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September/October 2015

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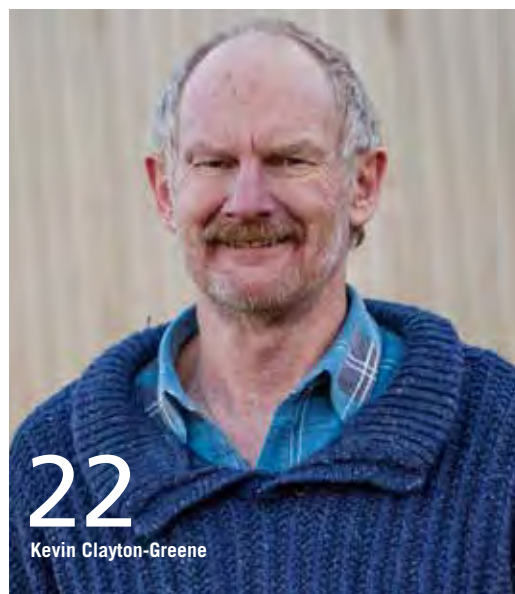
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AUSVEG Chairman and CEO messages



Geoff Moar

AUSVEG Chairman

A recurring point of discussion at many industry events this year has revolved around the challenge of attracting younger generations into the vegetable industry and encouraging them to pursue rewarding careers. While those of us who have been in the industry for decades have plenty of knowledge and experience, I believe it is a fresh wave of thinking that will help the vegetable industry prosper in the future.

As University of Queensland Dean of Agriculture Professor Neal Menzies noted during his presentation at the 2015 National Horticulture Convention, there are plenty of opportunities to study agriculture at a tertiary level in Australia and our universities are very well-equipped to educate students in this field. However, we must unite to promote the vegetable industry as an attractive and rewarding place to work, and communicate the diverse range of occupations available – from hands-on work in the field to farm management, administration, biosecurity and Quality Assurance roles.

Securing the future of our agriculture industry is more important than ever, given predictions that the world's population is set to swell to nine billion by 2050. It is clear that the vegetable industry will play an important role in providing sufficient amounts of food to this rising population and ultimately, upcoming generations will need to ensure this can happen.

One of our Leading Strategic Partners, Bayer CropScience, has shown initiative in relation to this issue after joining Future Farmers Network to host the 2015 Youth Agriculture Summit in Canberra. The event brought 100 leading young

minds from all over the world to discuss the global issues facing agriculture and, given the passion and enthusiasm shown by the delegates, the industry is fortunate to have such young minds leading the way to the future.

As we know, the role of R&D will be crucial to the vegetable industry's ongoing success and it is imperative that vegetable growers keep abreast of the latest research being conducted. A useful and informative resource is the InfoVeg database, which is a central point of reference for growers who are keen to find out more information on research funded by the National Vegetable Levy. It can be accessed online or via your smartphone and, along with InfoVeg radio podcasts, is a simple tool to keep updated on the latest R&D in the industry.

Finally, I would like to congratulate AUSVEG Biosecurity Adviser and industry stalwart Kevin Clayton-Greene on his recent Industry Recognition Award at the 9th World Potato Congress. While this award specifically acknowledges his contributions to the Australian potato industry, Kevin has also dedicated many years of hard work to the vegetable industry through various research projects, biosecurity discussions and industry advisory roles. He is certainly a deserving recipient of this international accolade and we are fortunate to benefit from his knowledge in the industry.

Geoff Moar
Chairman
AUSVEG



Richard Mulcahy

AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer

The value of Australian vegetable exports is on the rise, increasing to more than \$270 million since the previous financial year. This is very welcome news for growers who are already benefitting from the popularity of Australian vegetables overseas, as well as those who are considering exports as an additional dimension to their businesses.

The Asian and Middle Eastern markets are currently the driving forces behind this increase in value. Rising middle class populations in Asia, combined with projected growth in the United Arab Emirates' food sector, are stimulating an increased demand for a greater variety of Australian vegetables. At the moment, exports make up a relatively small part of vegetable production in Australia, but these market trends indicate that the sector has great potential for further growth.

Whether you're an export-ready grower or simply interested in finding out how exports can work for your business, AUSVEG can help as we work closely with growers to facilitate discussions and connections with international buyers. This includes hosting a range of export symposia on key markets, organising the annual Reverse Trade Mission and helping growers exhibit their fresh produce at key international trade shows.

The high esteem in which Australian produce is held in international markets was evident at the recent Asia Fruit Logistica event in Hong Kong, where there was an overwhelming interest in Australian vegetables among key players in the Asian market. Following the successful Hong Kong event,

another group of Australian growers will make their way to Dubai for the World of Perishables trade show in October, where they will have the opportunity to meet key buyers in Middle Eastern markets.

There have also been some industry developments back home, as the Federal Government has finally made some progress in the challenge to create a clearer Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) system. In July, new label designs were released and, at first glance, are an improvement on the existing system. The new labels include a visual diagram of the percentage of Australian ingredients in a product.

While AUSVEG welcomed some of the government's proposals as a step in the right direction, it was disappointing to see that the ambiguous term 'Made In' will continue to be used. Furthermore, Australian consumers will still be left none-the-wiser about the exact origins of imported produce contained in food manufactured in Australia.

These are crucial elements that must be addressed if we are to create a genuine CoOL system that Australian consumers have been calling out for. The good news is that the discussion will continue, as a review of the system will be held within two years. Until then, AUSVEG will continue the campaign for further improvements to our CoOL system and ensure transparency exists between manufacturers and Australian consumers.

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**FRONT COVER:**

Brock Sutton

Photograph by Rob Maccoll.



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Daryl Wilson

Vegetable growers face a variety of challenges in their day-to-day operations and sometimes, Mother Nature likes to make things a little more confronting.

In our Grower profile this edition, we speak to Daryl Wilson who operates a hydroponic facility on the outskirts of Rockhampton in Queensland. He discusses how his family faced the daunting task of recovering from Cyclone Marcia, which caused significant damage to the property earlier this year (page 38).

We also travel to South Australia for our Young grower Q&A profile (page 16), where Phuong Truong shares her passion for the vegetable industry and her thoughts on the challenges and opportunities ahead. Fellow young grower and EnviroVeg member Brock Sutton also discusses the environmentally-friendly practices he has

incorporated onto his vegetable growing operation in Gatton, Queensland (page 34).

The latest R&D also takes centre stage this edition, with a variety of articles focusing on Australian vegetable exports. In addition to Australia's successful representation at this year's Asia

Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong (page 26), our regular Economic update provides useful facts and figures that demonstrate the increasing value of Australian vegetable exports (page 40).

There have also been many promising developments in R&D on home soil. On page 14, we present the recommendations of a research project that looked at innovative ways to ensure the effective management and disposal of plastic waste products and materials on vegetable farms. Meanwhile, The Front Line biosecurity column outlines everything you need to know about the Brown marmorated stink bug (page 20).

If you are interested in finding out more about research

projects funded by the National Vegetable Levy, a useful resource is the InfoVeg database (page 43). The database includes a detailed report on the Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia delegation to the Netherlands earlier this year, where South Australian vegetable growers learnt about the latest trends in advanced horticultural production (page 44).

Attracting younger generations into the horticulture industry was also recently addressed by University of Queensland Dean of Agriculture Professor Neal Menzies at the 2015 National Horticulture Convention. You can find out more of what he had to say on page 10.



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SA growers visit the Netherlands

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Veggie bites

Facts & figures...

34%

The latest AUSVEG Economic Survey found vegetable growers' confidence regarding production costs other than labour increased by 34 per cent over the June quarter, indicating that growers are more optimistic about investing in their businesses.

14,151 tonnes

The production for processed peas was 14,151 tonnes in 2013-14, according to data from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics and the Global Trade Atlas.

\$4.8 million

According to the June 2015 Nielsen Homescan opportunity calculator, the vegetable industry could achieve another \$4.8 million in sales value by encouraging cucumber-buying households to buy cucumber as frequently as they did a year ago.

400%

The Project Harvest April 2015 report found that over the last decade, snacking in Australia has increased by more than 400 per cent, presenting a valuable opportunity to create healthier vegetable snack options.

\$270 million

Data from the Global Trade Atlas has shown Australian vegetable exports increased to over \$270 million in 2014-15, with key markets in Asia and the Middle East contributing to the growth in value.



\$2.60kg

The average price of butternut pumpkins dropped from \$3.23kg in October 2014 to \$2.60kg in May this year, according to Project Harvest Wave 25 research.



Over £1 million

Beetroot sales are set to soar to over £1 million per week in the United Kingdom due to its highly publicised nutritional benefits, according to Project Harvest's Wave 24 report.

23.4kg

On the topic of beetroot, the Guinness World Record for the heaviest beetroot is 23.4kg, which was presented by Ian Neale at the UK's National Giant Vegetable Championships in 2001.



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Bayer CropScience

How to make horticulture appealing to future generations



University of Queensland Dean of Agriculture Professor Neal Menzies spoke at the 2015 National Horticulture Convention.

THE CHALLENGE OF HIGHLIGHTING THE VALUE OF AN AGRICULTURE DEGREE TO FUTURE TERTIARY STUDENTS WAS NOTED DURING A PRESENTATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND'S PROFESSOR NEAL MENZIES AT THE 2015 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION. HE SPOKE TO CAMILLA THOMAS ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDUSTRY TO CHANGE HOW PEOPLE CURRENTLY VIEW THE WORLD OF HORTICULTURE.

Does agriculture, and horticulture more specifically, have an image problem? University of Queensland (UQ) Dean of Agriculture Professor Neal Menzies certainly seems to think so.

"Horticulture is not sexy," Professor Menzies said during his presentation at the 2015 National Horticulture Convention at Jupiters Gold Coast in June.

"We are seeing extreme challenges for horticulture education at a tertiary level as students are not wanting to enter the field."

Data collected by Professor Menzies and Professor Jim Pratley from Charles Sturt University has indicated that, relative to the general community, there was a very low level of people with a tertiary education working in the agriculture industry. Out of an average of 4,000 agriculture jobs available in Australia every year, less than 800 graduates leave universities with the relevant qualifications.

"The message here is not that great," Professor Menzies said. "Horticulture is technically extremely demanding; it is a difficult marketplace, so you need high-level skills for success.

"However, the number of university students entering horticulture is very low."

But, it is not all bad news.

The ability for Australian universities to deliver tertiary education in agriculture remains extremely high, with two Australian

universities ranking well above world standard and another above world standard in the discipline.

"Our universities have gotten better and better in the last couple of decades," Professor Menzies said.

"There are 10,000 universities that offer agriculture science around the world and UQ, for example, ranks number 10 out of those institutions, which is stunning. We know that there is a suite of universities here in Australia that rank highly in agriculture science, but we as an industry are not appealing to potential graduates."

Overcoming the challenges

Professor Menzies said the combination of federal funding reductions to agriculture science and student disengagement could have detrimental affects to the industry.

"Why, you may ask, should growers and industry workers care about the issues affecting agriculture and horticulture tertiary education?" he said.

"Well, when the industry and the government funds research by university students and academics, we can produce results that greatly affect and help industry development. But the level of this research will diminish if student numbers continue to as well."

Professor Menzies said universities, growers and industry bodies must start working together to attract more students to enter the horticulture field.

"Somehow the mining industry has managed to make its work look appealing through attractive and inspiring campaigns," he said.

selling the horticulture and agriculture industry as a wonderful place to work."

Professor Menzies said there had to be a collaborative effort to remake agriculture's image.

"For years it has been 'oversupply and low prices for agriculture commodities'; it

"We are at the start of a new, good time for agriculture in general and agriculture innovation; we are coming into a boom period."

- Professor Neal Menzies, UQ Dean of Agriculture

"However, we know that the reality of fly in fly out work and the cyclical nature of mining is not all that great."

Selling the industry

Professor Menzies warned vegetable and potato growers to be wary of how they may unintentionally present their industry to the media.

"Farming and horticulture is often portrayed in the media as hindered by famine, drought and farmer suicides," he said.

"Take a leaf out of the mining industry's book and understand that it is important we start

has been genetically modified organisms as 'Frankenstein food'; it has been every single thing wrong with what we are doing – the science of what we are doing," he said.

"But things have turned around – in the last couple of years we have had governments talk about our national research priorities as food, soil and water. We are at the start of a new, good time for agriculture in general and agriculture innovation; we are coming into a boom period.

"We need the community and the next generation to see that too."

New ag degree on offer

A new Bachelor of Agriculture degree has been developed to prepare the next wave of students for a predicted agricultural boom in Australia.

The University of Melbourne has worked with industry, employers, graduates and alumni to redesign the existing curriculum so the university's future graduates are armed with the necessary skills to make an impact in the Australian agricultural industry.

"There are more than four vacant jobs per agricultural

science graduate, and the sector supports 1.6 million Australian jobs when related industries are taken into account, around half of which are in cities," University of Melbourne Dean of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences, Professor Ken Hinchcliff, said.

"...our new curriculum will enable students to develop an extra depth of expertise in agricultural economics, animal science or plant and soil science and employ these skills in external industry placements

and cross-disciplinary projects that will ask them to examine the big issues facing agriculture today."

Course outline

The new Bachelor of Agriculture degree offers specialisation from three majors: Animal Science; Plant and Soil Science; and Economics, as well as an integrated cross-disciplinary subject at every year level. The course aims to incorporate communication, problem-solving and team work skills, as employers are increasingly looking for agricultural workers who display these 'soft skills' and offer a point of difference to other candidates.

The course will also give students plenty of practical experience, as external placements are incorporated into the course outline. This includes a semester at the university's campus in Dookie, Victoria, which will allow students to gain hands-on experience in precision farming technologies.

"Dookie sits at the intersection of Victoria's prime livestock, orchard and cropping land and near major agricultural support industries like processing, manufacturing and transport," Professor Hinchcliff said.

"Dookie is the jewel in the crown of our agricultural teaching and research, and the students who learn there will come away from it with an enviable wealth of on-the-ground experience."

The first year of the new degree aims to build a foundation of knowledge in the agricultural sciences, while second and third year students will focus on their major and cross-disciplinary projects, often working in teams to find solutions to issues facing the Australian agricultural sector.

The Bachelor degree will also provide opportunities for eligible students to further their studies with an Honours, Masters or PhD program.



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Respected industry figure receives prestigious award

BAYER CROPSCIENCE HEAD OF NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RICHARD DICKMANN HAS ENJOYED MANY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING HIS 27-YEAR CAREER WITH THE COMPANY, WHICH WERE HIGHLIGHTED WHEN HE RECEIVED THE PRESTIGIOUS AUSVEG INDUSTRY LEADER AWARD IN JUNE.



Bayer CropScience Head of New Business Development Richard Dickmann.

Whether he was working in France, Singapore, Japan, China, Germany or Australia, Richard Dickmann has undoubtedly contributed a great deal to horticulture on a global scale through his work with Bayer CropScience.

After working in Bayer's R&D and marketing sectors both locally and internationally for the past 27 years, Mr Dickmann received the prestigious Industry Leader Award at the National Horticulture Convention's Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner at Jupiters Gold Coast on 27 June.

The award is not presented annually, but rather when a member of the horticulture industry is identified for their passionate and tireless work to further the interests of the

Australian vegetable industry as a whole. Mr Dickmann is a well-known industry figure who has not only acted as a valuable point of contact for growers, but has also served on numerous advisory panels that help inform the direction of R&D funding priorities.

"I became quite directly involved in the Australian vegetable industry after I returned from overseas in 2008. I had 20 years with Bayer in France, Singapore, Japan, China and Germany," Mr Dickmann said.

"I moved from research into business, and now I'm blending research, business, government affairs and sustainability in my role as Head of New Business Development at Bayer."

A humble recipient

Mr Dickmann said that receiving the Industry Leader Award was one of the many highlights of his career in the Australian horticulture industry so far.

