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australia

November/December 2016

Sam Adams
Young grower

Kristena Le
Industry trailblazer

Veggie Stats
Beetroot facts and figures

Industry investment
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Geoff Moar

AUSVEG Chairman

As we approach the end of the year, here at AUSVEG we are busier than ever, with the arrangements for 2017 Hort Connections well underway.

I am pleased to announce that Australian Organic, Onions Australia and Irrigation Australia have signed on as co-hosts of this ground-breaking horticulture event, which is a joint initiative between AUSVEG and PMA Australia-New Zealand Limited (PMA A-NZ). We are committed to bringing growers and members of the wider horticulture community a world-class conference and trade show.

Hort Connections combines the National Horticulture Convention and PMA Fresh Connections, and will be held at Adelaide Convention Centre from 15-17 May.

The inclusion of four industry co-hosts will ensure delegates can listen to a wider range of presenters and gain an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and network with their industry peers across horticulture.

AUSVEG and PMA A-NZ are continuing discussions with other industry groups to co-host Hort Connections, and we will keep you informed of further developments as this one-of-a-kind conference draws closer.

Meanwhile, the AUSVEG Science and Extension team has undertaken a range of activities in relation to biosecurity. In September, AUSVEG National Manager – Science and Extension Dr Jessica Lye and Biosecurity Coordinator Callum Fletcher presented at a grower workshop that examined the fundamentals of on-farm biosecurity and other plant pest and disease issues. Dr Lye also presented at the annual Farm Biosecurity Conference,

discussing the implementation of a farm biosecurity plan.

It is important for growers to understand the importance of implementing stringent biosecurity practices on their farms. In doing so, they ensure the risks posed by destructive pests and diseases are minimised. As always, a swift response to any potential pest and disease threat found on-farm is vital to securing the future sustainability of the vegetable industry.

On a final note, I, along with AUSVEG CEO Simon Bolles, had the privilege of attending the Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers (BFVG) 'Night under the Stars' Gala Dinner in October.

This event attracted around 500 local producers and celebrated not only the achievements of the local growing region but also the wider horticulture industry. It is pleasing to see the Bundaberg food bowl is thriving, and we thank BFVG Chairman Allan Mahoney, Managing Director Bree Grima and staff for their hospitality.

We also had the opportunity to visit a number of leading growing operations in Bundaberg during our visit and discuss some of the key challenges affecting the region. Overall, I congratulate the Bundaberg growing region on its success and we are looking forward to seeing its contributions to the Australian vegetable and wider horticulture industry continue into the future.

Geoff Moar
Chairman
AUSVEG



Simon Bolles

AUSVEG Interim CEO

The vegetable industry is currently in a critical phase of development, with over 30 Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) consultation workshops being held with growers across the country.

Under the direction of Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) and consulting firm Consulting & Implementation Services (CIS), these workshops will give levy-paying growers the opportunity to have their say on the key areas for R&D investment, which will shape the direction of vegetable levy-funded projects over the next five years.

AUSVEG is also attending these workshops as the peak representative body for vegetable growers. We believe this consultation process is vital for the future direction of the industry and an invaluable platform for levy-paying growers to assist in shaping the short- and long-term future of the industry.

A short online survey released by CIS is also available for growers who are unable to attend the regional workshops. As this consultation process only occurs once every five years, we encourage growers to take the time to complete the survey and make sure their thoughts and suggestions are heard.

In some ways, the future of the industry was demonstrated through the opening of Australia's first horticultural robotics learning and development hub in October. Located at the University of Sydney, the Horticulture Innovation Centre for Robotics and Intelligent Systems (HICRIS) will be home to the best and brightest in

engineering and science, as well as those who are passionate about incorporating automation onto their farms to increase the productivity and profitability of their businesses.

It is particularly pleasing that the centre will commit \$10 million to upcoming projects. This investment will benefit current and future generations of vegetable growers and provide the resources they need to increase on-farm efficiencies and lower production costs.

On a final note, Australian vegetable exporters have once again impressed international buyers at the World of Perishables trade show in Dubai. The Australian Vegetables stand, which formed part of the wider Australia Fresh pavilion, proved popular with key buyers from the Middle East, who showed keen interest in our fresh, clean produce. It also gave our growers a chance to gain an understanding of the Dubai market and establish connections with businesses in the Middle East.

This positive feedback is encouraging not only for growers who attended the trade show, but for the Australian vegetable industry as a whole. We hope these international trade shows continue to be a successful platform for export-ready growers to establish business relationships with buyers in key export markets.

Simon Bolles
Interim Chief Executive Officer
AUSVEG

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All research and development projects have been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and/or voluntary contributions from industry, and funds from the Australian Government. *Vegetables Australia* is produced by AUSVEG Ltd and is free for all National Vegetable Levy payers. For more information or to follow AUSVEG online visit:

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ISSN 1832-3340



FRONT COVER:

Sam Adams

Photograph by Rowena Dione Photography



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Joe Mondello – EnviroVeg Profile



AUSVEG would like to thank the readers of *Vegetables Australia* for your support in 2016. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year in 2017.

It's all happening in the world of vegetables at the moment, with consultation for the industry's Strategic Investment Plan currently in process.

Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) and Consulting & Implementation Services (CIS) are currently conducting levy-paying grower consultation meetings around the country. CIS Manager Greg Spinks outlined the SIP process to *Vegetables Australia* and explained the benefits available to growers by attending these meetings. The SIP is important for shaping the future of the

vegetable industry, and further details can be found on page 14.

The Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection column this month features 2016 AUSVEG Grower of the Year Rob Hinrichsen from Kalfresh and provides an overview of September's Werribee Farm Walk in Victoria (page 10), while the National Vegetable Extension Network is ramping up its activities in Tasmania and New South Wales (page 30).

This month's Grower profile feature is Kristena Le, a pioneer in the Australian vegetable

industry. The Vietnamese-born grower, based in Western Sydney, speaks about her passion for the farm and the challenges it presents on page 44. We then travel further north to Gatton, Queensland, where young grower Sam Adams discusses his role as Field Officer for Qualipac (page 16).

The EnviroVeg profile for this edition is Joe Mondello. As the General Manger of Sales at Marrone Fresh in South Australia, Joe talks about the importance of sustainability on-farm and the challenges faced in the marketplace, highlighting the need for ongoing investment

in R&D (page 38).

Finally in our Women in Horticulture column, *Vegetables Australia* features a selection of the 2016 Rural Industries Research and Development (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award winners working in the horticulture industry (page 22). These women are champions of their chosen primary industry, aiming to make a difference and encouraging others to follow their lead.

Whether you know of a research project or grower in the industry, please share your story ideas with us on 03 9882 0277 or info@ausveg.com.au.



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Veggie bites

Facts & figures...

25%

Veggycation® states that one serve of red radish (75 grams) provides a good source, or 25 per cent, of the recommended dietary intake of vitamin C.

\$5.87kg

Zucchini's national average price was sitting at \$5.87kg in August 2016, Project Harvest Wave 39 reported. This is significantly higher compared to \$3.65kg in April 2016.

3.9 grams



In half a cup of Brussels sprouts, there is 3.9 grams of fibre. *Source: Go for 2 & 5 (gofor2and5.com.au).*

1-3 days



The Heart Foundation recommends storing cucumber in the refrigerator crisper and eating it quickly; that is, 1-3 days after purchase.

68%



Project Harvest Wave 37 has revealed awareness of carrot types remains low, with 68 per cent of consumers unable to name a variety of the vegetable.

\$23 million

Australian vegetable producers are predicted to receive \$23 million in additional profit if consumption was 10 per cent higher, according to Deloitte Access Economics 2016 report, *The impact of increasing vegetable consumption on health expenditure.*

68%

A Nielsen report released in May, *Global vs. local: The choice is clear for fresh and packaged foods*, revealed 68 per cent of respondents preferred local brands to global ones for vegetables.

10.74 metres



Jason Karl of the United States holds the Guinness World Record for growing the tallest sweet corn plant. The plant measured 10.74 metres on 22 December 2011.



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AUSVEG Grower of the Year Rob Hinrichsen from Kalfresh.

Focusing on healthy soils in Queensland and Victoria

THE SOIL WEALTH AND INTEGRATED CROP PROTECTION (ICP) PROJECTS ARE CONTINUING TO ASSIST VEGETABLE GROWERS, PROVIDING ADVICE ON CROP NUTRITION AND SOIL MANAGEMENT. IN THIS COLUMN, WE EXPLAIN THE LATEST FINDINGS FROM A DEMONSTRATION SITE AT KALBAR IN QUEENSLAND AND WERRIBEE IN VICTORIA.

AUSVEG Grower of the Year, Rob Hinrichsen, runs a successful vegetable farming operation in the Fassifern Valley, located in south-east Queensland, producing carrots, onions, beans and pumpkin.

Rob follows four fundamental principles to guide his soil management and cropping practices. These are:

1. Controlled traffic farming.
2. Compost.
3. Cover crops.
4. Biologicals.

The Soil Wealth and ICP projects have managed a demonstration site at Kalfresh since early 2015. The results from the demonstration site confirm that by following the above four principles in managing vegetable cropping soils, both soil condition and financial returns can be maximised.

Carrot returns increased by between \$400 and \$1,200 per hectare using compost and beneficial bacteria while at the same time improving the long-term health of the soil and the cropping system. It's a true win-win situation.

For a fact sheet summarising the results that Rob and the Soil Wealth team have achieved on the demo site, check out the Soil Wealth/ICP website (soilwealth.com.au) and look under the 'Resources' tab.

Werribee Farm Walk

Soil management in Werribee,

Victoria, is challenging. High magnesium and sodium salts combined with intense rotations mean aggressive cultivation is used to break up the hard soil and establish each crop. Typically 7-8 cultivations are used, including deep ripping in both directions, rotary hoeing, bedform and power harrow.

So, can 'softer' tillage work in these soils? This has been the key question on the Werribee demonstration site, hosted by Andrew Fragapane and managed by Stuart Grigg (Stuart Grigg Ag-Hort Consulting) with soils input from Kelvin Montagu (Applied Horticultural Research).

After three lettuce crops, the first farm walk was held. More than 40 people attended the event in September, with the baby gem cos lettuce just about ready for harvest.

What is the crop telling us?

The lettuce crops don't mind the 'softer' tillage approaches. At the farm walk, the third lettuce crop was uniform and similar across the following three soil management practices:

1. Conventional with seven cultivations.
2. Reduced tillage with two cultivations (deep rip and power harrow).
3. Minimum-tillage with only a power harrow and compost application.

Similar yields were also

measured in the second baby cos lettuce crop (baby cos 2) with reduced-till and minimum-till practices producing yields about the same as the conventional till, (i.e. less than five per cent different to the conventional tillage practice).

In the first crop (baby cos 1), the yield in the reduced-till practice was also similar to the conventional tillage practice. However, a total no-till approach used in the first crop (baby cos 1) was a step too far, with uncultivated hard setting soil too hard for the coulter attached to the transplanter. As a result, this was changed to a minimum-till with compost practice.

Since the demo site started, the conventional tillage area has been cultivated 23 times compared to just six times in the reduced tillage area.

A full wrap-up from the Werribee Farm Walk can be found on the Soil Wealth/ICP website.

New fact sheet: Brassica whitefly control

Brassica whitefly (*Aleyrodes proletella*) is a pest of crops in the brassica family. In New South Wales, the Brassica whitefly has only become a pest of significance in the last 2-3 seasons.

The ICP team has released a Brassica whitefly fact sheet, detailing the damage it causes along with advice on how to monitor the pest. The fact sheet can be found on the Soil

Wealth/ICP website under the 'Resources' tab.

Summer cover crops

Mixtures of cover crop species can be planted to optimise the benefits associated with cover crop use. Typically, mixes will include a grass, a legume and possibly a brassica.

Soil Wealth/ICP has released a summary sheet where growers can match their main soil management aim to the southern Australian summer cover crops. This can be found on the Soil Wealth/ICP website under the 'Resources' tab.



For more information, please contact project leaders Dr Gordon Rogers on 02 8627 1040 or gordon@ahr.com.au and Dr Anne-Maree Boland on 03 9882 2670 or anne-mareeb@rmcg.com.au.

More information and resources are also available from the Soil Wealth/ICP website at soilwealth.com.au or integratedcropprotection.com.au.

The Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection projects have been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Numbers: VG13076 and VG13078

**Horticulture
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Ground-breaking robotics hub officially open



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST HORTICULTURAL ROBOTICS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT HUB OPENED IN OCTOBER, SIGNIFYING THE INDUSTRY'S DETERMINATION TO ADOPT ON-FARM TECHNOLOGIES, RAMP UP EXPORT CAPACITY AND DEVELOP FUTURE LEADERS IN HORTICULTURE.

Located at the University of Sydney, the Horticulture Innovation Centre for Robotics and Intelligent Systems (HICRIS) will initially host a \$10 million commitment to projects in robotics and autonomous technology that aim to increase farm efficiencies.

HICRIS was officially opened by Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston on 6 October, and is located within the University of Sydney's Australian Centre for Field Robotics.

New level of innovation

Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) CEO John Lloyd said the new centre will help the horticulture industry minimise labour costs and prepare for the future.

"Never before have we seen this level of innovation in the horticulture industry. Through working with the University of Sydney, we have been able to develop technology that can detect foreign matter, robots that can map tree-crop architecture, and ground-breaking autonomous weed identification and eradication capabilities.

"This research will be further expanded to investigate capabilities such as automated

crop forecasting to predict the best time to harvest and ground penetrating radar sensors to measure things like soil water content."

Increasing accessibility

Mr Lloyd said Hort Innovation is looking to identify commercial partnerships with the aim of making these technologies accessible to growers.

"This centre will give current and emerging generations of growers and agri-scientists the resources they need to develop their ideas for the benefit of the industry, and all Australians," he said.

Professor Salah Sukkarieh, University of Sydney Director of Research and Innovation at the Australian Centre for Field Robotics, said the HICRIS would further put Australia's reputation for developing world-leading technologies on the world map. It will initially have six research fellows, five PhD students and six technical staff.

"It will attract Australia's brightest minds in engineering and science. It will also act as a training facility for Australian growers and the future generations of students who are passionate about creating innovative solutions to make farming more efficient."

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Project Number: VG15027

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The National Vegetable Levy at work

Who pays the National Vegetable Levy?

The levy is paid by growers who produce vegetables in Australia.

- The charge is set at half of one per cent at the first point of sale.

The Federal Government also provides funding in addition to grower levy payments. Once paid, these funds are managed by Hort Innovation.

How is levy money invested?

There are now two pools with different funding priorities.

Pool 1 is funded by grower levies with contributions from the Federal Government. This pool has a one to five year scope and will invest in applied R&D designed to directly benefit growers. This includes pest and disease management and biosecurity matters, with findings communicated through a variety of channels including *Vegetables Australia*.

Pool 2 has a one to 15 year scope and matches strategic co-investment funds with at least \$20 million, at the Pool's maturity, of government seed funds annually. This pool aims to address multi- and cross-industry challenges and opportunities of strategic and long-term importance to Australia's horticulture industries.

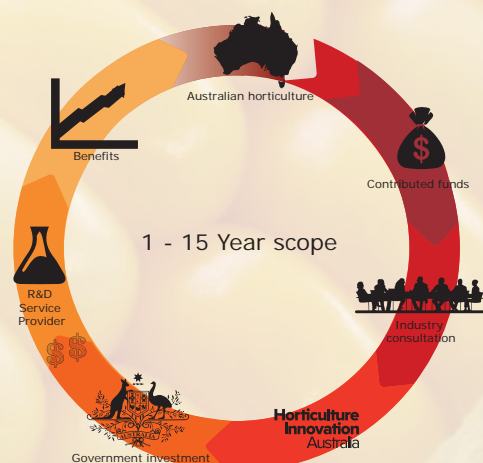
Five 'Foundation Funds' have so far been established in Pool 2 and will work with an expert panel to direct strategic projects. They are:

- The Leadership and People Development Fund
- The Fruit Fly Fund
- The Asian Markets Fund
- The Green Cities Fund
- The Health, Nutrition and Food Safety Fund

Pool 1



Pool 2



How can growers get involved?

