

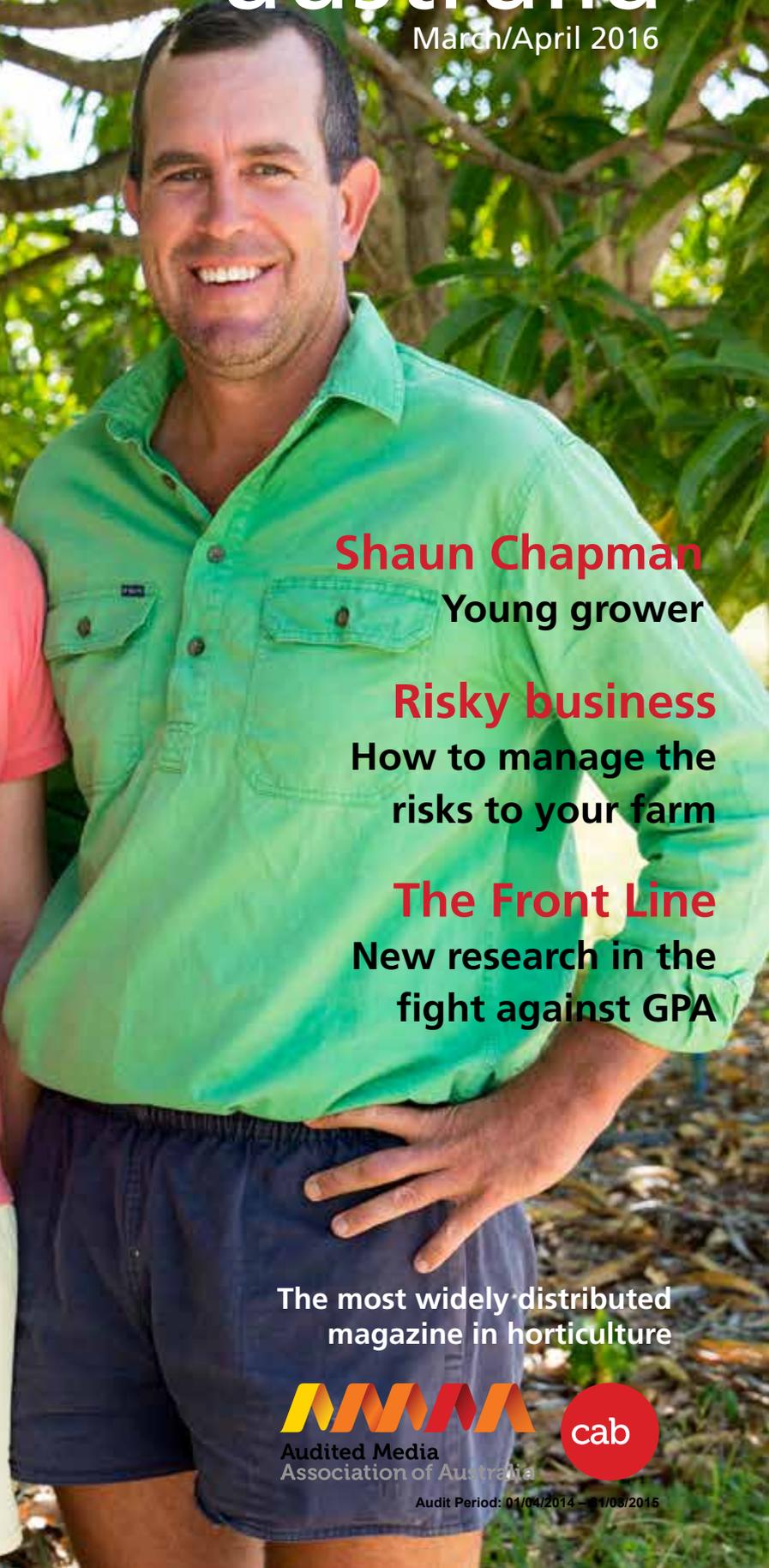
# vegetables

australia

March/April 2016



**Paul and  
Amanda Lowis**  
New players in the  
veg industry



**Shaun Chapman**  
Young grower

**Risky business**  
How to manage the  
risks to your farm

**The Front Line**  
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## AUSVEG Chairman and CEO messages



**Geoff Moar**  
AUSVEG Chairman

As we draw closer to the 2016 National Horticulture Convention, I am delighted to welcome Growcom and Persimmons Australia Inc. as co-hosts of the event. These two organisations will join with AUSVEG, Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) and the Central Markets Association of Australia in partnership with Fresh Markets Australia (CMAA-FMA) to ensure that the 2016 Convention will be the most successful event in the history of Australian horticulture.

With the 2016 Convention returning to the Gold Coast, it is particularly fitting that Growcom, the state's horticultural representative, is joining as a co-host. This is certain to benefit growers not only in Queensland but from all over the country.

In addition, the participation of Persimmons Australia provides an excellent opportunity for persimmon growers to become involved in the Convention and highlights the exciting possibilities for all growers to network with a wide variety of individuals and businesses. The 2016 Convention continues to grow each month, and by collaborating with these respected organisations, we are ensuring the most successful event possible for a united horticulture industry.

The National Horticulture Convention is fast becoming an event that is truly inclusive of Australia's entire horticulture industry. AUSVEG, along with our co-hosts, will continue to work with other industry groups to explore the possibility of bringing more organisations on board to host the event.

In other news, the vegetable industry is constantly investing in ground-breaking research to ensure it remains at the

forefront of global horticultural innovation. Research is commissioned into a wide variety of fields such as consumer behaviour, with Project Harvest research regularly providing detailed insights into the choices consumers make when buying their vegetables. Researchers in Australia and around the world are also discovering more and more benefits of incorporating vegetables into diets, especially for children.

Ongoing research in this field will give growers sufficient knowledge to continue providing consumers with a wide range of clean, green and safe vegetables in suitable formats and quantities. There are many opportunities for growers to offer a variety of convenient options for consumers on the go, giving them easy access to the vital nutrients that vegetables contain.

I hope that these research findings can help growers to capitalise on current consumer trends and increase the demand for Australian vegetables throughout the year. I encourage growers to make the most of the ever-evolving opportunities that are available to interpret this research and look for new ways to ensure your produce sufficiently meets the needs of Australian consumers.

Geoff Moar  
Chairman  
AUSVEG



**Richard Mulcahy**  
AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer

It is my pleasure to report that a group of leading Australian vegetable growers attended the recent Foodex trade show in Japan with great success. Japan is among the largest markets for Australian vegetable exports and it is important that the industry maintains its efforts to develop this valuable export market.

Australian growers exhibited a wide range of fresh vegetable products at the event and Japanese buyers were impressed by the variety, quality and clean, green nature of the Australian produce on display. Growers who participated in this exhibition established many valuable business contacts and were able to explore new business opportunities in this lucrative export market.

While the Asian market is a key export destination for Australian vegetable growers, it is clear that local produce is in high demand across the world. A recent example of Australian export success was displayed by a Victorian grower who secured a deal to supply organic beetroot to Dubai. This business deal was initiated during a levy-funded export mission to the World of Perishables trade show in Dubai last year, where Australian vegetable growers showcased their high quality produce to Middle Eastern and Asian buyers.

This unique business opportunity highlights the importance of grower participation at events such as the World of Perishables and Foodex Japan, as these trade shows allow growers who are exporting or looking to begin exporting to build vital networks with importers. I encourage all growers to consider attending

future events to ensure that you don't miss out on developing new opportunities for your business.

In other promising news, the results of the latest Economic Confidence Survey, conducted by AUSVEG, have been released, showing that grower confidence has increased by 19 per cent during the December 2015 quarter. The survey comprises questions relating to how confident growers feel about key economic indicators, including macroeconomics, investment, the market and government policy.

The current economic climate is clearly allowing growers to feel more optimistic about their future. This is driven by heightened grower confidence in government policy and investment, with confidence levels increasing by 35.5 per cent and 28.8 per cent in these two categories respectively. Grower confidence in all other indicators has also increased, while the overall confidence index has risen by over 124 per cent since the initial survey period was conducted in early 2015.

This is a very encouraging sign for the industry, as growers may feel confident enough to begin investing more in their businesses. This could create jobs and strengthen not only the Australian vegetable industry, but also the national economy. I hope that growers will use this new confidence to take their business to the next level and perhaps explore new export opportunities.

Richard J Mulcahy  
Chief Executive Officer  
AUSVEG

**AUSVEG Chairman**

Geoff Moar

**AUSVEG CEO**

Richard J Mulcahy

**Communications Manager**

Shaun Lindhe

shaun.lindhe@ausveg.com.au

**Senior Communications Officer/Editor**

Dimi Kyriakou

dimi.kyriakou@ausveg.com.au

**Writer/Journalist**

Stephanie Eaves

stephanie.eaves@ausveg.com.au

**Graphic Design**

Julia Chapman

julia.chapman@ausveg.com.au

**Editorial Enquiries**

AUSVEG

Ph: (03) 9882 0277

Fax: (03) 9882 6722

info@ausveg.com.au

**Advertising**

Marc W. Wilson

Gypsy Media

Ph: (03) 9580 4997

Fax: (03) 9523 2270

M: 0419 107 143

marc@gypsymedia.com.au

**Print**

RA Printing

**Contributor**

Camilla Thomas

Stefania Bostock



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**FRONT COVER:**

Paul and Amanda Lewis

Photograph by Rina Totorica

This edition of *Vegetables Australia* is packed with the latest industry issues, new R&D and expert advice.

Our feature story focuses on the controversial topic of foreign investment in Australian agriculture. We take a closer look at the recent changes to the Foreign Investment Review process and talk to several parties to gain an understanding of the complexities of the debate (page 12).

On page 16 we chat to young grower Shaun Chapman from Gumlu, Queensland, who believes that new technologies must be embraced to encourage young people to enter the industry and ensure it can continue to grow.

Paul and Amanda Lewis, also from Gumlu, Queensland, are the subjects of our Grower profile on page 26. This hard-working couple joined the

industry just three years ago, and despite facing several challenges during this time, including the threat of the destructive Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus, they are very happy in their career choice.

In a topic of importance to all growers, we examine the economic landscape of the horticulture industry, including the opportunities and risks that could impact the financial performance of your business (page 22). AUSVEG Economist Andrew Kruup also explains how growers can manage the risks to their farms and ultimately their profitability on page 40.

As always, we have also uncovered the latest R&D findings in the vegetable industry. Our story on page 14 will be of interest to growers who are preparing for the cold winter



months ahead, as we examine the results of a recent study that has trialled commercial frost cloths to protect vegetable crops against low temperatures, with promising results.

The article on page 24 also describes the findings from a research project conducted by Horizon Consumer Science

about the potential for new meal occasions to increase overall vegetable consumption in Australian households.

In this edition of *The Front Line*, our biosecurity experts talk to Dr Siobhan de Little from scientific consulting company Cesar Pty Ltd. The company is undertaking research into the troubling issue of insecticide resistance in Green peach aphid and she discusses the development of a resistance management strategy (page 32).

We also report on the recent European Industry Leadership and Development Mission, which gave nine Australian vegetable growers the opportunity to attend Berlin Fruit Logistica, the world's leading international meeting place for the fresh produce trade. The group was also treated to a tour of Bayer's Global Headquarters during the mission (page 28).



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# Veggie bites

Facts & figures...

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Australia

## \$3.8 billion

The vegetable industry is the fourth highest value agricultural industry in Australia, worth around \$3.8 billion at the farm gate. Source: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences Vegetable Farm Survey 2014-15.

## 62.71 kg

The record for the world's heaviest cabbage weighs in at 62.71kg, according to the Guinness World Records. It was presented at the Alaska State Fair by Scott A. Robb in August 2012.

## 2.3 serves

The Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that Australian men eat an average of 2.3 serves of vegetables a day, compared to their recommended intake of 5-6 or more serves per day. Australian women eat an average of 2.5 serves a day, which is well below their recommended intake of five or more.

## 34%

About 34 per cent of Australians want to boost their vegetable intake, according to a national survey commissioned by the Dieticians Association of Australia.

## 54%

Project Harvest Wave 30 research found that 54 per cent of consumers purchase sweet corn in pre-packaged small trays.

## 5.5%

Australian vegetable exports grew by over 5.5 per cent during the financial year 2013-14 to 2014-15, according to the Global Trade Atlas.

## 600g

On average, consumers purchase 600g of kale, according to Project Harvest Wave 30 research.

## 53%

Shoppers are most willing to pay more for Australian grown vegetables during their typical fresh vegetable shop, with 53 per cent of respondents signalling this preference, as shown in Colmar Brunton's Ad Hoc Compilation report.

# Growcom and Persimmons Australia join 2016 National Horticulture Convention

THE 2016 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION CONTINUES TO GAIN MOMENTUM WITH THE EXCITING NEWS THAT GROWCOM AND PERSIMMONS AUSTRALIA INC. HAVE JOINED AS CO-HOSTS FOR WHAT IS PROMISING TO BE THE BIGGEST EVENT IN AUSTRALIAN HORTICULTURE.

AUSVEG, Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) and the Central Markets Association of Australia, in partnership with Fresh Markets Australia (CMAA-FMA), are pleased to welcome Growcom and Persimmons Australia Inc. as hosts for the 2016 National Horticulture Convention.

The addition of two of Australian horticulture's heaviest hitters is expected to result in a record number of attendees at this year's Convention, who will travel to RACV Royal Pines on the Gold Coast to discuss the leading issues in Australian horticulture and take part in an array of social and networking opportunities from 23-25 June.

## Explore a bigger Trade Show

In 2016, an expanded Trade Show will run across the three days of the Convention, showcasing the latest technologies, products and services to the industry. The demand for booth spaces has been unprecedented, with companies across the supply chain keen to promote their businesses at the Trade Show.

By bringing together such a wide array of diverse exhibitors, the Trade Show is sure to benefit all members of the Australian horticulture industry, and is a great opportunity for

those exhibiting to show off their products and services to a huge number of industry leaders.

The opening of the Trade Show will coincide with the Welcome Reception on Thursday 23 June, which will allow delegates to ease into the event and mingle with Australia's premier agricultural supply chain companies.

## Stay informed

With the program for the National Horticulture Convention now well underway, delegates can expect to receive important industry information from a range of leading international and domestic speakers during the event. The speakers will present on a range of topics which will be of interest and benefit to many delegates, in an effort to create a stronger and more unified horticulture industry.

The program also includes a range of social events, including the highly popular Friday Theme Night, Women in Horticulture event and Young Grower activity. These events have been very successful in previous years as they have helped delegates to come together for fun-filled networking opportunities.

## Celebrating success

The National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner will serve as a fitting finale for the Convention, allowing delegates to reflect on and celebrate the past year.

Renowned as the night of nights in the Australian horticulture industry, it is an opportunity for growers and industry representatives alike to acknowledge the amazing achievements of those who have made significant contributions to the industry. With a range of prestigious awards on offer, nominations are now open to highlight those striving to make the Australian horticulture industry the best that it can be.



Delegate registrations for the 2016 National Horticulture Convention are now open. To register online, please visit <http://registration.hortconv.com.au> or download the registration brochure at [www.hortconv.com.au](http://www.hortconv.com.au).

For further details about the 2016 National Horticulture Convention, or to submit a nomination for the National Awards for Excellence, please contact AUSVEG on (03) 9882 0277 or email [convention@ausveg.com.au](mailto:convention@ausveg.com.au).

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## The National Vegetable Levy at work

THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE LEVY SYSTEM IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO THE HEALTH OF THE INDUSTRY, PROVIDING VEGETABLE GROWERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH THE LATEST RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS THAT AIM TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY.



The levy system is integral to funding important research and development (R&D) projects that aim to help growers improve their productivity and increase their ability to make a profit. While you're out working on the farm, your levies are also hard at work, investing in R&D projects that will ultimately benefit you and your business operation.

The vegetable levy system was developed at the request of the vegetable industry to ensure the vegetable growing community would continue to evolve into the future. Over the years, the system has made investments in a wide range of projects, ranging from pest management studies and automated farm robotics to insightful consumer research. The transition of Horticulture

Innovation Australia Limited (Hort Innovation) to a grower-owned Research and Development Corporation has resulted in some changes to the way levies are invested.

### Paying the levy

The National Vegetable Levy is paid by growers who produce vegetables in Australia. The charge is set at half of one per cent at the first point of sale.

The Federal Government also provides funding in addition to grower levy payments. Once paid, these funds are managed by Hort Innovation, which seeks grower and industry advice to allocate the funds to the most valuable R&D projects.

### Two pools of funds

The biggest change to how R&D is funded through Hort Innovation is that there are now two pools with different funding priorities.

Pool 1 is funded by grower levies with contributions from the Federal Government. This pool has a one to five year scope and will invest in applied R&D, designed to directly benefit growers. Projects funded by Pool 1 encompass biosecurity matters, growing techniques, weeds, pest and disease management approaches and more, with the findings





programs that build leadership and develop people at all stages of their career.

- The **Fruit Fly Fund** is committed to a strategic, coordinated and national approach to the management of the Queensland fruit fly and Mediterranean fruit fly.

- The **Asian Markets Fund** will help build a globally competitive, unified, agile and profitable Australian horticulture industry through sustainable investment in high value and high growth Asian markets.

- The **Green Cities Fund** will drive investment in strategic longer-term research that drives a measurable increase in urban green space.

- The **Health, Nutrition and Food Safety Fund** will help deliver safe, nutritious and healthy Australian horticultural products to consumers by developing innovative products, technologies and processes.

Another six to eight funds are yet to be determined by Hort Innovation. Each fund will work with an expert panel to identify projects that are suitable for funding within their scope.

communicated to growers through a variety of channels, including publications such as *Vegetables Australia*.