"I was thrilled for myself personally but I was also so proud of my company for having taken this position of engagement and leadership in the industry," he said.

"I accepted the award on behalf of all my colleagues. I am just the face of the dedicated horticulture team behind me."

A more recent highlight of Mr Dickmann's career was his involvement in the 2015 Youth Agriculture Summit, which was hosted by Bayer CropScience and Future Farmers Network Australia in Canberra in August. The event brought 100 leading young members of the global agriculture industry together to discuss potential solutions to issues such as food security (see page 33 for more information).

"Bringing the Youth-Ag Summit to Canberra has been a tremendous event, which has focused world agriculture onto Australia. We've been able to partner with leading like-minded companies and government organisations to really present the best of Australian agriculture to these young people."

Working in a vibrant industry

Mr Dickmann noted that he enjoys working alongside the ongoing innovation and collaboration in the Australian vegetable industry.

"The level of innovation shown by the leading growers in the industry challenges us at Bayer to match them and deliver innovations of a similar quality," he said.

"The other aspect is the growing collaboration, which has been shown between major players and across the supply chain. Growers, input providers, processors and our major retailers are all involved in a very broad-based discussion about the future of Australian agriculture and horticulture."

As Mr Dickmann continues to think on a global scale, this will undoubtedly translate into further contributions to the Australian vegetable industry for many more years to come.

"My dream would be greater integration of Australian vegetables and horticulture into the world markets, including Asia, as well as from an R&D perspective. I'd love to see much greater success in Australian horticulture and the vegetable industry."



L-R: Richard Dickmann and AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar.



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On-farm plastic waste: A problem that can't be ignored



THE BUILD-UP OF WASTE PRODUCTS AND UNWANTED MATERIALS ON A FARM CAN CAUSE HEADACHES FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE PLASTIC-BASED. THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL OF THESE PRODUCTS FORMED THE FOCUS OF ONE RECENT RESEARCH PROJECT.

As is the case on many farms, vegetable production can result in large amounts of waste and unwanted materials that are difficult for growers to dispose of appropriately.

This is particularly true for materials such as plastic mulch sheeting and plastic irrigation pipe, which present some challenges for disposal and recycling when they are no longer required. Given that burning or burying plastics is illegal and difficult to monitor in regional areas, alternative solutions must be developed for growers.

Given this, a research project entitled *Innovative ways to address waste management on vegetable farms* was recently conducted to enable the Australian vegetable industry to consider alternatives to plastic use and recycling, and ultimately contribute to the continuous improvement in farm management practices, efficiency and sustainability.

Led by RM Consulting Group (RMCG) with the assistance of waste management specialist DJR Consulting, the project engaged with growers and the wider vegetable industry, as well as plastic providers and processors, to determine the extent of the problem in different growing regions throughout Australia and identify potential solutions.

“There has been a growing interest in on-farm management of plastic waste. It’s something that growers would like to be able to deal with, but they need an easier way to do it,” RMCG Senior Consultant Economist Kym Whiteoak said.

The current situation

The research project primarily focused on the use and disposal of plastic mulch and plastic irrigation equipment on vegetable farms, which pose a significant problem in consolidated areas of horticulture, particularly in south east Queensland and Victoria.

“What became clear is that there are supply chains that exist for plastic processing in some areas. For drip and permanent irrigation, there are recycling options but they mostly exist in areas near ports and processing plants to make it more cost-effective,” Mr Whiteoak explained.

“The main exception is plastic mulch, as you often can’t send it to landfill because it is so voluminous. The actual plastic is suitable for re-processing and recycling, but because of the contaminant load and its size, the transport costs are high for a relatively small tonnage. It’s a problem that hasn’t been resolved yet but there are people working on it.”

While technological solutions to effectively decontaminate plastic mulch for processing are currently underway, another possible option is to use biodegradable or photodegradable options. However, the labelling of these products is not always clear and there are unresolved issues about the impact of photodegradable plastics on the surrounding environment.

Mr Whiteoak noted that growers using a larger share of plastics, especially plastic mulch, were particularly interested in a low-cost solution to their plastic management problems. As a result, the project looked into the cost-effectiveness of different disposal options for plastic mulch.

“Starch-based, biodegradable mulch is currently the most expensive option and photodegradable plastic mulch is even cheaper than illegal disposal. However, this data suggests that we need to have a clearer understanding of its practical limitations and environmental impacts,” he said.

Possible solutions

The report provided a range of recommendations, which included grower and industry participation in state-based

environmental organisations. It also advised plastic processors to work with the vegetable industry to develop fit-for-purpose plastic products that meet their needs.

“From a grower’s perspective, they need to be aware of some of the regional plastic processing solutions available. If they’re thinking of using an alternative plastic product, such as photodegradable plastic, they need to know enough information about it and its potential implications,” Mr Whiteoak added.

“From a research point of view, we need to find out the impact of photodegradable plastic products on the environment and consider investing in recycling technology. It would also be good to have some extension material with more information about the possible options and their potential implications.”



A full project report is available on the InfoVeg website: www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

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

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Grow a better tomorrow.

Q&A Young grower profile



Name: Phuong Truong

Age: 29

Location: Virginia, South Australia

Works: 4Ways Fresh Produce

Grows: Cucumbers, capsicums, zucchinis and eggplants

How did you first become involved in the vegetable industry?

Prior to their retirement, my parents used to be growers themselves. Naturally, in a family business, my siblings and I helped our parents on the farm performing different jobs, from preparing the land to planting seedlings, plant maintenance, harvesting and packing the produce.

What is your role in the business?

My role at 4Ways Fresh Produce is an Office Manager and Quality Assurance Manager.

How would you describe your average day at work?

My average day at work is often fun and exciting. Fun comes from working with a great team. 4Ways

is like a family away from home. Our staff is passionate about their work and we work great together as a team. The excitement comes from the unexpected things that tend to come along each day, giving more variety. I may come to work with set tasks to complete, but I will find new things that happen that will need some resolution on the day, as well as new projects to take on board, product testings, new packaging designs or simple things such as fixing the printer.

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

The most enjoyable thing about working in the vegetable industry is the people that we get to work with. They are from all walks of life and we listen to their life experiences, where they come from, and how and why they are in the vegetable industry. There are stories of farmers who have



taken on the family business, stories of younger generations who just want to try something different and find themselves attracted to the vegetable industry. There are engineers who have come back to help in the family business and have never looked back. There are graduates from different fields, who have been given a job within our industry, and have made a career

out of it simply because they love what they do.

With the excitement and smiles on the people and farmers we work with, we also see the worries on their faces. We also hear stories of how their yields are affected by weather and pests, and how poor prices are making it hard for them to make ends meet, even though so much effort has been put



Photography by Andrew Beveridge.

in to produce the vegetables. However, despite all of this, we see farmers dig their heels in and plough through each day, working towards a better day, a better yield and a better price. Their commitment and strength is an inspirational lesson that many of us younger generations will need to learn from.

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

The biggest challenge is to know where to obtain the right information to make an informed decision. Our vegetable industry is not united enough to work together as a team and help make our industry more recognised and valued. Our vegetable industry is not getting enough recognition and support to help make the industry stronger. There are many ideas and projects that are being developed by passionate individuals to help improve our industry, but these projects are often left unrecognised.

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

The opportunity for growth in the Australian vegetable

industry is through exports. Our Australian farmers have a great capacity to produce quality and safe vegetables, which we can offer to other countries where quality and safety is often an issue. With that in mind, our Australian farmers will need all the necessary support to help guide them and prepare them to be export-ready.

Within our growing region here in South Australia, we are seeing more and more young multicultural farmers who are willing to try new techniques and seedling varieties to help improve the production of quality produce with greater shelf life. Additional help and support from government departments and organisations such as AUSVEG will strengthen our vegetable industry. Informational seminars in multilingual sessions, field days, etc. will also help broaden our knowledge and apply this to the wider vegetable industry.

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

Young people rely more and more on their social network group to help them make decisions. If their friend rated working in the vegetable industry as a positive experience, they are more likely to view our vegetable



industry positively.

Having work experience opportunities available to the younger generation within the vegetable industry can give them a first-hand experience on what it is like to be part of an important industry that is providing stable natural food to our nation. Inviting young people on field days to the farms or a vegetable production area can help demonstrate the amount of work that has been put in to produce a piece of fruit that has been presented nicely on a supermarket shelf. Providing more first-hand knowledge and information about our industry to young people will help increase their understanding that there is more to the vegetable industry than just a plant in the soil.

An AUSVEG career expo may be an idea to raise young people's awareness and interest of the job availabilities within our vegetable industry.

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

If I was not working in the vegetable industry, I might be working in the financial services sector, such as accounting or bookkeeping etc.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I still see myself working at 4Ways in five years' time. I am passionate about the company that I work for. I want to be a part of this company and help to make it grow and reach its full potential. Working with a team that often has great ideas to help make it a great company motivates me to work hard to help implement those ideas.



BELT

Mighty tough on chewing pests

with a little soft spot for beneficials





with Dr Kevin
Clayton-Greene

R&D
Market &
Value Chain
Development

HIGH QUALITY PEST SURVEILLANCE DATA IS OF KEY IMPORTANCE FOR RETAINING MARKET ACCESS, BOTH INTERSTATE AND WITH INTERNATIONAL TRADING PARTNERS. SURVEILLANCE FOR SPECIFIC PESTS IS OFTEN CARRIED OUT BY STATE OR TERRITORY DEPARTMENTS OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES. HOWEVER, INDUSTRY-DRIVEN SURVEILLANCE IS BECOMING AN IMPORTANT TOOL IN PROVING REGIONAL, STATE OR COUNTRY FREEDOM FROM PLANT PESTS.

What are the benefits of consistent surveillance by both government and industry?

For Australia to be viewed as a trusted exporter, it is vital that importing countries have faith in our biosecurity system and the integrity of those responsible for it. This will not occur if an importing country cannot trust Australian phytosanitary declarations issued by our biosecurity officers.

Robust surveillance practices and accurate recording of surveillance information helps to minimise pest-related disruptions to market access. If a trading partner challenges the status of a certain pest in Australia, the Federal Department of Agriculture may use surveillance information gained through government and industry activities to prove freedom from the pest in question. In addition, long-term pest surveillance in growing regions will inevitably support cost-effective pest management practices.

Does Australia have a national surveillance data network?

Plant Health Australia manages

the National Plant Surveillance Reporting Tool (NPSRT). In essence, NPSRT is a summary database of surveillance activities carried out for exotic or nationally significant pests in Australia. It does not hold actual surveillance data, but instead provides an overview as to what pests are being looked for and where these activities are undertaken. It also identifies any significant detections.

The key purpose of this database is to aid in market access negotiations and provide support in an emergency response. If there is a requirement for this information (e.g. when challenged on proving pest freedom by an overseas market), NPSRT identifies where the relevant authority can go to obtain the surveillance information.

For more information on NPSRT, visit www.planthealthaustralia.com.au.

How much surveillance is necessary?

The extent of surveillance that is necessary is highly specific to each importing country. It can depend on the major primary industries in that country, the importing country's pest status and the level of assurance needed to

be confident about importing Australian produce. There is currently no stated requirement for what surveillance data can be contained under NPSRT; however, the Federal Government is currently finalising the National Minimum Data Standards (NMDS) for plant pest surveillance.

What exotic pests should growers and agronomists look out for?

The Vegetable Industry Biosecurity Plan includes an extensive list of High Priority Plant Pests. However, it is obviously not feasible to carry out active surveillance for all exotic pests listed in the plan.

Pests that could lead to serious impacts on the vegetable industry and market access include: the Vegetable leafminer (currently found in the Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula as of 2015), the Banana mealy bug (found in the Torres Strait and also Cape York Peninsula), and the Brown marmorated stink bug (a frequent stowaway in break bulk containers). These pests represent exotic species that have very broad host ranges and have been declared as major agricultural pests worldwide. However, it is important to

note that pest surveillance also includes bacteria, viruses and fungi as well as insects. When conducting surveillance, especially for the purpose of retaining market access, recording the absence of a pest is just as important as recording detections.

What about additional surveillance?

Importantly, there are also endemic pests under management that also require surveillance. What may be a plant pest in one state, or even region, may not be present in an adjacent location. For example, the green snail is found in some regions of Victoria; Queensland fruit fly and Mediterranean fruit fly are primarily found in north east Australia and Western Australia respectively; and Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus is mostly confined to the Northern Territory.

In the interests of retaining domestic market access, regular on-farm surveillance for endemic pests is a useful insurance policy.



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Adult brown marmorated stink bug, *Halyomorpha halys*. Photo courtesy of David R. Lance, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org.

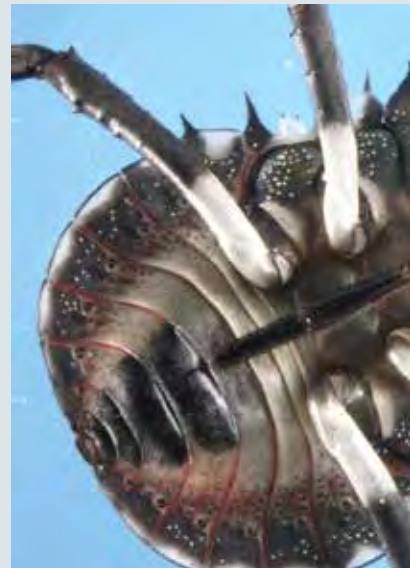


with Dr Jessica Lye



The big stink about the Brown marmorated stink bug

THE BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG IS FAST EMERGING AS A MAJOR AGRICULTURAL PEST AROUND THE GLOBE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY CLEAR IN THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THE BUG IS WREAKING HAVOC ACROSS AT LEAST 42 STATES AND WAS DETECTED IN MACHINERY, PARTS AND TYRES WAITING FOR EXPORT TO AUSTRALIA EARLIER THIS YEAR. AUSVEG NATIONAL MANAGER – SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS DR JESSICA LYE LOOKS AT THE HORTICULTURAL IMPACTS OF THIS PEST AND THE AVAILABLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR INDUSTRY.



In 1996, the Brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB; *Halyomorpha halys*) was detected in Allentown, Pennsylvania in the United States. As a highly polyphagous bug, it is now a high-profile pest of the US agricultural industry, especially in mid-Atlantic growing regions. The extent of the damage is influenced by three major factors: the high replication rate of the bug (each female lays as many as 400 eggs); the cryptic nature of the bug as it overwinters indoors; and its ravenous and unassuming appetite.

The host range of the BMSB rivals even the Vegetable leafminer in variety, with tendencies towards at least 120 plant species (a conservative estimate), including a wide range of fruit trees and numerous vegetable commodities such as beans, sweet corn, capsicum,

eggplant and okra.

So far, little impact has been reported on brassica or cucurbit vegetables in the US. However, given the broad host range of the BMSB, it is possible that these crops may be more attractive and susceptible if they are grown away from preferred host plants. Indeed, it is generally accepted by US researchers that the list of host plants will grow as the pest spreads to new regions.

A collaborative effort of more than 50 researchers from 10 institutions across the country is currently underway to develop control methods for the pest. Known as 'Stop Brown Marmorated Stink Bug', the campaign aims to develop monitoring and management tools for the BMSB with funding from the US Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Research Initiative.

Impact and management

The bug is a piercing sucking feeder that inserts a stylet into fruit, pods, buds and stems of plants. Small necrotic spots on fruit and leaf surfaces often result from feeding damage and, as entry wounds from feeding can allow disease to attack the host fruit, plant damage may be compounded by secondary infections as the fruit matures. Feeding on fruiting vegetables results in a characteristic distortion that renders the fruit unmarketable as a fresh product.

Research in the US indicates that that vegetable crops are attacked by the BMSB in warmer months, from mid-July until mid-September. US researchers have also noted that vegetable crops directly bordering woodlots are at the highest risk of attack. Sweet

corn is a particular favourite of the stink bug palate, with one study identifying BMSB injury to 100 per cent of corn ears in a Maryland site in early- to mid-season plantings.