Vegetable growers play a fundamental role in advising on the allocation of both levy and co-investment funds, and will be engaged in extensive consultation with Hort Innovation in regional grower meetings, industry-specific consultation programs and individual grower and grower group consultation.

Growers can also submit ideas for R&D projects via Hort Innovation's Concept Portal at horticulture.com.au/concept-proposal-form.

For more information about the National Vegetable Levy, visit ausveg.com.au/md/thelevysystem/vegetablelevy.htm



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Hitting the road for grower consultations

HORTICULTURE INNOVATION AUSTRALIA HAS BEGUN ITS STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY, WITH A NUMBER OF LEVY-PAYING GROWER MEETINGS SCHEDULED IN ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES. GROWERS CAN ALSO HAVE THEIR SAY THROUGH A SURVEY TO BE RELEASED IN MID-NOVEMBER.

Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) has joined forces with Consulting & Implementation Services (CIS) to launch the vegetable industry's Strategic Investment Planning (SIP) process.

The SIP process will determine where more than \$100 million in matched levy contributions will be spent on research, development and extension activities over the next five years.

A number of levy-paying grower consultation meetings will take place around the country, in all states and territories, and a wide-ranging grower survey will be conducted as the vegetable industry looks to the future.

CIS Managing Director Greg Spinks explained his company's role in the SIP.

"Every five years, each of the sectors of the horticulture industry has to develop and implement a strategy as to how they are going to spend their matched levy funding.

"There has to be a well-

considered strategy and our role is to develop that strategy to maximise the benefits for the industry from those levy funds," Mr Spinks said.

Early days

The levy-paying grower consultation process began in mid-October, with CIS aiming to have the plans finished by July 2017.

"What we have done so far is some background work to get ourselves up-to-date in terms of what some of the key trends in the industry are," Mr Spinks said.

"We've also looked at what's happening internationally, what the strengths and weaknesses are, where the opportunities are and where the threats might be – and just trying to understand, as a starting point, how the industry is performing and why."

CIS has identified 30 key growing regions around Australia as locations for these levy-paying grower meetings.

"Those 30 key growing regions will give us coverage

of 70 per cent of all vegetable growers in the country," Mr Spinks said.

In addition to these meetings, CIS will have one-on-one discussions with other stakeholders.

"That could include government departments, agronomists, large corporates, peak industry bodies or other stakeholders in the vegetable industry, and we'll talk to them one-on-one around their views of the industry and where they think the opportunities are for levy funding," Mr Spinks said.

Grower surveys

Mr Spinks said he expected grower surveys will be available for all levy payers by mid-November. These will arrive via fax, through an online link or growers can fill one out at the levy-payer meetings.

"This is a really important initiative that only comes around once every five years," Mr Spinks said.

"Once the plans are agreed to, they're fairly locked in for

the next five years. If growers actually want to have some input into how this money can be used to drive the success of their industry this is their chance – it's their money, they will know better than anyone their problems and opportunities so it's really important they participate and contribute to this process. Besides, it gives them a rare chance to catch up with other growers in the region."



For more information, please visit horticulture.com.au or contact Consulting & Implementation Services Managing Director Greg Spinks on 03 9081 0413 or 0412 386 373 or at gregspinks@consultingis.com.au.

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

Project Number: VG15027

**Horticulture
Innovation
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Targeted training available for vegetable industry members

THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY EDUCATION AND TRAINING INITIATIVE, VEGPRO, IS FOCUSING ON PROVIDING TARGETED TRAINING TO UPSKILL PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS WITHIN THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY BASED ON THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS.



VegPRO is industry-owned and industry-driven, offering people in the vegetable industry a chance to put forward their training needs for any aspect of their business.

A dedicated program coordinator will organise training programs that are custom-made to suit these needs, with implementation of the training being levy-funded. They will be relevant, easy to access, flexible and responsive to regional or changing needs.

This program will also offer a hub where information on

training relevant to the vegetable industry can be found, along with a 'Training Passport' where skills and qualifications can be registered.

Skills development

Other initiatives from VegPRO will include the development of a mentoring program, upskilling trainers and a service to link producers, staff and supply chain members to already existing training services.

In summary, VegPRO is a program to provide producers,

staff and other supply chain members with targeted training to meet specific needs and be professional, proficient and progressive.

Program coordinator Sophie Lapsley is looking forward to working with industry members wishing to upskill.

"I am really excited about this project as it offers an easy way to get the skills that are needed to work in the vegetable industry," she said.



For more information about VegPRO or to lodge a training need, please contact Sophie Lapsley at sophie.l@rmcg.com.au or phone 0426 200 996.

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

Project Number: VG15028



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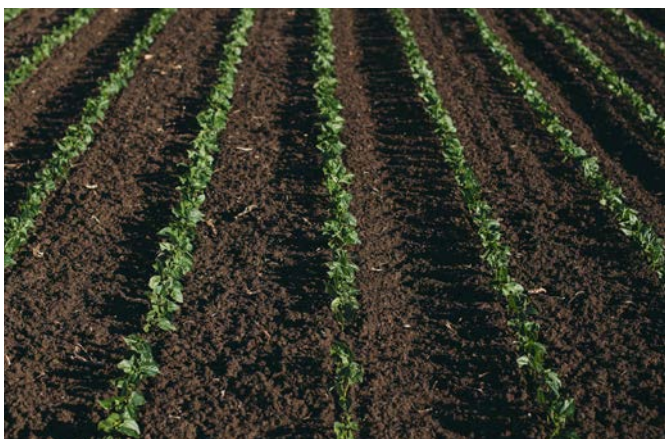


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Young grower profile

Name:

Sam Adams

Age:

25

Location:

Gatton, QLD

Works:

Field officer, Qualipac

Grows:

Broccoli, pumpkin, onion, sweet corn, green beans and cabbage

How did you first become involved in the vegetable industry?

My first glimpse into horticulture came when the tomato farm was built up the road from home, at Guyra, NSW. I had a fantastic opportunity during university as a part of the RIRDC Horizon Scholarship Program to conduct work placement in Bundaberg in 2011. Sponsored by Horticulture Innovation Australia (then Horticulture Australia Limited) for my three-year degree, I was fortunate to be able to spend a fortnight with a host of growers in various industries under the watchful eye of Peter Hockings of Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers, a truly remarkable experience which no doubt has helped me return to horticulture, beginning with Qualipac in 2015.

What is your role in the business?

My role varies week to week and season to season. Currently I have been working with the harvest supervisors, the packing shed and marketing to coordinate harvest scheduling and product throughput. I have also begun, and will grow into, a grower liaison role. For me, this is an exciting pathway allowing me to work with a variety of people in different areas to achieve multiple outcomes both for Qualipac and each individual grower.

How would you describe your average day at work?

I never have an 'average day'; there are always challenges and excitement! I am fortunate to have found a role that fits with my interests and skills, and work never feels like work! Most days involve a check in with the harvest supervisors, helping to solve any issues they may have and get their feedback on the paddock performance. This is often followed with a stop at the packing shed to piece together issues we have in the paddock and how they are/ may impact on fulfilling orders. The day often will transgress into travelling to visit growers or other blocks, office work or tractor work, and inevitable phone calls regarding the day's activities.

What do you enjoy most about working in the vegetable industry, and how do you maintain your enthusiasm?

During my school years, I was always drawn to broadacre agriculture as I found the scale and production of volume fascinating. Initially, the lure of 'broadacre horticulture' sucked me in. Now that I am in the industry, I have a much greater appreciation for the scale of production, the challenges that they bring and the potential for good margins with good management. I learn something new every day that can be applied to other facets of life and to other industries.

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

Coming from a sheep and beef background, my knowledge and understanding of horticulture and big business was certainly a weak point. I have been quite lucky to have been given the freedom to learn at my own pace, which I believe has allowed me to learn quickly.

What has been your greatest achievement so far?

It has been quite a personal achievement (and stroke of luck) to be in a position that I enjoy. I haven't found the job satisfaction in any other workplace as I do here. Within the business, I would hope that implementing small things here and there has helped the day-to-day tasks for others in the business.

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

I truly believe for any Ag course at uni, there must be more hands-on learning (TAFE already has the right approach). I was most disappointed throughout my degree that the hours spent outside dramatically reduced from my first to my last year, and have continued to do so. I think regardless of the degree, there should be a mandatory four months spent within industry as a part of the course. Universities within horticultural production areas have to be engaging with local communities as it is greatly beneficial to both parties.

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

With the growing global population, there are boundless opportunities for innovation and efficiency of current practices, and for opening and strengthening new markets. Australia is unique in its ability to produce more than it consumes, and with Asia at our doorstep screaming for clean, fresh produce, export presents some exciting opportunities.

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

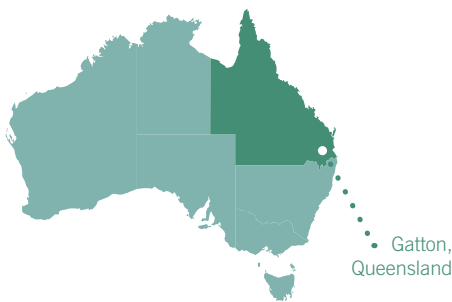
Most likely I would be working with livestock, either in Australia or New Zealand, getting frustrated.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I'll be with Qualipac, no doubt in a new role as the business explores new opportunities. I do hope to play a part in the expansion of the business, with more colleagues engaging new growing partners and offering a change to the 'way we know' Australian agriculture.



Photography by Rowena Dione Photography.



Mighty tough on chewing pests

with a little soft spot for beneficials





Be part of the good farm labour story in horticulture

THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY IS CURRENTLY FACING A NUMBER OF ISSUES RELATING TO LABOUR HIRE THAT HAS LED TO A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE REVIEW. GROWCOM CHIEF ADVOCATE RACHEL MACKENZIE SPOKE AT THE 2016 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ON-FARM WORKPLACE RELATIONS.

There were a number of engaging speaker sessions at the 2016 National Horticulture Convention, held at RACV Royal Pines on the Gold Coast from 23-25 June.

One of these speakers was Growcom Chief Advocate Rachel Mackenzie, who told growers that the most important place for action and reform in workplace relations was on the farm.

“It is the responsibility of individual growers to make sure they are compliant with the law,” she said.

“We know that this can be a confusing area, but your growers’ organisation can help. For example, Growcom supports our members by undertaking risk assessments with them and providing them with individualised support to help

them through the workplace relations maze.”

Labour hire benefits

Ms Mackenzie said labour hire contractors were important and useful in the horticulture industry and could save farming businesses time in finding labour, reducing the need to invest in HR staff.

“But it is important that you understand you cannot just hand over your labour responsibilities to the contractor,” she said.

“You have an obligation to work with legitimate operators. You must do your due diligence to establish their legality.

“You must develop a written labour hire agreement with each labour hire contractor setting out responsibilities and

obligations. Growcom has a template for members to use.

“A farmer who has used a labour hire contractor who is not doing the right thing by their workers is considered an accessory to the wrong doing by the Fair Work Ombudsman. You are under risk of significant reputational damage as you have the likelihood of being publicly named in any litigation. It can have quite significant impacts on your supply chain relationships and there are personal penalties of up to \$10,800 per breach.

“We have heard where growers are absolutely certain they are doing the right thing – paying the right money, ticking all the boxes – but the money is not going to the workers. I advise that you ask the workers regularly whether they have

received their money and if they are being paid correctly and appropriately.”

Ms Mackenzie also encouraged growers to engage with members of parliament regarding some of the larger issues affecting their industry and their farming businesses, such as the Modern Award review.

Review process

Ms Mackenzie said that every four years the Fair Work Commission (FWC) must by law review all modern awards, of which the Horticulture Award 2010 is one of more than 120. The process began on 1 January 2014.

“A number of ‘common issues’ including casual and part-time employment have



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been completed,” she said.

“Growcom is among key agricultural groups, led by the National Farmers’ Federation, which have been working to state the industry’s position. Twenty eight witnesses presented evidence to FWC hearings in July,” Ms Mackenzie said.

“All evidence has been submitted by horticulture groups, including the National Farmers Federation. We now await a decision which will hopefully allow us to retain necessary flexibility in our industry.”

Generating a voice

Ms Mackenzie said growers needed to talk more loudly and more often about the particular and unique needs of the industry.

“It shouldn’t matter what day of the week it is, or when a crop is ready to be picked and packed. We are price takers who operate on very low margins and must continue to fight against penalty rates on the weekend to survive. That is not an excuse to do the wrong thing by our workers but it is our right to ensure we lobby for a sustainable deal for our industry,” she said.

Ms Mackenzie added the industry also needed to get better at telling its positive stories about working on farms. “We do not condone

underpayment of employees under any circumstances – no excuses. But we know the majority of growers do the right thing and treat their workers incredibly fairly. And we understand as an advocacy organisation how important it is for the industry to get on the front foot and promote our good work on farm stories.

“For example, a grower in the Lockyer Valley said she hopes that when her kids get older they will be backpackers around Europe. She would never dream of treating her staff in a way that she wouldn’t want her own children to be treated.

“A strawberry grower who has employed backpackers for the last 20 years recently went to a reunion in Japan of all the backpackers he has ever worked with. These are just two stories of the many good stories about work on farms.”



For more information, please contact Growcom on 07 3620 3844 or visit growcom.com.au.

Important: The descriptions, illustrations, photographs, advice, suggestions and vegetation cycles that may be presented herein are aimed at experienced professionals and are derived from observations made in defined conditions on various trials. They are offered in all good faith, for purely informational purposes, and shall not therefore, under any circumstances, be held to be exhaustive, be taken as any form of guarantee of harvest or performance, prejudice specific factors or circumstances (either current or future), and more generally, form any kind of contractual undertaking whatsoever. The user must first and foremost ensure that his exploitation conditions, local geographical conditions, his planned growing period, his soil, the means at his disposal (such as technical knowledge and experience and cultural techniques and operations), his resources (such as tests and control methods) and his equipment, and more generally his agronomical, climatic, sanitary, environmental and economic context are suitable for the crops, techniques and varieties that are presented herein. All the varieties illustrated in this publication were photographed in favourable conditions and no guarantee can be provided that results will be identical under different conditions. All reproductions, whether in part or in whole, of this publication (of the medium and/or the contents), in any form whatsoever, are strictly forbidden, unless specific prior permission is granted. Non contractual photographs - All rights reserved - © 2016 HM.CLAUSE



Freight uncertainty for fresh produce exporters

EXPORTERS OF FRESH AUSTRALIAN PRODUCE ARE HEAVILY RELIANT ON SHIPPING LINES AND AIRLINES TO DELIVER TO OFFSHORE MARKETS. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* LOOKS AT THE CHALLENGES FRUIT AND VEGETABLE EXPORTERS FACE WHEN SENDING THEIR PRODUCE OVERSEAS.

The increasing demand for Australian produce in Asia and the Middle East, along with current shortages for some products in the region due to adverse weather events, is seeing more and more Australian produce being exported.

However, there is some uncertainty in the future for both sea and air freight capacity and prices, which could impact on Australia's ability to service this growing demand. It could also affect Australia's reputation as a reliable supplier of fresh produce.

Sea freight

Recently the South Korean shipping company Hanjin – the world's seventh-biggest container shipping operator by capacity – filed for bankruptcy. It was then bailed out by Korean Air and has recently begun offloading ships to other shipping lines.

Hanjin is attempting to sell at least five of its biggest vessels as it tries to raise funds to unload stranded cargo, pay off creditors and re-emerge as an Asian regional carrier.

