

# vegetables australia

July/August 2014

**Belinda  
Adams**  
Syngenta  
Grower of  
the Year

**Jacob Parrish**  
Energetic young  
grower

**2014 Reverse  
Trade Mission**  
Exports set to boom

**2014 AUSVEG  
National  
Convention**  
A tropical success

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## AUSVEG Chairman and CEO messages



## Geoff Moar

### AUSVEG Chairman

I was very pleased to witness the resounding success of the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence that was held in June. More than 1,100 delegates made their way to sunny Cairns for the three-day event, which was by far the best Convention that AUSVEG has hosted. I would like to thank all industry members who took the time to attend and contribute to the most successful Convention to date. I would also like to thank the hard-working AUSVEG staff whose efforts ensure the Convention remains the biggest event in Australian horticulture.

As always, the annual Awards for Excellence were a highlight of the event and celebrated the outstanding contributions of leading vegetable and potato growers, researchers and agribusinesses. I offer my congratulations to all nominees and winners of these prestigious industry accolades.

In particular, I would like to again congratulate Belinda Adams of Coastal Hydroponics in Queensland on receiving the prestigious Grower of the Year Award. Belinda gave an inspiring acceptance speech that reinforced her passion for the work and the prominent role that women play in our horticulture industry.

I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate Silvio Favero, a past AUSVEG Chairman and industry stalwart, who deservedly received a Lifetime Achievement Award for his services to the industry.

A major focus for our industry this year has been on developing opportunities for Australian growers to expand their businesses by accessing export markets. In light of this, two events to help vegetable growers take advantage of expanding trade markets were held.

The 2014 Reverse Trade Mission began in the lead-up to the Convention and allowed around 40 buyers from Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan to visit businesses and meet with local growers to discuss export opportunities. The initiative culminated in fresh produce displays and buyer meetings in Cairns, and was exceptionally well-received by buyers and growers alike.

The Exporting to Japan Symposium, which was held the day after the Convention on June 22, was also a great success with more than 100 vegetable industry members listening to informative presentations from experts on Japanese trade.

The speakers addressed a range of key issues, including the Japanese marketplace and consumer demands, as well as cultural considerations that should be front of mind.

Through events such as these, we hope to open the door for Australian vegetable growers to further capitalise on the high quality of vegetable produce that is grown throughout the nation.

Geoff Moar  
Chairman  
AUSVEG



## Richard Mulcahy

### AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer

After months of preparation and unprecedented interest from around Australia, and the world, the AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence has been and gone for another year.

With more than 1,100 delegates attending the event at the Cairns Convention and Exhibition Centre from June 19 to 21, I am delighted to say this year's Convention was the biggest and best AUSVEG has held to date. Based on feedback received, this highlight of the Australian horticultural calendar certainly impressed, with the event providing a raft of invaluable information and networking opportunities for Australian vegetable and potato growers. The level of interest shown in the Convention fills me with great hope for the future of our industry and while I appreciate the efforts of all involved, particular praise is due for Simon Coburn and Lauren Winterbottom of AUSVEG for their efforts in managing this event.

In another promising development, I am pleased to confirm the AUSVEG SA offices are now up and running, under the watchful eye of our South Australian State Manager Jordan Brooke-Barnett. The official opening of this local point of contact for the state's potato and vegetable growers occurred in June, with South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon unveiling a plaque to mark the occasion. AUSVEG SA will ensure the views of the state's growers are strongly represented in their dealings with the South Australian government and political representatives.

In other industry news, an overwhelming majority of Members of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) have formally voted to transition HAL

to a grower-owned research and development corporation (RDC), during an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) held on Friday 20 June. The EGM was called by the HAL Board to seek endorsement to progress negotiations with the Federal Government on the recommendations of the HAL Review. AUSVEG will be working closely with HAL over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition for the Australian vegetable and potato industry, and will keep you updated with developments.

On a final note, I'm sure you are all well aware of AUSVEG's current debate with Woolworths, after the supermarket chain demanded excessive contributions from Australian growers to fund their much-touted Jamie Oliver campaign. After receiving complaints from growers who were asked to contribute a massive 40c per crate charge – on top of contributions they are already required to pay for marketing purposes – we decided to take action, and go public with the concerns.

Following a staggering amount of global media attention, the British celebrity chef has agreed to talk with Woolworths executives about the funding of the campaign, but stopped short of requesting the money be returned to growers.

AUSVEG is working with the ACCC and will continue to monitor this issue, and is proud to continue fighting on behalf of Australian growers.

Richard J Mulcahy  
Chief Executive Officer  
AUSVEG

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Geoff Moar

**AUSVEG CEO**

Richard J Mulcahy

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**FRONT COVER:**

Belinda Adams

Photograph by John McRae

# Editorial

This edition of *Vegetables Australia* has plenty of information in store to make sure growers stay ahead of the pack in the successful running of their businesses.

We begin with an overview of all the action from the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence (page 9) and recap the winners from the prestigious Awards for Excellence (page 12). Highlights from the Produce Innovation Seminar, held in Cairns on June 19, are also examined on page 40.

Efforts to capitalise on lucrative overseas export markets are also covered in this edition, with our regular Export Column providing an overview of the successful Reverse Trade Mission (page 33). We also cover off on the Exporting to Japan Symposium which was also held in Cairns on June 22 (page 42).

In other industry news, we provide a progress update on changes to the structure of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) stemming from the HAL review (page 18). Also, the official opening of the new AUSVEG SA offices was given a warm reception in June (page 20).

In the research and development sphere, the introduction of a new Veggie Stats series will provide a snapshot of the key facts and figures of popular Australian vegetable commodities, starting with lettuce (page 25). AUSVEG Economist Shaun Muscat also offers his insights into how a grower's scale of operations can be linked to higher profits on page 22.

Regular Syngenta columnist Scott Mathew analyses the best ways to approach whitefly management in Ask the Industry (page 15).



# 44

Fraser Davidson



# 9

2014 AUSVEG Convention

Meanwhile AUSVEG biosecurity adviser Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene discusses communicating biosecurity information on page 30.

EnviroVeg has also been busy organising audits of its Platinum growers, led by new Environment Coordinator Tim Shue. The encouraging results are discussed on page 38, while Bayer reminds us that Integrated Pest Management is a constantly evolving practice that growers need to keep on top of (page 37).

Finally, turn to page 16 where a young grower from

Queensland, Jacob Parrish, explains his fortuitous entry into his current role at Farm Gate Packing. Then head over to page 44 to find out why South Australian grower Fraser Davidson is optimistic about the future of farming in Langhorne Creek.

Jacob was also a participant in the 2014 European Grower Study Tour, which explored the production techniques of growers in Germany and France, the brassica hub of Europe. Read more about the tour on page 46.



## Mighty tough on chewing pests

with a little soft spot for beneficials



# Veggie bites

Facts & figures...

## \$5,000

The average vegetable business profits for levy paying vegetable growers in 2011-12, according to ABARES.

## 842 million

The number of people in the world who don't have enough to eat, according to the United Nation's World Food Programme.

## \$193.1 million

The gross value of lettuce production in 2012-13 according to ABS Catalogue 7503.0 Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced.



## \$51 million

During 2011-12, \$51 million worth of carrots were exported as published in the ABS Catalogue 5465.0 International Trade Australia.



## 1-1.5 inches

The average diameter of a Brussels sprout.

## 18,952 tonnes

The amount of pumpkins sold in the United Kingdom and United States during Halloween season, as found by global marketing agency Dunnhumby.

## 700g

The average weight of broccoli purchased per shop in a survey published in the Project Harvest March 2014 report.



## 6%

The Project Harvest April 2014 report found that 6% of consumers surveyed were not concerned with cleaning their vegetables.





# 2014 AUSVEG National Convention a tropical success

IN JUNE, OVER 1,100 DELEGATES FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND THE GLOBE HEADED TO FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND FOR THE 2014 AUSVEG NATIONAL CONVENTION, TRADE SHOW AND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE, MAKING IT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONVENTION TO DATE.

## THURSDAY 19 JUNE

Blue skies and perfect weather welcomed a record number of delegates to the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence at the Cairns Convention Centre.

The biggest event on the Australian horticultural calendar kicked off with the Welcome Reception, where delegates were given a warm welcome to paradise by AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy. One of football's greatest characters and Convention favourite, Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico, reprised his Master of Ceremonies duties to announce the official opening of the Convention alongside Queensland Agricultural Minister the Hon. John McVeigh and Cairns Mayor Cr Bob Manning. The event gave attendees an opportunity to network and preview more than 80 trade stalls that were on show over the next two days.

## FRIDAY 20 JUNE

As delegates tucked in to an alfresco breakfast on Friday morning, Maya Smitran from Diabetes Queensland and



There were over 80 trade stalls at the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention.

Georgie Knight from Growcom reminded growers of the importance of looking after their health by providing an overview of the Live Well Farm Well initiative.

Horticulture Australia Limited CEO John Lloyd led the speaker sessions with his presentation on a rational future for local

horticulture. He said that while Australia will never be the food bowl of Asia, growers should make the most of the inputs they did have control over.

DuPont Sales and Marketing Manager Jeremy Cocks was next to step up to the speaker's podium, giving the audience an overview of the company's

Smooth Trade initiative and how it can benefit growers.

Christine Brunel-Ligneau, Senior Key Relation Manager at Bayer CropScience, advised growers on the benefits of enhancing sustainable farming as a long-term solution before Federal Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Barnaby



Federal Minister for Agriculture, the Hon Barnaby Joyce in his keynote speech.



Independent Senator for South Australia Nick Xenophon addresses the delegates.

Joyce, addressed delegates in his keynote speech with an inspiring call to arms for Australian growers to ensure quality, not quantity, is the focus of their produce.

The presentation from eccentric Dutch cultivator Rob Baan, aka the Willy Wonka of the vegetable industry, was a highlight for many delegates as the Koppert Cress CEO delivered an entertaining attempt to change the way we look at fresh vegetables and health.

Delegates were then presented with solutions to drive sustainability and productivity on their farms during a presentation from Syngenta Head of Business Development Alexander Tokarz. AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy was next to provide his thoughts on why the vegetable industry should be proud of where it stands today. The audience was once again keen to hear the keynote speech from popular independent Senator for South Australia

Nick Xenophon, who outlined his concerns for the industry and his belief that a tougher approach was necessary in the Senate in order to protect Australian resources.

Growers also found great value in the opportunity to meet over 40 international buyers and explore the possibility of exporting their fresh produce during the 2014 Reverse Trade Mission, which was held in conjunction with the National Convention. To read more about the initiative, turn to page 33.

Delegates were then invited to enjoy an evening by the beach, sponsored by DuPont, at the Kahaki Luau, where they kicked back and relaxed with some delicious food, great company and picturesque views of the Cairns Esplanade.



Delegates enjoyed DuPont's evening by the beach at the Kahaki Luau.

## SATURDAY 21 JUNE

What better way to start the day than with a thought-provoking presentation from the famous Dr Karl Kruszelnicki? This is exactly what delegates were treated to for breakfast on Saturday, where the enthusiastic scientist delivered his thoughts on the importance of fresh vegetables in our diet.

Netafim Agronomist Sam Birrell then discussed the conversion of vegetable crops from travelling irrigator to surface drip irrigation, while Brand Australia consultant and entrepreneur Craig Davis spoke about the need for the industry to work together to create a singular 'brand' which represents the clean, green and safe perception that Australia's

produce has around the world.

Dr Graham Stirling from Biological Crop Protection delivered an important presentation on the integrated management of root-knot nematodes in vegetable crops, while Yara International Agronomic Competence and Training Director Barry Bull gave potato growers something to think about with an overview of the role of calcium nutrition in potatoes.

The contentious topic of the Retail Code of Conduct stimulated a lively discussion from a panel of speakers comprising Senator John Madigan, Coles Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager Chris Mara, Australian Food and Grocery Council Legal and Regulatory Director Christopher

Photographs by John McRae.



The packed house at the National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner.

Preston and Mills Oakley Lawyers Partner Warren Scott. This discussion was followed by an address from the Hon. Bob Katter, who captivated the audience with a passionate speech on the issues that farmers deal with when forced to sell their produce to a fierce oligopolistic market.

Mr Katter's speech undoubtedly fired up the audience in preparation for the Great Debate, where the controversial and timely topic of foreign investment in Australian agriculture took centre stage. Under the watch of Moderator and National Press Club of Australia President Laurie Wilson, now Senator David

Leyonhjelm and FT Consulting Managing Director John Corbett presented their case for foreign investment and were fiercely rebutted by the opposition, Cambinata Yabbies Manager and Joint Proprietor Mary Nenke and QUT Business School Senior Lecturer Dr Mark McGovern.

Saturday afternoon presented an opportunity for delegates to explore the great outdoors with two social events. The Women in Horticulture Rainforest Discovery took attendees on a unique rail journey through the lush tropical forest to the north of Cairns, where they were accompanied by *The Australian* journalist Sue Neales and

2013 Women in Horticulture award winner Belinda Adams. The industry's youth also had some fun away from the farm as they went water skiing and wakeboarding on the NextGen Saltwater Splash-tacular.

As night fell, close to 700 delegates gathered to attend the Convention's highlight event, the AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner. A total of 14 awards were presented on the night amidst entertainment from the Razed in Flames fire dancers, as well as speeches from key political figures and industry representatives.

The highly coveted Grower of the Year award went to Belinda Adams of Coastal Hydroponics

in Queensland who, in a historic moment, became the first female to win the prestigious award. Meanwhile, Victorian Nathan Free took home the Young Grower of the Year award.

The formalities ended with a special Lifetime Achievement Award, which was presented to humble industry stalwart and former AUSVEG Chairman Silvio Favero of Victoria. The full list of award winners can be found in the following article.

AUSVEG would also like to thank its Leading Strategic Partners for their ongoing support, as well as its many other Strategic Partners, which made this spectacular event possible.

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# AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence

THE 2014 AUSVEG NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE CELEBRATED THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO THE AUSTRALIAN HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY BY GROWERS, RESEARCHERS AND ORGANISATIONS, AT A MAGNIFICENT GALA DINNER.

## Grower of the Year

Belinda Adams (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by Syngenta

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L-R: Syngenta Head of Vegetables Craig Thompson, Belinda Adams and Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck.

## Lifetime Achievement Award

Silvio Favero (VIC)



L-R: AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar and Silvio Favero.

## Industry Leader Award

Ian Muir (VIC)



L-R: AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar and James Muir (on behalf of Ian Muir).

## Young Grower of the Year

Nathan Free (VIC)

Proudly sponsored by Dow AgroSciences



Dow AgroSciences



L-R: Senator John Madigan, Nathan Free and Dow AgroSciences Horticulture Business Manager John Gilmour.

### Rising Star of the Year Sam Humphries (SA)

Proudly sponsored by Coles



L-R: Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon, Sam Humphries and Coles Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager Chris Mara.

### Industry Impact Award Mulgowie Farming Company (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by VISY



L-R: Senator Jacqui Lambie, Mulgowie Farming Company's Fabian Carniel and VISY National Sales Manager Wayne Dunne.

### Women in Horticulture Award Melinda Brimblecombe (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by Steritech



L-R: Senator Larissa Waters, Melinda Brimblecombe and Steritech Queensland General Manager Glenn Robertson.

### Community Stewardship Award David Nix (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by DuPont



L-R: DuPont Sales and Marketing Manager Jeremy Cocks and David Nix.

### Researcher of the Year Brenda Coutts (WA) and Professor Salah Sukkarieh (NSW)

Proudly sponsored by Bayer CropScience



L-R: Brenda Coutts, Bayer Key Account Manager Jodie Brown and Professor Salah Sukkarieh.

### Innovative Marketing Award OneHarvest (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by CMAA



L-R: OneHarvest representatives with Adelaide Produce Markets CEO and CMAA Secretariat Angelo Demasi.

### Environmental Award

Colin Houston (TAS)

Proudly Sponsored by Netafim



L-R: Netafim National Marketing Manager Stuart Upton, Colin Houston and His Excellency, Ambassador of Israel Shmuel Ben-Shmuel.

### Productivity Partner Award

SARDI (SA)

Proudly sponsored by John Deere



L-R: AUSVEG SA State Manager Jordan Brooke-Barnett (on behalf of SARDI) and John Deere Tactical Segment Manager Royce Bell.

### Trade Display of the Year Award

Single-booth

Australian Organic



L-R: AUSVEG Director David Addison and Australian Organic's Joanne Barber and Andrew Monk.