Pool 2 matches strategic co-investment funds with at least \$20 million, at the Pool's maturity, of government seed funds annually to address multi- and cross-industry challenges and opportunities of strategic and long-term importance to Australia's horticulture industries.

Hort Innovation will secure co-investments from external sources, including Federal and State Government, industry bodies, academic bodies, international bodies and commercial organisations. Industry levies may also be invested in Pool 2 funds, but only if this is in accordance with grower wishes and would be of benefit to the specific industry.

Pool 2 has a one to 15 year scope for investment return and will invest in larger, long-term strategic projects across multiple industries within horticulture. Five 'Foundation Funds' have so far been established to direct these strategic projects. These are:

- The **Leadership and People Development Fund** will help build a globally competitive, innovative, resilient and profitable horticulture industry through investment in

### Grower consultation

Growers and Industry Representative Bodies (IRBs) are fundamental in advising on the allocation of both levy and co-investment funds. Although Hort Innovation is still in the process of creating a new strategy for obtaining advice, a workable advisory framework is being used that ensures growers are the primary source of advice.

When it comes to general matters, growers and industry stakeholders will be engaged in extensive consultation with Hort Innovation in a three-stage process, which includes regional grower meetings, industry specific consultation programs and individual grower and grower group consultation.

In addition, growers can submit ideas for R&D to Hort Innovation via its website at any time of the year via the Concept Portal at [www.horticulture.com.au/concept-proposal-form](http://www.horticulture.com.au/concept-proposal-form).



For more information, visit [www.auveg.com.au/rnd/thelevysystem/vegetablelevy.htm](http://www.auveg.com.au/rnd/thelevysystem/vegetablelevy.htm).

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## Foreign investment in Australian ag: The debate continues

THE DECISION OF WHETHER TO SELL AN AUSTRALIAN FARMING OPERATION TO A LOCAL BIDDER OR A FOREIGN INVESTOR HAS SPARKED HEATED DEBATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW PROCESS, STEPHANIE EAVES TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RAMIFICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE.



Australians, whether they are country or city dwellers, tend to have a deep respect for the land. In particular, Australian farm land is representative of the 'golden soil' that is celebrated in our national anthem.

Given this, it is no surprise that the sale of agricultural land to foreign buyers is a sensitive topic, particularly when the land in question has been passed down through several generations.

Much has been made of this issue in recent months, with high profile cases attracting a range of opinions. Some are concerned that recent changes to the Foreign Investment Review Board's (FIRB) framework will deter foreign investors, while others believe that Australian land should be kept under Australian control.

### Providing opportunities

Ben Waters, FTI Consulting Senior Managing Director and Head of Agribusiness, Corporate Finance and Restructuring, assists both domestic and foreign parties to invest in agriculture across the supply chain, as well as providing advice to those wishing to sell agricultural assets. He believes that foreign investment is necessary and should not cause concern.

"In a broad sense, Australian agriculture certainly needs a significant level of investment over the next three to five years for it to capitalise on the opportunities that are available, which relate significantly to the ability to export high quality produce into global markets," Mr Waters said.



“Therefore, the opportunity is not only to invest in farms to improve and increase agricultural output, but to invest in the supply chain to ensure produce is moved as quickly and as efficiently as possible to our key clients.

“What we need is capital, and until we’re in a position to provide that capital internally, then we are going to be very much reliant on foreign capital, and I don’t think we should be overly concerned about that.”

Mr Waters explained that foreign investment has always been a key component of the development of Australian agriculture. This was reiterated by a Treasury spokesperson.

“Foreign investment ... can contribute to the prosperity of business, communities and the Australian economy. Without foreign investment, production, employment and income would all be lower,” the spokesperson said.

## A change in review

Recent changes have allowed the FIRB to review the sale of farm land for over \$15 million to foreign buyers, and assess all agribusiness sales above \$53 million. These thresholds have been lowered considerably, giving the FIRB more control over foreign investments.

Mr Waters believes that the changes will give the public a greater level of comfort around the issue.

“I think a lot of the changes have been developed to deal with the public perception that Australia is potentially selling too many assets to overseas parties,” he said.

“They’re sending a pretty clear signal to the market that

the Australian Government is focused on who is buying Australian land, and what the purpose of the acquisition is.”

A Treasury spokesperson explained the reasoning behind the changes.

“The foreign investment review framework is designed to strike a balance between ensuring that Australia remains an attractive investment destination, while maintaining community confidence in foreign investment and protecting Australia’s interests.”

## National interest at heart

The review process aims to ensure that foreign investments do not cause any harm to Australia, with the Treasurer able to block or impose conditions on foreign investment proposals that are found to be contrary to Australia’s national interest.

“You certainly don’t want any foreign investment to give a perverse outcome,” Mr Waters said.

“This includes significant foreign control of a particular commodity, land type or particular key assets in the supply chain, without there being a thorough process to make sure that Australian producers are protected to the extent they should be.”

While the criteria for assessing ‘national interest’ has not been made public, a Treasury spokesperson said that the government considers a range of factors including “national security, competition, taxation, impact on the economy and the community and the character of the investor”.



## Potential to deter

There has been some concern, however, that the changes to the review process may deter foreign investors due to increased application fees, longer waiting periods and a close inspection of the foreign business.

“I think there are some potentially unintended consequences,” Mr Waters said.

“For instance, at an auction, if the agricultural land is more than \$15 million, then foreign bidders can’t participate because they can’t put forward a bid capable of acceptance on the day. Any bid would be subject to FIRB approval.

“It has also added a layer of bureaucracy and administration, and with that has come the application fees. Those fees are not inconsequential.”

Overall, though, Mr Waters is not concerned.

“I don’t think it will deter people, as long as the processing by FIRB and the messaging that comes back from them is clear and consistent.”

## Domestic preference

Despite the changes to the review process, Independent Senator Nick Xenophon has proposed that foreign investment laws should be changed so that local bids are considered before a foreign bid can be approved.

Recently, a local bid was put forward for Van Diemen’s Land Company, but was beaten by Chinese company Moon Lake Investments.

“It would be a monumental act of folly to approve this bid when there is an Australian-

based bid to consider,” Mr Xenophon said at the time.

“Even if the bid is marginally under the overseas bid, there could be clear benefits in terms of local jobs and local taxes being paid.”

Mr Waters disagrees with this view, saying that it would be detrimental to the Australian economy and to farmers wanting to sell.

“We would be sending a very clear message to international buyers that Australia isn’t open for business, and that’s certainly not what we want to do,” he said.

“There are limits to the amount of capital that’s available to the industry. We need a lot more capital and limiting it to local capital resources would be detrimental to the industry and to our ability to make the most of the opportunities that are in front of us.”

## Maintaining farmers’ rights

While the issue of foreign investment in Australian agricultural land is likely to face continued debate, Mr Waters believes the farmer’s right to sell should be upheld.

“If you think about a farmer who has worked the farm for 10, 20 or 50 years, and it comes to the point where that person wants to retire, then they should be able to sell their farm to the highest bidder.”

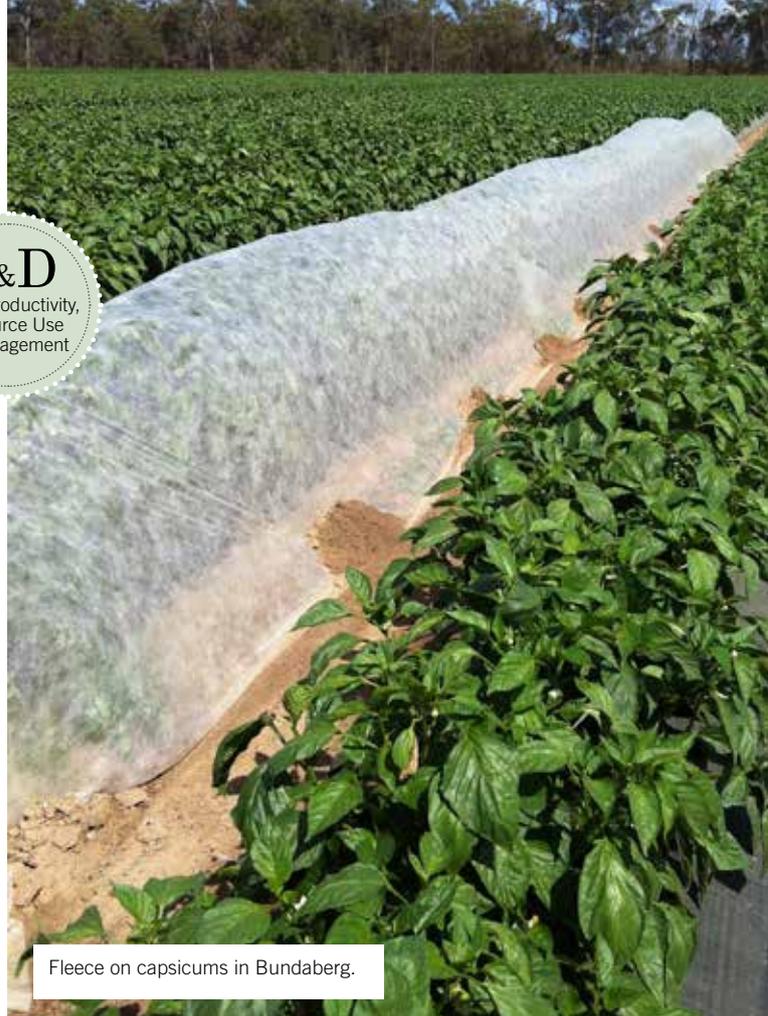


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## A touch of frost: Using 'fleece' for winter crop protection



AS WE APPROACH WINTER, THE ONSET OF LOW TEMPERATURES AND MORNING FROSTS CAN SEVERELY IMPACT THE GROWTH CYCLE OF VEGETABLE CROPS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA. DIMI KYRIAKOU REPORTS ON NEW RESEARCH FINDINGS THAT EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF USING COMMERCIAL FROST CLOTHS AS A WAY TO PROTECT CROPS.



Fleece on capsicums in Bundaberg.



Fleece trial in Camden, NSW.

Waking up to a blanket of frost in the middle of winter may seem like a picturesque scenario to some, but for a vegetable grower, it can be their worst nightmare.

Frost, which forms as white ice crystals or frozen dew drops, is most likely to appear on calm, clear nights with low humidity. As many growers have discovered, this seemingly harmless depository has the potential to completely destroy a vegetable crop.

Given this risk, different methods to protect vegetable crops against frost were recently trialled in VG13075 *An investigation of low cost protected cropping*. Project Leader Dr Jenny Ekman from Applied Horticultural Research said that frost was a “severe issue” for the Australian vegetable industry, particularly for growers located in the southern and inland areas of the country.

“Even if crops recover from a frost event, growth can be severely affected and quality reduced. Low temperatures reduce germination and greatly slow growth of winter-grown vegetable crops, reducing productivity and yield and extending the time to harvest,” she said.

“Leafy greens are by far the most susceptible to frost and/

or cold temperature damage. In contrast, products like cabbages and broccoli are quite frost tolerant.”

### Low cost solutions

According to Dr Ekman, the project aimed to investigate ways for vegetable growers to protect crops against extreme weather events without using full protective structures, which are expensive as well as impractical for many crops.

“Extreme weather events are happening more frequently, so low cost protected cropping systems can provide a way for growers to adapt to a more variable climate,” she said.

“The main method used to protect crops is simply not to plant during cold periods of the year. Growers generally do not plant susceptible crops if they think there is a risk of frost, or at least delay in planting.

“Frost protection materials may help growers fill gaps in the market at times when prices for cold-sensitive crops are relatively high.”

The research was conducted over the last 12 months at commercial vegetable growing operations in Werribee and East Gippsland in Victoria, Sydney in New South Wales and Bundaberg in Queensland.

“Obviously Bundaberg does

not have frosts! However in this case, we were investigating whether the frost protection materials could help capsicum crops grow during the winter 'shoulder' period, in order to produce harvestable fruit by spring," Dr Ekman said.

### Fleece protection

The trials used commercial frost cloths called 'fleece', which are made of spun bonded polypropylene. As the material does not have holes, the fleece presents a continuous barrier to air movement and acts like a blanket, trapping warmth radiating from the soil, increasing humidity and deflecting sinking columns of cold air.

As the material can protect young plants from wind and dehydration, it can help them to establish more quickly. This, in turn, can increase plant growth rates, especially during colder months.

### Promising results

During the trials, the fleece was installed early in the cropping cycle and typically removed just before harvest. Dr Ekman said the results showed dramatic effects of using fleece on baby leaf crops, particularly when growing conditions were adverse.

"The main results showed that the colder the weather, the greater the benefits of

frost cloth. For example, it successfully prevented frost settling on a baby leaf crop," she explained.

"Frost cloth also increased germination, protected plants from wind damage, reduced insect contaminants and brought on harvest earlier. They could be particularly useful to Integrated Pest Management and organic producers, as they offer chemical-free protection from insects."

In some good news for growers, these materials are becoming more affordable and mechanised systems (as already used in Europe) can make it possible to apply fleece commercially.

"The frost cloths work best on low-growing, leafy crops when the weather is cold. The results from this project can certainly help growers produce out of season, bring in a crop earlier, or perhaps just act as 'insurance' against cold weather events."



For more information, visit the AHR website at [www.ahr.com.au](http://www.ahr.com.au) or contact Dr Jenny Ekman on 0407 384 285 or [jenny.ekman@ahr.com.au](mailto:jenny.ekman@ahr.com.au).

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

Project Number: VG13075

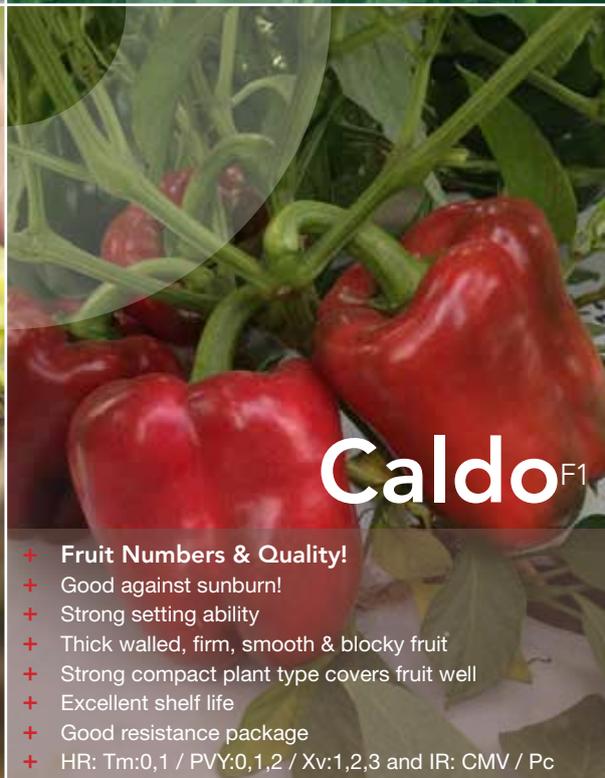


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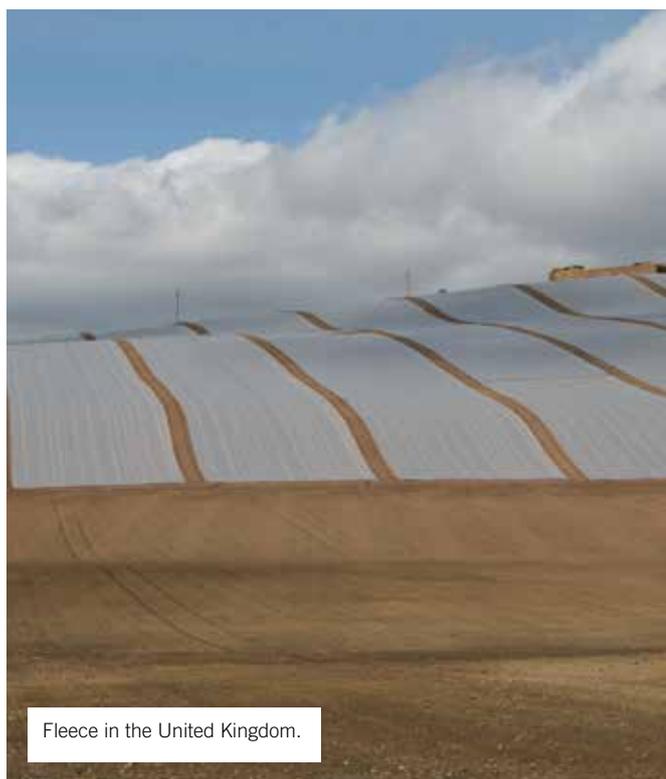
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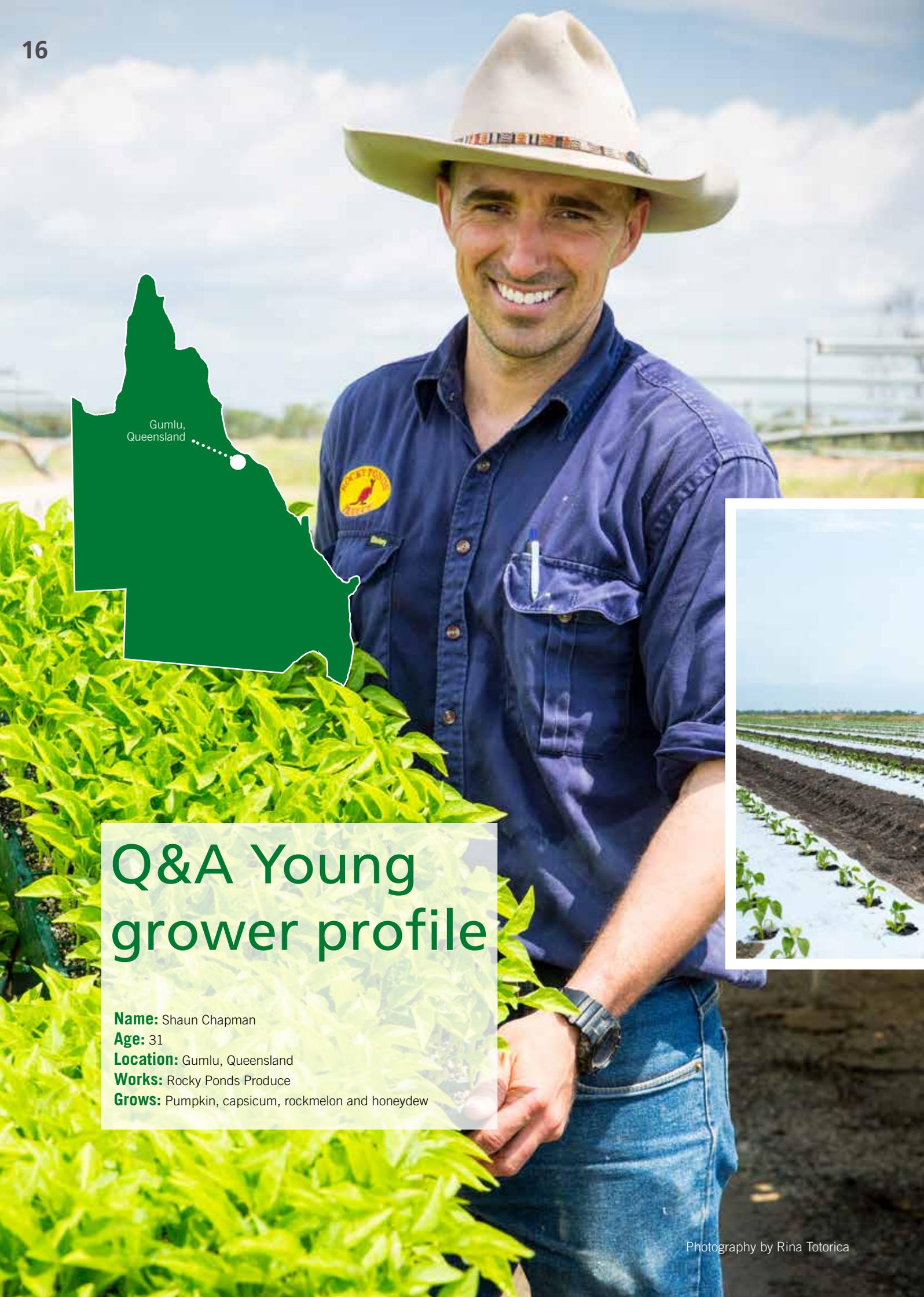
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Fleece in the United Kingdom.