The uncertainty caused by Hanjin's troubles, combined with a globalised containerised fleet already considered too large – and plans to increase the fleet a further 15 per cent by 2019 – are concerning in the short- to medium-term.

Shipping rates have been low because of the level of competition among the shipping lines. While fruit and vegetable exporters have not been heavily affected by the immediate impact of the Hanjin demise, the growth plans for additional ships in the global fleet could introduce a number of different dynamics into the market and lead to increased market volatility in the future.

Air freight

Exporting fresh produce by air freight is necessary for many different fruit and vegetable products from Australia. This is particularly true for perishable vegetables including asparagus and lettuce, as well as premium fruits such as cherries and peaches.

However, finding air cargo space on aircraft for fresh produce has become

challenging as output increases, with the problem exacerbated as freight carriers often prioritise higher-margin shipments of products such as beef or dairy. The shortage is particularly acute when demand peaks around Christmas and the Lunar New Year, which coincides with the seasons for various fruit and vegetable crops in Australia.

Typically using an agent as an intermediary, smaller producers can start negotiating with airlines for cargo space nearly a year ahead of their season. However, there is no guarantee of cargo space on planes as production volume may be down, and airlines can also bump off small shipments of produce at short notice to load consignments of higher margin products.

The squeeze in space comes despite numbers from data provider MariTrade showing that Australian air freight export volumes nearly doubled in four years to 35,000 tonnes in June 2016.

The total value of Australian rural goods, which includes meat, cotton, fruits and vegetables sent by sea and air freight, were valued at

AUD\$42.7 billion in the 12 months to August 2016. This accounts for 13 per cent of Australia's total exports and represents an increase of 37 per cent from the 12 months ending in August 2011.

The uncertainty surrounding both the sea and air freight capacity and prices will be closely monitored by suppliers in many exporting industries.



Levy-paying vegetable growers who would like to raise issues being experienced with freight to international markets are encouraged to contact the AUSVEG Export Development team on 03 9882 0277 or email export@ausveg.com.au.

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

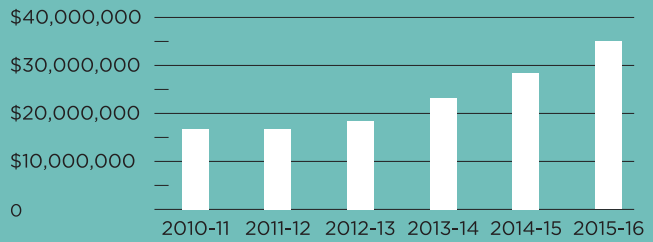
Project Number: VG13097

AUSSIE VEG IN THE UAE

In 2015-16, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was Australia's third-largest export market with Australian vegetable exports valued at \$36 million. This represents an increase of 110 per cent from 2010-11.

The UAE is import-reliant with approximately 70 per cent of the UAE's food coming from imports. Key Australian commodities exported to the UAE include carrots, onions and potatoes.

Australian Vegetable Exports to the UAE by Value (AUD)



Market	Total vegetable imports	AU veg exports	Overall key imports	AU key exports
United Arab Emirates	\$1.02 billion	\$36 million	Onions, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, lettuce	Carrots (AUD\$25m), onions (AUD\$1m), potatoes (AUD\$2m), cauliflower and broccoli (AUD\$1.6m)

There is a strong food service sector in the UAE, with Dubai receiving over 45 million hotel room nights per year. This leads to substantial demand for the supply of premium quality produce for high-end restaurants.

Dubai also acts as a transport hub, with large volumes of imported products re-exported to surrounding countries across the Middle East.

levy-paying vegetable growers exhibited at the World of Perishables trade show in Dubai.

World of Perishables is the key fresh produce trade show in the UAE with buyers attending from across the Middle East. Strong interest was received for fresh Australian produce including carrots, broccoli, organic produce and retail/ready-to-eat products.

World of Perishables

From 13-15 November 2016, a group of Australian



For more information, please contact AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or email export@ausveg.com.au.

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L-R: Robbie Davis, Emma Robinson, Kalyn Fletcher, Martina Matzner, Rebecca Duffy, Dr Jessica Lye and Sophie Hansen.

Rural women celebrate their achievements

THE RURAL INDUSTRIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD IS A NATIONAL ACCOLADE THAT RECOGNISES AND ENCOURAGES RURAL WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO AUSTRALIA'S PRIMARY INDUSTRIES. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* PROFILES SOME OF THE INDUSTRY LEADERS WHO WERE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR IDEAS IN 2016.

The world is an ever-changing place. The power of technology has ultimately impacted the way businesses operate in a range of industries across the globe. While farming and vegetable growing practices date back to our ancestors, this industry also has to move with modern times.

In September, the best and brightest women in various primary industries, including horticulture, were honoured at the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award dinner at Parliament House in Canberra.

These women are all champions in their respective fields and offer a range of innovative ideas on promoting and safeguarding the future of Australian agriculture.

Rise of social media

Perhaps the biggest change the world has experienced in the past 10 years is the introduction of social media.

Sophie Hansen, from Orange in New South Wales, was awarded the 2016 National Rural Woman of the Year award for her tireless work in educating and empowering people within agriculture to use social media.

A food writer, farmer and blogger, Sophie is an advocate for the power of social media to help farmers tell positive stories. She is a firm believer that by using social media, they can connect with each other as well as their customers and show the world what they have to offer.

"I really think there's this perfect storm of exponentially growing interest in where our food is coming from. You pick up a magazine or turn on the television and the content is probably going to be food-related. But I'm not seeing the farmers in there enough," Sophie said.

"My ever-constant goal is to support and celebrate Australian farmers by encouraging consumers to seek out their produce as directly as possible and then cook and share it."

Sophie's online course *My Open Kitchen*, supported by fortnightly podcasts, is designed to help those in primary industries familiarise themselves with social media and build strong personal and professional relationships.

"Farming can be a lonely business – sometimes we work for 8-10 hours without having a conversation with anyone. With *My Open Kitchen*, you can have a community in your pocket; a tribe of followers, peers or supporters who are there for you."

Making a difference

Dr Jessica Lye is passionate about raising biosecurity awareness in the vegetable and potato industries, and increasing industry preparedness against biosecurity threats, especially exotic plant pests.

As the Victorian Rural Woman of the Year and AUSVEG National Manager – Science and Extension, Jessica believes the award has presented her

with the opportunity to increase the quality of her contributions to agriculture.

Jessica also gained perspective throughout the awards process, particularly in terms of rural women and the amount of recognition they receive.

"How many women, specifically rural women, are now being heard and creating an impact because they have been inspired by this award? How many have joined boards, or run for parliamentary office? We may never know," she said.

"But what I do know is that sometimes all it takes is one word, or one piece of advice, or a meeting with an inspirational person, to set you on a completely unexpected path. It is difficult to achieve, and create impact, without the right mix of people in your life. Certain people provide the right kind of advice and open doors."

Jessica will undertake a study tour to New Zealand, the United States and South America to gain information

Photography by Irene Dowdy.



L-R: Victorian Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie and AUSVEG National Manager – Science and Extension Dr Jessica Lye.

on key high priority pests and emerging pest threats.

Providing a platform for women

Potatoes South Australia Chief Executive Officer Robbie Davis decided to enter the Rural Women's Award to promote her project that aims to increase productivity by reducing waste and loss in the value chain, particularly at the farm gate. This concept earned her the South Australian Rural Woman of the Year title.

"It was all about the project work I'm doing at the moment. I knew there was a way of profiling it and in hindsight, it's done a brilliant job of that," she said.

Robbie recently travelled to Europe to investigate and research technology that is being used in horticultural products and find out how it can be relevantly and economically transferred to Australia.

"The award is certainly worth applying for – you're part of the alumni and you do meet some great people. The branding is wonderful – it's well-respected, and it's allowing me to travel."

2016 RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD WINNERS

NSW/National winner: Sophie Hansen, Orange

Sophie will develop an innovative online learning course called *My Open Kitchen*, which is designed to assist anyone involved in primary industries to use social media channels to build 'social capital'.

WA/National runner-up: Kalyn Fletcher, Kununurra

Kalyn will conduct a study tour of the Cerrado Region of Brazil to learn from a successful tropical agriculture industry and help promote and support the growth of tropical agriculture in Australia.

VIC: Dr Jessica Lye, Melbourne

Jessica's project focuses on enhancing biosecurity preparedness for the vegetable and potato industries.

NT: Martina Matzner, Humpty Doo

Martina will engage young people in the idea of a career in food production and combat the perception that occupations within this field are not valued by society.

QLD: Emma Robinson, Charters Towers

Emma will develop a social media platform to profile producer cooperatives and share resources, and facilitate a producer forum to educate people on the benefits of cooperation for family farming.

SA: Robbie Davis, Meningie

Robbie will investigate how the South Australian potato industry and wider horticulture sector can increase productivity through the reduction of food waste and loss in the supply chain.

TAS: Rebecca Duffy, Rowella

Rebecca aims to create a national and international cellar door study tour with the aim of creating a new, exciting and dynamic experience for customers that offers more than just a tasting.



For more information, please visit rirdc.gov.au.



Participants visit a vegetable trial site undertaken by the Greater Sydney Local Land Services team.

Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Program update



AUSVEG, IN CONJUNCTION WITH PLANT HEALTH AUSTRALIA, IS CURRENTLY OPERATING A VEGETABLE AND POTATO BIOSECURITY PROGRAM. THIS INITIATIVE AIMS TO UNITE VEGETABLE AND POTATO GROWERS WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INDUSTRY GROUPS WITH THE GOAL OF RAISING BIOSECURITY AWARENESS. THE BIOSECURITY TEAM RECENTLY VISITED GREATER SYDNEY TO CONDUCT A WIDE-RANGING WORKSHOP ON PESTS AND DISEASES.

The Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Program aims to improve biosecurity risk preparedness and response mechanisms within the vegetable and potato industries. Current Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Officers (VPBOs), Dr Jessica Lye and Callum Fletcher, facilitate cooperation between vegetable and potato growers, government departments and industry groups for the purposes of raising awareness around biosecurity best practice in production regions.

Greater Sydney workshop

The VPBOs visited the Greater Sydney region in September, and with the Greater Sydney Local Land Services, co-hosted a biosecurity workshop.

Speakers included Dr Gordon Rogers (Applied Horticultural Research), Dr Len Tesoriero (New South Wales Department of Primary Industries), Dr Jessica Lye and Callum Fletcher

(AUSVEG), and Andy Ryland (IPM Consulting).

Topics included an industry update on priority exotic pests, endemic pests in the Greater Sydney region, outcomes of the Soil Wealth program, farm biosecurity plan development and an overview of common soil borne diseases and cultural practices to reduce pest spread. The speaker sessions were followed by a vegetable trial site walk to view current composting trial work being undertaken by the Greater Sydney Local Land Services team.

Practical resources

Apart from national extension activities, the biosecurity program aims to produce practical biosecurity resources for growing operations.

One product developed by the program is the vegetable and potato industry guidance booklet, *DIY Biosecurity*. This booklet includes checklists

and risk assessment templates to aid in the development of an on-farm biosecurity plan.

Every farm will differ slightly in its plant pest risk profile due to proximity to urban areas, other production regions and range of crops grown, in addition to other variables. A biosecurity plan would ideally be tailored to the needs of each farm to reduce the risk

of pest movement through key transmission pathways.

However, there are key risk mitigation practices such as farm signage, regular use of clean-down areas and procedures for controlling people and machinery movement that provide solid foundations of an effective biosecurity plan.



DIY Biosecurity and related biosecurity resources can be found on the AUSVEG website at ausveg.com.au/biosecurity.

The Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Program is co-managed between Plant Health Australia and AUSVEG. The current phase of the program is funded until June 2019. For further information on the program, please contact AUSVEG National Manager – Science and Extension, Dr Jessica Lye at jessica.lye@ausveg.com or 03 9882 0277.

Any unusual plant pest should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881).

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

Project Number: VG15027





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with Scott Mathew

A COMBINATION OF ABOVE AVERAGE RAINFALL AND INCREASED DISEASE AND INSECT PRESSURE IN SOME BROADACRE CROPS HAS IMPACTED THE SUPPLY OF SOME FUNGICIDES AND INSECTICIDES USED BY VEGETABLE GROWERS. SYNGENTA TECHNICAL SERVICES LEAD SCOTT MATHEW EXPLAINS HOW TO BEST AVOID THE SHORTFALL.

One of the main discussion points I am picking up with our field staff, who cover both broadacre and horticultural crops, is that some fungicides and insecticides are becoming tight in terms of supply.

This is mainly due to the increased disease and insect pressure being faced in some broadacre crops at the moment, particularly in the pulse crops in northern Australia. The global demand for some of the active ingredients is also having an effect.

Couple this with a prediction of above average rainfall for many horticultural growing regions across Australia that is likely to lead to increased disease and insect pressure, which could lead to some serious product shortages in the spring and summer periods.

What can you do to prevent product shortages affecting you?

Plan what crops you are likely to

be planting over the next few months and discuss with your consultant/adviser what fungicide and insecticide programs you require on these crops. It is best to consider a few different scenarios, such as a normal spray program versus a high disease or insect pressure program.

When you have completed this planning, discuss your potential crop protection requirements with your local reseller and discuss any potential issues with product availability and supply.

How can I make sure I don't miss out?

In short, don't just wait and see what the weather will do before purchasing product as you could miss out! You know how much product you require in a 'normal' season so, as a risk management strategy, you could commit to purchasing those

products you will need early, particularly those likely to be in short supply. We all remember how hard it was to get our hands on Downy mildew fungicides in 2010-11 when there were major Downy mildew outbreaks across most viticulture areas in southern Australia.

Keep your options open. There are often a number of different products registered to control the same diseases

or insects and just because you may not have used a certain product before, it does not mean it won't effectively control the disease or pest.

Remember the five Ps: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor results (or in other words, not being able to source the required crop protection product to protect your crop).



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

The R&D content for this article has been provided to *Vegetables Australia* to educate Australian vegetable growers about the most relevant and practical information on crop protection technologies and their on-farm applications.

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

Project Number: VG15027

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Veggie Stats: Beetroot

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

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

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

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

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

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



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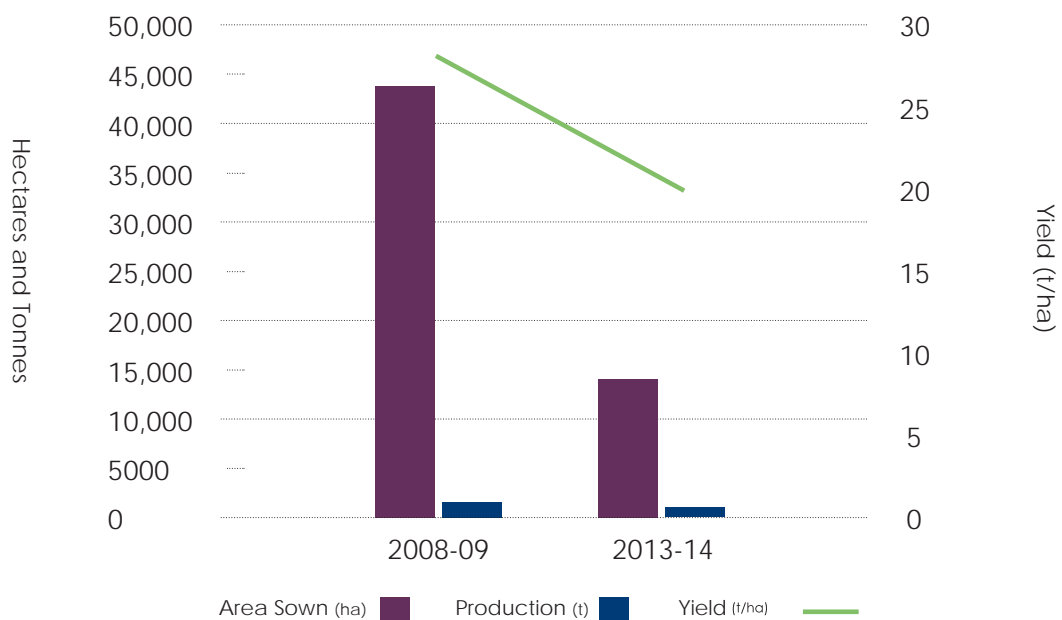


VEGGIE STATS: BEETROOT

Beetroot Production – Key facts and figures

- Over the period 2008-09 to 2013-14, beetroot production decreased by 67.41 per cent.
- During the same period, the number of beetroot growers increased by over 19 per cent to 273 nationally.
- Beetroot exports in 2014-15 were valued at over \$604,000, with Indonesia the largest export market.
- Victoria had the highest gross value of beetroot production of any state in Australia in 2013-14.
- Beetroot exports have grown by around 236 per cent since 2009-10.