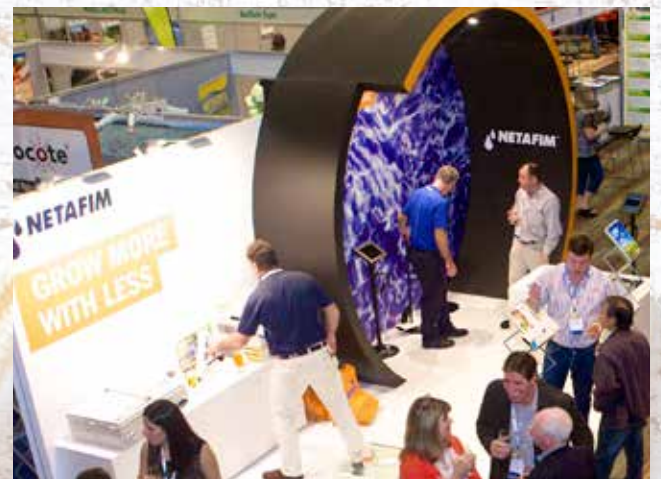
### Trade Display of the Year Award

Multi-booth

Netafim



L-R: Netafim's Agronomist Sam Birrell and National Marketing Manager Stuart Upton.



Ask the industry



with Scott Mathew

SCOTT MATHEW, TECHNICAL SERVICES LEAD AT SYNGENTA, CLARIFIES THE CONFUSION SURROUNDING DIFFERENT WHITEFLY SPECIES AND SUGGESTS THE BEST WAYS TO APPROACH WHITEFLY MANAGEMENT.

Recently I have received questions focused on whitefly management, particularly around the management of Silverleaf whitefly in some of the major growing regions in Queensland. This month, I've put together a quick Q&A to address these issues.

Many growers use the terms whitefly, Silverleaf whitefly and Greenhouse whitefly interchangeably. Is there a difference between these terms?

There are two species of whitefly that are significant pests in a range of vegetable crops in Australia: the Greenhouse whitefly (*Trialeurodes vaporariorum*) and the Silverleaf whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci*).

How can I tell which species of whitefly has infected my crop?

There are differences in appearance

between the two species at different life cycle stages, as described in Table 1.

What are some plants that may host whitefly populations?

Greenhouse and Silverleaf whiteflies have a wide range of about 250 plant species which can act as hosts, mostly in the Cruciferae, Leguminosae, Malvaceae, and Solanaceae family groups.

Capsicums, cucumbers and eggfruits are members of these families, but so are many broadleaf weeds, including mallow, sow thistle and verbena.

I have been targeting my whitefly insecticide application to coincide with whitefly egg lays; however, I am still seeing large numbers of juvenile and adult whiteflies develop. What should I be doing differently?

There are many distinct life cycle stages of the whitefly which can be present on a single plant at the same time – all of these differ in their tolerances to insecticides. The adult and crawler stages are the most susceptible to contact insecticides, but the egg, scale and pupa stages vary in their resistance to insecticides.

A single spray of any insecticide will only kill the whiteflies that are in the susceptible stages at the time of application or during the time the chemical remains active. Whiteflies in all other stages will survive and continue their life cycle.

Q

For more information or to ask a question, please contact your local Syngenta Territory Manager, the Syngenta Advice Line on 1800 067 108, visit [www.syngenta.com.au](http://www.syngenta.com.au) or email [Vegetables Australia: info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:Vegetables Australia: info@ausveg.com.au). Please note that your questions may be published.

Table 1: Whitefly life cycle stages

Life cycle stage	Greenhouse whitefly ( <i>Trialeurodes vaporariorum</i> )	Silverleaf whitefly ( <i>Bemisia tabaci</i> )
Pupal stages	Pupa are scale-like, oval-shaped and only 1.5-2mm long	Pupa are smaller than Greenhouse whitefly pupa
	Under magnification, pupa have a flat top and box-like sides with waxy filaments emerging from the top edge	Pupa are smaller than Greenhouse whitefly pupa
Eggs	Eggs are bullet-shaped and laid vertically onto the leaf in a semi-circle shape	Eggs are still bullet-shaped and laid vertically, but they are scattered on the leaf
	When first laid, the eggs are creamy white, but they turn purplish as they mature and are difficult to see without a magnified hand lens	Eggs do not turn as dark as Greenhouse whitefly
Adults	Greenhouse whitefly adults are small white insects, 1.5mm long with four powdery white wings	Silverleaf whitefly adults are smaller, yellower and fly less often than Greenhouse whitefly
	Greenhouse whitefly hold their wings flatter over the body with no part of the body showing	Silverleaf whitefly adults hold their wings tent-like over their body, with the body visible down the centre

Reference: Syngenta

# Q&A Young grower profile

**Name:** Jacob Parrish

**Age:** 22

**Location:** Carpendale, Queensland

**Works:** Farm Gate Packing Pty Ltd

**Grows:** Carrots, potatoes, avocados, snow peas, lettuce, celery, broccoli, corn and zucchini.



Carpendale,  
Queensland

## How did you first become involved in the vegetable industry?

A family friend offered me some part-time work within the Farm Gate packing shed over the school holidays in my senior year. I have been coming back ever since.

## What is your role in the business?

Operations Manager of the Organic Pre-Packing Facility.

## How would you describe your average day at work?

The days vary quite a bit depending on different demands; however some aspects remain consistent. My days generally start with order checking and locating incoming produce, followed by discussions with production staff as to the progress of the day and the expectations for different lines.

Throughout the day there is constant communication between buyers, customers, growers and transport companies, as well as discussions with other managers, QA teams, packaging suppliers, floor staff and numerous others. Reviewing figures is also a big part of my role as we maintain efficiencies and productivity. This helps

to highlight areas that can perhaps be improved with new machinery or technology.

## What do you most enjoy about working in the vegetable industry?

I personally like that no two days are the same. With seasonal variations, changes to customer requirements and new customers/products being developed, there is always something exciting happening. In general, it is an all-round great industry, with genuine people growing quality produce to support our nation and more. I am extremely happy to be a part of it.

## What are the biggest challenges that you face?

The biggest challenge would be managing labour costs. There is a constant assessment of efficiencies as we try to minimise costs and maximise profits without affecting the quality of the end product. This is an ongoing challenge as we continue to strive for the best possible and continued efficiency.

You attended the Growers' Study Tour to Europe in February this year. What did you learn from the experience?



It is difficult to explain just how beneficial I found this tour. After spending years working within the industry, the opportunity to travel to Europe and experience the different cultures and methods of production was inspiring. Being strongly involved in the pre-packing side of the industry, I was very happy to have opportunity to visit so many pre-packing facilities. From different methods of packaging and presentation to the physical layouts of the shed, it was all valuable information.

There were some absolutely amazing displays at the Berlin Fruit Logistica 2014, from the vacuum-sealed beetroot with a shelf life at room temperature of up to four months to the innovative packaging technique for broccoli and the bio waste to electricity conversion systems. There was a wealth of information available and I expect I will be drawing on it for many years to come.

### What was the highlight of the tour for you and why?

With so many excellent experiences I could only narrow it down to the Berlin Fruit Logistica as the highlight. Berlin itself is an amazing city with friendly people, good food and fortunately at the time, nice weather (not freezing). Within the Fruit Logistica there were seemingly endless displays of everything you could think of and more. Having so many displays, demonstrations and information all in one location made it my highlight of the tour.

### How do you think more young people could become encouraged to take up jobs in the vegetable industry?

While finishing my studies in Brisbane, there was very little to no promotion of the vegetable industry. If it wasn't for my family friend offering me a holiday job, I find it unlikely that the opportunity or suggestion to

work in this industry would have ever been provided.

Perhaps providing the suggestion and opportunity to young people, who are just finishing school and trying to decide what direction to take, will assist in growing the youth involvement in the industry.

### If you weren't working in the vegetable industry, what would you be doing?

I would be working in the beef industry as my family has always had an active interest in this industry. Before I began work at Farm Gate I spent quite a lot of time working on cattle stations in Western Queensland. If the vegetable industry hadn't lured me in and kept me interested, I would still be there.

### Where do you see yourself in five years?

Given the amount of enjoyment I currently get out of working in the vegetable industry, I find it difficult to think of being anywhere else.



Photographs by Cory Rossiter.





Horticulture Australia Limited CEO John Lloyd at the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention.

## HAL changes progressing smoothly

HORTICULTURE AUSTRALIA LIMITED (HAL) CEO JOHN LLOYD HAS SPOKEN TO *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF CHANGES TO THE ORGANISATION, STEMMING FROM THE RELEASE OF A REVIEW EARLIER THIS YEAR.

Changes to the structure of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) are progressing smoothly, after an overwhelming majority of current members voted in favour of transitioning the body responsible for administering the funding and implementation of millions of dollars in industry research and development projects each year, to a grower-owned research and development corporation.

The major development came during an Extraordinary General Meeting of HAL members, held in Cairns in June. The meeting was called by the HAL Board to seek endorsement from its members to progress negotiations with the Federal Government on the recommendations of the HAL Review.

A centrepiece of the review, released earlier this year, was the recommendation that HAL transition to a grower-owned research and development corporation. With 95 per cent of members voting in support of the move in Cairns, HAL CEO John Lloyd said he was

confident the transition would progress smoothly.

A second resolution passed at the meeting, with 97 per cent support, has empowered the HAL Board to take all necessary steps to achieve the transition. Though the HAL Review recommended the transition occur via a government entity, Mr Lloyd said a method proposed by the HAL Board, and backed by members, would result in a subsidiary of HAL overseeing the changes, pending government approval.

Mr Lloyd said HAL would now engage with government to progress the transition, adding he was confident negotiations would go well, particularly given the strong support of industry.

"The strong backing of industry is very helpful, incredibly helpful, in this process," he said.

Mr Lloyd said HAL now had until early August to agree on an implementation plan, and until November 3 to reach a funding agreement between government and the transitional entity. He said major changes stemming

from the establishment of the new HAL should begin to take effect by mid-2015.

### Transition

Though the review also recommended some changes to R&D processes, in particular a rethink of the existing structures involving Industry Advisory Committees (IACs), Mr Lloyd said for now it was largely a "business as usual" approach to both contracted R&D projects, and new projects under consideration.

"Currently, we've got no other basis to make any decision other than the Strategic Plans that are in place," he said.

"A sensible thing to do would be to say that generally the way we conduct ourselves between now and the first of July 2015 should roughly remain the same.

"So even if it's a new entity, we're not in the business of pulling the carpet out from under things, or anything like that, so generally we would be looking for that 12 months of

stability."

Mr Lloyd said the existing process of IAC's endorsing R&D projects would be examined during the transition process, in line with the review's recommendations. He added it was hoped any new processes would result in a flexible structure, which would give industry a desired level of input into R&D projects.

### New HAL

Though much is still to be finalised before the new incarnation of HAL takes form, Mr Lloyd said thought had been given as to how the new entity might be comprised.

"What has been contemplated so far is levy-paying grower ownership," he said.

"So the grower has to be a levy payer. There will be some type of opt-in system whereby they will register and verify and that would entitle them to a vote. It would be a balanced vote based on representation and volume of some type, and that's yet to be determined."

## AUSVEG endorses proposed changes to HAL

AUSVEG has backed changes recommended by the Board of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) to pursue a transition to a grower-owned research and development corporation (RDC).

The Board of AUSVEG has endorsed the initiative, and looks forward to constructively working alongside HAL throughout the transition process.

The HAL Board's proposal was further backed during an Extraordinary General Meeting of HAL members, including AUSVEG, held in Cairns on Friday 20 June.

Transitioning HAL to a grower owned RDC is one of the key recommendations contained in a review of HAL released earlier this year.

HAL is currently preparing a response to the review for the Federal Department of Agriculture. The Minister for Agriculture will then make a final decision regarding transition arrangements. AUSVEG will keep you up to date with developments.

Mr Lloyd said it would also be important to distinguish between the role of the grower owners of HAL and other bodies, and parties with which the new HAL would consult.

"You very much have to distinguish between the role of a shareholder and the role of

industry having input into what we do. What we are talking about is establishing growers as shareholders of the company and they will be treated with all the rights that shareholders have. There will be other mechanisms by which industry, including growers themselves

can participate in decision making of the company."

### Peak Industry Bodies

With Peak Industry Bodies the current member shareholders of the existing HAL, Mr Lloyd said the entities would likely continue playing a significant role in the new grower-owned RDC. He added examples from other industries within Australia would be considered when determining precisely what form that role would take.

"You have only got to have a look at all the other research and development corporations and they have very sophisticated, very well-developed consultation mechanisms with the Peak Industry Bodies, and we hope to replicate that," he said.

### The future

As the transition process continues, Mr Lloyd said the ultimate aim was for the new HAL to deliver projects that result in the best possible

outcomes for Australian horticultural industries. He added that could involve more collaborative efforts, to address broader industry themes and issues.

"At the end of the day we have to do world class R&D and marketing," he said.

"I think many of the things that differentiated industries and allowed this model to develop with all the separate industry buckets... are actually coming together now in probably six to 10 critical issues for all of horticulture – things that need to be addressed.

"We're talking about things like fruit fly, things like market access and trade, things like robotics and mechanisation, and I think we've really got to address those issues in a very important way."

Mr Lloyd said it was also important to be mindful of the current federal fiscal environment and present the strongest case possible to government.

"We need government to be very strong, proactive supporters of our new model," he said.

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## AUSVEG SA offices now open

INDEPENDENT SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA, NICK XENOPHON, OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED THE NEW AUSVEG SA OFFICES DURING AN INDUSTRY EVENT AT THE ARKABA HOTEL ON 12 JUNE. AUSVEG SA WILL ACT AS A REPRESENTATIVE BODY TO FURTHER THE INTERESTS OF THE STATE'S POTATO AND VEGETABLE GROWERS.

Leading industry members, AUSVEG senior management and growers were on-hand to enjoy the festivities as Senator Nick Xenophon unveiled a plaque to mark the official opening of the new AUSVEG offices in Littlehampton, in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia.

Speaking at the event, Senator Xenophon highlighted the importance of the \$500 million vegetable and potato industries and their contribution to spending in regional communities, before joining AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar to officially launch the new offices.

In addition to Senator Xenophon, Mr Moar and AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer Richard Mulcahy spoke to growers about how the establishment of the new AUSVEG SA offices

would ensure growers were represented with a stronger voice when dealing with state and local governments.

Attendees at the event included South Australian Member for Unley David Pisoni MP, Mt Barker District Mayor Ann Ferguson, Hortex Alliance Executive Officer Bryan Robertson, as well as prominent growers and supply chain participants.

### Home-grown representative

Having grown up on a farm in the south-east region of the state, Jordan Brooke-Barnett was the perfect candidate to take on the role of AUSVEG SA State Manager. He has spent the last seven years working in the field of communications and marketing, including three years



Independent Senator for South Australia Nick Xenophon with AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar.

with AUSVEG at the national level.

Mr Brooke-Barnett will act as a key point of contact for growers within the state and will be consulting with them widely in the coming weeks and months, as a major part of the role will be to assess key priorities for representation and potential on-farm services to assist the industry.

Mr Brooke-Barnett is passionate about agricultural issues and will extend the strong model for advocacy on industry issues that AUSVEG has established at a national level to South Australian growers. AUSVEG has the goal of using its experience in effectively representing grower interests with government and the community to further the development of horticulture in the state.

### Membership benefits

With the establishment of AUSVEG SA, South Australian vegetable and potato growers now have the ability to become members of a state-wide body to represent their interests.

Membership for the first year is available to all South Australian vegetable and potato levy payers, subject to admission by AUSVEG, with membership benefits including:

- Ability to have the State Manager for South Australia take up issues with local councils and South Australian government on behalf of AUSVEG SA Members.
- Access to all services and information provided by AUSVEG.
- Monthly AUSVEG South Australia newsletter.
- Advice available on export development including assistance with export

readiness checklist.

- Assistance for potato growers to enhance communication with pack houses.
- Opportunities for young growers to participate in local networking events.
- Access to discounted AUSVEG Member rates to subscription events.
- Assistance in developing minor use permits.
- Access to economic data including economic and trade statistics specific to vegetables and potatoes.
- Assistance with nomination for recognition of business excellence through the AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence.
- Access to all of AUSVEG's R&D data.
- Direct representation at Plant Health Australia forums regarding biosecurity issues.