The research effort in the US has revealed some intriguing information that may help with management of the pest. For instance, a study this year by entomologists at the University of Maryland has shown that the BMSB has a strong preference for ripe fruit and can track its favourite fruit throughout the growing season in an effort to maximize its access to food. Information such as this may aid in identifying where management practices may be most effective.

Overall, due to the few effective pesticides labelled for use against the pest, the US has found management of the BMSB challenging. However,

Be informed and prepared

Despite the unfortunate name, the BMSB is an attractive bug. Adults are approximately 17mm long and feature a ‘shield’ shape thorax coloured in shades of brown. The main point of anatomical difference from other stink bugs are light coloured bands on the antennae.

The ‘stink bug’ part of the name is derived from scent glands located on the dorsal surface of the abdomen and the underside of the thorax. As a defence mechanism, the bug releases volatile

compounds from the scent glands when disturbed, which have an unpleasant odour.

There are five nymphal instars (immature bugs), which range in size from 2.4mm to 12mm in length. At these stages, the eyes are a deep red and the body changes from a yellowish red in the early stages to off-white with reddish spots in the final instar. During immature stages, the legs, head and thorax are black.



Brown marmorated stink bug nymph. Photo courtesy of Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org.

This idea is not so farfetched – the BMSB tends to overwinter in protected areas, such as shipping containers.

While the bug has not been found on Australian shores, biosecurity officers have previously intercepted the BMSB in shipping containers at Australian ports.

In February this year, interceptions in containers from US ports had begun to noticeably increase. In response, the Federal Government declared emergency regulations for the fumigation treatment of containerised and break bulk vehicles (including boats), machinery, automotive parts and containerised tyres sourced and shipped from US ports.

While it is hoped that these measures will continue to keep our growing regions BMSB-free, continued surveillance for exotic pests in growing regions is an essential aspect of industry preparedness.



Brown marmorated stink bug nymph. Photo courtesy of Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org.

in China there is evidence that a recently identified species of egg parasitoid, *Trissolcus halymorphae*, may be an effective biological control agent against the pest. It is likely that future management of the BMSB will involve an Integrated Pest Management approach.

Beware the stowaway

How the BMSB found its way to the US is unsubstantiated, as the bug is native to China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. However, genetic analysis has revealed that the US incursion originated from a single introduction from the region of Beijing, China. There is speculation among US researchers that the bug was a stowaway on a shipping container that arrived at a US port from Asia.



Growers can obtain more information about on-farm biosecurity measures in the Vegetable Industry Biosecurity Plan at www.ausveg.com.au/biosecurity.

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).

For further information, see the farm biosecurity website at www.farmbiosecurity.com.au, or contact AUSVEG National Manager – Scientific Affairs Dr Jessica Lye on (03) 9882 0277 or email jessica.lye@ausveg.com.au.

A pest in every sense of the word

Apart from having a major impact on the agricultural industry, every summer the BMSB invades homes in both rural and urban areas where they are a messy, smelly nuisance.

Residents are

encouraged to manage entry of the pest by mechanical means, such as sealing cracks and other building openings with silicone and making sure damaged screens on doors and windows are repaired.



Brown marmorated stink bug eggs. Photo courtesy of David R. Lance, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org.



Australian researcher honoured with international accolade

A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE AND WIDER HORTICULTURE INDUSTRIES HAS LED AUSVEG BIOSECURITY ADVISER DR KEVIN CLAYTON-GREENE TO RECEIVE THE PRESTIGIOUS INDUSTRY RECOGNITION AWARD AT THE 9TH WORLD POTATO CONGRESS IN CHINA.

Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene is a household name to many readers of *Vegetables Australia*, having established himself as one of the most respected researchers and advisers in the Australian vegetable industry and the wider horticulture sector.

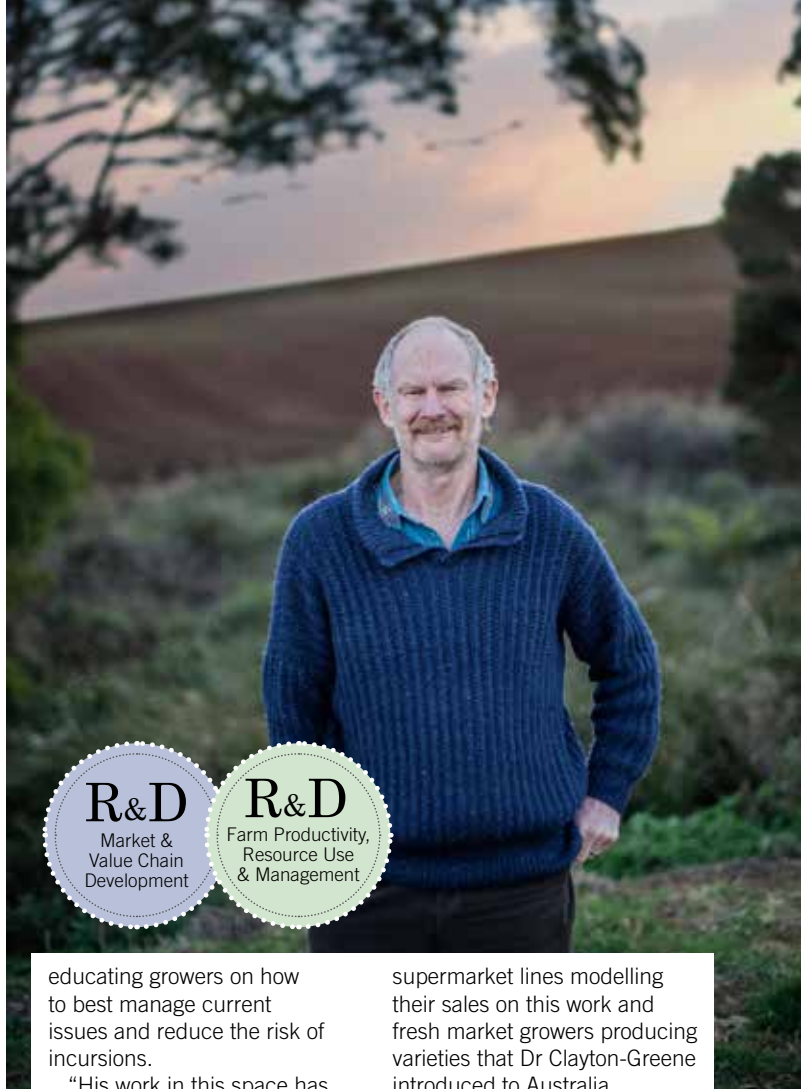
Thanks to his many years of experience and knowledge, Dr Clayton-Greene has undoubtedly advanced and evolved the Australian vegetable industry to ensure that it not only reaches its full potential, but also maintains the quality and safety that makes the industry stand out on a world scale.

In July, Dr Clayton-Greene's many achievements were recognised on the international stage when he received the Industry Recognition Award at the 9th World Potato Congress in China. AUSVEG

nominated Dr Clayton-Greene for the accolade and he is only the second Australian to receive the prestigious international award.

"Dr Clayton-Greene has had a long and distinguished career in Australian horticulture, having prepared over 30 refereed research papers and written hundreds of horticulture industry articles. He has also worked as General Manager at Harvest Moon, one of Australia's largest potato and vegetable producers, located in Tasmania," AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy said.

"His efforts in biosecurity and plant health have gone a long way to safeguarding Australia from pests and diseases not currently present, as well as



educating growers on how to best manage current issues and reduce the risk of incursions.

"His work in this space has been crucial in keeping the destructive Zebra chip disease and fresh potato imports from New Zealand out of Australia."

supermarket lines modelling their sales on this work and fresh market growers producing varieties that Dr Clayton-Greene introduced to Australia.

"His work on varietal licensing for potatoes initiated a shift in how Australian retailers market potatoes to consumers and also introduced a vast new range of varieties to growers, which created greater opportunities and solutions for the industry," Mr Mulcahy said.

In addition to serving on numerous additional horticultural advisory committees and representing Australia's potato and vegetable industries at international conferences and trade shows, he also initiated the formation of a Tasmanian potato and seed potato industry group, which operates under the Tasmanian Productivity Group and aims to ensure the state's biosecurity and industry matters are addressed and represented.

Career highlights

For a number of years, Dr Clayton-Greene has represented Australian R&D on the International Potato Group. Back on Australian soil, he has also been a member of the National Industry Advisory Committee for the potato and vegetable industries and Chair of the Australian Technical Advisory Groups for Potatoes and Vegetables.

In 2011, he was awarded an AUSVEG Lifetime Achievement Award. He currently acts as a valued Biosecurity Adviser to AUSVEG, as well as a Biosecurity and Technical Consultant for Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited.

In his various roles at Harvest Moon from 1993 onwards, Dr Clayton-Greene was responsible for implementing the company's first Quality Assurance scheme, preparing its export business as well as the potato varietal introduction (HZPC) and licensing for fresh and processing potatoes.

This revolutionised how potatoes were sold, with major

A worthy recipient

Dr Clayton-Greene has worked tirelessly on improving the Australian vegetable and horticulture industries, which are now regarded as some of the most progressive in the world for their respective R&D practices.

AUSVEG congratulates Dr Clayton-Greene on his latest achievement and thanks him for his tireless work on behalf of the Australian vegetable and wider horticulture industries.



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Labelling changes fall short of what's needed

WHILE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO AUSTRALIA'S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING SYSTEM ARE A SMALL STEP TOWARDS MEANINGFUL REFORM, THEY STILL FALL SHORT OF GIVING AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS INFORMATION THAT GENUINELY IDENTIFIES THE TRUE ORIGINS OF A PRODUCT'S INGREDIENTS.

After many years of industry campaigning for change, the Federal Government finally announced reforms to Australia's current Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) system in July.

The proposed changes include a mandatory requirement to display a diagram on Australian-manufactured food products, which shows the proportion of Australian ingredients. The new label designs include 'Made In' and 'Grown In'

country of origin claims, as well as 'Packed In' statements.

While this is definitely an improvement to the current system, it also means that Australia will be the only originating country outlined on Australian-manufactured food products. As a result, consumers will still be left in the dark about which specific ingredients are Australian as well as the exact origin of the non-Australian ingredients.

"By not disclosing the countries of origin of key



ingredients in products, the Federal Government runs the risk of letting down the people of Australia, who want to know where the food they are eating has come from," AUSVEG Deputy CEO Andrew White said.

"It is incumbent on the government to go further and meet the demands of consumers, who have repeatedly indicated they want to know the origins of the food they are buying and eating, and that their food is safe."

This is all the more imperative given the results of a recent survey conducted by consumer

advocacy group CHOICE, which found that 71 per cent of respondents felt it was crucial or very important to know where their food comes from.

Clarify the confusion

Meaningful CoOL reform also needs to clarify some of the confusing information and terms that are provided to consumers on labels. AUSVEG has long called for the terms 'Made from local and imported ingredients' and 'Made in Australia' to be dropped, as they are ambiguous, confusing and provide no meaningful information about the origins of particular ingredients.

While it is pleasing that the proposed reforms removed the term 'Made from local and imported ingredients', it is disappointing that 'Made in Australia' can still be used. This term is highly confusing to consumers, a fact that was clearly highlighted in a video released by AUSVEG earlier this year, which revealed the depth of consumer confusion that exists around food labels.

In addition, the abovementioned CHOICE survey also found that only 12 per cent of respondents were able to correctly identify the meaning of 'Made in Australia'.





“By not disclosing the countries of origin of key ingredients in products, the Federal Government runs the risk of letting down the people of Australia...”

**- Andrew White,
AUSVEG Deputy CEO**

No more excuses

There are some sections of the business community who continue to oppose CoOL reform, claiming the cost of

changing labels will be too high. This assertion does not stack up, particularly given how readily and easily companies change packaging for promotion and marketing purposes.

Such excuses should not be allowed to hinder the implementation of more meaningful labelling reform. Indeed, many businesses would do well to heed the wishes of their customers and provide them with the country of origin information that they so clearly desire, unless of course they have something to hide.

The Federal Government has also indicated that it will investigate online platforms and digital options to provide more information on product ingredients. However, by making this information available only online, a massive segment of the community – particularly older Australians – will be robbed of the opportunity to truly know the origins of their food.

“This is a woefully inadequate substitute for a genuine system that identifies the country of origin of key ingredients on labels,” Mr White said.

“If food manufacturers are willing to change markings on a product for scanning by an app, and digitally update ingredient lists online, then we see no reason why they cannot also change printed text indicating the country of origin of ingredients on product labels.”

While the government has taken a step in the right direction regarding food labelling, the current proposals fall short of giving consumers what they want. With the government confirming it will review its new system within two years, AUSVEG will continue pushing for the genuine Country of Origin Labelling system that Australian consumers deserve.



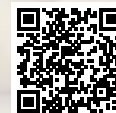
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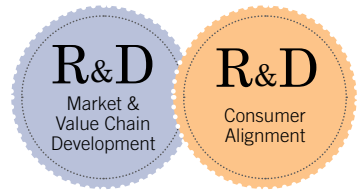
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Export success at Asia Fruit Logistica

BUILDING ON AUSTRALIA'S SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION AT ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA IN 2013 AND 2014, THE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLES STAND RETURNED TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOW IN HONG KONG FROM 2-4 SEPTEMBER.



Nine vegetable growers from across the country recently travelled to Hong Kong to display their produce at Asia Fruit Logistica, in an effort to create and strengthen business relationships in Hong Kong and other Asian markets. During the event, the impressive Australian contingent helped to enhance the fresh, clean and safe perception of Australian horticultural products.

Australian vegetable exports to Hong Kong have increased by 13 per cent, totalling over \$8 million in the last financial year. The popularity of Australian vegetables in Asia was demonstrated during the international trade show, with buyers placing a strong emphasis on traceability, quality and safety.

Increasingly, Hong Kong is becoming a gateway into mainland

China; this was highlighted by a significant number of Chinese buyers attending this year's Asia Fruit Logistica. Buyers also travelled from a range of other nearby markets including Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

The prominence of Asia Fruit Logistica within the Asia-Pacific region allowed growers and Australian vegetables to be exposed to buyers from a wide range of export markets.

Levy-funded grower participants also visited a range of retailers, importers and wholesalers of imported produce to gain a deeper understanding of the Hong Kong market. Overall, Asia Fruit Logistica allowed growers to further understand the offerings

of competitor markets such as South Africa, the US and New Zealand.

Networking opportunities

The Australian vegetable industry also hosted a networking event where wholesalers, retailers and buyers from across Asia enjoyed some Australian hospitality. This event provided vegetable growers with an opportunity to network with a large range of key industry members from across Asia.

Despite only concluding a few weeks ago, the growers who attended Asia Fruit Logistica are confident that enhanced trade will occur in their businesses as a result of participating in the trade show.

Key messages from consumers in Hong Kong suggest that Australian carrots, potatoes, leafy vegetables and organic varieties are all in high demand, while innovative and pre-packed options are popular among retailers. Additionally, buyers placed increased importance on a product's origin and traceability, given the growing concerns regarding food safety.

Consumer enquiries in Hong Kong ranged from vegetable production in Australia to supply and product availability.

Many retailers also enquired about any new and innovative products that haven't reached Asia yet, reinforcing the need for innovation and product development in Australia.



The popular Australian Vegetables stand at Asia Fruit Logistica this year.

Download new export resources

The AUSVEG Export Development webpage, hosted on the AUSVEG website, has seen record downloads of key materials such as the Export Readiness Checklist and the Guide to the Export Readiness Checklist. In response to this demand, AUSVEG has created a range of new export resources that are now available online.