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Gumlu,  
Queensland



## Q&A Young grower profile

**Name:** Shaun Chapman

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Gumlu, Queensland

**Works:** Rocky Ponds Produce

**Grows:** Pumpkin, capsicum, rockmelon and honeydew

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

I grew up on our family farm, Rocky Ponds Produce, so it has always been something I have been involved with in some way or another.

## What is your role in the business?

Operations Manager and Electrician.

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

Every day is different on the farm so you never really know what will happen. However, generally I start my day checking that the electrical equipment is

operational and that there are no issues on the processing side.

My brother and I will then make a plan to keep in front of the field works and that involves jumping on a tractor and doing ground work. There is always a curve ball thrown in somewhere in the way of a break down or electrical equipment maintenance. I also help out with any issues other staff or the business may have.

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

The diversity of the job and the fact that every day brings a new challenge. I also deal and work with a broad range of people and this can be both challenging and enjoyable.



## What are the biggest challenges you face in the industry?

There are so many factors to the farming industry but some of the more challenging ones are the changing weather conditions, keeping up with the latest technology and more recently keeping the farm's biosecurity in check due to disease outbreaks in other districts.

## Where do you see opportunities for growth in the Australian vegetable industry?

Technology has to be one of the fastest growing aspects and I believe this will be a huge growth sector in the industry.

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

Again, the technology side of farming is a perfect way for younger people to enter this industry. Some of the older generation are intimidated by these changes but if they are not made they could be left behind. This leaves a massive opening for young people to enter this business.

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

I've always had the dream of owning my own bar so I guess I would be doing that.

## Where do you see yourself in five years?

I enjoy the marketing aspects of the business so something involving that. I would also like to incorporate my own business aspirations with the farm as I can see many opportunities having access to such fresh produce and supply chains.



# Mighty tough on chewing pests

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with Scott Mathew

## IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT THE PRODUCTS YOU ARE USING ON YOUR CROPS ARE ALL COMPATIBLE. SYNGENTA TECHNICAL SERVICES LEAD SCOTT MATHEW EXPLAINS HOW TO TEST FOR COMPATIBILITY USING A JAR TEST.

During the peak vegetable growing season, I often get inundated with enquiries requesting advice on the compatibility of various products with Syngenta products.

One of the most common questions I get asked is whether products W, X, Y and Z are compatible with each other. The issue with so many products being added to the tank is that when a company like Syngenta conducts compatibility testing, it generally tests the most common products likely to be used and only in tank mixes where two products are added (unless one of the products requires a particular adjuvant, then that too will be tested in the tank mix). When three or more products are added to the tank, it becomes hard to give an accurate answer on product compatibility.

Compatibility information can be found on some crop protection product labels, however some products are not likely to have this information on the label. The reason is that, as a company, Syngenta can control how it formulates its crop protection products but it cannot control how other companies

formulate their crop protection products. Even a minor change in formulation can change the compatibility of a product.

Therefore, it is always best to contact the relevant crop protection companies to ask if the products you are looking to use are compatible with each other. If you are unable to contact the company, you can conduct a simple jar test to test the compatibility of the products.

### How to conduct a jar test

**1.** In a clean glass jar with a tight, sealable lid, add approximately 25 per cent of the final volume of carrier. For example, if 1L of total solution is to be made up, add 250mL to the jar at this stage.

**NOTE:** Use the same source of water that will be used for the tank mix and conduct the test at the temperature at which the tank mix will be applied.

**2.** Add a compatibility agent if one is to be used (for example, ammonium sulfate). Shake or stir gently to mix.

**3.** Next, add the appropriate amount of pesticide(s) in their relative proportions based on

recommended label rates. If more than one pesticide is used, add them separately (following your tank mixing order guide). After each addition, shake or stir gently to thoroughly mix.

**4.** After the pesticides are mixed, add any adjuvants that are to be used in the final spray solution at their recommended label rates.

**5.** Fill the jar to the required final volume (for the example above, make up to 1L total volume).

**6.** Put the lid on and tighten. Invert the jar 10 times to mix. Let the mixture stand for 15 to 30 minutes and then look for separation, large flakes, precipitates, heat, gels, heavy oily film on the jar or other signs of incompatibility.

**7.** If the mixture separates, but can be remixed readily, the mixture should be able to be sprayed as long as good agitation is used.

**8.** If the mixtures are incompatible, test the following methods of improving compatibility:

**a.** Slurry the dry pesticide(s) in water before addition.

**b.** Add a compatibility agent if one was not used.

**c.** Add half the compatibility agent to the fertiliser or water and the other half to the emulsifiable concentrate or flowable pesticide before addition to the mixture. If incompatibility is still observed, do not use the mixture.

**9.** After compatibility testing is complete, dispose of any pesticide waste in accordance with the Storage and Disposal section on the label.

**NOTE:** This procedure will only test for physical incompatibility of various products. It is still possible for some mixtures to be chemically incompatible, i.e. efficacy or crop safety may be impacted despite no physical evidence of mixing problems.



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.

## Veggie Stats: Celery

TO ENABLE DEEPER INSIGHTS INTO THE PRODUCTION AND TRADE PERFORMANCE OF KEY AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE PRODUCTS, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A SERIES OF CROP-SPECIFIC VEGGIE STATS PROFILES. THE NEXT INSTALMENT OF THIS SERIES FOCUSES ON CELERY PRODUCTION.

The following Veggie Stats article has been developed specifically to give readers a detailed snapshot of the key facts and figures on celery. Veggie Stats utilises data from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) and the Global Trade Atlas, funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

It is important to note the data itself provides a broad indication of the

performance of celery growers and should be interpreted carefully. The data is presented at the national level and therefore does not account for differences among jurisdictions.

In addition to this, the information provided is not specific to every Australian grower since each enterprise operates differently from one another.

Please note that ABARES and the Australian Bureau of Statistics do not provide financial data or information on annual trends for this commodity.

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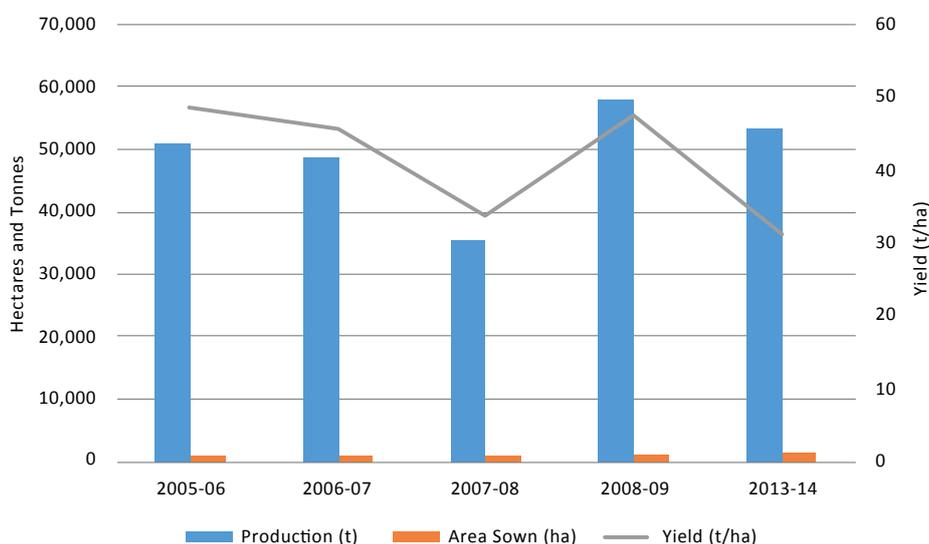
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# VEGGIE STATS: CELERY

## Celery Production – Key facts and figures

- Since 2008-09, celery production has decreased by 7.9 per cent. The gross value of celery production has also decreased by 5.7 per cent during the same period.
- The price for celery on the domestic market is on average 36.6 per cent lower than the Malaysian export market.
- Average yield decreased by 34.2 per cent in 2013-14.
- Celery is experiencing an expanding export market. Since 2011-12, fresh celery exports have increased by over \$1.66 million (172.2 per cent).
- Malaysia and Singapore are the two largest export markets for celery. Combined, they represent over 84.87 per cent of total celery exports.

## Farm Gate Statistics

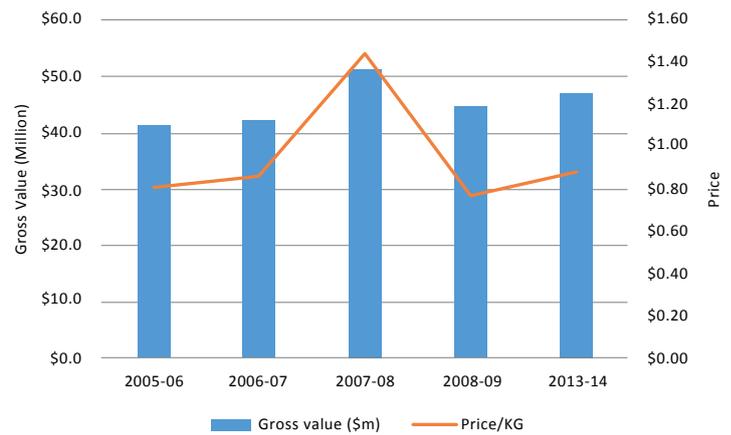


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics catalogue 7121.0 - Area, production and yield of agricultural commodities, various years.

- Between 2008-09 and 2013-14, production of celery has decreased from 57,804 to 53,261 tonnes (7.9 per cent).
- The area sown has increased from 1,210 to 1,695 hectares (40.1 per cent) from 2008-09 to 2013-14.
- Yield average has decreased from 47.8 to 31.42 tonnes per hectare (34.2 per cent) between 2008-09 to 2014-15.

## Gross Value of Production

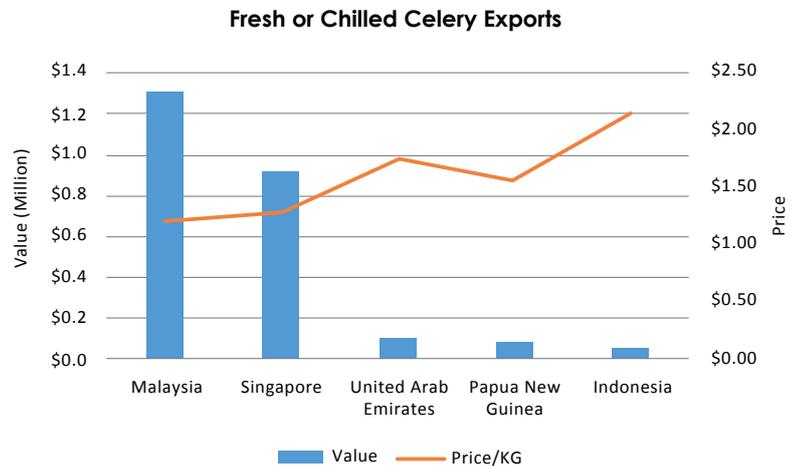
- Gross value of celery production has increased from \$44.65 million to \$49.19 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14. This could be due to the 14.7 per cent increase in the estimated value per kilo over the same period.
- The gross value of celery production reached a five-year high in 2007-08 when the industry was worth \$51.36 million.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics catalogue 7503.0 - Value of agricultural commodities, various years.

## Key Export Markets in 2014-15

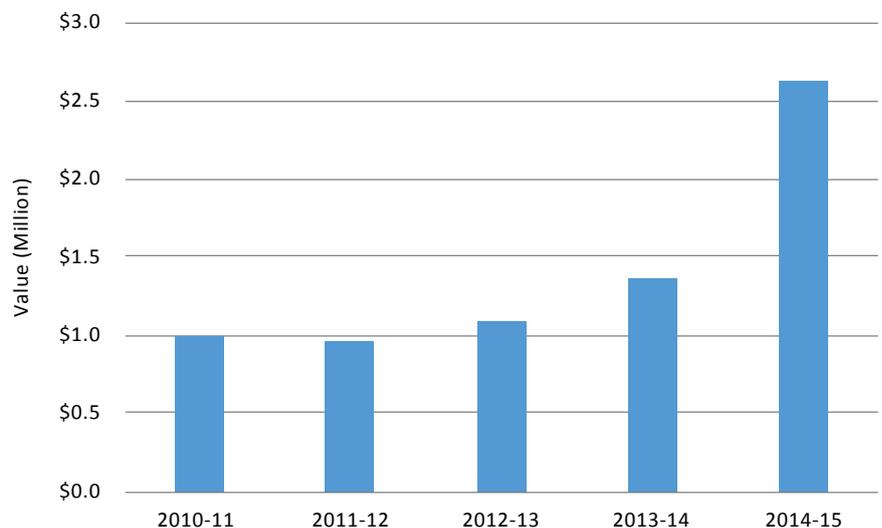
- Malaysia was Australia's largest celery export market in 2014-15, with a 49.48 per cent share of total celery exports. Australia's second largest celery export market was Singapore which held a 35.39 per cent share of total celery exports.
- The United Arab Emirates (4.17 per cent), Papua New Guinea (2.94 per cent) and Indonesia (2.96 per cent) all have export market shares of less than five per cent and export values less than \$110,000.
- Export prices are the lowest for Malaysia (\$1.21 per kilo) and the highest for Indonesia (\$2.15 per kilo). This is likely to be the reason why Malaysia is the largest export market of celery for Australia.



Source: Global Trade Information Service, sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics International Trade data, various years.

## Total Exports

- In 2014-15, celery exports were valued at over \$2,621,274 – an increase of over 92.4 per cent on the previous year's estimates.
- The export market for celery has been in an upward trend over the past three years, with an overall increase in value of 172.2 per cent since 2011-12.
- Celery exports have grown, on average, by 32.1 per cent each financial year since 2010-11.



Source: Global Trade Information Service, sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics International Trade data, various years.

# Analysing the economics of horticulture

R&D

Drive Train

WITH THE 2016 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION ONLY A FEW MONTHS AWAY, *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* TAKES A LOOK BACK AT TWO SPEAKER SESSIONS FROM LAST YEAR'S CONVENTION THAT EXAMINED THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY AND IDENTIFIED THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS THAT COULD IMPACT THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF A GROWER'S BUSINESS. CAMILLA THOMAS REPORTS.



Director of Independent Economics Chris Murphy.

Economics can often seem like another language to the layman.

But two experts in the field – Director of Independent Economics Chris Murphy and Director of consulting firm Equity Economics, James Bond – simplified the complex interrelationship between industry and economics during the 2015 National Horticulture Convention speaker sessions.

Mr Bond and Mr Murphy spoke about how potential changes to domestic and

international economies may affect the Australian horticulture industry.

## Seven scenarios

Recently, Mr Murphy was commissioned by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (Hort Innovation) to explore the effects of seven scenarios that would alter the Australian economy and the vegetable growing industry.

The scenarios were:

1. What would be the impact

if the GST was broadened to include basic food?

2. What is the impact on the industry of greater export access?

3. Given the health benefits of fresh vegetables, what would be the impact if the government introduced a subsidy of five per cent of local sales to consumers of levied fresh vegetables?

4. If the prices of vegetables were to fall by 10 per cent, how would that impact the local industry?

5. What would be the impacts

of a disease affecting levy vegetable growing?

6. If the government decided to withdraw the diesel fuel rebate that is currently available, what would be the impacts of that?