### Sign up today

Growers can sign up for AUSVEG SA by downloading and completing the application form which can be found at: [www.ausveg.com.au/ausvegsa/ausvegsa.htm](http://www.ausveg.com.au/ausvegsa/ausvegsa.htm). The forms can be sent to the AUSVEG SA State Manager – South Australia via email at [jordan.brooke-barnett@ausveg.com.au](mailto:jordan.brooke-barnett@ausveg.com.au) or faxed to (03) 9882 6722.

ausveg.com.au or faxed to (03) 9882 6722.

AUSVEG SA would like to thank the industry members who made time and effort to attend the official launch and looks forward to working with industry to ensure the interests of vegetable and potato growers are represented with government.



L-R: Adelaide Produce Markets CEO Angelo Demasi, AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy and South Australian vegetable grower Danny De Ieso.

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## Economies of scale: Size matters

AUSVEG ECONOMIST SHAUN MUSCAT EXPLAINS HOW A VEGETABLE GROWER'S SCALE OF OPERATIONS CAN PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN WHETHER OR NOT THEY ACHIEVE A HEALTHY PROFIT.



The majority of Australian vegetable growers are experiencing ongoing financial difficulties, according to recently published data from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), which conducts an annual survey of Australian vegetable growers funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government. This article will analyse the drivers affecting growers' financial performance and the potential solutions to help overcome these challenges.

Over the last decade, Australian vegetable growers' profits have been declining marginally. However, the average profit of \$5,000 per farm in 2012-13 was the lowest since ABARES began surveying vegetable growing farms in 2005-06. Compared to the previous year, profit levels fell by over 90 per cent.

As shown in Figure 1, both vegetable growers' cash receipts and cash costs have been increasing. However, cash costs

have grown more rapidly, which has translated to weaker profits.

Despite weaker business profits for the average Australian vegetable grower, some growers are performing better than others. According to the data, the financial performance of Australian levied vegetable growers is somewhat related to the scale of their operations. On average, vegetable growers operating more land are more profitable than growers producing on less land (see Figure 2). This is largely consistent with economic theory as larger enterprises have greater economies of scale, enabling them to purchase inputs to production at lower prices.

Australian levied vegetable growers working on less than five hectares were on average the least profitable, making a loss of \$66,000 in 2012-13 – this translates to a 1,019 per cent reduction since 2005-06. Alternatively, vegetable growers operating on less than 20 hectares experienced both marginal losses and profits.

Vegetable growers operating 20 to 70 hectares achieved

rather consistent profits over the years; however, the level of these profits has only increased marginally over the past eight years.

In contrast, the profits for Australian vegetable growers working on more than 70 hectares were positive but rather volatile, with profits peaking at \$733,300 in 2007-08. Although these growers sold more vegetables in 2012-13 than 2007-08, profits were \$550,000 less. The driving force behind this reduction is mainly increasing production costs, which rose by over \$1 million since 2007-08.

To better understand the underpinnings of growers' cash costs, it is important to analyse the costs of production per unit. In 2012-13, Australian levied vegetable growers operating on less than five hectares achieved cash costs per tonne of production of \$3,550. On the other hand, growers working on more than 70 hectares were able to produce a tonne of vegetables, on average, at a cash cost of \$742 – almost five times less than costs realised by those operating on less than five

hectares.

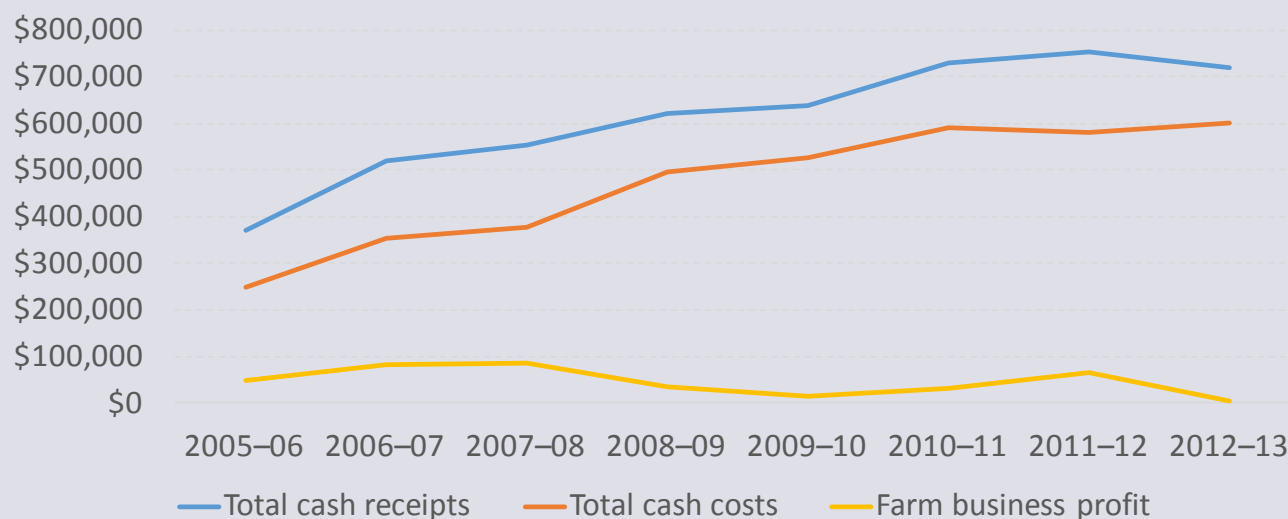
As shown in Figure 4, there is a clear increasing trend for cash costs per tonne of production for those growers operating on less than 20 hectares of land. In comparison, larger growers' production costs per tonne of production have also increased, albeit significantly less than smaller growers. Increases to prices of production inputs have a tendency to impact smaller growers' financial performance to a greater degree (compared to larger growers), as they have less ability to offset such increases to production input prices.

### Solutions

Despite the difficult operating conditions most Australian vegetable growers are facing, growers must remain resilient and actively pursue initiatives and opportunities that reduce their total costs of production, particularly smaller growers.

There are many potential solutions to reduce production costs through economies of scale. One such technique is through co-operative

**Figure 1: Financial Performance of Levied Vegetable Growers**

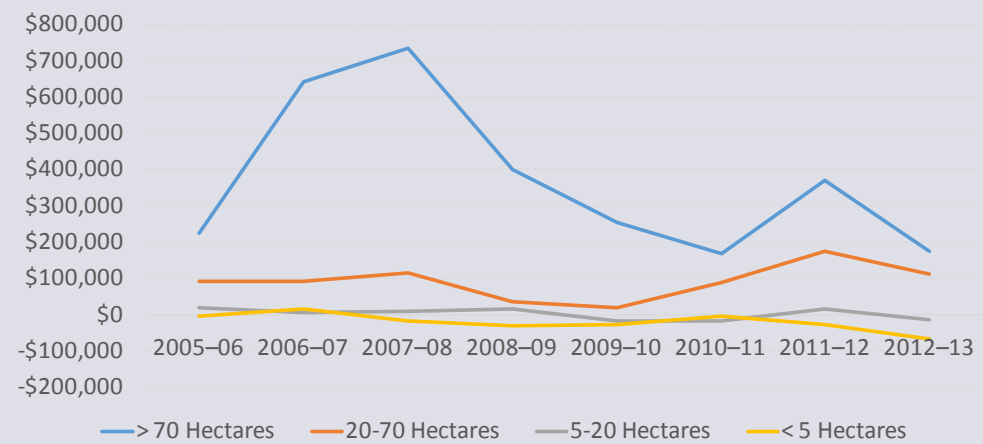


Source: ABARES Australian vegetable growing farms survey.

arrangements with fellow growers. These arrangements have proven successful for many Australian growers and, in particular, growers overseas.

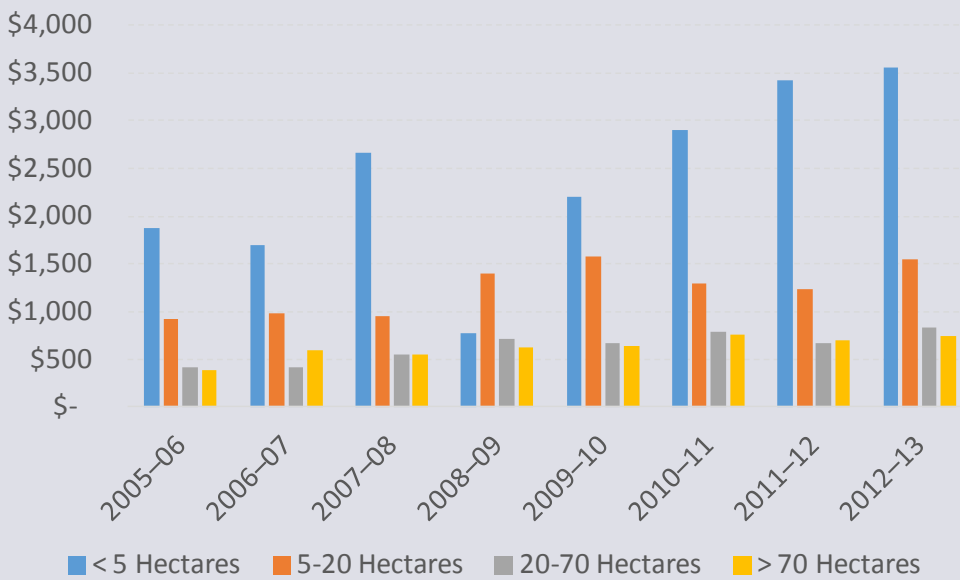
There are various forms of co-operative arrangements, which is essentially an agreement among growers that has an overall objective to reduce production costs. For example, an agreement to bulk purchase from suppliers resulting in businesses achieving a reduced average cost per unit. Another co-operative arrangement could be to asset share machinery or equipment at a cost lower than purchasing it individually. Businesses could then share

**Figure 2: Levied Vegetable Growers' Profit**



Source: ABARES Australian vegetable growing farms survey.

**Figure 3: Levied Vegetable Growers' cash costs per tonne of production**



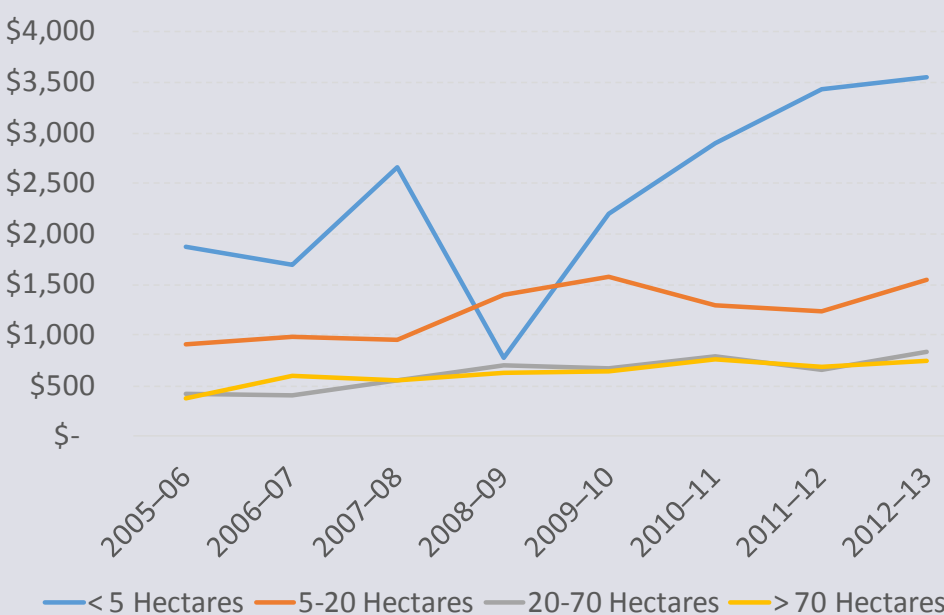
Source: ABARES Australian vegetable growing farms survey.

the equipment, which would be expected to increase on-farm efficiency and improve profitability.

While reducing production costs is one form of increasing profitability, alternatively, growers could also target markets where they may receive a higher price for their produce. For example, identifying and entering niche markets, where possible.

Overall, growers are not expected to receive any relief from lower production costs in the next few years. Instead, prices of production costs are likely to increase. Accordingly, vegetable growers must ensure that reducing production costs, where feasible, is one of the main priorities in operating their enterprise into the future to achieve the best financial outcomes.

**Figure 4: Levied Vegetable Growers' cash costs per tonne of production**



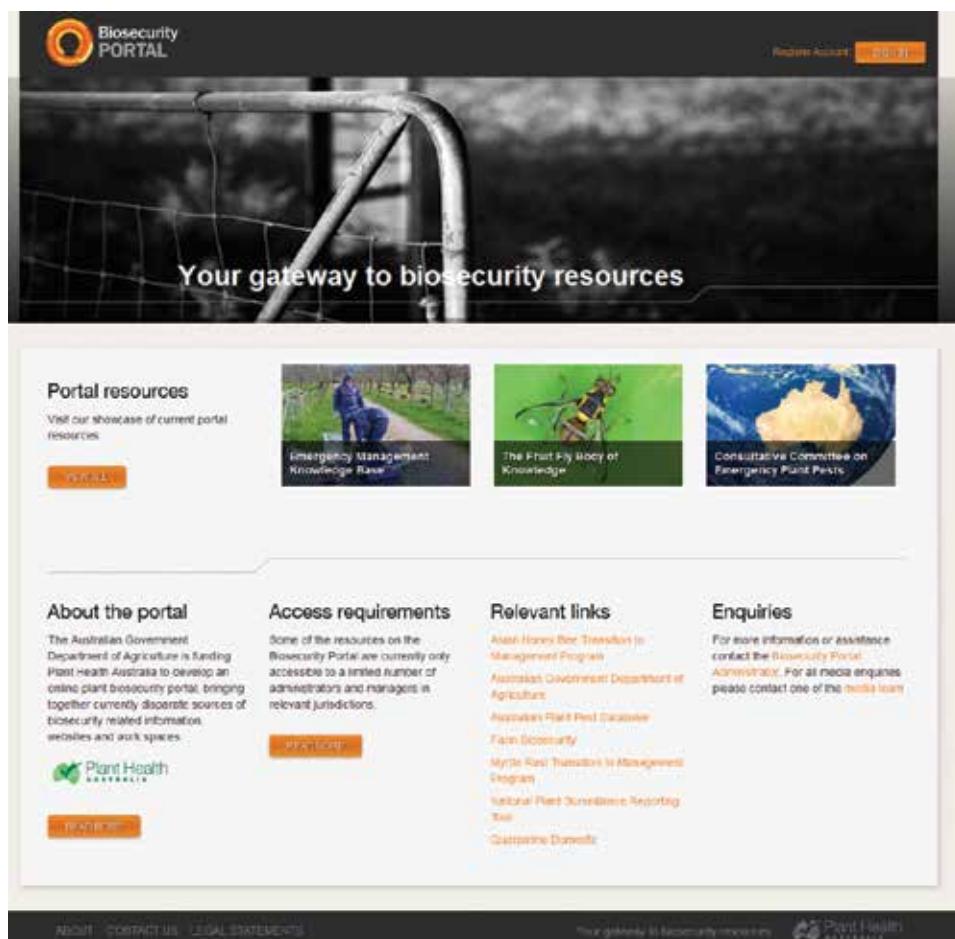
Source: ABARES Australian vegetable growing farms survey.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

- The average profit of \$5,000 per farm in 2012-13 was the lowest since ABARES began surveying vegetable growing farms in 2005-06.
- On average, vegetable growers operating more land are more profitable than growers producing on less land.
- Growers must remain resilient and actively pursue initiatives and opportunities that reduce their total costs of production, particularly smaller growers.

**i** AUSVEG: (03) 9882 0277  
 This project has been funded by HAL using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.  
 Project Number: VG12078

## New gateway to biosecurity information



DEVELOPED BY PLANT HEALTH AUSTRALIA (PHA), WITH FUNDING FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, A NEW 'BIOSECURITY PORTAL' IS SET TO GIVE USERS UNPARALLELED ACCESS TO BIOSECURITY RESOURCES. PHA PROGRAM MANAGER BIOSECURITY PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION, BRAD SIEBERT, SPOKE TO **THE FRONT LINE** ABOUT THE BIOSECURITY PORTAL.

Biosecurity resources are not uncommon, but they tend to be highly dispersed and hard to access. By constantly accumulating and standardising high-quality biosecurity information, the Biosecurity Portal promotes accessibility.

"The Biosecurity Portal will amass a range of biosecurity material, including surveillance and diagnostics data, training modules, technical information, national policy, strategy and legislation documentation, and a number of helpful biosecurity tools," says Brad.

