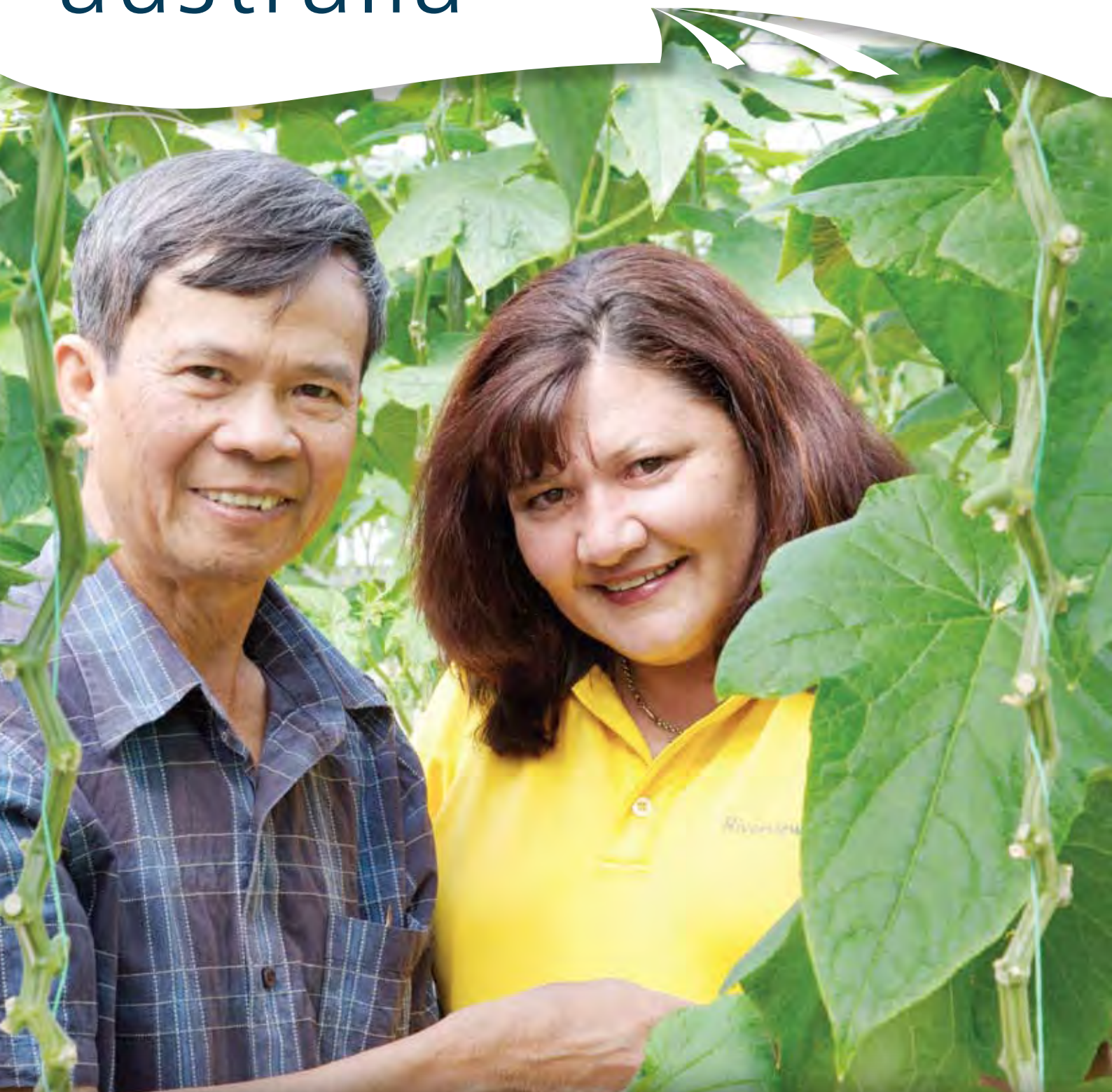


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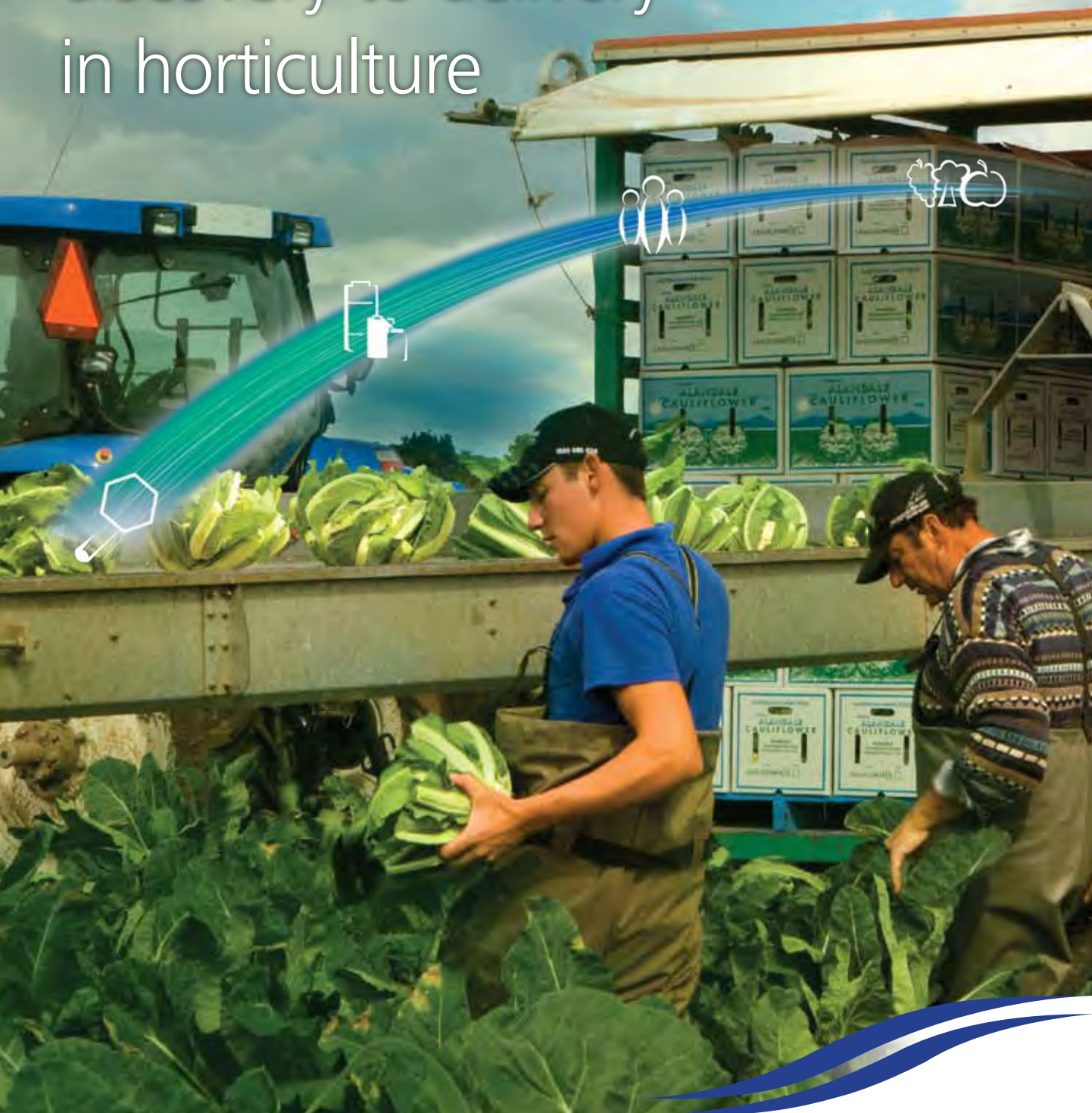


12 AUSVEG
adopts new
constitution

26 "Not in my backyard":
the urbanisation of
rural areas

31 Nominate now for
Vegetable Industry
Awards 2009

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A word from the AUSVEG Chairman

Historic agreement for the Australian vegetable industry.

The AUSVEG Board called an Special General Meeting by teleconference on 24 October 2008. Members, individual members and the board took part to discuss the content of the new AUSVEG constitution, with amendments. With the exception of one individual member, who was absent, the vote was unanimous; the constitution was passed.

The review process has taken an extraordinary amount of time and effort. I'm grateful to Vice Chairman Jeff McSpedden for his dedication in chairing the taskforce comprising the financial members. Jeff's leadership has been pivotal in getting the new constitution aligned with industry requirements. Now AUSVEG can leap forward and better serve industry. Well done, Jeff.

Under the new constitution:

- Membership to AUSVEG is now open
- There will be several categories available
- Membership will be available upon application
- Fees, if any, will be determined at the AGM, to be held Monday 24 November
- Board will comprise seven members plus up to two skills-based directors
- AUSVEG is now set to move forward to represent the grass-roots of the vegetable industry.

Under the new constitution, only National Vegetable and Potato Levy payers (except the two skills-based directors) can be directors of AUSVEG Ltd. As my family operations are winding up, at the upcoming AGM I will stand down

as Chairman and as a director, so this will be my final message for *Vegetables Australia*.

Robert Lawler has also signalled that he won't be renewing his contract as CEO. However, he will continue in this role until the new board has been appointed and a replacement CEO employed. Robert has been an outstanding employee for AUSVEG and has worked long and hard since joining the company early this year as Chief Financial Officer. Thanks Robert, for a job well done.

While I'm thanking people, the AUSVEG Board and all the staff have been tireless workers for the vegetable industry. Our honorary board members (that's right, they don't get paid) have given their time and talent freely for the good of the industry. The staff are dedicated to the cause and all work above and beyond the call of duty. The amount of



David Anderson
Chairman
AUSVEG Ltd

support that I have received from all parts of the industry must also be acknowledged. Thank-you everybody.

Lastly, I must thank my family members for their continual support. Without their help I could never have served the industry in this capacity.

From the editor



For the vegetable industry, consumers have often been the great unknown. What factors influence their buying decisions and what actions can the industry take to increase per capita vegetable consumption? Two new initiatives, the levy-funded Vegetracker and Nielsen Homescan, go straight to the source to find out what, where and why consumers purchase vegetables (pages 24 and 38 respectively).

Increased urbanisation of rural areas, and residents' confusion about the level of regulation in the horticulture industry, are tales that too many growers are familiar with. This issue's feature article takes us to Logan City, an hour south of Brisbane, where we meet two growers who have been spearheading the local horticulture community's efforts to meet changing council requirements for protected cropping businesses. It's been a long journey for them, and it's not over yet (page 26).

Nuffield Scholar Tim Harslett has returned from his travels and he reports on his findings about mechanisation and alternative methods for controlling weeds and diseases (page 32). We also spend time with the Carnarvon Growers Association in Western Australia and find out how it digs deep for its members, in more ways than one.

We'll be back in January with a special look at the latest technology being developed and used by the vegetable industry, but until then, Happy New Year and good growing.

Jim Thomson
Editor, *Vegetables Australia*

“Not in my backyard”

26



contents

november/december

Features

- 21** Environmental certification
– easier than you think
- 26** “Not in my backyard”
- 32** Mechanise to improve
growing techniques

News

- 8** Verify MRL compliance
with FreshTest
- 9** ETS needs to include
agriculture: BFA
- 11** \$400 million production
figure for Bundaberg
- 12** New AUSVEG constitution
adopted
- 13** PCN outbreak in Victoria
- 14** Green light for Bundaberg
IPM program
- 15** National Vegetarian Week
wins award
- 16** New \$33 million
warehouses for Brisbane
Markets
- 16** Survey winners announced
- 16** Australian registration for
new insecticides
- 17** Challenging opportunities
- 18** Media matters

R&D

- 9** Levy report on its way
- 10** Brassica toolkit is
all-encompassing
- 10** New industry development
program
- 14** Access alternatives to
methyl bromide
- 19** Project preview: Australian
Vegetable Industry Soil
and Land Management
Knowledge Exchange

- 24** On the right track
- 34** Spread the word
- 42** Help sweet corn fulfil its
potential
- 46** Young growers take the
challenge

Industry update

- 12** Recent minor use permits
- 31** Seeds firmly planted for
industry conference
- 35** Asian vegetable profile—
White radish
- 37** Profile: Carnarvon Growers
Association
- 38** Hard data for veggie
purchases
- 40** Tailor-made leadership
development
- 41** Ask the industry
- 49** Around the states

“Growers are unfairly cast as the villains in the environmental debate and aren’t recognised for the good they’ve done.”

– page 21

Regulars

- 3** Chairman’s message—
David Anderson
- 3** From the editor
- 44** Economic outlook—Awash
in a sea of imports
- 48** AUSVEG report
- 50** Calendar of events

vegetables australia

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Growers Don Pham [left] and Lisa
Crooks on Don's property in Park
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Verify MRL compliance with FreshTest

Growers can make use of a cost effective, national system to ensure compliance with Maximum Residue Limits.

Growers and wholesalers now have access to the FreshTest Program, established by the Australian Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries. The program manages and collates results from Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) and microbial testing of produce. The service is available in all central produce markets around the country.

FreshTest was developed by the wholesaling sector to reduce costs and coordinate tests conducted by wholesalers for verification of their food safety and quality assurance systems. Uptake of food safety programs by growers in recent years has increased demand for the program.

More than 33,000 tests are recorded in the database, showing a compliance rate of 97 per cent against the MRL legislated by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). In each residue test, produce is tested for a minimum of 110 different substances, and includes microbial testing.

Cost savings of up to 50 per cent have been achieved through the system and results are usually available in 14 days. Growers can take advantage of these savings by arranging tests through their wholesaler.