Farm-Gate Statistics



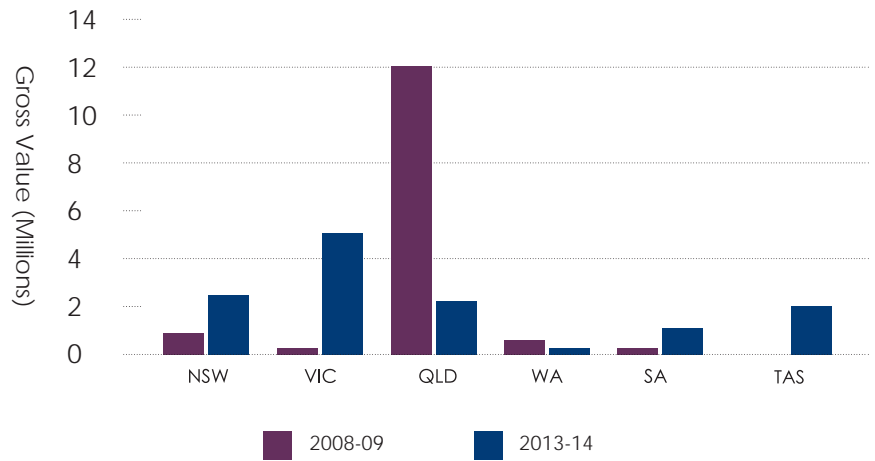
- Beetroot production has decreased from 43,268 tonnes in 2008-09 to 14,103 tonnes in 2013-14.
- The area planted has also decreased by 893 hectares during the same period.
- Average yield has fallen from 26,900kg per hectare in 2008-09 to 20,000kg per hectare in 2013-14.

Gross Value of Production

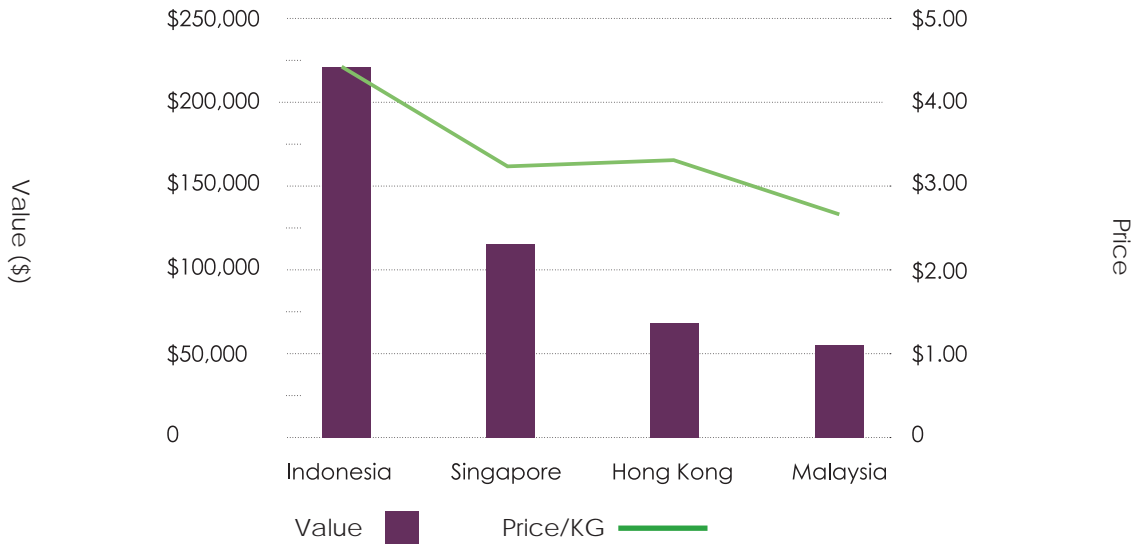
The gross value of beetroot production fell by around 4.7 per cent from 2008-09 to 2013-14, equal to around \$640,000.

Victoria has the largest beetroot industry of all the states, representing around 38.53 per cent of the gross value of production nationally in 2013-14. In 2008-09, Queensland had the largest beetroot industry, representing around 88.14 per cent of the gross value of production nationally.

Victoria had the largest growth in beetroot production from 2008-09 to 2013-14.



Key Export Markets 2014-15

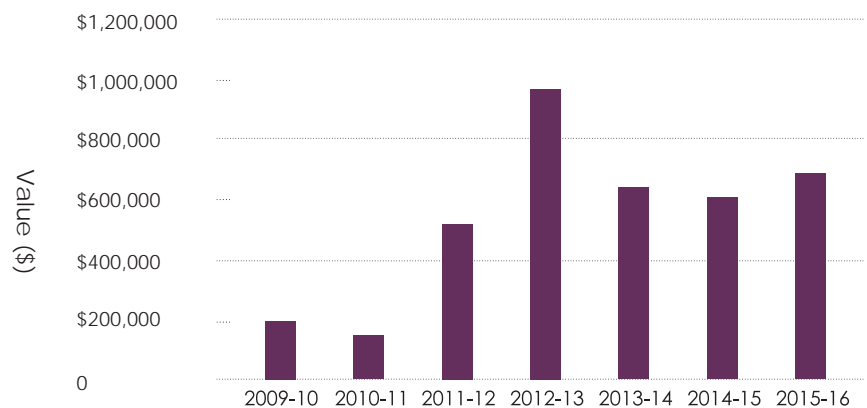


- Indonesia was Australia's largest beetroot export market in 2014-15, accounting for around 36.59 per cent of the total export value.
- Indonesia also received the highest price per kilo for beetroot at \$4.37 in 2014-15.
- In relation to this export data, beetroot belongs to the category *Salad Beets (Salad Beetroot), Salsify, Celeriac, Radishes and Edible Roots, Nesoi, Fresh or Chilled* (HS Code 070690).

Total Exports

The value of beetroot exports grew by over \$480,000 (around 236 per cent) over the period 2009-10 to 2015-16.

Beetroot exports were at their highest in 2012-13, valued at around \$968,000.





Greater Sydney Local Land Services ag advisory experts Matt Plunkett (bottom right) and Peter Conasch (bottom left) with growers and industry at the launch of the project.

National Vegetable Extension Network: Spotlight on Tasmania and New South Wales

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO WITH THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE EXTENSION NETWORK. THE FEATURE REGIONS FOR THIS ISSUE, TASMANIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES, HAVE BOTH HAD A BUSY START TO THE PROJECT.

In September, producers, packers and advisers converged on the Tasmanian cities of Devonport and Richmond to hear about postharvest management of vegetables from a Horticulture Innovation Australia levy-funded research project, *Identifying and sharing postharvest best practice on-farm and online* (VG13083).

The importance of cooling produce, monitoring product temperature and storage were key themes throughout the morning, with new technologies taking centre stage. At the time of writing, the team is working with the soil borne disease project, *A multi-faceted approach to soil borne disease management* (VG15010), to hold a workshop on irrigation management and damping

off in leafy vegetable crops in southern Tasmania.

Additionally, there are plans to present a summary of recent consumer and market research at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) Forthside Vegetable Research Facility Open Day in early November. The afternoon's presentation will focus on opportunities in the supply chain: what the consumer wants, what's available and what growers can do to take advantage of that.

What else is available?

The Tasmanian National Vegetable Extension Network (NVEN) team is available to work with producers, one-on-one or groups on issues that are important to you and the industry in Tasmania. If you

have a grower group already, or are keen to get one up and running, the team can help. The NVEN team in Tasmania is offering BizCheck for growers wanting to evaluate their current business position, benchmarking and/or cost of production. Additionally, the team has a range of resources from events held so far.

How to keep in touch

- Like the team on Facebook: Search 'National Vegetable Extension Network – Tasmania'
- Follow NVEN Tasmania on Twitter: @TasFarmingFutures
- Visit the website: tasfarmingfutures.com.au
- Contact NVEN Tasmania Industry Development Officer Ashley Evans on 0447 776 909.

New South Wales

The launch of NVEN NSW attracted many growers and industry representatives to the Sydney demonstration farm. The event provided valuable information and was an opportunity to gather feedback on the NSW extension project into the future.

Greater Sydney Local Land Services Manager Bill Dixon said the event also attracted strong representations from the Khmer and Chinese communities.

"It was excellent to hear directly from these communities on the key issues and priorities they face as vegetable growers in the Sydney Basin," he said.

"They are happy to be involved in this project and we look forward to working

UPCOMING EVENT IN WA

vegetablesWA is presenting the annual Grower Leadership Summit on Friday 25 November, where international opportunities and competitors as well as the latest domestic market insights will be discussed. The information at the summit will be presented by Coriolis, Nielsen and Colmar Brunton.

Details are as follows:

9:30am-2:30pm: Grower group tour

3:00pm-6:00pm: Summit

6:00pm-7:30pm: Cocktail/Networking function

Please note: this is limited to 15 places.

The tour will visit Baldvis Farms' automated greenhouse operations and Ivankovich Farms' automatic carrot packing machine. If you are interested in participating, contact Rebecca Blackman at vegetablesWA@rebecca.blackman@vegetableswa.com.au or phone 08 9481 0834.



Greater Sydney Local Land Services Officer (mixed farming) Peter Conasch with Agnes Banks vegetable growers Val and Sam Micallef.



NVEN Tasmania Industry Development Officer Ashley Evans.

closely with them to reduce input costs and boost their returns at the farm gate.”

Tackling the big issues

Following the launch, AUSVEG delivered the NVEN’s inaugural workshop on biosecurity risks and responsibilities to growers and industry.

This was closely followed by a compost workshop for the Khmer community, aimed at promoting the benefits of using compost to improve

soil health, detailing how to use compost on-farm and showcasing composted products.

A parsley and brassica disease identification workshop has also been held for Chinese growers.

“While it’s early days, we are very encouraged by the response from growers to date and at this stage our focus will remain on engagement and getting the word out to as many stakeholders as possible,” Mr Dixon said.

How to keep in touch

- Register to receive regular updates on workshops and events by email to

admin.greatersydney@lls.nsw.gov.au.

- Contact Greater Sydney Local Land Services Manager Bill Dixon on 02 4724 2113.

i For more information on the National Vegetable Extension Network and upcoming events, please contact Adam Goldwater on 02 8627 1040 or adam.goldwater@ahr.com.au.

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

Project Number: VG15049



TOMORROW’S ADJUVANTS FOR PLANT AND SOIL

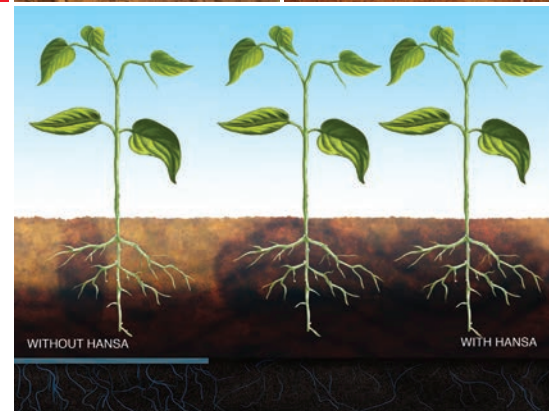
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Queensland fruit fly.

R&D
Farm Productivity,
Resource Use
& Management

Endemic fruit fly edition part 2: Research, development and extension

IN PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF *THE FRONT LINE*, WE INVESTIGATED PREPAREDNESS MEASURES FOR COMBATting EXOTIC FRUIT FLY THREATS AND DISCUSSED THE RECENT INJECTION OF FUNDS INTO THE NATIONAL FRUIT FLY STRATEGY. IN THIS EDITION, AUSVEG NATIONAL MANAGER – SCIENCE AND EXTENSION DR JESSICA LYE CONTINUES TO INVESTIGATE THE BREADTH OF CURRENT RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION INITIATIVES THAT WILL UNDERPIN THE SUCCESS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY.

Research, development and extension (RD&E) activities underpin all elements of fruit fly management, including operations, legislation, regulation, market access and biosecurity.

Adoption of effective fruit fly RD&E overseas has led to some major wins in the export space, with protection of the Mexican fruit and vegetable export market of more than \$3 billion per year through an annual investment of around \$25 million, and access for Chilean fresh produce into export markets worth up to \$500 million.

In June 2015, the Plant Biosecurity Corporative Research Centre (PBCRC) published a long-term National

Fruit Fly RD&E Plan, which sits under both the National Fruit Fly Strategy and the National Plant Biosecurity RD&E Strategy. It will inform decisions relating to RD&E activities carried out as part of the National Fruit Fly Strategy and will be used by the National Fruit Fly Council as part of its larger fruit fly prioritisation process.

Current fruit fly RD&E

The PBCRC has been an important player in ensuring that RD&E efforts for management and eradication of fruit fly continues. Current research topics include:

- Creating a lure and kill device for Queensland fruit fly (Qfly).
- Identifying the gaps

and strengths of past fruit fly research.

- Reviewing (with the aim of improving) post-harvest market access treatment for horticultural products.
- Innovative work to reduce mass-rearing costs and enhance mating performance of sterile Qfly.
- Chemical host location in fruit flies.
- Fruit fly community engagement in Western Australia.
- High density mass Qfly trapping.
- Pre-harvest control of Qfly.

A dedicated fruit fly fund

One outcome of the transition from Horticulture Australia Limited to Horticulture

Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) has been the establishment of a Strategic Co-investment Fund Pool (Pool 2).

From aggregating seed funds and establishing priority streams, such as Leadership and People Development and Asian Markets, long-term goal setting is possible. Such a fund will enable investment in larger, longer-term R&D priorities that will be cross-sectoral (across horticulture) and able to attract specific expertise.

Since many trade-sensitive plant pests have wide host ranges (such as fruit fly) and fresh produce production areas are often represented by a mixed bag of industries (such as vegetable production and orchards), an investment fund

OVERSEAS FRUIT FLY EXPERIENCES HAVE PROVEN COSTLY

The Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) has been established for about a century in Hawaii and despite persistent and costly eradication efforts, it is repeatedly detected in Florida and California.

It is estimated that the cost of each of its previous incursions into the US (eradication and industry loss) ranged from USD\$300,000 to USD\$200 million. Medfly outbreaks in California during the past 25 years have cost taxpayers nearly USD\$500 million, while the Medfly outbreak in Florida's Tampa Bay region in 1997 resulted in USD\$25 million spent on eradication, which is significantly less than the cost of potential establishment and subsequent management.

It has been estimated that the cost of controlling established Medfly in California alone could range between USD\$493 million to USD\$875 million, and imposition of a trade embargo from Asian countries would result in additional revenue losses of USD\$564 million and cost more than 14,000 jobs.

The eastern Mediterranean region has also experienced substantial losses linked to fruit fly infestations estimated at USD\$192 million.



Mediterranean fruit fly. Image courtesy of Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org.

that promotes cross-sectoral initiatives is a logical and useful approach.