Not all of this information will be freely accessible, but public access to the Biosecurity Portal homepage is currently enabled. The homepage will feature more information and other tools as the Portal develops.

"The Biosecurity Emergency Knowledge Base, which will soon contain a massive amount of biosecurity information, will be open to the public. This

will put a weight of biosecurity information at the fingertips of the wider public, giving everyone the ability to limit biosecurity risk," says Brad.

The Biosecurity Portal will also contain specialist biosecurity information for industry-specific biosecurity issues. The Fruit Fly Body of Knowledge, which is currently under restricted access, will assist in the management of fruit fly.

"Fruit fly is a significant pest of a number of industries. The management of fruit fly is a priority of government, industry and the wider community and providing ease of access to information regarding fruit fly is a step in the right direction," he says.

The Portal's National Plant Surveillance Reporting Tool (NPSRT) will act as an online database for plant pest survey information. This is highly important when transitioning to management of a pest or

disease incursion.

"Compiling plant pest survey data will give managers a much better idea about the host range and spread of pests and diseases. This will allow managers to rapidly plan pest and disease management responses," says Brad.

Other areas of the website are intended to give biosecurity managers access to an array of relevant information.

### Portal welcomed

The Portal was recently welcomed by Federal Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce, who believes increased access to biosecurity resources will improve Australia's capacity to share information.

"Currently there are many databases of biosecurity information held by governments, industry and community groups but each

tends to be isolated, limiting their usefulness. [The Portal] will bring significant benefits to Australia's biosecurity system by making important biosecurity information accessible," said the Minister at the time.

The Biosecurity Portal is overseen by the Portal Management Committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Plant Health Australia, the national coordinator of the government-industry partnership for plant biosecurity in Australia.



To visit the portal go to: [www.biosecurityportal.org.au](http://www.biosecurityportal.org.au)

For more information, contact AUSVEG Biosecurity Officer Dean Schrieke on (03) 9882 0277 or email [dean.schrieke@ausveg.com.au](mailto:dean.schrieke@ausveg.com.au)



## Lettuce in the limelight

TO ENABLE DEEPER INSIGHTS INTO THE FINANCIAL, PRODUCTION AND EXPORTING PERFORMANCE OF KEY AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE PRODUCTS, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A SERIES OF SIX CROP-SPECIFIC VEGGIE STATS PROFILES. WHILE THE FIRST TOPIC WILL FOCUS ON LETTUCE PRODUCTION, FUTURE EDITIONS WILL EXAMINE CABBAGE, CARROTS, BROCCOLI, PUMPKIN AND CAULIFLOWER.

R&D

Drive Train

Australian vegetable growers are undoubtedly experiencing significant pressure to continuously explore new opportunities, adopt new farming technologies and adjust the scale and nature of their operations to remain financially viable.

This notion is clearly supported by recent estimates that suggest that average vegetable business profits for levy paying vegetable growers have fallen from \$65,500 in 2011-12 to \$5,000 in 2012-13. This equates to an approximate reduction in business profit of 92 per cent from the previous year, according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences (ABARES). Australian vegetable growers' average business profits have fluctuated over time with median business profits totalling approximately \$46,464 since 2005-06.

### Diversifying crops

Despite the average Australian levy paying vegetable grower experiencing relatively marginal business profit in 2012-13, vegetable yields improved for most vegetables with tomatoes experiencing the largest yield improvements (45 per cent), followed by lettuce (30 per cent), capsicums (12 per cent) and onions (6 per cent), while potatoes and carrots improved at similar rates (1 per cent). This clearly illustrates most growers are continuously aiming to produce vegetables more cost effectively and efficiently; however, in many cases rising costs are negatively impacting on the ability to do this profitably.

Many Australian vegetable enterprises are responding to these challenges by diversifying the mix of vegetables that are produced. This diversification is largely being driven by

vegetable growers' motivation to achieve higher returns, but also to mitigate against risks that arise by solely producing one vegetable type.

The first of our crop-specific Veggie Stats profiles will focus on lettuce, with a detailed snapshot of the key facts and figures available in the following

pages.

Veggie Stats utilises data from ABARES and the Global Trade Atlas, funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

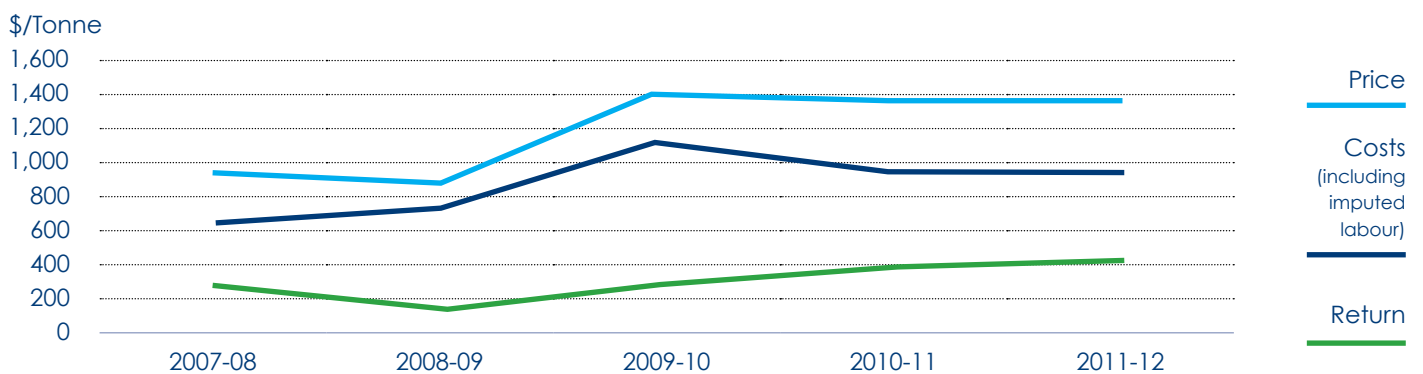


# VEGGIE STATS: LETTUCE

## Lettuce Production – Key facts and figures

- Lettuce growers' average returns have been increasing since 2008-09.
- Since 2007-08, average domestic lettuce prices and costs have both grown at a similar rate of around 45%.
- Lettuce production has varied over the recorded years, with no clear trend.
- Australia's fresh lettuce exports were greater than \$3 million in value in 2012-13.
- More than 40% of Australia's total fresh lettuce exports were sent to Singapore in 2012-13.

## Australian Lettuce Growers' Financial Performance (average per farm)



Source: ABARES vegetable farm survey 2011-12 and 2012-13, page 72  
Returns: The difference between price and costs (including imputed labour).

### Current Financial Performance

Australian lettuce growers' returns on average totalled \$418 per tonne in 2011-12, up 6% on the previous year.

In 2011-12, the average price received per tonne of lettuce was \$1,369, whereas the average cost to produce a tonne of lettuce was \$951.

### Long Term Trends

Lettuce growers' returns, on average, have continually increased annually since 2008-09.

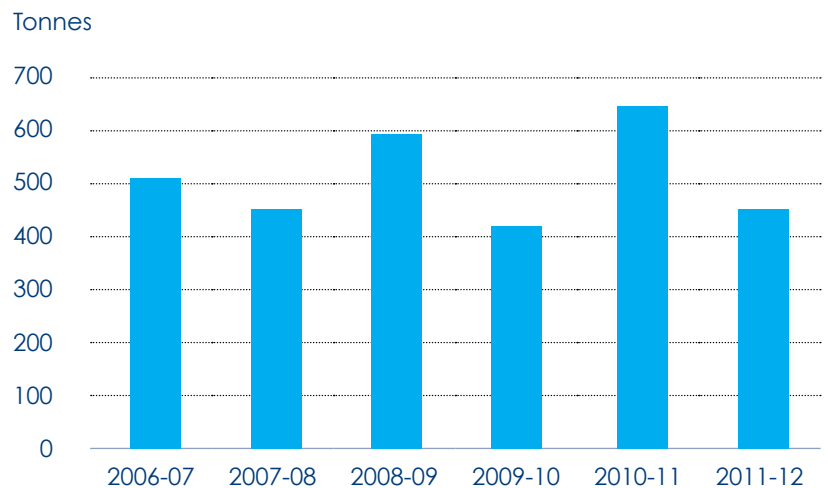
## Australian Lettuce Growers' Production (average per farm)

### Australian Lettuce Production

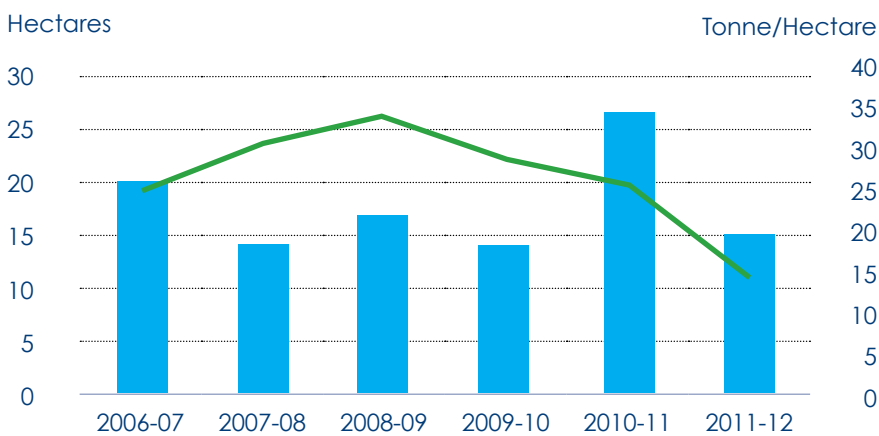
Australian lettuce production per farm averaged 452 tonnes in 2011-12, down 31% on the previous year.

Average lettuce production has varied over the years, with no clear trend.

Source: ABARES vegetable farm survey 2011-12 and 2012-13, page 72



## Area Planted v Yield (average per farm)



Source: ABARES vegetable farm survey 2011-12 and 2012-13, page 72

### Australian Lettuce Production

The average area planted in 2011-12 fell by 42% from the previous year.

In 2011-12, lettuce growers' average yields were the lowest since 2006-07 at 15 tonnes per hectare.

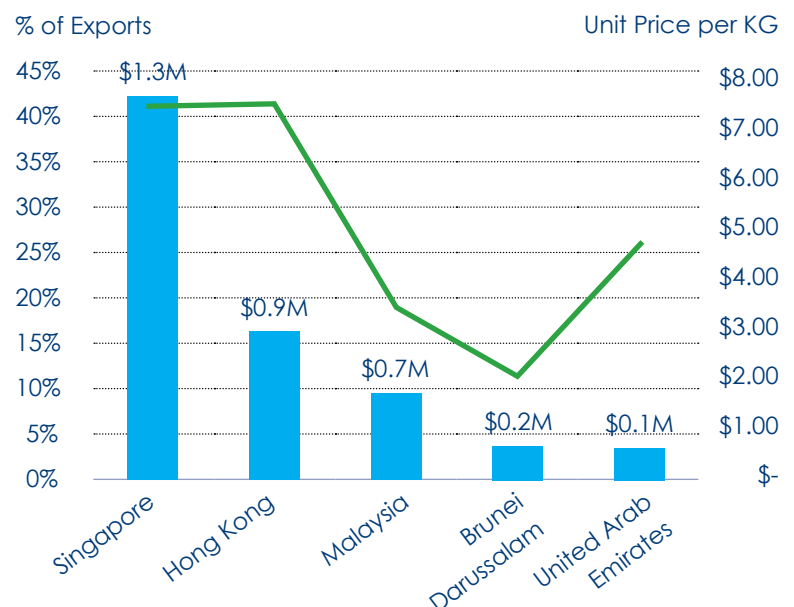
Area Planted  
Yield

## Destination of Australian Lettuce Exports and Export Prices Received

### Exports

The majority of Australia's lettuce exports were sent to Singapore in 2012-13.

Australia's lettuce exports received the highest export price per kg from Hong Kong and Singapore, whilst the lowest export price was Brunei Darussalam at \$1.97 per kg.

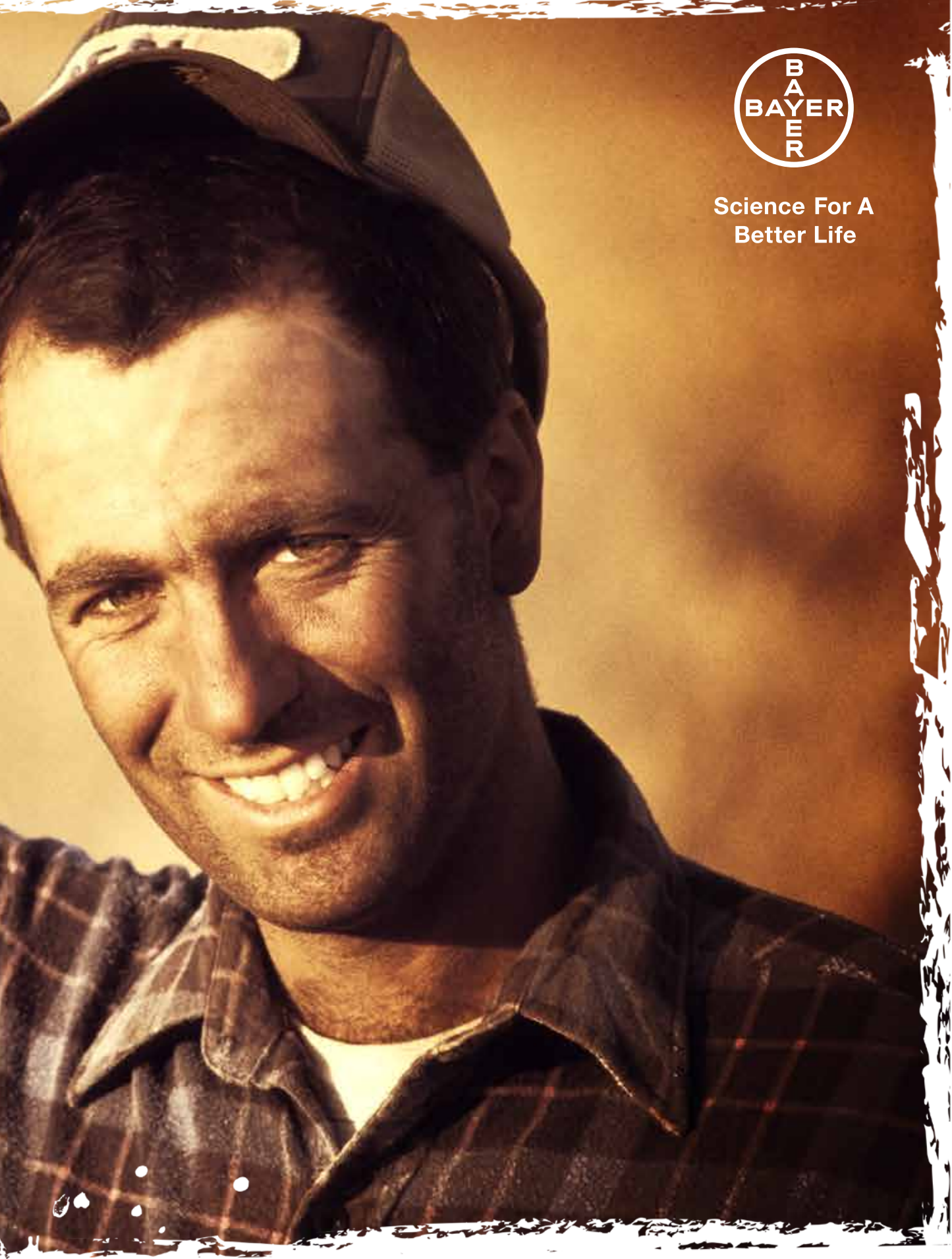


Source: UN Comtrade. Commodity 070519



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Science For A  
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## Biosecurity brief



with Dr Kevin  
Clayton-Greene



IN THIS EDITION OF BIOSECURITY BRIEF, AUSVEG BIOSECURITY ADVISER DR KEVIN CLAYTON-GREENE DISCUSSES THE NEW BIOSECURITY PORTAL WEBSITE. THE PORTAL, DEVELOPED BY PLANT HEALTH AUSTRALIA WITH FUNDING FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, IS SET TO GIVE USERS UNPARALLELED ACCESS TO BIOSECURITY RESOURCES.

### How important is it for growers to have access to detailed biosecurity information?

Biosecurity is in the same class as insurance – no one is much interested until their house burns down! We in Australia make much of our image of being clean, green and relatively pest-free. Anything that can be done to both maintain and enhance this status has to be of use. For growers/producers it is important that they have access to timely and relevant information on biosecurity issues. This is important for market access (trade) issues as well as understanding how biosecurity can have an impact upon all aspects of production and supply.