New materials include a range of "Market Snapshots" that provide an overview of key export markets. The information included in these snapshots range from market insights, export requirements and the latest trade data. The markets covered are:

- China.
- Hong Kong.
- Indonesia.
- Japan.
- Malaysia.
- New Zealand.
- Singapore.
- South Korea.

- Thailand.
- United Arab Emirates.

AUSVEG has also prepared a Free Trade Agreement Overview that provides information about current Free Trade Agreements between Australia and partner countries and how they are expected to affect the Australian vegetable industry.

The Export Development webpage will be continually updated with a range of new materials over the coming months – make sure you check back regularly to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.




i For more information, visit the Export Development page of the AUSVEG website at www.ausveg.com.au/export.


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Export commodity snapshot: Carrots

Fresh carrot and turnip exports are Australia's largest exported vegetable commodity, representing over 20 per cent of all vegetable exports in 2012-13. In 2014-15, Australia exported \$61.8 million worth of carrots.

The key destinations for Australian carrots are the United Arab Emirates and Singapore, with these two markets receiving (by value) 51 per cent of the carrots exported in 2014-15.



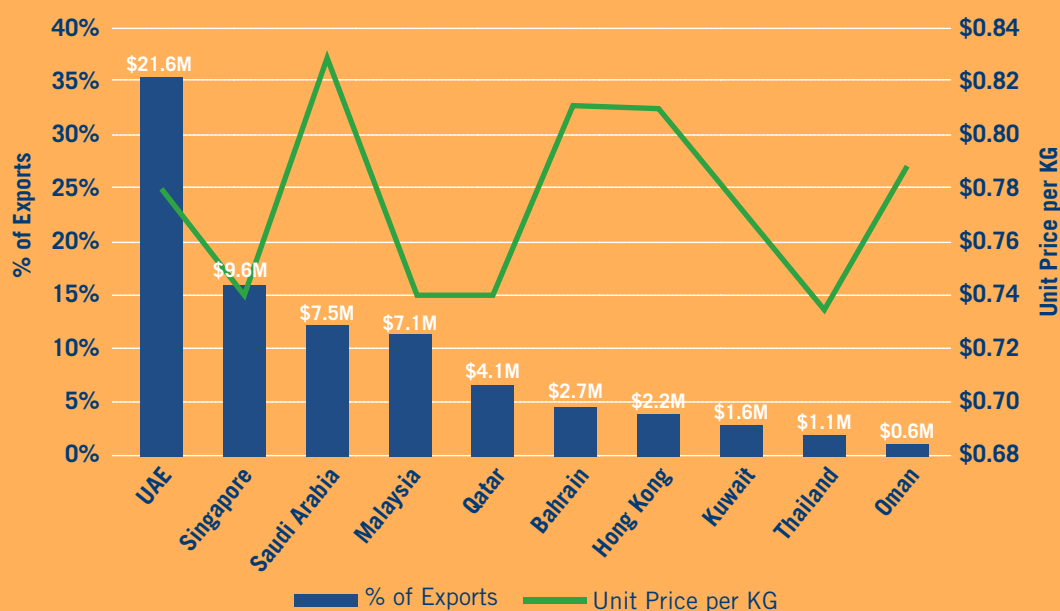
Rank	Country	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
1	United Arab Emirates	\$12,429,185.00	\$13,038,102.00	\$14,360,219.00	\$17,344,044.00	\$21,630,921.00
2	Singapore	\$9,897,879.00	\$9,859,946.00	\$9,389,104.00	\$9,243,190.00	\$9,736,584.00
3	Saudi Arabia	\$6,490,396.00	\$7,188,768.00	\$5,505,000.00	\$6,684,993.00	\$7,482,168.00
4	Malaysia	\$6,606,958.00	\$6,484,722.00	\$6,488,568.00	\$6,672,656.00	\$7,151,885.00
5	Qatar	\$3,080,709.00	\$3,347,897.00	\$3,817,345.00	\$3,798,027.00	\$4,109,617.00
6	Bahrain	\$3,001,989.00	\$2,327,611.00	\$2,916,582.00	\$2,225,513.00	\$2,694,043.00
7	Hong Kong	\$1,359,135.00	\$1,247,199.00	\$1,576,079.00	\$1,790,265.00	\$2,254,198.00
8	Kuwait	\$1,965,041.00	\$2,104,927.00	\$1,688,264.00	\$1,831,691.00	\$1,646,369.00
9	Thailand	\$716,858.00	\$779,668.00	\$1,012,207.00	\$2,551,758.00	\$1,075,027.00
10	Oman	\$738,411.00	\$709,648.00	\$902,923.00	\$1,064,843.00	\$610,013.00
	Total	\$52,164,935.00	\$51,874,186.00	\$52,095,343.00	\$56,559,789.00	\$61,808,542.00

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

Carrot exports have remained steady over the past five years and have shown solid growth in the last three years. Significant growth in carrot exports can be seen in the United Arab Emirates and more broadly, Middle Eastern markets.

As total carrot exports trend upwards, there are opportunities for carrot growers to explore other possibilities to increase trade further, such as through the potential to provide larger composite class carrots in bulk to meet the demands of juice manufacturers.

In 2014-15, on average, Australian carrots were valued at \$0.79/kg. This price has remained consistent over the last five years. Within the top 10 carrot export markets by value, Saudi Arabia demanded the highest price for carrots with the average price being \$0.83/kg.



Veggie Stats: Peas

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 PEA PRODUCTION.

The following Veggie Stats article has been developed specifically to give readers a detailed snapshot of the key facts and figures on peas. 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 (HIA) 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 pea 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.

Collect the whole set

Encourage all the local beneficial species to keep helping protect your crops by including compatible Bayer products in your IPM program. This is the latest card in our set explaining which Bayer products will cause minimal disruption to which beneficial insects and mites. For more information, visit bayercropscience.com.au or call your local supplier.

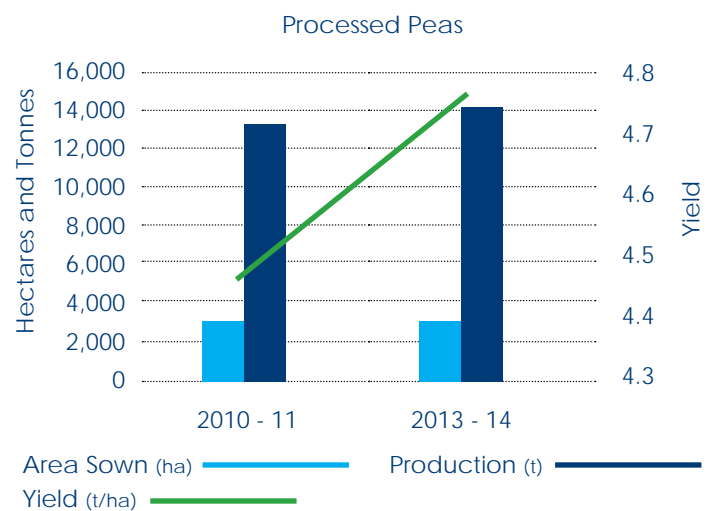
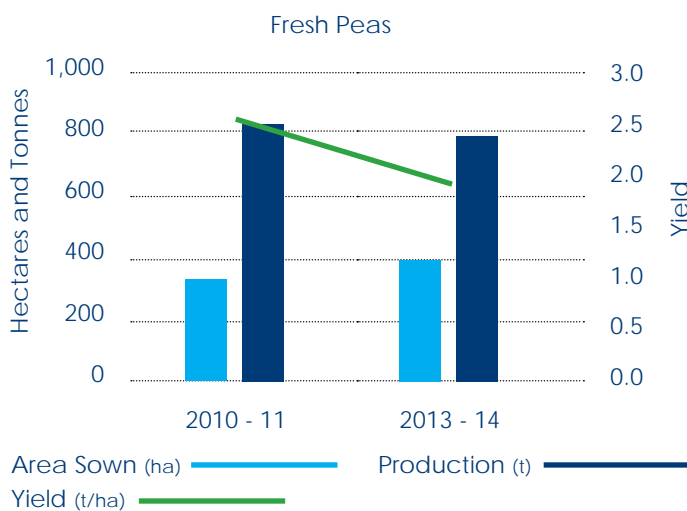
If you've missed any of the previous cards in this series and would like them sent out to you, please call **1800 804 479**

VEGGIE STATS: PEAS

Pea Production – Key facts and figures

- Since 2010-11, the gross value of fresh pea production has increased by 5 per cent, whereas the gross value of processed pea production has increased by 22 per cent.
- The production in tonnes of processed peas is almost 18 times greater than fresh peas, however the gross value of production for processed peas is less than two times greater.
- Yield has increased for processed peas, but decreased for fresh peas.
- Since 2011-12, exports of fresh and frozen peas have decreased by 76 per cent and 54 per cent respectively.
- Exports for frozen peas were more than double the value of exports for fresh peas in 2014-15.

Farm-Gate Statistics

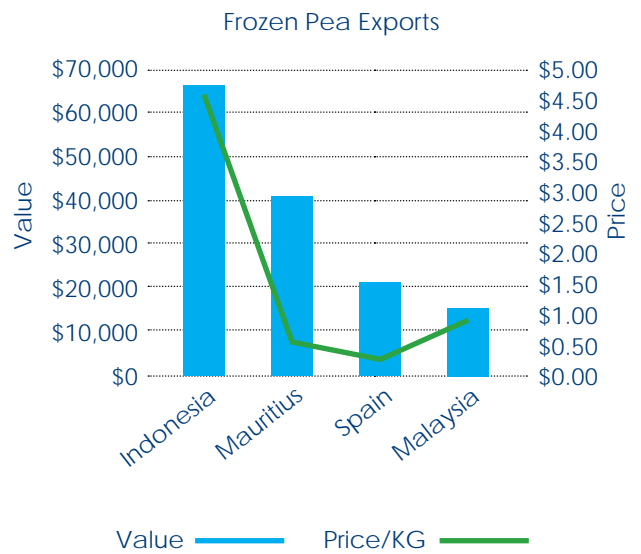
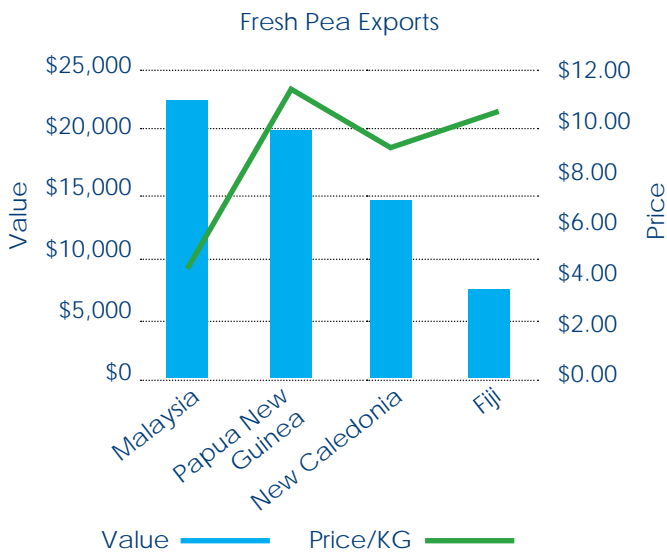
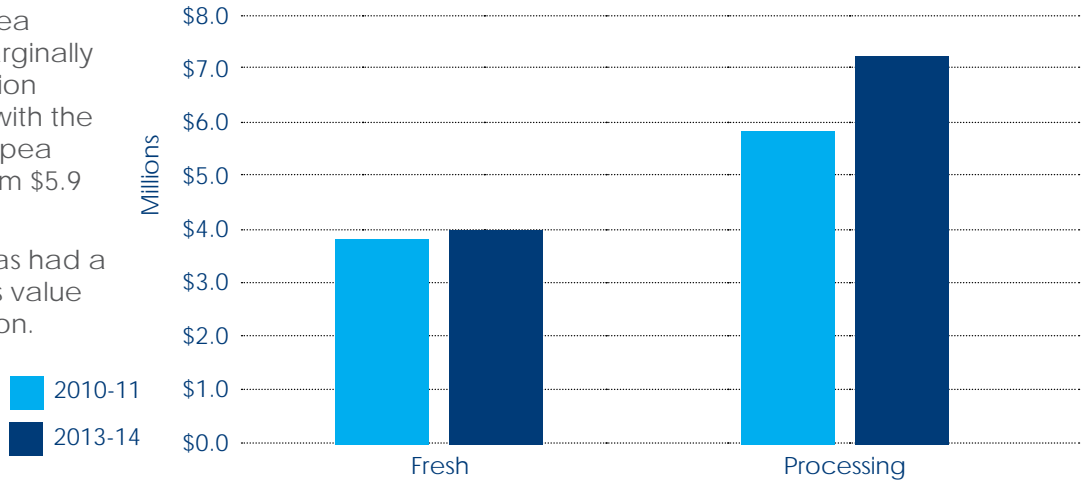


- Since 2010-11, production for fresh peas decreased from 813 tonnes to 793 tonnes in 2013-14, with area sown increasing from 327 hectares to 406 hectares over the same time period. This led to a decrease in yield.
- Since 2010-11, production for processed peas increased slightly from 13,392 tonnes to 14,151 tonnes in 2013-14. This led to a slight increase in yield as the area sown had decreased over the time period.

Gross Value of Production

The gross value of fresh pea production increased marginally from \$3.8 million to \$4 million from 2010-11 to 2013-14, with the gross value of processed pea production increasing from \$5.9 million to \$7.2 million.

In 2013-14, processed peas had a 64 per cent share of gross value out of total pea production.



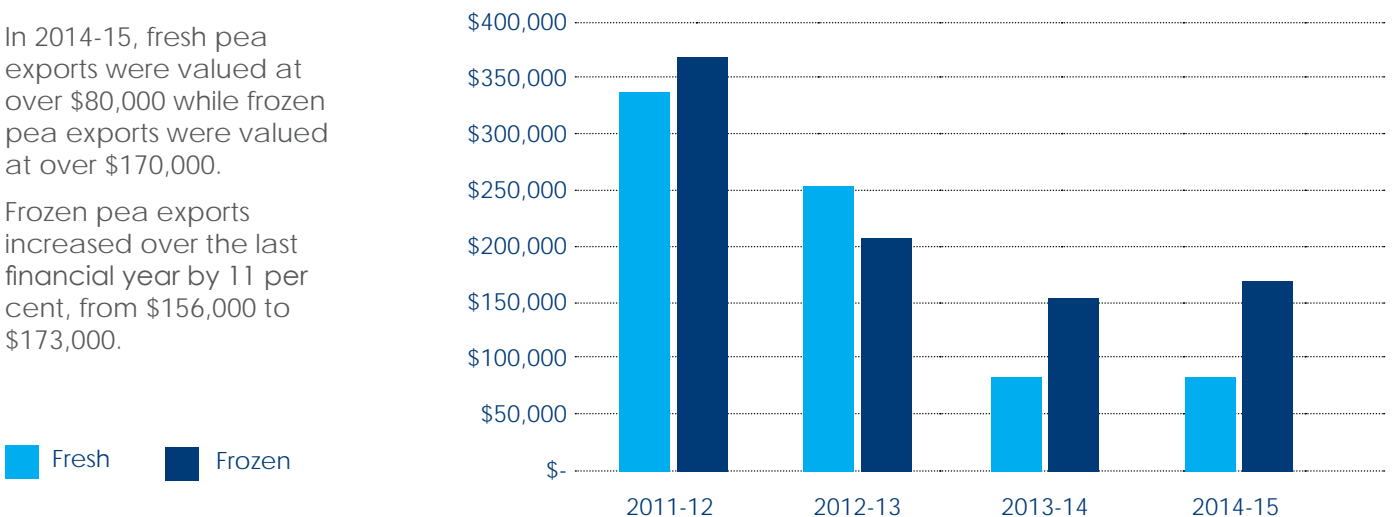
- Malaysia was Australia's largest fresh pea export market in 2014-15, having a 27 per cent share of total fresh pea exports. Papua New Guinea had a 25 per cent share.*
- Indonesia was Australia's largest frozen pea export market in 2014-15, having a 38 per cent share of total frozen pea exports.
- It can be seen that prices for fresh peas tend to be much higher than prices for frozen peas.