7. If there was extra government research and development funding, sufficient to boost productivity in levy vegetable growing by five per cent, what would the impacts be?

"These are all 'what ifs' but it will help the industry to be prepared if these changes do happen," Mr Murphy said.

## Possible impacts

While extending the GST to include basic foods would raise about \$5.4 billion in government revenue annually, Mr Murphy indicated that this would not necessarily result in an increase in profitability for the fresh food industry.

"The introduction of GST on basic foods would be a significant negative for the industry, with losses of about three to five per cent," he said.

"On the other hand, a five per cent government subsidy or a five per cent boost to productivity would lead to production gains of three



Director of Equity Economics James Bond.



to five per cent.

“Scenarios two, four and six would have milder effects with greater export market access a positive for the industry. Lower input prices would be a negative, as would the withdrawal of the diesel fuel rebate.”

### Regional impacts

When evaluating regional impacts of these scenarios, Mr Murphy said the regions of Australia where the strongest affects would be felt were

Latrobe/Gippsland in Victoria, Toowoomba in Queensland, the south east of South Australia, Bunbury in Western Australia and the north and northwest of Tasmania. He noted that these areas were commonly affected when something directly impacted the vegetable industry.

“In terms of leakage to other industries, when vegetable growing is affected, other industries tend to be affected in other ways, including vegetable retailing, wholesaling and trade and transport,” he said.

### Predicting the economy

Mr Bond, a former economic adviser to Kevin Rudd, addressed economic predictions rather than hypotheticals during his presentation to delegates.

He said his key message to industry and growers was that the biggest drivers of growth in consumption was population and income.

“In Australia, we are seeing a reverse of the two-speed economies – a term that was coined in 2011 in response to Queensland and Western Australia’s mining booms,” he said.

“There is now a boom in New South Wales and Victoria where people are feeling wealthier. As incomes are growing in Sydney, really high-end and niche fresh food products will be in demand.”

### Export impacts

Mr Bond said export market changes were also rapidly occurring overseas.

“Japan, which is a major

trading partner, has an economy that is slowing down – income levels are decreasing and the population is aging,” he said.

“The greatest potential export market for fresh food is now the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which have growing populations that are young and wealthy.

“The Gulf countries are mostly surrounded by barren desert, so quality fresh food is in high demand.”



For more information, visit [www.equityeconomics.com.au](http://www.equityeconomics.com.au) and [www.independenteconomics.com.au](http://www.independenteconomics.com.au).

The report by Chris Murphy, *Economic modelling of the vegetable industry*, was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG13110

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## New meal occasions on the Horizon

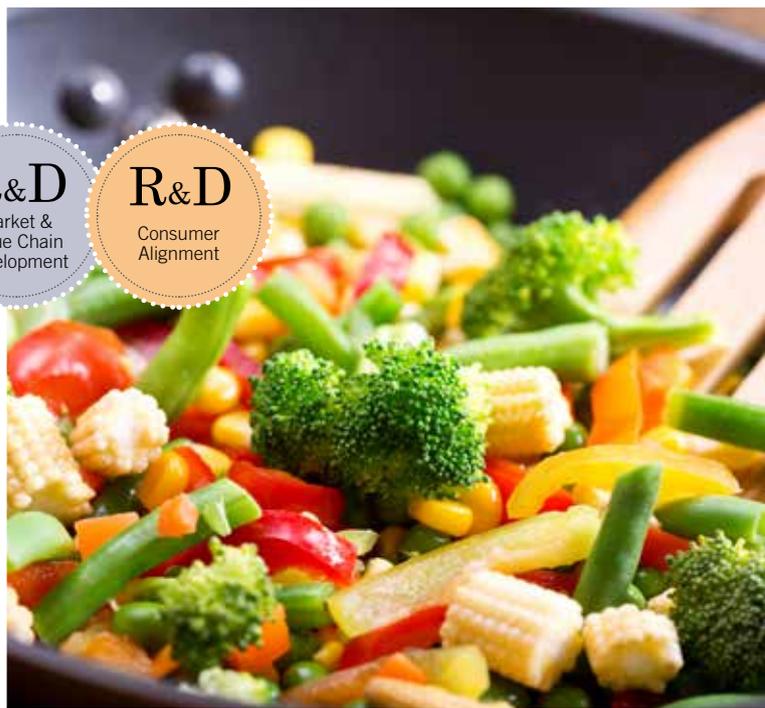
OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE VEGETABLE MEAL OCCASIONS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO INCREASE OVERALL VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION IN AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* SPOKE WITH HORIZON CONSUMER SCIENCE ABOUT A PROJECT INVESTIGATING THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF FRESH VEGETABLES.

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Consumer Alignment



Australian consumers have an appetite for fresh vegetables. Unfortunately, research has found that their own eating habits are holding them back – and a lack of knowledge about convenient ways to incorporate vegetables into their meals is acting as a deterrent to adding more vegetables into their diet.

In project VG14026 *Opportunities for more vegetable meal occasions*, Horizon Consumer Science set out to ask consumers about the potential for new meal occasions and ways to consume vegetables that could increase

demand among Australian consumers.

### Consumer consultation

For the first stage of the project, Horizon reviewed relevant data from previous consumer research to identify vegetables with growth potential. Working with a reference group including Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited, AUSVEG and grower representatives, they selected 11 vegetables to investigate in-depth.

Using focus groups in Melbourne and Sydney, Horizon

then analysed the differences in habits between “typical” and “versatile” vegetable consumers to try to find uses for vegetables that could be marketed to Australians who may be less knowledgeable about ways to incorporate vegetables into their diets.

Horizon took the ideas generated from these focus groups and conducted over 1,500 online interviews with Australian vegetable consumers to identify those with the best potential for increasing or expanding vegetable usage among consumers.

This research took broad concepts for adding vegetable meal occasions (such as stuffing vegetables with leftovers, or making vegetable-based versions of popular meals) and presented ideas for specific vegetables (such as stuffed capsicum or pumpkin fries).

### Untapped potential

Horizon Consumer Science Vice President Michael Feely gave *Vegetables Australia* a breakdown of the key points to come out of the project.

“For growers, the most

important finding from this project is that all vegetables, irrespective of their current popularity, have significant untapped consumption potential," Mr Feely said.

"This project identified which ideas offer the most potential to increase usage for each vegetable. Growers can utilise these insights for their specific crops to convince retailers of the merits of employing these strategies in their stores."

According to Mr Feely, the ideas with the highest chance to increase consumption are those which link vegetables to things consumers already do, but aren't often associated with vegetables.

"For example, barbeque is a cooking style that consumers are very familiar with. While many vegetables can be cooked on the barbeque, consumers rarely consider doing so, mostly out of a lack of knowledge that this option exists."

**Clear communication**

Horizon's research found that more than 50 per cent of respondents think that at least

one of the nine novel concepts has the potential to increase their vegetable usage.

"While we've focused on 11 specific vegetable categories in this project, we expect that the insights for these will apply to other vegetables as well, so the information can be useful to all growers," Mr Feely explained.

To capitalise on the findings of the research, however, it's vital that industry presents the new ideas in ways that will ensure consumers feel encouraged to try out something new.

"Consumers are not short of information about cooking. What consumers are short of is experience, confidence and knowledge about new ideas at critical points in time," Mr Feely said.

"Presenting recipes simply, including realistic estimates of the time they'd take a novice to prepare, will help to make usage ideas more approachable. This will give consumers more confidence to try out something new."

Most importantly, communicating these ideas in a way that will translate into increased vegetable



consumption means targeting consumers at the right time – in the shopping aisle.

"Consumers want this information at the point of purchase. A single usage idea card for a specific vegetable, right at the point of purchase, reaches a consumer at the time when they are most likely to consider trying something new."

 The final report for this project will be made available on the InfoVeg database at [www.ausveg.com/infoveg](http://www.ausveg.com/infoveg).

This project was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG14026

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## A dream come true

AS NEW PLAYERS IN THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY, HUSBAND AND WIFE DUO PAUL AND AMANDA LOWIS ARE USING THEIR BUSINESS ACUMEN AND PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP THEIR FARMING OPERATION IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND AS A LEADER IN ITS FIELD. THE COUPLE CHATS TO STEFANIA BOSTOCK ABOUT THE CHALLENGES THEY HAVE FACED ALONG THE WAY.

Capeview Fresh began as little more than a dream for husband and wife team Paul and Amanda Lowis.

“Owning a farm together has been our goal since we were 22 years old,” Amanda says.

“We have always been attracted to the business side of the vegetable industry. Although we both had relatively well-paying jobs at the time

(Amanda is a chartered accountant by trade and Paul a registered property valuer), we realised that being on a salary was not going to provide us with the capital needed to invest in the type of rural property we were seeking.

“We loved the idea of raising our family on a rural property and still wanted to be young enough to handle the physical



Photography by Rina Totorica



aspects of farming.”

Amanda grew up on a cattle property in central Queensland, where her parents also dabbled in pumpkin and melon production. Paul, too, enjoyed a rural upbringing. As a teenager, he would spend his Christmas holidays picking mangoes, but his first real introduction to horticulture came via his sister and her husband who grew tomatoes at Turner Farms in Bowen.

### Starting from scratch

Paul and Amanda met as 18-year-olds at the University of Queensland in Gatton and several years later they started up a property valuation business in Townsville.

“It was challenging, as we grew our business from scratch,” Amanda admits.

“But our sights were set on owning a rural property. The business was successful before the property market tightened in 2008 – when the Global Financial Crisis hit – but rather than put off any of our valuers, we decided we would buy another business for us to work in.

“We purchased Garage World Townsville, a shed construction business that our friends were selling. Paul trained as a qualified builder and eventually the valuation businesses were sold.”

With 10 years of planning under their belts and a third child on the way, Amanda and Paul took the plunge in 2011 to invest everything they had – including a large jar of coins their two children had been saving – to purchase a property (today called Capeview) in the dry tropics of Queensland at Gumlu.

“For us, it represented a good investment decision, and the opportunity to diversify our income sources added to the appeal,” Amanda says.

### Foray into farming

Initially, the Lowis’ shed





construction business funded the farming operation, which comprised beef cattle production, an established mango orchard, large packing shed facilities and established horticulture cropping land.

Combined, the two businesses provided the couple with a steady cash flow.

“We had a basic knowledge of the industry and our background in property valuation gave us an understanding of the difference between soil types, fertility, production, economies of scale, infrastructure and potential,” Paul explains.

“This helped us in choosing

the right property and negotiating the right price.”

Today, the couple owns approximately 1,500 hectares of land (they sold around 500 hectares to a neighbouring grower in 2015). Gumlu, which is situated about 30 kilometres south of Home Hill and 70 kilometres north of Bowen, is home to some of the country's most sophisticated horticultural operations and it is the largest winter vegetable growing region in Australia.

Amanda is responsible for the business' packing, marketing and compliance while Paul drives the growing operations.

“We run around 400 head

of Brangus cattle; we have a 7,200 tree mango orchard, predominately Kensington Pride and R2E2 varieties, and this year we plan to grow around 100 hectares of horticultural crops (primarily pumpkin and watermelon), in addition to mung bean and forage sorghum crops,” Paul says.

### Overcoming challenges

Last year the operation was threatened by an outbreak of Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus. While the virus did not affect the Lowis' farm directly, Paul says it did delay the supply of its seedlings.

“The outbreak has heightened our emphasis on farm biosecurity and the importance of implementing biosecurity measures,” Amanda adds.

Employing three full-time staff and up to 40 casual staff at the peak of their harvest season, the couple have made long strides since their start-out years.

“We purchased the property when we were 32, so like anyone looking to get into the industry, the biggest challenge was obtaining finance and raising capital,” Paul says.

“But our business experience has taught us that if you produce a good product, delivered by a strong team, marketed to the right customers and you're prepared to continually improve and adapt to the ever-changing environment, you will be putting yourself in the best position to succeed.

“After rushing our first year of horticulture, we realised the importance of coordination, timing to spread risk and oversupply and, above all, patience.”

### Onwards and upwards

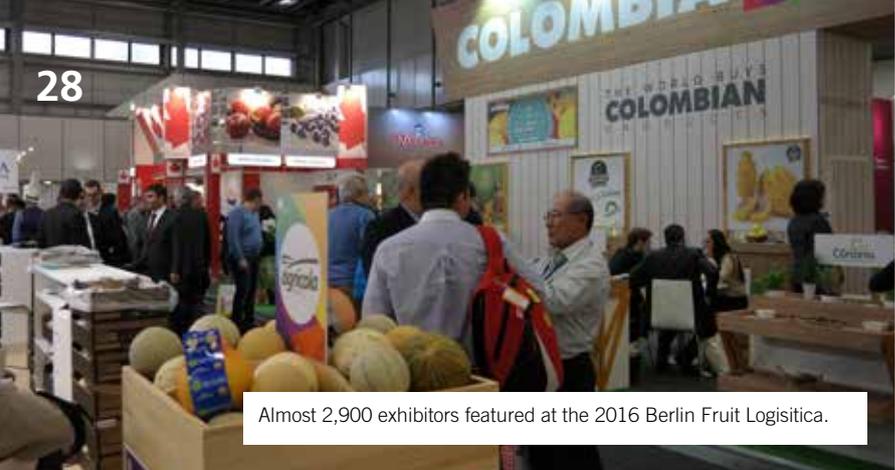
Since implementing a new strategy, the couple have doubled their production and maintained the cash flow needed to progressively invest in improving their property and operation in order to reduce production costs and improve yield. Eventually, they plan to establish Capeview Fresh as an innovative, recognisable brand.

“We are also interested in further diversifying the crops we grow – diversification has been one of our key strategies so far, and will assist us in mitigating the variability in our business,” Amanda says.

“We are fortunate to have large areas of developed, arable land that we don't currently utilise for horticulture.”

Amanda and Paul are continually looking for new opportunities to maximise use of their production capacity and have identified export markets as the future for growth within the industry.

“We've seen the benefits of the live export of cattle and the export of mangoes, and would certainly like to develop relationships within the horticultural industry for the export of other crops we may grow as well,” Paul says.



Almost 2,900 exhibitors featured at the 2016 Berlin Fruit Logistica.

## German innovation on the agenda

EARLIER THIS YEAR, NINE VEGETABLE GROWERS SWAPPED A HOT AUSTRALIAN SUMMER FOR A COLD GERMAN WINTER DURING THE 2016 EUROPEAN INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT MISSION, WHERE THEY ATTENDED BERLIN FRUIT LOGISTICA AND NETWORKED WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM A RANGE OF GLOBAL AGRIBUSINESSES.

Boasting 2,891 exhibitors and more than 70,000 visitors through the door, Berlin Fruit Logistica is the world's leading international meeting place for the fresh produce trade. It is a highly anticipated event that attracts a range of representatives from the global agriculture industry to Berlin every year.

From 31 January to 7 February, nine Australian vegetable levy payers had the opportunity to visit Germany to attend the Logistica and meet with leading agribusinesses during the 2016 European Industry Leadership and Development Mission.

The main focus of the mission was for participants to examine the latest trends in horticulture, form networks with their international peers and gather innovative ideas for implementation in the Australian vegetable industry.

### An insight into global R&D

In the lead-up to Berlin Fruit Logistica, the group travelled to the other side of the country for a guided tour of Bayer's Global Headquarters in Leverkusen, near Cologne.



New machinery on display.



Australian vegetable growers were among more than 70,000 attendees at Berlin Fruit Logistica.

Participants met with External Visitors Adviser Judith Wehr and Crop Manager for Vegetables and Potato (Strategy and Portfolio Management) Albert Schirring, who gave presentations on their sectors.

The group visited several important R&D facilities during the site tour, including the Compound Logistics facility. This is one of the most modern systems in the world for storing, preparing and distributing substances prior to comprehensive biological testing.

Overall, participants gained a greater appreciation of the production processes employed to create new chemistries for seeds, chemical and biological crop protection and pest control. The group then returned to the German capital, ready to visit Berlin Fruit Logistica.

### A trade show like no other

Berlin Fruit Logistica, which was held from 3-5 February, gave participants the opportunity to forge strong networking connections with leading researchers, growers and business professionals in the global fresh produce industry. This included key machinery suppliers who were interested in the Australian vegetable industry as well as producers of the latest technologies and innovations in fresh produce packaging.

Throughout the trade show, participants were particularly interested in any new machinery or equipment that might generate efficiencies in their own operations, as well as new product varieties or technologies that could provide an advantage over their competitors.

The annual Fruit Logistica

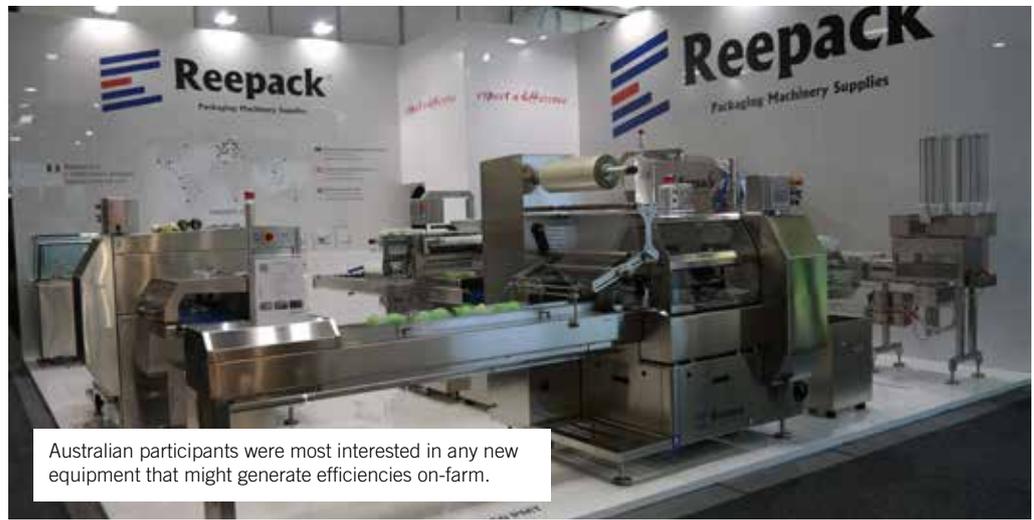


One of the many stands at Berlin Fruit Logistica.

