

vegetables australia

November/December 2013

**The Hon.
Greg Hunt MP**

**Environment
Minister backs
industry action
on environmental
management**

Daniel Quattrochi
Young grower

Carlo Pippo
Passion for the job

Jamie Jurgens
Protecting the Great
Barrier Reef, and his
business

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150 Years
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AUSVEG Chairman and CEO messages



Geoff Moar

AUSVEG Chairman

As the recently-elected Coalition Government continues settling in to Canberra, AUSVEG is committed to building on already-strong relationships, while continuing to provide a voice for growers. With this in mind, I am pleased to report that AUSVEG was recently among the first agricultural groups in the country to a secure a meeting with newly-appointed Federal Minister for Agriculture, The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP.

In recent weeks, a delegation including myself, AUSVEG Board Member and former Chairman John Brent, AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy and Communications and Public Affairs Manager William Churchill, sat down with Mr Joyce for what was a highly-productive meeting. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for AUSVEG representatives to raise a range of key issues impacting the sector, and was also a great chance to get to know the Minister and his vision for the vegetable industry.

We found Mr Joyce took a keen interest in the discussion and was highly-responsive to issues raised.

AUSVEG is looking forward to working closely with him as we continue advocating for growers.

Elsewhere, it is pleasing to read about the on-farm successes stemming from industry R&D, outlined in the Grower Success Stories publication which will accompany this magazine. The booklets recognise those in the industry who have successfully embraced R&D advances, funded through the National Vegetable Levy. It's a well-deserved pat on the back for growers who have incorporated

initiatives into their businesses.

As a grower myself, I am keenly aware of the important role well-funded R&D plays in the successful advancement of the sector, and its long-term sustainability and viability. These Grower Success Stories serve as prime examples of the benefits the levy can bring to the industry. I would encourage all growers to keep abreast of ongoing R&D initiatives, and to consider the positive effects they can bring to their businesses.

AUSVEG will certainly keep you posted about future developments and I look forward to hearing many more Grower Success Stories in the years ahead.

Geoff Moar
Chairman
AUSVEG



Richard Mulcahy

AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer

The 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence at the Cairns Convention and Exhibition Centre from June 19 to 21 may be some months away, but it will be upon us before we know it. With planning now in full swing, I am excited to announce Mr Anthony Pratt, Executive Chairman of Visy, has been confirmed as a keynote speaker at the event. Employing more than 9,000 people, Visy is one of Australia's largest privately-owned companies and focuses primarily on packaging, paper, clean energy production and recycling. A long-time friend of the vegetable industry, Mr Pratt has also spent time in the United States, where he led the expansion of Pratt Industries, which now employs approximately 4,000 people across more than 50 American sites. He also takes a keen interest in numerous environmental causes and is a member of the Climate Group, established by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. AUSVEG is delighted to have Mr Pratt on board for the Convention and is certain his wealth of experience in the business and environmental spheres will prove invaluable to delegates. More exciting details about the Convention will be released in coming months. For up-to-date information be sure to keep an eye on the AUSVEG website at www.ausveg.com.au/convention.

Meanwhile, AUSVEG's new Melbourne headquarters recently hosted four days of productive meetings featuring the vegetable industry's three Design Teams. Predominantly comprised of growers, each

team aligns to one of the three Strategic Priorities outlined in the Vegetable Industry Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Those priorities are: 'Consumer Alignment', 'Market and Value Chain Development', and 'Farm Productivity, Resource Use and Management'. The ongoing work of the Design Teams is crucial to ensuring growers continue to drive the direction of industry R&D to benefit the sector.

The Australian Vegetable Industry Annual Report 2012/13 is also hot of the press and has been distributed alongside this edition of *Vegetables Australia*. Primarily, the Annual Report provides a valuable overview for levy payers of the R&D investment program through HAL over the past financial year and I would encourage levy payers to read it. Almost \$10 million (\$9,959,456) of levies and matched funds from the Australian Government were invested in industry R&D during 2012-13. As investment in R&D continues this financial year, I would encourage all growers to take advantage of exciting new developments as they come online by registering for free as a user on the AUSVEG website. The password protected section on the website is regularly updated with the latest findings, which can be found easily via the R&D search engine.

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**FRONT COVER:**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP with
AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy

Photograph by Luka Kauzlaric

Editorial

There's plenty of passion packed in to this edition of *Vegetable's Australia*.

While many growers bring an undeniable enthusiasm to their work, it could be tough to top Carlo Pippo in the keenness stakes (page 14). Having made the transition to cucumbers from tomatoes a few years ago, the grower from Wardell in the Northern Rivers region of NSW is a prime example of how a love of the job has been converted into business success.

Elsewhere, in South Australia, young grower Daniel Quattrochi (page 22) tells an inspiring story of how, aged 12, he stepped-up his involvement

in the industry following his father's passing. The 23-year-old, who has growing "in his blood", now plays a key role in his family's Monika's Organics business, a Certified Organic grower of spinach, spring onions, beetroots and leeks, specialising in packing on-farm for direct supply into Coles and Woolworths in South Australia.

A wrap-up of the recent Asia Fruit Logistica event in Hong Kong (page 12) is also included in this edition as is a report on the 2013 Carrot Growers' Study tour to the USA (page 30). Be sure to keep an eye out also for more exciting news about the looming 2014 AUSVEG National

Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence in Cairns from June 19 to 21 (page 10).

In the R&D sphere, AUSVEG Economist Shaun Muscat examines recent trends in Australian vegetable exports, and opportunities in the Asian market (page 24). Meanwhile, new research from Dr Doris Blaesing (page 38) considers the best ways to allow growers to access and apply research, development and extension

advances in the industry.

In EnviroVeg news (page 18), a new app has been developed to make it easier for growers to deal with environmental issues on their properties. A feature about Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt's launch of the app is included (page 26).

Meanwhile, Rosemary Henderson of Protech Consulting provides advice on the handling and storage of chemicals (page 19).

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2014
Convention



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Jamie
Jurgens

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Veggie bites

Facts & figures...



319,000 ha

Total area farmed for carrot production in 2012, as recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

7.8 days

The amount of time consumers expect broccoli to remain fresh after purchase, as recorded by the Project Harvest report.

52%

According to research undertaken by the University of Hawaii Cancer Centre, women who consumed the most yellow-orange vegetables were 52% less likely to be diagnosed with invasive bladder cancer compared to women who consumed the least amount.

948

According to Colmar Brunton's Project Harvest report, the number of celery products launched globally between June and August 2013.

2,060 ha

The total area of cabbage plantings in Australia between 2008/2009, as recorded by the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2012.

9,007 GL

The total amount (gigalitres) of water used on Australian farms in 2011-12, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.



7%

The average increase in vegetable purchases between July and August 2013, as recorded by Colmar Brunton's Project Harvest report.

\$60,610,721

The 2012 Australian organic vegetable and herb farm-gate market value, according to the Biological Farmers of Australia Ltd.

Biosecurity brief



with Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene

IN THIS INSTALMENT OF *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA'S* SERIES ON BIOSECURITY, AUSVEG BIOSECURITY ADVISOR, DR KEVIN CLAYTON-GREENE, DISCUSSES THE SIMULATED INCURSION EVENT HE AND AUSVEG HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH RECENTLY.



What have you been working on lately in relation to industry biosecurity?

There are a couple of things happening at the moment. The first is that we're working on a project which is looking at the level of biosecurity awareness and preparedness across the vegetable industry supply chain. This project is focusing on what needs to be done as an industry to raise awareness, and highlight how important biosecurity is.

The second issue is that, as a representative of the industry, AUSVEG is a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). The EPPRD has been around for a long time but there are a lot of people who have not been involved with it before. We need to know what the procedure is when we have an incursion. We need to have people at AUSVEG who have been through at least one exercise so that if there is a real incursion, we've already got a feel for what needs to be done, and what the issues will be in relation to getting things mobilised. Incursions will usually mean there will be restrictions on trade, movement of vehicles and produce, all sorts of things.

What is an example of a simulated incursion?

Recently we had a simulated incursion of an outbreak of

coddling moth, which attacks a wide range of crops including vegetables near the Victorian/NSW border in Mildura. The incursion would involve a number of jurisdictions, including the Federal Government and a number of industries – in particular, grains, citrus, cotton, veggies and nursery. The exercise played out exactly as if there was an actual incursion, from the initial teleconference through to preparing a response plan. It was gratifying to see that all the actual people who would be involved in real life event also participated.

Ultimately who is responsible for overlooking the response to an incursion?

Let's say you're a grower, and you're out in your paddock and you see something that doesn't look too good or you've never seen before. You'd ring up the pest hotline and the pest in question would get a tentative identification, which would be relayed to various state departments. The Chief Plant Protection Officer in the affected jurisdiction is obligated, within 24 hours, to notify the Office of the Chief Plant Protection Officer at DAFF. There is then an emergency meeting called of all the affected parties. This includes all the state jurisdictions, the Federal Government and affected industries. This is called

the Consultative Committee for Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP).

Then at that point, and this is what we practised in the simulation, the CCEPP would then set the quarantine zone (if required), and decide the next steps of recommendation that go to a National Management Group (NMG), which comprises senior managers from the various state departments plus affected industries. The NMG would then make a final decision about eradication. Plant Health Australia, who look after the EPPRD, would come up with cost-sharing arrangements, and then procedures would be put in place.

How long does it usually take to put all necessary procedures into effect?

If it's a serious incursion, it can happen quite quickly. Normally, what's happened is a quarantine zone is set up immediately and movement protocols are created, depending on the pest, so people and goods can no longer move in and out freely. With the green papaya fruit fly outbreak that was successfully eradicated in north Queensland about 10 or 12 years ago, there was a whole quarantine zone set up in northern Queensland. To go in and out, every car and vehicle was inspected. So it depends on what it is, but the eradication costs can range from thousands to hundreds of

millions of dollars. However, the cost to the industry and the cost to the country if a pest becomes established can be many times that.

Will you continue working on simulated incursion events?

Yes it's ongoing. As the technical expert, I've already participated in the first teleconference for that. That was useful because it highlighted the other issues we have about communications. We've got a large number of people involved. We've been working on getting the industry involved, to see the steps that need to be done.

Are you confident that it's progressing well?

So far, so good. I think it will be very beneficial because if an incursion happens, we as an industry need to be aware of what we need to do, and who we need to contact.



Biosecurity manuals are available through the Plant Health Australia website: www.planthealthaustralia.com.au. Email: info@ausveg.com.au Project Number: VG11013

Sneak peek 2014 AUSVEG Convention events



Women in Horticulture: Full steam ahead

Playing an ever-important role in the male-dominated field of horticulture, female veggie and potato growers will again be treated to an afternoon of luxury at the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention as the industry recognises their contribution.

The 2014 Women in Horticulture event will see delegates taken on a journey through the lush tropical rainforest to the north of Cairns before a relaxing afternoon tea. Completed in 1891, the scenic Kuranda Railway meanders through the World Heritage-listed Barron Gorge National Park. It will leave delegates in awe of its stunning natural beauty.

Women are increasingly becoming leaders within the

horticulture industry and often take on a raft of roles within family businesses; from quality assurance to accounts and administration. An opportunity to share experiences, lend support and make new friends across the industry, the Women in Horticulture event will also feature several influential speakers. These stories of success from impressive self-made women will no doubt leave delegates feeling inspired.

As always, the event is complemented by the popular Women in Horticulture Award, which acknowledges women who have achieved outstanding success and demonstrated strong commitment to the industry. The 2014 Women in Horticulture Award will be presented at the spectacular Gala Dinner on Saturday 21 June.

Making a splash in the industry

Having taken part in exciting activities including jet boating and go-karting over the past two years, the industry's young bloods are set to face their most exhilarating challenge yet when they hit the water for an exciting event aimed exclusively at them at the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention.

Young growers from across Australia will get the chance to try their hand at water skiing and wake boarding at one of Tropical North Queensland's newest attractions. With many delegates travelling from far-flung corners of the country, the afternoon event offers an important opportunity to catch up with old mates, make some



new friends and most of all, to have fun.

With an ageing industry, it has never been more important to identify and support those who will lead the sector into the future. This sentiment is echoed by Dow AgroSciences, who will again sponsor the event.

The younger generation bring with them innovative ideas, new techniques and a fresh approach, all of which are vital to the success of the industry in the long term.

AUSVEG welcomes all growers aged 35 and under to register for this event. Registration is

free, however, spaces are strictly limited, so be sure to apply now to avoid missing out!



To register for the 2014 Convention and for more information go to www.ausveg.com.au/convention

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Horticulture Australia

This research project has been funded through HAL using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.



Enter the dragon

OVER THREE DAYS IN SEPTEMBER, AUSVEG PROVIDED A GROUP OF GROWERS AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND THE ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA TRADE SHOW AS PART OF A VEGETABLE LEVY-FUNDED PROJECT TO PROMOTE AUSTRALIAN R&D.

Often talked of as 'The Pearl of the Orient', Hong Kong now refers to itself as Asia's World City. With a history deeply coloured by international influences, it is easy to see why this is the case, and why this made Hong Kong the perfect showcase for the Australian vegetable industry's exciting new trade initiatives.

As early as 1513, explorers and merchants from Portugal established trade with the region, however, after clashes that saw the Portuguese expelled, the British-owned East India Company commenced trading activities with Chinese merchants in the territory, with opium being an important commodity.

The British established the area as a Crown Colony, and the region's trade activities continued to grow. More recently, the region was briefly held under Japanese control during the Second World War, before being relinquished to the British in 1945. In 1997, the Sovereignty of Hong Kong

was transferred from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China, but the legacy of this international influence remains plain to see.

It is this legacy, and a deep harbour ideal for shipping, that made Hong Kong the global trade hub that it is today, and an ideal host for the 2013 Asia Fruit Logistica, which for the first time, featured a stand showcasing high quality Australian produce and industry Research and Development (R&D).