Weekly tests

Samples are collected every Wednesday, but Testing Request



Forms must be completed and lodged with a wholesaler two days before this.

The database is checked to ensure the same produce is not tested twice or has been tested in the past six months. An independent sample collector randomly selects the required amount of produce from the grower's consignment, which is sealed in a pre-labelled bag and sent to a laboratory.

Test results are sent electronically to the Program Manager and recorded in a database. A result summary is also sent to the wholesaler.

Protected data

The Program Manager is the only person who can match test results to specific growers or wholesalers as laboratories are

given only a batch number to report on. As such, the collected data can be made available to other parties only as collective test results.

The data may also be used to refute adverse publicity of Australia's fruit and vegetables. This information has not been available previously and will help protect the viability of the industry.

Wholesalers are invoiced for the service, and growers must make payment arrangements directly with their wholesaler.

Ensure compliance

Australia's fresh vegetable industry has a very high compliance rate with MRLs, so detection of an adverse result is rare.

However, if a MRL breach is recorded, the wholesaler will

be issued an Adverse Detection Notification, which is forwarded to the grower. The breach must be investigated and identified, and corrective action put in place to prevent a recurrence. An additional sample test must be completed to show the problem has been rectified. This process is also to be followed for any microbial detection. **va**

i For more information or to register as a participant in the program contact:

Queensland
Brismark 07 3915 4222

Victoria
Fresh State 03 9689 3233

New South Wales
Newcastle 02 4923 3700
Sydney 02 9764 3244

South Australia
Adelaide 08 8349 4528

Western Australia
Perth 08 9455 2742

ETS needs to include agriculture: BFA

The Australian Government needs to bring forward agriculture's potential inclusion in an Emissions Trading Scheme, according to the Biological Farmers of Australia.

The *Biological Farmers of Australia's response to the Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) Green Paper*, released in September, stated that leaving agriculture out of an emissions trading scheme (ETS) could cost growers who use environmentally-friendly methods of production.

for. The submission advises that agriculture be brought forward into an ETS before 2015 to accommodate growers who don't "burn out" carbon in soil.

Make 'opt-in' an option
"While we applaud policy moves towards reduced carbon pollution, discounting agriculture from a proposed ETS omits what could

"Organic and biological farmers should be given the opportunity to 'opt-in' to an emissions scheme from 2010. Organically managed soils are active models of an agricultural system which can deliver carbon sequestration and emission reduction benefits right now."

Record comments for Standard

In other organic news, a record number of comments was submitted for the recent call by Standards Australia.

"Over 900 comments were received on the draft of the Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Products. Previously, 60 comments was considered a high number for a draft standard," said Andre Leu, Chair of the

Organic Federation of Australia.

"This unprecedented level of support shows that the Australian organic sector wants to ensure that this standard meets the needs of our complex industry as well as the expectations of our consumers.

"Once developed, this standard can be used by government agencies such as the ACCC to ensure compliance against misleading and deceptive practices for organic products sold on the domestic market including imported products." **va**

“Farmers should be given the opportunity to ‘opt-in’ to an ETS.”

The BFA said better carbon soil sequestration by landowners who utilise biological systems, minus emissions-intensive farm chemicals, should be accounted

arguably be the biggest single optimal positive impact on carbon abatement and sequestering: soils," said Dr Andrew Monk, BFA Director.

To download the BFA Green Paper submission visit:
www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=258

Levy report on its way

The National Vegetable Levy industry report is due in your mailbox in December.

Each year, an annual industry report for the National Vegetable Levy research and development program is produced and sent to levy payers. This year's report has been produced by Horticulture Australia Limited.

Distribution of the *Vegetable Industry Report* is planned for December, along with a separate report for the Horticulture Across Industry program. The 76-page industry report has an update on projects funded throughout the 2007/08 year. Look for it in your mailbox, and keep abreast of how your levy is working for you.

For more information or if you do not receive your copy of the *Vegetable Industry Report*, contact:
Horticulture Australia Limited
Phone: 02 8295 2300



Brassica toolkit is all-encompassing

THE BOTTOM LINE

- A Brassica Integrated Crop Management Toolkit has been produced and distributed to growers around Australia.
- The toolkit, which was produced as a CD, contains more than 350 fact sheets and a diagnostic key to help identify problems discovered in crops.
- To ensure growers make the most of the toolkit, workshops will be held in each state.

i If you have not received your copy of the toolkit, contact:
David Carey, Senior Horticulturalist, Queensland DPI&F
Phone: 07 5466 2222
Email: <david.carey@dpi.qld.gov.au>
For more information visit
www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
Project number: VG07030
Keywords: Integrated Brassica

A new toolkit for brassica growers will assist with the on-farm identification and diagnosis of pests and diseases.

Brassica growers throughout Australia should have received their copy of the *Brassica Integrated Crop Management Toolkit*. Produced as a CD, the toolkit was distributed in July 2008.

The CD comprises 355 fact sheets about crop management issues, resistance management strategies, general references, and internet links to further information. A great on-farm resource, the toolkit also contains more than 450 images, including insect pests and diseases of brassicas, which will assist in on-farm problem solving.


A diagnostic key allows growers to answer questions about problems they see in their crops, before it compiles a list of possible causes. This self-diagnosis can be checked and compared with reference photos on the CD for verification, while the included fact sheets provide management options.

Several games are included on the CD for young growers or those who are young at heart.

The toolkit is growers' one-stop shop for information about brassicas; it complements valuable paper-based information previously produced.



Workshops available

A series of introductory workshops are proposed for each state. If you are interested in receiving training for using the CD, or accessing information for brassica crop management and the latest research, complete the Expression of Interest form included with the CD and return it to David Carey, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Locked Bag 7, MS 437, Gatton, 4343. 

New industry development program

A new industry development program is in the works, writes Simon Drum from Inovact Consulting.

The vegetable industry, through the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), has recommended Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) implement a new national program of industry development services be put in place in early 2009.

The program is based around the industry's strategic plan, Veg-Vision 2020, and is the outcome of a thorough needs assessment


that included consultation with more than 475 levy payers and industry stakeholders.

The new program will see vegetable industry development services at a national level in response to specific needs identified by the industry. This will make best use of limited resources.

The program will provide targeted services to vegetable growers

and other industry stakeholders. These services will utilise specialist expertise and be designed to get the most from the industry's investments in research and development.

HAL is undertaking detailed design work for the new program. The Vegetable IAC, advisory groups, and the HAL Board will review this design in early December. A tendering process

will begin once the IAC has made a final recommendation to the HAL Board and the HAL Board is satisfied with what is recommended. 

i For more information contact:
Lucy Keatinge, HAL Industry Services Manager Vegetables
Email: <lucy.keatinge@horticulture.com.au>
Phone: 02 8295 2342

\$400 million production figure for Bundaberg

Sixty years strong and a sizable increase in the region's production figures had BFGV and nearly 600 guests celebrating two-fold.

On Saturday 20 September, Bundaberg's horticulture industry celebrated 60 years since the formation of Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers (BFGV). A gala dinner took place at the Bundaberg Civic Centre where almost 600 growers, industry stakeholders, supporters and dignitaries gathered.

David De Paoli, BFGV Chairman, said the night was a great opportunity to mingle with colleagues and acknowledge the growing strength of horticulture and its benefits to the greater Bundaberg region.

"Being our 60th anniversary made it extra special as we remembered the history and looked to the future of this exciting and vibrant industry," he said.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) horticulture production figures for the Bundaberg region in 2007 were announced on the

evening, showing that the local industry expanded from production of \$352 million in 2006 to approximately \$400 million in 2007.

"This injects over \$1 billion into the economy of Bundaberg and Queensland, something the entire industry can be proud of," said David.

With many locals attending, the night also saw guests from around the nation joining the festivities, including AUSVEG Chairman, David Anderson, and AUSVEG CEO, Robert Lawler. Local dignitaries were joined by special guests, leader of the Queensland Opposition, Lawrence Springborg, and Queensland Senator Barnaby Joyce.

The event was prepared with a birthday theme to acknowledge the 60th anniversary and a celebratory cake was unveiled by David De Paoli along with past BFGV presidents, including Ron Simpson, Don Halpin, Geoff



[From left] BFGV Chairman, David De Paoli, celebrates the association's 60th anniversary with past presidents Ron Simpson, Geoff Chivers, Don Halpin and Andrew Philip.

Chivers and Andrew Philip.

BFGV extends its thanks to VanWissen Events, Acclaim, the BFGV dinner committee (David and Tracey Da Pra, John and Cris Kajewski, Geoff and Narelle

Chivers, Edwin and Kay Tesch and Tammie Lauman), the quintet REVAL, and all the evening's sponsors. va

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New AUSVEG constitution adopted

After years of development, the new AUSVEG constitution will take effect on 24 November 2008.

AUSVEG members were unanimous in their decision to adopt a new constitution for the company when they voted at a Special General Meeting held on 24 October.

Under the new constitution, all national vegetable and potato levy payers will have the opportunity to become members of AUSVEG.

“The new constitution will allow AUSVEG to encompass broader industry representation and increase the interaction of its members.”

“The new constitution will enable broader representation of levy-payers in determining the direction of their peak industry body. This can only deliver greater benefits for the future of Australian growers,” said AUSVEG CEO Robert Lawler.

AUSVEG will move to an all-

inclusive national membership-based model and a skills-based board.

Previously, AUSVEG membership was dominated by one state-based vegetable grower association from each state. As some levy payers are not members of these associations, growers' interests weren't being adequately represented.

With the new constitution, additional state, regional or commodity-based organisations can become members of AUSVEG, which will increase grower representation.

“The new constitution will allow AUSVEG to encompass broader industry representation

and increase the interaction of its members. It will foster greater industry partnerships,” said AUSVEG Chairman David Anderson.

New Board of Directors

The new constitution will take effect on 24 November 2008 following the company's Annual General Meeting.

The new board will comprise seven board directors, one from each state and the Northern Territory, and up to two skills-based directors.

Members with voting rights will have the opportunity to nominate and elect the AUSVEG Board of Directors.

AUSVEG Vice Chairman Jeff McSpedden said, “It's pleasing to see AUSVEG in a position to effectively fulfil its role as the national peak industry body of the Australian vegetable industry”.

“The board is very grateful to Jeff and the constitutional taskforce, who were given the responsibility of assembling a new constitution for AUSVEG that truly represents the growers and the



The new AUSVEG constitution will foster greater industry partnerships: David Anderson.

members,” David said.

In this positive transition period, AUSVEG will implement a corporate governance policy to ensure effective representation of Australia's vegetable and potato growers. See page 48 of this issue of *Vegetables Australia* for more information. [va](#)

The new AUSVEG constitution can be viewed at www.ausveg.com.au

Recent minor use permits

Permit number	Permit description (pesticide / crop / pest)	Date issued	Expiry date	States covered
ALLIUM VEGETABLES				
PER10714	Karate (lambda-cyhalothrin) / Bulb onions / Onion thrips	08-Sep-08	30-Sep-11	All states except Vic
LEGUME VEGETABLES				
PER6611	Select (clethodim) / Peas (green and processing) / 'Fop' resistant ryegrass and winter grass	13-Feb-06	12-Feb-10	Valid for Tas* and WA

*Note: Tas added to existing permit

PCN outbreak in Victoria

Potato growers in and around Thorpdale face an uncertain few months after soil tests found Potato Cyst Nematode on a property.

Following the discovery of Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) on a property in Thorpdale, Victoria, in mid-October, the Gippsland potato community is bracing itself for what could be very challenging times.

Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) scientists identified PCN in soil samples taken from the affected property. PCN is a microscopic, worm-like organism that feeds on the roots of potatoes. It does not affect human health, but can reduce crop yields.

“Trade restrictions apply to areas where PCN is detected, so unfortunately this detection has serious implications for the potato industry and the local Thorpdale community,” said DPI Principal Plant Standards Policy Officer David Beardsell.

“It will affect market access for both seed and ware (fresh) potatoes grown in the area around the detection site. Thorpdale also supplies up to 30 per cent of Australia’s high-health certified seed potatoes, so there could also be repercussions for seed supply around the country next season.”

Action taken

A series of meetings between growers, DPI representatives and state regulatory authorities took place in the weeks following the detection, with more planned. While senior regulatory authorities have spoken extensively about market access issues, it is anticipated that negotiations may take months to complete.

Victorian DPI stopped testing soils for about one week, while



A PCN-infected plant [right] compared with a healthy plant. Image supplied by Ulrich Zunke, University of Hamburg, Bugwood.org.

state regulatory bodies decided on the sampling sizes for evaluation in an effort to make the procedure less time- and cost-intensive. Following this, it was planned that testing re-commence with sampling undertaken on the property on which PCN was found, then on adjoining properties, neighbours’ associated properties and paddocks owned by growers who received seed from the grower with the PCN-positive detection.

Extra DPI staff have been recruited and trained to deal with the extensive requirements of this outbreak. A team of 16 people is now helping across the community.

The DPI has established that the PCN found on the affected paddock may have been dormant

in the soil for up to 50 years.

This has prompted calls to industry groups across the nation to boost awareness of the need for vigilance about on-farm hygiene practices.

Victorian Minister for Agriculture Joe Helper toured the area on 24 October, and a service industry meeting was held at the Traralgon Shire offices to inform banks, machinery suppliers and other potato industry-related businesses about PCN.


Des Jennings, Chairman of the Victorian Potato Growers Council, said that a bank had already indicated that it was willing to lend a financial hand where necessary.

Stay informed

The Traralgon Shire offices have

set up a family and financial counselling service and is open to anyone who wants to discuss their situation in light of the PCN finding. Des urged growers to use the service.

