots – given that Onions Australia as the peak industry body has taken back control of the magazine and all grower communications and it feels good!

Not only does this 36th edition cover news of all things onions, it also brings you news from overseas, ensuring our Aussie growers are kept up to date with the latest onion industry happenings.

It brings us much joy – mixed with a lot of pride – to deliver this in our magazine, which this year has grown to 48 pages.

The 2019 edition features all of our regular updates, from state round ups, Executive Committee news through to minor use permit details.

This publication has been solely financed by Onions Australia, without any input from Hort Innovation and the onion industry levy fund.

Onions Australia is grateful to key strategic partners, advertisers and especially our members whose contributions have allowed us to continue publishing this quality magazine.

Without this support we would not have been able to publish this year, and our much respected publication would have come to an end.

As always, the offer stands to contact the OA office with any feedback, be it constructive or critical, to ensure that we continue to meet your needs.

We hope you enjoy the read, and look forward to your support to continuing publishing our industry's valued publication.

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Onions Australia Executive Committee

Peter Shadbolt (Chair)
Alan Thierry (Deputy Chair)
Darren Rathjen
Jason Daniell
Greg Bragg
Tim Groom
Rohan Shadbolt
Lewis Lydon
Dean Metcalf
Mark Dobson

Chief Executive Officer

Lechelle Earl

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FROM THE CHAIR

Well it does seem that time is speeding up as the years go by.

Once again such a lot has happened in the world of onions and especially that is true for Onions Australia.

This past onion season has by most accounts been above average, with dry conditions around the world certainly lifting export sales and prices along with a reasonably strong domestic market. I think most growers, while not being ecstatic, should be happy with returns thus far.

I am hearing various reports on the upcoming new season with some growers expecting better returns than last year however this can sometimes be limited by our major customers having a fair say in what a grower is returned.

Some major concerns going forward are definitely water supply and quality and also access to labour, which of course is getting more and more expensive.

Lots of things are starting to come out of the MDBA plan and I think it is just a matter of time before Government is forced to take another look at it. (If this is something you think OA should be part of by all means give myself or Lechelle a call).

As mentioned last year, OA has been working really hard to help get Totril or a replacement back onto the market. We are very close to seeing its return and it looks like we may have a choice of more than one going forward which is a fantastic result for growers.

It was exciting to once again co-host Hort Connections this year in Melbourne. OA had our Executive Committee meeting followed by our industry's Levy Payer conference on the Sunday so as not to prevent growers from attending Hort Connections.

Both OA events were extremely successful with really good numbers attending the afternoon conference which included a presentation from guest speaker Onions New Zealand CEO James Kuperus. I really would encourage growers to get along to both events next year to be held in Brisbane as the information and networking opportunities can often be priceless.

Unfortunately, we were not able to secure funding to run the onion industry communications project ourselves this year, and the offer from HIA to partner with Cox Inall - who did win the project - was not quite up to where we felt it needed to be for OA to continue to work with them this year.

This means for the next three years Cox Inall will create the content and it will be delivered by another company RMCG.

The Onions Australia Executive Committee and grower members are very disappointed that we could not make it work but the good thing to come out of this going forward is hopefully communication between HIA and Onions Australia will improve to bring better communications projects back to peak industry bodies, and specifically OA, so that we can deliver crucial information to Australian onion growers into the future.

I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank those people on the Executive Committee. It has been great to see the commitment of all involved making the time to come to meetings and contribute to the life of OA. It's often hard to get away from our farms to attend a meeting but these blokes have been fantastic.

I wish you all well for the upcoming harvest.



PETE SHADBOLT
Chair OA

FROM THE OFFICE

As I sit down to write this, it seems like the Australian onion industry has had the best and worst of times in 2019.

The best being excellent export opportunities with good rewards for growers' hard work, albeit in a tough economic climate, and at the expense of international hardship.

While the worst was the loss of project work – and therefore funding – for Onions Australia as the peak industry body, from decisions which have left us scratching our heads.

Sitting back it seems for most of 2019 I have felt rather like the oft-referenced duck, seemingly gliding effortlessly across the lake, while under the surface paddling furiously to ensure progress is made and everything remains afloat.

But through these challenges, one thing has remained constant, the dedication of Onions Australia and its Executive Committee, and the loyalty and support of our members and levy payers.

In the midst of the turmoil we again took part as a cohort of the ever-successful Hort Connections in Melbourne.

It was an honour to host growers from across Australia and New Zealand.

The event featured an outstanding cross-section of industry, with interesting presentations from representatives of a range of onion industry organisations.

The highlight of the day was the presentation of keynote speaker James Kuperus, the CEO of Onions New Zealand.

It was interesting to learn about their approach to onions, and I'm sure there was a collective dropping of jaws when it came to their export success.

In terms of our export program, it is good to see growers capitalising on the European drought, but it is likely it will be a one-off event.

With that in mind, we are continuing to focus on building sales into Asia as a longer term priority. This will be done through the establishment of export facilitators, identifying frontier markets and assisting growers to progress their export framework.

Onions Australia has also lodged a request with HIA to provide onion levy funding to enable OA to continue to bring international speakers to our levy payer events, in a bid to extend international expertise to Aussie growers.



LECHELLE EARL
CEO OA

Last but by no means at all least is the Totril issue. This has been one of the most difficult and time-consuming issues we have had to confront for some time.

The office has spent many, many hours working with industry representatives trying to fast-track alternative ioxynil products.

We are just starting to see those products become available on the market, and it now seems there may be multiple options for growers.

Please know that we have done all we can to ensure there is light at the end of the tunnel.

So, after all of that, I now know why I feel like that duck, as there has been plenty going on.

As I sign off, please let me take a moment to thank our hard-working Executive Committee members, and our Chair Pete Shadbolt in particular, for helping me to steady the ship and do my best to ensure our industry is well represented.



NO TEARS FOR ONIONS

By Andrew Wang, FMCG Insight Analyst

Onions' multi-layered skin has helped it endure a poorer-performing season in 2018, with stronger sales in the past 52 weeks ending 15 June 2019.

The onions category increased in dollar sales growth (3.8%) and recorded relatively flat volume sales (1.7%). This performance was in line with total dollar sales growth for vegetables (3.4%) and relatively flat volume sales (-1.4%). Brown onions continue to be the most popular type, accounting for two-thirds of total onion dollar sales and having the highest dollar sales growth (5.3%) in the last 52 weeks. Onions are a popular and staple ingredient with nine-in-ten households purchasing every year.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Pre-packed onions were a key factor driving the increase in onion dollar and volume sales in the last year. Roughly half of all onions sold were pre-packed. Pre-packed onions showed strong growth in dollar (13.4%) and volume sales (10.3%). Loose onions, on the other hand, saw a decline in both dollar (-3.3%) and volume sales (-5.0%).

Pre-packed onion growth was the result of an increase in the number of pre-packed buying households (up 4%), along with an increase in their average spend (up 8.9%) and average volume purchased (kg) (up 5.9%). In addition to these factors, 92.8% of pre-packed onion dollar sales came from major retailers; who accounted for 73.7% of all onion dollar sales.

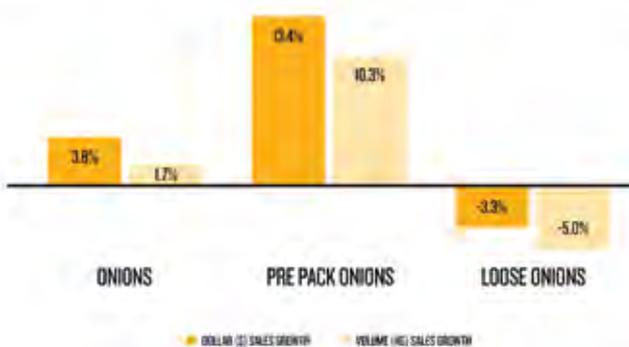
DIFFERENT LAYERS OF RETAILERS

With almost three-in-four households purchasing onions from major supermarkets, it continues to be the main channel for onion sales and is the only retailer channel that saw an increase in dollar sales across all varieties of onions.

Other supermarkets, greengrocers and specialty markets declined in dollar sales driven by a fall in average prices by -11.6% and -7.5%, respectively. However, the lower average price per kg helped drive volume sales in these channels by 11.7% and 4.6%, respectively.

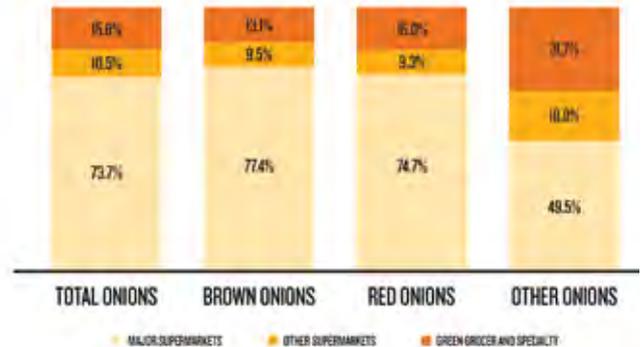
While brown onions and red onions were purchased predominantly through major supermarkets, other onions (such as white onions) were undertrading significantly in major supermarkets and overtrading in other supermarkets, greengrocers and specialty markets.

DOLLAR (\$) & VOLUME (KG) SALES GROWTH VS A YEAR AGO



Source: Nielsen Homescan 52 weeks to 15/06/2019
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DOLLAR (\$) SHARE TRADE ON ONION VARIETY



Source: Nielsen Homescan 52 weeks to 15/06/2019
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OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Although onions are a staple ingredient for many Australian households, there is still an opportunity for growth. Broadening the reach and targeting audiences on social media platforms with recipes, furthermore, having point-of-sale information in major retailers to help educate buyers on how to use smaller, sweeter tasting onions may create further opportunities. With pre-packed onions being one of the key drivers for onion category growth, the addition of a variety pre-pack with two to three different varieties, may also help target onion buyers who currently purchase only one type of onion.