The Australian Vegetables stand provided the 6,500 attendees of Asia Fruit Logistica with a first-hand experience of the clean, fresh and safe nature of Australian-grown produce. The primary goal of this project was to demonstrate the advantages of Australian produce as a result of industry R&D investment. The backdrop to the Australian Vegetables stand was an expansive visual demonstration of how R&D has been incorporated into every facet of the Australian vegetable



industry, from investment in seed technology designed to grow vegetables which meet consumer needs, through to innovative packaging and logistics solutions to provide the freshest produce to market.

On hand at the Australian Vegetables display were a range of industry experts to provide the legions of buyers at the event with more information about the high quality of Australian produce as a result of prolonged investment in R&D. Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene, the vegetable industry's Biosecurity Advisor, informed attendees how industry R&D makes Australian vegetables an attractive and viable option for Asian markets.

"Visitors were taken with the

breadth of vegetables - from cool temperate to tropical - produced in Australia and the challenges and opportunities that this creates. It was also clear that many other competitor countries are also supporting their industries with R&D," said Dr Clayton-Greene.

Also on hand were a number of Australian growers who are already experienced with exporting to Asia. Peter Wauchope, of Centre West Exports in WA, said that a lot of interest was shown in Australian vegetables, and there appears to be growing demand for produce which has not originated in China.

"This demand is being led by an increasingly sophisticated consumer and market sector



in the Asian region," said Mr Wauchope.

This initiative is part of the Australian vegetable industry's push to increase exports of Australian produce. The industry currently only exports around seven per cent of its produce, and as a result, the vast majority of Australian produce supplies the domestic market forcing Australian growers to be 'price takers', instead of being able to demand reasonable returns for their produce. In a recent column in *Vegetables Australia*, Bathurst sweetcorn grower and

Chair of the Vegetable IAC, Jeff McSpedden stated, "While exporting may not be an option for all vegetable operations, taking produce overseas will ultimately assist growers in the domestic market."

The mission to Hong Kong also served as an eye-opening educational experience. Industry representatives learnt first-hand what global buyers are seeking when it comes to produce. Particularly apparent was the preference for convenience in these markets, with much of the produce on display at the

event packaged pre-cut and individually portioned. "The trends towards convenience in fruit and vegetable products were plain to see in Hong Kong, and Australian growers looking to explore these markets should bear this in mind when developing their offerings," said AUSVEG National Marketing Manager, Simon Coburn.

As part of this mission to Asia Fruit Logistica, AUSVEG collected the details of international buyers interested in Australian produce, and is encouraging growers interested

in exporting to pursue these leads.

"These contacts have already delivered some promising opportunities for Australian growers, and it is hoped that ultimately this increases vegetable exports to regions like Asia and the Middle East," said Mr Coburn.

"Judging by the level of interest in the Australian Vegetables stand at Asia Fruit Logistica, the industry's confidence in the potential of export markets is well founded and Australian vegetable growers should continue to pursue the opportunities these emerging markets provide."

This project has been funded by HAL using the National Vegetable Levy with matched funds from the Australian Government.



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Cucumbers star for Carlo Pippo

Photographs by Mike Greenslade.

CARLO PIPPO IS A MAN WITH AN UNDENIABLE LUST FOR LIFE, AND HIS BUSINESS. HAVING MADE THE MOVE FROM TOMATOES TO CUCUMBERS A FEW YEARS BACK, THE PRIMARY PRODUCER BASED IN THE NORTHERN RIVERS OF NSW DESCRIBES HIS HECTIC SEVEN DAY WORK ROUTINE AS "LIKE A HOLIDAY". AS KAREN SHAW WRITES, THIS ENTHUSIASTIC ATTITUDE TO THE JOB HAS CLEARLY PAID DIVIDENDS.



When Carlo Pippo agreed to take part in a cucumber growing trial six years ago, little did he realise how transformative the move would be. Within six months he'd ripped out the tomatoes he'd grown for 22 years, replaced them with cucumbers and now produces at least 3500 tonnes of the vegetable annually for supermarket giant Coles.

"Cucumbers really excited me when I first started growing them," Carlo explains. "I love the plants. I love that they grow so fast, and I love how nice they look. A cucumber is a cucumber. It's got one colour and generally if you're on the ball there's one size," he says.

Carlo is clearly a man who loves his job, describing the seven-day work routine as "like a holiday". Born and bred on a farm on the outskirts of Sydney, he started working with father Luigi as soon as he left school.

The Pippos soon outgrew that property, so the enterprising family moved north to Wardell, in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, to try their hand at

sugar cane farming, thinking life would "get easier". But it was the early eighties; the cane industry collapsed and so the clan – Carlo, his wife Leanne and parents Luigi and Tina – turned back to what they knew best and started growing tomatoes, as well as some remaining cane on their 60ha property.

For 22 years the tomatoes kept the family busy, until Carlo swapped to cucumbers. Since then the business has grown from strength to strength, with at least four hectares covered with igloos including several high-tech polycarbonate houses, complete with fully automated weather stations.

The process

Trading as Fresh@Heart Carlo each year grows four crops of Lebanese, Continental and Slicer cucumbers. Once the seeds have germinated, seedlings are transplanted to a quarantined growing shed. Although Luigi, 78, has officially retired, he still lends



his expertise to watering and nurturing the tiny plants.

"We then transplant them to the hothouses and igloos so they can start growing as vines up 2.4 metre long strings or wires," says Carlo. It's labour intensive work for the 35 staff members, who are all involved with the maintenance of twisting the vines clockwise every three days, clipping them and hand picking daily for up to 28 days.

Much of the guesswork is taken out of the growth cycle as it's all fully computerised. The plants are grown hydroponically

in coir fibre. The fertiliser and nutrient needs are calculated by specialist equipment, which monitors the size of the plants and irrigates according to needs and climatic conditions.

Water used through the irrigation system is harvested on-site and stored in a 35 megalitre tank. Specially designed sand-filters sterilise and cleanse the water before it's mixed with nutrients and stored in massive holding tanks until it's needed on the crop.

While Carlo says the operation is not organic, the introduction of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system four years ago has worked well. "We are just about pesticide free now," he explains proudly.

"All sorts of pests such as thrips, grubs, white fly, mites



“ I get so much enjoyment out of growing something. Farming gives me pleasure. It's a hobby...and my life. That's just the way it is. ”

- Carlo Pippo.

continued over page ►

and aphids pose problems to cucumbers. Controlling these was a major dilemma but we've found that putting in the good bugs and keeping an eye on the crop for outbreaks of other pests works really well."

"While it's probably more expensive than using chemicals, it actually works and we have no issues with residues; none whatsoever. We have no worries about workers having to go into an area that's been sprayed. And it's much healthier for the consumer," says Carlo. "The safer we can make it, the better it is."

Once the crop is harvested, the igloos and poly-houses are sterilised and the cycle starts again.

The future

Each week on average at least 5000 crates of cucumbers leave Carlo's farm, are transported to Coles and are on the supermarket shelves by 9am. Carlo is confident of the industry's future. "That's provided we grow a good, consistent, product, which is

what the customer is after," he says.

It hasn't all been easy with severe weather earlier in the year destroying many of the igloos and wiping out the cucumber crops inside. This happened in February, but Carlo is still repairing some of the damage. Despite this Carlo has plans to double production in the next few years, provided there's a market.

A highlight earlier this year was spruiking his cucumbers for Coles' advertisements, which appeared during the television program *My Kitchen Rules*. While Carlo clearly enjoyed the experience, he has no plans to change career.

"I get so much enjoyment out of growing something. Farming gives me pleasure. It's a hobby...and my life. That's just the way it is," he says.

The only other pastime that might compete is fishing. So when the weather is just right he happily heads out in the boat. And often bags a feed to complement the salad, which has as its main ingredient – cucumbers of course!



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Project Harvest unveils new Interactive Research Tool



EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF THE INTERNET AND LINKED RESOURCES HAS CHANGED THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE AND DO BUSINESS. A DIGITAL ECOLOGY IS EVOLVING; RESULTING IN THE PROLIFERATION OF SOFTWARE DESIGNED TO SUIT ANY APPLICATION. CONTRACTED BY HAL, MARKET RESEARCH AGENCY COLMAR BRUNTON HAS DEVELOPED AN ONLINE 'INTERACTIVE RESEARCH TOOL' (IRT), DESIGNED TO GIVE LEVY PAYING VEGETABLE GROWERS ACCESS TO CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR DATA.

Consumer perception and purchasing behaviour is difficult to accurately predict. HAL recently contracted Colmar Brunton to conduct an unprecedented analysis of vegetable consumption patterns. The three-year research program, entitled 'Project Harvest', aims to identify consumer needs, preferences, motivations and perceptions, as well as trends relating to new vegetable products.

Since June 2013, Colmar Brunton has conducted monthly online tracking and trend analysis. The web-based IRT was designed to give levy paying vegetable growers access to these analyses in an easy to use format. Results can be filtered by monthly report and vegetable line, then further distilled by demographic (e.g. gender, age and location).

For example, growers can use the IRT to identify the following attributes for a selected vegetable:

- ✓ Consumers' average purchase amount, frequency, purchase format and place of purchase
- ✓ Consumer motivation to purchase, expectancy of freshness and common usage
- ✓ Consumer interest regarding new varieties
- ✓ Consumers' value of provenance (i.e. grown in Australia)

Data is currently available for pumpkin, carrot, cauliflower, beans (French/runner), broccoli, sweet corn, lettuce and green peas for June, July and August 2013. Data for more vegetable lines will become available over the life of the project.

Vegetable growers can utilise the IRT to identify potential opportunities in domestic and global markets, improve and promote product offerings to meet market trends, and expand product varieties to suit consumer preferences.

Large-scale trend analysis has the potential to inform production schedule and volume, varietal expansions and marketing programs. Knowledge generated by Project Harvest can inform targeted business decisions from paddock to plate.

As Project Harvest progresses, users of the IRT will be able to compare datasets over time. This

might be useful when measuring the effectiveness of marketing programs and varietal expansion, or to project future trends. The IRT includes an 'Instructions and Methodology' section providing step-by-step instructions on how to use the IRT and the methodology behind Project Harvest.

Harnessing apps for industry success

What is an 'app'? An 'app', short for 'application', is a small, downloadable piece of software that allows you to conveniently access information, organise, monitor and learn. You can download apps from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

AUSVEG has collated a comprehensive list of useful smartphone and tablet apps to assist you with your farm operations by improving the way you do business, network and track weather data. Why not download one and see what it can do to help improve your business? Go to:

<http://ausveg.com.au/resources/smart-phone-apps.htm>

AUSVEG claims no responsibility for any damage or liability caused by the use of these apps. Please contact the app developer directly with any questions or complaints.

Examples of reports available on the IRT:



THE BOTTOM LINE

- The IRT is available to all levy paying vegetable growers.
- The IRT tool provides easy to use and customisable consumer perception and purchasing data.
- Project Harvest data can be used to align marketing strategies and make long term business decisions regarding production volume and varietal expansion.

i Levy paying vegetable growers wishing to access the IRT service are advised to contact AUSVEG for login details.

Phone: (03) 9882 0277
Email: info@ausveg.com.au
This project has been funded by HAL using the vegetable levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

New EnviroVeg iPhone App now available

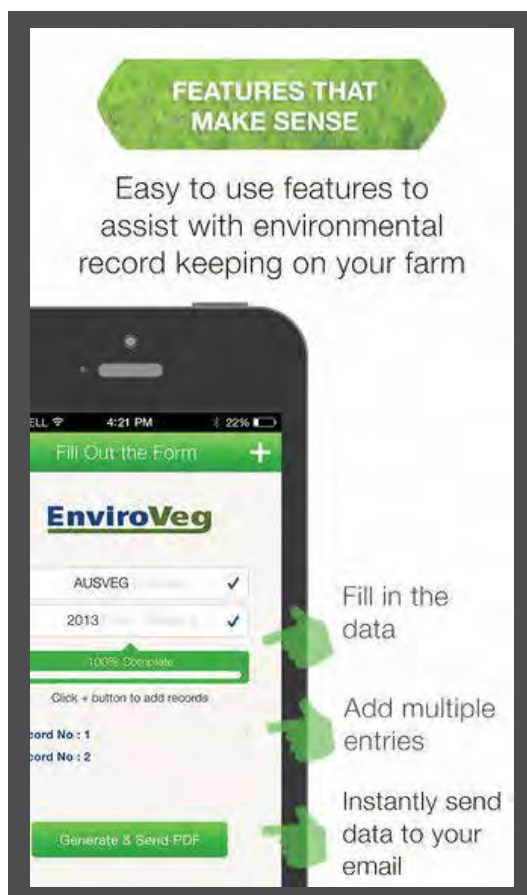
A NEW HIGH-TECH ENVIRONMENTAL TOOL IS NOW AT GROWERS' FINGERTIPS.

EnviroVeg members now have access to a new application to assist with management of environmental data on-farm, with the launch of the new EnviroVeg App for iPhone and iPad devices.

The EnviroVeg App makes recording data, such as pest and disease monitoring records, fast and easy for growers. The app contains a number of forms associated with the EnviroVeg and EnviroVeg Platinum programs, as well as access to information materials such as the Program Manual. It is available free to all EnviroVeg members.

Features include:

- 14 forms, from Environmental Action Plans to Spray Diaries, which are easy to fill in and support multiple entries and data storage so you can fill in data and come back to it later.
- Ability to export data to PDF and send it back to the office by email.
- Access to the Self Assessment tool and information materials such as the Manual and regional guides.



With the new app it is even easier for growers to start recording information on their environmental performance.

The app can be used for growers to meet record-keeping requirements under the new EnviroVeg Platinum Program or even for field staff to record data such as pest and disease monitoring on property and send it back to the office.

Download the EnviroVeg App at the Apple iTunes Store: <http://itunes.apple.com/>

For more information on the EnviroVeg Program visit: www.enviroveg.com.