A steering committee for the Thorpdale district has also been formed to distribute regular newsletters to keep growers and industry representatives informed. More information about the PCN crisis and how it affects growers and industry will be featured in the December issue of *Potatoes Australia*. [va](#)

For more information contact:
 Laura Bowles, Executive Officer
Victorian Potato Growers Council
Phone: 0417 118 233

Green light for Bundaberg IPM program

A three-year IPM program has been developed for the Bundaberg region, with potential expansion to other Australian production areas.

The Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Initiative is funding a new venture for the Bundaberg horticulture industry that aims to help the region more effectively manage the risk of pest damage to crops. "Area wide integrated pest management for Bundaberg regional production horticulture" is a Landcare Sustainable

pest management practices.

"What distinguishes this project is its area wide, cross-commodity focus that will also see the urban community involved in helping to reduce pest pressures throughout the growing season," said BFGV Executive Officer, Matt Dagan.

"The successful implementation of this project will have

“The project's cross-commodity focus will see the urban community helping to reduce pest pressures.”


Practices grant project that incorporates three years of on-ground pest monitoring trials with an area wide implementation of integrated pest management (IPM) practices.

Pilot program

Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers (BFGV) will join forces with local horticulture growers, consultancy firms and government agencies to trial, validate and apply leading-edge technology to pest-pressure monitoring and mapping. This will lead to the development of key decision-making tools and IPM practices, adding to growers' armoury of

many benefits such as enhanced coordination and cooperation in response to pest pressures, reduced chemical dependency, increased sustainability, improved profitability for growers and enhanced regional biodiversity."

It is intended that the program will develop the concept, technology and tools that will enable other production regions around Australia to implement similar programs. [va](#)

For more information contact:
 Peter Hockings, BFGV Project Office
 Email: <peter@bfgv.com.au>
 Phone: 07 4153 3007

Access alternatives to methyl bromide

Register to use MBAIS for information about more than 300 alternatives to the ozone-depleting fumigant methyl bromide.

The Methyl Bromide Alternatives Information System (MBAIS) aims to help growers identify alternatives to methyl bromide use as a general-purpose fumigant. The system has been developed to identify methyl bromide alternatives being researched or used in Australia and overseas for quarantine pre-shipment (QPS) and non-QPS purposes—more than 300 in total. This web-based tool also helps identify gaps where there are no technical and economic alternatives for commodities.

Contributions have been received from Australian, New Zealand and American governments; peak industry bodies; researchers; consultants; regulators from Australian states and territories, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; Montreal Protocol (Meeting of the Parties, Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee), International Plant Protection Convention, commercial fumigators and recapture technologies.

Sources include treatment manuals, databases, statistics, peer-reviewed scientific journals, monographs, conferences, consultancy reports, technical reports, print and electronic media.

Register to use to find alternatives

To request access to MBAIS, phone 02 6272 3422 or email <janice.oliver@daff.gov.au>.

Registered MBAIS users can search, add or edit records, and suggest other data contributors. They can search MBAIS information either by commodity group, methyl bromide alternative, or contributor's last name.

Once registered, growers can use MBAIS to help them:

- find alternatives
- share information they have about alternatives or research they know of
- establish links to expertise about methyl bromide alternatives.

Methyl bromide has been used for many years as a general-purpose fumigant to kill a variety of plant pests. However, it is an ozone-depleting substance.

The *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987)* sets out a mandatory timetable for the phase out of ozone-depleting substances, including methyl bromide. All reductions include an exemption for methyl bromide pre-shipment and quarantine uses. [va](#)

For more information and conditions of use contact:
 Janice Oliver, MBAIS Administrator, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
 Email: <janice.oliver@daff.gov.au>
 Web: www.daff.gov.au/planthealth
 Phone: 02 6272 3422

National Vegetarian Week wins award

Bringing plant-based eating into the mainstream was one aim of last year's award-winning campaign.



Hot on the heels of this year's National Vegetarian Week, which was held from 29 September to 5 October, comes the news that National Vegetarian Week 2007 and Crossman Communications have been honoured with a National Golden Target Award from the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA).

The award, which was for the Consumer Marketing category,

was announced at the Annual PRIA Gala Dinner on 13 October in Fremantle, Western Australia.

Strategic campaign

Australians are the third highest meat eaters per capita in the world. The National Vegetarian Week campaign was devised to bring plant-based eating into the mainstream and encourage people to eat more vegetarian meals. Celebrity vegetarian Jackie

O was enlisted as an ambassador for the week in 2007, which coincided with World Vegetarian Day. AUSVEG was a co-sponsor of the week.

Judges for the award said the program had a smart, clear strategy.

"Its beauty lay in the use of good linkages, stakeholder engagement and celebrity endorsement, which helped to validate the key messages," they said.

"With skilled execution, this program has catalysed a profound turnaround in the Australian consumption of vegetarian meals. National Vegetarian Week emphasises the ability of public relations and marketing to raise consumer awareness of not only products but ways of life," said Tracy Jones, PRIA National President. *va*

Nominations now open

Nominations are now open for:

- Landini Grower of the Year
- Landmark Young Grower of the Year
- Syngenta Researcher of the Year
- Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award
- AUSVEG Industry Recognition Award

Vegetable Industry Awards



Nominate now by using the nomination form included with this issue of *Vegetables Australia*, or by visiting www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au

Nominations close 27 February 2009

Winners receive a \$1,000 cash prize plus more!

The award presentations will be proudly hosted at the Australian Vegetable Industry Conference gala dinner, at the Crown Palladium, Melbourne on Wednesday 6 May 2009

For more information visit www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au or call the AUSVEG office on 03 9544 8098

Landini

LANDMARK

syngenta



AUSVEG

New \$33 million warehouses for Brisbane Markets

Eight new warehouses are the first stage of a 10-year redevelopment plan for Brisbane Markets.

Queensland growers have reason to celebrate with Brisbane Markets Limited (BML) opening its \$33 million multi-tenant South Gate East warehouse and commercial centre development in September.

The structure is the first project completed for the planned upgrade and redevelopment of the Rocklea site. Further projects proposed include the replacement of older facilities, to a cost of \$100 million over the next 10 years.

Sizable increase

Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, Tim Mulherin, toured the site and unveiled a commemorative plaque at a ceremony that attracted more than 150 invited guests from industry

and the business community.

"The structure comprises eight warehouse facilities and 10 offices with a floor area totalling 16,063m². It provides state-of-the-art facilities that are an important addition to what the Brisbane Markets offers to the fresh produce industry," said BML CEO Andrew Young.

The eight warehouses increase total warehouse space (excluding selling floors) within the Brisbane Markets site by 15 per cent, with temperature-controlled space increasing by 23 per cent.

As Queensland's only central fruit and vegetable market, Brisbane Markets is the state's most important centre for the marketing and distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables. **va**



Survey winners announced

Survey responses help shape *Vegetables Australia's* future.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the Reader Survey included with the September issue of *Vegetables Australia*. It's a great way to let us know what you enjoy about the magazine and what you'd like to see more of in the future. We're busy collating the data to ensure the magazine continues to deliver relevant, topical and useful information.

Funded by the National Vegetable Levy, *Vegetables Australia* is dedicated to communicating levy benefits to growers—it's about helping you become the most efficient, profitable and environmentally aware growers you can be.

Winners drawn

Winners have been drawn for the Reader Survey prizes.

Congratulations to Elia Rigali from Wanneroo, Western Australia (winner of the \$500 Nufarm Gift Voucher), and Rick Rockcliff from Sassafras, Tasmania, and Keith Moody from Crossmaglen, New South Wales (winners of Nufarm Spraywise Decisions annual memberships, valued at \$132 each).

Vegetables Australia thanks Nufarm for its support. 

Australian registration for new insecticides

Two new insecticides, which claim to be IPM-friendly, are now available to Australian growers.

Registration approvals from the Agricultural Products and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) have been issued for two new DuPont insecticides, Coragen and Altacor, which aim to help growers achieve high-quality, high-yielding vegetable and fruit crops.

Coragen, as a liquid formulation, is registered for use on a range of vegetable crops, including lettuce, leafy vegetables, broccoli and tomatoes.

Altacor is suitable for use with selected pome and stone fruit crops. With a reputed low toxicity to mammals and many other non target species, both insecticides are reported to be suitable for use with integrated pest management (IPM) programs.

The first sales of both products were recorded in 2007 in the Philippines and Indonesia. Progress has since been made on product registrations in many other countries. **va**

Challenging opportunities

GMOs and a shift in how crop protection products are managed and publicly perceived were high on the agenda at the recent CropLife Australia conference.

A science-based approach to assessing the role of genetically modified crops was called for by Craig Emerson, Federal Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, in his keynote address at the CropLife Australia 2008 Perspectives Conference held at the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, on 8 October.

“Farmers don’t want chemicals, they want their pests gone.”

“There is enormous opportunity for the scientific development of genetically modified food production in Australia, with benefits in higher yields, reduced chemical use and less use of water,” he said. Craig was one of several speakers at the conference who challenged the 100 delegates to find new ways to meet community expectations and sustain food production.

He reminded delegates that Australians have had genetically modified crops since William Farrer developed rust-free wheat in the 1800s.

“When it comes to food, some organisations and governments, like Western Australia, don’t ask the questions or do the analysis because they think genetically modified organisms are bad. We live and practise GMOs, and while I am not calling for open slather

on GMOs, I am all for a science-based approach,” he said.

Offer services, not products

Boomerang Alliance Environmental Strategist Dave West advised delegates to turn the challenges of reducing spray drift into opportunities by doing more to address community expectations.

“I’m surprised that none of the major players in your industry have looked at dematerialising the sale of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides,” he said. As an example of dematerialisation he cited DuPont’s decision to stop selling titanium oxide paint and start selling paint application services through paint outlets and automotive workshops in

the treatment on the property.”

Dave said that a dematerialised approach would involve calculating chemical loads, hiring professional contractors and operating monitoring regimes on behalf of growers.

Time is running short

A further consideration was that the crop protection industry had a two- to four-year window to engage with green groups before their focus turned from regulation to litigation, said Dave.

“Your product is only a pesticide while it’s on the property—the moment it crosses the border, whether it’s spray drift, runoff or residues on products, it’s pollution,” he said.

“In terms of product stewardship, green groups recognise that irresponsible chemical use isn’t really (the manufacturer’s) problem, but the next step in their campaign against chemical trespass will be litigation, and manufacturers are on their radar.”

Paula Matthewson, CropLife Australia CEO, said speakers at the conference highlighted the challenges facing global and local food supplies.

CropLife Australia represents the developers, registrants, manufacturers and formulators of plant science solutions for use in agriculture and the management of pests in other settings. Its members invent, develop and manufacture 85 per cent of crop protection and 100 per cent of the crop biotechnology products used by Australian farmers. [va](#)



Federal Minister Craig Emerson called for a science-based approach to GMOs at the CropLife Australia Perspectives Conference last month.

The Boomerang Alliance brings together many of Australia’s leading environment groups, to work for zero waste in Australia.

After congratulating the industry’s management of agricultural chemicals, Dave said that further measures were needed.

response to safety concerns in 1994.

“There are real grounds to consider the same value-added approach with farmers. Farmers don’t want chemicals, they want their pests gone. Instead of simply buying your chemicals, they buy

MEDIA MATTERS

The melamine scare has been big news in recent weeks, with newspapers citing consumer concerns about imported Chinese produce. Meanwhile, the discrepancy between what growers receive for their produce and what consumers pay was given primetime airing on Channel 9's *A Current Affair*. Here are five recent items.

"Minister drags feet over tougher food label laws"

West Australian, Perth
Monday 13 October, page 13

With one telephone call, the *West Australian* confirmed with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) that Federal Agriculture Minister, Tony Burke, could amend the Trade Practices Act to strengthen labelling laws for fresh and processed foods.

Despite these findings, Minister Burke claimed that he was still investigating whether the act could be amended. This comes after a promise by the Rudd Government, six months ago, to toughen country of origin food laws.

Growers have since renewed calls into tougher country of origin food labelling after fears that Chinese vegetables, suspected of being contaminated with melamine, might be passed off as Australian-grown produce.

"Farewell to family farm"

Hobart Mercury, Hobart
Wednesday 15 October, page 11

Lower than average returns, long hours and rising production costs have resulted in one family of vegetable growers leaving horticulture to try their luck in the tourism industry.

After 150 years of vegetable growing, the Hiscutt family in Howth, Tasmania, has left vegetable production to open the Black Rock Retreat.

Other growers are also looking for other sources of income, either moving away from food production or converting to dairy.

"We have done well out of farming but there is no money in vegetables anymore," said ex-grower Ben Hiscutt. He explained that the farm-gate price of vegetables simply did not cover the costs involved.

"Vegie contamination fears"

Canberra Times, Canberra
Thursday 9 October, page 4

Fears that Chinese vegetables imported and sold in Australia could be contaminated with melamine have prompted investigations by Australian food authorities.

Lydia Buchtmann, from Food Standards Australia New Zealand, said investigators were taking the reports very seriously and investigations were being made in regards to concerns about imported Chinese products.

"At this stage, we can find no evidence that they're unsafe, but it's certainly something we're looking into," she said, adding that large quantities of contaminated dairy or vegetable produce would need to be eaten over a period of months before a person would suffer ill effects.

"Fruit 'n' veg magic"

West Australian, Perth
Wednesday 27 August, page 8

"Vegetables and Fruit for Health and Healing", a study conducted by nutritionists from Edith Cowan University, found that Australians are not eating enough fruit and vegetables.

According to the study, fruit and vegetables could significantly reduce the rate of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental health problems, musculoskeletal conditions and metabolic syndrome.

Despite these findings, of the people surveyed, only 7.6 per cent of males and 10.9 per cent of females eat the recommended daily intake of fresh food.