### Who will benefit most from this access?

Any party that chooses to utilise the resource is a potential beneficiary. Quite apart from the general principle that knowledge is always valuable, the degree of benefit will also depend to some extent on the context and which part of the supply chain is likely to be affected.

### How can growers make the best use of the Portal in their day-to-day operations?

There are quite a few things which are helpful. One thing on there is the farm biosecurity manuals and also information on fruit fly for people in those areas. There are also a couple of portals on market access

and domestic quarantine. Not everything on there is available to the public but there are various pieces of information there that are available, and quite helpful.

### What do you think about the Biosecurity Emergency Knowledge Base? Is it a good idea to allow public access to this kind of information?

At this stage public access is barred whilst the portal is updated. However on a broader context I see no reason why the public should not be a part of the biosecurity continuum. It would be senseless to not have them involved. Only a tiny per cent of Australia's population is involved in primary production yet it is the entire population that is involved in biosecurity.

Once again, anything that lifts awareness of biosecurity in the general public has to be applauded. I do not think it would be stretching the truth to say that a significant percentage of Australia's population is quite disengaged from biosecurity. Many view it as of no concern to them and something that belongs on farms or possibly even as something to do with terrorism!



To access the Biosecurity Portal, go to: [www.biosecurityportal.org.au](http://www.biosecurityportal.org.au)  
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Science For A Better Life

## A chemical-free option for exports

EXPERT STERILISATION COMPANY STERITECH IS CONTINUING TO INVESTIGATE THE BENEFITS OF APPLYING CHEMICAL-FREE FOOD IRRADIATION TECHNIQUES TO FRESH PRODUCE IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR GREATER EXPORT MARKET ACCESS.



Food irradiation is a post-harvest, chemical free phytosanitary treatment, which exposes fresh produce to a source of ionising energy in order to eliminate or sterilise insects.

It has an important role to play in managing biosecurity risks, as food irradiation can be used to sterilise the unwanted pests that can accompany food when it is traded regionally or imported from other countries. Irradiation can also be used as a replacement for other chemical treatments.

Both international and local agencies, such as Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and World Health Organisation (WHO), accept that food irradiation is a safe and useful processing tool for the horticultural industry.

### Nutritional value

Phytosanitary irradiation of fresh fruits and vegetables poses no nutritional risk to consumers, according to FSANZ, which carried out a comprehensive review of the effects of irradiation on a wide

range of fruits and vegetables. The review focused on vitamin C and carotene (a pre-cursor to vitamin A) as they are radiation sensitive and a significant percentage of our daily requirement comes from fruits and vegetables.

### Local regulation

More than 50 countries allow the use of food irradiation and international food regulatory bodies support use of the irradiation process at approved levels. In Australia, the regulatory system assesses the treatment of fruit and vegetables with irradiation on a case-by-case basis.

Any irradiated food must go through a strict safety assessment by FSANZ and, if approved, must be labelled as having been treated by irradiation.

The below lists show which commodities have been approved for irradiation, future approvals and commodities which are currently being assessed.

Produce already approved for irradiation includes:

- Tomato
- Capsicum
- Mango
- Lychee
- Papaya
- Longan
- Rambutan
- Bread fruit
- Carambola
- Custard apple
- Persimmon
- Mangosteen

Produce currently being assessed includes:

- Blueberry
- Raspberry
- Passionfruit

Produce for future approval includes:

- Table grape
- Cherry
- Strawberry
- Zucchini
- Nectarine
- Rock Melon
- Honeydew
- Apricot
- Apple
- Peach
- Plum

\*Final approval: April 2015

The Queensland Department

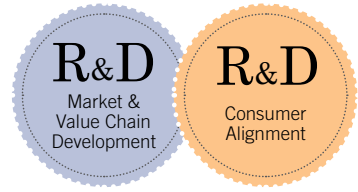
of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (QDAFF) has recently submitted an application to FSANZ to seek permission to irradiate the above future approval commodities for phytosanitary purposes. The approval of irradiation for these commodities will provide a safe and effective option to maintain market access for all Australian states and export to New Zealand.

### Export markets

The following export markets have been identified as having a high strategic priority for using irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment for market access: China, U.S.A, New Zealand, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Further bilateral discussions are still needed before final approval is granted. Food irradiation is not only a safe and efficacious treatment. It should also be seen as a long-term solution, which can ensure Australia's horticultural industry meets an importing country's phytosanitary requirements for fresh produce.



# Local growers to see benefits from Reverse Trade Mission



THE 2014 REVERSE TRADE MISSION WAS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS, WITH AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS ALREADY SEEING THE BENEFITS OF THE INITIATIVE, WHICH WAS RUN BY AUSVEG FROM 16-22 JUNE.

This year's Reverse Trade Mission saw more than 40 buyers from Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan visit Australia to learn more about the local vegetable industry and meet with Australian vegetable growers interested in exporting their produce. The delegates represented international supermarket chains and large vegetable importing businesses.

The mission culminated at the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence in Cairns. While there, the delegation was greeted by an impressive display of Australian vegetables, with over 50 local vegetable growers participating. This event also facilitated one-on-one discussions between Australian growers and the international vegetable buyers to discuss business opportunities and enhance trading relationships.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

## International buyers impressed

AUSVEG National Manager –

Export Development, Hayden Moore, was very satisfied with the outcome of the mission.

“The objective of the Reverse Trade Mission is to help increase the export of Australian vegetables by showcasing the high quality of Australian vegetables and, importantly, facilitating relationships between growers and international buyers,” he said.

“We were really pleased with the enthusiasm with which Australian growers approached this initiative. We had over 50 growers provide the international delegation with a very professional display of high-quality vegetables.

“The feedback given by these delegates indicates that over 90 per cent of the buyers who participated in the mission are likely to increase the amount of Australian vegetables they currently import. One respondent indicated that their business would increase imports of Australian produce by 25-35 per cent by the end of 2014.

“This is a great result for Australian growers.”

## Mission highlights

With a packed itinerary,

the Reverse Trade Mission delegation initially visited the Sydney and Brisbane wholesale markets, the Sydney Polar Fresh (Coles) Distribution Centre and met with growers at

an Australian-themed Produce Dinner.

Tours of growing operations Coastal Hydroponics and Kalfresh were a great success, with buyers receiving a first-hand



Reverse Trade Mission delegates are greeted by the Federal Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce.



Over 50 local vegetable growers had their fresh produce on show for the delegates.



## Export Events Calendar

### International Trade Shows

**3-5 September: Asia Fruit Logistica, Hong Kong**

**15-17 October: Agritech Japan, Japan**

**9-11 November: World of Perishables, Dubai**

look at the high quality and innovative production methods within the Australian vegetable industry.

In a show of support for this industry initiative, the international delegation and participating growers were also greeted by the Federal Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce.

### The road ahead

The 2014 Reverse Trade Mission is one part of a multipronged effort to increase vegetable exports being funded by the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

The project will be followed by AUSVEG representation at Asia Fruit Logistica, the premier trade show for fresh produce in the Asia Pacific, which will be held in Hong Kong from 3-5 September 2014.

The industry's representation at Asia Fruit Logistica also includes funded positions for vegetable growers to display produce and establish new business contacts. Growers who

are interested in this opportunity should contact AUSVEG.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

- This year's Reverse Trade Mission saw more than 40 buyers from Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan visit Australia to meet with local vegetable growers interested in exporting their produce.
- More than 50 Australian growers provided the international delegation with a very professional display of high-quality vegetables at the AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence in Cairns.
- Next on the calendar is the Asia Fruit Logistica, which will be held in Hong Kong from 3-5 September 2014.

**i** For more information on the Reverse Trade Mission and Asia Fruit Logistica:  
 AUSVEG  
 Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
 Email: [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au)  
 Project Number: VG13035

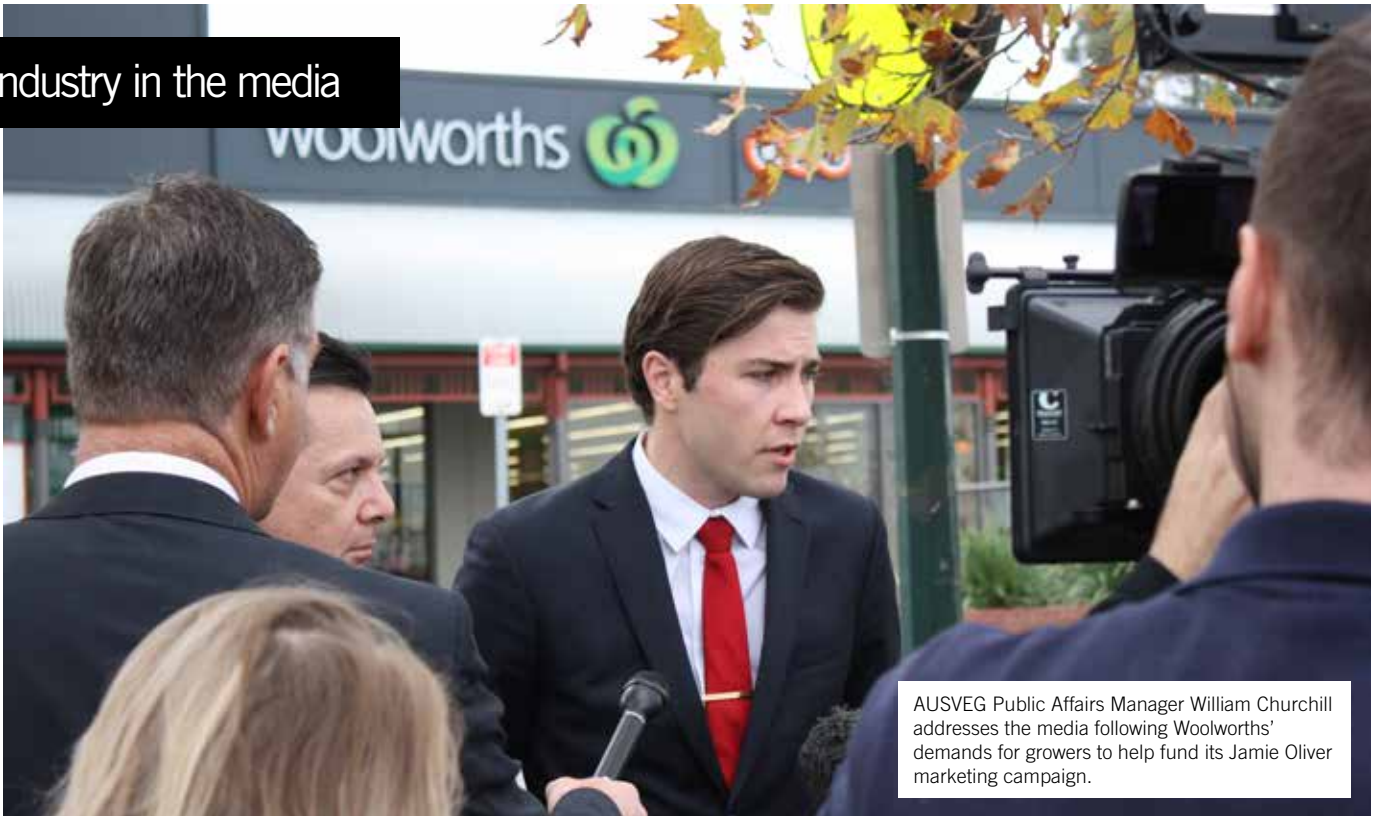
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## Industry in the media



AUSVEG Public Affairs Manager William Churchill addresses the media following Woolworths' demands for growers to help fund its Jamie Oliver marketing campaign.

AUSVEG has dramatically increased its presence in the media over the past few months, following its exposé of Woolworths' Jamie's Garden marketing campaign and the hype surrounding the record-breaking 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence.

A record-breaking 7,344,777 Australians read, heard or saw something concerning the vegetable industry during the month of June. A total of 1,281 media reports mentioned AUSVEG – a striking increase from 571 hits in May. Following recent trends, radio continued to be the number one platform for media mentions, followed by press and television.

### Woolworths debate

Following complaints from growers across Australia, and with the help of South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon, AUSVEG took to the media on Friday 6 June to alert the public about Woolworths' demands for its growers to provide 40 cents per crate to help fund a marketing campaign involving UK celebrity chef Jamie Oliver.

Growers had informed AUSVEG that they were afraid to decline the request through fear of retaliatory action by Woolworths – their largest customer. In light of this, AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy

wrote to ACCC Chairman Rod Sims, requesting an urgent investigation into Woolworths' actions.

Extensive national and international media coverage was secured as a result of the revelation and the public support demonstrated for affected growers was immense.

AUSVEG hit the media trail, with numerous television, radio and print interviews taking place on the issue, including a live-to-air appearance on ABC News 24. In addition, AUSVEG featured on Channel 9 News and in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *The Guardian* and the widely-circulated UK daily newspaper, *The Daily Mail*.

Over the following weeks, AUSVEG continued to feature across the media regarding developments in the campaign against Woolworths. AUSVEG said that the feedback received by both Woolworths and Jamie Oliver was disappointing, and that growers should be refunded for their contributions to the campaign. The issue continues to unfold.

### Convention highlights

Both Australian and international media provided extensive coverage of the AUSVEG National Convention during June, with over 1,100 delegates packing the Cairns Convention Centre for the biggest event in Australian

horticulture.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy appeared live from the Convention floor on the ABC Queensland Country Hour with Craig Zonca, receiving extensive coverage across all states and territories. Mr Mulcahy discussed AUSVEG's efforts in working tirelessly for the benefit of growers.

Recipients of the AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence were also provided with coverage, with Syngenta Grower of the Year Belinda Adams featuring in the *Weekly Times* on her big win.

The 2014 Reverse Trade Mission, which brought around 40 Asian buyers to Australia for one-on-one meetings with Australian growers, was also featured in broadcast media.

### In other news...

AUSVEG Economist Shaun Muscat was interviewed by broadcast media regarding new data from the ABS that vegetable growers were receiving improved crop yields. Mr Muscat said that it did not necessarily represent profitability and that many farmers were trying to compensate for higher production costs.

The AUSVEG CEO also featured on ABC Radio recently, discussing the industry's desire for the government to clamp down on unscrupulous farm labour hire companies.

Following the launch of AUSVEG SA, AUSVEG National Marketing Manager Simon Coburn appeared on ABC Radio, stating that the new body would consult extensively with SA growers and work towards meeting the specific needs of growers within the state.

### Key topics for the May/June period:

- AUSVEG uncovers Woolworths' demands on growers for an additional 40-cents-a-crate levy on top of already existing marketing fees, with public outrage ensuing.
- The 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence and its associated activities received great coverage by both international and Australian media.
- New data indicates that Australian vegetable growers are receiving improved crop yields, but might be compensating for higher production costs.
- AUSVEG SA is launched to positive reception.



## Changing faces

The EnviroVeg Program has grown from strength to strength in recent years and is now excited to welcome on board the new Melbourne-based Environment Coordinator, Tim Shue.

The previous Environment Coordinator, Jordan Brooke-Barnett, has returned to his roots in Adelaide to head up the AUSVEG SA office. Mr Shue will be in charge of the EnviroVeg Program with assistance from Mr Brooke-Barnett.

Mr Shue completed a Bachelor of Environments and a Certificate in Global Issues through the University of Melbourne and has been part of the AUSVEG team as a Scientific

Communications Specialist since early 2013.

“I’m hoping to bring a fresh perspective to the EnviroVeg program. I’m looking forward to building upon all the hard work that Jordan has put into the project so far and enhancing the on-the-ground relationships we have with growers,” Mr Shue said.



For more information contact AUSVEG Environment Coordinator Tim Shue.  
Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
Email: [tim.shue@ausveg.com.au](mailto:tim.shue@ausveg.com.au)

## New environmental R&D

The agriculture sector is under increasing pressure to demonstrate that it is environmentally responsible when it comes to taking care of waterways, which are often associated with negative stories about pollution, algal blooms, erosion and invasive species.

In order to demonstrate that the industry is environmentally responsible, a research project was undertaken to investigate how vegetable management practices may impact waterway health.



### Report findings

A report entitled *Environmental effects of vegetable production on sensitive waterways*, recently published by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), looked at ways to empower growers with tools to address environmental concerns about sensitive waterways at both the farm and community level.

The project also reviewed nutrient losses from vegetable crops and how these were linked to nutrient levels near waterways. The report generated additional case studies on crop nutrient dynamics, which

showed negative nutrient budgets over a range of vegetable crops.