One long-term initiative that has benefitted from Pool 2 funds has been the SITplus program, which is a joint industry-government initiative between Hort Innovation as well as Australian federal and state governments. This is one element that will contribute to the rollout of the National Fruit Fly Strategy.

What is SITplus?

The SIT in 'SITplus' refers to the Sterile Insect Technique, which is a well-established method of controlling key pests worldwide. The first field use of SIT in 1954 led to the eradication of New World screwworm from the island of Curaçao (Venezuela).

SIT works by first knocking down wild fly populations to low levels using chemical, trapping and farm hygiene control practices, and then uses a concentrated release of specially reared sterile male fruit flies. Once released 'en-masse' these sterile males mate with females within the remaining wild population. Following the release of the sterile flies,

reproduction rates in the wild population begin to decline until eventually there is population collapse.

The New World screwworm eradication on Curaçao took only seven weeks, which is an impressive example of effective biological control. However, to be most effective this method of control must be used as one weapon within an entire arsenal of management practices. While this has been an extremely useful tool worldwide, it is just that – a tool.

A multi-faceted approach

On this point, the 'plus' emphasises the aim of the SITplus initiative to be about more than the release of sterile fruit fly – it is about combining this technique with innovative R&D and a strong extension focus to achieve co-operation on the ground for integrated management of the fly.

Ultimately, in order for sterile insect release to be effective, this powerful control technique must be used in conjunction with area wide management practices that also aid in delimiting and suppressing fruit fly populations.

R&D projects currently being funded under the SITplus program include:

- Developing and optimising production of a male only, temperature-sensitive-lethal strain of Qfly (South Australian Research and Development Institute).
- Guidelines for Adaptive Area Wide Management of Qfly using SIT (CSIRO biosecurity flagship).
- Improved population management system for Qfly (Plant and Food Research).

- SITplus: Port Augusta Qfly SIT factory pilot operation (Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia).

The new Port Augusta facility will be completed in the second half of 2016 and will have the capacity to produce 50 million sterile male Qflies each week, which will further support the effective roll-out of the National Fruit Fly Strategy.



For further information about future fruit fly RD&E initiatives, visit the PBCRC website at pbcrc.com.au.

For more information on how you can contribute to the management of fruit flies, please visit the Plant Health Australia website planthealthaustralia.com.au or contact AUSVEG National Manager – Science and Extension, Dr Jessica Lye at Jessica.lye@ausveg.com.au or 03 9882 0277.

Any unusual plant pest should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881).

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

Project Number: VG15027



More than 530 growers and industry members attended the 2016 Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Gala Dinner.

Bundaberg growers unite to celebrate horticulture

THE BIENNIAL BUNDABERG FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS GALA DINNER HAS BECOME A HIGHLIGHT OF THE REGION'S LOCAL CALENDAR. AUSVEG WAS PLEASED TO ATTEND THIS YEAR'S EVENT, WHICH ATTRACTED MORE THAN 500 GROWERS AND INDUSTRY MEMBERS TO CELEBRATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AUSTRALIAN HORTICULTURE DURING A 'NIGHT UNDER THE STARS'.

The pride of the Bundaberg and Wide Bay Burnett growing region took centre stage during the 2016 Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers (BFGV) Gala Dinner on Saturday 8 October.

More than 530 growers, supply chain members, wholesalers, researchers, politicians and industry members dressed up in their finest to celebrate the success of not only the local growing region, but the wider Australian horticulture industry.

Guests sipped champagne and listened to a live orchestra before making their way to the entrance of the Bundaberg Recreational Precinct, which was quite fittingly lined with tractors and machinery. An extensive display of local produce attracted the attention of many guests as it highlighted the range of brands and businesses that have helped to put Bundaberg on the map.

Celebrating horticulture

Established in 1948, BFGV represents horticultural growers in the Bundaberg and Wide Bay Burnett region, providing an important regional voice to the local industry.

For decades, the BFGV Gala Dinner has celebrated the expansion and production quality of the region's horticulture industry.

"Our Gala Dinner is held every two years and is a real celebration of not only the region but the entire horticulture industry. It's not a speech night or awards night; it's simply a chance for growers and industry to relax, catch-up and enjoy a special night where the local produce shines," BFGV Managing Director Bree Grima said.

"We were able to transform a tin shed into an amazing 'Night under the Stars' which was our theme. We wanted guests to

feel special and transformed into another time and we think we achieved that.

"We're proud to say approximately 92 per cent of the meal was made from locally-sourced commodities. Guests loved the band 'The Accidents' who put a local spin on some songs, comedian Tom Gleeson and the amazing displays which promoted all things local."

A thriving region

Ms Grima added that the increased attendance at the 2016 Gala Dinner was a positive sign for the future of the region.

"We had quite a lot of new people attending this year so that's exciting. Hopefully that means the industry is expanding and overall interest in not only horticulture but the region is increasing," she explained.

"Bundaberg and Wide Bay Burnett are significant contributors to the Australian

horticulture industry. Boasting a subtropical climate, we are ideally suited for year-round growing and can therefore supply a range of commodities from salads to nuts.

"In terms of vegetables, the region supplies over 75 per cent of Australia's sweetpotato production and is a major production region for capsicum, tomatoes, chillies and numerous other commodities."

AUSVEG would like to congratulate BFGV Chairman Allan Mahoney, Managing Director Bree Grima and all staff for organising a successful industry event.



For more information, please contact bfgv.com.au.



Photography courtesy of BFGV.

The fresh produce display.



L-R: BFGV Managing Director Bree Grima, AUSVEG CEO Simon Bolles, AUSVEG Senior Communications Officer/Editor Dimi Kyriakou and AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar.

AUSVEG VISITS BUNDABERG GROWING OPERATIONS

In addition to attending the Gala Dinner, AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar, CEO Simon Bolles and Senior Communications Officer/Editor Dimi Kyriakou met with vegetable and potato growers in the Bundaberg region in October.

Meetings were held with David Da Pra of S&D Produce, Austchilli founder David De Paoli, Bunda Ginga Manager Anthony Rehbein and Perfection Fresh Farm and Facility Manager and BFGV Chairman Allan Mahoney.

Discussions included key issues affecting the Bundaberg growing region and how AUSVEG can assist regional groups such as BFGV in providing a unified and strong voice to all levels of government on behalf of the industry.

AUSVEG thanks the growers for their time and looks forward to working closely with the region into the future.



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Bursaria spinosa has been identified as a hero plant for attracting a variety of beneficial predatory insects.

Region-specific resources for growers

THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, THERE ARE 56 REGIONAL NATIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM) ORGANISATIONS THAT DELIVER REGION-SPECIFIC INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAMME, INCLUDING GRANTS AND R&D PROJECTS. THESE ORGANISATIONS DELIVER A WEALTH OF RESOURCES TO BENEFIT GROWERS AND LANDOWNERS AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGE REGIONAL RESOURCES.

The Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority of Victoria's native insectarium trial sites has established specific plants that can be planted near production areas to attract a variety of beneficial predatory insects.

Bursaria spinosa, *Leptospermum continentale* and *Austrodanthonia* sp., or wallaby grass, have been identified as 'hero plants' for this purpose. Workshops, presentations and direct researcher contact information encourages growers to use this information for their own benefit.

Case studies and workshops

The South Coast Natural Resource Management in Western Australia profiles a number of grower case studies for land management techniques. A wide range of management practices have been implemented on the property of Stephen and Kerry

Frost in Narrikup, including biological farming to improve soil organic carbon. In this case study, Stephen Frost describes increasing total organic matter and organic carbon levels as well as reducing salinity issues on-farm.

The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources management board is also hosting a series of free workshops showcasing energy savings in irrigation. It offers plant and pest management programs for the region and has recently employed engagement officers to better communicate with landholders.

New funding

A pilot of the Commonwealth On-Farm Further Irrigation Efficiency (COFFIE) program is being launched in the Murray-Darling Basin with \$15 million of funding available to irrigators in the region. The program provides funds for

irrigators to modernise their on-farm irrigation systems and save water.

The Cradle Coast NRM in Tasmania is coordinating recovery information for growers affected by the recent floods, with a raft of support services available from the organisation. Grants of up to \$10,000 are now available to applicants wanting to enhance natural resources and conserve biodiversity on private land.

Growers are encouraged to use these regional resources through their local NRM organisations. Please visit nrm.gov.au/regional/regional-nrm-organisations for more information.

Climate action consultation

Growers are being asked about their experiences, attitudes and concerns regarding changes in the environment. By completing an online survey from Australian National

University, in conjunction with the Farmers for Climate Action group, growers can go into the draw to win a solar system and battery storage system worth \$15,000. To access the survey online, please visit surveymonkey.com/r/farmers_survey.

Regional NRM organisations are funded through the National Landcare Programme's regional funding stream.



For more information, please contact AUSVEG Environment Coordinator Andrew Shaw on 03 9882 0277 or andrew.shaw@ausveg.com.au.

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

Project Number: VG12008

Product application: Increasing cost-efficiency

THE TYPE AND RANGE OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE TO GROWERS FOR APPLICATION ON VEGETABLE CROPS IS AN AREA OF CONSTANT DEVELOPMENT. ALONG WITH THE MANY BENEFITS TO ARISE FROM THE UPTAKE OF SOFTER CHEMICALS COMES A DESIRE TO IMPROVE THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH APPLICATION.

Crop protection products are one of a number of input costs that growers juggle as a part of modern day produce production requirements.

Careful scrutiny is applied through each stage of the development of a crop protection product to ensure its efficiency and efficacy is maximised.

This pragmatic approach to product development must also be extended to include product application if growers are to access the full benefits of a crop protection product and maximise the associated cost savings.

Bayer Senior Global Stewardship Manager Peter Ohs said that many factors impact the effectiveness of crop protection product application. Boom height, crop height, droplet size and product decomposition must all be accounted for to reduce spray drift and make sure that a product is applied for maximum efficiency.

"Spray drift is the movement of spray droplets outside of the target area, which not only has the potential to cause unintended contamination of nearby crops, pastures or public areas, but also reduces how effective a product is," Mr Ohs said.

"New research and development in this area includes the use of drift reducing nozzles, additives and electronic technology in an integrated approach to drift management."

About IDM

Where adopted, Integrated Drift Management (IDM) takes a localised approach to spray application on-farm, where a grower takes into account the exact local conditions including weather, crop, equipment, tank mix and landscape. IDM computer software maps these inputs to the sprayer, which then automatically adjusts

application parameters to provide the highest level of spray drift protection.

The Bayer Digital Farming Initiative is one resource that growers can use to implement an IDM system on-farm.

Australia is working towards product, equipment and label development to support a true IDM approach, however many current product labels do not support the flexible use of drift reduction technologies or IDM at this time. The registered product label should always be consulted for the correct application parameters prior to product use.

In order to develop application research, the drivers for drift need to be identified. These can be broken into four categories: application techniques and equipment, weather conditions, crop and formulation effects.

For drift reduction, the nozzle (and the fluid pressure applied to the nozzle) is one of the most important components because it determines a number of spray droplet parameters including size, pattern and speed.

Achieving biological efficacy

Bayer Head of Application Technology Development Dr Reinhard Friessleben has conducted research which helped to redefine the role of droplet size in spray applications.

"Many experiences and historical statements concluded that fine-droplet applications were better in terms of biological efficacy," Dr Friessleben said.

"The theory behind this was that it achieved a more even coating on the upper and lower sides of the leaf. Fine and medium droplet application therefore had been the standard procedure for many years."

The role of air injection/air induction nozzles

With an increased focus on drift reducing applications, Dr Friessleben investigated using coarse (large diameter) droplets through the use of air injection nozzles. After compiling 12 years of trial work from over 350 different trials, he found that coarse droplet spraying did not have a detrimental impact on the efficacy of fungicides, insecticides and herbicides.

One of the major advantages of an air injection nozzle is that it can achieve a reduction in drift without changing other application parameters, like water volume and application pressure.

"Air injection nozzles can substitute standard hydraulic nozzles for a reasonable price, without any significant technical modification," Dr Friessleben said.

In general, the choice of nozzle makes little difference to the biological performance of agricultural chemicals if all other technical parameters are optimal and a choice of a larger droplet size provides the added benefit of reduced spray drift.

Remember to always follow the label instructions for application parameters, including the required droplet size for optimal performance where these are listed.

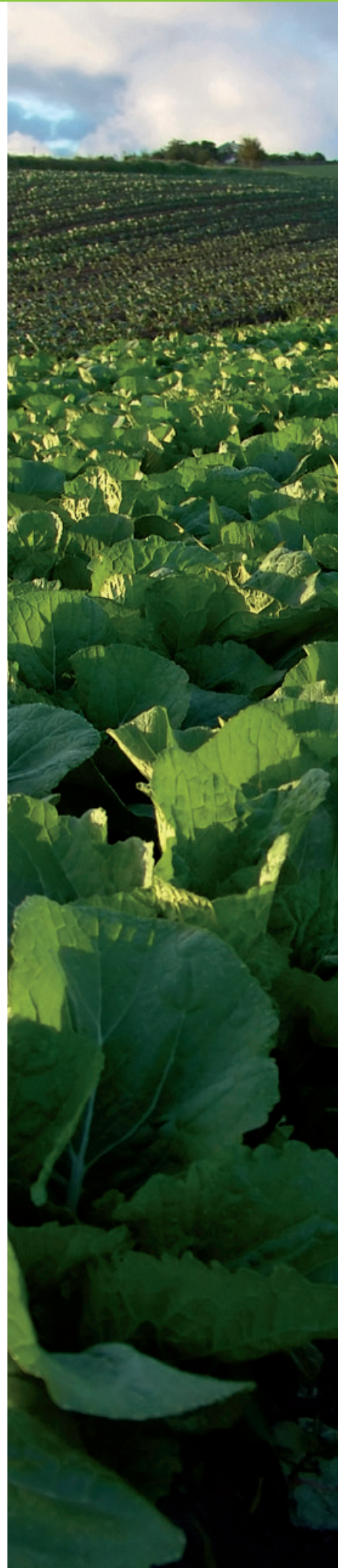


For more information, please visit bayer.com.au.

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

Project Number: VG12008

**Horticulture
Innovation
Australia**





Marrone Fresh General Manager of Sales Joe Mondello.

Driving a profit: Sustainability at the wheel

MARRONE FRESH HAS SPECIALISED IN PRODUCING PARSNIPS, SWEDES, TURNIPS, RADISHES AND BEETROOT FOR 20 YEARS. IN THIS EXPANDING SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS, JOE MONDELLO CALLS ON A WEALTH OF INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE TO DEVELOP MANIFOLD GROWTH. JOE SPOKE TO AUSVEG ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR ANDREW SHAW ABOUT MARKET CHALLENGES AND INDUSTRY ADVANCEMENT.

Joe Mondello is General Manager of Sales at Marrone Fresh, where for the past four years he has used over 30 years of industry experience in his role to oversee company growth and focus on sustainable forward-thinking. Each challenge is met with an eye to the future, which in a competitive marketplace makes all the difference.

“Short-term gain will kill you in the long run,” Joe explains.

“We have every production detail for the next 12 months mapped out. We plan the areas, varieties and crops we are growing, making sure not to oversupply the market. There are only so many people that eat these vegetables on a regular basis; it’s not like potatoes or onions.”

Ongoing investment the key

Joe believes that the reason behind the success of Marrone Fresh is detailed planning and ongoing investment in R&D. Improvement to the company’s bottom line is the major driver for the continual investment in this space.

“Profitability these days is made by developing areas that other people often neglect. It’s not just a matter of growing a vegetable – you have to work out what is more cost-efficient,” he says.

“We are always trialling different product varieties

on-farm, which can give you more opportunities to supply different markets that require different specifications in length, colour and variety. Our trials constantly give us different seeds; different varieties to use. One recent example is a really good radish variety that we have developed through trial work.”