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Chemical handling and storage: Sustainable practices for growers: Part one

IN THE FIRST OF TWO ARTICLES, WE DISCUSS CHEMICAL SAFETY FUNDAMENTALS BEFORE SPRAYING WITH ROSEMARY HENDERSON OF PROTECH CONSULTING.

Rosemary Henderson is a leading authority on chemical management in agriculture and provides AgSafe Accreditation training to staff of companies such as Bayer CropScience. In this article, Rosemary provides advice for growers in the sustainable management and handling of chemicals on farm.

Select the right product

Growers should ensure that any product used on property is registered for use in Australia. This is as simple as identifying the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA/NRA) approval number on the label. When purchasing chemicals, growers should ensure they only purchase chemicals from an AgSafe accredited supplier and maintain detailed records of purchases.

The APVMA has a website (<https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris>) as well as an iPhone application (search 'APVMA' in the iTunes store) available to growers through which they can access current details about agricultural and veterinary chemical products registered for use in Australia or those which may be available for off-label use under a minor-use permit. The app is a great way for growers to access information about crop protectants they are using on their farms and ensure they are kept up to date with new registrations.

Safe transportation

1. Ute it, don't boot it!

Where possible, have products delivered to the farm as this will save the time and hassle of transportation. If you are picking them up from a reseller,

make sure you have a suitable vehicle such as a ute, truck or trailer. Remember that loading products into the cabin or boot of a passenger vehicle puts you and your passengers at risk as fumes, leaks and ruptures may cause a toxic atmosphere and long-term contamination within the vehicle.

2. Secure your load!

In recent years there has been increased scrutiny by police and road transport authorities on improperly constrained loads. Each State has its own laws and regulations regarding load restraints and can provide the relevant guidelines. Growers should ensure they are across the relevant requirements for the State or Territory in which they operate to ensure their actions are safe and within the law. (See also the "Load Restraint Guide" at www.ntc.gov.au)

Store products correctly

Chemicals should always be properly stored on the farm property, and the following considerations taken into account by growers. As a general guide, growers should always follow storage directions on the product label and Safety Data Sheet, which can be accessed online on manufacturers' websites. This will help prolong their shelf life and protect the health of people, animals and the environment.

Growers should also take into account the following:

- Ensure they maintain a list of products and Safety Data Sheets.
- That stores are; located in a cool, well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight, lockable with an impervious floor and shelving and



When handling chemicals, always follow instructions on the label and wear at least the minimum level of protective clothing, plus items detailed in the 'safety directions' section of the label.

- bundled to contain spills.
- That chemicals are stored separate to seeds, fertilizers, protective clothing and stockfeed.
- Ensure running water, first aid and other facilities are available.

For further information refer to AS2507-1998 available from www.saiglobal.com

Personal safety

When handling chemicals, always follow instructions on the label and wear at least the minimum level of protective clothing, plus items detailed in the safety directions section of the label.

A minimum level of protective clothing consists of the following:

- Long sleeved cotton shirt.
- Long cotton trousers or overalls.
- Impervious gloves.
- Waterproof footwear.
- Washable hat.

In addition, growers should consider installing an emergency shower and eyewash facility close to their chemical mixing/loading area to enhance safety on farm. Products such as chemical spill kits and first aid products are widely available through safety equipment providers.

Disposal of unwanted chemical and containers

Disposal of all unwanted chemicals and washed empty containers should be made through the ChemClear and DrumMuster program.

ChemClear and DrumMuster collections are available in most growing regions throughout Australia.

For further information on these programs visit www.chemclear.com.au or www.drummuster.com.au.

Training and accreditation

Regulations regarding training and accreditation vary by state and by product category. Growers should familiarise themselves with the requirement in their areas. Training and certification can be provided by registered training organisation. Some of the key bodies are listed below:

- AusChem (VIC) (2012) www.auschemvic.org.au
- ChemCert Australia Ltd. (<http://www.chemcert.com.au/>)
- AusChem WA (2012) www.auschem.com.au
- AusChem (QLD) (2012) www.farmsafe.com.au



Laying the ground for future success

AFTER NEARLY 20 YEARS ON THE LAND, JAMIE JURGENS IS STILL EXPERIMENTING TO ENSURE THE FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF HIS OPERATION INTO THE FUTURE. AT HIS BOWEN, QUEENSLAND-BASED FARM, JURGENS PRODUCE, JAMIE HAS TRIALLED A NUMBER OF CHANGES TO HIS FARMING SYSTEM IN RESPONSE TO RISING INPUTS AND RISING COMMUNITY AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF FARMING ON THE NEARBY GREAT BARRIER REEF.

Jurgens Produce grows a number of varieties of capsicums and chillies, which until recently have been grown using plastic mulch. After teaming up with scientists from the nearby Department of Primary Industries, Jamie Jurgens has been one of the early adopters of Australian Bioplastics biodegradable mulch and crop covering. The Australian Bioplastics technology has become more widespread in recent years and won the VISY Industry Impact Award at the 2013 AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence.

The Australian Bioplastics



Photographs by Kerri Smith.

product is made of corn starch, with a key benefit being that after the season, it can be tilled back into the ground. This saves labour in that people do not need to be employed to pick up pieces of degraded plastic, as with conventional products. Jamie was one of the early growers to trial the technology, which he is now using in 80 per cent of his production. While the product costs more than conventional options, Jamie considers this to be offset somewhat by the time and labour savings in removal of the mulch after harvest.

Asked about his attitude to change on his farm, Jamie said he always prefers to take a cautious approach. "We always do trials before we make any changes on the farm. With the biodegradable mulch we gradually built it up over the years and now use it on 80 per cent of production," he said.

Jurgens Produce has been using compost for the past few years in order to decrease reliance on fertilisers and issues associated with run-off

into water systems and the nearby Great Barrier Reef. The company is in its first year of making its own compost on site and has been able to achieve great results in terms of yield.

Much of Jamie's motivation in improving the sustainability of his production system stems from the need to lower input costs and to be a good member of the community. Jamie is an active participant in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian program, which aims to promote best practice in agriculture and other industries to minimise the amount of run off which reaches the nearby Great Barrier Reef.

Understanding that farmers in the region would be under increased scrutiny, Jamie undertook to work with local environmental groups as part of the Reef Guardian program to ensure that his farm practices would have little impact on

the natural wonder. He has made significant investments in drainage works on property and facilities to control the movement of water.

A decade ago, Jamie put a water recycling system in place to limit the water leaving his property. In the following years, he has made investments in drainage works on property to minimise soil erosion and run off in the flood prone region.

Jurgens Produce is also working to start communicating the environmental credentials of the business to consumers. The business has set up a Facebook page for the company's brand of tomatoes - VeeJays Tomatoes - which it uses to engage directly with customers. In addition, Jamie regularly communicates with wholesalers and other buyers about initiatives on his property so that they can be confident that any produce sourced through Jurgens Produce is grown to high environmental standards.

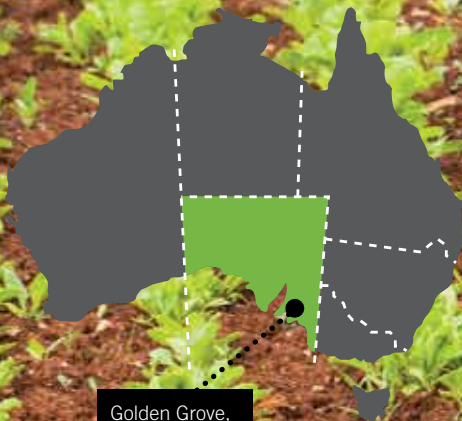
"It's not always about saving money today, as there is usually upfront expenditure and a longer term pay off. A lot of the decisions we make are to ensure the long term sustainability of the farm because farm inputs are likely to rise in the future," he said.

With an eye on the efficiency of the business and the broader environment, Jurgens Produce has placed an emphasis on environmental management in their farming system. Operating in an environment where on farm activities can have broader regional impacts will ensure his efforts contribute to the sustainability of both his property and the broader region.



Q&A Young grower profile

Name: Daniel Quattrochi
Age: 23
Location: Golden Grove, South Australia
Works: Monika's Organics
Grows: Spinach, spring onions, beetroot, leeks and zucchini



Golden Grove,
South Australia

How did you first become involved in the vegetable industry?

It's in my blood. My great grandfather, grandfather and father were all market gardeners so I've been involved since I can remember. We lived on the farm so I always spent lots of time outside helping after school and school holidays, and as soon as I could reach the pedals I was driving the tractor. After dad passed away, mum said if we were to survive I'd have to be her business partner. I was 12 and mum was a nurse. Now we are Certified Organic growers and wholesalers specialising in packing on-farm for direct supply into Coles and Woolworths in South Australia.

What is your role in the business?

My role in the business is just about everything, from preparing land and planting, to organising the workers for the day both in the field and in the packing shed. I also manage and coordinate all crop programs throughout the year to ensure consistency of supply to all our customers, and I work closely with mum to coordinate the wholesaling side of the business.

How would you describe your average day at work?

I prioritise the day's work: loading the truck, delivering to Coles' and Woolworths' distribution centres, picking up produce coming in from interstate and other supplies needed, ordering produce from other growers, quality control of produce packed, checking paperwork, writing invoices on the computer, record keeping, as well as trying to catch up with various jobs around the farm that need attention. The list goes on and on. The day is always so busy – there's never a dull moment.

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

I enjoy meeting other growers and the opportunity to visit their farms, exchanging ideas and information. Also travelling

overseas visiting farms is a very rewarding experience. (Also) to be able to grow something from seed that will end up on someone's dinner plate.

What are the biggest challenges that you face as a grower?

Being a certified organic grower, some of the biggest challenges we face are controlling the weeds and the labour cost associated with that. Also the rising costs of inputs like electricity, fertiliser and fuel, mean we have to be very careful with managing our expenses and wastage.

You attended the USA Growers' Tour at the beginning of this year. What did you learn from the experience?

I learnt that it is very important for the government and the public to realise the need to have food security. In the Yuma Valley in Arizona, the government built a huge canal from the Colorado River through the desert to bring water to the valley so they could produce food through the winter to feed the country.



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

Definitely the Yuma Valley in Arizona - it was just acres and acres of leafy greens for as far as you could see and it was all flood irrigated. The scale of production was incredible. Also, the farmers we met went to great lengths to show and explain what they did in their business.

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

I think schools should be educating children on where their food comes from and organising farm visits. Also, we should be encouraging children to grow veggies at home so they can experience the feeling of growing something that ends up on their dinner plate.

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

I'd be working on someone else's farm!

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Hopefully taking over the business as my mum would like to step back and not have to work so hard. Out with the old, in with the new, right?

Australian vegetable export opportunities in Asia

GROWTH IN AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE EXPORTS HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY STAGNANT IN RECENT YEARS, WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION. OVER THE PAST DECADE, SALES TO ASIA HAVE INCREASED CONSIDERABLY, WITH EXPORTS TO CHINA ALONE GROWING BY 378 PER CENT IN JUST THE PAST SIX YEARS. WITH RELATIVELY FEW DOMESTIC VEGETABLE GROWERS CURRENTLY EXPORTING COMPARED TO OTHER HORTICULTURAL INDUSTRIES, AND A GROWING ASIAN MIDDLE CLASS SHOWING SOME WILLINGNESS TO SPEND ON QUALITY PRODUCE, AUSVEG ECONOMIST SHAUN MUSCAT REPORTS THE REGION WILL LIKELY PRESENT FUTURE EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRALIAN PRODUCERS.

Many Australian vegetable growers are facing significant cost pressures, partly due to the market dominance of major retailers and increasing cheaper imports. To overcome these pressures, a number of Australian growers have begun to recognise that the rising affluence of the Asian region is presenting unprecedented opportunities, scope for future growth, and the ability to

compete on the basis of quality, branding and reputation. In this article, we examine Australia's vegetable export trends to Asia and the opportunities and challenges that exporting vegetables to the region presents.

State of the export market



R&D

Drive Train

Australian vegetable exports currently make up a very small proportion of Australian agricultural exports. Only four per cent of growers currently sell vegetables overseas, significantly less than other agricultural industries, leaving scope for immense expansion.

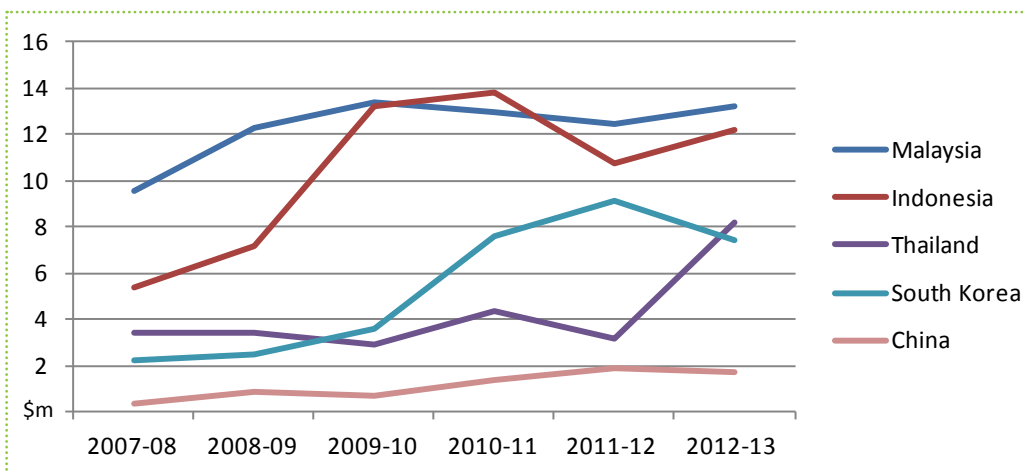
Over the past seven years,

Australia's vegetable exports have remained reasonably flat, totalling around \$249 million in 2012-13. In 2011-12, New Zealand was Australia's largest vegetable export market but has since been overtaken by Japan in 2012-13, with a total value of \$51 million.