The study, conducted by the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, focused on several key vegetable growing regions including Watsons Creek (Victoria), Lockyer Valley and Bowen (both in Queensland).

### The results

Through consumer surveys, it was identified that none of the communities identified vegetable production as the primary factor impacting on

waterway health; a good result for the vegetable industry. Data from a nutrient budget survey for the Lockyer Valley region found that the standard application rate of nitrogen across six key vegetable crops was below the optimal rate – this positive result provides supporting evidence of careful nitrogen management by the vegetable industry in this region.

Despite the positive results overall, the report emphasises that the effects of vegetable production on sensitive waterways is very much dependent on local conditions – rainfall events in particular.

Growers should continue their good nutrient management practices and be aware of how their local waterways connect them to their regional catchment areas.



For more information: See the report, *Environmental effects of vegetable production on sensitive waterways* by Dr Stephen Harper, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Queensland.  
Project Number: VG09041



## Hot topic: IPM in the Queensland tropics

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT IS A DYNAMIC AND CONSTANTLY EVOLVING PRACTICE – IT IS NOT A CASE OF ‘ONE SIZE FITS ALL’, WRITES BAYER HEAD OF NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RICHARD DICKMANN.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is not the same as it was 10 years ago. In fact, IPM isn't the same as it was last year either, according to expert crop consultant Chris Monsour.

Getting a grasp on the concept of IPM is no easy task, so before we can start communicating it to consumers, we first need to wrap our heads around what IPM means to the producer.

“There is no recipe for IPM. It is a dynamic management practice and at its core is an attitude for the production of safe and environmentally responsible food,” Mr Monsour said.

The decline of broad spectrum insecticides means we are becoming more aware of beneficial insects that are occurring naturally in the field. The climate in Queensland's tropics and sub-tropics is particularly conducive to pest

explosions, which is why IPM programs need to be able to respond quickly.

“The pest spectrum will change as a result of the practices we use. The use of more specific pesticides that target key pests means that those insects that were once controlled incidentally by broad spectrum sprays are now becoming more prominent,” he said.

With an ever-increasing focus on beneficial insects as a pest management tool, every aspect of the cropping system needs to be considered, particularly as softer chemicals may result in a greater diversity of naturally-occurring insects. Growers need to consider how their pesticides may affect beneficial insects, remembering that some diseases, such as viruses, rely on particular pests as vectors.

“The warmer temperatures in Queensland mean that

insect numbers can build up very rapidly, and we have an environment that pests seem to enjoy. Sometimes you have to act quickly in order to take out a pest that could potentially devastate a crop overnight – a realistic scenario we often face,” Mr Monsour said.

### IPM for consumers

The broader challenge that confronts growers and the industry is how to best communicate the concept of IPM to consumers, especially since it is such a dynamic management practice.

“I think it's up to the industry to get the message out that growers are being as responsible as possible to produce food that is safe for consumers and the environment. Growers are very conscious about doing the

right thing and the Australian regulatory system is known to be one of the best and toughest in the world,” he said.

“Consumers and retailers need to understand what it takes for us to produce our food in reality if we're going to be able to produce food efficiently in this country.”

IPM means different things to different people. However, the key characteristics of IPM are that it requires specialist expertise, dynamism, a diversity of management practices and the need to be able to think quickly. Understanding how we define the concept of IPM is the first important step towards increasing understanding among consumers and the wider community.



Favorite Farm Manager Chris Millis.

## EnviroVeg Platinum audits prove successful

VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA SPEAKS TO TWO ENVIROVEG PLATINUM GROWERS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE PROGRAM AND HOW THE RECENT AUDIT PROCESS HAS BENEFITED THE RUNNING OF THEIR BUSINESSES.

### FLAVORITE

Tucked away in Warragul, Victoria, Flavorite operates 24 spectacular hectares of greenhouses growing hydroponic tomatoes and capsicums. The discrete growing business may even be unknown to some locals, despite being one of the largest greenhouse operations in the country.

Flavorite joins an exclusive list of EnviroVeg Platinum growers around the country who are seeking recognition for their outstanding environmental growing practices. For Flavorite Farm Manager Chris Millis and Senior Grower Matt Henshall, getting involved with EnviroVeg Platinum was seen as a natural progression for the business.

How do you think EnviroVeg Platinum will benefit your business?

“Taking part in the program was seen as a good way to be recognised for the environmentally conscious efforts we already consider as part of our standard practice,” Matt says.

Growers who achieve EnviroVeg Platinum accreditation will be able to use the EnviroVeg logo to promote their produce to consumers.

How much time did you spend to establish the program on your farm?

“It didn’t take as long as I thought. The most time-consuming aspect of establishing the program for us was the information gathering,” Chris says.

“As we are a large farm broken down into different departments, the challenge was to consolidate the relevant information into one spot.”

The operation already had very detailed records of all their

inputs, such as water, fertiliser, weather, utility consumption etc. This meant that no time was wasted in chasing up loose ends.

How would you rate the resources and support provided by AUSVEG?

“Jordan Brooke-Barnett from AUSVEG was fantastic. As well as knowing the program inside out, he also took the time to understand our business and day-to-day operations to help recognise current practises that support the program,” Matt says.

What was the experience of having the program audited on your farm?

“The audit was fine. It provided an opportunity for a new set of eyes to come in and see what we do and give a new perspective on different parts

of our operation. The auditor also gave an insight into how other industries deal with similar challenges, even down to little things like ways to organise or present information to an auditor.”

What have you learnt from the EnviroVeg Platinum experience and how do you think it will benefit your business into the future?

“EnviroVeg Platinum showed that being environmentally considerate doesn’t take a lot of effort or even cost a lot. It will save you in the long run – especially with increasing utility costs – and helps with sustainable farming. Any business that can be recognised with an environmental stamp of approval is ahead of its competitors.”

## PITCHFORD PRODUCE

Situated about 80 kilometres south of Adelaide at Currency Creek, Pitchford Produce is a vegetable growing operation with strong values and an environmental conscience.

Pitchford Produce Owner/Director Graeme Pitchford grows broccolini and baby cos lettuce all year round, and iceberg lettuce and celeriac in opposite seasons. The business has recently undergone its first EnviroVeg Platinum audit, the very first in South Australia.

### How do you think EnviroVeg Platinum will benefit your business?

"I really like the idea of a recognisable label that shows consumers that growers really do care for their farms, the environment and their produce," Graeme says.

"At this stage I am not exactly sure what positive effect EnviroVeg Platinum will have, but I am hoping it will strengthen already existing markets and create a new

marketing edge in potential growth areas."

### How much time did you spend to establish the program on your farm?

"The time spent to get the program up and running would be about one and a half days overall. This simply involved compiling records in order to align with the auditor's checklist, not really having to generate any new information," Graeme explains.

"The audit itself took around two to three hours on-farm. We took the auditor on a tour of the property first, followed by about one and a half hours back at the office. This allowed us to demonstrate our environmental management practices, not just through words written on a piece of paper, but demonstrably through what the auditor could see for themselves."

### How would you rate the resources and support provided by AUSVEG?

"The resources were easy to

follow and the support given by AUSVEG was excellent! Help was never far away. The fact that the EnviroVeg Platinum program has been designed to complement other QA schemes meant that despite being new to the auditor, the audit process ran very smoothly."

### What was the experience of having the program audited on your farm?

"We actually arranged to have the Platinum audit at the end of another QA audit, so it meant the auditor didn't have to go over the whole farm twice. This helped save a lot of time and unnecessary duplication. Even the feedback from the auditor about the process and the auditor's checklist was very positive, despite a hint of initial scepticism," Graeme laughs.

### What have you learnt from the EnviroVeg Platinum experience and how do you think it will benefit your business into the future?

"When the QA programs forced us down that path years ago, we felt it was a necessary evil and loathed the time spent on them. However, over time we have realised the majority of the programs are good for our business. The EnviroVeg program will prove the same, ensuring that we are sustainable for future generations."

People in all walks of life often forget to think about their goals in the long-term – too often, they can't see how decisions in place today will affect how their business will succeed over the next decade. When speaking with the Pitchfords, it is clear that they're always talking about the future, looking at ways to improve and refine their business.

"I'm excited to be part of the first group of vegetable growers in Australia who have moved to accreditation under the EnviroVeg Platinum scheme. We feel we are now set up with an edge in the market, as well as a more powerful environmental identity that we can communicate through the supply chain and to our consumers," Graeme says.



Pitchford Produce Owner/Director Graeme Pitchford.



**R&D**  
Market &  
Value Chain  
Development

**R&D**  
Consumer  
Alignment

## Innovations unveiled: Seminar prompts industry to think outside the box

THE 2014 PRODUCE INNOVATION SEMINAR, HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JUNE AT THE CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE, SAW OVER 100 GROWERS AND INDUSTRY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN A DAY OF LEARNING AND INTERACTION.



As a follow-up to 2013's Emerging Technologies in Horticulture Seminar, this year's Produce Innovation Seminar was designed to present to growers new technologies and methods of production that can be implemented instantaneously.

Six international speakers presented at the seminar, providing insights into creating premium vegetable products with greater value for consumers. This included further utilising the health benefits of vegetables, responding to evolving consumer needs and designing modern packaging.

### The Baan effect

One of the first speakers to present to the audience was

Rob Baan, CEO of Netherlands-based micro-vegetable producer Koppert Cress. Mr Baan gave an overview of his business and left attendees intrigued by his varieties of greens that taste like camembert, chilli and mustard, to name a few.

Mr Baan also explained his "reverse marketing" strategy that sees his product sold directly to chefs and restaurateurs. Mr Baan said that this process makes his product worth three times as much as it would at wholesale.

### An American perspective

A key aim of the seminar was to showcase to local growers developments and innovations in vegetable production and marketing from the USA, with all other speakers making the trip

from America to Cairns to do so.

Tim O'Connor, President and CEO of his own consulting firm and former President and CEO of the United States Potato Board, gave great insight into the latest and greatest products from North America.

Brian Zomorodi, an Executive Vice President at California-based producers Ready Pac, provided details on the process behind creating value-added vegetable products and gave examples from some of Ready Pac's most successful ventures.

One of the products highlighted by Mr Zomorodi included the Bistro Bowl salad, the first single-serve and ready-to-eat salad meal in America. Mr Zomorodi said the Bistro Bowl is one of the fastest growing products in the US fresh produce market.

### Beyond face value

As well as attendees being shown the best new value-added products, they were also given information on how to best understand consumers and their needs. Consumer psychologist Dr David Lundahl, CEO of InsightsNow in Portland, Oregon, explained that it is vitally important to target your customer's exact desires in order to create fully beneficial products.

Dr Lundahl described growers as being "downstream" from the end consumer and said that you must first go upstream to fully understand your target market, and then work backwards to ensure you are correctly targeting your customers.

Packaging design was also on the agenda, with Roger





University of Massachusetts Amherst Associate Professor Dr Hang Xiao.



InsightsNow CEO and founder Dr David Lundahl.



For more information on the Produce Innovation Seminar:  
 AUSVEG  
 Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
 Email: info@ausveg.com.au  
 Project Number: VG13033

Gates, President of R. W. Gates Packaging and former Business Development Manager for Amcor, explaining the best types of packaging for vegetables, from commodities to premium and value-added products.

### Food for thought

Dr Hang Xiao, a food scientist from University of Massachusetts Amherst gave the seminar a diverse element, providing attendees with some of his research findings in functional foods; in particular, vegetables with increased health benefits.

Anti-cancer properties of broccoli and garlic were discussed, as were methods of increasing the digestibility and absorption of nutrients in vegetables. Dr Xiao explained that by utilising this science, vegetable products with much

higher health benefits could be easily created.

The 2014 Produce Innovation Seminar provided attendees with many thought-provoking ideas. Interactive Q&A sessions after the presentations showed that attendees were already beginning to think about ways to implement some of the ideas presented into their own business plans.

Jeff McSpedden, Chair of the Vegetable IAC and Dr Michael Keller, a member of the Farm Productivity, Resource Use and Management Design Team, both chaired the seminar.

All presentations were recorded and will be made freely available on the AUSVEG website in the coming weeks.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.



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KPMG's Leigh Obradovic addresses attendees at the 2014 Exporting to Japan Symposium in Cairns.

## The 2014 Exporting to Japan Symposium: Learning the ins and outs of Japanese trade

ON 22 JUNE 2014, THE CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE HOSTED THE 2014 EXPORTING TO JAPAN SYMPOSIUM FOR OVER 100 VEGETABLE GROWERS AND INDUSTRY SERVICE PROVIDERS INTERESTED IN CAPITALISING ON THE EMERGING OPPORTUNITY TO EXPORT TO JAPAN.

Japan presents significant future expansion options for the Australian vegetable industry. With a Free Trade Agreement recently struck between Australia and Japan, there are increased opportunities for Australian vegetable growers.

The demand for fresh vegetables in Japan has traditionally been supplied locally, with imports limited to a narrow range of products. However, with the import market slowly opening and competitiveness rising, Japan has increased import volumes in order to secure sufficient supply to meet the country's demand. In light of this, the Australian vegetable industry is well positioned to deliver alternative products by using counter-seasonality and proximity to its

advantage.

The 2014 Exporting to Japan Symposium provided a valuable opportunity for attendees to gather the best information to aid them in the process of exporting their vegetable produce to Japan.

Local and international speakers presented on topics such as vegetable trends in Japan, trade arrangements, and cultural dos and don'ts, while also touching on the opportunities, limitations and pitfalls of the exporting process. Experts came from the fields of regulatory and logistical issues, shipping and packaging, and trade, among others.

The first speaker to address the symposium was Masahiro Onishi, a Buyer in the Agricultural Products Procurement Department from

the AEON Group, one of Asia's largest supermarket chains. Mr Onishi discussed current consumer trends in Japan, and the marketable opportunities which arise from the nuanced preferences of Japanese consumers.

During the Symposium, attendees also heard from Catherine Taylor of Austrade, based in Osaka. Ms Taylor detailed how the Australian Government was able to assist growers in initiating and maintaining successful trade relations, and stressed that

Austrade has already facilitated several successful links between Australian exporters and Japanese fresh produce distributors. She also said that it is almost impossible to do business in Japan without first establishing a reliable business contact and that Austrade is there to help in this matter.

Growers were also schooled on the cultural keys involved in doing business with Japan, including the importance of etiquette and the practical necessity of greetings. Lilly Choi-Lee explained the simplest way





Travconsult's Lilly Choi-Lee gave an interactive and entertaining presentation.

to ask 'how are you?' and give your name in Japanese. Mrs Choi-Lee said that speaking a few words of the local language could go a long way in making an excellent first impression on potential new contacts in Japan. Mrs Choi-Lee's entertaining and interactive presentation also touched on the importance of 'face' and respecting social

hierarchies at all times, even when choosing where to sit in a meeting room.

Over the course of the day, attendees also heard from Professor Masayoshi Honma who spoke about the ageing population in Japan and the effect on vegetable purchasing, KPMG's Leigh Obradovic who touched on the new Free Trade

Agreement between Japan and Australia and what that means for Australian vegetable producers, Dr Mala Gamage from the CSIRO who explained modified atmosphere packaging for vegetable products, and Dean Buder from Pacific Asia Express who gave an informative pictorial presentation outlining the dos and don'ts of

refrigerated cargo shipping and cold chain logistics.

Another highlight of the symposium was the Growers Panel, which featured Lucy Gregg of Reid Fruits, Chris Shreuers of Schreuers & Sons and James Terry of Momack. The panel members each spoke about their experiences in dealing with exporting their fresh produce to Japan, how to mitigate the risks involved, and answered the question everybody in the room wanted to know: is it worth it? Each panel member answered 'yes' but with the caveat which was echoed throughout the majority of the presentations all day: make sure you do your research to ensure the smoothest possible entrance into the market.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.