Notes:

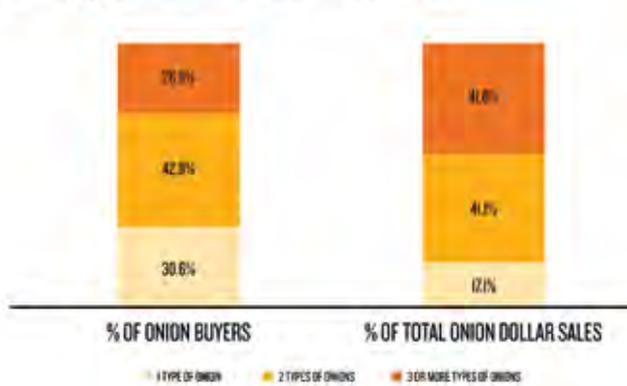
- Major supermarkets are defined here as the sum of Woolworths, Coles and Aldi
- Other supermarkets are defined here as all other full-service supermarkets

Sources:

- Nielsen Homescan 52 weeks to 15/06/2019
- Attitudinal reports prepared by Nielsen for Hort Innovation, survey sample minimum n=300, fieldwork from 23/05/2019 to 28/05/2019 for the Australian market. Copyright © 2019 Horticulture Innovation Australia.

These data and insights were produced independently by Nielsen and shared through the Harvest to Home platform, supported through the Hort Innovation Vegetable, Sweetpotato and Onion research and development levies. For more insights visit www.harvesttohome.net.au

DOLLAR (\$) SHARE TRADE ON ONION VARIETY



Source: Nielsen Homescan 52 weeks to 15/06/2019

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HORT INNOVATION INVESTS IN NUTRITION AND HEALTH ACTIVITIES FOR AUSTRALIAN ONION GROWERS

In April 2018 Hort Innovation appointed FoodBytes, a specialised nutrition consulting agency, to complete a suite of activities including a literature review investigating the latest onion nutrition and health benefits. These activities will help drive Australian onion purchase and consumption, and form part of the 2015-18 Australian onion industry strategic investment plan.

Accredited Practising Dietitians Lisa Yates and Teri Lichtenstein, who have extensive horticulture, FMCG and marketing experience, undertook the project since it also aims to encourage health professionals to recommend nutritious onions in the everyday diet of Australians. The literature review uncovered that much of the onion research used onion extracts, powders, juices and oils, in animal models and cell cultures. There is much less evidence for the effects of whole food onions in humans. While more research is needed onion consumption may play a role in heart health (through its impact on heart disease risk factors), diabetes management, gut health and cancer prevention. Surprising emerging research found onions may protect bones. Onions contain unique compounds – quercetin, anthocyanins and sulfoxides with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that help explain onions' health effects. It's clear Australians should be consuming onions regularly.

A report substantiating onion nutrition and health claims that can be used on labels or in forms of advertising was also produced, as well as an updated health summary report which will be available on the Australian Onions website shortly. Web copy updates for both the existing Australian Onions health webpage and the Veggycation onions webpage have also been written. An issues management manual was developed to help onion stakeholders address issues such as the impact of the low FODMAP

diet on onion consumption or to answer the question why onions make you cry and what to do about it. Finally, a report identifying a standard onion serving size was developed based on size and weight of onions grown and sold, sales data, national and international recommendations and recipes. This is essential for substantiating nutrition and health claims. The serve size is 75g or a half a cup similar to Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND FINDINGS:

- Onions are often overlooked as a source of nutrition, yet they provide nutrients we need to eat more of fructans, folate, vitamin C and antioxidant quercetin. This humble hero can help with healthy skin, building strong bones and teeth, keeping the immune system strong and the brain functioning normally.
- Onions are a natural source of fructans, a prebiotic fibre that helps support good gut health.
- People following a low FODMAP diet can still enjoy the flavour of onion in their meals. Cooking large pieces of onion in oil-based dishes and removing prior to eating will impart the flavour without the fructans. Fructans can cause gut issues in people with irritable bowel syndrome.
- Onions are one of the top common food sources of antioxidant quercetin to help protect against free radical damage and inflammation, which can contribute to ageing and chronic disease.
- To retain as much quercetin as possible avoid over peeling your onions as quercetin levels are higher in the outer layers.

For more information or questions please email teri@foodbytes.com.au

This project VN18002 has been funded by Hort Innovation, using the Australian Onion Industry research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture.

**AgNova - Supporting
Australian onion growers**



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MAYA'S QUICK RELEASE FILLS THE IOXYNIL GAP FOR AUSTRALIA'S ONION GROWERS

When Totril (ioxynil) was withdrawn from the Australian market in mid-2018, the Australian onion industry was left with few broadleaf herbicide options.

The July 2019 launch of Nufarm's Maya, a unique SC formulation of bromoxynil for crop safety, has solved this problem and is already in market providing weed control for onions in every Australian state.

In a fantastic example of Onions Australia and its members working together for the benefit of growers, over a very short time frame Onions Australia worked closely with Nufarm to apply for the emergency use permit to address this one-off challenge.

The timeframe between Nufarm's first discussion with Onions Australia to having product in Australia for onion growers was 11 months, less than half the normal time taken to have a new product available for growers to use. To meet the exceptional grower demand this season, Nufarm flew product in from Denmark to meet grower demand.

ABOUT MAYA

Maya was developed by Nufarm's European arm to fill the gap in onion growers' herbicide programs when ioxynil was withdrawn from their market. It is a unique formulation developed when compared with EC formulations of bromoxynil.

- Maya is recommended for use as a broadleaf herbicide in onion crops.
- Maya has good efficacy on many broadleaf weeds.
- It can be used post sow pre-emergence (PSPE) and from 2 to 4 leaf.
- Maya was Tested in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. The tests show fantastic results in the field on many weeds including spear thistle, bellvine, cress.
- Maya is crop safe, fast acting and reliable.
- Ideal herbicide for onion growers





MAYA®

The new solution for early weed control in onions.

Introducing Maya by Nufarm. Get control of key broadleaf weeds in onions at key timings of Post sow, pre-emergent (PSPE) AND 2 to 4 leaf stage.



New

For broad spectrum broadleaf weed control in onions

- Get your crop off to the best possible start.

Targeted control of key broadleaf weeds in onions

- Providing fast knockdown of your weeds with a unique SC bromoxynil formulation.

Unmatched solution for use in early growth stage

- Applied PSPE (post-sow pre-emergent) AND 2 to 4-leaf stage.

Excellent crop safety profile

- Developed specifically for crop safety in onions.

For more information, contact your local Nufarm Territory Manager.



nufarm.com.au

 **Nufarm**

Grow a better tomorrow

IPM NOW THE WAY FOR DOLLING PRODUCE

MT16009 - An IPM extension program for the potato and onion industries. Funded by Hort Innovation and the Potato and Onion levies. Contact Dr Paul Horne: paul@ipmtechnologies.com.au

A couple of years ago, Shane Ebert (farm manager at Dolling Produce in SA) attended a workshop on IPM that was run by IPM Technologies P/L.

The workshop was run as part of a Hort Innovation project to demonstrate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in potato and onion crops around Australia. In the workshop IPM Technologies presented an alternative to routine insecticide applications to control pests, and in onion crops the main pest of concern is onion thrips.

Shane attended because he was seeing far less effect from his insecticide applications and was interested to see if there was another way. He was interested in what was presented and was prepared to set up a trial, but it is fair to say he was sceptical. With support from Jarryd Dolling (manager), they set up a trial following the guidelines that IPM Technologies provided. The main element was to add organic matter on the soil surface as mulch in order to encourage beneficial insects and mites. (The initial stage of this trial was recorded in a video produced by Onions Australia.

The results of the trial encouraged them to seek out methods of mechanising what they had done by hand in the initial trial. Dr Paul Horne and Jessica Page from IPM Technologies met Jarryd Dolling and Shane Ebert in May 2019 to discuss the progress and what might be required in the future to continue with the improved control of thrips. Dolling Produce has succeeded in mechanising the process of spreading mulch and in the 2018-2019 season about one-third of their onion production was grown using the mulching technique. However, they refined the amount and type of mulch used to meet their requirements and are now planning to use the improved method over all their onions in the 2019-2020 season. Shane commented: "We are very happy with the results from the commercial areas treated last season and will continue to use this method into the foreseeable future".