Despite stagnant growth in overall Australian vegetable exports over the past decade, sales to Asia have increased considerably. As shown in Figure 1, there has been an increasing trend of Australian vegetables exported to Asian countries over the past six years and this trend is expected to continue. For example, exports to Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea have more than doubled to \$8 million, \$12 million and \$7 million respectively in the past six years.

Australian vegetable exports to China have also increased considerably, by 378 per cent, to around \$1.8 million over the past six years. China provides enormous future potential for Australian vegetable growers. The real value of world agrifood demand in 2050 is projected to be 77 per cent higher than in

Figure 1: Total Australian vegetable exports to selected Asian countries, 2007-08 to 2012-13



Source: Global Trade Information Service, sourced from ABS International Trade data, 2012-13

2007, with 43 per cent of this future demand deriving from the Chinese market alone (Veriy Linehan et al).

Traditionally, Australia's total vegetable exports have predominately focused on fresh vegetables. A similar story arises with Australia's vegetable exports to Asia. In 2012-13, approximately 65 per cent of Australia's total vegetable exports to Asia were fresh vegetables. Australia's exports of fresh and processed vegetables to Asia have increased by 36 per cent and 101 per cent respectively in the six years to 2012-13. This demonstrates Asian consumers have a willingness to pay higher prices for quality produce and pre-packed products that offer greater convenience.

Opportunities and challenges

An expanding Asian middle class with increasing incomes and populations will lead to additional demand for quality and safe vegetables over the next 40 years. There are predictions that higher-income consumers in Asia will spend up to five times more on high quality food products compared to lower income brackets. This demand for quality products presents Australian vegetable producers with the opportunity to pursue these export markets based on the renowned quality of our produce, as opposed to solely competing with other exporting countries on price. This has been demonstrated in Singapore, where Australian

carrots hold the largest market share, despite costing considerably more than carrots from China.

Although Australian growers are well positioned to target these Asian markets, there are many challenges, particularly given Australia's labour and marketing costs are among the highest in the world. Many of the major challenges to vegetable exports include, competition from other exporting countries, high transportation costs, a strong Australian dollar, building relationships, and trade barriers in foreign markets. However, the recent decline of the Australian dollar and the ongoing efforts to remove trade barriers will enable Australian vegetable exports to be more cost competitive and allow easier international market

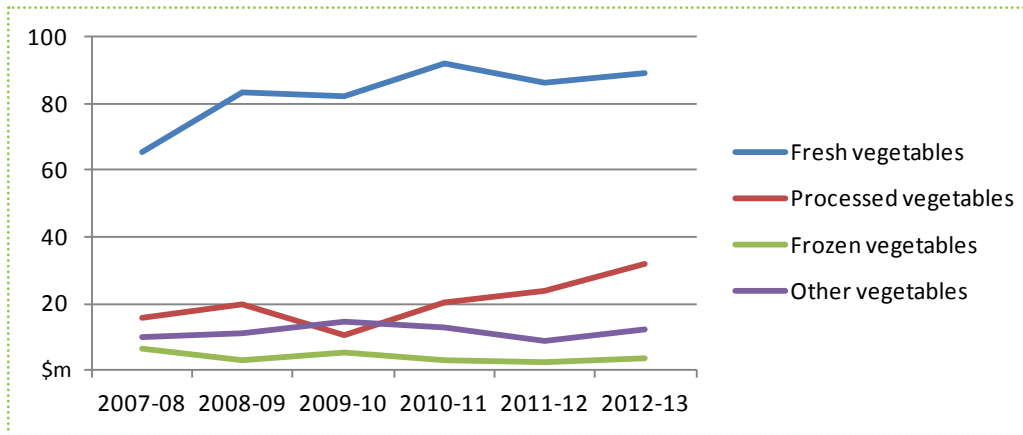
access.

Many vegetable growers are beginning to realise that the future viability of the industry lies in its ability to build exports. The key to this is building relationships and trust between domestic growers and overseas customers. The vegetable industry has an important role to play in working together with growers to deliver research and development work that supports the growth of export opportunities.

For more information on Australia's exporting opportunities, please refer to the AUSVEG website where you can find a discussion paper (under the Resources tab) titled 'Australian Vegetable Export Opportunities 2013'.

Reference: Veriy Linehan et al. ABARES, "Food Demand to 2050 – Opportunities for Australian Agriculture," 2012. Conference paper presented at 42nd ABARES Outlook conference 6-7 March 2012, Canberra: 1.

Figure 2: Types of Australian vegetable exports to Asia



Source: Global Trade Information Service, sourced from ABS International Trade data, 2012-13

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The rising affluence of the Asian region presents Australian vegetable growers unprecedented export opportunities, scope for future growth, and the ability to compete on the basis of quality, branding and reputation.
- Over the last six years, there has been an increase in vegetable exports to Asian countries and this is expected to continue.
- Although Australian growers are well positioned to target these Asian markets, there are a number challenges, however, many vegetable growers are beginning to realise that the future viability of the industry lies in its ability to build exports.



AUSVEG (03) 9882 0277
Project Number: VG12071

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





Minister backs industry action on environmental management

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENT MINISTER GREG HUNT HAS INDICATED HE PLANS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE FARMING SECTOR WHILE LAUNCHING A NEW ENVIROVEG IPHONE APP AIMED AT MAKING IT EASIER FOR GROWERS TO MEET THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL OBLIGATIONS.

Federal Environment Minister, The Hon. Greg Hunt MP has thrown his support behind the new EnviroVeg iPhone App, officially launching the initiative during an event at Gazzola Farms in Somerville on October 25. During the launch, which took place in his own electorate of Flinders, he

praised Australian farmers as “innovators”, and described their farms as the “best in the world”. He also took some time to offer his views on the relationship between his portfolio and the agricultural sector during an interview with *Vegetables Australia*.

Environmental initiatives driven by growers

With the EnviroVeg iPhone App now available through Apple iTunes, farmers now have an easy tool to record data such as chemical application schedules and environmental plans on their smartphones, while out on their property. Speaking at the launch, Mr Hunt said the initiative was testament to the pioneering spirit of Australian growers and their sense of environmental responsibility. “Australian farms are the best in the world. I don’t have any doubt about that,” he said. “They use technology. They understand the land. They work

with not just new equipment but also new species and strains, always trying to strive for water efficiency, to strive for productivity and above all else these are means of achieving the Holy Grail of quality. That’s what farming is about and I have been fortunate to see and experience that around Australia but in particular to see and experience it here on the Peninsula.”

While growers have at times been at odds with environmentalists, the Minister said the industry was often at the forefront of environmental management nationwide, as evidenced by the development of the app. “The other element... is that the farmers are the great conservators of

Australia's landscape," he said. "They carry and manage and steward enormous areas of this country... so this particular initiative (the EnviroVeg iPhone App) is all about managing two things, productivity and environmental management. For us it's a way of ensuring that the farms can balance their fertiliser input, balance the use of pesticide, can balance all of the additives to the soil."

Mr Hunt added the app had the potential to complement the ongoing work of industry and government. "It's also, I think, a platform for the work which we are working on, which is reducing Australia's emissions by increasing soil carbons at one level, by increasing re-vegetation, by decreasing the amount of energy required, and this is a platform which brings some of those elements in to the reach of farmers and growers all around the country. There is more to be done but it is a great initiative."

A commitment to the industry

Mr Hunt also indicated he would support common sense

initiatives to reduce burdens on farmers. As well as reiterating the Government's commitment to abolishing the Carbon Tax, Mr Hunt indicated he would be willing to consider a range of green tape reduction measures to ensure Australian farmers remained competitive. "The first thing is that they are in a deeply competitive national and international market and so that means that we've got to reduce any unnecessary cost," he said. "Part of my job is to reduce green tape, maintain standards, but reduce green tape. The second thing is to get incentives in to the field such as incentives for soil carbons and for re-vegetation of non-productive areas of the land and then the third thing is to try to reduce some of the input costs such as electricity or gas."

Carbon Tax savings

Mr Hunt also re-stated the government's intention to have the Carbon Tax abolished by mid-next year, adding the step would result in bill savings. "On average it's a nine per cent reduction in electricity and a seven per cent reduction in gas

but for larger users it's likely to be a greater percentage and proportion," he said. The Minister repeated calls for the Opposition to back the wind-back of the tax. "Right now, whether it's Australian farmers, whether it's Australian families, whether it's Australian businesses, they are looking for electricity price relief. Until the ALP comes to a recognition that the election result called

for the end of the Carbon Tax, they will be in denial of the will of the Australian people. The Australian people want lower electricity prices, the Australian people want lower gas prices and the Carbon Tax is an electricity bill and a gas bill attacker. The Carbon Tax drives up electricity bills, it drives up gas bills. We have the will of the people expressed and it is time to recognise that."



Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt speaks with AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy at the EnviroVeg App launch.



Ask the industry



with Scott Mathew

SCOTT MATHEW, TECHNICAL SERVICES LEAD AT SYNGENTA, OUTLINES SOME IMPORTANT MATTERS GROWERS SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE ORDERING SEED.

With summer plantings well underway, or being thought about, it is a good time to take stock of leftover seed before you place an order. It is essential that carry-over seed can and should be used before its viability declines, especially given the cost of buying new seed each year. As a grower what are some of the things that you need to consider?

- Evaluate what varieties that you want to grow.
- Look at what seed you have on hand, how much is leftover, and is it enough for your planned plantings?
- When evaluating stored seed stock, how and where you kept your seeds are important considerations, as well as knowing the natural seed storage life.
- Try to determine age of seed by packing dates on the package, and consider conducting germination tests.

Question: If I am considering storing seed to carry over to future plantings, what are some of things I need to take in to account?

Firstly you need to keep in mind that a seed is a living organism and respiring, but very slowly in a resting or dormant state. While seeds begin the process of losing their viability from the point that they are harvested with proper conditioning and storage, some species can last for many years.

Viability of stored seed is affected by two main factors: seed moisture and storage temperature exposure over time. The combination of high seed moisture and either high or low storage temperature regimes are especially detrimental to the storage life of seed.

Cool, consistent, basement storage is preferable to the back wall of your shed. Periods of high temperature exposure, such as a seed packet left in direct sun or in a hot shed, can significantly reduce seed longevity or kill it outright.

When storing your seeds, be sure to keep them consistently cool. Ideal seed storage temperatures are between 4.5 to 10°C (<12°C - Syngenta standard) and dry (RH <42% - Syngenta standard). Temperature and moisture are the primary factors that cause seeds to lose their ability to germinate and fluctuations of these speed the process, with desirable seed moisture for most crops around 10 to 12 percent.

Question: What is the storage life of some of the vegetable seeds?

The relative life expectancy under favourable storage conditions for certain crop groups is, in years:

- 1 yr: Onion, parsley and parsnip.
- 2 yrs: Sweet peppers and capsicum.
- 2 to 3 yrs: Corn, spinach, beets, carrots and chard.
- 3 to 4 yrs: Legumes (beans).
- 4 yrs: Tomatoes.
- 4 to 5 yrs: Crucifers (broccoli, cauliflower) lettuce (raw seed) endive, chicory and cucurbits (melons, squash).

As seed gets older, the percent germination declines at varying rates depending on conditions seed treatment, priming and species.

Question: What is the easiest way to conduct a germination test?

If you have stored seed it is always best to conduct a quick and simple test to check the viability of the seed

- This can easily be done by wrapping some seeds in a wet paper towel, keeping them moist and warm (18 to 21°C) over a period of 3 to 7 days and counting germinated seeds.
- If the percentage is low or germination is slow or variable, it is best to discard the lot.
- A weakened seed, even though it germinates, makes for a weak seedling and poor early growth.

It is important to know if the retained seed from last year has been treated in any way, particularly if it has been primed or pelleted, as this will impact on the shelf life of the seed. Both treatments are utilised to enhance germination and for machine sowing capability but seed treated in this way has a limited life expectancy of as little as 6 months at best before viability begins to drop. Seeds treated in this way should be bought and used for the current sowing period and not kept for next year.

Some/most seeds are just coated with a fungicide to protect it from vermin when in bulk storage so care must be taken when handling any seeds that retain these chemical residues.



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 or email *Vegetables Australia*: info@ausveg.com.au. Please note that your questions may be published.

International Horticultural Congress to convene in Brisbane



The 29th International Horticultural Congress will take place in Brisbane from August 17-22, 2014. The event is expected to attract 2,500 delegates from around the world.

The Congress will be hosted at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre by the Australian Society of Horticultural Science, the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science, and the Secretariat of the Pacific

Community, under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Science.

A number of high-calibre international scientists will travel to Australia for the event, offering an invaluable opportunity for the Australian vegetable industry to take advantage of the event's global focus. Held every four years at various sites around the world, the Congress is a world forum, covering all aspects of horticulture and horticultural

science.

The theme of the 2014 congress is 'Horticulture - sustaining lives, livelihoods and landscapes' and addresses the key issues of health, poverty, food production and the environment. It will showcase advanced technologies that are becoming globally significant in a world with a rapidly growing population, less cultivatable land and an environment under threat.

Despite being the 29th

congress, it is only the second time it has been hosted in the southern hemisphere. The Scientific Program Committee is assembling an exciting and stimulating scientific program of 39 separate symposia, with some of the areas of interest listed to the right.



International Horticultural Congress
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Carrot Grower Study Tour: Getting to the point

The 2013 USA Carrot Grower Study Tour provided 10 vegetable levy-payers with the opportunity to visit leading innovative carrot operations, and participate in a four-day Carrot Convention, covering all elements related to commercial carrot production. The tour was funded by HAL using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions from industry, and matched funds from the Australian Government.