For more information:  
AUSVEG  
Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
Email: info@ausveg.com.au  
Project Number: VG13034

## Is this a good look for your industry?

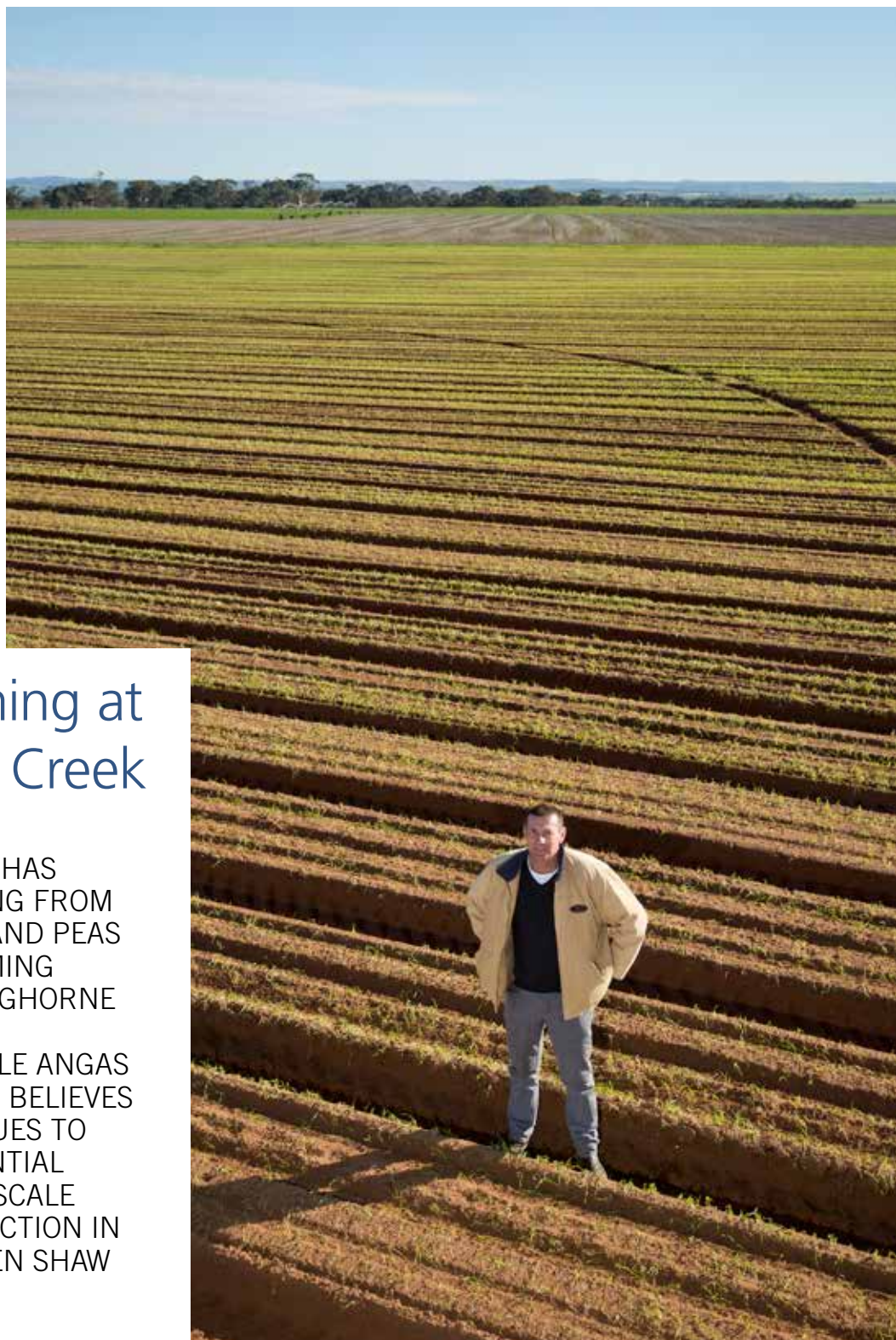
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## Fertile farming at Langhorne Creek

FRASER DAVIDSON HAS GROWN EVERYTHING FROM CARROTS, BEANS AND PEAS AT HIS MIXED FARMING OPERATION AT LANGHORNE CREEK ON SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S FERTILE ANGAS BREMER DELTA. HE BELIEVES THE AREA CONTINUES TO HAVE GREAT POTENTIAL FOR MORE SMALL-SCALE VEGETABLE PRODUCTION IN THE FUTURE. KAREN SHAW EXPLAINS.

Major players in the wine industry have vineyards at Langhorne Creek – this includes Orlando, Rosemount, Hardys, Wolf Blass and several superannuation funds. While Fraser Davidson still sees the area as “the great sleeper of the wine industry”, he also believes there is potential for more vegetable producers to make the most of the land.

“For example, small operators doing four hectares ... or with half a dozen glasshouses,”

explains Fraser, whose family has worked the land there since 1852.

“There is infrastructure such as railway and freeway connections, good soil, a benign climate, annual rainfall of about 400mm and importantly a reliable water supply.”

The district, just 60km south-east of Adelaide, covers 7,100 hectares between the Angas and Bremer Rivers, beside Lake Alexandrina, which is only 30km from the mouth of the

Murray. The fertile delta is what initially attracted settlers in the 1850s, when they planted the first vineyards.

### Water supply and sustainability

It was over a century later in the 1960s when viticulturists and farmers discovered an underground aquifer. This ready supply of water was perfect for irrigating fodder crops such as

lucerne and potatoes – the first of these crops were planted by Fraser's father Angus, and Peter and Ray McDonald.

Things ticked over nicely, with farmers using as much water as they wanted until the 1980s when – as Fraser puts it – “things fell in a hole”.

“Over extraction had reduced the amount of water available and salinity started to go north,” he says.

This resulted in the introduction of water licensing

and regulations that covered the aquifer, nearby rivers and the lake as well as aquifer recharge. The guaranteed water supply was instrumental in transforming and drought-proofing the area.

“While there was huge angst and opposition to this at the time, I would be amazed if you could find someone that would say it hasn’t been a good thing,” Fraser says.

“Langhorne Creek suddenly had big players undertaking large-scale viticulture in the area.”

Water regulation has also been important in ensuring the continued sustainability of the district. In order to protect

against salinity, landowners had an obligation to plant a hectare of trees for every 100 megalitres of water they were licensed to take.

“It’s made a huge difference, with trees everywhere,” Fraser says. “The country is in infinitely better nick than when we inherited it. Although my father could never understand why we were planting trees, when he had spent a lifetime cutting them down.”

### Returning to the land

As well as stints living on the family farm, Fraser spent his formative years living in the pretty town of Strathalbyn before

attending boarding school in Adelaide – an experience he enjoyed. In 1970, he returned to help run what was then an 800 hectare property.

At that time, his community-minded father Angus was Mayor of the local council and his uncle, Senator Gordon Davidson, was a Liberal Senator for South Australia. Both men were often away performing their duties as civic father and politician respectively, which left the young Fraser to tackle much of the farm work.

While he had dreams of going into the aviation industry, there was “subtle pressure” to return to the land.

“It’s been enjoyable. I have

no regrets about my time in the business,” he says.

In 1989 Fraser and his sister, Dianne, went into viticulture, with Fraser only recently selling his 35 hectare holding. In conjunction with the vineyard, “we have stuck to our mixed farming roots,” he says. “We have grown everything from lucerne to onions, potatoes, carrots, cereals, beans and peas, all under the centre pivot (irrigation) system.

“We’ve gone with the flow, with no great scale to any operation but it has enabled us to survive the waxing and waning of agriculture.”

### The key to success

He chuckles when asked if this approach to farming has been the secret to the family’s success.

“The great conundrum of my life is that every time we have deviated towards getting bigger in any given direction, suddenly the price falls off a cliff or demand for that item drops. The next thing you know you don’t have an income,” Fraser says.

He believes flexibility is the key. “I enjoy the process of growing things, but it’s got to be commercially viable. If it’s not, then out it goes.”

For Fraser, turning 60 last year provided a catalyst for changing the dynamics of the farm. While he has downsized to 200 hectares and there are now three share farmers involved, he still spends at least five days a week on the farm to concentrate on carrots and fat lamb production.

However, he still enjoys the hour-long drive from his suburban Adelaide residence to the farm.

“There are not many places in the world where you can be involved in agriculture and be only an hour from a capital city,” he says.

This proximity, as well as guaranteed water, is why Fraser believes the Angas Bremer region has such appeal for vegetable production in the future.

“Another major Brussels sprouts grower has just moved into the area. Turf for the new Adelaide oval was grown in Langhorne Creek. And while there is no great scale to any of these things, this niche area has a range of things that all seem to work,” he says, clearly optimistic about the region’s future.



Photographs by Andrew Beveridge.



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Drive Train

## Touring the brassica hub of Europe



Participants met with UCPT cauliflower and artichoke grower Christoph, who farms 45 hectares of land in France.

THE ACTION-PACKED 2014 EUROPEAN GROWER STUDY TOUR GAVE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO THE SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES OF THEIR PEERS IN GERMANY AND FRANCE.

In February, eight vegetable growers from Australia set off on a two-week study tour of Europe, during which they visited vegetable producers, pack houses and researchers to learn about the latest production methods and business structures they have in place. The group made their way from Germany to France, with a major highlight being a visit to the brassica hub of Europe – Brittany, the leading region for vegetable crop production in France.

The tour was funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions from industry and matched funds from the Australian Government.

### Fresh produce on show

The tour kicked off in Germany with a visit to the Berlin Fruit Logistica 2014, one of the world's largest fresh produce trade events. The Aussies were among 62,000 trade visitors who took advantage of a great networking opportunity with leading scientists, growers, agribusiness professionals and importers looking to trade

Australian vegetables.

With 2,600 exhibitors at the event, the group was particularly interested in new machinery or equipment that could generate efficiencies in their own operations, as well as new product varieties or technologies. A highlight from the show included a random weight pumpkin pricing/sticker machine that had achieved a higher processing rate than its Australian equivalent, while the winner of the prestigious Fruit Logistica Innovation Award (FLIA) was a Swiss BBQ Grill-Mix that kept the product under vacuum to ensure optimal freshness and presentation.

### German innovation

The next stop on the tour was an early morning visit to Fruchthof Berlin – the city's vegetable wholesale market – where the group noticed a wider range of products on offer compared to Australian wholesale markets, such as grocery and convenience items. The group also visited leading seedling and vegetable producer, Rudolf Sinn GmbH, which addressed rising energy costs onsite by using



A Swiss BBQ grill mix won the prestigious Fruit Logistica Innovation Award at the 2014 Berlin Fruit Logistica.

a nearby bio-energy plant, as well as energy efficient hot water heating pipes for its greenhouses.

The next day, participants were treated to an exclusive tour of John Deere's tractor production facility in Mannheim; the second largest in the world. This is no surprise, considering it churns out 40,000 tractors each year. The company's success in the industry is largely attributed to the fact that tractors are made to order, rather than mass produced to a set specification.

In the afternoon, the group travelled to nearby Monheim, the home of Bayer CropScience's global headquarters, where participants visited several important R&D sites to gain a better appreciation of the production processes to store, prepare and distribute substances for biological testing.

### French collaboration

The second half of the tour took participants to Saint Pol-de-Léon on the coastal fringe of northern France. This is the home of SICA, which is part of a co-operative of three linked organisations that produces vegetables under the Prince de Bretagne brand.

The majority of growers in France are part of regional co-operatives such as SICA, where they work together under a single brand to take their produce to market, share costs and participate in joint marketing for the selling and promotion of vegetables. It's a system that has resulted in much success in the country, funded by a three per cent commission plus funds from the European Union CAP.

The group then visited the nearby CATE Experimental Research Station, which looks at region-specific R&D issues – in

this case, Club root. The role of the station is to help increase the competitiveness of growers by improving the quality and shelf-life of their produce. The day finished with a visit to Daniel Cadiou, a large producer and exporter of shallots, onions and legumes, where participants gained an insight into the farm's marketing processes and export development activities.

The following day, the group stopped by the UCPT cooperative, a sister organisation to SICA which is based in Paimpol. It uses the Dutch-auction system of marketing as part of the co-operative, which ensures a fair and transparent method of sale as well as a healthy relationship with shippers. Participants also had time to visit the

Organic Research Station; a sister station to CATE, which focuses exclusively on organic vegetables.

The last stop on the tour was a visit to Agrial, based in Saint-Georges-de-Gréhaigne. The company structure is such that growers are shareholders and those who are members of the co-operative can rent their own land to farm.

## The final word

After an action-packed 14 days of intensive and informative education, the group returned home to Australia. Having experienced firsthand how the other side of the world operates, they were ready to apply their newfound knowledge of European vegetable production techniques, research, marketing and business models to the successful running of their own farms and share this valuable information with their peers.

In particular, it was recommended that the Australian vegetable industry should consider the benefits of implementing a co-operative model, or at the very least considering initiatives for growers to share equipment and use centralised packing sheds.



A full project report will be released in coming weeks and will be made available on the AUSVEG website. [www.ausveg.com.au](http://www.ausveg.com.au). Project Number: VG11706.



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# 2014 Women in Horticulture Tour

6 September – 18 September 2014



## Israel and Turkey

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For further information please contact AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or email [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au)

This project is funded by HAL using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions from industry and matched funds from the Australian Government.  
\*This tour is only open to Australian Vegetable Levy paying growers. Growers will be required to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of this tour.

All air and land travel, single room accommodation and most meals will be included.

**AUSVEG**



Horticulture Australia



# Tune in to InfoVeg Radio

R&D

Drive Train

**infoVeg**



Whether you're taking a well-deserved break at home or working out in the field, keeping on top of the latest research and development (R&D) initiatives in the vegetable industry is now easy with the launch of InfoVeg Radio.

Developed by AUSVEG, InfoVeg Radio is a unique R&D-focused podcast that provides growers with an insight into vegetable R&D, with each edition featuring interviews with researchers who are conducting projects using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

AUSVEG Manager of Industry Development and Communications Andrew White said InfoVeg Radio will release regular programs focusing on cutting-edge R&D being undertaken within the industry.

"InfoVeg Radio will provide industry R&D in an audio format so that vegetable growers can more easily digest the latest research findings," Mr White said.

"We recognise that growers are time poor and want an overview of the latest R&D so that they can pick and choose the research findings that are relevant to their businesses.

"Whether it is access to the latest findings regarding innovative soil health measures to manage plant diseases, the feasibility of biogas as an electricity source or innovative mechanised equipment that could drive labour inefficiencies, InfoVeg Radio will be available to download, providing a regular and reliable update on the most recent discoveries."

Each podcast will be around 10 minutes long and there are also several ways to tune in. For example, growers with tractors equipped with a USB input in the cab stereo can easily listen to the programs while working out in the field.

## First episode gives food for thought

The maiden podcast includes a host of horticultural R&D information hand-picked for Australian vegetable growers. The first episode discusses the 2014 International Horticultural Congress to be held in Brisbane in August, as well as vegetable soil health systems that can help overcome soil borne diseases.

You can also hear more about key findings from monthly consumer tracker Project Harvest, while AUSVEG Biosecurity and Special Projects Coordinator Dean Schrieke discusses the prevention and management of pest and disease incursions. Finally, Kym Whiteoak of RMCG talks to InfoVeg Radio about the potential of biogas generation.

Each edition of InfoVeg Radio will be available for vegetable levy payers to stream online from the AUSVEG website ([www.ausveg.com.au/infovegradio](http://www.ausveg.com.au/infovegradio)) or subscribe to via a portable audio device, such as a smartphone.



For more information on InfoVeg Radio:  
AUSVEG  
Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
Email: [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au)  
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The Adama team man their booth at the AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show.

# New name, same game



LEADING CROP PROTECTION COMPANY FARMOZ HAS OFFICIALLY REBRANDED AS ADAMA – BUT THIS DOESN'T MEAN THE COMPANY WILL REST ON ITS LAURELS, AS IT CONTINUES TO PROVIDE SIMPLICITY IN AGRICULTURE, WHILE DELIVERING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE EVERYDAY ISSUES GROWERS FACE.

Meet Adama. While the name may be new to many, the faces and ethos behind the brand will remain the same. From 16 July, the company formally known as Farnoz, will officially rebrand as Adama, a single brand that unites more than 20 individual company brands that currently serve growers in 120 countries.

According to Adama Australia Managing Director David Peters, the global brand rollout will be complete in December this year.

"We want to create simplicity in our structure and move to one company, one identity, one culture and one brand. Adama reflects a global company in close touch with our customers and respect for our historic beginnings in Israel," Mr Peters said.

"The name Adama is Hebrew for 'earth', the essential element of farming. Our strong connection to the land

represents our commitment to agriculture."

## New products on the horizon

As well as streamlining the company's operations, Mr Peters said the move to rebrand also ties in with the launch of several new products that have been developed to solve real and present problems for Australian growers.

"Fungicide, herbicide and insecticide resistance management are among the biggest challenges that we face as an industry and we are pleased to be able to bring several new options to the market just as we launch Adama," he said.

"Our new nematocide, Nimitz® – due to be released this spring for use in tomatoes, capsicums and cucurbits – is a

really good example of the new generation of crop protection products that are a quantum leap ahead of many traditional solutions."