Innovation Award also gave participants a look at the most outstanding innovation in the fresh produce sector. The Genuine Coconut was declared the winner for 2016 – this Spanish product comes with a patented seal and straw to form a simple, coconut water drink with high nutritional value. The runner-up for the award was the Northern Greens Kitchen Minis tomato from Denmark, a compact cherry tomato plant that grows up to 11 centimetres in height and produces up to 150 fruits in all seasons. Danish invention Enjoya, a yellow/red striped pepper that is packed with vitamin C and produces a tangy flavour, won third place in the competition.

In addition to visiting trade show stands, participants also networked with their global counterparts at a variety of events hosted by Syngenta, Bayer, Plant and Food Research New Zealand and the Produce Marketing Association.

The participants agreed that the exposure to an international event of this scale is crucial for the continued growth and expansion of the Australian vegetable industry.



Australian participants were most interested in any new equipment that might generate efficiencies on-farm.

### The heart of trading

In addition to Berlin Fruit Logistica, participants were able to visit the city's fruit and vegetable wholesale market (the Fruchthof). The building was redeveloped in 2007 to create a modern market that now boasts 85,000 square metres of floor space and a central commercial refrigeration system.

The market operates six days a week and, while not open to the general public, its 50 wholesalers offer delivery services to customers in Berlin

and surrounding areas.

During the visit, participants witnessed and compared the market's operations with Australia's wholesale markets. Many noted that the market operated very efficiently and were surprised to see the produce on display was not limited to fresh fruits and vegetables, as many stall holders also traded grocery and convenience items.

Following their return to Australia, participants will share their experiences with local growers to ensure the

information garnered from the mission is distributed to the wider growing community.



The final report for this project will be made available on the InfoVeg database at [www.ausveg.com/infoveg](http://www.ausveg.com/infoveg).

This project was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15701

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Andrew Doran from Harvest Moon inspecting an onion crop near Devonport in Tasmania.

## Consistent control of Downy mildew

GROWERS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA NOW HAVE ACCESS TO A NEW CROP PROTECTION SOLUTION THAT CAN ASSIST IN THE ONGOING FIGHT AGAINST DOWNY MILDEW IN VEGETABLE CROPS.

**D**owny mildew is a common fungal disease affecting a wide range of vegetable crops throughout Australia, including lettuce, spinach, kale, cucurbits, brassicas and Asian leafy vegetables.

Symptoms of the disease usually begin with yellowish leaf spots which then turn brown, while downy growth can appear on the underside of leaves. Factors such as high humidity, leaf wetness and cool to mild temperatures (10-16 degrees Celsius) can be conducive to the spread of the disease.

To help combat this issue, DuPont Crop Protection has launched Zorvec® Enicade®, which has the potential to provide Australian vegetable growers with consistent and long-term control of Downy mildew in a wide range of crops.

The product is registered for crops including bulb vegetables, brassicas, cucurbits and leafy vegetables as well as poppies, and should be used in preventative spray programs

in rotation with other approved fungicides.

### Multiple targets

DuPont Crop Protection Marketing Manager Jeremy Cocks said the product affects multiple stages of the pathogen's life cycle for better efficacy, efficiency and long-term control of Downy mildew.

"The active ingredient oxathiapiprolin has a new mode of action (MOA) that is effective against all strains of target pathogens, including those which show resistance to currently available products," he said.

Mr Cocks said the fungicide can move systemically in plants to protect treated leaves as they grow and expand, as well as new leaves as they emerge and grow. He added that growers should target the early, rapid growth phases of crops to protect emerging leaves.

"In positioning trials conducted over recent seasons,

the best results have been when the fungicide is used early in the program. This is often when conditions are conducive to Downy mildew so it is the ideal option for growers."

### Additional features

Mr Cocks said that trials had been conducted by various independent organisations throughout Australia and the feedback from researchers, agronomists and growers had been very positive.

"Wet weather is conducive to Downy mildew and can be a challenging time to apply fungicide and have it work effectively," he said.

"Zorvec® Enicade® is able to rapidly penetrate the leaf surface of plants and may not be washed off by rain as little as 20 minutes after the spray residue dries on the leaves."

The fungicide is also effective on target organisms at very low use rates and has very low

toxicity to non-target organisms. Mammalian oral, neurological, developmental and dermal toxicity are all low, as is avian and bee toxicity.

### Education is key

Mr Cocks said a stewardship program will be organised to educate growers and industry members on the correct use of the product.

"DuPont will work closely with agronomists and advisers to make sure they can help growers get the best value from the new fungicide, and also minimise the risk of resistance developing to the Downy mildew pathogens," he said.



For more information or to register to receive the technical brochure, visit <http://crop-protection.ap.dupont.com/dupont-zorvec-enicade> or scan the QR code on page 2 of this edition of *Vegetables Australia*. Always refer to the label before use.

# AUSVEG VIC holds official launch

STATE REPRESENTATIVE BODY AUSVEG VIC RECENTLY CELEBRATED ITS OFFICIAL LAUNCH WITH A SUCCESSFUL EVENT ATTENDED BY MANY OF THE STATE'S LEADING GROWERS, SUPPLY CHAIN REPRESENTATIVES AND VICTORIAN DIGNITARIES.

The Victorian vegetable and potato industries have begun an exciting new era following the official launch of state representative body, AUSVEG VIC.

Victorian growers, industry members and dignitaries were on hand to enjoy the festivities alongside the AUSVEG VIC Executive Committee and AUSVEG senior management on Thursday 11 February.

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Health, addressed attendees on behalf of the Victorian Minister for Agriculture, Ms Jaala Pulford, and highlighted the importance of the \$970 million worth of

produce grown each year by the state's vegetable and potato industries.

Guests also included Victorian Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Leader of the Nationals Mr Peter Walsh MP; Lead Deputy Secretary for Agriculture, Energy and Resources Mr Luke Wilson; and Shadow Attorney General Mr John Pesutto MP.

### Strong representation

AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar and AUSVEG VIC President David Wallace also welcomed guests to the event and spoke about the transition of the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria into a new



Left to right: AUSVEG VIC State Manager Kurt Hermann, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Health Mary-Anne Thomas MP, AUSVEG VIC President David Wallace and AUSVEG Director Bill Bulmer at the official launch.

organisation that will ensure the state's growers have an effective voice at local, state and federal government levels.

As the leading body representing the state's 840 vegetable and potato growers, ongoing grower involvement is critical to the success of AUSVEG VIC and will help cement the organisation's ability to effectively represent the industry.

AUSVEG VIC would like to thank the Victorian dignitaries and industry members who

made the time and effort to attend the official launch and looks forward to working with the industry to ensure the interests of Victoria's vegetable and potato growers are well represented.

**i** To sign up as a member of AUSVEG VIC or for further information, please contact AUSVEG VIC State Manager Kurt Hermann on (03) 9882 0277 or email [ausvegvic@ausveg.com.au](mailto:ausvegvic@ausveg.com.au).



## Membership benefits

Victorian vegetable and potato growers have the ability to become members of AUSVEG VIC, a state-wide body that will represent their interests at all levels of government.

Membership benefits include:

- Contact with AUSVEG VIC State Manager Kurt Hermann, who will take up issues with local councils and Victorian Government on behalf of members.
- Receive the AUSVEG VIC newsletter.
- Find information on levy-funded R&D projects, including economic data specific to vegetables and potatoes.
- Participate in local networking events.
- Benefit from direct representation at industry meetings and forums.



## General Manager - Agriculture

Houston's Farm employs over 200 people throughout Australia with some of their people being part of the team for over 20 years. This wealth of knowledge, passion and experience is a driving factor in their continued successful operation and growth in a highly competitive industry. With a focus on delivering safe, high quality food that is environmentally, socially and commercially sustainable, all that they do is underpinned by their core values of caring, innovation, integrity, quality and sustainability.

Based from their head office operations (20 minutes from Hobart CBD), the role reports to the Chief Executive Officer and forms part of a strong management team. Having complete operational and financial accountability, the role is also responsible for the strategic growth plan

and implementation of the farming operations within a safe, sustainable environment and is a rare career opportunity

farming operations.

To be considered for this opportunity you will ideally have a proven track record in:

- Managing a business unit within an intensive farming environment (preferably horticulture) with strong industry engagement through stakeholder partnerships
- Delivering and managing financial performance Implementing innovation and best practice processes to a business model

- Precision Agriculture
- Leadership/Strategic Focus
- Hobart

- Strategic thinking and financial acumen, identifying and analysing growth opportunities

- People leadership experience in an operationally focussed, high performance business culture.

This opportunity offers a very attractive remuneration package and excellent career development opportunities for an experienced professional looking to progress their career within corporate agribusiness.

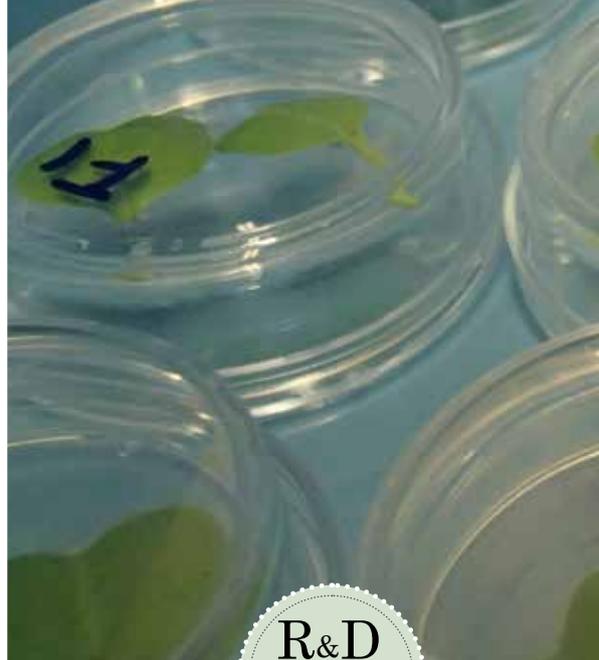
To enquire, please phone Nigel Crawley on +61 3 9645 5200.

[www.rimfireresources.com.au](http://www.rimfireresources.com.au)





Researcher Annabel Clouston looking for aphids in a brassica crop. Image courtesy of Ginger Chang, Cesar Pty Ltd.



## Researchers contribute innovative solutions to the fight against Green peach aphid

THE GREEN PEACH APHID (GPA) CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE RESISTANCE TO MULTIPLE INSECTICIDES. HOWEVER, AUSTRALIAN RESEARCHERS HAVE SHED LIGHT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AND HAVE OFFERED GUIDELINES TO MANAGE INSECTICIDE-RESISTANT GPA POPULATIONS.

In this edition of *The Front Line*, we interview researcher Dr Siobhan de Little from Cesar Pty Ltd, a scientific consulting company that uses world-leading science, technology and research to provide practical and innovative solutions in agricultural pest control. In this article, Dr de Little explains more about the battle against Green peach aphid (GPA) insecticide resistance and how growers can effectively manage the pest.

### Q: What circumstances led to the initiation of this project investigating GPA's resistance to insecticides?

The interest was largely in response to reports of GPA control failures and crop losses from growers across a number of vegetable crops throughout Australia, particularly in northern Queensland. Synergies were also present between Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) and the grains industry, which offered a chance to collaborate with

researchers across industries to better understand GPA insecticide resistance.

### Q: How long has the project been underway and how is it funded?

The project has been running for 2.5 years and it is funded by Hort Innovation through the National Vegetable Levy.

### Q: What impact has GPA had on the vegetable industry?

At the start of our project, growers in northern Queensland (Bowen, Gumlu, Burdekin and Bundaberg) were experiencing uncontrollable GPA infestations in capsicum, tomato and eggplant crops. Estimates from Bowen in 2011 revealed that capsicum, tomato and eggplant crops suffered marketable yield losses of \$8.60 million, \$7.50 million and \$0.36 million, respectively.

### Q: Which type of insecticides are GPAs most resistant to?

The results of our study have shown that GPA populations

collected from horticultural regions across Australia (Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia) demonstrate resistance to pyrethroids, carbamates and



Researcher Dr Siobhan de Little in the lab. Image courtesy of Annabel Clouston, Cesar Pty Ltd.



Testing for insecticide resistance in the laboratory. Image courtesy of Annabel Clouston, Cesar Pty Ltd.

organophosphates. We have communicated these results to growers and consultants, along with aphid management guidelines, to prevent further insecticide resistance in this species and to manage resistant populations.

### Q: What are the current management guidelines for insecticide-resistant GPA populations?

As part of this project, we have been developing a resistance management strategy for GPA in vegetable crops in the Bundaberg region. It is envisioned that this strategy could be adapted for other regions that have problems managing GPA resistance.

Through a grower survey, we found that crop types and seasons vary widely between different parts of Australia and management practices for GPA are also very different depending on the region

and crop.

The main message for growers who want to manage resistance in this aphid are:

1. Rotate the chemistries used to control GPAs.
2. Avoid the application of broad-spectrum insecticides early in the cropping stage.
3. Avoid using pyrethroids, carbamates or organophosphates to control GPAs as the majority of Australian GPA populations are resistant to these products.

### Q: What are your plans for the future of this project and insecticide-resistant GPA populations?

Given the widespread and continuing presence of insecticide-resistant GPA populations across Australia, in both horticultural and broad acre crops, we feel it is imperative to continue monitoring levels of resistance in

this aphid, and communicating management plans to growers.

It will also be important to establish data on aphid responses to newer chemistries, as these newer insecticides are now among the most-used products for GPA control. Understanding how aphids respond to these chemistries, combined with ongoing monitoring, will allow growers and industry to identify any emerging resistance issues and plan accordingly.

It is also important for the industry to have a greater understanding of the reasons growers control GPA, whether for feeding damage or virus prevention, and how effective current control practices are at achieving these goals.

### Q: What implications does this research have on other industries?

GPAs are found on a wide range of commercial crops, including vegetables, fruit trees, nut trees, berries, cut flowers and some broad acre grain crops. Resistant aphids are able to move between these crops and

among different geographical regions, which has implications for management practices at a local level.



For more information please contact Dr Siobhan de Little at [sdelittle@cesaraustralia.com](mailto:sdelittle@cesaraustralia.com).

Project Number: VG12109 has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Any unusual plant pest should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 884).

For further information, see the farm biosecurity website at [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au), or contact AUSVEG National Manager – Scientific Affairs Dr Jessica Lye at [jessica.lye@ausveg.com.au](mailto:jessica.lye@ausveg.com.au) or AUSVEG Assistant National Manager – Scientific Affairs Nicholas Schmidt at [nicholas.schmidt@ausveg.com.au](mailto:nicholas.schmidt@ausveg.com.au) or (03) 9882 0277.

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## DNA testing now available

Project Leader and Cesar Director Dr Paul Umina and his research team have determined that major Green peach aphid (GPA) populations exhibit a high level of resistance to some insecticides.

Cesar is now offering a DNA testing service to determine the presence of insecticide resistance in GPA populations on-farm to aid in grower and adviser decision-making about aphid control.

For further information please visit [www.cesaraustralia.com](http://www.cesaraustralia.com).

## More about the Green peach aphid

The Green peach aphid (*Myzus persicae*, GPA) is a significant global pest that attacks a wide range of agricultural crops including capsicum, eggplant, tomato, broccoli, lettuce and potato.

The pest can occupy young plant tissue at very high levels leading to water stress, wilting and reduced growth rate of the plant. If the aphids stay for a prolonged period of time, dramatic reductions in yield may result for root and foliage crops. Additionally, yellow spots may be observed as a result of GPA feeding.

However, the most damaging aspect is the aphid's propensity to transmit plant viruses. Nymphs and adults are equally capable of vectoring viruses and can inject pathogens into plant tissues via feeding.



Green peach aphid adults and nymphs. Image courtesy of Andrew Weeks, Cesar Pty Ltd.

# Consumers in Malaysia are hungry for Australia's fresh produce

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

AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE EXPORTERS ARE INCREASINGLY EXAMINING THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES MALAYSIA OFFERS, DRIVEN BY GROWING CONSUMER DEMAND FOR MORE CHOICE, HIGHER QUALITY PRODUCTS AND THE MALAYSIA-AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT.

The Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement (MAFTA), which entered into force on 1 January 2013, is a comprehensive agreement that further integrates the Australian economy into the fast-growing Asian region. The agreement also builds on benefits already flowing to the Australian economy from the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA), which started for Australia and Malaysia in 2010.

Under MAFTA, Malaysia has already guaranteed tariff-free entry for Australian-originating goods on 98.6 per cent of its tariff lines, extending to 98.8 per cent by 2020 and 98.9 per cent in 2026.

In 2016, the final 22 horticultural items that still faced a tariff were eliminated.

## Strong relationship

Australia and Malaysia share a long history of cooperation and celebrated 60 years of Australia's diplomatic presence

in Malaysia in 2015.

Austrade Senior Trade Commissioner for Malaysia Susan Kahwati said Australia has been a source of agrifood products in Malaysia for many years.

"In an environment where consumers are becoming increasingly interested in the origins of their food, Australia is well placed to capitalise on its reputation as a source of clean, green and high quality products," Ms Kahwati said.

"Australia's reputation for having high standards in food safety and quality assurance systems provides additional advantages for exporters.

"With the increasing interest in health and wellness and growing affluence in Malaysia, the demand for a more diverse range of fresh fruit and vegetables is expected to grow over time.