The main focus of the tour was to educate growers about the latest in carrot farming methods, technology, equipment and information. To achieve this over the eight-day tour, growers visited Bolthouse and Grimmway – America's two largest carrot processors and growers – toured Shiprock Farms in Wisconsin, and attended the 36th International Carrot Conference. Growers received exposure to production, technical, and supply chain systems operating in a country recognised as setting many benchmarks in horticulture. In this way, growers gained industry knowledge that can be relayed back to other members of the Australian

vegetable industry.

In California, growers visited Bakersfield to tour the Grimmway and Bolthouse farms – both major competitors in the carrot industry – and the producers of more than 80 per cent of the nation's supply. The two companies are striving to find the edge over their opponent, which is encouraging large-scale investment in company R&D. Farm visits began out on the companies' fields, examining both planting and harvesting operations, before following the production line to the packing and processing plants. Growers paid particular attention to the expansion both companies have made in their businesses to move from a family business to a multinational operation.

The final destination on the tour of Bolthouse's operations was their machine shop. Closed to the public, the Australian growers were grateful to be allowed into the grounds. The majority of farming machinery, from forklifts to planters and harvesters, are designed and custom built in-house to best cater to Bolthouse's specific



The impressive sorting facility in action at Bolthouse.

needs. The tour group took the opportunity to walk freely around the sheds, speaking with mechanics, operators and engineers on their opinions, techniques and pioneering projects.

Close to the scale of a carrot growing operation in Australia, Shiprock Farms offered

the group the opportunity to compare their practices to an American counterpart. Owner and operator Paul Phillippi met with the growers to show them around his fields. The frosty climate and Wisconsin's marshland soil plays a major role in the alternative techniques implemented at Shiprock Farm's



An Asa-Lift harvester at work in Wisconsin.



An inspection of The University of Wisconsin's Carrot Variety Trial.

operation. The cold winter restricts growing from May to October as it can reach a consistent minus 20 degrees celsius for weeks at a time. However, this has the benefit of producing up to two feet of frost which kills bugs and pests in the fields, giving Paul a fresh start each season.

Also interesting was Shiprock's muck soil fields, which are created by draining bogs and swamp lands. Due to its dark colour and favourable composition, made up of decomposed plant and organic matter, the growers compared Shiprock's soil to having fields of nutrient rich potting mix. The land is ideal for growing root vegetables but Paul noted there is controversy surrounding muck soil farms, as draining wetlands results in a variety of environmental problems. This makes the fertile land extremely valuable as it is unlikely that any more will be created in the United States.

The four-day International Carrot Conference tested everyone's academic and practical side. Speaker sessions and conversations covered topics such as carrot breeding for disease resistance, cultivation methods for increased yield, and innovative harvesting techniques being trialled by the local University of Wisconsin.

The tour also involved a number of carrot field trials, a visit to a breeding facility, and on-farm examinations

of multiple carrot varieties showcasing experiments with carrot colour, texture and taste. During one afternoon, the tour visited the University of Wisconsin's West Madison Agricultural Experiment Station. The Experiment Station currently has trials underway with an estimated 130 different vegetables. One of the carrot studies, now in its second year, was focused on natural Nematode resistance between 36 different varieties of carrots in an unaltered environment. The outcome will influence future carrot breeding at the facility. The results of this test are still undetermined, but the growers were able to learn new ways to detect early warning signs distinctive to different carrot types.

Written evaluations were undertaken by tour members after each day and debriefing sessions were held over the duration of the trip to discuss key information and points of interest. These findings were then recorded in tour diaries supplied to the participants to ensure a written record of each day's events.



Project Number: VG12707

A full project report will be released by the end of this year, available on the AUSVEG website: www.ausveg.com.au



Planting underway at Grimmway.



Touring growers inspect Grimmway's fields.



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Senator sets sights on strong action and small government

EXPERIENCE RUNNING A LARGE COMMERCIAL ROSE GROWING OPERATION PREPARED ANNE RUSTON WELL FOR LIFE AS A POLITICIAN. THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SENATOR RECENTLY TOOK SOME TIME OUT TO OFFER HER VIEWS ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR FOLLOWING HER ADDRESS TO THE WOMEN IN HORTICULTURE EVENT AT THE 2013 AUSVEG NATIONAL CONVENTION TRADE SHOW AND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE ON THE GOLD COAST.

With Senator Anne Ruston's professional background in horticulture, specifically the field of commercial rose production, you might say she has a rosy future in Canberra. But although the South Australian representative has been in the Federal Upper House just a little over 12 months, she's far from a shrinking violet where politics and agribusiness are concerned.

Following her address to this year's AUSVEG National Convention Trade Show and Awards for Excellence on the Gold Coast, Senator Ruston offered *Vegetables Australia* her considered views on the sector,

in the lead-up to September's Federal election. Calling on her experience operating a large commercial rose garden, and time spent as a senior ministerial adviser and on the executive of the Liberal Party in SA, she discussed a range of key issues affecting the industry; from Country of Origin Labelling to Australia's role in feeding Asia to Government involvement in the sector.

Government involvement in the industry

Senator Ruston said while Canberra and the states had a role to play in supporting and

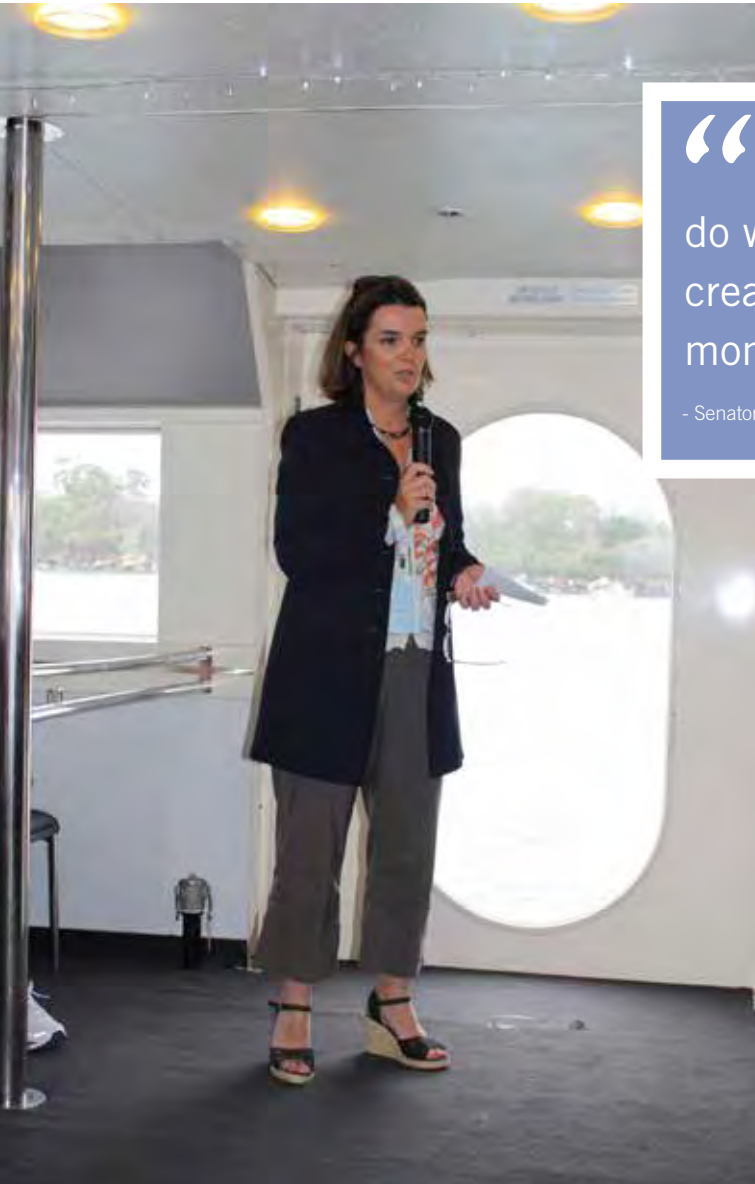
developing industry, less was always more when it came to interference. "I've got a great belief that governments should only do what businesses can't, won't and shouldn't do, and anything else is completely unnecessary," she said. "I think the people that are best placed to make the best decisions are the people with the skin in the game and with firsthand knowledge. So to have a bureaucrat in Canberra making a decision about what should happen on a farm, unless there's some necessity for that decision to be made at a centralised point, I think it's really silly."

"So I am a great believer in small government and also a great believer that the market mechanism works best and if we keep on interfering with it, with overly burdensome regulation, we are just messing up what is otherwise a reasonably good mechanism. We need to allow our growers to do what they do best; grow crops, create jobs and actually make some money."

Country of origin

Quizzed on other significant issues, Senator Ruston described ongoing discussions over Country of Origin Labelling as among the trickiest facing





“ We need to allow our growers to do what they do best; grow crops, create jobs and actually make some money. ”

- Senator Anne Ruston.

the sector. Nevertheless she remained hopeful resolutions could eventually be found. “The first and most important thing to say about labelling laws is that if it was going to be simple to fix, it would have been fixed by now,” she said. “It’s a very difficult and a very complex issue, however that doesn’t mean to say that we shouldn’t try and tackle it. Obviously I am a great supporter of people having the information about where a product has come from. I would choose always to buy Australian.”

Asia’s food bowl

On the now-former Commonwealth Government’s regular references to Australia becoming the “food bowl” of Asia, Senator Ruston said

while the concept was good, the “rhetoric” needed to be backed up with strong actions. “If you could actually get what they say and what they do all heading in the same direction then maybe we’ve got some chance of getting there but that’s just not happening at the moment.”

Life in politics

Though a relative newcomer to the Senate, Senator Ruston joked her background as a commercial flower grower was arguably the best training leading in to life as a politician. “One could suggest that if you have been in a horticultural industry, you’ve already been sort of blooded on politics anyway. There is no place more political than the agricultural sector,” she said.



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Measuring consumer attitudes to insects and eco-labels

AN ONGOING PROJECT FACILITATED BY APPLIED HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH (AHR) HAS INVESTIGATED CONSUMER ATTITUDES TO THE PRODUCTION OF VEGETABLES, ECO-LABELS, AND INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM). *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* SPOKE TO DR JENNY EKMAN TO FIND OUT MORE.

As part of Project VG12084 - Enhancing market attitudes to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and sustainable vegetable production practices - AHR conducted a series of focus groups in Sydney and Melbourne as well as a national online survey of over 1,000 grocery buyers. Focus group participants were questioned on their shopping habits as well as their feelings about food and farming.

Dr Jenny Ekman from AHR said that consumers already appear to have strong views about the purchasing of other products like free-range eggs and non-generic brands of milk. However, she said most consumers had no idea about the wider issues around the production of vegetables. The survey and focus groups found that city dwellers' understanding of vegetable production is very low, but those with friends or relatives in the country or who have lived in regional areas have an improved knowledge of

agriculture generally.

Despite this, explaining IPM to consumers generally received an excellent response, said Dr Ekman. "Many of the participants were really interested, wanting to know more. This was something they had never thought about, but could understand how it affected the food they bought everyday," she said.

Eco-labels

This explanation was followed by an auction where participants bid actual dollars to 'upgrade' standard vegetables for ones with eco-labels. An eco-label is any label that identifies overall, proven environmental performance of a product to consumers. Participants indicated that they were willing to pay more for eco-labelled products, and more than half those surveyed said that supermarkets should favour environmentally-responsible suppliers, even if it meant prices



would increase. Forty per cent of participants said they were willing to pay more for certified sustainable products.

The average premium for eco-labelled products was 97 cents in the focus groups and 40 cents in the online survey. The people most interested in eco-labels tended to like vegetables and consume more of them. They also usually bought free-range eggs, had some interest or experience with growing their own vegetables or herbs, and often had above average household income.

However, despite this apparently strong support, stated intentions may not necessarily translate into real purchases, said Dr Ekman. For example, nearly all focus group participants and more than half the survey respondents said they bought free-range eggs. In reality, free range represents only 28 per cent of eggs sold at retail, demonstrating a disconnect between consumer intention and action.

While price is the major

barrier, consumers may not notice an eco-label, not understand or trust it, or simply lack motivation while shopping. A common remark made during the focus groups was, 'When I'm in the supermarket I'm not thinking about where it was grown or how. I'm thinking what I'm going to make for dinner'.

"Lots of people raised imports as an issue, but in reality if they want something they will buy it regardless of whether it is imported or not. Asking about a brand or label for vegetables often drew a blank from consumers – they are just not looking," said Dr Ekman.

IPM

Survey respondents were shown pictures of insects on vegetables and asked whether they would complain or simply wash and eat the product. Up to 80 per cent did not mind finding a ladybeetle on herbs, a bug on some loose leaves, or even a caterpillar inside a lettuce. However, they



especially if it has been bought in the hygienic environment of a supermarket.

According to Dr Ekman, "The high standard of 99.99 per cent of vegetables means that it is a big surprise to find even a tiny bug. Many consumers have little understanding of how vegetables are grown so it hardly occurs to them that this has grown in a field where insects are present."

The answer could be in education. "People who had grown vegetables themselves, lived in the country, or visited farms were different. They understood that bugs are part of nature. Some even thought it was a good thing, as it showed the product hadn't been sprayed with a lot of pesticide," said Dr Ekman.

Next steps

This research has led to five proposed strategies:

1. Quantify the insects present at harvest in IPM and non-IPM systems, and examine the effectiveness of techniques to remove them.
2. Develop strategies to deal with the issue of insect contamination in fresh vegetables at a workshop involving all supply chain members.
3. Investigate the potential for

farm Open Days and other educational activities.

4. Discuss development of an eco-label with major retailers.
5. Investigate opportunities to link the vegetable industry with school agriculture programs.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Focus groups and surveys found that city dwellers, in particular, had little knowledge about the wider issues around the production of vegetables.
- Explaining IPM to consumers generally received an excellent response.
- Participants indicated that they were willing to pay more for eco-labels, but stated intentions may not necessarily translate into real purchases.
- Most participants did not mind finding small insects on purchased produce; however they were much less tolerant if the vegetables were packaged or processed.