The study has called for primetime television advertising to educate children and parents about fruit and vegetable intake.

"Death of farmers"

A Current Affair, National
Wednesday 8 October

Discrepancies between farm-gate prices and what consumers pay are too high for members of the Greentree family, who have grown vegetables for four generations.

As prices for fertiliser, fuel and electricity increase, the one price that hasn't followed this trend is what the Greentrees receive for their vegetables. They are concerned that the produce they sell—their cabbages, for example—is given a 500 per cent mark up before being placed on supermarket shelves. None of this profit makes its way to the growers.

Tally Mathews, who had previously grown vegetables, has since left the industry to grow turf. The price received for his vegetables forced him to try his hand at something different.

R&D project preview

Australian Vegetable Industry Soil and Land Management Knowledge Exchange

Project number: VG07146

Start date: January 2008

End date: January 2011

Project leader: Jim Kelly, Business Manager, Arris

Email: jkelly@arris.com.au

Phone: 08 8303 6709




The Australian Vegetable Industry Soil and Land Management Knowledge Exchange is an innovative new tool for growers, researchers and industry representatives. It aims to become one of the largest specialised industry-based soil and land systems websites in the world.

The knowledge exchange will provide growers and industry consultants with scientifically reviewed resources that are developed and presented in a language and manner that increases accessibility and promotes acceptance and adoption.

Soil and land management information, relevant to vegetable growers, will be summarised and presented. These synopses are expected to aid growers when determining what information is relevant to their needs. Also available will be a selection of soil fact sheets, detailing findings and outcomes from research projects. The fact sheets feature growers and their properties in project-specific case studies.

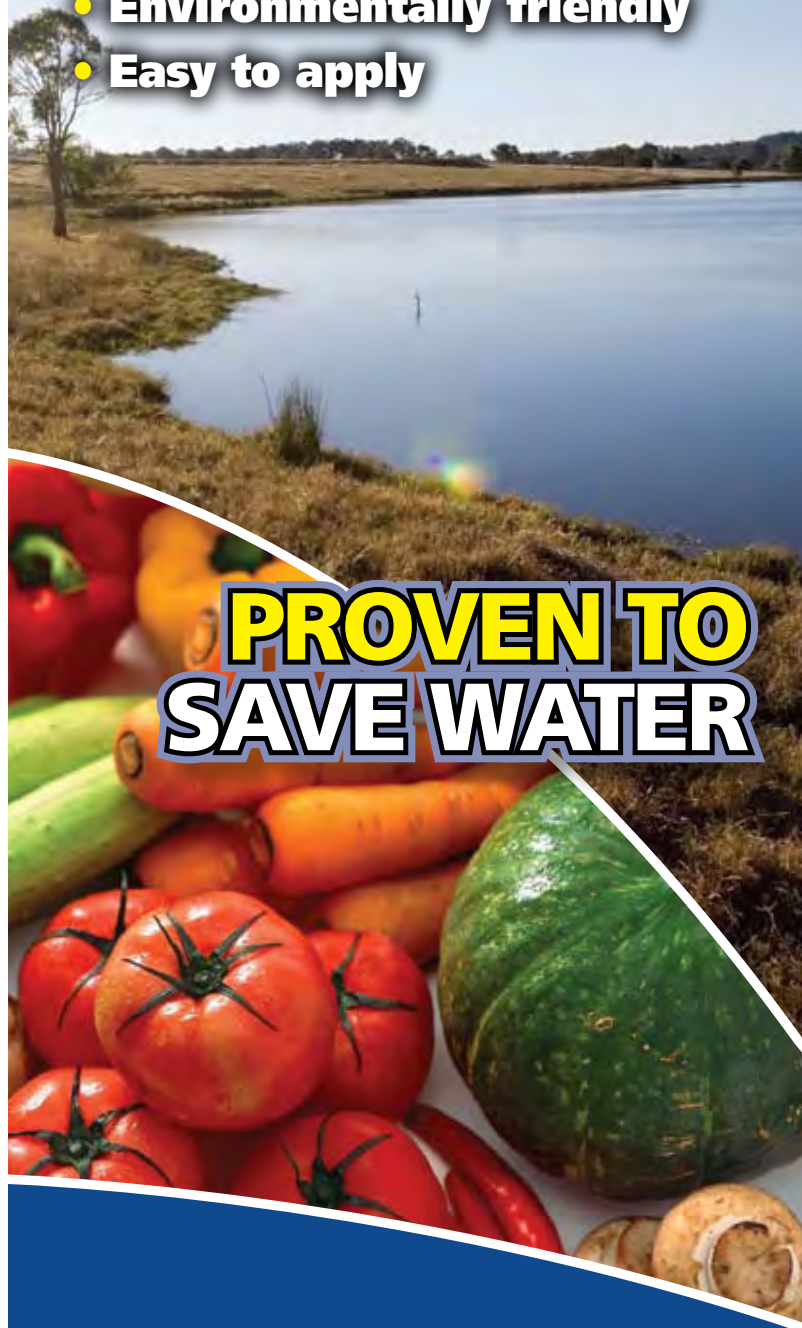
The information and tools harvested will be reviewed by a forum of industry stakeholders, scientists and professional editors to avoid duplication of material, verify appropriateness and ensure the information is scientifically sound.

A forum where growers can submit questions and seek advice from fellow growers or members of the Exchange Forum Panel will be incorporated into the website. Growers and other industry members will be able to submit and upload content they believe is useful; this content will be reviewed by the Exchange Forum Panel before being uploaded to ensure the quality of presented material remains high. 

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Environmental certification – easier than you think

Growers considering committing to an environmental Code of Practice may find that much of the hard work has already been done, writes Brea Acton.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- There is increasing demand for growers to demonstrate that they engage in sustainable farming practices.
- An environmental Code of Practice is one way to do this. It involves detailed record-keeping and an annual audit.
- Growers may find that the good industry practices they have adopted means that they are already complying with many of the code's requirements.

For more information visit:
www.freshcare.com.au
 or ring 1300 853 508

With climate change high on the agenda during last year's federal election, there is increasing demand from consumers and industry for sustainable practices in the agricultural sector. One organisation is helping growers meet this demand head-on by offering national certification of environmental standards on-farm.

Freshcare was established eight years ago to provide certification against a recognised Food Safety Code of Practice (CoP), allowing industry to meet both customer and regulatory requirements. Angela Steain, Environmental Program Manager at Freshcare, said the organisation now has more than 4,000 grower members.

"The Freshcare program was established through the support of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). Growers wanted a recognised program that was credible, easy to manage and cost effective. Freshcare was designed to be accountable, equitable to all parties, and industry-owned and managed," she said.

Formalised Code of Practice

Two years ago, Freshcare introduced environmental certification, partly in response to the growing demand for responsible farming methods. Joe Ekman, from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, has been working with Freshcare since its

inception. He is a member of the Freshcare Technical Committee, which is responsible for the establishment and ongoing development of the Environmental CoP.

"HAL's 'Horticulture for Tomorrow' program provided the momentum and resources for the development of the Freshcare Environmental CoP," said Joe.

"These developments drew on the experiences of specific industry environmental programs, such as EnviroVeg, and a strategic alignment between EnviroVeg and Freshcare was quickly established. Extensive consultation and drafting culminated in

continued page 22



Growers inspect and discuss soil structure improvements through use of organic matter/mulches.

“ Growers are unfairly cast as the villains in the environmental debate and aren't recognised for the good they've done.”



Duane Leadbetter, AusQual Auditor, inspects and discusses the implementation of chemical store management requirements for Freshcare. Images supplied by Joe Ekman.

the publication of the Freshcare Environmental CoP.”

EnviroVeg is an Environmental Management System (EMS) providing on-farm training and support to help growers comply with the Freshcare Environmental CoP. The CoP essentially provides growers with a template for an environmental business plan.

Competitive edge

Although environmental certification is still voluntary, there are several reasons why growers might become certified.

“Certification enables growers to achieve recognition that responsible environmental management and good agricultural practices are in place. It is also a cost effective, practical option for horticultural producers wanting to gain accreditation to an environmental standard,” said Angela.

Another reason why growers might opt for certification is that it is likely to become regulatory. In this sense, certified businesses may gain a competitive advantage.

“Many overseas customers already require environmental assurance. Evidence of environmental compliance will become increasingly more important across all markets,” said Angela.

Environmental certification

will cost growers around \$1,200 for the first year, including initial training and auditing, with ongoing annual costs of around \$500 to \$600. Annual audits are required to ensure ongoing compliance with the Freshcare Environmental CoP. They consist of detailed assessment of farm management, usage of chemicals, fertilisers and soil additives, as well as water, land and soil management. Biodiversity is assessed, as are all aspects of waste, air and energy management.

Apart from the personal sense of satisfaction growers might gain, Joe said there are other benefits to certification.

“In many cases, growers are already aware they need to take action but the demands of their business means it always slips down their list of priorities. Going through this process helps growers to focus and make changes that are overdue. This can lead to cost savings and better ways of working for both the grower and the environment.”

Surprisingly straightforward

For growers already running their businesses efficiently, Joe believes compliance with the Freshcare Environmental CoP will

be fairly straightforward.

“Growers who have already adopted good industry practices in chemical use, fertiliser and soil-additives use and water management will probably find they are already complying with many of the code requirements. Growers who are not measuring and managing their inputs well and have poorly developed property plans may have to make significant changes.”

Following an environmental assurance program such as EnviroVeg and the Freshcare Environmental CoP may be an important step in helping growers respond to the increased pressures of climate change, both on-farm and within the industry as a whole.

“Growers often complain to me that they are unfairly cast as the villains in the environmental debate and are not recognised for the good things they have done,” Joe said.

“For these growers, developing the plans and practices to meet the environmental code can ultimately provide a sense of personal empowerment and regaining control in this debate.” **va**

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A study into consumers' vegetable-buying behaviour shows that vegetable purchasing is on the rise, writes Jenan Taylor.

On the right track

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Vegetracker is a demographically-reflective survey of the vegetable-buying behaviour of Australian consumers.
- Overall, vegetable consumption has increased, though different methods need to be trialled to increase children's vegetable consumption.
- The five most commonly purchased vegetables were tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, onions and lettuce.

i For more information visit:
www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
 Project number: VG07168
 Keywords: Consumer behaviour

Growers have a good reason to celebrate as a new consumer tracking study for the vegetable industry about consumer behaviour reveals, among other things, that more than half of Australian shoppers surveyed have increased their purchases of fresh vegetables in the past year.

The project was conducted for the Australian vegetable industry by market research and brand development company Brand Story, which has been at the fore of marketing and consumer studies for companies such as Fosters and Boral.

The tracking research, Vegetracker, provides a wealth

of new data for the industry about consumer attitudes and behaviour, including insights into consumer perceptions of Australian vegetables.

Demographically sound

Brand Story Managing Director, Steve Sheppard, said that the project uncovered key attitudes towards vegetable consumption and buyer behaviour, providing details that until now have been difficult to ascertain. "The key objective was to assist the industry in formulating its marketing and communications strategies moving forward," said Steve.

Vegetracker's data has been compiled using online surveys

conducted over two periods (wave one and wave two, respectively) covering the summer and winter seasons in 2008. Each wave surveyed 600 people throughout Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia and focused on grocery buyers across key demographics including young householders, families and empty-nesters. It also considered their spending capacity and was balanced to represent the population demographics in these states.

In order to more accurately study the habits of vegetable buyers, the project evaluated the respondents' answers to questions under five main categories:

vegetable purchasing behaviour, preparation and consumption, diets, attitudes towards fresh produce, and children's perceptions of vegetables.

The key outcome of the wave one study into purchasing behaviour is that Australians are buying more fresh vegetables. More than half of those surveyed stated that they had increased

that those purchasing results may be largely indicative of seasonal eating habits.

There is also an indication that consumers are prepared to use their vegetables in creative ways with the survey showing that most people used their produce in salads, stir fries, baked dishes and sandwiches. These results imply that more Australians are

“More than half of those surveyed had increased their vegetable consumption compared with the same time 12 months ago.”

their consumption compared with the same time 12 months ago. It also shows that their main vegetable purchases comprise two groups of staples—primary (tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, onions and lettuce) and secondary (mushrooms, broccoli, capsicum and pumpkin). More consumers state that they have increased their purchases of salad mixes, Asian vegetables and semi-prepared vegetables over canned vegetables.

Creative consumption

Steve explained that the data from wave one was collected during the warmer months and

realising the value in freshness, and are becoming more involved with eating vegetables for health.

The wave one survey shows that 40 per cent of the respondents prefer to add trusted brands of vegetables to their shopping baskets, while around one in three are buying more organic produce. However, around 60 per cent state they would not pay more for organic vegetables.

Aim for a high-five

Contrary to the purchasing behaviour data, the outcome of the preparation and consumption trends category shows that despite the increase in fresh

Top performers

Two groups of staple vegetables emerged that the majority of households buy.

Primary (more than 70 per cent buy)

- tomatoes
- potatoes
- carrots
- onions
- lettuce

Secondary (50 to 70 per cent buy)

- mushrooms
- broccoli
- capsicum
- pumpkin

vegetable purchases, consumers consider themselves to generally be eating less than the recommended five serves of vegetables per day.

Reasons for this include a belief that including more vegetables in the daily diet was 'too hard' indicating that a lack of engagement with, and knowledge about, vegetables have played a major role in this outcome. Indeed there is a tendency among low spenders not to invest as much time selecting their fresh produce because of a lack of knowledge about it, let alone include more vegetables in their meals.