"Many Malaysians have an acquired taste for more exotic foreign fresh produce. Australia exported more than \$99 million worth of fruit and vegetables in

2015, making it a significant supplier for the market."

## Exporting to Malaysia

Fresh vegetables exported to Malaysia include carrots, onions, garlic, leeks, tomatoes, lettuce, celery, broccoli, cabbages, cauliflowers and leafy and root vegetables.

Australian companies are free to export to Malaysia under the latter's generally applied tariffs or using either MAFTA or AANZFTA.

When exporting using either MAFTA or AANZFTA, growers need to ensure they comply with the relevant agreement's rules of origin and documentation requirements. Information about importing and exporting using these agreements can be found in guides available on the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website ([www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)).

Each year, Austrade delivers a range of initiatives to promote Australia as a source of

world-class agrifood products, including introducing Malaysian buyers to Australian suppliers at major events such as Food and Hotel Asia and supporting customer visits to Australia where they can see first-hand the quality and variety of products available from around the country.

As Australia's ninth-largest trading partner overall, Malaysia continues to be an important market for Australian vegetable exporters.



For more information visit [www.austrade.gov.au](http://www.austrade.gov.au), or phone 13 28 78 or email [info@austrade.gov.au](mailto:info@austrade.gov.au).

The Vegetable Industry Market Access and Development Program is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG13097

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## Malaysian retail and wholesale markets for Aussie produce

Australian vegetables are exported into Malaysia for the retail, wholesale and food service sectors.

According to Retail Group Malaysia, 50 per cent of retail food sales in the country are made through organised retail grocery and specialty stores, providing more distribution channels. The retail food and beverage sector is worth US\$16 billion and is expected to grow a further six per cent.

Malaysian households spend an average of 24 per cent of their household income on retail

purchase of food.

The expanding retail and food service industries and changing consumer tastes present opportunities for a wide range of Australian suppliers. Austrade is well-positioned to help Australian companies familiarise themselves with local market conditions and appropriate entry channels, as well as providing introductions to buyers, distributors and key decision-makers.

See below for the key retail and wholesale companies in the Malaysian market.

Retailer	Importer/Wholesaler
Aeon – 60 stores nationwide	Euro-Atlantic
Tesco – 55 stores nationwide	Techno-Fresh
Giant Hypermarket – over 85 stores nationwide	Khaishen

## Export Calendar of Events

### International Trade Exhibitions

Food and Hotel Asia, Singapore

12 – 15 April 2016

### Vegetable Industry Export Development Training Program

31 March – 1 April 2016, Gatton, QLD

28 – 29 April 2016, Perth, WA

### Reverse Trade Mission

19 – 26 June 2016

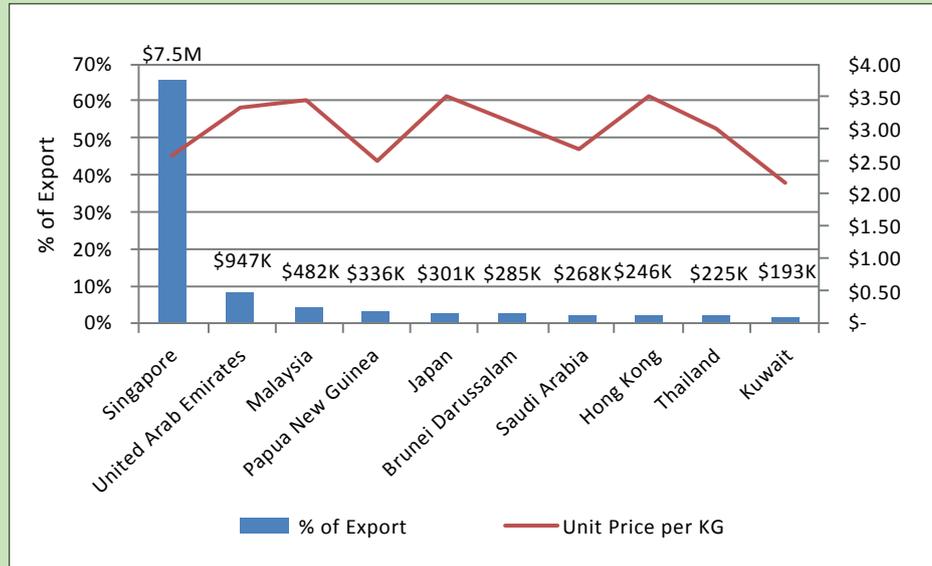
For more information on any of these events, please contact [export@ausveg.com.au](mailto:export@ausveg.com.au)

# Export commodity snapshot: Cauliflower and headed broccoli



In 2014-15, Australia exported \$11.4 million of cauliflower and headed broccoli. The key destination was Singapore, with this market receiving (by value) 66 per cent of the cauliflower and headed broccoli exported in 2014-15.

Cauliflower and headed broccoli exports have increased by 45 per cent over the past five years, due to significant increases in the value of cauliflower and headed broccoli exports to markets such as the United Arab Emirates and Japan.



## Australia's cauliflower and headed broccoli exports (fresh or chilled) by destination

Australian Dollars (\$)

Rank	Country	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	World	6,311,493.00	6,654,296.00	6,175,718.00	7,153,943.00	11,377,857.00
1	Singapore	3,749,559.00	4,437,813.00	4,247,666.00	4,756,845.00	7,456,576.00
2	United Arab Emirates	759,673.00	340,210.00	275,046.00	286,198.00	947,595.00
3	Malaysia	228,623.00	260,208.00	322,526.00	417,471.00	482,520.00
4	Papua New Guinea	157,173.00	243,383.00	339,368.00	284,806.00	336,452.00
5	Japan	5,122.00	305.00	-	-	301,415.00
6	Brunei Darussalam	207,402.00	152,000.00	244,570.00	224,722.00	285,518.00
7	Saudi Arabia	365,623.00	202,276.00	116,627.00	202,246.00	268,433.00
8	Hong Kong	98,115.00	122,294.00	114,669.00	173,036.00	246,122.00
9	Thailand	12,295.00	7,222.00	32,322.00	112,890.00	225,477.00
10	Kuwait	13,370.00	4,348.00	3,712.00	85,992.00	193,722.00

Source: Global Trade Information Service, sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics International Trade data, various years



Significant growth in cauliflower and headed broccoli exports can be seen across several markets, with the United Arab Emirates market increasing in value by 70 per cent over the last financial year. There is also significant opportunity in the Japanese marketplace, with exports of cauliflower and headed broccoli from Australia taking place for the first time since 2011-12. It is anticipated that both the Japan Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA) coming into effect and the competitive price of Australian cauliflower and

headed broccoli will ensure that exports continue to increase over the coming years.

In 2014-15, Australian cauliflower and headed broccoli was valued at \$2.73kg on average. The price per kilogram of cauliflower and headed broccoli has remained consistent over the past five years. Within the top 10 cauliflower and headed broccoli export markets by value, Japan demanded the highest price for cauliflower and headed broccoli, with the average price being \$3.54kg.



The Vegetable Industry Market Access and Development Program is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG13097

Horticulture  
Innovation  
Australia

## EnviroVeg manual now available in Vietnamese!

The EnviroVeg manual is a major resource for vegetable growers, containing over 250 pages of material on property and business management, soil and nutrition, water and waterways, pests, chemicals, biodiversity, waste, air quality and energy.

Vietnamese speaking growers can now access this valuable source of information, with hard copies of the translated manual now available from AUSVEG.

### A useful guide

The manual also contains sections of resources for growers, including developed templates on pest management identification, good practice guidelines for responsible chemical management and resource links

for growers to access more information on these topics.

If you know any Vietnamese speaking members of the vegetable growing community who may benefit from this valuable resource, please encourage them to get in touch for a copy of the manual.



For more information or to access a copy of the manual, please contact the AUSVEG Environment Coordinator on (08) 8221 5220 or info@ausveg.com.au.

The EnviroVeg Program is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG12008



*Những người trồng rau quan tâm đến môi trường*



## Access grants for your business



Vegetable growers may be eligible to access grants or loans that are available through the Australian Government's [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) website. These grants cover a variety of areas, from specific drought and transport assistance for farmers to innovation and sustainability loans.

Loans and grants have individual closing dates, guidelines and eligibility criteria, with many available specifically for primary producers.

### Queensland

Growers in Queensland can access loans of up to \$650,000 to cover costs to increase the productivity and sustainability of their enterprise. This loan is ongoing and can be used to upgrade machinery and purchase equipment that improves productivity or implements sustainable resource management practices.

### New South Wales

The New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Rural Assistance Authority is offering funds through the farm innovation fund to carry out works that will benefit the land, long-term productivity of the enterprise and address adverse seasonal conditions. There is close to \$200 million available for growers through this fund.

These are just two examples of the funds growers may be eligible to access. Other examples include grants in Western Australia to support the development of alternative water supplies and the agribusiness growth program in South Australia, which helps small growers to expand their business.



For more information go to [www.business.gov.au/grants-and-assistance](http://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-assistance) or contact the AUSVEG Environment Coordinator on (08) 8221 5220 or info@ausveg.com.au.

# Soil recovery from intensive cropping: methods and benefits in practice

MANAGING CROPPING TECHNIQUES IS VITAL TO PROTECTING SOIL HEALTH AND ULTIMATELY PRODUCING QUALITY PRODUCE. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* SPEAKS TO U.S-BASED SOIL CULTURE CONSULTING OWNER AND AGRONOMIST BOB SHAFFER AND JURGENS PRODUCE OWNER JAMIE JURGENS ABOUT THE THEORY AND PRACTICE INVOLVED IN MOVING AWAY FROM INTENSIVE CROPPING.

Intensive farming practices can result in reduced soil health – a detriment to any growing operation. As an agronomist, Bob Shaffer works directly with growers to help them improve their soil after using these intensive practices and to develop replacement techniques to ensure soils stay healthy in the future.

“The soil’s health is the most important aspect of farming soils,” Mr Shaffer said.

This simple idea was the foundation for over 35 years of work for Mr Shaffer, who is a horticulturalist, viticulturist and agriculturalist for Soil Culture Consulting, based in the United States. Mr Shaffer consults with a variety of growers to help them develop sustainable farming practices.

Intensive farming, as it is commonly known, generally lowers the soil organic matter, leading to compromised soil health. Soils that are low in soil organic matter are erosive, require more fertilisers and produce lower quality and lower yielding crops than soils with better soil organic matter levels.

For growers looking to move away from intensive cropping systems, Mr Shaffer advises that the first thing to do is establish

a baseline.

“We need to do audits of soil health to know where we are and to more clearly see the results of practices that can elevate soil health.”

## Transitioning to healthy soil

After taking a soil health audit, Mr Shaffer recommends improving the soil’s health by employing a system that considers three groups of cultural practices and their synergy.

1. **Organic matter management**, through the use of cover crops, composts and tillage.

Elevating the soil organic matter is one of the most critical tasks in intensively farmed soils, as soils that are low in soil organic matter can crust, lowering water infiltration and reducing water holding capacity and water availability to the crop’s roots.

2. **Mineral management**, which aims to balance the minerals in the soil.

A lack of minerals and organic matter contributes to the occurrence of compacted, low bulk density soils, which result

in smaller, unhealthy crop roots.

3. **Tillage management**, a beneficial disturbance which acts to enhance the effects of organic matter management and mineral management to loosen soils.

Compacted soils are directly associated with low organic matter content and poor soil health. They require constant tillage, which results in a high cost, reduced productivity system.

These three groups of practices can elevate soil health, prevent erosion, improve soil structure, elevate water infiltration and holding, prevent diseases and sustain crop quality and yields.

## A change for the better

Jurgens Produce owner Jamie Jurgen grows capsicums, beans, pumpkins and tomatoes in Bowen, northern Queensland, and has consulted with Mr Shaffer on how to move away from intensive cropping.

The most difficult part of the change was the initial set up, with machinery and farming methods required that are different to those used on a conventional farm. Changing practices means that Jurgens

Produce has incorporated controlled traffic farming practices and permanent beds, as well as adopting variable rate applications for soil amendments and crop rotations.

“We have invested in the initial setup of machinery and equipment, as well as incorporating composting and spreading equipment into our operations,” Mr Jurgens explained.

He added that overhauling this aspect of his operation has taken a total of about five years, but was a necessary change for the better.

“You need to replenish the soil with minerals and organic carbon, otherwise you are mining the soil of good nutrients. We are seeing better soil structure, higher organic carbon levels and more consistent crops.”



The EnviroVeg Program has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG12008

Horticulture  
Innovation  
Australia





## Setting a high standard brings a golden reward

FOR ALMOST 70 YEARS, THE TARANTO FAMILY HAS BEEN GROWING VEGETABLES IN THE SMALL REGION OF TYABB IN VICTORIA. SAM TARANTO SPEAKS TO *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* ABOUT DEVELOPING HIS BUSINESS AND ENHANCING HIS ENVIRONMENTAL CREDENTIALS WITH ENVIROVEG GOLD.

The Taranto family has witnessed many changes in their vegetable growing business since its establishment in Tyabb, Victoria in 1947, including expanded and simplified operations. At the core of the business, however, Sam Taranto explains that some things have never changed.

“The main thing we try to do is grow a high quality article and get a higher return,” he says.

The decision to narrow the

focus of the farm to four lines (leeks, spinach, baby cos and Dutch carrots) over the past 10 years has occurred in line with industry changes and investments. By targeting these lines, Taranto Farms has been able to invest heavily in equipment to increase efficiencies on-farm.

“We have expanded to 230 acres and all lines are now grown 12 months of the year. The advances in mechanisation



have made it easier to specialise in a certain area and invest heavily,” Sam explains.

Using specialist equipment has also allowed Taranto Farms to focus on sustainable practices such as increasing water delivery methods. Last year, a new washing facility was installed for this reason.

“We irrigate at night time so the water better penetrates the plants,” Sam says.

“We water multiple times to

eliminate wastage through water runoff and we control our own water, recycling wash water to be used again and again.”

These good farming practices are commonplace for the Taranto family, who see the changes as necessities to a modern farmer.

“We also do a lot of cover crops and green crops, and since we have grown to our current size we have put in hedges everywhere to stop



Photography by Luka Kauzlaric



winds buffeting our farm.”

Sam adds that these hedges also act as a biosecurity barrier between neighbouring properties, helping to keep out unwanted pests and diseases.

“Having the local agronomist on call is important; when there is an issue we can call him.”

### Golden growth

Sam attributes the gradual expansion of his growing operation to market demands

and the increasing value in growing a high quality product. He can see the need for growers to gain recognition for growing top quality produce, which is why he became a member of EnviroVeg Gold.

“It was a simple decision to become a member of EnviroVeg Gold. It was an easy thing to do with our quality assurance systems the way they are, and for most growers it would be the same.”

By becoming an EnviroVeg Gold member, Sam is able to showcase his environmental credentials for all to see.

“A nice-looking gate sign comes with the Gold accreditation and I thought: I want one of them out the front of my property,” he laughs.

Engaging with the local community is important to Sam, as is the ability for consumers to view his farm as an important source of food. This is something Sam ensures by inviting the local community onto the farm for a closer look, and keeping friendly relationships with all of his neighbours.

“Once every year or two we get the local school kids to come over and have a tour so they can see how food is grown and that it doesn’t just come straight from the shelf. They also take produce home to give to their families,” he explains.



“It is really important that kids know where their food comes from.”

### Quality is the best way forward

In the future, Sam would like to see more cooperation and rational quality compliance measures within the vegetable industry.

“All farmers need to get better at showing that what we do is good for the environment. The better we do that, the better off farmers will be,” Sam explains.

By being an active member of a vegetable industry-owned environmental program like EnviroVeg, Sam is keeping quality assurance measures in the hands of growers. He believes that quality assurance measures will only increase in the future and will play a crucial role in the public perception of the vegetable industry.

“Increasing public perception of our high growing standards is a hard thing to accomplish. What I can see is more ready-

to-use foods being produced in the future, which is where the industry is going. Everyone will need to comply with stricter and stricter standards.

“Everyone has evolved, so farming is two pronged now – you need to be able to market and communicate a lot more than 20 years ago.”

Ultimately, it all boils down to growing a good product under the right conditions.

“We are third generation growers who just want to improve and grow with market demands. We have seen good growth in everything we do; that’s why we have stuck with what we do,” Sam says.

“We grow a good product, and if you supply a good product, people will demand a good product.”



The EnviroVeg Program is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG12008





## Tips on risk management and planning for vegetable growers



VEGETABLE GROWERS FACE A VARIETY OF UNCERTAINTIES AND RISKS IN MANY ASPECTS OF THEIR BUSINESSES, FROM UNEXPECTED WEATHER EVENTS TO CHANGING MARKET PRICES. AUSVEG ECONOMIST ANDREW KRUPP EXPLAINS HOW GROWERS CAN MANAGE THE RISKS TO THEIR FARMS AND ULTIMATELY THEIR PROFITABILITY.

Risk is often described as a situation involving exposure to danger under conditions of uncertainty. In the vegetable industry, there are many decisions that are made by growers under conditions of uncertainty that could expose both their businesses and their livelihoods to financial danger. This is because risk plays a large role in determining the variation in yearly profits.

Why doesn't a farm with a consistent area harvested and a consistent crop yield therefore consistently make the same profit every year? It may be due to the uncertainty of future prices for the crop produced, or the variation in input prices (such as labour),

or it could be because of a drought that is affecting the industry. All of these examples involve situations of uncertainty that can damage a growing operation's financial stability and ultimately threaten to reduce business longevity.

### Defining risk

Risk can be defined in different layers, which often require various responses and management procedures to overcome them. The standard risk layer includes variations in production, prices and input costs and does not usually require a specific government policy to overcome it. However, these risks can be directly

managed through strong business strategy and planning.