For more information:
Dr Jenny Ekman, Applied Horticultural Research
Email: jenny.ekman@ahr.com.au
Project Number: VG12084

were much less tolerant if the vegetables were packaged or processed.

Packaging vegetables creates an assumption that they are washed and ready to eat. If an

insect is visible, the assumption follows that the product must be dirty, and hasn't been checked properly. Even if the package is labelled 'wash before use', this may make little difference,



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Finding fertiliser solutions for a sunburnt country

WITH AUSTRALIA'S SEVERE CLIMATE IN MIND, FERTILISER PRODUCERS ARE SPECIFICALLY TAILORING THEIR PRODUCTS TO PROTECT PLANTS AND OPTIMISE RESULTS IN EXTREME WARM WEATHER. THE EXAMPLES OUTLINED BELOW ARE JUST SOME OF MANY WAYS GROWERS CAN AUGMENT THEIR CROPS THROUGH THE STRATEGIC USE OF FERTILISERS.

Harsh environment

It's a well-known fact that particularly in summer Australia's harsh climate can take its toll on vegetable crops. When plants are subjected to heat stress, the high temperatures can degrade existing protein and inhibit new production.

The potentially devastating impact on crops can lead to a drop in quality and yield, and, in extreme cases, death. A plant's natural response to severe heat is to activate particular genes (HSP70 & HSP90), in an effort to combat this potentially fatal cell degradation. While these

natural defences can be highly effective, sometimes it's not enough in the sun-parched Australian environment.

Boosting natural defences

With harsh summers in mind, Italian-based fertiliser company Valagro has developed Megafol, in a bid to bolster the biological resilience of crops to the heat. Aimed at ramping-up the activation of the HSP70 and HSP90 genes five-fold in the event of warm weather events, Megafol has been scientifically-tested using gene chip technology.

Betaines contained within the product also act as an extra weapon in the war against heat stress. The accumulation of these neutral compounds within cells favours water retention, thereby encouraging hydration. The overall formulation of Betaines, amino acids and proteins is designed to protect the plant from physical and environmental stresses. The formula also acts as a carrier of vital nutrients to improve uptake.

Test cases

Megafol was used throughout Australia in many crops last

season in an effort to avoid heat stress and maintain growth and yields. In the instance pictured below, the product was applied at 3L/ha 24 hours prior to the extreme heat event. On the day in question, the temperature reached 43°C, resulting in extensive heat stress on the crop.

Lettuces at two different growth stages were evaluated, two weeks after transplant and four weeks after transplant. The pictured trial was completed in South Australia on lettuce and shows the crop maintained a healthy, green leafy appearance despite the severe heat.



Lettuces with Megafol applied, two weeks after transplant.



Lettuces with Megafol applied, four weeks after transplant.

A history of specialised product development

Now employing over 300 people, Valagro has become a world leader in the production and marketing of speciality fertilisers. This passion for tailored product development can be traced back to the 1980s, when the producer began developing and marketing its products in the valley of the River Sangro, in Abruzzo, Italy.

At the beginning of an

intricate process, the most suitable natural ingredients are selected from raw plant materials from around the world. Active ingredients within each raw material are extracted, with processes differing depending on the raw material. This ensures the active ingredient is of the highest quality and concentration. Each active ingredient is then analysed and recombined in the laboratory, using the most advanced technology available. Prototypes are then tested

on plants in the laboratory to examine effects on plants at DNA level. If successful, the prototype is trialled in the field at all 11 Valagro subsidiaries around the world and on different crops. Once it meets quality standards, it is entrusted to the marketing department, who plan its future as a Valagro product.

Through this keen focus on scientific research and the specific needs of customers, crops and environment, the company gained a strong

foothold within the Italian domestic market throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Since then it has steadily expanded, first in to broader Europe, and now to 80 countries worldwide, including Australia.

Focus on Australia

Megafol is just one of an extensive range of Valagro products already available to growers in the Australian marketplace. These include products that provide specific solutions on plant physiology including, root growth, fruit sizing, increased sugars, soil health, plant health and environmental stress.

As Valagro distributes through Campbells Fertiliser Australia, Megafol and the whole Valagro range can be found at any E.E. Muir & Sons Branch, Australia's leading horticultural specialists. The range can also be made available to all AgLink distribution outlets, giving every grower in Australia the ability to try the newest advancement in speciality products for plant physiology.



For more information on Megafol please contact any E.E. Muir & Sons branch.

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Delivering RD&E bang for your levy buck

NEW RESEARCH HAS RECOMMENDED LEVY FUNDS FOR PLANT HEALTH AND CROP PROTECTION RD&E BE PRIMARILY INVESTED INTO APPLIED AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION WITH TANGIBLE OUTCOMES ON FARMS OVER THE NEXT THREE TO FIVE YEARS, WRITES RACHEL WILLIAMS.

Farmers should soon see better value for their levy inputs, thanks to a new research, development and extension (RD&E) plan for plant health and crop protection in the Australian vegetable industry.

The plant health desktop study, conducted by Dr Doris Blaesing and her colleagues from RMCg, supported by Paul Horne (IPM Technologies) and Julian Morrison (EconSearch), was initiated because many growers haven't accessed the large volume of RD&E information developed for the industry.

"There is an opportunity to improve collaboration and communication on all levels and avoid duplication and repetition of R&D," she said.

"A lot of good work has been done and growers have to now benefit from finding out about how to use the research findings on their farm. An important aspect of extension will have to be demonstrating economic and other benefits of adoption. Previous research also provides a good basis for further work, which is being planned now."

Dr Blaesing said that under the current system, a substantial amount of time and funds was

spent on final project reports.

"However, industry members and service providers rarely utilise them to implement R&D findings, even though they are a main project output," she said.

"The resources spent on large reports may be better allocated towards more effective extension that addresses specific needs; these may be regional, commodity specific or business size issues."

"At the same time researchers should be able to provide the scientific reporting on their work in the form of refereed research papers. The targeted extension resources and quality R&D papers would replace the current reports. Both would improve the legacy and use of research findings."

Dr Blaesing has recommended that levy funds for plant health and crop protection RD&E be predominantly invested into applied and participatory research, development and extension with tangible outcomes on farms over the next three to five years.

"This should, however, not preclude strategic investments or smart co-investments to foster innovation and the development of new

technologies, as well as cross industry RD&E," she said.

"The minor use program needs to remain an important investment area while good plant protection practices and adoption of integrated crop protection have to be strongly supported at the same time."

She suggested HAL-funded RD&E focus greater attention to vegetable production systems, and business implications of R&D outcomes, and include consideration of supply chain implications, information management and capacity building needs.

"Industry participation in applied research should be encouraged, for example, through using representative commercial farms for trials, checking with growers and or supply chain members that RD&E concepts are practical and or using a technical reference group," she said. "Extension has to be a budgeted part of each project."

Dr Blaesing said the new strategic investment plan would build upon previous industry-wide programs and encourage investment into integrated, innovative and new production technologies.

She added there was

particular scope for growth in the field of crop protection.

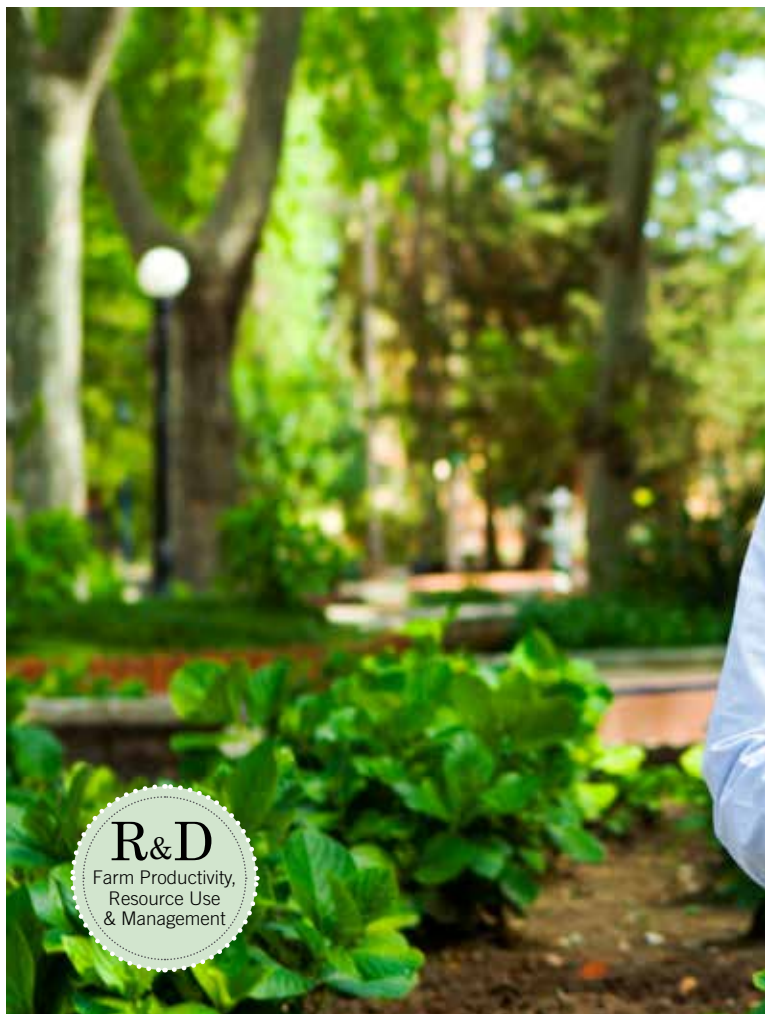
"Effective plant health and crop protection is of great economic importance to vegetable producers," Dr Blaesing said.

"Safe use and minimising inputs of pesticides is of great interest to producers for OH&S, economic and sustainability reasons. Safe crop protection measures are also highly important for consumers who demand pesticide free, high quality and well presented vegetables."

She found there was also extensive pressure on industry from markets (demands & prices) often leading to a reliance on lowest cost options and short-term wins, rather than a focus on longer term economic sustainability.

But, she said farmers faced a positive future if they continued to increase the use of new technologies and build on a positive culture of innovation that is being pushed by inventive young farmers with good training.

Highlighted areas for improvement for plant health and crop protection RD&E for the Australian vegetable industry included:





- Consideration of the whole vegetable production system rather than aspects or disciplines (e.g. pests, weeds and diseases) in isolation.
- Consideration of the complexity of the industry with a wide range of crops, growing environments, business sizes, structures, and profitability, different networks, supply chain partnerships, alliances, skills, knowledge, attitudes, expectations and other attributes.
- Generation and utilisation of knowledge for the industry through RD&E and the requirement to focus on the needs of growers and the supply chain.
- Consideration of the vegetable business as a whole and as part of a supply chain rather than the agronomic aspects alone, including business and market analysis.
- Inclusion of all industry participants such as agronomists, seed companies, agribusiness, advisors and crop protection companies.
- Improving skills through training and regional demonstration.
- Fostering education and training.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The project aims to reduce duplication and provide better value for farmers.
- Vegetable production systems, and business implications of R&D outcomes, should be the key focus of HAL-funded research projects.
- The project was funded by HAL with matched funds from the Federal Government.



For more information
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Project number: VG10048

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with Andrew Olley

Understanding phosphorus fertilisers

PHOSPHORUS FERTILISERS ARE AMONG THE MOST EXPENSIVE USED BY GROWERS AND CAN PLAY A VALUABLE ROLE IN ENSURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG ROOT SYSTEMS. GIVEN THE RELATIVELY HIGH COST OF PHOSPHOROUS COMPARED TO OTHER NUTRIENTS, IT IS IMPORTANT GROWERS UNDERSTAND THE VARIOUS FORMS AVAILABLE, AND HOW BEST TO USE THEM.

Phosphorous fertilisers are the most expensive macro nutrient (N, P, K, S) fertiliser component applied in vegetable crops. These Phosphorous products are used at high levels to ensure high yield, and also to ensure quality of harvested product is produced. Phosphorus's main role in crop production is to ensure a strong root system is developed after planting to allow a conduit for water and nutrient into the plant.

Due to the relative expense of Phosphorus compared to other nutrients, it is critical that growers understand the various forms of Phosphorus available - whether that is manufactured or organic - and have the ability to compare costs between the types available.

All Phosphorus fertiliser products sold in Australia should come with a label indicating the relative analysis as a percentage of the components contained within. Labels can be confusing as it's not as simple as looking at the Phosphorus % to know what you are paying for as a crop input. This in turn makes it hard to compare it to other products.

Fertiliser labels contain the following information in relation to Phosphorus (P) content.

P Water Soluble %
P Citrate Soluble %
P Plant Available %
P Citrate Insoluble %
P Total %

Understanding each of the P types greatly helps in determining value for money from products.

$P \text{ Water Soluble \%} + P \text{ Citrate Soluble \%} = P \text{ Plant Available \%}$

The three above P percentage contents indicate how much of the P in the product is actually available for crop uptake. Water Soluble P shows immediately available P in moist soil. Citrate Soluble P shows the P that is available over time in acidic soils and by the action of microbes over time. When these two are added together, Plant Available P is the P percentage that should be used by growers to compare products.

Citrate Insoluble P is the fraction of Phosphorus that is tightly bound and not available for crop uptake.

Manufactured products used as straights and in blends such as SSP, TSP, MAP and DAP have a high percentage of Plant Available Phosphorus. Furthermore,

the majority of this is Water Soluble P, indicating high solubility of the P in soil for uptake.

Rock Phosphate products and manures have a very low water solubility and majority of the P as citrate soluble forms will release over a number of seasons in acid-based soils and through microbe action. Care must be taken if the soil pH is neutral or alkaline. Products with majority P in the citrate form will be extremely slow to release and are therefore not a wise choice for crops requiring P input.

When soil tests are taken and Phosphorus recommendations are made by trained advisors, the rate is based upon Available P in fertilisers. Hence if manure or rock products are to be used, that rate must be increased many-fold to meet the demands of high yielding crops. When costs are considered, these are often uneconomical compared to manufactured products.