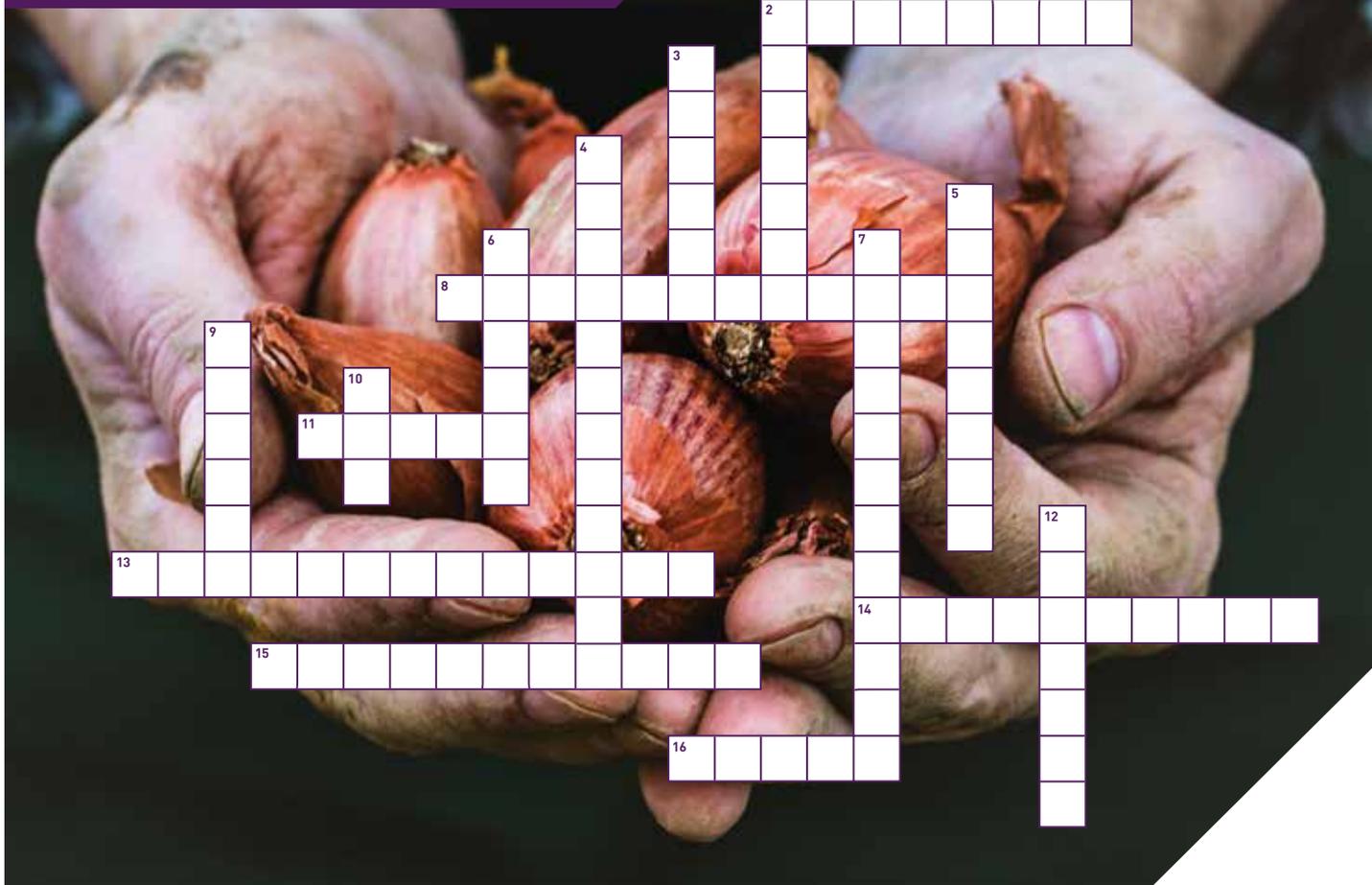
The methods of controlling thrips on the Dolling Produce farm has now changed completely. Instead of a regular insecticide application there are now likely to be no insecticides applied for thrips in the coming season. This is a move that has made the production of onions on the farm more sustainable. "This method of thrips control has changed the way we look at problems. In the future we will look to find alternatives from the conventional spraying methods whether that be to combat disease or resistant weeds which are becoming an ever-increasing problem". - Jarryd Dolling

From Left - Shane Ebert, Brett Dolling, Jarryd Dolling, Angelica Cameron, Paul Horne



Corteva Agriscience™ Crossword

To find out how much you know about onions, view the answers here: onionscrossword.corteva.com.au



Down

1. Onions are high in this type of antioxidant, known for being a natural antihistamine (9).
3. Onions are part of this family which contains over 300 species (6).
4. The CEO of Onions Australia (8,4).
5. Two of the major onion growing regions in Australia are the Adelaide Plains in South Australia and Northern ----- (8).
6. This type of soup is usually based on meat stock and onions, often served with croutons (6).
7. Nick Koch is the Marketing Manager for ----- & Insecticides for Corteva Agriscience (12).
9. The Reg ----- Award is the onion industry's highest honour and is named in recognition of the South Australian who helped found Onions Australia (6).
10. Corteva Agriscience is founded on the rich heritages of DuPont, Pioneer and this company (3).
12. Red onions have purplish-red skin and are sometimes incorrectly known by this name (7).

Across

2. This ancient civilisation considered onions as an object of worship (8).
8. This cricketer plays for Lancashire and England as a right arm fast-medium bowler and a right-hand tail-end batsman (6,6).
11. Onions are high in vitamin C and a good source of fibre and this acid (5).
13. This Corteva fungicide is rainfast 20 minutes after spray residue dries and has the optimal level of active ingredient at 35 grams of Oxathiapiprolin per hectare (6,7).
14. 28th Prime Minister of Australia and a fan of onions (4,6).
15. Corteva Agriscience's Zorvec Enicade provides onion growers with an unmatched combination of consistency and long-lasting control of this major disease (5,6).
16. These onions are generally not as strong in flavour or pungent as brown onions (5).

SOIL TEMPERATURE IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ONION WHITE ROT DISEASE DEVELOPMENT

Development of an onion white rot forecast model for Tasmania VN14001
Research Provider: Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), Lead contact Dr Suzie Jones

Onion white rot (OWR), caused by, *Sclerotium cepivorum*, is a highly destructive fungal disease of commercial onion crops.

The prevalence of the disease is widespread throughout Tasmania's coastal production areas and is rapidly spreading to the less intensively cropped areas. The fungus can survive in the soil for as long as 20 years in the form sclerotia, which are small poppy seed-like structures that act as inoculum for future disease outbreaks. Sclerotia form on infected bulbs and disperse into the soil where they remain after the onions have been harvested. Once OWR sclerotia are present in a field soil, there is always a risk that the disease can infect subsequent crops. This limits options for growers to avoid the pathogen with crop rotations.

The fungus infects plant roots and progresses up the roots to the base of the onion bulb. Infection can spread from the roots of one plant to another, resulting in patches of infected plants. Root infection and disease development are

influenced by a combination of factors. The depth of sclerotia and onion roots in the soil, the time of planting, environmental conditions such as temperature and moisture are factors that interact and influence the onset and progress of OWR disease.

The two-year project looked at the effect of planting date, environmental conditions, sclerotia depth and onion root growth patterns to provide insights into OWR disease development. The study included multiple commercial onion crops from Hagley to Rocky Cape in northern Tasmania and planter bag studies in both outdoor and controlled environments. Data on onion root development were collected over two growing seasons (2016-17 and 2017-18) in field and planter bag trials. To cover the relatively long planting period of onion crops in Tasmania, three planting windows were studied to corresponded with planting onions in May, July and September. Development of disease was studied in outdoor planter bag trials and controlled environments (growth chambers).

Trials in commercial onion fields showed that the majority of onion

roots (over 80%) were in the top 100 mm of the soil profile. The high biomass in this section of the soil profile provides opportunity for infection to spread from root-to-root and from one plant to another. In the outdoor planter bag trials, the greatest number of infected onions occurred when sclerotia were in the top 100mm of soil. The finding that most root and fungal pathogen activity occurred in the top 100mm of the soil indicates that fungicide applications need to target this area.

In controlled environment studies, the temperature range of 15 to 20 °C was optimum for fungal activity and onion infection. The number of infections was reduced with sustained temperatures above 20 °C. Root growth was fastest for the onions planted in September and yet they had the lowest incidence of infected bulbs, compared to those planted in May and July. The higher temperatures experienced in the top 100mm of soil from November to February are likely to have reduced the ability of the fungus to reach the base of the September planted onions.

Soil temperatures recorded at commercial field sites during the project showed that temperatures in the top 100mm of soil can be above 20°C periodically from October; and more so from November to February. This can reduce the likelihood of infection reaching the bulb. If feasible, planting later in the season is recommended for fields known to have a history of OWR and potential sclerotia in the soil. Fungicide management is still recommended to reduce the risk of infection reaching the bulbs, with adjustments to timing of application and compliance with fungicide registration guidelines.



Left: Onion bulbs infected with OWR.

An unplanned beneficial outcome of this project was establishing contact with Dr Fred Crowe, a world leading authority on onion white rot disease from Oregon State University in the USA. Dr Crowe visited Tasmania in October 2018 to attend Onions Australia meetings, to present at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) Open Day and to discuss onion white rot with growers, industry and researchers. Funding for this visit was sourced from Hort Innovation via a submission from Onions Australia. Dr Crowe's visit was supported by the Tasmanian onion industry and it is hoped that the visit may lead to collaborative research activities with the United States onion industry in the future.

Discussions on potential OWR management strategies are ongoing between the Tasmanian onion industry, researchers at TIA and Dr Crowe's colleagues in the USA. A potential management strategy could be the use of allium derived substances, such as pulverized, powdered or granulated garlic or onion, as sclerotia germination stimulants. Fungicides are routinely used for management of OWR in onion production systems in Tasmania. Fungicides slow the growth of the fungus and if applied at the right time and to the right depth in the soil, prevent the fungus infecting bulbs. However, fungicides do not kill the sclerotia. Hence, they can persist in the soil until an allium crop is planted.

Sclerotia require the presence of volatile, water-soluble compounds to germinate. These compounds are found in allium plant tissues, including onion and garlic juice. Application of these substances to affected soils has the potential to stimulate sclerotia germination in the absence of an onion crop.



This could provide growers with a means of reducing, and possibly eliminating, the sclerotia in their soils and reduce reliance on fungicides. Successful reduction of sclerotia in field soils could provide growers with greater flexibility in their production operations and increase productivity. The effectiveness of juiced, powdered and granulated garlic as sclerotia germination stimulants is currently being researched in the USA. There is potential for onion-based products, such as juice made from waste onions, to be used in a similar way to help combat OWR in the long-term.

Above: OWR research trial site at the TIA Vegetable Research Facility.

THE CHALLENGES OF REPLACING TOTRIL (IOXYNIL)

Lechelle Earl, Onions Australia CEO, PO Box 9420, Mt Gambier West, SA 5291. Ph: 0458 11 11 26 E: lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au

One of the biggest challenges of 2019 has been the battle to access an ioxynil alternative to replace the withdrawn Totril product.