On-farm trial work that produces a return on investment is an essential component of the development at Marrone Fresh.

“R&D is very important. A lot of people don’t like to do it because they think it is a waste of money, but it is the best money we have ever spent,” Joe says.

“You can get someone else to do your R&D but they don’t know your soil, weather, climate or watering conditions, so the only way to learn is to do your own. You have to do it from start to finish through seed, growing and packaging and then compare it to other varieties.”

Investing in innovation has resulted in the installation of new machinery for packing to increase efficiencies and reduce labour costs as well as encouraging employees to advance and develop.

“I am a big believer in looking after your staff and if you have good staff, you will do this. You can pinpoint someone who will

take it to the next level and you have to develop them, send them to a few courses and learn about areas of interest. That is where you get ahead.”

A niche business model

The vegetable lines grown at Marrone Fresh are niche in nature. Considering Joe’s background in larger-scale potatoes, you could forgive him for feeling restricted in market options. He counteracts this with an evident appreciation for best practice techniques and thorough planning to develop quality products.

“You cannot oversupply and flood this market – we have been doing well as one of only a few suppliers that grow these lines 12 months of the year. But a lot of people grow these lines as a secondary product so if they have a few spare acres they will put it in the ground without a second thought,” Joe says.

“Everything we do is about quality because it sells volume.”

This statement applies to all decision making processes within the company. Some products are better adapted to certain growing regions and therefore Joe believes it is important to pick growing areas wisely, and ensure that input decisions are made on informed advice.

“We don’t believe in spraying ‘just in case’. Making money these days is hard enough; that sort of practice is just throwing money away for no reason.

“We monitor water use, only spray when required, make decisions based on leaf nutrient analysis and make sure we look at the insects – if they are doing damage we will spray, otherwise we will let them go. Input decisions are made as needed.”

Sustainably managing growing areas is top of the list of actions underpinning development in the business.

“I am a big believer that you cannot be growing on the same crop of land over and over, because all you are doing is building up resistance to the bugs and reducing the quality and tonnage of your produce,” Joe says.

“We put a green manure crop in that stops erosion, acts as a biofumigant and keeps our

ground healthy. If you go too hard on the soils then you don’t get the quality or the price and it is hard enough in this industry at the moment.”

Stepping back

Looking at the bigger picture, these actions reveal a responsible focus on the environmental impact of vegetable growing practices.

“We always have the environment as a high priority, because if not then we would not be here in five years’ time. You have to be on top of that to make sure you look after your soil, water and environment or you will have nothing and I have seen that happen to businesses before,” Joe explains.

Within his local growing region of Virginia, Joe has faced a number of challenges that have reinforced this perception, including recent flooding that has resulted in widespread crop damage.

“We lost probably 3-4 acres, which was lucky compared to other places because we are on higher ground. You have to deal with salinity, Western flower thrips and your soil health. As long as you look after your soil it will look after you,” he says.

“You can’t keep flogging a dead horse; it catches up with you sooner or later.”

Overall it is the attention to detail that keeps Joe on top of his game, and will continue to drive his business forward. This is exemplified by his record maintenance.

“Professional growers know how important it is to keep good records. People say it is a waste of time, but I believe it is a big part of the business.

“It’s about making money, but before you make money, you have to do your R&D. It’s as simple as that.”



Photography by Andrew Beveridge.



Danny Marrone and Bianca Costanzo.



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

Project Number: VG12008

**Horticulture
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Forthside research farm in Tasmania.

Contract research organisation reaps rewards from collaboration

AN AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND CONTRACT RESEARCH ORGANISATION HAS MERGED WITH A EUROPEAN AGROSCIENCE BUSINESS TO OFFER ENHANCED AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH EXPERTISE AND CONSULTATION SERVICES TO CLIENTS, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS.

Collaboration with industry organisations can be a vital component to a product or service's success, particularly when it comes to the development of new crop protection agents through agricultural and horticultural field trials.

This was demonstrated on 1 July this year when Peracto, an Australian and New Zealand agricultural contract research organisation (CRO) merged with Staphyt, one of the fastest-growing international agrosience businesses operating in 12 countries and around 70 sites across Europe.

The merger means Australian, New Zealand and global customers will be able to benefit from the combined resources and speciality services of both companies, which include new product development for agricultural inputs, field residue trials, plant pathology research, laboratory diagnostics, crop variety trials, product registration trials and cooperative research work.

A successful partnership

Peracto's expertise and services can be applied to a wide range of crops, products and locations across Australia, New Zealand and other countries across the globe.

Recently, the contract research organisation's knowledge in the area of crop protection agents, including horticultural fungicides, led to a rewarding collaboration with DuPont™ during the development of its Zorvec® Enicade® fungicide.

As Peracto has specific strengths in certain locations with plant pathology experts, this allowed the contract research organisation to conduct successful trials on Downy mildew in vegetables and poppies (refer to the label for a list of registered crops).

"As Zorvec® Enicade® contains a new active ingredient with a novel mode of action, the development process required a significant amount of time and investment. In particular, the reliability of field trials was

imperative to deliver successful results and prevent longer registration timelines through trial repetition," DuPont Product Development Manager Tom Loveless said.

In this instance, product development field trials started in Australia and New Zealand in 2009 and trial work continued every year until the product's registration and launch in 2016. Peracto conducted most of the residue and efficacy trials which were used for regulatory submission in Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to the regulatory submission, the company conducted most of the positioning, demonstration, crop safety and compatibility trials across Australia and New Zealand.

R&D importance

Ongoing R&D investment is vital to securing the future of the Australian agricultural and horticultural industry for a range of reasons, including the identification

of new disease and pest management strategies as well as the development of learning programs.

Peracto has a role within the R&D sphere to collaborate with agricultural industries to identify and resolve commercial production issues. These projects, jointly funded by industry and various government research and development organisations, have achieved commercial outcomes for growers in a broad range of crops.

Carrot diseases and disorders, Head rot of broccoli, brassica green manure crops and Downy mildew in peas are an example of programs that the research organisation has been involved in.



For more information, please contact Peracto Head Office on 03 6423 2044 or visit peracto.com.au.



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All machines are in Singapore and are running. For full specifications, videos of any of these equipment running and to arrange for viewing please contact:

Chen Yi Wee
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Tax incentives and grants help growers plan for future business investment

GROWERS INTERESTED IN EXPANDING THEIR BUSINESS THROUGH INNOVATION OR EXPLORING NEW MARKETS COULD BE ELIGIBLE TO GET CASH BACK FROM THE GOVERNMENT. WATERMARK ADVISORY SERVICES SENIOR TAX CONSULTANT RUSSELL GOOCH EXPLAINS HOW GROWERS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE R&D TAX INCENTIVE OR EXPORT MARKET DEVELOPMENT GRANT.

Investing in new project initiatives within any business can have a significant impact on cash flows, with the return on investment for some projects not developing for a period of time.

When assessing which projects to invest in, companies should also consider how tax incentives and government grants may provide a positive impact on their return on investment.

It makes sense to consider how the available tax incentives and government grants could provide an additional boost to the successful delivery of a project. Additional cash flows could help to accelerate a project, hire more specialist staff, aid in the purchase of new equipment or upgrade existing equipment, or bring forward the funding of future activities related to the project.

The Federal Government's

R&D Tax Incentive and Export Market Development Grant (EMDG) are two key initiatives to assist companies to grow their business and boost a return on projects.

Investing in R&D

The R&D Tax Incentive is a self-assessment program designed to encourage industry to conduct R&D. AusIndustry (on behalf of Innovation Australia) and the Australian Tax Office jointly administer the program.

The program provides a tax incentive to companies who conduct experimental activities, in a scientific way, for the purpose of generating new knowledge. The benefit is taken up in an income tax return following registration of eligible R&D activities with AusIndustry.

For income years from 1 July 2016, eligible R&D entities incurring eligible expenditure

on core and supporting R&D activities can claim a 43.5 per cent refundable tax offset (turnover less than \$20 million) or a 38.5 per cent non-refundable tax offset (turnover \$20 million or over).

Companies with tax losses and less than \$20 million turnover may be able to cash out tax losses with a direct refund of up to 43.5 per cent of the eligible R&D expenditure claimed.

Qualifying for the R&D Tax Incentive

If a business is conducting any one of the following indicative project initiatives, owners may be eligible to apply for the R&D Tax Incentive. These activities look at the discrete focus areas of both 'projects on the farm' or for operations 'from farm to market'.

Projects on the farm

- Streamlining processes:** Investigating possible improvements to the harvesting process, improving weed and pest control processes or introducing automation.
- Adapting existing equipment:** Creating enhancements to existing equipment, such as tractors and tractor implements, to improve farm performance and capabilities. This may include investigating production equipment and processes typically used in other industries and adapting them for use on-farm.
- Improving yields:** Process initiatives to remove processing bottlenecks, ensure product uniformity and lower input wastage.



Projects from farm to market

- **Innovative packaging:** Modifying product packaging to increase shelf life, reduce spoilage and/or improve freshness.
- **Streamlining processes:** Investigating improvements to processes such as produce cleaning, display-ready packaging or transportation and loading methods to deliver better quality produce.
- **Adapting existing equipment:** Changing processes by modifying existing equipment or introducing automation to reduce labour and increase throughput.

Funding export growth through EMDG

For those interested in exploring

opportunities internationally to export their product and increase market reach, or are new to the exporting trade, the EMDG is a scheme to consider.

As the government scheme to support a range of products and sectors, it can help expand business reach and place produce in overseas markets such as the United Arab Emirates or South East Asia.

The EMDG scheme encourages small- and medium-sized Australian businesses to develop export markets through reimbursement of up to 50 per cent of eligible export promotion expenses above \$5,000.

Making an EMDG claim

Whether you are currently exporting or the next phase of your business plan is to seek new export markets, grants via the EMDG scheme may provide much-needed

financial support. There are nine categories of promotional activities to claim expenditure in any given financial year.

1. Trade fairs, seminars and in-store promotions.
2. Overseas representatives.
3. Marketing consultants.
4. Marketing visits.
5. Communications.
6. Free samples.
7. Promotional literature and advertising.
8. Overseas buyers.
9. Registration and/or insurance of intellectual property.

In the first year of the grant, companies can claim expenses incurred over the last two financial years. Recipient companies are entitled to up to eight grant years under the scheme, with each year's maximum grant amount closely linked to the company's export turnover.

This highly structured scheme is a saving grace for many companies, but the funding rules and limited time scale make advance planning a must.

Discussing your R&D or export-related activities with a trusted adviser who speaks your language and understands how integral R&D and exporting are to growing your business is also paramount.

i For more information, please visit watermark.com.au.

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

Project Number: VG15027

Horticulture Innovation Australia



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The rise of the Vietnamese vegetable grower

KRISTENA LE IS A TRAILBLAZER IN THE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE INDUSTRY. MOVING TO AUSTRALIA FROM VIETNAM AS A SIX-YEAR-OLD, KRISTENA GREW UP HELPING HER PARENTS RUN THEIR WESTERN SYDNEY FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SHOP BEFORE ESTABLISHING HER OWN BUSINESS. THE AUSTRAL-BASED GROWER SPOKE TO MICHELLE DE' LISLE ABOUT HER JOURNEY SO FAR AND HER LOVE FOR THE FARM.

Fierce determination, a passion for the land and a positive attitude can be applied to many, if not all, vegetable growers and farmers within the agriculture industry.

Western Sydney grower Kristena Le brings these qualities to another level. The Vietnamese-born herb and vegetable grower and her husband, Gu Kong Hwang, have steadily built their business Kong J Farms over the past 14 years. They now own 18 greenhouses, with four of those built recently for cucumber growing.

From shopkeeper to grower

Kristena was originally involved in her family's Cabramatta fruit

and vegetable business before making the decision to venture into the horticulture industry, establishing Kong J Farms in Austral, NSW.

"It was a case of no job, looking for work. Because my parents farmed when they first came to Australia, they had the farm and greenhouse ready, so my husband and I decided, 'Okay, that's it, get out and just do farming – give it a try.'

"It's not something we really wanted to do but at that moment in time, there was no-one helping them on the farm so we came in, helped and we stuck to it.

"We would probably still be at the shop if we hadn't have decided to go and farm."

Kristena planted herbs for many years but has

recently added cucumbers to her workload, purely for something different.

"I have seen the neighbours growing them, and it's a change," she says.

On-farm challenges

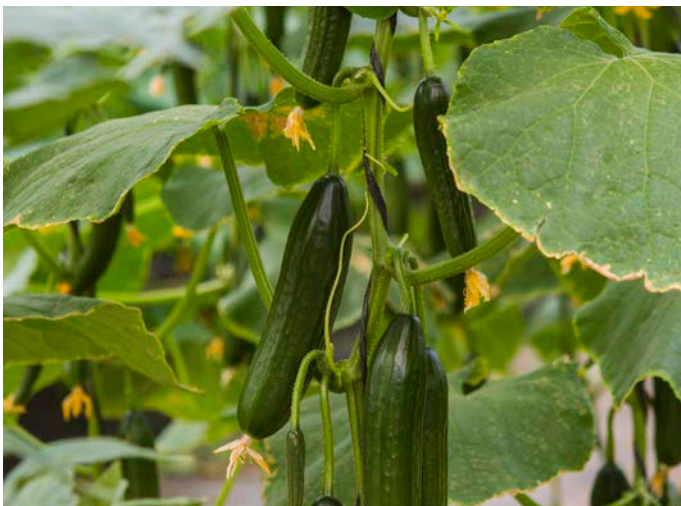
Like all growers, Mother Nature and her unpredictability is the biggest issue for Kristena. However, attracting full-time workers to the farm is another challenge Kristena and her husband currently face. At the time of print, the pair were running the farm by themselves.

"Because the workers are part-time, they come and go. For the past couple of years, the workers haven't done full-time work," she says.

"I don't know what's wrong with them – they don't want to do full-time. They just want to do part-time. That's a challenge nowadays, getting people to work. If there are no workers, we have to put in our labour."

Despite the challenges, there have been moments where the fortuitous decision to start farming has reaped rewards for Kristena. Her proudest moment on-farm occurred in 2006, when she hosted a WaterWise demonstration in one of the greenhouses.

The WaterWise program was developed by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and on-farm training was carried out across major vegetable production regions in the state. The workshops held as part of the program allowed



Kristena Le and her husband Gu Kong Hwang.

Photography by John McRae.



participants to improve their knowledge of soil, plant water use and system efficiency, as well as monitor soil water and schedule and develop a farm irrigation plan.

“We had an opening day for all other growers to come and have a look and see what has happened. It was funded by the Department of Primary Industries through Matthew Plunkett and Bill Yiasoumi. They were great to deal with,” Kristena says.

“A lot of the people in the industry got involved in helping out with it.”

Shattering stereotypes

Kristena is also a leading example of the significant contribution that women and

Vietnamese growers provide to the Australian vegetable and wider horticulture industry on a daily basis.

“A lot of (Vietnamese) people are going into the vegetable industry because I think they’re finding it easier to maintain a lifestyle. I knew this guy who was a butcher for 14 years – he had his own business, and then he left it and went into the vegetable industry,” she says.

“There are a lot of women in the vegetable industry, actually. They can work on their own – they hire people’s greenhouses and grow themselves a few things. They’re really talented.

“With the vegetable industry, it’s hard work but it’s a relaxing job – if you’re sick, you just have to close your eyes and let it go. You don’t have to pay

too much rent. In the farming industry you just have to pick, pack and send.”

Future plans

Despite the weather, non-stop work and the challenges they present, Kristena wouldn’t change her career choice.

“With farming, you have to love it to be in it,” she says.