Please send your soil nutrition questions to *Vegetables Australia*.
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Home delivery takes new organic turn

Aussie Farmers Direct has recently announced that it has become the largest online home delivery service of fresh organic products in Australia, adding to its existing line of seasonal organic fruit and vegetable boxes.

The company has recently

begun delivering certified organic free-range eggs, organic Dairy Farmers cheese and biodynamic milk, as well as 5AM organic yoghurt.

The move towards organics is part of a recent joint venture between Aussie Farmers Direct and Organic

Dairy Farmers Australia to begin manufacturing organic butter from Aussie Farmers Direct's milk processing site in Camperdown, Victoria.

Aussie Farmers Direct CEO Jordan Muir says, "Organic food for our business is a major focus moving forward. We are

committed to expanding our range and offering the best quality food available."

Aussie Farmers Direct's fruit and vegetable boxes include up to 10kg of locally sourced produce, and are delivered to more than 130,000 homes across Australia.

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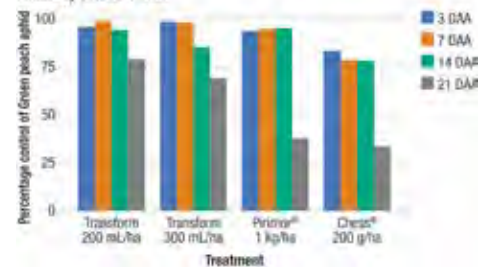
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Control of Green Peach Aphids
Summary across 4 trials



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Industry in the media

The voice of the Australian vegetable industry has been heard far and wide over the past two months. AUSVEG has continued to communicate the outcomes of research and development (R&D) and the interests of Australia's 9,000 vegetable and potato growers to a number of print and broadcast media nationwide.

In September, a total of 783 media reports mentioned AUSVEG – a striking increase from 365 hits in August. Following recent trends, radio continued to be the number one platform for media mentions, followed by television and press. Approximately 1.67 million Australians read, heard or saw something concerning the vegetable industry during the month.

Following the election of the Coalition earlier in the month, AUSVEG actively sought opportunities to express the interests of the industry to Australia's new decision makers. AUSVEG CEO, Richard Mulcahy, appeared on 2NM radio, welcoming the Coalition's election to government. Mr Mulcahy said that AUSVEG was eager to work closely with the Coalition to ensure that the interests of growers were well represented at a Federal level.

Mr Mulcahy also appeared on 3WM radio to welcome the appointment of Barnaby Joyce MP to the role of Federal Minister for Agriculture. The AUSVEG CEO said that Minister Joyce was well versed on the importance of horticulture to the nation, given his background in rural politics.

AUSVEG also made public comment on McCain's announcement that it would cease operations at its Penola potato processing plant in December. AUSVEG Public Affairs Manager William Churchill said that the closure would be another nail in the coffin for the potato industry.

In positive news, Woolworths'

decision that it would source 100 per cent of its Select frozen vegetables from Australian growers was welcomed by AUSVEG. Spokesperson Hugh Gurney said that while it was encouraging to see that more Australian vegetables would be sourced by the supermarket, it was important that it's done sustainably and retailers continue to support Australian vegetable growers.

In the R&D space, AUSVEG spokesperson Andrew White appeared in a number of print and broadcast media, concerning findings of market research conducted on behalf of the Australian vegetable industry. Mr White discussed the survey with 2NM radio and



the *Weekly Times*, which found that carrots were the most popular vegetable amongst consumers in the month of August. The spokesperson also highlighted that carrots

were Australia's most exported vegetable.

In other appearances, AUSVEG spokesperson Hugh Gurney featured on ABC News to a syndicated audience of around half a million viewers, discussing a vegetable surplus and how growers were finding it difficult to command decent farm-gate prices.



Key topics for the November/December period:

- AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy's welcoming of the Liberal-National Coalition's election to government, notably the appointment of the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP to the role of Federal Minister for Agriculture.
- Supporting Woolworths' decision that it will source 100 per cent of its Select frozen vegetables from Australian growers.
- Findings of market research which found that carrots were the most popular vegetables amongst consumers for the month of August.

Vegetable IAC Update

Over a year has passed since the Australian vegetable industry commenced its new strategic direction, and the projects we are seeing progress through the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) reflect this focus on the future. The new frontiers being explored by this research and development program offer enormous potential to Australian growers, be this in the soil, where they sow their crops, or the overseas markets where their produce will command a high value due to its exceptional quality.

Over two days in late August, the IAC met in Melbourne to discuss the progress of existing projects and to consider the potential of exciting new R&D ideas. The committee received a briefing on the progress of the Vegetable Industry Crisis Management Plan, which when completed, will be on hand to guide the industry through any potential crisis situation, from a contamination of produce to a

major supply chain disruption. When completed, this plan will aim to minimise the adverse effects on industry caused by a crisis. A plan of this sort is critical for the Australian vegetable industry. We only need to cast our minds back to 2011 - and the 50 deaths resulting from the European E. coli outbreak - to see what can happen without a proper Crisis Management Plan.

The IAC was also updated on the Plant Health work currently being undertaken by RMCG, which will assist in on-farm R&D implementation. This work will provide guidance on the best ways to harmonise R&D to ensure that the Australian vegetable industry can continue to improve its sustainability and its productivity.

Looking to the future, the IAC also considered a number of exciting new projects at this meeting. These new projects look at making it easier for Australian growers



to take part in export activities, following up on the successes of the magnificent Australian Vegetables display at the recent Asia Fruit Logistica, which took place at the beginning of September in Hong Kong. There was an extremely high level of interest in the Australian produce on display, which was extremely encouraging and indicates that the industry is moving in the right direction with its renewed focus on exporting and developing new markets.

The IAC also discussed projects seeking to gain a greater understanding of

consumers closer to home, looking at issues such as attitude towards origin of produce and consumer preference within different commodities.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the Vegetable IAC, and in particular the ongoing efforts of committee members Danny de Ieso and Peter Ward, who were both re-appointed to the committee at the August meeting, following the conclusion of their initial three-year terms.

I encourage any growers who have an idea for vegetable levy R&D to submit these through the AUSVEG website: www.ausveg.com.au.

For more information contact your local Dow AgroSciences representative on **TOLL FREE 1800 700 096**

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SuccessTM Neo
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Minor-use permits

Permit Number	Permit Description (pesticide/crop/pest)	Date Issued	Expiry Date	States	Comments
PER10089	Chlorpyrifos / Parsley & Potato / Vegetable Weevil & Black beetle	12-Feb-08	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Covered by other permits - PER14074 & PER10283
PER10279	Abamectin / Cucumber, Zucchini and Squash / Two spotted mite	22-Feb-08	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Use now registered - Vantel.
PER10486	Carbendazim / Garlic / Botrytis	29-Jun-11	30-Sep-13	Tas only	Permit will not be renewed as product removed from sale.
PER10818	Bravo Weather Stik Fungicide (chlorothalonil) / Cucumbers / Botrytis rot	1-Jun-09	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal. Growcom to be permit holder.
PER10878	Trifluralin / Peppers (sweet and chillie) / Broadleaf and annual grass weeds	11-Aug-08	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Growcom seeking to add crops to PER12823. Growcom to be permit holder.
PER10934	Buprofezin / Tomatoes (protected) / Greenhouse Whitefly	9-Jun-09	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	New permit issued: PER14100, PCA permit holder.
PER10948	Abamectin / Eggplant / Two Spotted Mite	17-Oct-08	30-Oct-13	All states (except Vic)	Use now registered - Vantel.
PER11120	Natrasoap and Neemtech / Greenhouse tomatoes / Greenhouse whitefly	10-Oct-08	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Permit holder to be decided. Renewal yet to send to APVMA.
PER11800	Pirimicarb / Garlic / Bulb aphid and other aphid species	1-Sep-10	31-Aug-13	NSW & Tas	Residue data required - AGP.
PER11919	Flint (trifloxystrobin) / Beetroot / Alternaria leaf spot and Cercospora leaf spot	29-Jun-11	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal.
PER12504	Permethrin/ Cucurbits: Rockmelons, Watermelons, Pumpkin, Cucumbers, Squash and Zucchini/ Cucumber Moth Larvae (Phakelura Indica).	22-Jul-11	31-Dec-13	WA only	There are several registered products that will control lepidoptera pests in cucurbits, eg. Success Neo (spinetoram), Coragen (chlorantraniliprole), Talstar (bifenthrin), Bugmaster (carbaryl) and Lepidex (trichlorfon). Gowcom to confirm.
PER13002	Metalaxyl-M / Lettuce / Damping off	27-Sep-11	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal.
PER13003	Ridomil Gold MZ / Capsicums, Chillies and Paprika / Downy Mildew	26-Oct-11	31-Oct-13	NSW, Qld	Application submitted for renewal. Growcom to be permit holder.
PER13009	Propiconazole / Spinach, Beetroot & Celery / Cercospora, Leaf Spot, Blossom Blight & Anthracnose	2-Nov-11	31-Oct-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal.
PER13032	Pirimicarb / Sweet Potato, Brassica leafy vegetables, Chicory & Coriander / Aphids	26-Oct-11	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal.
PER13034	Score Foliar Fungicide/ Beetroot/ Leaf Spot	18-Oct-11	31-Aug-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal.
PER13047	Acramite Miticide / Tomatoes, Capsicums & Cucumbers / Two-Spotted Mite	8-Nov-11	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Chemtura investigating registration of uses.
PER13089	Acrobat Fungicide / silverbeet, spinach, leafy lettuce / Downy Mildew	13-Oct-11	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal. Consolidation with PER13291
PER13300	Abamectin / Rhubarb / Broad mite	11-Oct-13	3-Dec-16	All states	
PER13291	Dimethomorph, mancozeb / Brassica leafy vegetables / Downy Mildew, White Blister	8-Feb-12	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal. Consolidation with PER13089
PER13498	Pirmicarb / Sweet corn / Aphids	21-May-12	30-Sep-13	All states (except Vic)	Application submitted for renewal.Consolidated with PER13032. Growcom to be permit holder
PER14164	Select Herbicide (Clethodim) / Brassica Vegetables (Broccoli, Brussel sprouts & cauliflower) / Ryegrass & winter grass	11-Oct-13	30-June-17	All states (except Vic)	

These permits have had their additional data requirements changed. Full details of all permits are available on the APVMA website: www.apvma.gov.au/permits

Amistar permit extended

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has agreed to issue an extension for permit numbers PER13123 and PER12999, which were due to expire Monday 30 September 2013.

Given that the Syngenta label registration has not come through as yet, the APVMA has been requested to extend the Amistar permits in the interim.

An extension has been issued until 31st March 2014.

Emma Germano wins Nuffield Scholarship

Emma Germano, from Mirboo North in Victoria, has been awarded the Nuffield Scholarship for 2014, receiving the award at Nuffield Australia's prestigious National Conference dinner at Crown Perth in September.

Emma was featured in the March/April 2013 edition of *Vegetables Australia*, and is the Business Development and Operations Manager for Germano Produce, a family business supplying cauliflower and cabbage crops for the Australian eastern seaboard fresh market and Woolworths.

The business currently grows approximately 50 thousand cauliflower plants for six months of the year on 120 hectares. Germano Produce also grows

broad beans, cabbage, and Chinese cabbage during the six-month harvest period.

While undertaking the scholarship, Emma will research how different countries facilitate exports, including what government programs are available to growers, as well as the market opportunities for Australian produce. She plans to visit Europe, Israel, Brazil and China to complete her studies.

"I expect this will involve the study of tariffs and free trade agreements, and also how subsidies have an effect on global trade – to complement this, I would also like to investigate how Australia is able to compete in the global food market," she said.

Emma believes the Australian



(L-R) Peter Melville from Horticulture Australia Limited, with Nuffield Scholarship winner Emma Germano and Terry Hehir, Chairman of Nuffield Australia.

vegetable industry is at a critical point and government needs to support the Australian industry's competitive advantage in food production.

"We produce an abundance of high quality fresh produce, but this works against the Australian grower. Put simply, we produce in excess of domestic consumption. As a nation we need to capitalise on our productivity and create export opportunities for growers and processors," Emma said.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy said Emma is one of the rising stars in the next generation of Australian vegetable growers.

"Emma is enthusiastic

and heavily involved with a broad range of activities. Her contributions to our industry are highly commended and AUSVEG congratulates Emma on being awarded the Nuffield Scholarship for 2014," he said.

Nuffield Australia is an organisation providing opportunities to Australian farmers to travel overseas on an agricultural research scholarship. The scholarship is a 16-week program consisting of both group and individual travel. The Nuffield Scholarship is funded by HAL using the National Vegetable Levy with matched funds from the Australian Government.

SEEKING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST SALE OF BUSINESS AND ASSETS LAKE JASPER CERTIFIED SEED POTATOES

M^cN⁺
M^cGRATHNICOL

Norman Oehme and James Thackray as joint and several Receivers and Managers of Lake Jasper Pty Ltd (Receivers and Managers Appointed) ("Lake Jasper") seek expressions of interest for the sale of the Lake Jasper Certified Seed Potatoes business and assets.

Lake Jasper generates annual revenue of circa \$5 million (with significant growth opportunity) and operates from leased premises in Yarloop, Western Australia. On an annual basis, the business produces and sells:

- + Circa 4,000MT of seed potatoes; and
- + Circa 2,000MT of table and chip potatoes.

Key features include:

- + Reputable established certified business within the WA potato industry;
- + Strong reliant customer;

- + Leasehold farms in various locations in South West WA (within reasonable proximity to Yarloop);
- + Significant inventory including finished goods and ample low generation seed for future planting and ongoing production;
- + WA potato marketing licences held (135MT pa); and
- + Skilled workforce.

Expressions of interest are sought by 5pm WST on Friday, 25 October 2013.

Interested parties can obtain further information, subject to execution of a Confidentiality Agreement from McGrathNicol.