The wave two data was only just filtering through when *Vegetables Australia* spoke with Brand Story

and the overall results were not yet available. However, Steve is confident that the take-home message from the first wave already suggests that vegetable producers can prepare themselves for more good news.

“The results hold some interesting clues as to how the vegetable industry might proceed with strategic marketing planning,” he said.

“There are, for instance, strong connotations of education gaps to be filled and that some buyers need assistance with the range of possibilities in vegetable preparation, including how to judge the ripeness and quality of fresh produce at the point of purchase.”

Fresh figures

- Almost half the consumers surveyed (43%) purchase fresh produce two to three times a week. Seasonality and meal planning were among the major reasons cited for shopping for vegetables.
- Consumers tend to buy their vegetables at major supermarket chains (66%) and green grocers (58%), with independent retailers (22%) and farmers'

markets (22%) bringing up the rear. Few shoppers opt for home delivery of vegetables (2%).

- The physical appeal of vegetables at point of sale is very important to consumers who are more inclined to buy produce that displays high-quality (look and feel) and freshness.
- A lack of time to prepare, and vegetable prices, are major barriers to increasing

vegetable consumption to recommended levels.

- Parents report that children aren't eating enough vegetables and support a wide range of tactics for addressing this, including introducing fresh produce into their snack foods and snacking habits, and the use of mass advertising and cartoon characters.



“Not in my backy

Growers Lisa Crooks [left] and Don Pham on Don's cucumber farm in Park Ridge, Queensland.



The urbanisation of rural areas can make life difficult for growers, especially if residents and local councils don't understand how regulated the horticulture industry is, writes Jim Thomson. Photography by Kylie Hood.

From wind-farms in Victoria's Gippsland, to late-night music venues in inner-suburban Sydney, "not in my backyard" is an increasingly common reaction from residents on all manner of issues; they appreciate the necessity of a service, they just don't want it to have a direct impact on their lives.

With the urbanisation of rural areas nationally, growers have found themselves on the receiving end of this mentality. While growers' property values in Baldivis, Western Australia, and Cranbourne, Victoria, for example, have increased with rezoning, what happens when they have no plans to relocate?

Teething problems

Lisa Crooks owns two properties in Chambers Flat with her husband Ray, growing parsley and radishes. Located less than one hour south of Brisbane, the farm has been operating complaint-free for 18 years, but the past few years have proved difficult with confusion over changing legislation for agricultural businesses and local councils that have inconsistent views of the value of market gardens. Until March this year, Lisa's properties were part of Beaudesert Shire. They are now part of Logan City.

The problems stem from complaints made by residents, said Lisa. She first heard about these complaints by reading the local paper.

"In the early days, concerns from residents were about land clearing. This changed to con-

cerns about chemical usage, dust and pollution before moving on to greenhouse visual amenities—the sight of greenhouses in the landscape," she said.

"Neighbours, and not necessarily those who were new to the area, voiced their concerns directly to our local council. As many complaints related to LOTE growers, those who speak a language other than English, there were language issues in some instances."

Lisa had some concerns of her own. "If growers keep working,

chemicals are applied correctly, this odour is not dangerous," said Don.

While Workplace Health and Safety representatives understand that these chemicals, when correctly applied, hold no risk to residents' health, the trouble Don has is in communicating this to residents, especially when many growers in the area are LOTE growers.

Rob Fontebasso, a sales representative for Elders, has had many dealings with growers and

“If growers keep working, silently riding out the issues in the hope that they will disappear, it could be detrimental to the industry.”

silently riding out the issues in the hope that they will disappear, it could be detrimental to the industry as a whole," she said.

Don Pham, a cucumber greenhouse grower in Logan City, is President of the Vietnamese Growers Association, which represents 52 growers. He appreciates that residents' concerns should be investigated, but believes that many of these concerns stem from residents not knowing a great deal about the highly-regulated horticulture industry.

"There were concerns about the odours that surround chemical application. Agricultural chemicals, like petrol, have an odour. This is normal. When agricultural

residents in the shire, with some residents contacting him directly to air their concerns. He said that teething problems commonly occur when rural areas are urbanised.

Taskforce time

In light of these complaints, in January 2007 Beaudesert Shire Council announced its intention to establish the Intensive Horticulture Taskforce.

Along with representatives from the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland,



Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Health, Queensland Police Service, Growcom and the Logan Albert Catchment Association, Lisa and Don joined the taskforce, which had its first meeting in June 2007. Involvement in the taskforce gave them the opportunity to converse with council representatives directly.

“Initially, one of the councilors on the taskforce wanted to regulate the entire horticulture industry. Luckily, representa-

“ We asked councilors to let people know we were qualified to use chemicals and were doing so safely. ”

tives from EPA and Workplace Health and Safety explained how regulated the industry already is,” said Lisa.

The taskforce met until December last year. “A decision was made for growers to communicate more with the council and increase compliance within the industry. This included educating the community about best farming practices, and bringing growers in line with taskforce

recommendations,” said Lisa.

“The taskforce welcomed this. An information booklet was produced detailing how growers could be compliant with council. Growcom supplied a lot of the data, which the council supplemented with its own information. This sheet was distributed to every grower.”

For Don, the taskforce enabled him to clarify what occurrences had led to complaints from residents, which he communicated to members of his association.

“Good results came out of the taskforce. We rectified some things on our side, for example, sometimes when the soil is too dry, tractors create dust. Our members now hold off using tractors until the soil is wet enough or there is no wind to blow the dust onto neighbouring properties,” he said.

A spokeswoman for Logan City Council said the taskforce made good progress.

“Since the completion of taskforce activities ... community concerns about intensive horticulture operations have reduced. City Standards have advised earlier this year that: *‘the introduction of outcomes from the*

Intensive Agriculture Taskforce have coincided with decreased nuisance complaints as a result of market gardening practices. In the last six months there have been three manure odour complaints and two smoke nuisance complaints associated with intensive agriculture; however, breaches were not detected in most of those instances.’,” she said.

Change for the better

With the taskforce successful, growers in the shire had greater confidence that their businesses were better understood by the council. To cement this, further initiatives were made to improve growing practices.

In February 2008, a Growing Wiser workshop for growers was held. Representatives from Workplace Health and Safety, Queensland DPI&F, Drummaster, Beaudesert Shire Council, Elders and Water For Profit all presented.

“Attendance was voluntary but of the 37 growers invited, 34 growers attended. These were significant growers, accounting for the majority of greenhouse production in the shire. The

evening lasted for about three hours and was hosted by the then Queensland Vegetable IDO Simon Powell," said Lisa.

"The shire's compliance officer was impressed by the night, which had a positive spin-off. We now talk more openly to the council and agreed that if there were any more problems that they would be communicated to us, so the industry can address them as a whole."

Don used the quarterly General Meetings of the Vietnamese Growers Association to communicate growers' obligations.

"At one of these meetings, all members agreed that it was our responsibility to change how we farmed, in order to accommodate our neighbours. We asked the council to let our neighbours know that we were doing something to meet their concerns," he said.

Growers attended an agricultural college to obtain their Level 3 certificate in chemical handling. A qualified Vietnamese interpreter was present at the course to ensure that all growers understood that the safe application of chemicals was a legal obligation, not a choice.

"Councilors have a responsibility to the community. We asked them to let people know of the changes we had made, that we were qualified to use these chemicals and were doing so safely," said Don.

Amid residents' concerns about

water quality, the council also tested water samples from 18 randomly selected water tanks from growers and residents' properties.

The Logan City Council spokeswoman said that "the investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations (of rainwater tank contamination)".

Public education needed

The taskforce identified opening lines of communication as one of its main achievements, but for growers the most frustrating part of this exercise has been the mystery surrounding potential changes to legislation (see panel), and what they can expect in the future.

"So far, the three association members who have gone through the application process for building a new greenhouse were not issued a permit. It is expensive to apply and these costs are not refunded," said Don.

While Don has not yet been affected personally, it's an issue he's passionate about.

"All my neighbours support me. They see my staff and I work hard," he said.

"Only the minority of residents say that the Vietnamese don't know much about the chemicals. By law, to buy agricultural chemicals, you need a permit. There needs to be more public education." **va**



Uncertain times

Increased red tape when applying to build a new greenhouse spells a headache for growers—and no guarantee that their applications will be approved.

Despite efforts made by growers regarding increased compliance with their local council, and the strengthened relationship with council following the Intensive Horticulture Taskforce, growers have been disheartened and confused by reported changes to legislation.

Last year, the local newspaper reported changes to legislation that would affect greenhouse growers, which was the first they'd heard of it.

"While the taskforce was active, the council implemented a new greenhouse law, which wasn't mentioned at the taskforce meetings, stating that one must submit an application for a new greenhouse or to extend or expand the greenhouses in an existing business. It's a costly process, and unlikely to be successful—this is how my local councilor explained it to me at the time," said grower Lisa Crooks.

However, when she pressed the council for more details, she received conflicting information about whether a new law had been passed. To complicate matters, the council minutes relating to potential new horticulture laws were confidential, and thus unable to be accessed by the public.

A tale of two councils

Part of the confusion relates to an expansion of Logan City in March 2008, which amalgamated Logan City with parts of Gold Coast City and the northern Beaudesert Shire.

Councilor Phil Pidgeon from Logan City Council offered this point of clarification to *Vegetables Australia*: "The legislation has not yet changed but we are bound to carry the old Beaudesert Shire legislation in the former Beaudesert area until such time as we make a decision to change it to one common law".

A new Beaudesert Shire Planning Scheme was introduced before the councils were amalgamated, which means it must be followed.

"The Beaudesert Shire Planning Scheme 2007 made some types of market gardening 'impact assessable – inconsistent' when it commenced in March 2007," said a Logan City Council spokeswoman. This affected the building of new greenhouses or the expansion of existing greenhouse structures.

"Prior to that, only specific forms of market gardening needed planning approval. Most of the operations that were built only required building approval at the time. The change in 2007 made future market gardens in structures subject to planning approval," said the spokeswoman.

continued page 30

"Under the rules that the state has given us for writing planning schemes 'impact assessable – inconsistent' is as clear as council can make it that a development is not wanted. These are performance-based planning schemes and we are not allowed to prohibit development. As a consequence, in some circumstances, 'impact assessable – inconsistent' development can be approved if it can be designed to control the impacts."

Phil has worked closely with growers regarding the issue of potential changes to legislation. He cautions that industry familiarity is needed if smart decisions are to be made.

"In any regulation that occurs, you can get a situation where decision makers, if they're not familiar with the industry, suggest and implement the wrong thing. You have to have a feel for the industry and understand the issues," said Phil.

"In some senses, what's happening at Logan City is a test case. The city does have a lot of urban development, but it is more mixed acreage, and I'm all for going into bat for those who want to use the land for traditional uses," he said.

Common sense prevails

Phil acknowledges that complaints have been made about

greenhouse growers, but said that these were isolated incidences.

"In Logan City we had the lion's share of greenhouses in the area; we had one or two complaints about these operations over 10 years. When the councils were amalgamated, there were still very few complaints," he said.

"The previous Beaudesert Shire Council had a proposal to make market gardening illegal in its shire, which was outrageous—we should minimise the regulations wherever possible."

While discussions were held about this proposal, Phil said that common

sense has prevailed thus far. However, he stressed that the existing legislation is there for a reason.

"If people want to install new greenhouses, then code assessment needs to be done and setback from neighbours' houses needs to be considered," he said

"The issue is getting approval for the structures. If the farmers were growing in open air, they wouldn't need approvals. There has always been an application process for the erection of the structures over 10m², this is a normal requirement as people are required to obtain building approval under the State Government Building Act." va

“Submitting an application for a new greenhouse ... is a costly process, and unlikely to be successful.”

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Vegetable Industry Awards




Seeds firmly planted for industry conference

Planning is well underway for the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, to be held at the Melbourne Convention Centre from 4 to 6 May.

More than 30 exhibitors and up to 700 delegates from Australia and internationally are expected to attend the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference. Representation from all vegetable industry sectors is anticipated, including general vegetables, fresh and processed potatoes, onions, organics, hydroponics and Asian vegetables.

The conference program will include a welcome cocktail reception, gala dinner, trade exhibition and an array of issue-focused sessions and presentations. A highlight of the conference will be the diverse research and development presentations, providing the opportunity for growers to learn about the latest outcomes from levy-funded projects.

Nominate now

The Australian Vegetable Industry Awards will be a significant feature of the conference program; the presentation ceremony will be held at the gala dinner on Wednesday 6 May at the Crown Palladium, Southbank.

Award categories include Landini Vegetable Grower of the Year, Landmark Young Vegetable Grower of the Year, Syngenta Researcher of the Year, Brisbane

Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award and the AUSVEG Industry Recognition Award.

Nomination forms, included with this issue of *Vegetables Australia*, can also be downloaded from the awards website, www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au.

“Both the awards and the conference provide unique opportunities for the industry to unite, gain valuable knowledge and celebrate its achievements,”

“The conference will promote the vegetable industry as a key player in the fight to improve the health of all Australians.”

said AUSVEG CEO, Robert Lawler.

The conference theme, “Growing a Healthy Australia” is about promoting the vegetable industry as a key player in the fight to improve the health of all Australians. Conference sessions will address the reality that a healthy industry is required to fulfil this important role.

Exhibition showcase

The trade exhibition will allow delegates to network with other

growers, leading suppliers, and farm and industry stakeholders. The exhibition will showcase an extensive range of products and services available to growers.