Last year Australian onion growers were faced with a looming disaster after learning that Bayer had decided to withdraw Totril from the market.

Undoubtedly this was the biggest issue to hit the Australian onion industry in recent years, causing great concern among growers, with Onions Australia at the fore of trying to solve this issue.

Ioxynil (the key active in Totril) is a member of the benzonitrile class of herbicides and is used for the selective control of broadleaf weeds in onions. It is a Group C herbicide which acts as a Photosynthetic electron transport inhibitor at the photosystem II, in certain broadleaf weeds.

Currently only ioxynil is approved for the post-emergent control of Bell vine, Burr medic, Keeled goosefoot, Ox-tongue, Saffron thistle, Slender celery and Three flowered nightshade in onions in Australia.

Totril® Selective Herbicide (ioxynil) was registered for use in onions but no product was available in Australia due to Bayer Crop Sciences announcing last year that it was ceasing supply globally.

The stop-gap measure last year resulted in Onions Australia working with representatives from RuralCo to source an alternative supply – much to the relief of industry.

Through this work, Arysta Lifesciences Australia agreed to seek a permit to allow importation of the product Ioxynil 225 EC from South Africa.

After Onions Australia successfully gained approval from the APVMA under an emergency use permit to allow the use of the ioxynil based product from South Africa, the product was imported.

However, that product was quickly distributed and then supplies dried up.

Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl said a great deal of work has continued behind the scenes to try to ensure continuity of supply for growers, with numerous chemical companies lodging applications with the APVMA.

At the time of writing, NuFarm had launched Maya, a unique SC formulation of bromoxynil for crop safety, which is already in market providing weed control for onions in every Australian state.

In addition, EuroChem had been granted approval for its Ioxynil 250EC Herbicide, with product becoming available in Australia in the last couple of weeks. At the time of receiving approval, stocks were limited due to supply restrictions. The product was packed in five litre containers.

There are also several other ioxynil products due to come online in the coming months, however it remains to be seen if they will be in time for this season.

While the situation is not optimal, Ms Earl said Onions Australia had worked tirelessly to address access issues.

“We are hoping to achieve a great outcome for Aussie onion growers, and this effort is an example of the work of the peak industry body in fighting for results for its levy payers.”





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MINOR USE PERMITS

Onion industry minor use program (VN16000)

CURRENT PERMITS

Permit IDS	Description	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Permit Holder
PER13119 Version 4	Diazinon / Onions / Onion thrips TAS only	06-Mar-12	31-July-20	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER14602 Version 4	Boscalid (Filan), Iprodione (Rovral Aquaflo) & Chlorothalonil (Bravo) / Onion seed & Onions / Neck Rot (<i>Botrytis alli</i>)	24-Jul-14	30-Sep-23	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER13698 Version 3	Phosphorous acid / Lettuce (leaf and hydroponic), Fennel and Bulb (Alliums) Vegetables – bulb onion, garlic, leek, shallot, spring onion and tree onion / Downy Mildew	01-Oct-12	30-Sep-22	Hort Innovation
PER14773 Version 3	Bentazone-sodium (Basagran) / Onions / Broadleaf weeds	16-Apr-14	31-Jan-23	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER80282 Version 2	Alpha-Cypermethrin / Onions / Onion thrips	16-Dec-14	30-Nov-20	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER84734	Haloxypop (Verdict) / Bulb onions / Storksbill & various weeds	19-Dec-17	31-Dec-21	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER84808	Ethofumesate (Tramat) / Bulb onions / Broadleaf and grass weeds as per product label	20-Feb-18	28-Feb-23	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER86865	Ioxynil (South African formulation) / Onions (field grown) / Annual and broadleaf weeds as per Totril Selective Herbicide label	10-Aug-18	31-Aug-20	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER81876 Version 3	Abamectin / Vegetable Leafminer (suppression only) / Various Vegetables including Bulb onions	24-Jun-16	30-Apr-24	Hort Innovation
PER87200	Fluroxpyr (Starane) for control of weeds in Bulb onions (TAS only)	26-Aug-19	31-Aug-24	AOIA

OUTSIDE OF THE LEVY

Permit IDS	Description	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Permit Holder
PER80060 Version 3	Dimethenamid-P (Frontier-P Herbicide) / Bulb Onions / Nutgrass / Purple Nutsedge (suppression only) WA only	31-Aug-15	31-Jul-21	WA Aust Vegetable Growers Ass
PER87914	Emergency Permit – Use and supply of an unregistered AgVet chemical Bromoxynil (Nufarm Maya Herbicide) Unregistered / Onions / Broadleaf weeds	22-May-19	31-May-21	AOIA

GENERATION PROJECTS

Details	Description	Contractor
NEW Label Registration	BASF/Agnova Zampro (300g/L ametoctradin + 225g/L dimrthomorph) Downy Mildew	ST16006 AgVet Grant Contracted Feb-2017 Due for completion 1-Feb-20
NEW PERMIT	ISK Mainman (Flonicamid) Bulb vegetables / Thrips – onion thrips, Western flower thrips, Thrips tabaci, Frankiniella accidentalis	ST17000 AgVet Grant Contracted 30-Apr-18 Due for completion 30-Nov-20
NEW Label Registration	Syngenta Prosulfocarb + S-metolachlor (Boxer Gold Herbicide) Annual Ryegrass	ST18001 AgVet Grant Contracted 24-May-19 Due for completion Jan-23

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TASMANIAN ONION REBUILDING PROJECT REPORT

Ian Locke, Tasmanian Fruit & Vegetable Export Facilitation Group. Ph: 0438 911 319 E: ian.locke@tasfruitveggroup.com.au

This Project has as its primary aims to investigate the reasons why Tasmanian exports of hard brown onions to Europe had decreased quite dramatically over the last 5 years, and, to investigate and renew supply chains for onions to Indonesia.

Supporting the desk-top and on-the-ground activities in Tasmania were visits to Europe and Indonesia to explore first hand current dynamics in the onion markets. More broadly, there were studies into impacts that other events were having on supply of fresh onions to the retail and food service sectors in these markets.

From a broad perspective, brown onions are grown across Europe from the UK in the west to Poland in the east. This band includes production areas located in Holland, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria to the north and northern Italy to the south.

In the winter, spring and summer of Europe in 2017/2018, most of western Europe and the UK experienced weather conditions that disrupted planting, growing and maturing of brown, white and red onion crops.

Late winter/early spring snowfalls and a dry summer contributed to a disruptive environment for onion production in Europe. Overall, UK/European-grown supply was down by about 1.5-million tonnes or about 30%; a market supply/demand situation not seen for a number of decades.

Over the last three years, major retail chains have pursued a sourcing policy that strived to reduce the window for imported onions from southern hemisphere suppliers (browns from New Zealand/Australia), and other

regions such as North Africa (yellows from Egypt) and the subcontinent (yellows and reds from China).

Responding to this sourcing policy, coordinated with a general desire by retailers to reduce the number of suppliers, onion packers were positioned to accept 12-month supply contracts at a fixed price throughout the period.

Such supply contracts are manageable during periods of normal onion supply/demand dynamics. However, when the pendulum moves from normal supply/demand to extreme in either direction, prices also respond. A usual market measure is that when supply/demand moves by 10%, prices will also move by about 40%. Up when demand outstrips supply and down when the market is oversupplied.

The UK market was further impacted with their (Pound sterling) exchange rate sliding by about 20% following the decision to exit the European Union.

The 2018 European onion market resulted in shortages as domestic supplies experienced the volume shortages mentioned previously. Further impacting these shortages were stored onions that began to sprout not long after harvesting. In late October packers across UK/Europe were already being challenged with onions that were small, had thin skins and began to show green shoots.



The market was further impacted when retailers had to relax quality standards as contractors found it increasingly difficult to maintain supply based on an annual fixed-price mechanism. It was not uncommon to see retail displays that were impacted by lack of supply of certain lines.



Southern hemisphere onions (New Zealand and Australia) had experienced market supply access challenges arising from the retailers' objective to narrow the market window for imported onions over the last few years. Traditionally, southern hemisphere onions, had a 6 to 8-week supply window in Europe with delivery into the market from (about) April though to June. It was on this basis that strong relationships existed between Tasmanian exporters and importers since the late 1980's.

In my last report, it was expected that domestic production in UK and Europe may recover in season 2019. However, the weather this northern hemisphere summer has seen record high temperatures and weather events that are the result of climate change. Consequently, farmers will have to make critical-impact decisions as to which crops to water; particularly as regards irrigation.

Whilst Maleic hydrazide remains approved by the EU to be used as a sprout suppressant prior to lifting of onions, there must be some concern amongst onions growers as the EU has recently

banned the use of CIPC as a sprout suppressant for potatoes.

But the good news is that in 2019, there has been a positive change in Tasmanian onion exports to Europe.

In the 5 months to May 2019 Australian onion exports to Europe increased by 117 per cent to almost 17,000 tonnes compared to the same period last year according to ABS data; with Tasmanian growers accounting for over 85 per cent of this volume.

Tasmania's share of these exports is more than 14,400-mt which is getting back to the level of exports in 2017. Not only has the volume more than doubled, the value has risen from \$7-million to \$16-million; an increase of 128% over the previous year. This will have a direct beneficial impact for Tasmania's balance of payments but and for Tasmania's exports of onions.

From a national perspective, Australian exports of onions were 35,466 tonnes worth A\$30.01 million by the end of May. The volume increased to 68 per cent above the same period last year while the value increased 97 per cent with unit values 17 per cent higher at A\$.85c Tasmania accounted for 54 per cent of the volume or 19,468 tonnes.

Domestic prices in the UK in May and June 2019 were high. Brown onion nets from New Zealand were selling for £1.00 or about £1.50 per kilo whilst loose Egyptian onions were £0.99 per kilo.