“It’s hard work and (although) everything is hard work, it is honest work. I came into the farming industry because of the honesty. You grow things, you plant things, you pick things – you don’t have to lie in this industry. In others, you have to stretch the truth a bit. That’s why I also like farming.”

There are tentative plans to take Kong J Farms even

further, with Kristena aiming to remain in business until she reaches retirement age.

“Maybe I’ll venture out a bit more on the farm but it’s a big risk. To be honest, I’m 42 now – for me to go back to study, I don’t know. I’m at a place where I’m getting a steady income and I’m happy where I am.”



Omnia Specialties R&D Manager in Australia Dr Teferi Belayneh.

Introducing humic acids to the soil system

IN THE SEARCH FOR CONTINUED PRODUCTIVITY GAINS, GLOBAL AGRICULTURE IS INCREASINGLY LOOKING TOWARDS PLANT BIOSTIMULANTS. ONE OF THE KEY CATEGORIES WITHIN THIS FIELD IS HUMIC ACIDS. OMNIA SPECIALITIES R&D MANAGER IN AUSTRALIA, DR TEFERI BELAYNEH, PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF HUMATES.

Humic acids are naturally derived from the breakdown of plant and microbial matter, and accumulate over the years to form the foundation of fertile soils. This is nature's way of minimising nutrient losses to maintain long-term soil fertility and ensure sustainable plant growth.

Multi-national fertiliser company Omnia produces a high strength commercial product, K-humate. This product is prepared from

deposits of a mineral called Leonardite and has the humic acids in the soluble form of potassium humate.

Omnia's K-humate 26 per cent liquid has been produced in the regional Victorian town of Morwell for over 25 years and is exported to over 30 countries.

Benefits of humates

Good soil structure is the building block of all productivity, as it allows penetration of water

and air into the soil, as well as leaving space for roots to grow.

K-humate does a number of key things in the soil system. With its ability to hold onto clay, the product improves the level of soil aggregates. Combined with greater penetration of surface-applied lime, these effects combine to give a significant improvement in soil structure.

Greater nutrient and water holding capacity is built into the soil with the use of this product. Acting much like a sponge, it improves the efficiency of applied fertilisers and increases plant nutrient uptake. Increased root volume is commonly observed, which helps maximise the return on dollars spent on fertiliser.

Microbial stimulation occurs when the available carbon sources in K-humate are applied. Beneficial fungal species are particularly stimulated to work with the plant to source water and nutrients to improve crop productivity.

It is best to first improve the soil environment and provide food sources for the native microbes in a soil. In

combination with appropriate soil amelioration, this product addresses these aspects.

This combination of improvements in the physical, chemical and biological aspects of the soil have led to recorded gains in the yield and quality of produce across a wide range of important crops.

Choosing the right humate

As a grower looking for the benefits of humates, you should make sure that the product you consider buying contains the humate needed to do the job.

The humate market in Australia has no government regulation, so there is a very wide range of product quality to be found.

It is strongly recommended to work with a reputable company that can provide independent lab analysis of its product quality.

Liquid potassium humates - independently tested

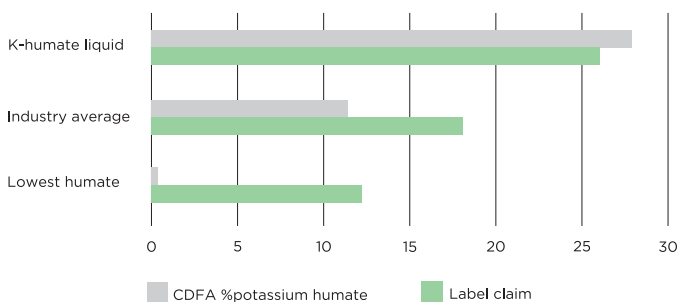


Figure 1: Comparing the claims of humate found in K-humate liquid to other products. Independent testing of various humate liquids was conducted using the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CFDA) method of analysis, which measures the immediately available humic acids.



For more information, please visit omnia.com.au.



Farm size a contributing factor to grower economic confidence

THE LATEST RESULTS FROM THE INDUSTRY-FUNDED GROWER CONFIDENCE SURVEY HAVE BEEN COLLECTED FROM VEGETABLE GROWERS AROUND THE COUNTRY. GROWERS HAVE INDICATED THAT CONFIDENCE IN THE BROADER VEGETABLE INDUSTRY IS SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN THE PREVIOUS QUARTER – HOWEVER, WHEN WE LOOK INTO CONFIDENCE LEVELS OF GROWERS ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF THEIR GROWING OPERATIONS, WE CAN SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SMALLER FARMS AND THEIR LARGER COUNTERPARTS. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* EXPLAINS.

AUSVEG conducts quarterly confidence surveys of vegetable growers from across Australia that comprise questions relating to how confident growers feel about key economic indicators, including macroeconomics, investment, the market and government policy. The results from these surveys are then used to measure changes in grower confidence when compared to results from previous surveys.

Information from the quarterly surveys is used to track grower sentiment in relation to economic indicators over time, with respondents located all over Australia and varying in farm size. Figure 1 shows the tracking of vegetable grower confidence over the last seven quarters.

National results

The latest confidence survey conducted in the September 2016 quarter indicated that confidence levels in the national vegetable industry decreased slightly by around 3.4 per cent when all economic indicators were considered.

As can be seen in Figure 2, confidence in each individual economic indicator was similar across the two most recent quarters, with confidence levels in the Government Confidence index showing the biggest difference with a decrease of around 53 per cent.

Results based on farm size

Given the number of surveys completed by growers who farm

varying sizes of land, we are able to compare the confidence levels of small-, medium- and large-sized growers, categorised by growers who grew under five hectares of vegetables, 20-70 hectares and 400-800 hectares respectively.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the proportion of growers who had a medium level of confidence across all farm sizes remained fairly consistent, with between 34-39 per cent having a 'neutral' level of confidence in the industry.

The differences occur in relation to the proportions of growers who feel positive or negative about the industry. For smaller growers, a much higher proportion have low confidence levels in the industry (over 55 per cent) compared to larger-sized growers (22 per cent).

The same trend can be seen with the proportion of growers who feel confident about the industry, with a higher proportion of larger growers (44 per cent) feeling more confident about the industry than smaller-sized growers (nine per cent).

FIGURE 1: VEGETABLE GROWER ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE INDEX

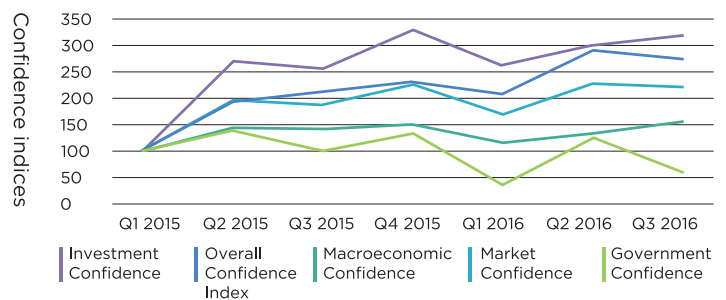


FIGURE 2: NATIONAL VEGETABLE GROWER CONFIDENCE Q2 VS Q3 2016

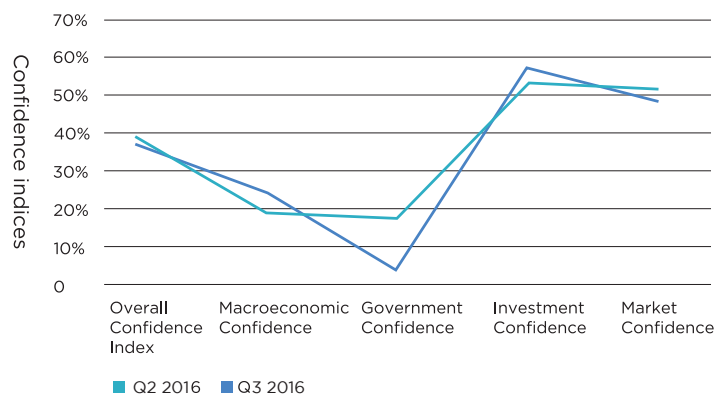
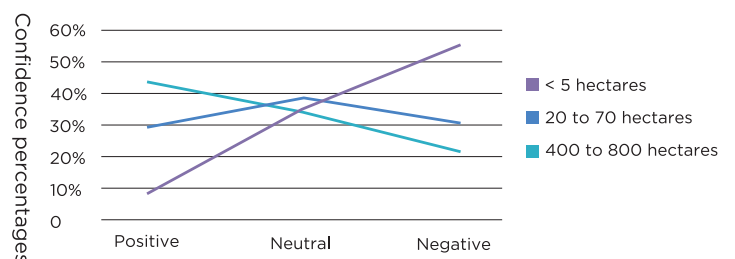


FIGURE 3: CONFIDENCE LEVELS OF GROWERS ACCORDING TO FARM SIZE



i For more information, please contact AUSVEG.
 Phone: 03 9882 0277
 Email: info@ausveg.com.au

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

Project Number: VG15027

Horticulture Innovation Australia

Chemical Access Advisory Group hosts inaugural meeting



THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CHEMICAL ACCESS ADVISORY GROUP (CAAG) WAS HELD AT THE HORTICULTURE INNOVATION AUSTRALIA OFFICES IN MELBOURNE ON 13 OCTOBER. THE CAAG IS A NEWLY INTRODUCED ASPECT OF THE MINOR USE PROGRAM AND WILL MEET TWICE A YEAR.

The Chemical Access Advisory Group's (CAAG) role is to provide oversight of industry agrichemical needs and priorities from a technical and strategic perspective.

The CAAG is comprised of industry experts selected by each discipline (insects, disease, weeds etc.) to advise on agrichemical pest management and to review and provide comment on any new vegetable agrichemical requests. Its role is also to evaluate results of the prioritisation workshops prior to the AgVet Forum each year, and provide guidance on the forward-planning of the program and recommend areas of improvement where necessary.

The group will meet prior to the AgVet Forum each year and again in the six months following the Forum.

Permit requests

The specific crops that were discussed included green beans, brassicas, spinach, leeks and organic broccoli. These potential Minor Use permit applications were all for new requests. In a number of cases, the group has asked AUSVEG to contact the permit requesters to get further information or to clarify certain points.

Other topics for discussion at the meeting were the status of new and emerging crops that may require a prioritisation

process. This will be flagged and considered by the coordinator during consultation.

A description of the next project phase was given to the CAAG and it was suggested that the coordinator educate stakeholders on the purpose and process of the AgVet Forum and take Strategic Agrichemical Review Process (SARP)

survey sheets on-farm so that this information could then be forwarded to Horticulture Innovation Australia.

The meeting was a success and members will keep in contact to follow-up on the issues raised and examine any new information that is submitted.



For more information or to request any of the minor use forms, please contact the AUSVEG Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator on 03 9882 0277, email minoruse@ausveg.com.au or visit ausveg.com.au/minoruse.

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

Project Number: VG13096

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Minor use permits

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Permit Number	Crop	Pesticide Group	Active	Pest/Disease/ Target weed	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Permit Holder	States
PER14353	Peppers including capsicum, chillies and paprika (field and protected cropping), celeriac (field cropping only)	Iprodione	Fenhexamid	Sclerotinia rot	02-Aug-16	31-Mar-22	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER14282 Version 2	Taro, rakkyo, daikon, burdock, yam, yam bean, lotus root, water chestnuts, galangal, turmeric	Herbicide	Fluazifop-P	Grass weeds, including Couch grass and Guinea grass	22-Nov-13	31-Oct-17	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER13151 Version 2	Sweetpotato	N/A	Zinc phosphide	House mouse (<i>Mus domesticus</i>) and Introduced rats	14-Dec-11	30-Mar-22	Growcom	NSW and Qld
PER13121 Version 2	Capsicums, chilli peppers, cucumbers, leafy lettuce (grown in protected situations)	Fungicide	Captan	Grey mould	19-Dec-13	30-Nov-21	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER13121 Version 2	Parsley	Fungicide	Metalaxyl	Pythium root rot and Phytophthora root rot	16-Nov-11	30-Nov-21	Growcom	Qld, NSW, SA, Tas, WA and NT
PER14892 Version 3	Snow peas and sugar snap peas	Insecticide	Pymetrozine	Cowpea aphid, Pea aphid and Potato aphid	06-Jan-15	31-May-22	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER13153 Version 2	Sweetpotato	Insecticide	Fipronil	White fringed weevil Wireworms	14-Dec-11	31-Dec-21	Growcom	NSW, QLD, NT and WA

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



Industry in the media

AUSVEG reached a cumulative national audience of 4,047,155 in September, with 768 media reports mentioning AUSVEG across print and broadcast outlets.

Increasing veg consumption

National Nutrition Week ran from 16-22 October, with AUSVEG National Manager – Communications Shaun Lindhe appearing in print and on radio encouraging Australians to take the chance to eat more vegetables. Mr Lindhe noted that Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows more than 90 per cent of the population fails to meet the recommended five or more servings of vegetables each day.

Mr Lindhe also appeared on national television, discussing the news that discount retailer Aldi is planning a renewed focus on the quality and range of its fresh produce offerings. He noted that if Aldi's move leads to better returns for growers at the farm gate, this initiative could be good news for the industry.

Consumer research

The latest findings from Project Harvest consumer research was also discussed across print and broadcast media in October. AUSVEG spokesperson Jarrod Strauch explained that consumer trends towards convenience showed that having vegetables washed

and ready for use is one of the three most important factors for Australian shoppers.

Meanwhile, AUSVEG spokesperson Dimi Kyriakou discussed recent consumer research from Horizon, which highlighted that vegetables are front and centre in a wide range of meal ideas, including beetroot brownies and pumpkin fries.

QA standards

In conjunction with Horticulture Innovation Australia and Freshcare, AUSVEG CEO Simon Bolles announced that vegetable growers looking to enter key export markets will save significant cost and complication after global and domestic food safety certification requirements are combined.

The Freshcare standard will be benchmarked against the internationally recognised GLOBAL G.A.P. standards, leading to increased efficiencies and cost savings for Australian fresh produce exporters.



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

Project Number: VG15027

Horticulture
Innovation
Australia

CALENDAR

October 2016 – March 2017 Consultation for Vegetable Strategic Investment Plan

Where: Over 30 locations across Australia
What: As part of the process for producing a new Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for the vegetable industry, specialist consulting firm Consulting & Implementation Services will host workshops to give growers the opportunity to share their views on the most important areas for R&D investment.

Further information:

Please contact AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or email info@ausveg.com.au.

1 December 2016

Biofumigation cover crops in vegetable production

Where: Online

What: Join Julie Finnigan, technical agronomist with Serve-Ag in Tasmania, for an update of using biofumigant cover crops in vegetable production.

Further information:

soilwealth.com.au/events.

8-10 February 2017

Berlin Fruit Logistica

Where: Berlin, Germany

What: Berlin Fruit Logistica covers every sector of the fresh produce business and provides a complete picture of the latest innovations, products and services in the international supply chain. It offers superb networking and contact opportunities to key decision-makers in the industry.

Further information:

fruitlogistica.de/en.

15-17 May 2017

Hort Connections

Where: Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia

What: A joint initiative between AUSVEG and PMA Australia-New Zealand Limited (PMA A-NZ) and co-hosted by Australian Organic, Onions Australia and Irrigation Australia, Hort Connections will deliver a world-class program and trade show to growers and whole-of-supply companies alike.

Further information:

Please contact AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or email info@ausveg.com.au.



An effective solution in crop nutrition

IN ITS 50TH YEAR, GLOBAL FERTILISER SUPPLIER HAIFA AIMS TO PROVIDE GROWERS WITH TIME-SAVING, COST-BENEFICIAL OPTIONS IN CROP NUTRITION. THE GLOBAL COMPANY'S GOAL IS TO WORK WITH GROWERS TO SUPPLY FRESH PRODUCE FREE OF CONTAMINATION.