The steering committee, comprising growers and representatives from all sectors of the industry, met last month to collaborate on the direction of the conference. Their input, along with the feedback from the 2007 conference, has been a valuable

ally demonstrate their support for the vegetable industry. We are proud to announce our confirmed sponsors to date:

- Platinum: Bayer CropScience
- Gold: Landmark, Vin Rowe
- Silver: DOW AgroSciences, Terranova Seeds and Bejo Seeds
- Bronze: South Pacific Seeds and Crop Care

Opportunities are still available for conference sponsorship and conference exhibitors. For more information or to obtain a prospectus, contact Max Hyde, AUSVEG Sponsorship Manager, on 03 9870 4161 or max@hydedia.com.au.

The conference prospectus can also be downloaded from www.vegieconf.com.au.

Registration forms will be issued with the January issue of *Vegetables Australia*, so secure your place early for the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, “Growing a Healthy Australia”. 

For more information contact:
AUSVEG on 03 9544 8098
or visit www.vegieconf.com.au
or www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au

Mechanise to improve growing techniques

Participation in world tours as part of his Nuffield Scholarship proved to be an eye-opening experience for Queensland grower and Nuffield Scholar Tim Harslett.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- After being awarded a Nuffield Scholarship, grower Tim Harslett researched the pros and cons of mechanisation, and alternative methods of weed and disease control.
- Increased mechanisation will reduce labour costs and may improve the standard of agronomic practices to ensure crops produced are of higher quality.
- While many alternative methods of weed and disease control are now comparatively commonplace, just as many methods are less well-known and should be considered on a per-farm basis.

I have recently returned from two educational world tours, which I attended as part of the National Vegetable Levy sponsored Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship. The first six weeks encompassed a Global Focus Tour. Along with 10 Nuffield Scholars from Australia, New Zealand and Canada, I travelled to developed and developing countries to learn about trends in world agriculture. I then completed an 11-week stint in North America and Europe to research my topics: “What role mechanisation has in the vegetable industry” and “Alternative methods of weeds and disease control”.

Mechanisation in the vegetable industry

Mechanisation has a role to play in alleviating the problems of increasing labour costs and labour scarcity.

There are two significant obstacles to adopting mechanisation. The first is cost, and several considerations should be

made when justifying increased expenses. While the potential savings made when machines replace manual labour is an obvious factor, the main economic justification will come from increasing the standard of growing techniques to accommodate machinery.

Increased quality will yield better returns, and machinery will potentially make the remaining physical work more attractive. Machinery may also result in staff working at a more constant speed. Reduced reliance on labour means less stress for employers or the potential to expand businesses with their existing human capital.

The second significant obstacle is the possible need to increase the standard of agronomic practices. Mechanisation dictates that, for best results, the average quality of produce must be high and standard deviation from the average must be minimised. Many growers will use this as an excuse to not adopt mechanisa-

tion. However, good growers will seek to overcome these challenges and allow mechanisation to realise its full potential and benefits.

Robotics is the next level of mechanisation. It already plays a role in the vegetable industry and this trend will intensify.

agronomic practices that can be adopted to aid weed and disease control. While some of these alternative methods are common practice on farms, many other novel concepts may warrant further investigation.

For disease control I investigated plant health, cultivar selection/

“Robotics already plays a role in the vegetable industry and this trend will intensify.”

Alternative methods of weed and disease control


Society will inevitably dictate that growers reduce their use of chemicals due to perceived environmental and health reasons. My objective was to learn what weed and disease control options could be implemented to complement, improve or replace conventional chemical controls.

There is a huge variety of

breeding, farm cultural practices, spraying techniques, disease modelling, clean seeds, soil sterilisation, beneficial pathogens, crop rotation and bio-fumigants.

For weed control the focus was on developed and developing technologies of sensor-guided inter- and intra-row mechanical weeding, GPS logging of plant placement to allow autonomous weeding, fumigants, ammonium-based sprays, mulches, crop rotation, planting density and spacing, pre-planting kill off, steaming, flaming, solarisation, night land-prep/planting, glass-house production and genetic modification potential.

Each method needs to be considered on an individual farm basis because practicality and cost effectiveness will vary.

The Nuffield Scholarship experience has challenged me to think outside the square and I hope that at least some of what I have learned can be passed on to other Australian growers. 



Increased mechanisation of the vegetable industry is inevitable, as seen above with an autonomous tractor. Image supplied by Tim Harslett.



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Spread the word

Communicating best practice growing methods to LOTE growers has been a successful (if somewhat complex) endeavour, writes Angela Brennan.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- A four-year project has improved communication with Asian vegetable growers, identified major pests and diseases of Asian vegetable crops, and established effective IPM systems.
- Arbitrary spray thresholds for certain pests were established, which demonstrated that IPM can reduce pesticide usage while maintaining product quality under low pest pressure.
- Scouting and monitoring strategies for pests and diseases of several types of Asian vegetables under different production systems were developed.

i For more information contact Len Tesoriero, Industry Leader Greenhouse & Ornamental Crops, NSW DPI
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 or visit www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
 Project number: VG04032
 Keywords: Integrated management strategies

With the Asian vegetable industry now worth \$150 million a year, it's clear that Australians are learning to love their Asian veggies. This reflects the nation's changing culture and ethnicity, which have seen a new wave in agricultural practices and diverse cultural populations, particularly in the horticultural sector, and a growing appreciation for Asian cuisine.

As the Asian vegetable industry grows, new allegiances between researchers and growers are forged, and new communication systems are set in place to accommodate linguistic and cultural issues. However, new pest and disease problems are also on the rise.

Broad reach

Len Tesoriero, Industry Leader Greenhouse & Ornamental Crops for the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, and a team of researchers have recently concluded a nationwide four-year project that improved communication with growers, identified major pests and diseases of Asian vegetable crops, and established effective integrated pest management (IPM) systems.

"There's been a longstanding problem in the vegetable industry that significant information—such as safe chemical use, water and environmental regulations, and farm management issues—has not been adequately communi-

cated to non-English speaking growers," said Len.

"Asian vegetables are still, to some degree, unexplored territory in this country. We have more than 1,000 growers of Asian vegetables in Australia, a large proportion of whom are from family-based enterprises with poor English and plant-protection skills."

Effective communication and improved pest management are the Asian vegetable industry's biggest challenges.

"Many Asian vegetable crops grow quickly; they have short production cycles with regular harvesting. This poses a significant constraint when using



Len Tesoriero [right] discusses disease symptoms with a group of Vietnamese growers at a field day in the Sydney Basin.

conventional pesticides,” said Len.

“However, we’ve had some very successful outcomes. Bilingual field officers funded through other government initiatives have assisted by communicating our project aims, gathering information about grower practices and translating project outputs and outcomes.”

“Many Asian vegetable crops grow quickly. This poses a significant constraint when using conventional pesticides.”

Improved systems

Len described the work achieved with LOTE growers (those who speak a language other than English) in Geelong, Victoria, and the Sydney Basin as a highlight of the project.

“The growers, most of whom are Chinese or Vietnamese, are receptive to improved pest management systems. In the Sydney Basin, we were able to demonstrate better pest control of leafy brassicas and the culinary herb perilla with biological controls alone,” he said.

“We established arbitrary spray thresholds for certain pests on leafy brassicas and have successfully demonstrated that IPM can reduce pesticide usage while maintaining product quality under low pest pressure.”

continued page 36

Asian Vegetable Profile

White radish (*Raphanus sativus*)

Otherwise known as: Daikon, Chinese radish, lo bok, mooli



Background

The white radish is a member of an extremely large and diverse family of plants known to have been cultivated for at least 2,500 years. Root types produced by *Raphanus sativus* vary from the small round red radishes that Australians are most familiar with, to giant white radishes that weigh several kilograms. The skin and flesh may be red, pink, green, white or black.

White radishes are the preferred type for Asian cuisine.

These can be long and slender or almost round, depending on the variety. They are often referred to as “daikons”, although arguably this should apply only to the medium-sized, carrot-shaped varieties preferred in Japan.

Where and how does it grow?

Like other root vegetables, white radishes do best in light-textured or sandy soils. However, the range of varieties means they are extremely adaptable. Some varieties grow entirely underground;

others protrude above the soil, developing green shoulders as a result. The latter varieties are more suited to heavier soils.

Preparation and cooking

Although most radishes are grown for their enlarged roots, the leaves and flowers are also edible. Very young leaves have a peppery flavour, similar to rocket, and may be added raw to salads. Older leaves are usually cooked.

White radishes generally have a milder flavour when compared with red radishes, but they can still be quite hot and pungent. They may be prepared in a number of ways: steamed, boiled, roasted, fried in oil like chips or added to soup. They are often grated and added to sauces, for extra zing. The Japanese sometimes insert chillies into white radishes before grating. The resulting pink puree has plenty of bite and is served with seafood.

Pickled white radish is a popular preparation method. It is usually finely sliced or shredded and mixed with vinegar or Chinese wine, soy sauce, ginger and other ingredients to make a tasty side dish. [va](#)



For more information contact:

Jenny Ekman, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries

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The project highlighted poorly-understood pest and disease challenges in traditional field production systems, and identified problems where new production methods and products are being developed.

“These growers are keen to try new production systems such as hydroponics and we are well placed to assist them by using existing resources or developing new methods,” said Len.

“It’s imperative we facilitate ways for LOTE growers to adopt sustainable disease and pest management practices. These people have come to Australia with very little knowledge of how the system works here. Many have agricultural and/or entrepreneurial backgrounds based on different environments and economies, and have set up an enormously successful new industry in Australia.”

More work to be done

Nevertheless, issues still arise. “These include overuse of certain insecticides that can devastate an IPM program, which depends on the build-up of beneficial insects, as well as damaging the environment and costing growers a lot of money unnecessarily.



Dr Victor Rajakulendran, NSW DPI Entomologist, monitors leafy brassica crops for pests. Images supplied by Len Tesoriero.

No-one wants this, and with more effective communication it doesn’t have to happen,” said Len.

“These issues are complex. When we started this project there were no legal control strategies in place. Several government-sponsored initiatives have since focused on overall compliance with food safety standards, while assisting growers in areas such as water-use efficiency, worker safety and reduced environmental impact. We seized the opportunity to boost compliance with several important aspects of plant protec-

tion, particularly with IPM.”

Len’s team developed scouting and monitoring strategies for pests and diseases of several types of Asian vegetables under different production systems, including field beds, trellised crops, greenhouses, hydroponic crops and bagged media crops. Significant diseases and pests identified by the researchers included root rots, viruses and damaging insects and mites.

“We’ve come a long way in the past few years, but we can’t rest yet,” said Len. “There are serious

pests and diseases for which we have no current solutions—either IPM-based or with conventional chemistry—such as thrips, Rutherglen bugs and flea beetles. Similarly, last year’s wetter weather in the Sydney Basin increased the incidence of a number of diseases on leafy brassicas, such as Turnip mosaic virus and white leaf spot, club root and downy mildew. We do not know enough about these yet to make improvements to existing recommendations. More research is needed.”

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Buried treasure supports a community

There's more than meets the eye at Carnarvon, including one of Australia's most productive commercial water systems, writes Dan McGuire.

From the air, the sandy section of the Gascoyne River near Carnarvon, Western Australia, looks like a desert. However, the dry river holds a secret—huge aquifers beneath the surface provide water for one of the most productive fruit and vegetable growing areas in the nation.

From just 2,000 hectares along its banks, 176 members of the Carnarvon Growers Association (CGA) make their living by sending a dazzling variety of produce more than 900 kilometres south to the markets in Perth.

"We are considered to have one of Australia's most productive systems in terms of water use," said CGA's General Manager, Ivor Gaylard.

With just 200 to 300 millimetres of rainfall per year, growers rely on bores to water their crops.

"The river itself is dry on the surface. If you look on Google Earth, it's just a big block of sand. But there are aquifers under the sand so we pump out of these," said Ivor.

Most of the region's growers have river frontage and their own bores but there is also a "bore-field" that pumped into a central scheme from which growers can buy water.

Small holdings

Holdings are small, typically from six to 10 hectares. Some growers make a living from just a few hectares while, at the other end of



Liquid dreams: the Gascoyne River near Carnarvon, Western Australia, rarely runs deep [see inset], if at all. As a result, growers must rely on bore water.

the scale, one business has 100 hectares over several plots.

Produce includes capsicum, cucurbits, bananas, tomatoes, mangoes, grapes, citrus, avocado, corn, chillies and beans.

"Vegetables have been commercially grown in the area for almost a century, but the industry didn't really take off until after the Second World War," said Zimbabwean-born Ivor, who took on the role at CGA early last year.

He said the close-knit association, which was owned by the growers, had developed a variety of practical functions to assist members. These included a monthly newsletter about industry issues and regular courses on topics such as quality assurance, chemical safety, irrigation design,

pest and disease-management and fork-lift driving.

CGA staff includes a full-time agronomist to help growers with problems on-site and a mechanic to handle pump repairs.

On a state level, CGA executive Rochelle Shain provides representation on the board of vegetablesWA.

"We have a system that works well," said Ivor.

All for members

One of the association's future challenges is to develop a more efficient marketing system. Currently produce is trucked all the way to Perth and then brought back up to towns along the way, which means haulage of well over 1,000 kilometres.

Significantly, CGA is self-funded, providing all its services to growers at virtually no cost.

"We run a warehouse here with all the inputs growers need—fertilisers, seed, a carton-erecting machine and such. The proceeds of merchandising fund our operations. Everything we make in the shop goes back into the association," said Ivor.

This enables CGA to charge only a nominal membership fee.

Like the aquifers beneath the dry Gascoyne River, the association is a reliable resource running deep to sustain its members. **va**

For more information contact:
i Ivor Gaylard, General Manager
Carnarvon Growers Association
Phone: 08 9941 8384

Hard data for veggie purchases

Accurate purchasing data for fresh vegetables is now available to help growers better understand their market and increase sales, writes Lisa Cork, Nielsen Fresh Produce Specialist.