Australian exports of onions to Indonesia has also increased strongly. It will be interesting to see the mid-term impact of Indonesia's recent decision (reportedly) to halt imports of onions from the Netherlands arising from the palm oil trade dispute.



Ian's trip and the Project was funded through the Australian Government's "Package Assisting Small Exporters" (PASE) administered by the federal Department of Agriculture and Water.

Further information may be found at: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/from-australia/package-assisting-small-exporters>

"SIX OF ONE AND HALF A DOZEN OF ANOTHER"

A COLLECTION OF ONION RECIPES, FACTS AND HINTS

COMPILED by JOHANNA HAASJES

ILLUSTRATED by AL WHITMORE

Leongatha and District Historical Society
2008

LYN'S CHEESE AND CHIVE SCONES

Ingredients:

2 cups S R Flour ¼ cup of milk 1 tablesp butter
1 cup of grated tasty cheese 1 tablesp grated parmesan cheese
½ cup of chives or spring onions chopped or cut with scissors

Method:

- In a bowl place the sifted flour; Melt the butter and stir into the flour
- Add the cheeses and chives or spring onion, then add the milk and mix into a soft dough
- Gently roll out until 2 cm thick; cut with a cutter or knife into scones; brush with a little milk
- Bake in a hot oven, 210 degrees C for 10 minutes or until golden brown
Extra chives and cheese add to the flavour



CHEESE AND ONION SCONES

Ingredients:

500 gm SR flour 1 teasp salt ¼ teasp cayenne pepper
60 gm butter or margarine 100 gm grated cheese
1 tablesp finely chopped parsley 1 tablesp finely chopped red onion
1 egg, beaten 1 ½ cups milk

Method:

- Sift flour, salt and cayenne; rub butter or margarine into flour; add grated cheese, parsley and onion; mix well
- Make a well in the centre and add beaten egg and milk all at once; mix to a soft dough; turn out on floured board and knead just enough to make a smooth surface
- Roll to 1 cm thickness and cut into rounds; place on floured tray, glaze top with milk or beaten egg and milk
- Bake in hot oven (230 degrees C) for 10 - 15 minutes or until scones are browned.

Serves 6

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HALF A DOZEN CONDIMENTS AND SAUCES

ONION JAM

Ingredients

3 large Spanish onions 3 tablesp balsamic vinegar ½ cup brown sugar
2 tablesp extra virgin olive oil

Method

- Slice onion into thin strips.
- Add onions to oil in a preheated pot and cook until completely collapsed.
- Add vinegar and sugar and stir in well; turn pot down to low heat
- Leave on low heat until a jam-like consistency, stirring occasionally.
- Pour into a couple of sterilized jars and seal.

Serve with cold meats or with cheese platter. Store in fridge.

RED ONION JAM

Ingredients

600 gm peeled and very thinly sliced red onions 50 gm unsalted butter
1 tablesp olive oil 125 gm brown sugar 150 ml balsamic vinegar
1 teasp freshly cracked black pepper 1 teasp salt
50 ml Crème de Cassis (a black currant liqueur) 250 ml red wine

Method

- Melt the butter with the olive oil in a heavy bottomed pan, stir in the onion, sugar, salt and pepper.
- Cover with grease proof paper and cook over low heat until the onions are soft; stir regularly so onions don't stick to the base of the pan.
- Pour in the vinegar, red wine and liqueur, and continue to cook slowly for another 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- The liquid will reduce as it cooks; taste and check for seasoning, remove from heat, allow to cool, and skim off any fat that comes to the top as it cools.
- Pour into sterilized jars and seal. Will keep for months in a fridge.

Serve with cold meats or with goats cheese in puff pastry cases, or it can be mixed with cream cheese and used to stuff a chicken breast.

Makes three small jars.



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HALF A DOZEN HOME REMEDIES

Wherever onions and their relatives have grown, wild or cultivated, people have used them to relieve coughs and colds as well as draw "poisons" from wounds and ulcers. Modern research is finding that they show promise in treating a wide range of disorders, so it is wise to include a variety of onions in your regular diet.

STINGS

To relieve the itch of insect bites, rub raw onion on the bite

COLDS AND SORE THROATS

- To make onion gruel, boil a large sliced onion in water until tender, add milk and thicken with groats or oatmeal. Add salt and take hot.
- Chop 1 brown onion and 1 or 2 cloves of garlic; add juice of 1 lemon. Put in jar and shake. This is very good to clear phlegm.

SORE THROATS

Many home-made cough syrup recipes contain garlic and/or onion juice mixed with honey in varying proportions.

- Boil a large sliced onion for 1 hour in water, strain and add 2 tablespoons vinegar and 2 tablespoons honey. This is very soothing for a sore throat.

CHILBLAINS

Before retiring, rub chilblains with a raw cut onion, or onion and salt.

POULTICE

- An onion poultice on the chest will relieve chest congestion, while others place them on the soles of feet to reduce high fever from flu.
- An onion poultice put on an aggravated sore is a safe preventative of blood poison.
- To make an onion poultice, pour boiling water on some bread; cover tightly. Mince an onion; drain water off bread and mix well together. Put on as hot as possible.

BALDNESS

Rub the part morning and night with a cut raw onion, until it is red; afterwards rub with honey or wash with a decoction of boxwood.

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FRENCH ONION SOUP

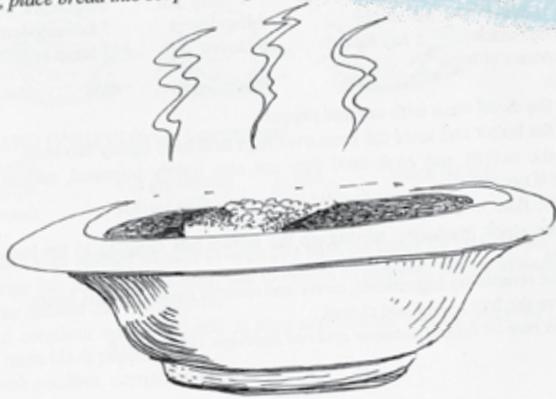
Ingredients:

90 gm butter	4 large onions	1 clove garlic	1 tablesp flour
1 teasp sugar	2 x 470 gm cans beef consommé		3 cups water
salt, pepper	1/3 cup red wine	1 tablesp dry sherry	
125 gm butter, extra	1 clove garlic, extra	1 stick French bread	
250 gm Swiss cheese	60 gm grated parmesan cheese		

Method:

- Heat butter in large pan, add peeled and thinly sliced onions and crushed garlic. Sauté gently until onions golden brown. Add flour, stir until combined.
- Add sugar, undiluted soup, water, salt, pepper and red wine, stir until combined. Bring to boil, reduce heat, simmer covered for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add sherry; simmer for a further 5 minutes.
- Cut bread into 1 cm slices. You will need 12 slices of bread. Melt extra butter in pan, add crushed garlic, stir until combined. Brush bread slices on both sides with butter mixture. Place bread slices under hot griller until golden brown on one side. Do not brown other side of bread.
- Sprinkle grated cheeses on untoasted side of bread, pressing cheese down firmly on to bread slices. Place under hot griller until melted and golden brown.

To serve, place bread into soup bowls, pour hot soup over. Serves 6



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LYN'S CARAMELIZED ONIONS

- You will need brown onions, olive oil and Worcestershire sauce.
- Peel and slice the onions and cook in a little olive oil.
- When the onions are cooked add 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce for each large onion.
- Stir for 1 minute over the heat to allow the onions to colour.

FRIED ONION RINGS

- Peel 2 huge Spanish onions
 - Slice 1 cm from each end and set aside for another occasion
 - Slice the central part of the onions approx 3 mm thick, then push out the rings
 - Remove the smallest core part and put it with the ends
 - Soak the rings in salted milk for 20 minutes
 - Drain a few of them and shake them in a bag of seasoned flour.
 - Deep-fry them until they are crisp and brown, then spread them out on absorbent kitchen paper and keep them warm while frying the next batches.
- Serve piled up on a warm plate, or as a garnish for meat or vegetables

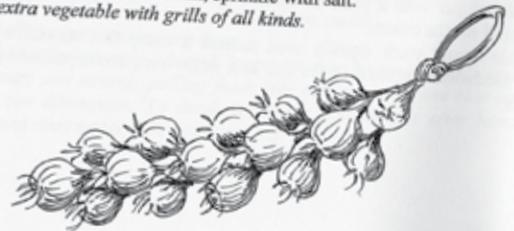
FRENCH FRIED ONIONS

Ingredients

4 onions	1 cup plain flour	1 cup milk	1 egg
1/4 teasp salt	oil for deep frying		

Method

- Peel onions, slice thinly, separate rings
 - Put into bowl; add the milk; let stand 1 hour. Drain, reserve the milk.
 - Beat egg well; beat in reserved milk, salt and sifted flour
 - Dip each onion ring into batter; drop into deep hot fat, a few rings at the time.
 - Fry until golden brown. Drain well, sprinkle with salt.
- Serve as an extra vegetable with grills of all kinds.



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INTRODUCTION

6 ONION HISTORY FACTS

- Onions are an ancient vegetable, thought to have come from Central Asia with records showing they were sold in the streets of Ur 5000 years ago.
- In ancient Egypt, onions were regarded as a symbol of the universe and the Romans considered the concentric rings of cut onions and globe shape of uncut ones, to resemble eternity.
- Bread and beer were the staple diet of Egyptian peasants as early as 1200 BC, and onions are depicted in many tombs from that period.
- Greek physicians recommended onions for eating and medicinal purposes by 60 AD. Olympic athletes partook of onions before Games to purify and condition their blood. Greek and Phoenician sailors carried onions on board ship; their goodly content of vitamin C must have helped prevent scurvy.
- Onions were an important ingredient in many of the recipes contained in the 1390 cook book of England's King Richard II. By then, many tucked into their bread and cheese with pickled onions - an eating habit enjoyed by the Greeks and the Romans more than a thousand years previous.
- In Australia, the first onions seeds were planted in March 1788 on Norfolk Island. In the early 1800's onions in the Colony sold at 2 shillings and 6 pence per ounce (25 gm). By 1835 brown, Spanish and Welsh onions were cultivated around Sydney.