The second layer includes large-scale events that can have lasting effects on many or all farmers within a geographic region. Examples of risks within this layer include disease outbreaks and severe weather damages. Often this layer of risk will require a government or industry policy response in conjunction with risk management planning to coordinate a group response to the danger.

In between these two layers lies yet another layer of risk, which includes dangers that are between the two extremes. These risks are serious; however, there are market tools

available which can be used to mitigate the losses that can be caused. These market tools include the use of insurance, future contracts or cooperative agreements between small groups of growers.

### Quantifying negative risk

To design a strong risk management plan to help deal with your farm's exposure to risk, it is important to develop a process to quantify risk and to describe its likely impacts on income variability.

The standard procedure used in economics is to calculate an expected value from undertaking a particular activity by taking into account the probability of another, unplanned event occurring. The expected value is calculated as the sum of all the possible outcomes multiplied by their probability of occurrence.

For example, a grower produces 1,000 tonnes of carrots each season and initially estimates that the crop is likely to be worth \$377,000 in 2016

**Table 1: An example of expected value calculation**

Situation	Probability of event occurring	Crop value based on outcome
Price remaining the same	60%	$1,000 \times 377 = \$377,000$
Price increasing	10%	$1,000 \times 400 = \$400,000$
Price falling	30%	$1,000 \times 330 = \$330,000$



## Using diversification to mitigate risk

There are many other market-based tools available to growers to minimise the effects of risk on their business, such as crop diversification, which is one of the most well-known techniques used to reduce risk, particularly within the finance industry.

Diversification attempts to reduce risk by spreading it out over multiple projects. Using the previous example, if a grower wanted to reduce the negative impact of lower prices in 2017, they could diversify their crop to include both carrots and broccoli. By using crop diversification, the grower reduces the impact of lower carrot prices because only half of the crop is susceptible to the impacts of the risk. In some cases, the financial cost incurred from farm gate price risk may also be reduced further if broccoli prices rise by a sufficient amount to offset any losses.

## Plan ahead

Risk is an ever-present part of every activity and decision we make in our lives, and there is no escaping the negative impacts and consequences it can have on business activities. The best way to handle risk is to understand and manage it through proper education and risk planning.

This article has shown how risk can be defined, how to correctly quantify risk and

some of the primary tools used to minimise risk. Through the application of this information and further study, vegetable growers can be more confident in facing the challenges that risk presents to them in the future.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

- Vegetable growers make many decisions under conditions of uncertainty that could expose both their businesses and their livelihoods to financial danger.
- Standard risks include variations in production, prices and input costs, as well as large-scale events that can have lasting effects on many or all farmers within a geographic region.
- It is important for growers to develop a strong risk management plan, including a process to quantify risk and to describe its likely impacts on income variability.

(1,000 tonnes multiplied by the market price of \$377 per tonne) and therefore believes it will also be worth \$377,000 in 2017. However, this estimate is likely to vary according to the exposure to market risk in terms of the farm gate prices they can receive.

The grower decides that they want to construct a more accurate measure of their business's worth in 2017 by re-evaluating their future crop value, taking into account their exposure to market risk. The grower estimates that there is a 60 per cent chance of farm gate prices remaining the same, a 30 per cent chance of prices falling to \$330 per tonne and a 10 per cent chance that prices may increase to \$400 per tonne in 2017. This example is represented in Table 1 – take note that the sum of the probabilities must always equal 100 per cent.

Based on the information presented in Table 1, the expected value of the grower's crop in 2017 is  $0.6 \times 377,000 + 0.10 \times 400,000 + 0.30 \times 330,000 = \$365,200$ . This value is less than the grower's initial estimates of \$377,000 because it now accounts for the risk of a fall in farm gate prices.

The expected value formula is important for estimating future values because it represents a more realistic figure rather than

another estimate that fails to take into account the degree of risk associated. Furthermore, the process of determining the expected value relies upon the estimation of probabilities and the results of different events occurring (such as lower or higher prices).

Therefore, this kind of analysis naturally encourages additional contingency planning in the likelihood of unexpected events occurring, which can be extremely useful during times of crisis.



For more information, contact AUSVEG.  
Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
Email: [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au)

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## Joint collaboration between CMAA and FMA in 2016

FRESH PRODUCE MARKETS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE INDUSTRY, ACTING AS AN ESSENTIAL LINK IN THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SUPPLY CHAIN. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* SHARES AN UPDATE OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIA'S CENTRAL MARKET SYSTEM.



The Central Markets Association of Australia (CMAA) is the peak body representing the owners and authorities of the five wholesale markets around Australia, including Brisbane Markets, Market City in Western Australia, Melbourne Markets, the South Australian Produce Market and Sydney Market. Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) is the national organisation representing each of the six Market Chambers.

FMA and CMAA's unified goal is to enhance the central market system so it is the preferred choice of customers and potential customers seeking the best means of marketing, distributing or acquiring fruit and vegetables in Australia.

### Ongoing change

2016 is shaping up to be a big year for Australia's central market system. Industry ownership continues to strengthen, with the recent sale of the Perth Markets to Perth Markets Limited, a consortium of industry-based investors formed by the Chamber of Fruit and

Vegetable Industries in Western Australia.

In Victoria, the recent move of the Melbourne Market to its new location in Epping is set to provide substantial economic benefits to the state through a more efficient market precinct.

### Horticulture Code of Conduct

One of the strategic imperatives of the central markets is to provide a national position on industry and government issues. In June 2015, the Federal Government announced it would conduct an independent review of the mandatory Horticulture Code of Conduct, which was a significant win for the fresh produce industry.

Stakeholders from across all central markets lodged submissions supporting changes to the Code and the Review Panel made 13 recommendations to the Federal Government for changes to the Code and its application. The central markets support the majority of these recommendations, however

it opposes those that do not promote a fair, commercial and workable outcome.

### Services for industry

As well as providing advocacy services on a range of national issues, FMA also provides market-based dispute resolution services (for growers and wholesalers) and Australia's largest and most comprehensive horticulture testing program. FreshTest is an FMA initiative to provide low-cost maximum residue limits and microbial testing for wholesalers and their growers in Australia's

central markets. The tests are confidential and are used for verification for food safety and quality assurance systems. Since its introduction in December 2001, FreshTest has grown to become the largest and most comprehensive horticultural residue-testing program undertaken in Australia. It continues to grow as more industry participants make use of the facility.



For more information, visit [www.freshmarkets.com.au](http://www.freshmarkets.com.au) or phone (07) 3915 4222.

## Fast facts

- Over 15,000 growers supply to businesses within Australia's central market system.
- Collectively, the central markets employ several thousand people, handling over four million tonnes of fresh produce each year.
- This represents a combined turnover of around \$7 billion at wholesale prices.

# A new approach to manage nematodes

The effective control of nematodes has been a major concern for many vegetable growers throughout Australia. While some nematode species have a beneficial role in the soil, a number of species are pests and can severely impact

agricultural production.

To help address this problem, Adama Australia has developed a new molecule in the form of NIMITZ nematicide. The product is now available for use in cucurbits and fruiting vegetables in Queensland

through the company's accredited Innovation Centres.

While its use will initially be limited to these crops in the state of Queensland, Adama expects to achieve registration for use on these and several other crops in the medium-term in all states of Australia.

## Controlling nematodes

Jonathan McDonald, Adama Market Development Manager in Queensland, said that several years of trials have demonstrated the handling benefits of the product and its effectiveness in controlling plant-parasitic nematodes.

"NIMITZ provides a truly effective alternative that is simple and safe to apply and can easily be incorporated into an existing nematode management strategy," he said.

"We have seen little or no disruption to important soil organisms including earthworms, which is great news for those growers who have already made an investment

in other cultural and biological practices to reduce nematode numbers and improve soil health."

## Promising results

The nematicide is used at low rates (4-8 litres per hectare) and can be applied as a broadcast spray or via drip irrigation. When the product is applied to a crop, nematodes quickly cease feeding, become paralysed and die, rather than the temporary 'freezing' or nematostatic activity.

"The results we have achieved have been excellent with massive reductions in Root-knot nematode numbers and crop root damage and even more importantly, a significant increase in marketable fruit," Mr McDonald said.



**i** For more information visit [adama.com](http://adama.com) or contact Adama Australia Horticulture Market Manager Luke Collins on 0421 187 765.

## CALENDAR



**28 April 2016**

### Minor Use Prioritisation Workshop

**Where:** South Australia

**What:** The Minor Use Prioritisation Workshop will discuss the issues surrounding minor use, collect feedback on proposed minor use permits and permits up for renewal, and provide in-depth insights into the role of minor use permits in Australia. It is important for vegetable growers to get involved to have their voices heard. A limited number of funded positions are available, so please submit expressions of interest as soon as possible.

**Further information:** To register your interest for this event, please contact AUSVEG on (03) 9882 0277 or email [minoruse@ausveg.com.au](mailto:minoruse@ausveg.com.au).

**23-25 June 2016**

### 2016 National Horticulture Convention

**Where:** RACV Royal Pines, Gold Coast

**What:** The highly anticipated National Horticulture Convention will return to the Gold Coast with a program that is bigger and better than ever. This year's Convention will be co-hosted by AUSVEG, Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL), the Central Markets Association of Australia in partnership with Fresh Markets Australia (CMAA-FMA), Growcom and Persimmons Australia Inc.

**Further information:** Please contact AUSVEG on (03) 9882 0277 or email [convention@ausveg.com.au](mailto:convention@ausveg.com.au). To register online, visit <http://registration.hortconv.com.au>.



# MINOR USE AWARENESS PROGRAM

## Minor Use Awareness Program: Latest news

AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS CAN HELP TO ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING OF MAJOR PEST ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN TWO UPCOMING EVENTS WHICH WILL BE HOSTED BY THE MINOR USE AWARENESS PROGRAM.



### Minor Use Prioritisation Workshop to be held in April

The 2016 Minor Use Prioritisation Workshop will be held on 28 April in Adelaide, South Australia. The Prioritisation Workshop is absolutely key to the future of the industry. It is used to gather feedback from growers on:

- Current minor use permits, to maintain access to necessary chemistry.
- New minor use permits, to gain access to new chemistry.
- Priority pest issues, to

determine the highest priority pests.

The results from the Prioritisation Workshop are used to represent the entire Australian vegetable industry at national collaborative meetings and other events.

Growers and agronomists need to get involved in this important workshop! The more people involved, the better the understanding of what is needed for the industry.

To register your interest in this event, contact AUSVEG at [minoruse@ausveg.com.au](mailto:minoruse@ausveg.com.au) or (03) 9882 0277.

### Sign-up to the Minor Use Database

To be involved in the Prioritisation Workshop, you must first join the Minor Use Database. This is used to gather feedback for ongoing communication with the industry to ensure growers have access to the chemicals they need.

Joining the Minor Use Database is an opportunity to play an integral role in improving access to agrichemicals in Australia. To join the Database, simply request a Database Form from the Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator by emailing [minoruse@ausveg.com.au](mailto:minoruse@ausveg.com.au).

Attendees agreed that the 2015 event was highly valuable with the following feedback:

*"Interesting resistance talk."*

*"Understanding of regulations is important."*

*"Can reverse resistance through IPM."*

*"Better understanding of registration process."*

*"Chemicals with resistance can be salvaged and brought back."*

### Register your interest today!

The 2016 Education Symposium is gearing up to be even better than last year's event. This is also the perfect opportunity to register as a delegate for the 2016 National Horticulture Convention.

**There are limited funded positions available.**

To register your interest in this event, contact AUSVEG at [minoruse@ausveg.com.au](mailto:minoruse@ausveg.com.au) with the title 'Minor Use Education Symposium' or call (03) 9882 0277.

## MINOR USE EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

**Saturday 25 June, 1–5pm**

RACV Royal Pines, Gold Coast, QLD

**Funded positions are limited, register your interest today!**

The symposium will feature talks by experts in the field of agricultural chemicals. This presents an opportunity to gain knowledge and engage with like-minded attendees.

**Held in conjunction to the 2016 National Horticulture Convention – the perfect opportunity to be a delegate.**

[registration.hortconv.com.au](http://registration.hortconv.com.au)

### June 2016: Minor Use Education Symposium

The Minor Use Education Symposium will run in conjunction with the 2016 National Horticulture Convention on Saturday 25 June, from 1-5pm at RACV Royal Pines on the Gold Coast.

This event will cover a range of topics covering chemical use and access, to inform growers and stakeholders about minor use within Australia.

Last year's Education Symposium was a valuable event, bringing speakers from CropLife, Applied Horticultural Research, NSW Biosecurity, Bayer, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and AUSVEG together to discuss minor use and chemical access for the vegetable industry.

**i** To request any of the minor use forms, please contact AUSVEG Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator Scott Kwasny on (03) 9882 0277, email [minoruse@ausveg.com.au](mailto:minoruse@ausveg.com.au) or visit [www.ausveg.com.au/minoruse](http://www.ausveg.com.au/minoruse).

The Minor Use Awareness Program has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

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Australia**



# Minor use permits

Permit Number	Crop	Pesticide Group	Active	Pest	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Permit Holder	States
PER13397 Version 3	Peas, eggplant, chilli pepper, paprika, silverbeet and spinach	Herbicide	Clethodim	Various grass weeds	15-Nov-13	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER12450 Version 6	Specified fruit crops	Insecticide	Trichlorfon	Queensland fruit fly and Mediterranean fruit fly	06-Oct-11	31-Jan-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC and TAS)
PER11848 Version 3	Brassica leafy vegetables, chicory, endive, radicchio and rocket (field and protected)	Herbicide	Clethodim	Various grass weeds	20-Jun-12	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER14142 Version 2	Spring onion, shallot and Welsh onion	Herbicide	loxynil	Broadleaf weeds	17-Oct-13	31-Mar-19	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER13351 Version 2	Eggplant	Aphicide	Pirimicarb	Aphids	28-Jun-13	31-Mar-19	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER81131	Leafy/open-head lettuce (field only)	Fungicide	Prochloraz present as the manganese chloride complex	Anthracoze	2-Feb-16	31-Dec-18	Growcom	All states
PER82358	Celery	Insecticide	Esfenvalerate	Heliothis	5-Feb-16	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER82359	Chilli peppers	Aphicide	Pirimicarb	Aphids	5-Feb-16	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER81196	Cucumbers, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, common beans, lettuce, peppers and eggplant	Insecticide/ Miticide	Bifenthrin	Silverleaf whitefly Biotype B, Greenhouse whitefly, Thrips and Two spotted mite	8-Feb-16	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER81196	Peas, common beans and celery	Insecticide/ Miticide	Bifenthrin	Red-legged earthmite and Blue oat mite	8-Feb-16	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)
PER13116 Version 2	Sweet corn (field grown)	Fungicide	Propiconazole	Northern corn leaf blight	8-Feb-12	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC and TAS)
PER11768 Version 2	Pumpkin	Insecticide	Chlorpyrifos	African black beetle	28-Jun-13	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC and NSW)
PER13566 Version 3	Tomato and capsicum (field grown)	Insecticide	Methomyl	Fruit fly including Queensland fruit fly and Lesser Queensland fruit fly	7-Dec-12	31-May-21	Growcom	Growing districts of Bowen and Gumlu QLD only
PER11991 Version 2	Silverbeet	Fungicide	Quinoxifen	Powdery mildew	29-Jun-11	31-Mar-21	Growcom	All states (except VIC)

## Reach your target audience with *Vegetables Australia!*

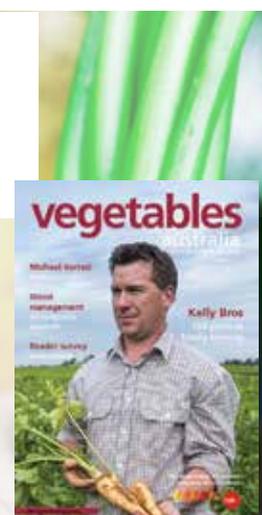
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T: (03) 9882 0277 F: (03) 9882 6722  
E: info@ausveg.com.au





AUSVEG reached a national audience of 5,211,001 throughout the month of January, with a total of 487 media reports mentioning AUSVEG across print, broadcast and television outlets.

In February, AUSVEG media mentions increased to 895 reports with an estimated audience of almost six million.

AUSVEG National Manager – Scientific Affairs Dr Jessica Lye featured extensively across live and pre-recorded television and radio, as well as print media outlets, following the voluntary recall of some pre-packaged lettuce products from Victoria. AUSVEG represented the industry on this issue in approximately 600 media reports, reaching an audience of more than 4.5 million.

Dr Lye outlined that this was an isolated incident involving one supplier and reiterated that the main priority for the vegetable industry is consumer safety. She added that consumers can have confidence that fresh and pre-packaged vegetable products available for purchase throughout Australia are safe to eat.

### Labour hire

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy featured across prominent print media and broadcast channels highlighting the concerns around the drop in seasonal workers visiting Australia over the past two years. This

included a television interview broadcast on CCTV, one of China’s biggest English news networks.

Mr Mulcahy stressed how important this labour supply is to growers, and stated that the proposed 32.5 per cent tax on backpackers from July 2016 could become a deterrent in attracting seasonal workers to Australia.

AUSVEG Deputy CEO Andrew White and AUSVEG National Manager – Export Development Michael Coote also appeared in print and on broadcast media reiterating that the proposed change to the way backpackers are taxed could have a significant impact on one of Australian horticulture’s vital labour sources.

### Anti-dumping duties

After the Federal Government announced that anti-dumping duties will be imposed on imported canned tomatoes from Italy, AUSVEG Deputy CEO Andrew White appeared on national television and broadcast media welcoming the decision.

Mr White explained that the anti-dumping duties will ensure Australian producers can compete on a level playing field with their international counterparts, and hoped that this decision will have flow-on effects to ensure a fair market for all growers.