If you would like further information about this process, please contact:

Shane Hurst on +61 8 6363 7635 or shurst@mcgrathnicol.com

Around the states

Queensland



Five workforce development officers have been appointed in regional Queensland as part of the State Government's program to improve horticulture workplace practices and boost production. Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry John McVeigh launched the three-year *Queensland Production Horticulture Workforce Development Plan 2013-15*, developed for the industry by Growcom, at a function at Rugby Farm in the Lockyer Valley in October. Under the plan, Growcom appointed a regional workforce development officer serving the Granite Belt and Southern Darling Downs regions, to help horticulture growers address local workforce

attraction, retention and up-skilling issues.

Peter Broomhall is the new Regional Workplace Development Coordinator, based in Growcom's Toowoomba office. He reports to State Workforce Development Coordinator, Michelle Templin, at Growcom's head office in Brisbane. Mr Broomhall will focus on industry workforce development needs within the Granite Belt and Southern Darling Downs and will be progressing workplace development initiatives associated with the plan. He has more than 25 years' experience in production horticulture and holds a Bachelor of Science at the University of Queensland majoring in Plant Physiology, a Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment, Diploma in Agribusiness Management, and qualifications in climate adaptation and resource management. His formal studies are well supported by wide-ranging industry experience, including running his own consultancy business providing growers with irrigation and

nutrition advice and managing and his own small family farm near Stanthorpe with his wife, Paulette, and their two children.

Horticultural growers in the Granite Belt and South Darling Downs regions wanting to learn more about how Peter Broomhall can assist with workforce development issues are invited to contact him on 0408 135 003 or email pbroomhall@growcom.com.au.

Three other regions and industry bodies have also appointed Regional Workplace Development Officers. They are:

- Greg Weir, Wide Bay Burnett (Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers), telephone (07) 4153 3007
- Bianca Fullarton, Bowen (Bowen Gumlu Growers Association) telephone (07) 4785 2860, and
- Leanne Kruss, Far North Queensland (Mareeba District Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association) telephone (07) 4092 6099.

The five officers will form the core of an Industry Education and Training Network (IETN) which will allow industry and

government to identify barriers to industry participation in higher education and training and help the sector optimise and maintain an efficient, available workforce.

The offices came together for a two-day workshop at Growcom in Brisbane in October to meet each other and representatives of key registered training organisations, government bodies and relevant stakeholders. They also discussed how to best implement the Workforce Development Plan in their regions.

The State Government has committed \$1.2 million in funding for the Plan and implementation, which supports the goal of doubling agricultural production by 2040.

A copy of the plan is available on the Growcom website at www.growcom.com.au.

Alex Livingstone

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

Western Australia



It is a great privilege that the vegetablesWA Committee of Management recently appointed me as the new Executive Officer following the retirement of Jim Turley after his 10 years in the role. Having commenced with vegetablesWA four years ago, working both in the field and predominantly as the Policy and Program Manager, I understand this position comes with great responsibility. I commit to serving our West Australian vegetable industry as best I can, recognising that often things may not be easy or tranquil. Then again, nothing worthwhile usually is.

I would like to recognise the

remarkable achievements of my predecessor, Jim. With grower support, his leadership resulted in great development for vegetablesWA, which now delivers so much value to our industry. His are large shoes to fill and I am pleased that Jim will still be available to provide advice and corporate knowledge from the position he retains as Executive Officer of the Potato Growers Association.

Both I, and your Committee of Management, have several important issues to promptly address. The development of a new Strategic Plan is paramount while a review and improvement of our corporate services, continued communications with our members and sparking new industry opportunities are just some of the tasks which must also be tackled. While we have so many strengths as an organisation, I am pleased at the new ideas already being developed to further benefit WA vegetable growers.

Day to day, the dedicated staff at vegetablesWA are no less busy serving the membership. We are lucky to have people of their calibre working hard for our industry. We will also continue striving to enhance communications with members.

In our industry, there is no doubt the world is increasingly competitive in terms of substitute products, imports from overseas and interstate, and spiralling input costs.

But the dangers of staying the same are greater than the dangers of changing. We cannot focus only on difficulties but must also search out opportunities for success.

There are a range of technical innovations coming out both through private channels and the national R&D system, which will improve production efficiency and growers' bottom lines. There are also emerging market opportunities both in improving the alignment between the produce we grow

and domestic consumers' needs; as well as the millions of middle class consumers rising in Asia who will be willing and able to pay for premium, safe West Australian produce.

vegetablesWA will continue to assist growers with these challenges and opportunities. I look forward to continuing the great relationships I have developed with the wonderful people I have come to know in the Australian vegetable industry. Of course if you want to discuss anything please just give me a call on 0488 111 526 or drop me an email at john.shannon@vegetableswa.com.au.

John Shannon

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

New South Wales



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Closer Economic Relations agreement between Australia and New Zealand which, despite our rivalry on the rugby field, has seen our two nations move closer towards common policy.

This is unquestionably a good thing, however, even though the policy was created with the best of intentions, it has created loopholes which are having unintended effects on the Australian vegetable industry and pose serious concerns for human health.

Presently these arrangements permit entry of foods into Australia which do not meet domestic food safety standards. The 'grey trade' as it has been

so aptly named because, whilst traded through distribution channels which are technically legal, they take advantage of grey areas in policy.

Under the Closer Economic Relations agreement: 'Foods will be able to be exported without import and export certification and inspection requirements'. In Australia, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) determines Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for agricultural and veterinary chemical residues present in food which is harmonised with 'Australia only' standards of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) ensure this standard is applied to imported foods that enter Australia except, under the agreement, those imported from New Zealand.

MRLs in New Zealand are determined by their own regulatory authority and harmonised with their own testing agencies which monitor domestic compliance

and the compliance of those foods imported into New Zealand. These MRLs are not always consistent with those determined and tested in Australia. Under the Closer Economic Relations agreement, foods imported from New Zealand do not have to meet these Australia specific standards. This creates a system of 'double standards'.

Whilst NSW Farmers' is concerned that imported food grown in New Zealand may not meet the same standards of that grown in Australia, we are more concerned with other countries which export food into New Zealand; subject to a simple transformation such as packaging, and are then exported to Australia from New Zealand effectively bypassing the import requirements of foreign food in Australia.

I do not wish to target a particular country, however, with the Free Trade Agreement between New Zealand and China, which was signed in 2008, I believe there is increased likelihood of produce

from questionable producers in China entering Australia through New Zealand.

I welcome commitments made in September at a Q&A in Wagga Wagga from Mr Angus Taylor, Member for Hume and Senator the Hon. Bill Heffernan who have indicated they will seek a review of the current arrangements of the Closer Economic Relations agreement and its interaction with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

On a side note I also want to congratulate Geoff Moar on his recent appointment as Chair of AUSVEG. I have worked with Geoff for a number of years on the NSW Farmers' Horticulture Committee and his appointment is a great outcome for the industry.

Peter Darley

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

Victoria



It was interesting to read that, according to Professor David Hughes from Food Marketing at London Imperial College, in the world market, fresh produce is down and processed produce is up.

Indications are that the consumption of fresh produce across Europe has declined mainly due to the impact of advertising; 'Drink more fruit and vegetables' rather than 'Eat more fruit and vegetables'. The processing of produce can create an added value that is often not enjoyed by the grower.

Professor Hughes also

emphasised the importance of China, and suggested if its population of 1.3 billion elects to eat 'a little more' nourishment from fresh produce, it will have a significant impact on World demand.

Exporting to Asia is not to be considered smooth sailing and global food prices need to be carefully monitored. On the other hand, Asia is also a 'volume producing' area so competition will be fierce. Quality will secure better than average prices for fresh produce.

Meanwhile, the Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria assisted Emma Germano, vegetable grower from Mirboo North in Victoria, with her application for a Nuffield Scholarship and would like to congratulate her on being awarded the prestigious accolade. As part of her scholarship, Emma will research global export opportunities for vegetables and other primary

produce. She plans to visit Europe, Israel, Brazil and China to complete her studies.

In other good news, our Executive Manager won a HAL scholarship to attend the recent Australasian Pacific Extension Network (APEN) Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand.

With over 250 participants from across agriculture and countries such as South Africa and Canada, and several international speakers, the three day conference covered all aspects of extension and networking, in particular what has worked in various agricultural industries. The highlight was the final presentation by Prof Gregorio Billikopf from the University of California. Prof Billikopf's presentation dealt with staff selection and conflict resolution. His methods could easily be applied across all sectors by all managers or owners of businesses.

VGA Vic is also on the verge

of signing an agreement with GOTAFE for delivery of 'on-farm' training to vegetable growers and their employees. The courses will be tailored for the vegetable industry to be run 'on-farm' with groups of employees and fit with existing accredited Certificate courses. Once the course material has been customised and trialled, we intend to start booking courses with interested growers for early next year.

Remember VGA Vic is your grower's voice in the Victorian vegetable industry

For industry information, contact Executive Manager Helena Whitman on 0407 772 299 or email helena.w@vgavic.org.au.

Keep smiling

Tony Imeson

VGA Victoria
Executive Officer
Phone: (03) 9687 4707
Fax: (03) 9687 4723
Email: tony.i@vgavic.org.au

Tasmania



As all vegetable growers in Tasmania prepared for the spring planting season, Mother Nature had other ideas. Heavy rain and strong winds have persisted since July, causing delays to plantings right across the state, more so in the north than the south. The ground in some areas is so wet that there is very little drainage, and most growers are hoping the sun will appear soon to dry things up so they can get their crops into the

ground.

A concern at the moment with planting being 2-4 weeks late is the effect on crop yields. Soil testing results so far are indicating leaching of fertiliser applications, so growers will have to take a gamble with extra fertiliser and its associated costs around yields.

Pea crops planted in the south around the Richmond area are looking good and will meet early harvest contract requirements. There are processing concerns because of the limited tonnage planted to date, but, as the weather starts to improve, more peas are being planted. With a few days of drier weather, most growers were flat out planting given the late start to the season.

Bean plantings have been delayed until mid-October, with growers now planting to supply the fresh market. Carrots and broccoli planted in September

are now coming good, even though some planting was slightly delayed as some beds had to be reformed because of the weather.

Planting of processing potatoes has been about 2-3 weeks behind schedule because of the very wet winter and later spring. There has been some nutrient leaching across a range of soils, which will require a higher than usual top dressing and foliage treatment. There are also reports of higher than usual slug and snail pressure.

Growers supplying Simplot are still in discussions over the future of the vegetable processing facility. Most growers are concerned about the ever-increasing input costs associated with growing vegetables, including water, power, fuel and other inputs costs. Water costs alone have increased 300 per cent over recent years. Machinery dealers

and support industries are also feeling the effect of the tighter margins being placed on the growers.

Because the wet weather has presented challenges for early plantings, our traditional growing season really didn't kick off until mid October. Due to the lack of sunlight, some transplants are lagging behind slightly which means late plantings should take off as the season develops. Providing we get good sunshine and warm temperatures, growers should be looking forward to a bumper season.

Andrew Craigie

Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association Vegetable Council Chairman
Cnr Cimitiere and Charles Streets
Launceston, Tas 7250
Phone: (03) 6332 1800
Mobile: 0418 144 040

Success™ Neo now registered for sweet corn

After two years of residue trials of Dow AgroScience's Success™ Neo, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has recently approved the product's use for sweet corn. This is good news to the many growers who have expressed concern about the lack of effective insecticide rotation options currently available for

control of *Helicoverpa spp.* in sweet corn.

The product includes a new active ingredient - spinetoram - which is an insecticide with longer residual that is effective on a wider range of pests and crops. At the time of registration in 2011, sweet corn growers, who for many years had used the original Success™ product, discovered that sweet corn

was no longer on the label. This was because when Success™ Neo was registered, there were no Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) in place for meat exported to Taiwan. Taiwan is a large export market for Australian beef and sweet corn plant waste is often used as a stockfeed for these animals. Residual trials conducted by Dow AgroScience have since

reassessed residual levels, and the product is now available for sweet corn growers.

It is important to note that this registration applies to all volumes of Success Neo currently in stock and not only product packed in drums with the new label.

Should you require a copy of the updated label, please contact Dow AgroSciences customer service on 1800 700 096.

CALENDAR



19 – 21 June 2014

AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence

Where: Cairns Convention Centre, QLD

What: The AUSVEG National Convention provides delegates with an opportunity to forge relationships with members of the industry, supply chain, researchers and growers.

Further information: AUSVEG (03) 9882 0277, convention@ausveg.com.au, or www.ausveg.com.au/convention

17 - 22 August 2014

International Horticultural Congress

Where: Brisbane, QLD

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

Further information: www.ihc2014.org/



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Congratulations
to last year's
winner!
Brad Qualischefski of
Qualipac Farms



READER SURVEY

1. What sector of the industry do you represent? Please tick:

- Grower (seed) Grower (fresh) Grower (processed)
 Processor Supply chain Researcher
 Government Industry official
 Other _____

2. What is your age group? Please tick:

- 18-24 25-34 35-44
 45-54 55+

3. What crops do you grow?

4. Which sections of *Vegetables Australia* are of most interest to you? Please tick:

- News R&D Articles
 International R&D Young Grower Profiles
 Grower Profiles Feature articles
 Industry Columns New products/Advertisements

5. On a scale of 1-5, how useful do you find the R&D articles included in *Vegetables Australia*, with 1 being "Not useful at all" and 5 being "Extremely useful". Please tick:

- 1 2 3 4 5

6. Does R&D content in the magazine influence the way you run your business? Please tick:

- Yes No

7. How many people read your copy of *Vegetables Australia*?

8. Where do you get your information from? Please tick:

- Industry publications Consultants
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 Resellers Government organisations
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9. Do you have any comments/suggestions regarding the magazine?

10. Are you interested in receiving further information regarding the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention in Cairns from June 19-21 2014? Please tick:

- Yes No

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