6 ONION QUOTES + 1 OTHER

- "Onions are at their best in autumn and winter. ...I insist on dry, clean, shiny and firm golden brown onions." (Maggie Beer, *renown television cook*)
- "Wines high in alcohol taste sweeter and match well with slightly sweet food. For example; a stew with a fried onion base or lots of carrots or an onion-finished chicken...." (Max Lake, *noted wine expert*)
- "We would take dry bread and onions for our lunch at work every day and if there wasn't enough, we would fill up on apples from the nearby farm house." (Ivee Strazzabosco/Mentha, *Koonwarra, recollecting childhood hardships when her father ventured into onion growing.*)
- "Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl, and scarce suspected, permeate the whole." (Rev Sydney Smith, 1771-1845, *Recipe for Salad*)



6 HINTS FOR GROWING ONIONS

- Onions are a good winter crop for the home garden. For most families a 6 m bed is enough. Make successive sowings with varieties of different maturity.
- All kinds of onions are easy to grow in rich, well-composted soil with regular watering. They like cool, moist conditions when they are young, then a long period of sunny days. For best results, move onions to a fresh bed each year.
- Onions are good companion plants to beetroot, cabbage and lettuce as they deter the cabbage white butterfly. Onions and carrots are mutually beneficial if grown near each other, but onions will hinder the growth of beans and peas.
- Do not hill the plants - bulbs sit on the soil surface, not below it. Keep onions free of weeds, but take care not to disturb their shallow roots.
- Bulbs are ready to pull when tops dry and fall over. Harvest them on a sunny day and leave them on top of the soil until their outer skins are quite dry.
- Store onions in wire baskets or mesh bags in a well-ventilated cool, dry place.

6 HINTS FOR "ONIONS WITHOUT TEARS"

- Skin the onion under a cold tap
- Whistling or chewing gum is supposed to help
- Goggles are effective but extreme
- Work outside in the fresh air
- Sit down well back from the onion, so that your face isn't hanging over it
- Cut, chop or slice as quickly as possible

6 EASY STEPS FOR CHOPPING ONIONS

- Pull the skin downwards and cut off the top but leave the root intact
 - Halve it down the middle; place the halves, cut face down, on the board
 - Make several cuts vertically from top to tail of each half, quite close together
 - Slice horizontally across twice or three times, starting from the top end
 - Cut downwards at right angles to the first cuts you made
 - Finally cut off the root and you are done
- If you have a wooden chopping board, keep one side for sweet foods and the other for savoury and strong-smelling foods like onions. Mark one side with a cross so you can distinguish. To deodorise hands and utensils after handling onions, wash and rinse under cold water, not hot.

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Uniform globe, medium to large size
Thin necks
Very good storage for an onion in this timeslot.



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SEEDS



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centre bulbs

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Murray Brown
timeslot

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brown colour with
excellent skin

Good vigour with
high yield potential

Excellent storage
potential.



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PLUTONUS Hybrid Brown Onion

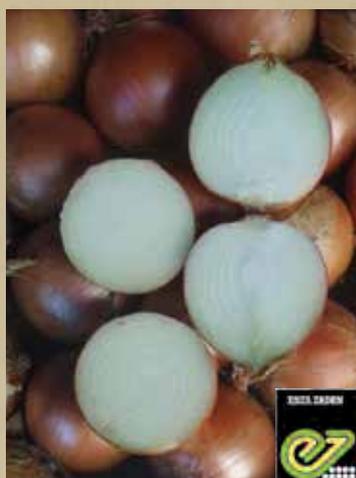
Excellent dark brown
colour

Produces very firm,
uniform high globe
bulbs

Extremely good
storage potential

Foliage is large and
vigorous and strong
against Mildew

Should be trialed in
the late part of the
PLK timeslot.



SAMANTHA Hybrid Brown Onion

Uniform medium to
large (70-100mm+)

Attractive dark
golden brown skins

Excellent bulb
firmness

Medium to long t
erm storage

Sow mid September
– early October for
February – March
harvest.



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EXPORT FACILITATORS PROJECT

Rebecca Blackman, vegetablesWA

vegetablesWA, in partnership with Growcom, the Tasmanian Fruit and Vegetable Export Facilitation Group and AusvegSA are halfway through a three-year Hort Innovation funded Export Facilitators project VG16085, designed to help upskill Australian vegetable growers to become export ready.

The purpose of the project is to increase Australian vegetable exports by supporting growers to capitalise on commercial business opportunities. The 'on the ground' export facilitators in WA, SA, QLD and TAS have formed a facilitator network across Australia. This network promotes collaboration within the industry and provide linkages across the supply chain that will assist in achieving the overarching objective of the Vegetable Industry Export Market Development Strategy of growing the value of vegetable exports by 40 per cent by 2020.

With key export markets in Asia and the Middle East driving demand for fresh produce, there is more opportunity than ever for Australian vegetable growers to become involved with export. Australia has a number of competitive advantages in the international marketplace including geographical proximity to key markets, counter seasonality and the perception of Australia as a premium quality producer.

There is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' model for export. The support offered through this project is tailored to individual businesses at different stages of export readiness. The reality is, many new exporters may be smaller businesses, with limited product range and seasonality so the state based facilitator and the national network aims to connect growers and resources to create collaborative partnerships to increase the likelihood of export success.

The Export Facilitators project focuses on supporting Australian vegetable growers to meet commercial export opportunities by taking opportunities and insights from a range of sources and working to support growers, exporters and other industry participants. This project also supports the delivery of the national Vegetable Industry Export Market Development Strategy and support the national Vegetable Export Development Program (VG16061) project facilitated by the Export Development team at AUSVEG.

The Export Facilitators project provides resources and extension support to help vegetable growers begin to successfully export. Export has the potential to play an important role in improving business profitability by providing an alternative channel to domestic supermarkets, thereby increasing negotiating power and spreading risk.

Vegetable growers who are interested in further exploring export opportunities are encouraged to contact the Export Facilitation Team via the below contacts:

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INTERNATIONAL ONION NEWS

While we often focus on seasonal news in Australia for our onion crops, this year we have reached out to our international friends to seek a wrap up and forecast of their harvests.

NEW ZEALAND ONION SEASON

Onions NZ

CEO James Kuperus

2018 planting conditions were more favourable than the year prior. With good soil preparation and weather patterns, the crop was planted on time and established well. Around the country yields were average to good and a healthy long storing cop was produced.

Export market conditions have been extremely pleasing this year as a result of a shortage in Europe/UK. This attracted more speculators into the market from other countries and increased competition from producers such as China and Egypt. However, New Zealand maintained a price premium for producing high quality, certified and reliably exported onions.

2019 plantings started off well with good soil prep and planting conditions. In mid/late August there has been increased levels of rain in Pukekohe which delayed plantings slightly, but nothing material. Overall plantings and establishment are relatively good across the country.

THE NETHERLANDS ONION SEASON

Wiskerke Onions

Chayenne Wiskerke

In season 2018 The Netherlands has exported 822.771.510kg compared to 1.175.232.747kg for season 2017

We have missed a huge percentage of our crop due to the drought! Especially in the southern part.

This made prices of Dutch onions rise to historic levels.

This season we see an equal acreage of sets however an increase of 30% in yields compared to an average year also the size profile of the onions is large!

The main crop which has just started with the harvest is foreseen with a 10% increase in acreage.

The southern provinces have experienced a rather dry growing season therefore no high yields are expected in the south.

In the northern provinces the weather conditions have been good and yields are expected to be high.

Overall The Netherlands is foreseeing a year with a good crop. Also the harvest conditions today for the maincrop is very good, sunny and dry!

France and Germany struggled with the heat, and in some areas again some drought and are expected to require imports rather early. Poland had a wet planting season and will also require more imports this season. While at the same time Spain is expected to have a very large crop, with low prices.

THE UK ONION SEASON

British Onions

Chairman Tim Elcombe

The 2018 growing season in the UK was one the most challenging in the industry's history, the beast from the East in the spring of 2018 meant planting and drilling was severely delayed with a lot of crop going in the ground 6 weeks later than normal.

This put most crops on the back foot which they never really recovered from. June and July were then extremely dry and hot which put severe pressure on irrigation capacity.

This all led to a very poor yielding crop in 2018. As a country, we were down 35% in yield.

The marketing season was reflective of the supply situation across the UK and Northern Europe, prices were high and the UK season was a lot shorter than normal. Imported crops started arriving as soon as February in to the UK marketplace.

The 2019 growing season looks like it has returned to some sort of normality with yields of early set crops slightly above normal.

Maincrop has only just started to be harvested but initial indications are pointing to a more average yielding year.



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CORTEVA AGRISCIENCE™: NEW NAME, SAME COMMITMENT

In June this year one of agriculture's biggest mergers became official.

After years of planning, the merger between well-known and trusted global company brands Dow AgroSciences, DuPont Crop Protection and Pioneer Hi-Bred was finalised and Corteva Agriscience™ formally became a publicly listed company on the New York Stock Exchange.

While the name may have changed, Corteva Agriscience™ is still driven by the same level of commitment to the onion sector and is excited to continue to build on the solid relationships built over many years.

Horticulture & Insecticides Marketing Manager for Corteva Agriscience™, Nick Koch, said the onion sector had much to gain from its relationship with the company – now the only major Agriscience company completely dedicated to agriculture.

"By combining the greatest assets of our merger companies, we've been able to attract some of the greatest, innovative minds in agriculture as well as retain the best people for each industry we serve," Mr Koch said.