### Export success

AUSVEG has been working hard to help vegetable growers expand their businesses and target lucrative export markets overseas. AUSVEG National Manager – Export Development Michael Coote recently appeared on broadcast and in print media, welcoming Papua New Guinea’s decision to lift the ban on the import of selected Australian fruit and vegetables for three months. Mr Coote said that the loss of any export market increased pressure on Australian vegetable growers and he hoped that the ban will be reversed permanently following the three-month period.

Mr Coote also featured in the media congratulating the export success of a Victorian grower, who secured a business deal in Dubai after an industry-led trade mission to the United Arab Emirates.

### Insightful vegetable research

AUSVEG National Manager – Scientific Affairs Dr Jessica Lye appeared on broadcast

media discussing research from Harvard University, which revealed that eating vegetables high in fibre at a young age is associated with a decreased risk of developing breast cancer.

AUSVEG Manager – Communications Shaun Lindhe also appeared on broadcast media discussing the results from consumer research study, Project Harvest, which showed that consumers aren’t able to identify individual varieties of some of their favourite vegetables. Mr Lindhe also featured on broadcast media highlighting that Australians are falling short of the recommended daily intake of vegetables despite the belief that they are meeting their quota.



Communication of R&D projects in the Australian vegetable industry have been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027

## Jordan Brooke-Barnett: Letting growers have their say in SA

IT HAS BEEN ALMOST TWO YEARS SINCE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS FIRST HAD ACCESS TO STATE REPRESENTATIVE BODY AUSVEG SA, WHICH WORKS TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE GROWERS' CONCERNS ARE HEARD IN PARLIAMENT AND THE MEDIA. STATE MANAGER JORDAN BROOKE-BARNETT SPEAKS TO *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* ABOUT THE ORGANISATION'S CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE GOALS.

Since its inception, AUSVEG SA has been determined to provide vegetable and potato growers in South Australia with an unprecedented level of representation.

Following the official launch of the state representative body in June 2014, State Manager Jordan Brooke-Barnett has been highly active in agri-political advocacy, listening to growers from around the state and providing a unified voice to government to ensure growers' concerns are heard.

In particular, Mr Brooke-Barnett has been working hard to drive investment and

improve labour access in the state's horticulture industry, to ensure it remains a significant contributor to the South Australian economy and lift the state out of a difficult time that has resulted in the highest rate of unemployment in the country.

"AUSVEG SA has been driving pretty hard to build investment in the Northern Adelaide Plains. We have been working with a lot of influential politicians to achieve this, and it is starting to get the attention it deserves," Mr Brooke-Barnett said.

"We have been out there advocating for growers in

the media on these issues. If we don't fight for them, then nothing will progress."

### A passion for the industry

Having grown up on a farm in the south-east region of the state, Mr Brooke-Barnett has a clear understanding and inherent passion for the South Australian horticulture industry. Armed with a background in communication and marketing, Mr Brooke-Barnett has been using his skills to ensure growers have access to programs and training to build their productivity and profitability.

"We have an exciting series of programs in export, Integrated Pest Management and trade lined up for 2016 that just wasn't available for South Australian growers before," he said.

Mr Brooke-Barnett is also focused on building relationships with corporate partners to ensure the growers he represents can have access to advice from leading businesses in the country on issues such as tax, R&D and legal matters.

"I think our industry networks

are exceptional. Bureaucrats and parliamentarians as well as our corporate partners respect our industry and I'd like to see that continue over the next year."

### Grower involvement

To have a greater say in the industry, Mr Brooke-Barnett urges all vegetable and potato growers in South Australia to join AUSVEG SA as members, or to increase their involvement in the organisation.

"I like it when I receive a phone call at 10 o'clock at night and a grower wants me to solve a problem because it means they are using the association and that they value it," Mr Brooke-Barnett said.

"We are always looking to build our membership base and welcome any new growers who would like to get involved in AUSVEG SA and have a say in the future direction of their industry."



AUSVEG SA State Manager Jordan Brooke-Barnett at the 2015 South Australian Vegetable Industry Dinner.



Jordan Brooke-Barnett can be contacted on (08) 8221 5220 or [jordan.brooke-barnett@ausveg.com.au](mailto:jordan.brooke-barnett@ausveg.com.au).

# Around the states

## Western Australia



Horticulture industries in Western Australia received some good news over the Christmas and New Year period, after the sale of the Canning Vale wholesale Market City site went to the industry bid, Perth Markets Ltd rather than property developer proponents. This will ensure that there is a long-term future for this key piece of infrastructure. Vegetable growers provided a significant amount of the capital raised and vegetablesWA was key in highlighting to government the risks of property developers

taking control.

Many growers are reporting declines in labour availability, which is backed up by government confirming that 417 visa holders are in decline. The proposed backpacker tax will only exacerbate this worrying trend. vegetablesWA is working with the National Farmers Federation, the Western Australian Farmers Federation and a range of other state associations across agriculture, tourism and hospitality to seek needed changes to this proposal.

Also in the labour space, vegetablesWA is working to support Growcom and the Voice of Horticulture to mount an effective case in the Horticulture Award review, where the claims of unions are expected to be strong.

Rogue labour hire

companies (also operating as sole traders and partnerships) continue to be a source of concern to the industry. We are seeking that the State Government introduces specific laws to regulate the industry because growers simply don't have the necessary powers to investigate the bona fides of these companies. Given that employment agents are already regulated by the *Employment Agents Act 1976*, there is already a WA precedent for specific laws in this area and the UK *Gangmasters Licencing Act 2004* provides an example of an existing regime. If growers have particular concerns in this area, please contact us so we can assist.

Stable fly has unfortunately been an issue among the broader community north of Perth again this summer, despite the tremendous gains

that many growers have made in altering their management practices. In good news though, it appears that grower efforts in conjunction with advice funded by the Agricultural Produce Commission (APC) and Horticulture Innovation Australia at Capel have largely controlled the pest this year. The APC Vegetable Producers Committee is represented on the regulatory review panel, which is looking at how incidences are reported and progressed.

**John Shannon**  
vegetablesWA  
Executive Officer  
103 Outram St  
West Perth WA 6005  
Phone: (08) 9481 0834  
Email: john.shannon@vegetableswa.com.au

## Queensland



together we grow

A network of six agriculture workforce officers based across Queensland have been appointed to help agribusinesses tackle one of the major challenges facing agriculture – accessing a consistent supply of appropriately skilled workers.

The Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) is an industry-led initiative funded by the Queensland Government as part of a package of rural jobs initiatives that aim to address agriculture's labour and skill needs, including the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA), AgForce School to Industry Partnership Program (SIPP) and Gateway Schools to Agribusiness.

The officers are based

with agriculture industry organisations including Growcom, Bowen Gumlu Growers Association, Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers, Mackay Canegrowers and Mareeba District Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and are working in partnership with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. They are:

- Southern Qld: Janne Dipple, jdipple@growcom.com.au, 0408 135 003.

- South East Qld (Project Manager): Michelle Templin, mtemplin@growcom.com.au, 0400 231 949.

- North Qld: Bianca Fullarton, rwd@bowengumlugrowers.com.au, 0427 009 929.

- Wide Bay Burnett: Kylie Jackson, kylie.jackson@bfgv.com.au, 0427 867 716.

- Central Qld: Janice Nelson, Janice\_nelson@canegrowers.com.au, 0419 706 506.

- Far North Qld: Leanne Kruss, rwd.mdfvga.fnq@gmail.com, 0431 743 633.

The new network is a slightly redefined version of the very successful Queensland Production Horticulture Workforce Development model, with the focus now extended to supporting employment and skilling outcomes for the whole of agriculture and not just production horticulture.

The Queensland production horticulture team delivered significant results for our industry, facilitating training for more than 1,260 employees and informing more than 9,150 students about careers. The model worked exceptionally well, having workforce development officers located in key growing areas who knew the challenges, and relevant stakeholders who could provide support. It made sense to continue to build the momentum.

Accessing a consistent supply of appropriately skilled workers has long been an issue for farmers. The network's focus is to work with

farmers across all agriculture sectors to gain an understanding of their labour and skills needs and to connect them with the most appropriate solution to help them grow their business. This could include information on the variety of available employment options and wage subsidies, connecting them with local recruitment and training providers, or providing an update on what funding opportunities are available to up-skill their workers.

If you want to know more about the wide variety of employment options that are available, please register to receive our free bi-monthly Workplace Essentials newsletter. To subscribe visit <http://news.growcom.com.au>.

**Pat Hannan**  
Growcom  
Chief Executive Officer  
68 Anderson Street,  
Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006  
Phone: (07) 3620 3844  
Fax: (07) 3620 3880

## Tasmania



The TFGA continues to remind the Tasmanian Government that agriculture is one of the key economic drivers for the state's economy; and farming, the most traditional of all our industries, will provide the backbone for our financial recovery.

The future of agriculture in Tasmania is vital to our economic survival. Therefore, it is imperative that governments at all levels do not destroy the investment environment that farmers require to deliver the goods.

Around the middle of this year, the Tasmanian Liberal

Government will hand down its second budget – the budget for the 2016-17 financial year. The TFGA will be waiting to see the initiatives we proposed in our State Budget Submission come to fruition.

An area that is important to all farmers is water management. Tasmania comprises just one per cent of Australia's landmass but receives 12 per cent of the country's total rainfall, making our freshwater resource potentially the state's most valuable natural resource. If utilised efficiently and sustainably, Tasmania's water resources should provide it with a great advantage over other states. The issue is that we have four entities managing this precious resource.

We are asking for a review of the current water management regime where we have Hydro, Tasmanian Irrigation, TasWater and the Water Management

Branch within the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) having varying degrees of management in relation to our water resources. Put simply, the current model is not sustainable and is inefficient and counterproductive to the sector.

Another initiative we have put to government is to establish an invasive incursions emergency contingent fund. The TFGA recognises the government has invested significantly in biosecurity, but sees that further investment in a contingency fund will ensure systems are in place to provide faster responses to pest and disease incursions.

The provision of such a fund will assist in urgent responses to an invasive incursion, whether plant or animal. This fund would allow for more efficient and timely responses, as any incursions are best dealt with in the initial stage and are therefore less resource intensive in the long-term.

These initiatives will provide a firm base for the next stage of agricultural expansion. With a renewed sense of security and an assurance of government support, farmers will have the confidence to commit to further investment – investment which will deliver more jobs and increased prosperity – and that is good news for all Tasmanians.

### Wayne Johnston

Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association  
President  
Cnr Cimitiere and Charles Streets  
Launceston, Tas 7250  
Phone: (03) 6332 1800  
Fax: (03) 6331 4344

## Victoria



In early February, AUSVEG VIC celebrated its official launch with a successful event attended by many of the state's leading growers, supply chain representatives and state dignitaries, including Mr Luke Wilson, Lead Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Energy and Resources; Mr Peter Walsh, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Leader of the Nationals; Mr John Pesutto, Shadow Attorney General and Ms Mary-Anne Thomas, Parliamentary Secretary for Health who represented the Victorian Minister for Agriculture.

This event is the first of many being planned by AUSVEG VIC, with the inaugural AUSVEG VIC Awards for Excellence to

be held on Friday 22 April at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club. Winners of the AUSVEG VIC Awards for Excellence will automatically be nominated for the National Awards for Excellence, to be held at the National Horticulture Convention in June. To purchase tickets or nominate yourself or another deserving Victorian grower for an award, please visit [www.ausvegvic.com.au](http://www.ausvegvic.com.au).

The results from AUSVEG VIC's 2016 Grower Survey are in, with access to water and the cost of labour clearly being the most important issues for Victorian vegetable and potato growers. Over the coming weeks, AUSVEG VIC will be working to formalise its policy positions in relation to these crucial issues.

On 16 February, AUSVEG VIC joined representatives

from RACV and the Victorian Transport Association at a press conference calling on the Victorian Government to build the 'North-East Link', which would connect Melbourne's Western Ring Road and East-Link. This missing link in Victoria's road infrastructure would significantly benefit the state's growers, particularly those in Melbourne's south-east, by enabling easier access to the new Melbourne Market in Epping.

Meanwhile, trial truck-curfews put in place in Melbourne's north-east are due for review in March. AUSVEG VIC will be making representations to all relevant parties in an attempt to have these curfews removed, as they have significantly impeded the ability of growers to get their produce to the

Melbourne Market.

If you would like further information or have any issues you would like to raise, please contact AUSVEG VIC. Your input is crucial to the ongoing success of the organisation and we encourage you to get in touch at any time.

### Kurt Hermann

AUSVEG VIC  
State Manager  
Level 2, 273 Camberwell Road  
Camberwell, VIC 3124  
Phone: (03) 9882 0277  
Email: [kurt.hermann@ausveg.com.au](mailto:kurt.hermann@ausveg.com.au)

# Around the states

## South Australia



It's a new year with old challenges for the South Australian vegetable industry, as hardworking growers continue to face rising costs. The main agri-political issues for AUSVEG SA in this period have been in planning and development legislation and in securing funding for new projects to benefit the South Australian vegetable industry.

AUSVEG SA has been working cooperatively with a number

of state horticultural groups to respond to the South Australian Government's planning legislation before parliament. This has involved key meetings with Planning Minister the Hon. John Rau MP to refine the proposed urban growth boundary in Adelaide's north. AUSVEG SA has concerns that the current drafting of boundaries would create an arbitrary barrier affecting land prices. While we recognise the importance of protecting land further north and in strategically important areas in the Adelaide Hills, industry needs to be consulted to ensure planning regulations are developed in the best interests of the industry. AUSVEG SA has been vocal

in the media in the past few months on the issue of the upcoming review into the Horticulture Award Rate by the Fair Work Commission. Particularly concerning are claims by a number of unions which would see a significant cost burden added to growers and a decrease in flexibility under the award. AUSVEG SA is working closely with the AUSVEG national office and a number of other horticultural groups like Growcom who are coordinating the response on behalf of industry.

In some positive news, AUSVEG SA recently received funding from Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited for an Australian-first project to

train resellers in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques. The project will provide South Australian resellers and advisers with better information and tools to promote IPM concepts on South Australian vegetable farms. We are extremely excited to be trialling this project which will provide South Australian growers with better advice and the opportunity to integrate IPM concepts into their growing practices.

### Jordan Brooke-Barnett

AUSVEG SA  
State Manager  
Suite 205, 22 Grenfell St  
Adelaide SA 5000  
Phone: (08) 8221 5220

## New South Wales



NSW Farmers has welcomed the final report of the independent review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct. NSW Farmers hopes that the government will act swiftly in accepting the report's recommendations as part of its commitment to growing horticulture's contribution to the economy.

Overall, the report has incorporated a number of NSW Farmers' positions on the code, including the recommendation that no grower should be excluded from the protections of the code merely because they were subject to a contract made before 2006.

NSW Farmers commends the Review Panel for the conclusion that growers deserve protection where disputes arise over quality and price of produce, regardless of whether it is sold through a central market or directly to a retailer. The recommendation for a more nimble and timely

dispute resolution system that utilises industry expertise to facilitate commercial outcomes is a very welcome approach.

These proposals are enhanced by recommendations to provide modern enforcement tools of civil penalty provisions, infringement notices and improved audit powers to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. NSW Farmers believes that these recommendations, along with a revamped commitment to educate stakeholders on the implementation of the code, will be important foundations to building more compliant

behaviour in the market.

While NSW Farmers is concerned that the report recommends removing existing rules regarding traders operating as agents or merchants, with the investment in real time price reporting for horticulture markets, an amended code could still achieve certainty and transparency for growers.

### Brett Guthrey

NSW Farmers' Association  
Horticulture Chair  
Level 25, 66 Goulburn Street  
Sydney, NSW 2000  
Phone: (02) 8251 1804  
Fax: (02) 8251 1750

## Northern Territory



February in the Top End of the NT is traditionally a quiet time on the farm as the Wet Season is normally at its peak, but 2016 rainfall has been very disappointing. After some very heavy falls in December 2015, January and February have only totalled a bit over 200mm rather than the 500mm (Middle Point AWS) normally expected by now in the Darwin rural area. The 2014/2015 period also produced a lower rainfall Wet season with approximately

1,132mm instead of the 1,407mm average that might be expected at Middle Point in the Darwin rural area.

This lack of rain to complete the yearly recharge of the ground water aquifers around Darwin and Katherine is a major concern. Horticultural production in Darwin rural, Douglas-Daly and Katherine/Mataranka currently depends almost entirely on ground water and the reliable recharge of those aquifers each Wet season. This season saw a number of bores in the Darwin rural area spiking as ground water levels dropped significantly at the end of the Dry season. This is a very timely reminder that these ground water systems are only a finite resource and need to be fully recharged every year for growers to have confidence that

there is enough water to irrigate their existing crops in the Dry. It certainly challenges the concept that northern Australia has unlimited amounts of water at its disposal.

This has a number of considerations for the NT horticulture industry. The first is the need to complete and implement the water allocation plans for the remaining aquifers in the production areas so that existing growers are confident in their water supply. The second is that further northern agricultural and horticultural development in the NT will depend on larger, reliable and cost-effective water resources.

With northern development still high on the agenda, it is time for the increasing research and development effort in the north to challenge some of

the old water paradigms, like on-farm surface water storage or wet season capture not being viable in the tropics. All options should be on the table. It is time to research potentially profitable crops, matched to accessible markets, and develop growing systems and water options for NT growers.

If you are interested in Northern Development, don't miss the second Northern Australia Food Futures Conference in Darwin from 11-13 April 2016. For more information visit [www.ivvy.com/event/NAFF16](http://www.ivvy.com/event/NAFF16).

### Greg Owens

NT Farmers Association  
Vegetable Grower Engagement Officer  
Mobile: 0437 092 551  
Email: [greg@ntfarmers.org.au](mailto:greg@ntfarmers.org.au)  
Website: [www.ntfarmers.org.au](http://www.ntfarmers.org.au)



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