As vegetable growers and marketers, how many of you would like to know:

- Who buys your vegetables?
- How frequently they buy vegetables?
- What retail outlets they buy their vegetables in?
- What the spending relationship is between fresh, processed and packaged vegetables?

If so, picture 10,000 Australian grocery shoppers using, at home, a hand-held scanner to scan every fresh, processed or packaged vegetable they buy. In addition

“Shoppers have been recruited so that their demographic specifically mirrors the Australian population.”

to scanning every vegetable purchased, they also scan the date, time and place of purchase, citing specific supermarket chains, local green grocer, farmers markets and the Internet.

Ready to go

The good news is that this is already happening. Currently, 10,000 shoppers partake in the Nielsen Homescan Panel. Shoppers have been recruited so that their demographic specifically mirrors the Australian population.

The shoppers' purchases are tracked by household size, primary household-shopper age, life-cycle stage, income and physical address in Australia.

Homescan aims to provide thorough coverage of vegetable purchases:

- Every time one of the 10,000 Homescan panelists buy fresh, processed or packaged vegetables, this data is recorded.

- As the panel is selected to match the wider demographic of Australia's population, assumptions can be made about how all Australian households buy vegetables.
- As panelists scan only what they purchase, Homescan data is extremely close to real time, actual data—especially for hard-to-track loose vegetable purchases.
- Access to this information is customised to specific industry needs, updated monthly or quarterly, and delivered via email or the web in easily understood reports.

Information about consumer purchases and buying behaviour helps the industry understand what, when, where and how shoppers purchase vegetables, an incredibly valuable tool in this fast-changing industry.

Vegetables Australia magazine will feature Homescan findings in future issues. If there is particular information you would like to see featured, call Jim Thomson on 0407 242 788 or email <editor@ausveg.com.au>. **va**

For more information contact:
i Lisa Cork, Nielsen's Fresh Produce Specialist
 Email: <lisa.cork@nielsen.com>
 Phone: +64 9 815 5944



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Tailor-made leadership development

A new levy-funded course has a three-pronged approach to the development of leadership skills and lets participants set the agenda, writes AUSVEG's Lucy Jarman.

A new leadership course is taking place in response to the vegetable industry's strategic plan, VegVision 2020. The course, which is partly funded by the National Vegetable Levy, is tailored to address three levels—personal, business and industry leadership.

The HAL Vegetable Industry Leadership Course is managed and facilitated by Jill Briggs from Rural Training Initiatives. The course is tailored for participants to set and implement their own leadership plan. Three sessions, each taking place over three days, will give participants a total of nine face-to-face training sessions.

The course will be held from 25 to 27 November 2008, 24 to 26 February 2009, and 25 to 27 May 2009. The November session will focus on personal development, the February session will look at business leadership, and the May session will target industry issues.

Personal input

"Participants set their own personal targets around the three areas; then, for the next six months, these targets are tracked," Jill said.

For example, a grower may participate in the course with the specific aim of refining his or her communication skills to better deal with staff members and clients. In this instance, a session would be tailored around the grower's particular needs.

At a business level, participants may choose to focus on more effective delegation and management skills, which are covered

in the program's skills session. At the industry-leadership level, an emphasis on public speaking could lead to a participant's desired outcome.

Core competencies met

The course is the only national industry-specific leadership program for the vegetable industry, and has been designed in consultation with industry needs. It is an adjunct to the work of the industry's previous People Development Coordinator, Dianne Fullelove, whose project finished in June this year (see *Vegetables Australia* 4.1, page 52).


"Dianne's work has been incredibly useful. It has provided information and guidance around what the industry needs and the skills that need to be developed

and addressed," said Jill.

In the 12 years Jill has been involved in leadership development, she has isolated the core competencies people want when they attend a leadership program. "The Vegetable Industry Strategic Leadership Course will ensure that participants have those core competencies when they graduate," she said.

The course welcomes registrations from all industry sectors, including growers, harvesters, processors, extension officers, exporters, importers, marketers and employees.

While the cut-off date for applications was 11 November 2008, people who are interested are still encouraged to contact Jill to discuss the program, in case the program is postponed

or held again. Participants will be required to pay \$500 for the course and additional costs such as accommodation and flights. 

THE BOTTOM LINE

- An industry-specific leadership development program has been created for the vegetable industry.
- The program will focus on three areas: personal development, business leadership and industry issues.
- Program participants have significant input in the areas that are to be focused on. The course is tailored to meet their individual objectives.

 For more information contact:
Jill Briggs, Rural Training Initiatives
Email: <rti@dragnet.com.au>
Phone: 02 6035 7284
Mobile: 0409 455 710



Ask the industry

Phil Hoult, Technical Services Lead for Syngenta Crop Protection, responds to questions, concerns or problems you have about protecting your crops.

What is the difference between a preventative and a curative fungicide?

Factors that determine the biological success of a foliar application of fungicide include selecting the correct product, applying the correct dosage at the optimum time, and achieving the required coverage of the target surface. Along with the chemical rate, coverage is a crucial factor in maximising efficacy.

Understanding the differences between preventative and curative fungicides, and how they respond to fungal diseases, is part of achieving a good result.

Preventative

These fungicides prevent the establishment of an infection occurring. As they stop the fungal disease from penetrating the leaf or plant surface, they must be applied before infection occurs. Depending on the fungicide group, they have no real ability to "cure" an infection after it has occurred.

Not all preventative or protectant fungicides are the same. For example, after application to the leaf surface, Amistar 250SC (Group K) moves into the leaf while ensuring some product remains on the leaf surface to combat incoming fungal spores. Though it behaves in this manner, it is still essentially a protectant fungicide.

Other preventative fungicides, such as Copper Hydroxide (Group Y), adhere to or form a

deposit on the outside of the plant or leaf surface so that when fungal spores germinate and contact the fungicide, control is obtained. In most circumstances these products do not redistribute or penetrate into the leaf. Good coverage is important with both product groups, but more so with Group Y.

Curative

Curative fungicides inhibit the development of an established infection that is not showing visible symptoms. Curative fungicides include products such as Score 250EC (Group C) and Ridomil Gold MZ (Groups D and Y). While these have different Modes of Action, the curative components essentially penetrate into the plant part where they control the disease after infection has occurred. The term curative does not imply that visible disease will be eradicated; however, some curative fungicides do exhibit limited eradicator activity. Once symptoms are evident, applying a fungicide will not regenerate dead or necrotic tissue; although, in most cases, it will halt further development of the disease. **va**

i If you have a question to ask the industry, email <editor@ausveg.com.au> or ring the Syngenta Technical Product Advice Line on 1800 067 108. Some questions may be published.



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HR: Fom: 0,2 (fusarium wilt)
IR: Px: 1,2US (powdery mildew)



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- Excellent field holding and extended harvest.
- Very good flesh firmness and colour.
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Resistances:

HR: Fom: 0,2 (fusarium wilt)
IR: Px: 1,2US (powdery mildew)



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Help sweet corn fulfil its potential

New technologies for monitoring plant densities and chlorophyll levels could lead to smarter application of fertilisers, writes Research Fellow James Taylor.

As a grower, would you manage a six ton/ha and 30 ton/ha crop the same way, with the same fertiliser? Of course not. It makes no sense to apply the same input levels to two areas where output differs by a factor of five.

However, a survey of site-specific sweet corn yield in the central-west of New South Wales showed that this scenario is happening. Across three fields (48 ha in total), hand-sampled yields as low as six ton/ha and as high as 30 ton/ha were recorded. All three fields received almost the same fertiliser treatment.

Targeted management pays off

Conducted by the Australian Centre of Precision Agriculture (ACPA), the survey of spatial variation in crop development, yield and quality focused on three aspects to identify:

1. How much variation there was in the production system
2. Whether there was enough variation to warrant site-specific management
3. Which technologies can be easily adapted to help growers move from a uniform to variable-rate management strategy.

Yield variability, and the implication of this variability on site-specific crops' nitrogen requirements, was the most striking feature of the survey. In years gone by, when nitrogen was more affordable, its overapplication was not so problematic—at least from an economic perspective. These days, wasting fertiliser is a costly business, not to mention the potential off-farm, environmental pollution effects of excess nitrogen application.

The large level of yield variability observed in the survey indicates that a more targeted management

strategy, in which nitrogen application would vary according to plant requirements and potential, could have significant economic advantages. Simple modelling of nitrogen requirements across the three fields conservatively indicated that at least \$100/ha was wasted in excess nitrogen application.

Smart side-dressing

Knowing there is variation is one thing, providing an effective management strategy is another. Growers need timely information if they are to make the right decisions. Canopy sensors, which measure the amount of chlorophyll at specific locations in a field, can help provide this information.

For the survey, canopy reflectance images collected during the fortnight leading up to side-dressing (a second dose of fertiliser, which boosts growth) showed areas in the fields

“Simple modelling indicated that at least \$100/ha was wasted in excess nitrogen application.”


where there was either a large or small amount of chlorophyll, corresponding to strong or weak plant growth. This provided one clue to production potential—and therefore nitrogen requirement—at a crucial stage in the growth cycle.

By itself, these images did not differentiate between chlorophyll in primary tillers and secondary tillers. Areas with strong second-

ary tillering appeared healthy, however, secondary tillers are generally non-productive, which meant the production potential was less than the canopy response indicated.

Survey results showed that site-specific yield predictions were greatly improved when plant density was incorporated with the canopy reflectance imagery. This encourages the development of a simple and effective tool for growers deciding whether to vary the nitrogen application rate at side-dressing.

Overall, the survey indicated that intensive fertiliser and irrigation management in sweet corn can improve production levels when using precision agriculture and site-specific crop management technologies.

Thanks to HAL, Simplot Australia, and Jeff McSpedden for their assistance during the project. 

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Variability in sweet corn production can be high. Measuring chlorophyll levels within crops can isolate strong and weak plant growth.
- When the chlorophyll levels are incorporated with data about plant density, it can provide a good indication of the production potential of crops.
- Side-dressing application rates can then more accurately be calculated for specific areas within crops, which may help reduce costs.

 For more information contact:
James Taylor, Research Fellow
IRNA
Email: <taylor@inra.supagro.fr>
or visit rural-gis.usyd.edu.au/
VG07035
or
www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
Project number: VG07035
Keywords: Sweet corn variation

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Awash in a sea of imports

The alarming trend of increased imports for vegetables in Australia is showing no signs of abating, writes Economist Ian James.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- In financial year 2007/08, imports of vegetables and vegetable products exceeded exports by \$315 million, a sharp increase in import figures from previous years.
- While the drought and the high value of the Australian dollar are both factors for this increase in imports, Australia's loss of capacity in the processing side of the industry as a result of globalisation is a major concern.
- The decreasing value of the Australian dollar and vegetable contamination scares out of China have created both domestic and export market opportunities.

For the second consecutive year, the Australian vegetable industry saw a sharp deterioration in its trade performance. In financial year 2007/08, imports of vegetables and vegetable products exceeded exports by \$315 million, up sharply on the previous year; in 2006/07, the gap was \$199 million. Six years ago the industry had a trade surplus with exports exceeding imports by \$66 million.

Concentrated deterioration

In 2007/08, exports decreased for the sixth consecutive year to \$235 million, down 4.7 per cent on 2006/07. Australian exports are principally fresh and chilled vegetables. Exports of fresh vegetables took a big hit in 2002/03 and 2003/04 as significant market share was lost in Asia—particularly in Singapore, Malaysia and Japan—largely to

Chinese competition.

Since then, exports to these markets have continued to decline. They decreased again in 2007/08. However, it is the growth in imports that should have alarm bells ringing through the industry. Imports of vegetables increased more than 23 per cent in 2007/08. This follows a 19 per cent increase in 2006/07.

Most of Australia's imports are processed or frozen.

While processed vegetable imports were up, largely due to a 46 per cent rise in tomato products, frozen vegetable imports were up a whopping 42 per cent. Frozen prepared potato imports were up 70 per cent to more than \$65 million, while frozen corn imports more than doubled and frozen pea imports rose 45 per cent. This follows a sharp acceleration in imports of frozen product in 2006/07.

Global market is here to stay

Processors and retailers sight the reason for the rise in imports as a shortage of supply caused by drought conditions in Australia. Economists sight the high value of the Australian dollar as an explanation. There is probably some veracity in both these points, however, many growers would claim that supply is not a major problem, particularly given the short growing cycle of vegetable crops. Additionally, the pace of decline in the industry's trade position and the long-term trends suggest that the industry's

Table 1. Vegetable import products in Australia

Top 15 vegetable imports	Year to June 2007 (\$M)	Year to June 2008 (\$M)
Frozen prepared potatoes	38.2	65.1
Processed whole tomatoes and pieces	37.2	52.0
Dried vegetables	38.9	38.5
Tomato paste	24.0	37.4
Frozen vegetable mixes	27.9	33.6
Processed vegetable mixtures	31.2	31.6
Vegetable seeds for sowing	30.6	30.4
Frozen peas	19.5	28.3
Frozen sweet corn	13.2	26.9
Frozen vegetables other than spinach, peas, beans, sweet corn and potatoes	17.2	20.6
Tuber vegetables	13.5	18.9
Processed potatoes and potato product	14.2	17.4
Vegetables preserved in vinegar	16.0	15.2
Garlic	12.2	10.7
Tomato sauce	12.2	10.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

woes cannot be laid entirely at the feet of the currency.

The vegetable industry has, uniquely among Australian agricultural industries, historically being domestically focused. Now, it is rapidly being globalised. The loss of capacity in the processing side of the industry is a major concern. Processors are now thinking and acting globally, as are the major retailers.