* In August 2015, the Papua New Guinean Government instituted a ban on the import of selected Australian vegetables, including peas. This had no impact on the 2014-15 financial year.

Total Exports

In 2014-15, fresh pea exports were valued at over \$80,000 while frozen pea exports were valued at over \$170,000.

Frozen pea exports increased over the last financial year by 11 per cent, from \$156,000 to \$173,000.



Progress to the next EnviroVeg level and promote good business practices

EnviroVeg is a three-tiered program that progresses from 'Basic' to 'Gold' to 'Platinum' accreditation levels. Advancing to a higher level allows growers to further promote their ongoing development of environmentally sustainable farming practices in their businesses.

To be eligible for Gold membership, a grower must submit a Self-Assessment that achieves over 85 per cent. This can be submitted either online through the EnviroVeg website or in hard copy using the Self-Assessment Form provided with the Program Manual.

The grower then submits an Environmental Action Plan

using the template provided in the Program Manual or on the EnviroVeg website in the member 'Resources' section. This document outlines planned activities and environmental improvements over the next year and will be an important reference document to achieve Platinum membership.

Following the successful completion of these steps, the grower will then receive a certificate that acknowledges their Gold membership status. In addition, the grower will be sent an EnviroVeg gate sign to help promote their efforts as environmental stewards.

Progressing to Platinum

Once a grower has achieved Gold membership status, they may choose to progress to Platinum level membership. This is the top level of accreditation in the EnviroVeg program and can provide growers with the opportunity to verify their well-developed business practices by initially submitting and passing an independent third party audit, as well as ongoing, random audits that are conducted once a year.

They must achieve either 100 per cent of essential criteria in

the audit, or 80 per cent of essential criteria and 50 per cent of recommended criteria.

The Platinum level of membership comes with the added benefit of being able to display the EnviroVeg logo on fresh produce packaging to promote a grower's brand.



To progress to a higher level in EnviroVeg, please contact AUSVEG Environment Coordinator Andrew Shaw on (08) 8221 5220 or andrew.shaw@ausveg.com.au.

Simplified pest checking tools now available

A new range of guides have been developed by Applied Horticultural Research to help growers easily identify on-farm pests and diseases in a range of commodity groups, including sweet potatoes, sweet corn, carrots, celery and parsley.

The Veg Pest ID guides are divided into sections covering common insects, diseases and disorders. They include pictures for simple and quick pest identification and a brief description of what to look for in your crops and when.

For example, the guide for sweet corn covers 40 pests, 11 diseases and 16 disorders. It also includes a 'problem solver' at the end of the booklet for quick identification by visible symptoms.

The three guides are the latest addition to the existing Veg Pest ID guides on babyleaf and brassica vegetables. They are also available in an app format for mobile phones, which allows growers to refine their search by a specific pest/disease or browse through each of the crop groups.

With over 1,500 pests at your fingertips, the Veg Pest ID guides are a valuable resource for quick identification of on-farm pests and diseases.



For a copy of the guides, please visit <http://ahr.com.au>. To download the Veg Pest ID app, please visit appstore.com/vegpestid on IOS devices or goo.gl/Q66bdD for the Android compatible version.



Keynote speaker Julie Borlaug from the Norman E. Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture.

Youth agriculture summit tackles global issues

IN AUGUST, 100 OF THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST PASSIONATE YOUNG MINDS IN THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY GATHERED IN CANBERRA FOR THE 2015 YOUTH-AG SUMMIT, WHERE THEY DISCUSSED AND DEVELOPED SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGING TASK OF FEEDING A HUNGRY PLANET.

Bernd Naaf, Member of the Board of Management at Bayer CropScience, and Julie Borlaug from the Norman E. Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture.

During the week, delegates worked with their peers and mentors to discuss the challenges facing global food security, which were initially divided into 15 themes. From this pool of topics, five key themes were selected as being of most importance in terms of relevance and impact for young leaders in agriculture. They included:

1. Education and skills building.
2. Communication about the value of agriculture careers and farming.
3. Socially acceptable and responsible consumption.
4. R&D and innovation to intensify or develop new production systems.
5. Personal and organisational leadership.

Meanwhile, delegates were also encouraged to develop three individual challenges to tackle food security at a personal level. These goals will be shared and discussed online via the Youth Ag-Network, where delegates can exchange ideas on modern agriculture, food security and safety.

Lasting change

As the 2015 Youth-Ag Summit drew to a close, two delegates – Laura Grubb from Australia and Samba Ouma Zablon from Kenya – were chosen to present the Canberra Youth-Ag Declaration to the United Nations Committee on Food Security in Rome later this year. The declaration is a global call for action that can be used by innovators and policy makers to help solve the most pressing issues in modern agriculture and ensure lasting change.

After four days of insightful discussions, it is hoped the delegates will return to their respective countries with a heightened desire to advocate for the global future of agriculture.

By 2050, the world's population is estimated to increase to nine billion. If predictions of water shortages, a lack of arable land and increased agricultural pests, weeds and diseases are accurate, this will place our global food supply under immense pressure.

To meet this challenge, Bayer CropScience teamed up with Future Farmers Network (FFN) Australia to host the 2015 Youth-Ag Summit. Held in Canberra from 24-27 August, the global youth conference brought together 100 young leaders from 33 countries to discuss, develop and deliver solutions to the challenging question: How do we feed a hungry planet?

Ultimately, the summit aimed to build awareness and understanding of the challenges facing modern agriculture and encouraged delegates to build international networks with like-minded individuals.

Program outline

Over the course of four days, delegates listened to

presentations that revolved around the key themes of innovation, sustainability and leadership, while also meeting with industry representatives at networking events and attending a field trip to the CSIRO research facilities in Ginninderra.

The speaker sessions addressed a variety of global challenges in agriculture including food wastage, equitable food distribution, sustainable food consumption and alternative food sources. Keynote addresses included inspiring presentations from

Australia's Laura Grubb and Kenya's Samba Ouma Zablon will present the Canberra Youth-Ag Declaration to the United Nations Committee on Food Security.

The delegates at the 2015 Youth-Ag Summit in Canberra.





EnviroVeg grower Brock Sutton (right) with his brother Dean from Sutton Farms in Queensland.



Focusing on a sustainable future

SUTTON FARMS IS A FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS THAT GROWS LETTUCE, ESCHALLOT, BROCCOLINI AND TOMATO VARIETIES ON MORE THAN 650 HECTARES IN QUEENSLAND'S LOCKYER VALLEY. FARM MANAGER BROCK SUTTON SPEAKS TO *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* ABOUT THE STRATEGIC CHANGES THE BUSINESS HAS IMPLEMENTED OVER THE PAST DECADE, WHICH HAVE ALLOWED IT TO THRIVE.

Brock Sutton is a third generation vegetable grower who has seen the family business change focus and undergo many developments over the last decade. Some of these changes were implemented due to major droughts and floods that occurred, but they have subsequently continued out of practicality.

"Over the past five to 10 years we have made a fair few changes to become a lot more sustainable and environmentally-friendly," Brock says.

"During the drought, which was broken by the 2011 flood, we adopted better water management practices. We have used drip irrigation in tomatoes for nearly 30 years and made the decision to use it in the leafy vegetables. We also improved our ability to catch runoff water through investment in water infrastructure. We are now using a fraction of the water we were using 10 years ago."

As well as improved water management, Brock has seen a change in common practices

including refining the use of Integrated Pest Management techniques coupled with 'soft' chemicals, using natural composts and fertilising programs that are directed at specific crop needs based on regular testing, and an increased focus on soil health.

"We are using more tailored chemicals to prevent a negative impact on the wider ecology of the farm. A major focus is now improving crop rotations, including the use of forage and green manure crops to get soil health into the ground in a more natural way," Brock says.





Increasing soil health

One of the significant developments Brock has witnessed over the past decade is the shift towards tailoring the inputs for each crop and the overall health of the soil.

"It's important to keep our soil health where it needs to be. Instead of always using crops that are hard on the soil, it is good to use some crops that give back a bit of structure and health to the soil," he explains.

"Everyone in the horticulture industry knows that crop rotation is a very important part of our job. It's about managing that rotation so that it eases pressure on your soil and on the management of pests and diseases. You have to do these things, otherwise not only will it be detrimental to the land that you are using, but your product quality will start to decline."

On farm, this has resulted in an additional focus on long-term effects of soil inputs. For Brock, the use of natural compost in particular has contributed to improved soil structure.

"Organic-accredited compost has given an added bonus. It's the combination of nutrient levels and soil structure that helps both the plant and soil health," Brock says.

He adds that this long-term outlook can result in decreased input costs and improved soil health, which promotes better plant health and, ultimately, a higher quality end product.

"Focusing on these aspects now will be self-rewarding into the future. The big thing about composting is that not only is there the short-term nutritional benefit to the plant, but also the long-term benefit to soil health that multiplies every year."

Cost-efficient practices

Looking after the surrounding environment plays a significant role in the operation of the business as well. When asked if sustainable and environmental practices are important to Sutton Farms, Brock's answer was practical and to the point.

"It has to be. We deal with the environment every day; it's our business. If we neglect that side of things, we would be neglecting our own business," he says.

Sutton Farms has seen financial benefit from Brock practicing what he preaches, as this has systematically helped to reduce energy use across the board. Brock has looked into the feasibility of using solar panels on farm, as well as the installation of variable speed pumps that showcase the increased performance he desires.

"The installation of variable speed pumps have seen up to 70 per cent savings in energy costs, which is obviously a huge saving," Brock explains.

The sustainable outlook of Sutton Farms is not just driven by the obvious financial benefits within the organisation, but also as a response to the desires of the surrounding community.

"There is an internal push to be more environmentally-friendly and sustainable, but there is also a push by the wider community to see not only improvements in our environmental focus but for an environmentally-friendly society. One of the key points is to show the wider community that we are doing these sustainable, environmentally-friendly processes already," he says.

For Brock, this is where a program like EnviroVeg can come into play.

"It is important to have something like EnviroVeg that is recognisable as a standard that we comply with, a standard in terms of being sustainable and environmentally-friendly."

Photography by Rob Maccoll.





with Scott Mathew



Left: Silverleaf whitefly. Photo courtesy of Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org. Below: Silverleaf whitefly damage. Photo courtesy of Alton N. Sparks, Jr., University of Georgia, Bugwood.org.



SILVERLEAF WHITEFLY (SLW) CAN BE A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM FOR AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS. SYNGENTA TECHNICAL SERVICES LEAD SCOTT MATHEW EXPLAINS WHY SLW POPULATIONS SEEM TO EXPLODE SUDDENLY DURING SPRING AND SUMMER.

Female Silverleaf whitefly (SLW) randomly lay between 50 and 300 eggs (the average is around 160). Its life cycle (egg to adult) generally takes between 18-28 days in the warmer weather conditions of spring and summer, and as long as 30-48 days in the cooler conditions of winter.

The number of eggs produced by each female peaks in warmer weather, and can reach 300 eggs per adult female SLW. For example, SLW can complete between 8-12 generations in a year in Queensland.

What is the best way to monitor for SLW?

Regular monitoring of your crops should form the basis of deciding how and when to apply control measures. When monitoring, you should pay particular attention to the undersides of the younger leaves where the adults tend to congregate and lay eggs, while larger nymphs are usually most noticeable on older leaves.

Monitoring for adult SLW should be conducted early in the morning (generally between 7am and 9am). Yellow sticky traps are useful for monitoring

whitefly adult movement or dispersal, especially the movement of SLW from mature or older neighbouring crops and host weeds. Adult numbers on the traps will give an early warning of population increases within crops, and an indication of the need for regular monitoring.

Due to time constraints, I often let the weeds get away from me around my crops. Can this lead to higher SLW numbers?

Weeds around the crop or greenhouse can provide a continuous source of hosts for SLW. Whether they are commercial crops, weeds, abandoned crops or volunteer plants, they can be a major contributing factor to a severe SLW problem.

Reducing any SLW hosts around your crop is a valuable way to help growers reduce the population of SLW that can migrate and infect your crop. Managing these sources of SLW infestations may ultimately reduce the number of sprays that are needed over the season to control whitefly.

Some of the more common weed species that have been found to be major sources of SLW include: sow thistle, bladder ketmia, bell vine, burr gherkin and star burr. Milk or sow thistle is regarded as the most suitable weed host for whitefly and can be found in the major vegetable production areas throughout Australia.

What are some of the things I should consider when using chemical control options for SLW?

Due to the fact that SLW adults generally feed and lay their eggs on the lower surface of leaves, a large proportion of these eggs and nymphs are easily protected from contact insecticides. A systemic/translaminar or vapour active chemical may provide a better control option.

Using a spray program that is based on monitoring as well as using action thresholds and correctly calibrated spray equipment will help you to get the most out of insecticide applications and help to reduce the development of resistance.

Selecting the correct insecticides and applying

them at the appropriate time is critical to achieve good SLW management. All insecticides vary in their efficacy on the adult and immature stages of SLW and should be selected according to where they have the greatest level of control.

For example, CHESS® (APVMA Minor Use Permit: PER13111) is approved for SLW control and is a translaminar insecticide that is active on the adult SLW only, whereas Admiral insecticide is also a translaminar product that is active on the eggs and nymphs of SLW.

Chemical registrations and APVMA permits for SLW control do not apply to all vegetable crops. Users must check the label for registration or permit status of the insecticides before use on a specific 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 www.syngenta.com.au or email Vegetables Australia: info@ausveg.com.au. Please note that your questions may be published.

Melbourne Wholesale Market moves to new home

After more than a decade of planning, Victoria's new wholesale fruit, vegetable and flower market opened in Epping, north of Melbourne, in the early hours of 31 August.

Around 4,000 wholesalers, growers, buyers and transport operators are now trading at the new location, which aims to provide businesses and buyers with a safer, cleaner and more efficient market.

The 70-hectare site offers the potential for 120,000 square metres of warehousing space, which is a significant increase on the 33,000 square metres of warehouse space available at the former site in West Melbourne. The market's close proximity to Melbourne Airport will also help horticulture growers and exporters supply

premium Victorian produce to key international markets.

"This state-of-the-art facility at Epping will ensure Victoria's horticulture producers, wholesalers and exporters are well positioned to export our premium fresh produce around the country and to the rest of the world," Victorian Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford said.

Since the announcement in 2004, the relocation of the Melbourne Wholesale Market has met numerous set-backs and controversies. Most recently, the official opening was postponed from 3 August to 31 August due to concerns about the readiness of some stakeholders to make the move.



Photography by Luka Kauzlaric.



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A shaded area covering three hectares of hydroponic production was impacted during the cyclone. Photo supplied.

Daryl Wilson (centre) pictured with his wife Natalia, daughter Tamara and brother Allen.



Photography by Orin Lucke.

There are certain dates in the year that are engrained in your memory: birthdays, anniversaries, public holidays – but for Queensland vegetable grower Daryl Wilson, one date he will never forget is 20 February 2015.

This was the fateful day that Severe Tropical Cyclone Marcia began a trail of destruction throughout central Queensland. By the time it had crossed the coast and reached the mainland, Cyclone Marcia had reached its peak strength, earning a place among the Category 5 cyclones in Australian history. When it reached Rockhampton, it had progressively downgraded to a Category 3 system – but with 220km/hr winds, this was still strong enough to cause significant damage in the area.

As the news of Cyclone Marcia broke, Daryl and his wife Natalia, brother Allen and parents Roy and Thelma – who make up the team behind Wilson's Farm Fresh Fruit and Veg – prepared to protect what they could of their hydroponic lettuce and herb production facility on the eastern outskirts of Rockhampton.