## Challenges ahead

Mr Peters notes that Adama's close connection to Israel will work to the advantage of Australian growers as both countries share a number of common challenges. This has been evident through the Grower Study Tours to Israel that have occurred in recent months, which Adama has supported.

"I believe that learning from other growers and vegetable industries in other countries is a simple way to help develop solutions that will enable them to capitalise on the many opportunities that await them," Mr Peters said.

He is confident the road ahead for the industry is bright, particularly if the different players within the Australian horticulture industry continue to work together to achieve a common goal.

"I'd really like to see our horticulture industries pull together even tighter to create a united front to take on the challenges we face now and those that will confront us in the future," he said.

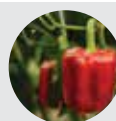
"We have seen the benefits of collaboration in other markets and while vegetable and potato producers are often looking for a competitive edge in daily markets, there is much to be gained by combining our energies and experiences to forge sustainable and profitable outcomes for all in the long-term."

## Minor-use permits

Permit Number	Permit Description (pesticide/crop/pest)	Date Issued	Expiry Date	States
PER14841	Chlorothalonil & Pyrimethanil (Walabi Fungicide) / Chicory, Endive, Radicchio, Silverbeet and Spinach / Botrytis and Alternaria	1-Oct-14	30-Sep-19	All states except Vic
PER14840	Bupirimate (Nimrod Fungicide) / Cucurbits & Peppers / Powdery mildew	1-Oct-14	30-Sep-19	All states except Vic
PER14432	Pendimethalin / Brussels sprouts / Grasses and Broadleaf Weeds	23-May-14	30-Jun-19	All states except Vic
PER14341	Pymetrozine (Chess Insecticide) / Celery / Aphids	30-May-14	30-Jun-17	All states except Vic
PER14471	Lambda-cyhalothrin (Karate Zeon) / Shallots & Spring onions / Red Legged Earth Mite, Rutherglen Bug, Grey Cluster Bug, Looper, Plague Thrips	30-May-14	31-Mar-19	All states except Vic
PER14535	Carrots	12-May-14	31-Mar-19	All states except Vic
PER14436	Celery	9-May-14	30-Jun-19	All states except Vic
PER12712	Cucumber, Zucchini, Squash/Marrow, Choko, Eggplant, Peppers, Capsicum, Lettuce - leafy varieties	13-May-14	31-Mar-17	All states except Vic
PER14479	Propiconazole / Spinach, Beetroot, Celery, Silverbeet, Gai Lum, Chicory, endive & Radicchio / Leaf Spot, Septoria Spot, Early Blight, Powdery Mildew, Rust & Septoria leaf spot	12-May-14	31-Oct-17	All states except Vic
PER14535	Clethodim (Select herbicide) / Carrots / Grass weeds, including winter grass	12-May-14	31-Mar-19	All states except Vic
PER14436	Buprofezin (Applaud) / Celery / Greenhouse whitefly	9-May-14	30-Jun-19	All states except Vic

All efforts have been made to provide the most current, complete and accurate information on these permits, however we recommend that you confirm the details of these permits at the following APVMA website: <http://www.apvma.gov.au/permits/search.php>

## CALENDAR

**17-22 August 2014****International Horticultural Congress**

**Where:** Brisbane, QLD

**What:** Held every four years at various sites around the world and attracting more than 2,000 delegates, the Congress is a world forum covering all aspects of horticulture and horticultural science.

**Further information:** [www.ihc2014.org](http://www.ihc2014.org)

**3-5 September****Asia Fruit Logistica**

**Where:** Hong Kong

**What:** Asia Fruit Logistica is Asia's leading trade show for the international fresh fruit and vegetable business.

**Further information:** [www.asiafruitlogistica.com/en/](http://www.asiafruitlogistica.com/en/)

**6-18 September 2014****2014 Women in Horticulture Study Tour**

**Where:** Israel and Turkey

**What:** Expressions of interest to attend this tour are now open.

**Further information:** Please contact AUSVEG on (03) 9882 0277 or email [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au)

**11-25 October 2014****2014 Young Grower Study Tour**

**Where:** Japan and South Korea

**What:** Expressions of interest to attend this tour are now open.

**Further information:** Please contact AUSVEG on (03) 9882 0277 or email [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au)

# Around the states

## Queensland



Substantial progress has been made in the past eight months to improve the skills of production horticulture workers under the Queensland Production Horticulture Workforce Development Plan.

This plan was developed by Growcom in collaboration with key stakeholders and funding support from the Queensland Government last year. A Production Horticulture Workforce Team has since been deployed comprising of four industry-based Regional Workforce Development Officers in key growing areas and a State Co-ordinator, based with Growcom in Brisbane.

On-the-ground engagement in key growing areas has led to a more in-depth understanding of regional skills, training and employment needs.

Strategic Regional Workforce Development Plans are being developed alongside the State Plan, but with specific actions tailored to suit regional needs.

Regional industry, education and training networks have been established to improve the sharing of information and stronger collaboration between industry and the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE); the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QDAFF); employment providers and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs); and other key government departments.

More than 200 production horticulture employees have obtained Regional Workforce Development Initiative (RWDI) funding to undertake accredited training. The skills funded include agribusiness, competitive systems and processes, frontline management qualifications, Excel training and accredited units in chemical, supervisor, marketing and financial management.

Vocational educational funding is currently targeted

at full qualifications, which do not meet the needs of our sector. The Queensland Production Horticulture Workforce Development Plan and the Queensland Annual Skills Priority Report recognise the continuing strong demand for funding for skill sets and individual units of competency. Skill sets are viewed as building blocks to the eventual completion of full qualifications.

Growcom was encouraged by the flexibility of the State Government's RWDI which covered skill sets and individual units of competency as this led to a notable increase in the uptake of training in Queensland's production horticulture sector. We ask the government to consider funding another program with the same flexibility.

In addition, an extension of funding for the Queensland Production Horticulture Workforce Development Team for at least another three-year period would assist in facilitating the delivery of skill set training in those regional areas where there are few RTOs providing a commercial service.

Considerable ground has

also been made in connecting the industry with schools, not only to promote available career pathways but also to educate students on the size, scope and value of production horticulture to the Queensland economy.

Information on the completion of training in single units of competency and skill sets is required by industry to gain an understanding of why certain qualifications/units of competency are preferred over others. It also helps to improve training packages, as well as the facilitation of more accredited skill sets and targeted funding.

We would like to thank the Queensland Government for its considerable foresight in funding the Queensland Production Horticulture Workforce Development project which has put the state on the front foot in up-skilling the workforce in our sector.

### Alex Livingstone

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Fax: (07) 3620 3880

## South Australia



In mid-June the State Government handed down its 2014 budget, which was a mixed bag for agriculture.

Key investments in areas such as market development for food producers and regional development were offset by a cut of \$3 million in rural research and development capacity and a \$5.5 million cut to Biosecurity SA. In tough economic times, it is more important than ever that governments are able to maintain the critical investments that underpin industries like our \$550 million vegetable and potato industries. While the investment in regions

and market development is a positive move, it must not be at the expense of the research and development and biosecurity capacity of our state.

At a time where the Victorian Government has thrown up the white flag and declared a Fruit Fly endemic, agriculture needs people on the front line to prevent incursions. Likewise, in a highly-competitive environment, it is essential that our growers have access to skilled researchers. Once these positions are lost, it takes a long time to bring new people up to speed. Investments in biosecurity and research and development are critical to the future competitiveness of our industry, and, as Departmental budgets are hard-fought, it will likely be very difficult to recover these funding shortfalls.

The State Government, to its credit, has made

investments available for regional development and the development of markets for food producers as part of their strategy to get the South Australian economy back on track. These efforts, however, will be for nothing if the food producers of South Australia are threatened by biosecurity incursions and not able to keep abreast of fast-moving developments in agriculture. This is why AUSVEG SA will be approaching government to reconsider these decisions in light of the serious potential ramifications for our industry.

On a more positive note, AUSVEG SA is very excited that South Australia took home two awards at the prestigious 2014 AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence. South Australian potato grower Sam Humphries was a worthy recipient of the Coles Rising Star Award for

his work with industry and participation on the Fresh Potato IAC. In addition, the South Australian Research and Development Institute received the John Deere Productivity Partner Award for their world-leading work in developing the Predicta-P test, which allows potato growers to ascertain the disease susceptibility of their crops.

I would like to congratulate both recipients and am extremely proud that the South Australian industry can benefit from the work of such exceptional people.

### Jordan Brooke-Barnett

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State Manager  
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Littlehampton SA 5250  
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## Western Australia



There are many who say that life wasn't meant to be easy. Unfortunately, this appears to apply all too much to the vegetable industry and the continual challenges we face. Taking labour as an example, we've had a number of factors which make this situation more and more difficult. This starts with the latest increase to the minimum wage of 3%, which will flow to those operating under the Horticulture Award from July 1. When labour is a grower's single largest cost, even an increase of 3%, which may seem modest, is anything but insignificant.

Those making the decisions about the price of labour seem to forget that vegetable growers are price takers rather than price makers when it comes to the sale of resulting produce and we simply can't pass on these additional labour costs to the supply chain as labour itself

can by law. No wonder there are some vegetable growers who look enviously at the regulated WA ware potato industry.

Labour availability and costs have also come into focus recently and growers should be certain they are doing all that is required by law to ensure the bona fides of their staff. vegetablesWA will continue advocating to the government about the policy changes required by our industry to keep us viable.

In the more immediate term, growers should also look into existing labour pools, including the Seasonal Labour Scheme, labour hire companies, refugees and the unemployed through job search agencies (<http://jobsearch.gov.au/provider/default.aspx>). Please contact me or our Field Extension Officers if you would like further information on these options.

vegetablesWA is also part of and assisting a working group of growers from across the vegetable, fruit and strawberry industries to seek solutions to labour problems, largely through investigating the options above. I will keep vegetable growers updated through the vegetablesWA e-news and the WA Grower.

I strongly encourage any growers who have an email address and don't already receive the fortnightly e-news to make contact with our office so we can add your details to the distribution list. In the modern world, there are often issues which arise that need to be considered more immediately than via a quarterly magazine. To update your email address, please contact Rebecca Blackman at [finance@vegetableswa.com.au](mailto:finance@vegetableswa.com.au) or on (08) 9481 0834.

Given the ever-increasing costs of our industry, growers should also give some real attention to the opportunities for reducing costs which they might not have considered properly before. This includes the use of things such as: solar panels through reputable companies; efficient irrigating through the Vegetable Irrigation Scheduling System; and simpler production methods such as getting your soil pH right. In addition to helping growers with these initiatives, vegetablesWA is also working on achieving other additional cost-saving measures for members.

Given that our domestic market is dominated by a small number of retailers, some

growers have begun thinking about the opportunities in export markets as a way of improving their sales prices and volumes, as well as spreading out their risks. Our Export Development Manager, Gavin Foord, would be pleased to help you, whether you've only just begun to wonder about what is possible or have already engaged in export markets – there is no harm in asking. Gavin can be contacted on (08) 9481 0834.

If there are other things you would like assistance with, please give me a call or speak to our Field Extension Officers. We're here to make your life easier among the continual challenges you face.

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## Victoria



The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA Vic) sincerely congratulates Silvio Favero who was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the recent AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence in Cairns. The award was well-deserved and recognises his past and present involvement in the

vegetable industry. Silvio is a past President and Lifetime Member of VGA Vic and served for many years on the AUSVEG Board.

There are many Silvio's out there in our industry and it is a shame that they are not all recognised for their achievements. As an industry, growers just seem to get on with it and don't expect any praise for what they do. In saying that, it is pleasing to see that at least the industry acknowledges their hard work and dedication.

Our congratulations go to all of the award winners. There were many nominations for each category, which indicates that as an industry we have a lot of good people doing a lot of

good work and the future is not all doom and gloom, especially when there are so many young people being nominated and recognised for their efforts.

Congratulations to the AUSVEG team who have once again put together a great and well-attended Convention.

VGA Vic would also like to thank Tony Imeson for the work he has done over the past 12 years for the Association. Tony has decided to call it a day and is enjoying a well-deserved break in Europe. On behalf of Victorian growers, we wish Tony and Maureen a happy retirement.

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## New South Wales



The industry is facing a large transformation with the release of the Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) review in May. Many growers have expressed support for the recommendations of a grower-owned corporation with hopes of providing greater transparency and division of resources to more projects. Members have expressed that they do support a grower-owned HAL, but have concerns over the lack of levy payer information, the power allocation of proxy voting, smaller industries not being heard and the need for all of

industry to make this change successful. NSW Farmers will continue to consult with their members to form a firm view on the recommendations.

NSW Farmers will also be joining the discussion, started by AUSVEG, of implementing a GST for fresh produce. NSW Farmers is still in discussion with their members about where they stand on the issue but preliminary talks have brought up concern for the need for transparency, the issue of cash flow around the implementation of GST and the potential impact on supply and demand.

With the winter months kicking into gear, farmers have been looking for new methods to control Queensland Fruit Fly around NSW before next summer. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has restricted the use of Fenthion to post-harvest use in certain crops only; alternative control options are desperately needed. NSW Farmers have

been in discussions with consultants over a new chemical, Alpha-cypermethrin, which is less harmful to the environment and effective in other countries for controlling fruit flies. Permit applications have been submitted for stone fruit and persimmons.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has also been looking to set up a trial for Areas of Low Pest Prevalence consistent with International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 30. This program will allow individual growers to accredit their properties as low areas of fruit fly through the use of phytosanitary measures. The proposed trial farms are located in the Griffith region, where they will use the winter months when fruit fly numbers drop off as a phytosanitary measure. DPI aims to gain access in the domestic market before using this standard for the export market. NSW Farmers believes that these measures will be part

of a useful multi-pronged solution to be used in conjunction with recently formed Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) programs.

Farmers in the Sydney Basin have also been keeping an eye out for any incursions of red spider mite (*Tetranychus evansi*) since its detection late last year. The mite is particularly damaging to the Solanaceae family which includes tomatoes, eggplant and potatoes. The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) has been working to contain the mite and the APVMA has already issued permits for the use of Acramite on snow peas and sugar snap peas with the CCEPP working to get more crops registered.

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## Tasmania



While the first months of the new State Government has highlighted proposed changes to Bass Strait shipping for both the public and private sectors, we still have fundamental inefficiencies in our domestic shipping regime around the Australian coastline.

Governments have found coastal shipping reform particularly difficult because there are many vested interests at work. TFGA recently made a submission to another review of coastal shipping regulations, which you can read on our website: [www.tfga.com.au](http://www.tfga.com.au).

The Coastal Trading Act 2012 was supposed to revitalise Australian shipping, but there

is no evidence that this has happened. In fact, shipping goods by sea has become more expensive as the Australian coastal trade is all but closed to foreign ships.

Australian shipping operates under a system of registration, licences and permits along its coast. Under our industrial legislation, Australian workers employed on Australian owned/operated/registered vessels working in Australian waters have always been covered by Australian legislation. However, foreign seafarers have generally been exempt from Australian domestic legislation.

This changed in 2010, where amendments to the regulations of the Fair Work Act 2009 meant that foreign vessels operating on the Australian coast continuously or on many occasions, in a relatively short period of time, were covered by Australian industrial law and were obliged to provide Australian minimum wages and conditions for the duration of that vessel's journey in Australia.

In other words, most foreign

flagged ships operating in Australian waters must comply with Australian work conditions and wages. This is called "cabotage", which is a pseudonym for protectionism. It reduces competition and increases costs – and this is most evident in Tasmania.

Under the Australian International Shipping Register Act 2012 (AISR), all registered ships must have a collective agreement with maritime unions. This means collective bargaining is compulsory, so the unions hold the whip hand in registering ships that can work the coastal routes around Australia.

Foreign ships wishing to work on the Australian coastal trade must comply with Australian workplace laws, thereby increasing costs. This has deterred foreign ships from seeking to provide services around the Australian coast.

The Tasmanian economy bears the costs of a modern service economy but struggles to generate the growth and economies of scale to absorb

these costs. Achieving this outcome is unlikely without an increase in economic activity.

There must be a true equalisation of freight costs for Tasmanian shippers with their mainland counterparts who move freight by road or rail.

Just as fundamental to our future is a clear acceptance from other governments – state and federal – that Tasmania's geographical location should not put us at an economic disadvantage. We are all part of a federation.

This is even more imperative considering that, barring a miracle, moving freight from Tasmania via more traditional land-based routes to major markets can never be a realistic option.

### Jan Davis

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