There are a range of crop nutrition and fertiliser options available in the Australian horticulture industry, marking an important aspect of the vegetable growing process. In this domain, global specialty fertiliser supplier Haifa is targeting continued innovation in nutritional solutions to support better agricultural practices.

The Israeli-based company has chalked up 25 years in Australia and is the country's largest supplier of water soluble nutrients, initially distributing through Multifert Agencies before establishing an Australian office in 2008, becoming the only global potassium nitrate supplier to do so.

Quality goals

Managing Director in Australia, Trevor Dennis, said Haifa's local team was proud to supply growers with nutrients with the least levels of non-target

elements, assisting in the goal to grow high quality produce free of contamination.

Mr Dennis said the company's products left little to no residue remaining in soils.

"When our flagship Multi-K fertilisers are applied, plants actively absorb both the nitrate anion, or negative particle, and the potassium, which is the cation or positively charged particle," he said.

"This unique property makes it the premium source of potassium, and while it may be more expensive per kilogram than other options, it should be viewed as more efficient and thus more economic in the long run."

Plants absorbing the nutrients from this dual affinity have an increased water use efficiency and reduction in the energy used by the plant to gain the nutrients.

Greenhouse use of the product has found they are low in harmful salts like sodium and

chloride. In particular, Multi-K Absolute is used extensively in European greenhouse production, where the low salt content enables growers to reuse the nutrient solution, saving both time and money.

Pioneer approach

Haifa's Multicote controlled release fertilisers (CRF) are also attracting increasing interest and the company recently expanded the range with a coated urea granule available in seven release longevity rates, from two to 16 months. The company's coated nutrient range allows any desired nutritional composition and release profile.

With a single application, crops can benefit from continuous and sufficient supply of nitrogen for a 16-month period, based on a standard soil temperature of 21 degrees Celsius.

Mr Dennis added that

Multicote is the most diversified CRF range, with more than 35 products. Using CRF ensures growers benefit from substantial savings in labour, time and costs by providing nutrients to their crops for the entire growth cycle in a single application.

The product also meets strict environmental regulations, with near zero nitrogen leaching.

"This demonstrates that at Haifa, we have many solutions to the nutrient application puzzle and we have the highest quality products for the production of food, which equates to the lowest risk," Mr Dennis said.



For more information, please visit haifa-group.com.

Overcoming challenges for NSW farmers

AFTER GAINING AN AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE DEGREE, MATT BRAND WORKED IN THE NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES. HE THEN MOVED AWAY FROM AGRICULTURE TO WORK IN MARKETING, RETURNING TO THE INDUSTRY IN 2010 AS CEO OF NSW FARMERS. MR BRAND SPOKE TO *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* ABOUT NSW FARMERS' PRIORITIES AND HIS HOPES FOR THE ORGANISATION'S FUTURE.



NSW Farmers CEO Matt Brand.

New South Wales has experienced an extremely tough couple of months – August was the wettest month in 13 years for the state, but there was worse to come with floods inundating many towns in the southern and central region.

When *Vegetables Australia* spoke to NSW Farmers CEO Matt Brand in September, floodwaters were continuing to rise while Forbes was declared a natural disaster zone. It will be a long road to recovery for growers, and Mr Brand said it is a priority for NSW Farmers to assist those affected.

“At the moment, we’re working with the relevant government departments and agencies to work out what damage has been caused and what’s available to help farmers that have got either waterlogged crops or in the worst case, written-off crops,” Mr Brand explained.

“We’ve heard that in parts of the central-west we’re going to have areas that won’t get crops and (those that do) will have severely damaged crops and restricted access to markets due to road damage. Once the water recedes, we’ll have a better understanding and be able to get around a lot easier to find

out what the issues are and what we can help members to access. Unfortunately for some, it will take years to recover.”

Industry issues

Mr Brand stepped into the NSW Farmers’ CEO role in October 2010. In his time at the helm, the vegetable industry has encountered a number of key issues that are unique to New South Wales.

“A lot of our production is in the Sydney Basin, so there’s a lot of pressure that comes with urban sprawl,” he said.

“Biosecurity is also a major issue for vegetable producers in the Sydney Basin due to the proximity to the domestic and international airports, a very large port in Port Botany and the Sydney Markets. There are some real challenges around biosecurity and making sure that there are adequate resources for quarantine and customs.

“We’re working very closely with the State Government, through the Department of Primary Industries and the Local Land Services, to make sure there are resources and systems in place to ensure that we have the ability to

track what’s coming in; and importantly if there is an issue we are able to act swiftly.”

Mr Brand outlined that another challenge is the lack of access to crop protection products for New South Wales, compared to other states.

“We are currently involved in a pesticide regulation review and it is something that we will be bringing up on behalf of our members. It makes it difficult to compete when you are not able to use products available in other states. The ability to use these chemicals would obviously improve productivity and profitability of the NSW vegetable industry,” he explained.

Clear message


All future signs for NSW Farmers are positive. The organisation is continuing to attract members and experience growth, however Mr Brand said it needed to look at embracing technology and making sure the technology that is starting to be made available in urban areas is also available for those living in regional areas.

“The digital economy will help farmers access information more efficiently, help them

make more informed decisions, improve productivity on-farm and help improve sustainability. These then result in best practice management and profitability,” he said.

“The future will continue to include close collaboration with organisations like AUSVEG, working together to build a consistent message across the country to make sure the sector’s voice is heard. On a national level, NSW Farmers is already working with other farming bodies to develop a more streamlined and structured model of representation for Australia’s farmers. This model is something that we and other members of the National Farmers’ Federation (NFF) family are striving tirelessly to achieve.

“Eventually we will go beyond the NFF family and look at bringing in other organisations to the new model which will be more streamlined and will provide the ability to fully reinforce the importance that agriculture plays in the economy, making sure the decision makers really hear a clear, consistent message.”

 For more information, please visit nswfarmers.org.au.

Around the states

South Australia



AUSVEG SA remains concerned for the welfare of growers on the Northern Adelaide Plains affected by the recent floods. Damage estimates are currently north of \$50 million and clean-up efforts have now commenced in the region.

The SA Government has offered support for clean-up activities and is currently applying for Federal Government funding to provide household support for growers. In addition, a recovery centre has been set up at the Virginia Horticulture Centre for growers

to access relevant services such as physical and mental health assistance.

AUSVEG SA encourages all growers to access these services if they are needed and we are making ourselves available to help each and every grower to advocate on their behalf. Moving forward, AUSVEG SA is pushing for state and federal funding for concessional loans to give affected growers the confidence to reinvest and stay in the industry.

On a more positive note, AUSVEG SA has been buoyed

by the support received for the 2016 Flood Appeal which has raised more than \$70,000 to fund seedlings and other start-up costs for flood affected growers. The initiative was jointly launched between AUSVEG, AUSVEG SA and the South Australian Produce Market, which kicked off the appeal. We are hoping to reach a target of \$100,000 for the appeal and donations can be made at foodbanksa.org.au. AUSVEG SA thanks everyone involved in the recovery effort and people on the ground

helping our South Australian growers get back on their feet.

Jordan Brooke-Barnett
AUSVEG SA
State Manager
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Adelaide, SA 5000
Phone: 08 8221 5220

Tasmania



It continues to be an extraordinarily challenging time for many of the state's vegetable growers.

Recent spring rains have compounded the issues that have been faced by growers since the unprecedented floods in June. Up to 200 millimetres of extra rain was received in some districts at a time when soil profiles were already saturated.

Waterlogged paddocks are preventing some growers from planting many traditional crops, including peas and to a lesser extent, carrots and beans. We are also hearing from many members that the window for many onion crops has now passed completely.

Unless it dries out in the next couple of weeks, many growers will be faced with the decision of having to coordinate a late harvest or, frustratingly, not being able to fulfil contracts to

processors. Some growers are choosing not to take the risk of losing crops to waterlogging, and are looking for alternative income options instead.

Another issue that may also add to the season's frustrations is the decision to refer the proposed backpacker tax changes back to a Senate economics committee for a month-long review. As it is now, the spectre of the original 32.5 per cent tax hangs over the agricultural industry's head as a very sizeable deterrent to prospective workers for this season.

From the TFGA's perspective, at the very least an interim decision should have been made, which may have assisted with recruiting potential employees for what is already going to be a tough year. The TFGA had congratulated the Federal Government on its announcement that the

proposed backpacker tax would be reduced to 19 per cent.

"This is a common sense approach which will ensure that Australia remains competitive at an international level," TFGA CEO Peter Skillern said.

The TFGA, along with other stakeholders, long and actively advocated for an appropriate result that reflected the needs of our industry.

We also participated in the recent delegation to Canberra to ensure that the views of Tasmanian farmers were heard on a national stage. The reality is that Tasmanian agriculture needs backpackers. Our growers need some assurance that they will have the workforce that they need.

On another note, vegetables are among the products that have played a strong role in Tasmania's recent boost in its export market. In the last 12 months the export market

in Tasmania has grown 8.4 per cent, which can largely be contributed to agricultural products such as seafood, fruit, vegetables and timber.

Tasmania's growth in the export market is the fastest growing market in the country and has outstripped the growth in other states.

Wayne Johnston
Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
President
Cnr Cimitiere and Charles Streets Launceston, TAS 7250
Phone: 03 6332 1800

Victoria



AUSVEG VIC held its Annual General Meeting on Friday 28 October 2016. The event was highly successful and was well-attended by representatives from the Victorian vegetable and potato industries.

David Wallace has made the decision not to nominate for the role of AUSVEG VIC President. During his tenure as President of AUSVEG VIC and the Vegetables Growers Association of Victoria, David advocated passionately on behalf of the Victorian vegetable industry,

and I thank him for his valuable contributions to the industry in this role.

Eight growers were voted onto the AUSVEG VIC Executive Committee. They were as follows:

- David Wallace.
- Paul Gazzola.
- Rocky Lamattina.
- Vince Doria.
- Bill Bulmer.
- Peter Cochrane.
- Deborah Corrigan.
- Frank Lamattina.

AUSVEG VIC was present for the launch of the report from the Inquiry into Victoria's labour hire market, which recommended the establishment of a register into labour hire firms and a licencing regime to better regulate the industry. I will update growers on the register and licencing scheme when more details come to light.

AUSVEG VIC is eager to hear from vegetable and potato growers about the issues affecting the productivity and profitability of their businesses.

For more information on joining AUSVEG VIC or about the organisation in general, please contact AUSVEG VIC State Manager Kurt Hermann at info@ausvegvic.com.au.

Kurt Hermann

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Queensland



Would your farm business pass a Fair Work inspection or audit?

- Are you confident you are meeting all your legal obligations under the Fair Work Act and the award/s?
- Are you sure your record keeping and employee paperwork would pass inspection?
- Do you know how to manage performance and termination of employment to minimise the risk of claims against you?

The Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) is delivering free workshops throughout Queensland to help agricultural businesses achieve Fair Work compliance and better manage employment risks.

Australia has a highly regulated framework of workplace relations with complex laws, regulations, awards and standards to be met by every employer. The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) has

high expectations that business owners who employ staff ensure they do so in line with the laws.

Increased funding and activity of the FWO means that employers are more likely to be inspected or audited. Targeted campaigns are exposing non-compliance across the board. In serious cases, high profile prosecutions have resulted in large fines, enforceable undertakings and media exposure.

The Workplace Relations Seminars will be delivered by workplace relations expert Donna Mogg.

At the end of these seminars, you will leave with a clear understanding of your obligations under the Fair Work laws. You will also leave with a clear understanding of where the gaps are in your policies and practices, and a set of resources to help you address those gaps.

Managing your employees is all part of managing your business. It is really important

that you get this right. During the free, half-day seminar, growers will:

- Undergo a risk assessment – effectively 'stress testing' their business against the legal requirements;
- Understand their legal obligations under the Fair Work Act, National Employment Standards and relevant Award/s;
- Gather information and resources to help with compliance and establish positive practices in the workplace.

Seminars are scheduled to be held in the following locations:

- Gympie: Thursday 17 November 2016.
- Glass House Mountains: Friday 18 November 2016.
- Mackay: Wednesday 8 February 2017.
- Yeppoon: Tuesday 14 February 2017.
- Emerald: Wednesday 15 February 2017.

- St George: Wednesday 1 March 2017.
- Kingaroy: Wednesday 15 March 2017.

Secure your seat today by registering online at growcom.com.au/wes.

QAWN is an industry-led rural jobs and skills initiative funded by the Queensland Government. It is being managed by Growcom Agriculture Workforce Officer for SE Queensland, Michelle Templin. For more information contact Michelle at mtemplin@growcom.com.au or 0400 231 949.

The QAWN Workplace Essentials Seminars 2016/17 are funded by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and sponsored by AustSafe Super.

Pat Hannan

Growcom CEO
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Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006
Phone: 07 3620 3844
Fax: 07 3620 3880

Around the states

New South Wales



NSW Farmers and other state farming bodies have engaged with the Federal Government to progress the recommendations from the independent review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct. The government and the Department of Agriculture have engaged with both growers and traders to work through the recommendations of the review to ensure the outcome will be beneficial for all and will improve the workability of the Code.

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, met with

NSW Farmers and other state bodies to discuss the recommendations. NSW Farmers reiterated that real time price transparency in centralised horticultural markets should be explored and that the recommendations need to be adequately resourced to ensure full implementation and compliance.

NSW Farmers has advocated for a timely decision from the government to give certainty to both growers and working holiday makers. The initial tax proposal of 32.5 per cent placed on working holiday makers would have significantly

reduced the inflow of working holiday makers, severely affecting the supply of workers relied upon by the farming community.

This is a highly important national issue that has seen collaboration from all state and national farming organisations working towards a solution that will ensure growers have adequate labour for the upcoming harvest seasons.

While NSW Farmers has some concerns with the superannuation arrangement and registration scheme that has been announced, it strongly believes that swift

implementation is needed.

The backpacker tax announcement has already seen growers report a decline in the number of working holiday makers for the upcoming harvest and any more delay will impact the much-needed certainty for the agriculture industry.

Brett Guthrey

NSW Farmers' Association
Horticulture Chair
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Phone: 02 8251 1804
Fax: 02 8251 1750

Northern Territory



A new Northern Territory Labor government was elected in August this year. The agriculture policies taken to the election included a commitment to the increase in extension services in horticulture for NT growers. This recognises what has been becoming very obvious over the last five to 10 years. Industry development through R&D needs a strong extension component to engage effectively with farmers if the R&D is going to be taken up by growers. This trend has been obvious across Australia, especially in the state and territory government policies reducing their commitment to extension.

Project funding models have also contributed to this gap, as short-term funding doesn't allow for the development of long-

term relationships that engender strong practice change outcomes. Projects often base success on defined outputs and short-term outcomes that can't capture the long-term practice changes that come from successful extension. The National Vegetable Extension Network projects are a great step in filling this gap and recognising that we need to build capacity not just in our growers, but also in our service providers in the ability to extend existing research to growers.

The detection of Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV) in Western Australia was very worrying news for the cucurbit growers in those regions. NT vegetable growers feel for the WA growers and know the stress and worry

that go along with these detections. It was good to be able to share some of the resources developed to help farmers through the NT incursion with the WA growers, which they could modify to fit their circumstances. The NT vegetable and melon growers are through a whole season with no detection of CGMMV, so there is light at the end of the tunnel for our WA colleagues.

The changes in water licensing regulations in the Greater Darwin Rural Area has caused a lot of paperwork as small growers are now required to apply for licences. The process should result in existing growers cementing their entitlement to water through the licence allocations. NT Farmers is assisting the vegetable

growers of the Top End to work through their water licence applications and with the NT Department of Land Resource Management to meet these government objectives.

Greg Owens

NT Farmers Association
Vegetable Grower
Engagement Officer
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Email: greg@ntfarmers.org.au
Website: ntfarmers.org.au



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