Having established the farm in 1991, the Wilsons were certainly no stranger to natural disasters. They had endured the severe flooding events of 2011 and 2013, where more than 900mm of rain drenched the area in two days, on both occasions. However, the previous cyclonic encounter to hit the area was Cyclone Fran, a Category 1 system, in 1992.

"What we learnt through the flooding was how to manage and deal with severe weather events; what you need to be prepared, how to respond and quickly recover," Daryl says.

"It's the luck of the draw. It's just a matter of doing the best you can with what you have and working through the event."

Daryl Wilson: Surviving the storm

WHEN CYCLONE MARCIA RIPPED THROUGH CENTRAL QUEENSLAND EARLIER THIS YEAR, DARYL WILSON AND HIS FAMILY KNEW THEIR VEGETABLE GROWING OPERATION NEAR ROCKHAMPTON WAS DIRECTLY IN ITS PATH. DARYL SPEAKS TO DIMI KYRIAKOU ABOUT PREPARING FOR THE NATURAL DISASTER, THE AFTERMATH AND THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.

Preparation is key

While cyclones can be unpredictable, Daryl says they were fortunate to receive about four days of warning that Cyclone Marcia was going to impact the Rockhampton region.

"Being prepared and having the advice beforehand helped us to instigate contingency plans. That was our saving grace and it made life a little bit easier afterwards," he explains.

The contingency plans included adequate fuel supplies to run backup power generators and vehicles for the imminent clean-up after the cyclone, as well as sufficient water reserves for the hydroponic operation in case they were unable to draw upon the town's water supplies.

"We removed all of our seedlings from the nursery and put them in our refrigerated trucks. That way, once the cyclone had passed and depending on what was left of the infrastructure, we could start replanting as soon as

possible to get us back into an income and jobs for our staff," Daryl recalls.

"We also communicated with our customers to make them aware that at that stage it wasn't going to be very pretty at the end of it, allowing them to review their supply as we recovered from the event."

Eventually, the time for preparation ran out. Daryl and his family remained on-farm during the cyclone and made use of their existing facilities to stay safe.

"From the building we could keep an eye on our hydroponic system and other parts of the farm, and unfortunately see our hard work and efforts gradually come apart as the day progressed. We didn't see the eye of the cyclone but rather stayed in the torrential rain and constant winds of a Category 4 and Category 3 system, varying from 279km/hr and dropping to 165km/hr over an eight hour period as it passed and slowly downgraded. It was the strong wind that did a hell of a lot of

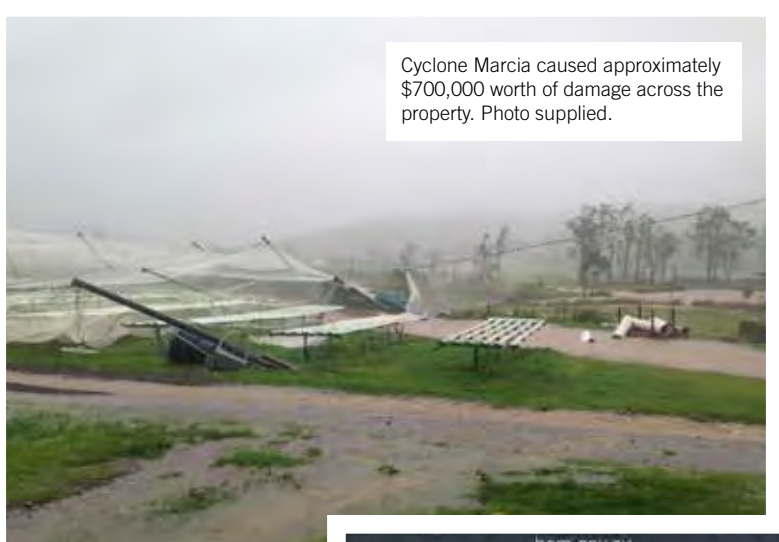
damage," he explains.

"It was certainly a sad and unfortunate event, but there was nothing you could do about it except keep yourself and your family safe and secure. Whatever impact it had on the farm, it was a matter of evaluating the damage and looking at your options once the cyclone had passed and start planning the way forward."

A quick recovery

Cyclone Marcia caused an estimated \$750 million worth of damage in its short appearance. For Wilson's Farm Fresh Fruit and Veg, the damage totalled about \$700,000 across the 400-acre property.

While the farm's main structures such as the house, sheds and seedling nursery survived the storm, there was an extensive amount of damage around the farm. A shaded area covering three hectares of hydroponic production was devastated progressively after



Cyclone Marcia caused approximately \$700,000 worth of damage across the property. Photo supplied.

a pole snapped, breaking the electrical wires, tearing the netting and shredding the crops.

The pump sheds and the associated electrical wiring around the property was also exposed to the elements, while about 16km of fence line was damaged alongside the roads and gully crossings around the property.

“Our region was without mains power for about eight days. Landlines, mobile phones and internet dropped out for about a week, so there was no communication. Regional power outages and infrastructure damage resulted in city water supply issues, waste water and sewerage complications in the nearby city regions. Panic buying and empty supermarket shelves were the norm. There was only one service station that had a backup generator to keep fuel pumping,” Daryl says.

“In our contingency plans we made sure we had backup generators that were operational and diesel to keep it going for the hydroponics, so we were fortunate that got

us through. It was just a surreal experience to see the impact of losing many things that we take for granted.

“As bad as it was, things could have been much worse and you obviously count your blessings because everything can be rebuilt to get back to where you were.”

Daryl adds that soon after the event, his family and others in the local community approached local, state and federal government representatives to initiate the National Disaster Recovery and Relief Arrangements (NDRRA) program.

“It was a bureaucratic process but it was a relief and quite refreshing to see that everyone pulled in the one direction to kick in different programs and assistance for the region, so farmers and businesses could start the recovery process.”

It was not all smooth sailing, however, as the Wilson family continues to negotiate with their insurance provider, six months on from the disaster.

“We’re big believers in insurance and we’ve been good, long-standing customers with this particular major rural insurer. This has been our first major claim and

six months on we are still in negotiation,” Daryl says.

“It’s frustrating and certainly disappointing; it has slowed down our recovery because we wanted to be further advanced than what we are now.”

One step at a time

Facing natural disasters such as Cyclone Marcia is just one part of the challenge of being a vegetable grower. The constant learning and subsequent innovation that comes from this process is what Daryl most enjoys about working in the industry.

Since 20 February 2015, Wilson’s Farm Fresh Fruit and Veg has made a strong recovery and Daryl continues to look to the future.

“It’s been a big job but it’s just a matter of getting back to where we were and working with our customers to continue growing the farm and reviewing our opportunities,” he says.

“When something like this occurs, you can’t change the outcome. It’s just a matter of



picking the pieces up, taking everything on board and making good and informed decisions going forward.”

New trade figures show increase in vegetable exports

R&D

Drive Train

VEGETABLE EXPORTS HAVE INCREASED BY MORE THAN FIVE PER CENT OVER THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR, FROM \$255.8 MILLION IN 2013-14 TO \$270.4 MILLION IN 2014-15.

The increase in vegetable exports is pleasing news for the industry, given Australian vegetable growers continue to battle rising production costs and decreasing profits from the domestic market.

Australian vegetable exports are worth approximately eight per cent of domestic production, which has sparked a heightened interest from growers who want to take advantage of profitable export markets. Given this, industry has broadened its focus and investment to increase vegetable exports.

Why the increase?

Australia's recent Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with China, South Korea and Japan are expected to assist Australian growers increase vegetable exports over time, with key markets in Asia and the Middle

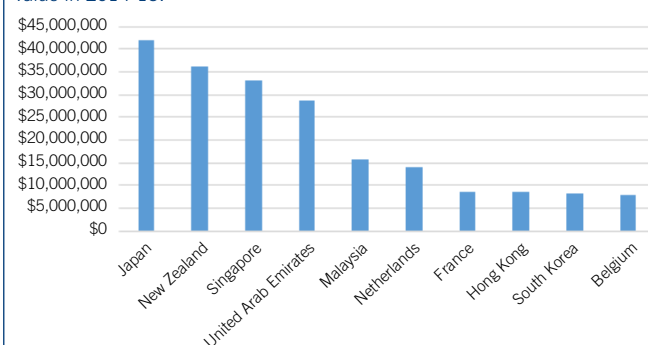
East contributing to growth in the value of Australian vegetable exports.

In addition to these FTAs, the devaluation of the Australian dollar against the US dollar could also contribute to a boost in exports. A lower exchange rate enables exports to be more competitive, due to Australian vegetables being relatively cheaper to international countries and export contracts mostly denominated in US dollars.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) recently found that exports were eight per cent higher in the first half of the 2014-15 financial year, reflecting increased competitiveness due to the weakened Australian dollar.

While the Australian agricultural industry exports

Graph 1: Export destinations of Australian vegetable commodities by value in 2014-15.



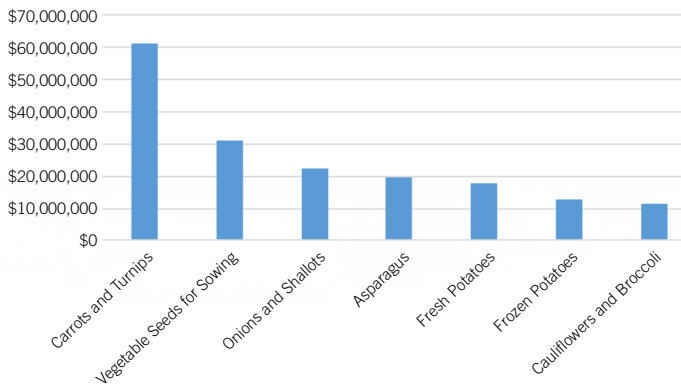
Source: Global Trade Information Services.

around 60 per cent of what is grown and produced, the vegetable industry only exports eight per cent, which is extremely low. Therefore, there is an important opportunity to consider exports as a way to increase the bottom lines of Australian vegetable growers.

Targeting new markets

There are still many opportunities for smaller vegetable growing businesses to increase the propensity of exporting; currently, exports are typically the domain of larger

Graph 2: Australian vegetable commodity exports by value in 2014-15.



Source: Global Trade Information Services.

vegetable growing operations in Australia.

Increased market access and more information on the process of exporting Australian vegetables is necessary to enable more growers to export. Australia's quality vegetables are highly sought after, with growing middle class populations in Asia and projected growth in the food sector in the United Arab Emirates stimulating an increased demand for a greater variety of Australian vegetables.

Asian countries continue to be Australia's top export markets for vegetables due to their proximity to Australia, rapidly growing populations and increasing wealth in their middle class.

Graph 1 shows the top export destinations for Australian vegetables by value in 2014-15. Japan remains the biggest market valued at \$42 million, closely followed by New Zealand, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Compared to the previous financial year, vegetable exports to Singapore increased by 29 per cent in value, which was largely attributed to the high demand for Australian cauliflower and broccoli. There was also substantial growth in vegetable exports to the United Arab Emirates, which increased by 24 per cent from the previous financial year due to the high demand for Australian carrots, which have a 75 per

cent share of total Australian vegetable exports.

However, the largest increase over the last financial year has been to Belgium, with almost 600 per cent growth in Australian vegetable exports. This can be largely attributed to demand for Australian onions, which has placed Belgium as one of the top 10 export destinations for Australian vegetables by value.

Commodities in demand

Carrots and turnips were the biggest vegetable exports in 2014-15, valued at over \$62 million, which was 10 per cent higher than the previous financial year. The United Arab Emirates was the biggest importer of Australian carrots, having a 35 per cent share of total Australian carrot exports.

Graph 2 shows that the export category for carrots and turnips is more than double the next highest category, which is vegetable seeds for sowing. Asparagus was valued at almost \$20 million, an increase of 18 per cent. Additionally, the cauliflower and broccoli category increased substantially by 60 per cent from the previous financial year.

Both fresh and frozen potato exports amounted to over \$30

million collectively. Domestically, the gross value of potato production is the highest out of any other vegetable commodity.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- While the Australian agricultural industry exports around 60 per cent of what is grown and produced, the vegetable industry only exports eight per cent.
- Japan remains the biggest export market for Australian vegetables, valued at \$42 million, and is closely followed by New Zealand, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.
- Australian vegetable exports to Belgium have increased by almost 600 per cent in the last financial year.
- Carrots and turnips were the biggest vegetable exports in 2014-15, valued at over \$62 million.



For more information, contact AUSVEG:
Phone: (03) 9882 0277
Email: info@ausveg.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: VG12071

Giving a voice to Tasmanian farmers

FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE TASMANIAN FARMERS AND GRAZIERS ASSOCIATION IN MARCH, *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* SPEAKS TO PETER SKILLERN ABOUT HIS GOALS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES AND CAPITALISE ON THE OPPORTUNITIES IN TASMANIA'S FARMING SECTOR.

Armed with a diverse background in banking, politics and of course, farming, Peter Skillern was certainly a logical choice to take on the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) in March this year.

farmer and agricultural sector is a dream come true," Mr Skillern said.

"I think at the end of the day that farming, particularly in terms of advocacy, is really an extension in many ways of the political regime from which I came. It's about being

"Tasmanian agriculture is effectively the major economic pillar of the Tasmanian economy, which is unique in the Australian context."

- Peter Skillern, TFGA CEO

Prior to his appointment, Mr Skillern was a TFGA Policy Manager with nearly 20 years of experience in the banking industry. He was also the State Director of the Liberal Party of Tasmania and a farmer in southern Tasmania and Victoria for 30 years.

He said that joining the TFGA was "a natural progression" for someone with his background.

"I've always enjoyed farming; it's in my family going back seven generations, both here and in England. For me to actually work in a position where I get to advance the individual

in a position to advocate on behalf of our members and the farmers of Tasmania."

A unique climate

Mr Skillern believes there are many opportunities in the Tasmanian farming sector, which he hopes to challenge and highlight through the TFGA in coming months.

"Tasmanian agriculture is effectively the major economic pillar of the Tasmanian economy, which is unique in the Australian context," he said.



Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association CEO Peter Skillern.

"The current government has a policy setting that is designed to produce a \$10 billion industry by 2050, and the challenge for both ourselves and the government is to ascertain in more detail how we are going to achieve that policy setting. The other challenge is to ensure the infrastructure constraints that currently exist are dealt with and rectified to maximise our ability to reach that target.

"We are also well-poised in terms of Tasmania's rather unique relationship with China. It has effectively been a bipartisan approach, which is good to see. Those sorts of opportunities look good for Tasmania's agricultural sector."

Feeding the planet

As the world's population grows, Mr Skillern said this will unquestionably increase the demand for food, opening the door for Tasmanian agriculture to shine.

"The reality is that by 2050, we're going to have somewhere between nine and 15 billion people on the planet. Food production and farmers over the next 35 years is going to become critical to our survival as a species," he said.

Mr Skillern added that, in the meantime, it was also important to communicate the significance

of Tasmania's agriculture industry, as the general public often takes their food and farmers for granted.

"I strongly hold the view that our agriculture sector has not been very good at sending the message to the broader food community about the importance of food production and those who produce food and fibre," he explained.

"If we were to take away that food production system and farmers, society as we know it would collapse. As Australians have been fortunate to live without food shortages, people have become less able to recognise that connection and have arguably become apathetic about food production."

With issues such as these and many more on the table for discussion, Mr Skillern said he is looking forward to continuing his role as the representative of Tasmanian agriculture.

"It's not often you get a job that you thoroughly enjoy and you're asked to achieve something you've always wanted to do: Give a voice to the Tasmanian farming industry."

The freshest vegetable R&D

THE INFOVEG R&D ONLINE DATABASE HAS BEEN UPDATED WITH THE LATEST REPORTS ON RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE LEVY. *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* PROFILES THREE RECENT HIGHLIGHTS.