"Our motto at Corteva Agriscience™ is 'When Farmers Succeed, Everyone Wins' and that runs through absolutely everything we do, from the scientists in our labs to agronomists in the field to sales reps visiting local growers," he said.

"We're really proud to be offering the solutions and support that help growers control weeds, pests and diseases and protect their land for the future."

One key focus for Corteva Agriscience™ is the development and delivery of innovative products based on years of research, designed to selectively remove insect pests to promote the

establishment of beneficial insects.

"Helping growers build healthy and sustainable agricultural ecosystems is something we take very seriously, and it's something that growers in the onion industry have really embraced," Nick Koch said.

"We're committed to developing integrated pest management strategies that result in high quality, high yielding crops and working with onion growers to continue to meet their needs," he said.

"It's exciting to be able to work alongside onion growers who are embracing new, innovative and sustainable practices while supported by traditional crop protection strategies".

"We're also thrilled to be able to offer the onion sector new products like Zorvec® Enicade® for long-lasting Downy Mildew control, that consistently performs under the most challenging environmental conditions."

And there are familiar faces on the ground committed to supporting onion growers, including sales team members Gregg Baynon servicing growers in east Victoria and Tasmania, and Nick Weckert who services the Mallee, Riverland, Virginia and South East areas of South Australia.

Nick's been involved with the onion industry for nearly a decade and was involved in the initial trial work for Fontelis® and then later Zorvec® Enicade®.

"Over the past ten years I have been involved with many growers who are very impressive with their sharing of knowledge and ideas both regionally and nationally," Nick said.

"Because of their openness we have been able to understand their specific needs and help them plan for the future," he said.



(L-R): Chris Brown (Corteva), Nick Weckert (Corteva), Pete Shadbolt (OA Chairman), Rohan Shadbolt (OA Member) and Nick Koch (Corteva) at the June OA AGM in Melbourne.

"The industry is well placed for sustainable longevity due to the great collaboration from within. Whilst grower returns could always be better, the industries focus on improving quality and seeking new market opportunities buoys well for the growers who are prepared to accept new challenges and prosper".

"It's really exciting for us to be working with the onion industry as we continue to develop more new products with the guidance and support of industry who are always willing to share what is important for them to continue to yield quality produce."

Want to join the Corteva Agriscience 'Alliance with Science'? Just search 'Alliance with Science' at www.corteva.com.au and follow the prompts.

Signing up will offer you access to the latest product information, the possibility to trial new products before market release and the opportunity to participate in the development of new products by telling the Corteva team what growers want.



(L-R) Gregg Baynon, 0417 387 270 – East Victoria and Tasmania. Nick Weckert, 0417 377 404 – Mallee, Riverland, Virginia and South East areas of South Australia.



CORTEVA PHOTO COMP TAKES SA ONION GROWER TO WORLD AGRI-TECH INNOVATION SUMMIT

Spraying an onion paddock with fungicide ahead of a weather change may well be a regular occurrence – but capturing the moment seconds before heavy rain hit won South Australian onion grower Darren Rathjen a trip to San Francisco thanks to a Corteva Agriscience™ Australia-wide photography competition earlier this year.

Mr Rathjen was one of three farming photographers who won the opportunity to travel to America to attend the World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit back in March.

"It was an absolutely unbelievable experience and an opportunity I couldn't have imagined ever coming my way thanks to taking a photo," Mr Rathjen said.

"Everyone who attended the summit all had a common interest in growing vegetables and we made some really strong friendships," he said.

"To see an agricultural expo of that magnitude was really interesting to get insights into where investments in technology are being made and how this might shape the future of agriculture. It was such an eye opener and we learnt so much."

Nick Koch, Marketing Manager for Horticulture & Insecticides for Corteva Agriscience™ said the photography competition was a way to inspire creativity, whilst showing how nature and science work together on farms.

"We wanted to encourage farmers, regardless of their skills and equipment, to get out and about observing and experimenting with their photography," Mr Koch said.

"It was also a great way for us to share our core beliefs in sustainability in agriculture and the role everyone has to play in it," Mr Koch said.

"Our panel of judges looked for an original photo that captured the essence of sustainability that showed how nature and science co-exist in producing food."

Mr Koch said he'd enjoyed catching up with Darren Rathjen again more recently



Darren Rathjen (second from left) and Nick Koch (third from left) and fellow attendees of the World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit.

at the Onions Australia levy payer day and at Hort Connections events in June.

"Corteva Agriscience™ values the relationships we make with customers and contacts, old and new, so it's wonderful to have opportunities that further support the strengthening of relationships with the onion industry."


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ADVANTAGES AND PRACTICALITY OF ONION GROWING FROM SETS

Martyn Callaghan - Senior Onion Breeder, Enza Zaden New Zealand

A possible direction for the New Zealand Onion export industry may be to copy the success of the NZ Apple industry and reduce pesticide, herbicide and fungicide use to levels well below EU maximum residue levels through the increased use of integrated pest disease and weed control.

It may be possible to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals to result in even lower residues than is current, in order to differentiate New Zealand onions as being cleaner and healthier than other countries we compete with on the world market.

One possibility to increase sustainability and reduce the amount of agricultural chemicals used to grow onions, which has been investigated with observational trials at Enza Zaden Pukekohe, is production of bulb onions from Sets.



Martyn Callaghan - Senior Onion Breeder, Enza Zaden New Zealand

A Set is a small scallion shaped onion of usually less than 10g weight which is produced by late sowing Onions at high density (aka "First Year Sets"). In the Pukekohe/ Waikato areas these may be September sowed ELK maturity onions, harvested around the same time as the equivalent normal winter direct sowed onions in early January.

The Sets are stored until the following year and replanted in September to mid-October. The storage of First Year Sets may be even longer than the standard winter sowed onions provided a long storage variety is used, and that ventilation of the stored Sets is good. In the case of Enza Zaden trials the variety Rimu was the best for storage as Sets.

In general the storage of bulbs grown from Set to bulb production ("Second Year Sets") has appeared to be as good if not better than standard winter sown seed to bulb production.

Set grown onions are not new in Europe, traditionally used mostly for second early onions. However there is a trend towards production of better quality storage type Set grown onions in the UK. According to figures published in the AMI Market Report Onions 2019, the production of Set grown onions in the UK has increased to 111,000 tons in 2018. 189,000 tons of onions were grown from Sets in Europe including the UK during the 2018 season according to the report.

The advantages of growing onions from Sets may be a paradigm shift in the potential for improved sustainability in New Zealand onion production for the main season ELK maturity storage onion type.

Key advantages of growing bulb onions from Sets:

1. The growing season can be reduced from 210 days from sowing to top fall to as little as



Set grown onions in the foreground versus Direct Seed to Bulb where herbicide damage occurred.

90 days comparing June sowed ELK onions with early October planted Sets.

2. The short season reduces the requirement for multiple early season herbicides and avoids part of the season for fungicide use. Small numbers of residual herbicide applications can reduce the need for selective contact herbicides
3. Some diseases such as White Rot, Downy Mildew and Stemphylium may be partially avoided
4. Soil bed preparation quality does not need to be as good for Sets as for conventional direct seeding
5. Fewer tractor passes over the crop reduces soil compaction in wheel tracks.
6. A much longer season for green crop for soil improvement is possible.
7. Reduction in Nitrate leaching, and soil erosion from heavy rain.

Disadvantages include that some specialized equipment is required for planting, there is some risk of bolting (up to 5% in Enza Zaden trials) and planning is required over two seasons rather than one. First Year Sets need to be grown on clean new soil free from long term soil/ bulb transmitted diseases.



Economic advantages include better ability to achieve lower residues, and possibly reduced final growing season costs. The decision to plant can be made as late as early October when the world market may be clearer, than in June. Bulb size prediction can be more accurate from Set growing depending on the time of planting. Eg. Mid-September planting of Sets can produce uniform 60-70mm bulbs and late October planting can produce 40-50 mm bulbs

CONCLUSION

The potential for reduced chemical use reduced environmental impact, reduced risk, and the positive effects of longer term green crops within a 12 month period appear to be such that further research is justified.



Photo left and top: Typical onion sets.



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SCAN FOR INFO

HOW DOES BOTRYTIS ENTER SEED CROPS?

Dr Dean Metcalf. Metcalf BioConrol. Molesworth, Tasmania. 0409 054 323, metcalf@tassie.net.au

Botrytis allii (onion neck rot) is a disease that is rarely seen while the onion crop is growing.

The disease is introduced to the crop by the planting of infested seed, and the fungus stays inside the growing plant, usually with no visible symptoms, until the crop is harvested.

Over the last few decades it has often seemed that the disease has gone away, but then it suddenly returns. The worst example was in 1996 and reduced Tasmanian onion exports by one third when packed crops decayed in transit to European markets. Key reasons included that *B. allii* infested seed had been planted and unusually wet and cool weather following lifting allowed the disease to spread among field cured bulbs.

At the time the onion industry generally produced seed crops from prime bulbs which were planted far away from bulb crops. The planted bulbs were carefully graded, often the bulbs were dipped in chemical fungicides, yet the disease still managed to appear in the seed, despite no visible symptoms in the growing seed crop.

In one Creamgold onion line, which had about 5% decay in May, we graded out all infected bulbs. The bulbs were re graded again in August another 5% of bulbs decays had appeared. There had generally been a perception that neck rot decays occurred about six weeks after lifting, but this observation suggested a much more gradual process. The information confirmed the long held suspicion that apparently healthy mother bulbs could develop *B. allii* spores and spread the disease to the bulbs around them, despite looking healthy at the time of planting.