VG13090 A strategy to address consumption of vegetables in children

Encouraging good eating habits in children is essential, as it forms the basis of their behaviour for the rest of their lives. However, results from the latest Australian Health Survey suggest that children do not follow the recommended daily intake of vegetables.

This project, undertaken by the CSIRO Preventative Health Flagship, aimed to develop a strategic investment plan to increase vegetable intake among children and simultaneously allow the vegetable industry to work with organisations pursuing public health goals. The project identified key areas for industry investment, including:

- Collaboration with other stakeholders.
- Publishing and endorsing best-practice guidelines for community initiatives.
- Researching new initiatives to encourage vegetable consumption.
- Influencing policy changes.

VG13087 Review optimal cooking techniques for vegetables to maximise retention of nutrients

This National Vegetable Levy-funded project, led by food scientist Dr Hazel MacTavish-West, collated scientific information on the impact of cooking on the texture, flavour, colour and nutrition on all levied vegetables, with a view to increase the consumption of Australian-grown produce.

As a result of this research, the project developed recommended cooking methods to get the best taste and nutrition benefits from each vegetable. Through consumer-testing of diagrams depicting the best cooking methods, the project has developed clear, simple ways of communicating this information to consumers.

This information is now available on the Veggycation website at www.veggycation.com.au/for-veg-lovers/vegetables.

VG13107 Benchmarking international road transport regulations

Australian road transport regulations, and any potential

constraints that exist within them, are a major factor in the productivity and competitiveness of the Australian vegetable industry.

This study, undertaken by HGH Consultants, was designed to identify areas in which the transport cost of vegetables in Australia could be lowered through the introduction of improved regulation, facilities, equipment or work practices.

The study consisted of three components: a benchmarking literature review of road transport regulations in New Zealand, Canada, the US and other jurisdictions; detailed interviews and discussions with stakeholders in Australia

and overseas; and case studies to quantify the gains from potential reforms.

While the review did not identify any 'silver bullet' solution, it did identify opportunities to improve productivity in Australia's existing regulatory framework. This included greater use of high-performance trucks, more flexible fatigue management regimes and the development of a "vegetables road network".



For more information on these reports and to search the comprehensive database of National Vegetable Levy-funded R&D, visit www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.



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44 Dutch innovation in horticulture impresses SA growers

EARLIER THIS YEAR, A SMALL DELEGATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS ACCOMPANIED THE STATE'S MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, THE HON. LEON BIGNELL MP, TO THE NETHERLANDS TO LEARN ABOUT THE CURRENT TRENDS IN ADVANCED HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

The Netherlands is a world leader in advanced protected cropping technology and is home to many large supply chain companies with advanced agricultural research capabilities.

The main aim of the 2015 Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia (PIRSA) Netherlands Mission was to investigate the suitability of technologies to South Australia's horticulture sector, with the aim of enhancing productivity and quality. During the mission, participants formed relationships with their Dutch counterparts to ultimately promote collaboration in horticulture innovation.

Seed and greenhouse technology

The mission began in Rotterdam with a visit to Rijk Zwaan, a developer of seed varieties. Participants were given a tour of the factory, where they were shown the packing area with crates of various seed varieties, as well as the warehouse.

Rijk Zwaan currently generates around EU\$300 million (approximately AU\$477 million) in revenue annually, but is hoping to reach EU\$500 million (approximately AU\$796 million) in the coming years by expanding the facility.

The group also visited Hoogendoorn Glasshouse Automation, which specialises in automation technologies for the horticulture sector. Topics of discussion included the innovation of automation processes in horticulture, particularly in climate, water and energy management.

The delegation then toured

the greenhouse facilities at Enza Zaden, an international seed breeding company that focuses on ongoing R&D, with facilities located in Australia and New Zealand.

Participants were also shown different packaging methods at Syngenta's seed facility, with machines packing seeds based on their weight as well as the seed count. The group was also lucky enough to witness a lab testing demonstration, where they learnt about the protocols for checking the contamination of seeds.

Workers at the company's seed processing plants are very stringent when checking for contamination, with seeds divided into groups of 2,000 before an antibody is added. If the sample turned yellow, the whole batch was subjected to heat treatment and the process was repeated. However, for particular diseases (such as tomato-related diseases), the whole batch was destroyed if a contaminant was present.

The group also visited greenhouse technology specialist Kubo, where

they were joined by South Australian Minister for Regional Development Geoff Brock MP. The theme of this visit focused on employment in South Australia, with Minister Bignell and Minister Brock discussing opportunities to expand horticultural jobs in South Australia through the production of greenhouses. Both Ministers discussed costs, employment opportunities and projects with Kubo Export Manager Henk van Tuyl.

Examining Dutch produce

The Netherlands is famous for its fresh produce and diversity of food, being one of the largest fresh produce exporters in Europe. During the mission, the group travelled to Rotterdam to visit the famous Market Hall (Markthal), which is a series of food stalls beneath a giant arc. A variety of fresh produce was on display, including sweets, freshly produced drinks and seafood.

In addition to seeing fresh produce sold directly to the public, participants were also given an opportunity to witness



The group was given a tour of Enza Zaden's greenhouse facilities.



Growers observed local produce at the Amsterdam Food Centre, which is the wholesale market of fresh produce in the city.



of the growers mentioned that this market had slightly different varieties of vegetables compared to the Adelaide Produce Market.

Some of the packaging on the produce was also a point of difference. For example, baby spinach was packaged in a plastic container as opposed to a loose plastic wrap to improve the product's shelf life.

The Baan effect

The highlight of the trip for many participants was the visit to Koppert Cress, which specialises in growing unique plants from seedlings. The owner, Rob Baan, gave a brief history of the company, and provided samples for tastings.

Mr Baan is extremely passionate about using foods to promote a healthy lifestyle, as well as advocating the various health benefits of vegetables. He has developed around 63 types of radish, with each type having a particular taste.

The delegation was treated to various flavours of radish including oyster, honey, cucumber, nut/mud, as well as one that made everyone's tongues tingle, then go numb.



The group taste-tested Rob Baan's radish creations at Koppert Cress.

how the wholesale fresh markets operate in Amsterdam. An early morning visit to the Amsterdam Food Centre, the city's fresh produce wholesale market, allowed participants to see how the market meets the daily needs of retailers, caterers and supermarkets.

The food centre is roughly 26 acres and comprises approximately 90 companies that sell vegetables, fruit, meat, poultry and other foods. Some

Participants were advised that this type of radish had properties that could prevent malaria.

After examining the differences and similarities between Australian and Dutch growing techniques, participants on the 2015 PIRSA Netherlands Mission gained a wealth of information that will enhance their own operations in areas such as crop protection, packaging and marketing. They have also continued to share their new-found knowledge with their Australian colleagues.

AUSVEG SA and other groups will continue working with the South Australian Government to determine ways to implement international technology and expertise to benefit the local vegetable industry.



A full project report is available on the InfoVeg website: www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

This initiative was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG14709

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A new generation of pest and insect monitoring technology has the potential to make the work of vegetable growers, agronomists and researchers much easier.

Trapview is one of these innovative systems. Distributed by Adama – which is known for its global crop protection products – the new solution comes in the form of an automated pheromone trap that allows users to monitor pest populations remotely.

The system uses a unique digital photo recognition technology that allows data and images to be collected on the number and type of lured pests in traps distributed around a property. This data is then sent via the GPRS network for processing and secure archiving, notifying relevant stakeholders of the information in near-real time.

During his presentation at the 2015 National Horticulture



Convention at Jupiters Gold Coast in June, Adama Digital Innovation Manager Alex Mills said that, regardless of the size of a farm, Trapview could change the way pest monitoring was perceived and practiced.

“Whether you have a one hectare block or a larger enterprise, this system is a true innovation for many crops and a wide range of locations,” he said.

“The system is only available through Adama distribution partners who are actively providing in-field agronomic advice. The true value of the system is found in its time and labour saving benefits that will allow agronomists to prioritise their activities and focus where they need to be to assist their clients.”

A remote solution

The Trapview system is cloud-based, which means growers and agronomists can log on from any internet-connected device (including smartphones, computers and tablets) to view agronomic activity and determine their next course of action with regard to pest populations.

Mr Mills said the product was ultimately a delta trap with smart technology inside.

“The standard device is equipped with four 4-megapixel cameras that each take an image – that is then incorporated into one – up to three times a day,” he said.

“The capturing and recording of daily images culminates in a data set that shows pest activity over the duration of the monitoring period. As an agronomist, notes can then be inserted on the timeline that indicate when intervention through control measures occurred and at the end of a season you can go back and review the year’s activity.

“Degree-day modelling software is also included, and the best way to understand pest dynamics on your farm is the combination of insect monitoring with degree-day calculations.”

Multiple functions

An integrated weather station measures temperature and humidity. This data is then modelled against the day-degree development requirements of the target insect to aid in

the prediction of pest cycle stages on farm. Crop protection measures can then be taken at the correct time relevant to target size, ensuring that pests are effectively controlled.

The device is energy-dependent as it is powered by its own solar panel, and a high-gain antenna ensures that it can operate on the GPRS network in more remote areas, even when the signal is weak.

When logged in to the system, users can view the images captured on a device as well as a map that indicates the location of traps and the number of insects in each. Software algorithms within the system assist to identify the target pests in the trap – currently 36 pest species are automatically recognised.

Users can manually mark other trapped pests after their initial detection or adjust the data capture intervals, and Trapview also allows for the setup of threshold limits for the target pest species.

“For example, if the system is set at a pest threshold limit of three, once it reaches that number, an indicator on the dashboard will stay red until you have evaluated the data,” Mr Mills said.

Following an analysis of the data, the agronomist is then able to work with the grower to determine a management solution with optimised insecticide selection and application timing.

Adama Digital Innovation Manager Alex Mills discussed Trapview at the 2015 National Horticulture Convention.



For more information, please visit www.adama.com.

CALENDAR



31 October – 14 November 2015

Women in Horticulture Industry Leadership and Development Mission

Where: The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany

What: This year's Women in Horticulture Industry Leadership and Development Mission will give Australian participants the opportunity to visit leading vegetable production areas, research facilities and industry representatives in Europe.

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

3 – 5 June 2016

London Produce Show and Conference

Where: Grosvenor House, London

What: This boutique exhibition will give attendees access to a wide range of international produce buyers from the retail, food service and wholesale sectors, as well as a series of networking events and seminars to expand their businesses.

Further information: Please visit <http://londonproduceshow.co.uk>

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MINOR USE AWARENESS PROGRAM

Minor Use Awareness Program: Latest news

R&D

Farm Productivity,
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GET INVOLVED IN MINOR USE! TAKE PART. BE INFORMED.

Chemical regulations across Australia are in a time of change, as the Federal Department of Agriculture is currently drawing the initial stages of major chemical regulation reform. You can access information regarding these reforms from the Department of Agriculture website (www.agriculture.gov.au).

The proposed changes have the potential to influence the entire Australian chemical landscape. Currently, there are proposals on the table to modify the regulation structure within the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) as well as the national and state systems.

One thing is clear: These changes will impact the vegetable industry.

Contribute to change

This is your chance to have a say on the changes, as the AUSVEG Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator is helping the Department of Agriculture understand how these changes could affect the Australian vegetable industry. Vegetable growers have the opportunity to have their input and ideas brought forward by joining the Minor Use Database and contacting the Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator.

The APVMA has several projects looking into current crop grouping and minor use permits, and the Department is considering

major overhauls to the chemical regulation system.

As examples, you may want to contribute your thoughts on:

- What isn't clear.
- What needs updating.
- What is important to you.

Get involved

Minor use plays an integral role in the Australian vegetable industry, as on-label options are often limited for many vegetable pest issues. Therefore, it is imperative that growers and stakeholders register their details on the Minor Use Database.

Information on the database

will be used to help provide improved chemical access to vegetable growers and it is vital to have as many growers representing as many different vegetable commodities as possible. The more farms involved, the better the information.

Joining the Minor Use Database is your opportunity to be part of improving access to the chemicals you need on-farm.



For more information, please contact AUSVEG Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator Scott Kwasny on (03) 9882 0277, email minoruse@ausveg.com.au or visit www.ausveg.com.au/minoruse.

Project Number: VG13096

Minor use permits

Permit Number	Crop	Pesticide Group	Active	Pest	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Permit Holder	States
PER13396 Version 2	Parsley and coriander	Insecticide	Methomyl	Thrips and Western flower thrips	29-Jun-12	30-Jun-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER81241	Lettuce, chicory, endive, radicchio, spinach and baby spinach	Herbicide	Phenmedipham	Broadleaf weeds	29-May-15	31-May-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER14837	Leafy vegetables including head and leafy lettuce, rocket, silverbeet (chard), endive, spinach and Asian leafy vegetables	Fungicide	Manipropamid	Downy mildew	24-May-15	31-Mar-18	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER14071	Spring onions, celery and sweet corn	Insecticide	Pirimicarb	Aphids (including Green peach aphid, Cotton aphid and Corn aphid)	7-Jun-15	30-Jun-19	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER11127	Celery and peppers	Fungicide	Boscalid	Sclerotinia rot	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-18	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER11764	Snow peas and sugar snap peas	Fungicide	Spiroxamine	Powdery mildew	01-Jul-15	30-Jun-18	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER12489	Celery, cucumber (field and greenhouse), peppers (field and greenhouse) and cape gooseberry	Insecticide	Imidacloprid	Aphids, Plague thrips, Onion thrips, Greenhouse whitefly, Green peach aphid, aphids	30-Jun-15	31-May-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER14126	Radish, swede and turnip	Insecticide	Methomyl	Cabbage white butterfly, Cabbage centre grub, Heliothis, Looper, Cluster caterpillar and Western flower thrips	30-Jun-15	30-Sep-17	Growcom	All states (except Vic)

PER12947	Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflowers, cabbages, common beans, lettuce, peppers (sweet and chilli), eggplant, cucumbers (field and protected cropping), peas (fresh and processing) and celery	Insecticide/ Miticide	Bifenthrin	Silverleaf whitefly, Greenhouse whitefly, Thrips (excluding Western flower thrip), Two spotted mite, Red-legged earthmite, Blue oat mite	07-May-12	30-Apr-16	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER80910	Brussels sprouts, eggplant	Fungicide	Iprodione	Grey mould	01-Aug-15	31-Jul-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER80501	Alliums (not including bulb onions and garlic)	Fungicide	Cyprodinil and fludioxonil	Black mould, Grey mould	20-Jul-15	31-May-20	Growcom	All states
PER10312	Capsicums, snow peas and sugar snap peas	Herbicide	Glufosinate-ammonium	Broad leaf weeds and grasses	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-18	Growcom	NSW and Qld
PER10918	Carrot, leafy lettuce, silverbeet and spinach	Insecticide	Imidacloprid	Aphids (including Green peach aphid, Carrot aphid and Fennel aphid) and Greenhouse whitefly	30-Jun-15	31-May-18	Growcom	All states
PER10938	Snow peas and sugar snap peas	Insecticide	Imidacloprid	Greenhouse whitefly	01-Jul-15	31-Jul-18	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER11848 (Version 2)	Brassica leafy vegetables, chicory, endive, radicchio and rocket	Herbicide	Clethodim	Grassweeds	20-Jun-12	30-Sep-16	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER11850 (Version 2)	Parsley and coriander (field-grown crops only)	Insecticide	Lambda-cyhalothrin	Redlegged earth mite, Rutherglen bug, Grey cluster bug, Onion thrips, Plague thrips, Looper	5-Apr-12	31-Aug-16	Growcom	All states (except Vic and Tas)
PER12008 (Version 2)	Lettuce (all types), silverbeet, spinach, rocket, brassica leafy vegetables, shallots and spring onions	Herbicide	Propachlor	Annual grasses and Broadleaf weeds	18-Jun-12	30-Sep-16	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER12048 (Version 2)	Parsnip	Herbicide	Prometryn	Weeds as per the product label	9-May-12	30-Sep-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER12048 (Version 2)	Carrots (at least one true leaf, less than four true leaves)	Herbicide	Prometryn	Broadleaf weeds	9-May-12	30-Sep-20	Growcom	Qld only
PER12384 (Version 2)	Rhubarb	Herbicide	S-Metolachlor	Various broadleaf and grass weeds	18-Nov-10	31-Aug-20	Growcom	All states
PER81285	Parsley (foliage only)	Fungicide	Chlorothalonil	Downy mildew, botrytis, alternaria and cercospora	8-Aug-15	30-Jun-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER12357	Parsnips	Herbicide	Linuron	Grass and Broadleaf weeds	9-May-12	30-Sep-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
Extended Permits								
PER12506	Eggplant	Insecticide	Dimethoate	Queensland fruit fly, Mediterranean fruit fly	30-Jan-13	5-Oct-17	Growcom	All states
PER13158	Citrus fruit, tropical and sub-tropical fruit, hot chilli peppers	Insecticide	Dimethoate	Queensland fruit fly, Lesser Queensland fruit fly, Northern Territory fruit fly, Mediterranean fly	6-Oct-11	5-Oct-17	Growcom	All states (except ACT)

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

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AUSVEG continues to maintain a strong media presence, acting as the first point of contact for industry-related stories around the country, including Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL), the current status of vegetable exports and consumer research relating to the vegetable industry.

AUSVEG reached a national audience of 6,131,980 throughout the month of July, with a total of 812 media reports mentioning AUSVEG across print and broadcast media.

Country of Origin Labelling

AUSVEG Deputy CEO Andrew White featured extensively across print and broadcast media in July, where he welcomed some of the Federal Government's proposed reforms to Australia's CoOL system but emphasised they were far from perfect.

Mr White highlighted that the reforms would only display the proportion of Australian grown ingredients in a product. Consumers would be left none-the-wiser about the actual ingredients that are Australian or the specific originating countries of the non-Australian proportion of ingredients.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy also appeared in print and on radio supporting calls from Horticulture New Zealand for a compulsory Country of Origin Labelling system for their country.

Economic Confidence Survey

The results from the latest Economic Confidence Survey featured across print and broadcast media in August. AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy noted that vegetable growers were more optimistic about investing in their businesses than they were in the previous quarter, possibly as a result of grower-friendly initiatives released in the Federal Budget in May.

Mr Mulcahy said grower confidence regarding production costs other than labour increased by 34 per cent on the previous quarter, with low interest rates generating the highest levels of confidence for growers.

Australian vegetable exports

AUSVEG National Manager – Export Development Michael Coote raised concerns about the

Papua New Guinean ban of all Australian fruit and vegetable imports in August. Mr Coote said that Australian vegetables have been exported to Papua New Guinea without major issue for a number of years, and explained that AUSVEG is working with all relevant parties to resolve the issue.

Mr Coote also featured widely in print and on broadcast media discussing data released from the Global Trade Atlas, which indicated the value of Australian vegetable exports rose over five per cent in the last financial year.

Mr Coote also featured on broadcast and in print media discussing the Exporting to Southeast Asia Symposium in July, which aimed to give Australian vegetable growers the tools and know-how to develop export markets across south east Asia.

Consumer research

AUSVEG Assistant Manager – Industry Development Kurt Hermann discussed Project Harvest data widely across print and broadcast media, saying that Australians now snack four times as much as they did 10 years ago, presenting a valuable opportunity for the vegetable industry to capitalise

on this trend by creating more healthy snack options for Australians on the go.

Mr Hermann also discussed Nielsen Homescan data that identified multi-million dollar opportunities for the Australian vegetable industry, highlighting key areas with potential for growing vegetable consumption.

Key Topics

- Proposed Country of Origin Labelling reforms are a step in the right direction, but don't go far enough.
- Economic Confidence Survey outlines the positive outlook of Aussie growers.
- Australian vegetable exports feature prominently in the news.
- Consumer research highlights new opportunities for growers.



Around the states

Victoria



The Epping Fresh Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market was to be opened on 3 August but was pushed back until 31 August, due to pressure from the fruit and vegetable industries. Representation was made by horticultural organisations, growers and wholesalers to the relevant state government departments and the Melbourne Market Authority that the Epping market would not have all the infrastructure facilities in place by the designated opening date.

The VGA has been actively involved in consultations with the Melbourne Market Authority through the representation of our president, David Wallace, who discussed the concerns that growers have had about the new facility in Epping. After consultation with industry, the Victorian Minister for Special Projects and the Melbourne Market Authority, it was decided not to open on 3 August but reschedule the opening at the end of August.

Meanwhile, the VGA has conducted a series of member workshops to discuss the future direction of the VGA. Meetings were held in three growing regions and were well attended. The main discussion revolved around the feasibility

of the VGA standing alone or amalgamating with other groups representing the vegetable industry within Victoria. The results of the discussion and feedback from members will be discussed and ratified at the next Executive Meeting in September and the outcome presented to members at the Annual General Meeting in October.

The regions that rely on runoff to fill dams for irrigation supplies are becoming concerned with the looming threat of a dry spring/summer. There has been very little runoff in southern Victoria in the months of July and August, with rainfall figures well below average. Several irrigation districts, such as the Werribee and Bacchus Marsh regions, have been provided

initial summer allocations with a dry to drought outlook being considered.

There is also a need for a consolidated information package-program for horticultural producers to cover how growers can deal with industrial relations in the horticultural field. Recent events in Victoria and South Australia have highlighted a need for grower education.

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Around the states

Queensland



In August, Growcom and the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection launched the first whole of farm Best Management Practice (BMP) program for production horticulture, in the Lockyer Valley near Brisbane.

Hort360 is a step-by-step, facilitated risk assessment tool designed to give growers a 360 degree view of their farm business operations, identifying potential risks, capitalising on business opportunities and highlighting unnecessary farm expenses. The unique thing about the program is that it doesn't just focus on environmental outcomes but looks at the whole farm, covering issues such

as industrial relations and workplace health and safety.

The first module of Hort360 is designed to help growers adopt BMP elements that protect land from erosion and subsequent sediment and fertiliser runoff from farmland by wind and water. It also helps them to manage farm inputs and avoid residual fertiliser and pesticide runoff to waterways.

This will save growers money and improve productivity and sustainability on farms, as well as reduce the initial amount of runoff on farms in the Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Pumicestone Passage catchments, which feed into Moreton Bay.

Environment Minister Dr Steven Miles said the Queensland Government was supporting the roll-out of BMP programs to promote sustainable land management practices across several primary industry sectors in Great Barrier Reef catchments

and now grazing and horticulture in south east Queensland.

Growcom is pleased that the Queensland Government is taking a holistic approach to the BMP concept and looks forward to working with growers to design new modules to meet their needs. Fundamentally, Hort360 is a tool for growers to maximise their productivity but it also has the capacity to deliver on community and catchment outcomes.

Natural resource management is an important issue for horticulture growers, with much of Queensland's fruit and vegetable industry located close to sensitive environments such as the Great Barrier Reef and Moreton Bay. The community and government demand the proper management of issues such as agricultural runoff and the responsible use of agricultural chemicals. It is important that the industry takes the lead on these issues to ensure a science-based and practical approach, voluntarily

implemented by growers.

The Hort360 program is designed to reflect the current standards of the Freshcare Environmental Code of Practice and support growers to achieve real productivity and environmental outcomes on farm. It was developed from many years of extension work with Queensland growers through Growcom's involvement in the Water for Profit, Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiatives and the Reef Rescue programs.

Modules to be released under the Hort360 program over coming months will include irrigation, energy, workplace safety, industrial relations and water quality.

Pat Hannan

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Tasmania



It has been 10 years since farmers took their tractors to the road and drove to Canberra to press their case for Australians to buy locally-grown food during the Fair Dinkum Food campaign.

They demanded laws that make the Country of Origin Labelling of food far more obvious and unambiguous to protect the livelihood of Australian farmers and rural communities.

The TFGA Vegetable Council joined forces with activist and vegetable grower Richard Bovill to mount the tractor rally and draw public and political

attention to the plight of Australian vegetable growers, encouraging them to choose Australian-made for both quality and loyalty. The rally began in Tasmania and passed through Victoria and New South Wales, before culminating in a mass rally outside Parliament House in Canberra.

The 2005 campaign led to a number of immediate initiatives, including:

- A federally-funded review of the industry.
- A Tasmanian Government-funded workforce development program and promotion of Tasmanian vegetables.
- The VegVision strategic plan.

While it is important to celebrate milestones, it is now vital that Tasmania's agricultural sector looks to the future. Our industry is now more robust than ever, and there are fantastic

opportunities for the next generation of farmers.

The Federal Government, some 10 years later to the day, has made a move in the right direction after consulting with the state and territory governments to change the requirements for Country of Origin Labelling. We need to remember that's how long progress can take.

Ten years ago we were told that Australians would be guided by price before local loyalty. The past decade has shown that shoppers do prefer to buy locally if they can easily identify the product's origin. Price is still a factor, but people are far more aware.

We have to keep the pressure on governments to support the Tasmanian and Australian brands, and we have to continue to press consumers to favour local produce. Buying locally not only supports local farmers, it also supports local

communities.

The TFGA also believes that continued investment in agriculture and R&D is also vital. All sectors need to collaborate to improve our efficiency, and therefore our cost price competitiveness.

Our growers now need the confidence to tackle new and emerging markets head-on – and work with governments for a hand up, not a hand out – to ensure that our vegetable industry remains a viable and productive force for the Tasmanian and Australian economies.

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New South Wales



NSW Farmers has had a busy past couple of months running our Annual Conference and electing a new Horticulture Committee Chair. The Committee continues to strive for a more productive and profitable agriculture sector and has been seeking to better collaborate with different

industry groups.

NSW Farmers was delighted to see the release of the Horticulture Code of Conduct issue paper. The Code has been in force for eight years and was due for review before its sunset period in 2017. The Code provides a valuable framework for improved transparency and trust in the horticulture industry. While the review of the Code will establish the extent to which this has occurred, NSW Farmers believes that this review is placed at a good time, especially coming off the back of the new Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.

NSW Farmers will seek to work with industry groups to ensure effective collaboration of the Code's review and to seek a common outcome for industry from the review. NSW Farmers is encouraging all its members to participate to ensure all concerns are addressed, and that the industry has a workable, transparent Code that everyone is satisfied with.

The Federal Government's announcement of new Country of Origin Labelling standards has been well received as a first step in the right direction from NSW Farmers. While some of the current confusion

around origin claims has been addressed, NSW Farmers believes that labelling of characterising ingredients should be mandatory. NSW Farmers has noted that this may be a key component of the government's two-year review.

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South Australia



I recently had the opportunity to attend the South Australian Government's 2015 South East Asia Trade Mission to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. As part of the mission, AUSVEG SA took two leading SA growers to meet with buyers, look at cold chain distribution facilities and wholesale markets in each of the countries from 15-22 August 2015.

The Mission was accompanied by South Australian Premier, the Hon. Jay Weatherall MP and Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Martin Hamilton-Smith

MP, who provided high level support to the delegation of around 100 South Australian business leaders.

In Singapore, AUSVEG SA met with leading buyers following on from the highly successful 2015 Reverse Trade Mission visit to South Australia in June. A key finding was that it is desirable to deal with larger wholesalers or retailers who maintain their own cold chain facilities rather than the markets, due to potential produce handling and refrigeration issues.

The mission then travelled to Malaysia to meet with buyers from wholesalers and retailers. Like Singapore, the wholesalers and retailers in Malaysia have strong cold chain and distribution facilities. While wholesalers have traditionally

played a key role in this market, a number of retailers that AUSVEG SA met with said they were looking at opportunities to contract farm or look into direct supply, where growers are able to supply in volume.

The delegation then travelled to Thailand, which is a secondary market for Australian produce exports, but one with significant growth potential. While market access in Thailand is a concern, given its restrictions for the entry of fruit such as capsicums and tomatoes as well as fresh market potatoes, there are still opportunities for all other commodities that do not fall under these restrictions. In particular, Australian carrots and processing potatoes have found a market in Thailand and

AUSVEG SA is currently in the process of providing information to potential buyers to increase access of South Australian produce to this emerging market.

AUSVEG SA would like to thank the hard-working South Australian Government staff for their considerable work on the mission.

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Around the states

Northern Territory



This Dry season has been cooler than usual for the vegetable industry in the Northern Territory, which has slowed production of okra, snake beans, Asian melons and cucumbers in the Darwin region but has produced some excellent quality basil and other herbs. There have been no new detections of Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV) since April and there is a general increase in confidence for vegetable growers to get back into cucurbit production.

This has also coincided with a drop in the cucumber price, as increased supply arrives in the markets.

Testing has started on CGMMV-infected farms to see if the virus has persisted over the quarantine period. A combination of soil tests and growing cucumber and melon plants in fully isolated netted areas to test for any virus in the resultant plants will be used as a basis for NT Biosecurity to decide the quarantine status of these farms.

The NT Farmers Northern Australia Food Futures Roadshow is also rolling out across the north of Australia, with the first held in Hughenden, north west Queensland, in June. Events were held in Douglas Daly and Katherine in the Northern

Territory in August, while more are planned for Broome, Kununurra and Alice Springs. The roadshow stems from the successful Northern Australia Food Futures Conference held in Darwin in November 2014, which looked at agricultural opportunities in northern Australia. This was centred on the land and water resources available and identified in the north, as well as existing and future projects for food production.

The roadshow is designed to bring information on current northern agricultural development back to regional communities and encourage discussion and input from stakeholders in the north. It was well attended in Hughenden, with the shire councils playing a very positive

role in bringing the discussion back to their land holders.

NT vegetable growers are often viewed as a very successful model for northern agricultural development. The concept is to start small, invest a number of years in learning a profitable growing system and then scale up to larger businesses. Together these businesses then make an industry.

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Western Australia



vegetablesWA recently hosted a successful industry summit, where a range of issues with markets and marketing were canvassed with a panel of speakers from across the supply chain. We thank those who participated in this event, as well as the Young Grower's Tour the following day. During the tour, young growers were able to visit the Coles Distribution Centre and Loose Leaf Lettuce. Many thanks to our hosts also.

I recently visited Canberra and Sydney for industry meetings. In Canberra, I

attended a labour issues forum hosted by the National Farmers Forum and PMA-NZ. I also held meetings with parliamentarians and departmental officials across a range of issues. In Sydney, I provided input from a WA perspective to the development of a new AUSVEG strategic plan.

The review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct gives industry a welcome opportunity to seek changes to an instrument that has demonstrably failed to provide the transparency and clarity required to the trading relationships of wholesalers. vegetablesWA is working with a number of other state peak bodies to represent growers on this issue.

Occupational health and safety has continued to provide challenges for growers. With so much grower progress on the issue, Worksafe WA has

recently completed a vegetable industry project. From the 41 workplaces visited, a total of 297 improvement notices were issued: 77 for mobile plants; 76 for hazardous substances; 47 for emergency procedures; 26 for machine guarding; 17 for electricity; nine for manual tasks; six for slips, trips and falls; one for falls from heights; and 38 for 'other'. vegetablesWA will continue to liaise with growers and Worksafe, particularly on issues such as blood tests that were not widely understood or communicated through awareness or training.

Lastly, I would like to put on record our sincere thanks to Gavin Foord who has been our Export Development Manager for a number of years. Gavin has provided the industry with a lot of value in assisting growers to take advantage

of export opportunities. As he moves into a full time General Manager role with Agrifresh, I know that he will continue to assist where possible as a member of the broader vegetablesWA family.

I'm also pleased that our Field Extension Officer Dominic Jenkin, who many in the industry know, will step into the role and deliver magnificently, given his existing expertise in horticulture exports and value chain development.

John Shannon

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