To investigate how *B. allii* interacts with infected mother bulbs, we marked bulbs with different levels of infection at the time of planting and followed the progress of the bulbs for six weeks. Some apparently healthy bulbs were injected with *B. allii* spores at the time of planting to see how it would effect the bulbs growth and whether the disease would appear. The healthy bulbs produced about 2.5 scapes per plant, while bulbs with neck rot produced about 0.2 scapes per plant. The bulbs injected with *B. allii* at planting produced about the same number of scapes as the healthy bulbs. Our first thought might be that the infected bulbs died away, but they actually grew leaves and produced spores before eventually declining.

From all this we have learned that mother bulbs do carry disease and infected mother bulbs do grow, at least enough to spread the disease to nearby plants. They are a threat that needs to be taken seriously as a source of infected seed. Growers should test seed to ensure it is free of *B. allii* before planting.

Thanks to Dr Jason Dennis who was involved in planning the work and HIAL.



Injecting bulbs with *B. allii* to monitor the spread of the disease.



An infected bulb at planting (above), and six weeks later, covered in Botrytis (below).





B. allii spores produced on the neck of a sprouting bulb.



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FRESHLOGIC DELIVERING VALUABLE INSIGHTS ON MARKET VIA FRESH-INCITES

Freshlogic is a leading food market research organisation. It continues to deliver its fortnightly newsletter which covers some valuable insights on the horticulture industry.

Freshlogic is made up of a team of researchers and analysts with deep expertise in fresh and prepared foods. It has built a unique set of data collection and analysis tools that helps to guide investment and strategy decisions. It has specialised focus on food supply chains and markets, as well as influences on consumer behaviour which allows it to provide detailed and insightful research on issues affecting the horticulture market.

Freshlogic aims to deliver these insights via a fortnightly newsletter called 'FreshIncites' to its subscribers. It is a collection of the latest trends in the fresh food market combined with the analysis from its 'Freshlogic Analytics' tool. A couple of examples of the articles from the latest FreshIncites are presented to the right.

Freshlogic will continue to deliver such valuable insights using the services from 'Freshlogic Analytics'. It is a Tableau based tool which covers data from production, trade, wholesale, retail, and promotions through to household buying patterns and consumer attitudes and values.

Visit the www.freshlogic.com.au if you want to know more about 'Freshlogic Analytics.' Email your request to info@freshlogic.com.au if you wish to subscribe to 'FreshIncites'.

TIME SPENT ON PREPARING VS PLANNING A MEAL

Time pressure continues to shape the way consumers plan and prepare food. Over 90% of Mealpulse food panel respondents agree they have the time required to prepare meals at home, but those same respondents are spending less time planning the meals before they shop. This reflects the ease with which households can shop for food 7 days a week and also evident by the 2 to 3 food shopping trips the average household makes each week.

- With less meal planning at home the retail store is being used increasingly to prompt household food buyer as to what meals they can prepare and the ingredients they need.



RISING WHOLESALE VALUES FOR FRUIT & VEGETABLE

Fresh fruit and vegetable supply pressure has eased in 2019 and this is forecasted to carry into the 2nd and 3rd calendar quarters. This pressure has relieved with stronger exports and steady supply with minimal disruptions following from crop recovery after Queensland floods in 2018. This resulted in 4.1% increase in wholesale prices of fruit & vegetable impacting wholesale values on a year on year basis.

- Stronger wholesale values are forecasted for the rest of 2019 leading to higher fruit & vegetable prices, increases in category values and a likely upward impact on overall food inflation. At the same time all investments in marketing initiatives are going to look a lot better than last year.



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STATE ROUND UP 2018/19 SEASON

NEW SOUTH WALES

Frank De Marco

In 2018-2019 we had an issue with spray drift - we lost 40 hectares of onions (died) and onion size was very small on the rest of the crop.

In 2019 growers have planted a total 290 hectares. I am not sure what the rest of the Riverina has planted, but I am hearing double the amount of last year.

One of the major issues is water, which is very expensive at \$630-\$660 per megalitre.

Currently 2019 onions are growing well.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Peter Ivankovich

Last season's crops were pretty good, however there were issues with aspergillus niger to start with during the early harvest. The later season crops were good.

There is plenty left in storage and at this stage it looks like stores will carry through until the next crop starts. Last year they carried through to January.

Plantings for this season are much the same as last year, no one has dropped out of the market.

Export has quietened down now, but was good earlier on. There was a lot of interest from Taiwan and the Middle East.

Prices are still down. Last season they peaked up to \$1,000 a tonne, which was only for a short period towards the end of the stored onions in about October/November.

There are still concerns surrounding the loss of Totril.

NORTHERN VICTORIA

Pete Shadbolt

Last season was a good average season with good size, quality and sales..

Prices were not as high as hoped for despite there not being an oversupply but certainly a better year than the previous.

2019-20 is shaping up okay. The crops went in on time and rain has been falling at regular intervals which has been nice.

Water allocations are low this year, however water has been secured by growers to finish their season comfortably.

SOUTHERN VICTORIA

Frank Powell

Early last season we had a few small onions, however the export market was good.

There has been a bit of breakdown in storage, given weather conditions were very hot when we harvested the crop.

In July the paddocks were rather wet, which meant plantings were delayed slightly.

At this stage it appears that hectares planted will remain about the same.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Darren Rathjen

Plantings have been very stable for the past few years and doesn't seem like it is any different this season.

Last year we had mild dry weather through winter and spring saw the weather continue to be dry and windy.

The early plantings came in with good tonnage and quality.

Come 2019, January's weather was extreme with an extended run of 40°C days, with many growing areas getting 47/48°C days. Some crops were affected during the mid season harvest period and which resulted in bulbing with reduced size.

There were reports that fusarium basal rot was more pronounced due to the extreme weather.

Later storage crops that started bulbing after the worst of the heat seemed to have less disease.

Overall tonnage was down but a strong export market and solid domestic demand led to good returns.

Current season plantings are going in with another dry season for the Murraylands, Riverland and the Mallee. The South East is having a good season.

Overall hectares will be around previous years even though there are water restrictions in place for properties on the river.



TASMANIA

Tim Groom

There has been very strong export demand, particularly from Europe, due to the severe drought and heat reducing the northern European 2018 harvest by 30 to 40%. There have been high prices as a result.

Reduced volume from Dutch exporters flowed on to higher demand and prices in SE Asia. North Asia was insulated from the European demand, with the Japanese market being subdued. New Zealand had a much better growing season than the previous year but the increased demand from Europe meant that high prices have been achieved for the whole season.

The crop was planted on time due to generally favourable conditions at planting.

Last year Tasmania has had a good growing season with a mostly dry harvest except for a wet week in February. Overall, quality was good and yields were around average.

Autumn conditions started out dry but we have had sufficient rain since late June. Early plantings have emerged.

Local European new crop prices are falling rapidly with the expectation of a normal harvest yield, not affected by the extreme drought experienced in 2018.

The planted area is likely to remain stable off the back of a good year but unlikely to see any significant increase as exporters are realistic about the opportunity that presented itself this year and the circumstances that drove it.

QUEENSLAND

Michael Sippel

During the month of October 2018 we received up to 150mm of rain. For most vegetable growers this was a blessing but not for the onion growers for obvious reasons. The weather was also dominated by some severe hail storms, particularly in the Kalbar region. The storm was so severe, onion bins were relocated up to 1.5 kilometres away, shipping containers were tipped over and all crops in their path were destroyed.

In November demand was been very good but prices were not reflecting the demand. Sadly, most growers were looking at a season that they would struggle to break even.

There is a lot of uncertainty around the onion industry at present. Although demand is good for a quality line, prices are not reflecting the demand. We have had two wet harvest periods in a row, putting pressure on quality. Hand harvest costs have sky rocketed to \$60 per bin in the last 12 months and this will only increase as time goes on. The major growers here are frustrated with the South Australian growers looking to start earlier, eating in to their window of production.

At the end of last year quality was very good and the chain stores were committing to good orders but price was still not reflecting the demand

In terms of the 2019 season, plantings look to be slightly down on last season as some growers are battling water availability and are still picking up the pieces on a break-even season last year. Lack of availability of bin hire and the pressures of dealing with labour hire contractors is also leading to growers contemplating leaving the industry.

There has also been concern over the availability of Totril herbicide

Conditions at seeding in April/ May and June were ideal. Plant establishments have been very good and crops are looking healthy in the field.

Rain is required desperately as bore levels are dropping quickly. If rain is not received and we get an early onset of heat in October, yields could well be down due to the quality of the bore water being used across the district.



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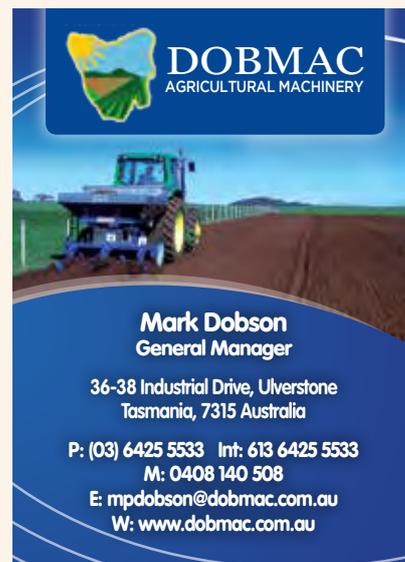
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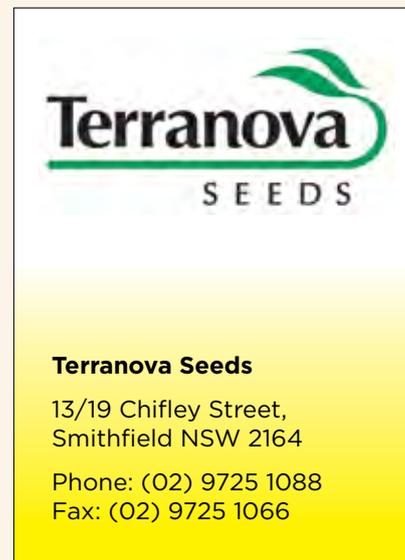


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