Despite widespread media

comment and data revealing that China is now the second most important source of vegetable imports after New Zealand, sourcing of imported vegetable products is not confined to China. There was strong growth in 2007/08 of frozen imports out of Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Canada, tomato paste and canned tomatoes out of the USA and Italy, tuber vegetables out of Thailand, and imports

continue to be sourced from more exotic locales such as Turkey, Peru, Mexico, South Africa and Argentina.

Falling dollar is good news

Although fresh vegetable imports were up more than 18 per cent, they are coming off a relative low base. At this stage, fresh vegetable imports do not constitute a threat to the Australian industry with most imports related to seasonal conditions. This excludes garlic, which is the largest fresh vegetable import.

The garlic import figures for 2007/08 make for interesting reading. There was some sourcing from new sources such as Mexico and Argentina, but overall garlic imports decreased last

year, largely due to lower supply from China. Anecdotal reports suggest that Australian chefs are underwhelmed by the quality of the Chinese product.

The recent rapid fall in value of the Australian dollar is good news for the industry as price competitiveness remains the key factor in determining sourcing of product.

“The growth in vegetable imports should have alarm bells ringing through the industry.”

While the dollar's depreciation is placing upward pressure on the price of key imported inputs for vegetable growers, such as

fertiliser, this will be more than offset by the expected decrease in prices that will accompany the emerging sharp deterioration in the world economy. There are also some market opportunities, both domestic and export, with the recent scares attached to contamination of vegetables out of China.

At the time of writing, new data was available for July and August 2008. Although we require more monthly figures for this financial

year, as shipments can fluctuate month to month for frozen and processed vegetables, the data suggests little relief. Exports have decreased 8.5 per cent and imports have increased 9.6 per cent compared with the equivalent months in 2007. Frozen vegetable imports increased 22 per cent with a noticeable shift of sourcing from New Zealand to the Netherlands, Belgium and Canada.

Call to arms

These figures are a major wake-up call for the industry and seriously undermine the industry's strategic plan. One of the goals of VegVision 2020 is an expansion in export markets. While there are some outstanding success stories of vegetable growers' success in export markets, the industry as a whole is showing no signs of growing export markets. Rather, the trade data shows that the industry is struggling to hold its domestic market share. While import penetration is low, relative to other Australian industries, the rate of increase in imports suggests that this will not be the case in future years.

A further goal of VegVision 2020 is to raise the domestic per capita consumption of vegetables. Even if the industry is successful in this, these trade figures suggest that some of the gains will be siphoned off into imports, rather than benefiting Australian vegetable growers.

Now is the time for the industry to respond to the challenges shown by the trade data.


Tomorrow will be too late. 

Table 2. Vegetable export and import figures for Australia

	2001/02 (\$M)	2002/03 (\$M)	2003/04 (\$M)	2004/05 (\$M)	2005/06 (\$M)	2006/07 (\$M)	2007/08 (\$M)
Exports (total)	347	326	282	257	250	247	235
Fresh	217	198	160	154	148	145	136
Frozen	32	27	39	27	25	30	33
Processed	70	70	53	47	49	48	39
Other*	28	30	30	29	28	23	27
Imports (total)	281	320	339	352	375	446	550
Fresh	22	27	34	32	41	45	53
Frozen	70	77	97	105	114	143	204
Processed	118	143	139	142	144	172	200
Other*	70	73	70	73	75	87	94
Trade balance for vegetables	66	6	-57	-95	-125	-199	-315
Fresh	197	171	126	122	107	100	83
Frozen	-38	-50	-58	-78	-89	-113	-171
Processed	-48	-73	-86	-95	-95	-124	-161
Other*	-42	-43	-40	-44	-47	-64	-67

*Other includes tuber, provisionally preserved and dried vegetables, and vegetable seed.



Protected cropping growers Steve Lioulios, Con Laftsis, and Thong Le, all from Virginia, SA, with SA IDO and tour leader Mel Fraser, enjoy dinner at the Horticulture New Zealand Conference.

Young growers take the challenge

Hairy weather proved no deterrent for those who attended the Young Growers New Zealand Tour, writes tour leader and South Australian Vegetable IDO, Mel Fraser.

The 2008 annual trip to New Zealand saw the biggest ever group of young Aussie growers visit the North Island for nine days thanks to the assistance of the National Vegetable Levy. Twelve growers, who ranged in age from 21 to 34 years, from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia met in Sydney before heading to the 'long white cloud' on 25 July.

The group met with Keith Vallabh, Chairman of Horticulture

New Zealand's Fresh Vegetable Product Group, after arriving in Auckland. Three days of grower and merchant visits around the Auckland region followed, accompanied by the worst storms in 20 years and 150km/hour winds. Forging on despite the exceptional weather, we explored the challenges and opportunities of both field grown and protected cropping enterprises north of Auckland and throughout the Pukekohe region.

One of the impressive enter-



Young growers enjoy a free afternoon exploring Auckland.

prises visited was a 14-hectare, Dutch-built glasshouse operation producing hydroponic red, orange and yellow capsicums. The current suspension of phytosanitary certification for New Zealand-grown tomatoes and capsicums poses a massive risk to this business, which relies solely on export trade.

Fair miles versus food miles

Returning to Auckland, the growers attended the Horticulture New Zealand conference from 29 to 31 July. Sustainable production in an uncertain future was a key theme, with carbon footprints and New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme high on the agenda.

Keynote speakers included New Zealand's branding guru, Brian Richards, and Emeritus Professor David Hughes from the Imperial College, London. The pair challenged the audience of industry stakeholders to find ways to sell less for more; to become purveyors of "Food, Furnishings and Fashions" rather than producers of vegetables, wool and wood; and to consider "fair miles" rather than "food miles".

The concept of reducing "food miles" and supporting local growers has hit a chord with consumers, though Professor Hughes said that many in the UK were now considering the ethics of "fair miles"—by not purchasing imported produce, were UK consumers making agricultural businesses in less-developed nations unviable? Who is in greater need of the support?

On day seven the bags were repacked before we flew to Palmerston North. In Ohakune, we visited a few of the declining number of growers in this region, which has now fallen to only 12 businesses. Brussels sprouts, potatoes, parsnips and carrots are still grown there, but the cost of transport and fertiliser inputs, and a dry spell in the summer had led to low yields, increased disease and tight margins on some of the crops produced.

Heading back to Palmerston North, the group was hosted by William Young to visit growers and see the local sights, including a wind farm and nursery.

Mission accomplished

Growers who attended the tour

made the most of their time in New Zealand; the marketing information presented throughout the trip was a particular highlight.

"The farm visits allowed me to learn a few things that I can take home and use to improve our standards and growing techniques. One key point I learnt from the conference was to be proactive and not reactive, a skill the vegetable industry is lacking," said hydroponic grower Thong Le, from Virginia, South Australia.

Trent Wells, a processed vegetable grower from Tasmania, spoke highly of the networking opportunities. "I enjoyed seeing the hydroponic and greenhouse production systems, having never been in them before. Also, meeting other growers from Australia and New Zealand may open up networks and opportunities to work together in the future," he said.

Thanks must go to HAL, AUSVEG, Quadrant Australia and Jonathan Eccles, who made the trip possible, and to all those who allowed visits to their farms, providing insight and inspiration from their production systems.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Twelve young Australian growers from six states toured New Zealand to learn about farming techniques used across the Tasman.
- Marketing initiatives were of particular interest, as were consumer trends from overseas that were communicated at the Horticulture New Zealand conference.
- Similar to Australia, some New Zealand regions have been severely affected by transport and input costs, drought, increased disease and tight margins on produce.

For more information visit:
www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
 Project number: VG07175
 Keywords: New Zealand

AUSVEG CEO Message

On Friday 24 October, AUSVEG held a Special General Meeting to vote on the adoption of the new constitution. With the exclusion of one member, who was absent, the votes were unanimously in favour of the new constitution, which was passed and will take effect after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 24 November.

A pivotal change to the constitution is that several AUSVEG membership categories are now open, and these memberships will be available on application. Fees for membership, if any, will be determined at the AGM, which will be held at 2pm on Monday 24 November 2008, at the Holiday Inn at Tullamarine Airport in Melbourne.

To supplement the new constitution, the AUSVEG Audit and Finance Committee is in the process of updating and finalising the AUSVEG Corporate Governance Charter. These changes will be included in the new constitution.

A Director's Selection Committee (DSC) has also been set up to make a recommendation to the AUSVEG Board for new directors to be appointed under the rules of the new constitution. By the time you read this column, the selection process will have already begun, with a view to appointing new state representative directors on the AUSVEG Board at the AGM on 24 November.



In other news, planning is well underway for the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference and 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Awards, which will both be held in May next year.

The conference and awards are the perfect opportunity for the industry to unite, gain valuable knowledge and celebrate its achievements.

The conference theme, "Growing a Healthy Australia", has been selected so that the vegetable industry can demonstrate to

Australia that it is vital in combating current health issues and ensuring that Australians are healthier in the future. The conference will look at building a healthy industry so it has the means to help grow a healthy Australia.

With the new constitution, a new AUSVEG Board of Directors, and the 2009 conference and awards all ahead of us, it's an exciting time for the industry.

If you have any questions about these changes, please don't hesitate to drop me a line at <robert.lawler@ausveg.com.au> or on 03 9544 8098.

Robert Lawler
Acting CEO
AUSVEG Ltd

AROUND THE STATES

Queensland



Enthusiasm for Pacific labour pilot

Last month, Growcom organised a meeting to enable the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to outline details of the proposed Pacific Labour Scheme. About one dozen growers, including a number of vegetable growers, attended the meeting, which was held in Stanthorpe, south-west of Brisbane.

Until now, growers have had little detail about the scheme; the meeting enabled them to provide feedback to the department about their seasonal labour requirements and the practicalities of running a trial in the Stanthorpe region.

The Pacific Labour Scheme will consist of 2,500 visas awarded over three years to workers from the Pacific Island nations of Vanuatu, Kiribati and Papua New Guinea.

While the government plans to place 100 workers before Christmas in an initial pilot scheme, the location of the pilot has not been finalised.

Industry should regard the Pacific Labour Scheme as a coup. Government has listened to horticulture's labour concerns and agreed to a horticulture scheme in the face of competing demands for overseas labour from other sectors of the economy.

Stanthorpe has a number of advantages as a location for the pilot. The harvest season runs from November to May for a range of produce in the area, including vegetables. This dovetails with the government's imperative to get a pilot in place before Christmas.

Growers at the meeting

expressed their enthusiasm for a scheme in the region. A number said they were ready to get involved. Several growers indicated they would be able to take labour on their farms for the whole harvest period while others thought labour could easily be shared between farms as the different crop seasons progressed.

For growers, the chief benefit was that labour would remain in place to meet the requirements of the entire harvest season, and the same labour force would return to farms each year familiar with what work needed to be done.

This contrasts with the current situation where labour constantly changes as backpackers come and go, necessitating repeat training of new people and time-consuming paperwork.

The Australian Government is further refining its policy and developing Memoranda of Understanding to be signed by participating countries and Australia.

The challenge will be to get a pilot happening prior to Christmas. Growcom will continue to provide advice to government as it is in the interests of both industry and government to ensure the trial is a success.

Mark Panitz

Chief Advocate
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Victoria



Fifth term for Gazzola

The Annual General Meeting for VGA Victoria was held in October at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Melbourne, where President Luis Gazzola was re-elected for a fifth term. David Wallace was elected Senior Vice President and Rocky Lamattina Junior Vice President.

Changes to the Executive Committee included new member Vince Doria, a vegetable grower from Devon Meadows, Victoria. Vince joins existing members Craig Arnott, Peter Cochrane, Silvio Favero, Paul Gazzola, Anthony Mason and Tom Schreurs. John Said and Robert Nave did not re-nominate.

The National Vegetable Levy program update created vigorous discussions with members disagreeing with the results of industry development surveys and the direction taken by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL).

Of particular concern was the demise of the state Industry Development Officer (IDO) position in its current form. In a lively exchange, vegetable growers challenged the fact that the Victorian IDO project would not receive levy funding after 31 December 2008.

Other industry presentations were provided by Craig Murdoch, Victorian Vegetable IDO; Occupational Health & Safety Committee grower representative Jack Walker; Melbourne Market Authority CEO, Peter McLennan; Helena Whitman, Environmental Manager AUSVEG; and Lucy Keatinge, Vegetable Industry Services Manager HAL. Following the AGM, Dr Robert Premier provided an informative look at "Good

Agricultural Practices around the world" during dinner.

"Just Add" campaign

We are now in the final stage of this Victorian promotion for fresh produce after successfully launching the dinner component of the "Just Add Fruit & Veg" campaign in Castlemaine in August.

Tip cards covering breakfast, lunch and dinner are available in fruit and vegetable retail outlets across Victoria. The fourth and final component of the campaign to be launched will be "Just Add Fruit & Veg to your snacks".

This promotional campaign has successfully increased consumption of fresh produce in Victoria. The main contributors to this project have been The Heart Foundation, the Victorian State Department of Human Services, Melbourne Market Authority, local councils, VGA Victoria, and fruit and vegetable retailers.

Tony Imeson

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Fax: 03 9687 4723
Email: <contact@vgavic.org.au>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2008

17 November

HAL R&D Project Call closes

For more information:

Website: www.horticulture.com.au

Phone: 02 8295 2300

24 November

AUSVEG Annual General Meeting

2pm, Holiday Inn, Tullamarine Airport, Melbourne, Vic

For more information:

Phone: AUSVEG on 03 9544 80980

27 November

HAL AGM and Board Meeting

Sydney, NSW

For more information:

Website: www.horticulture.com.au

Phone: 02 8295 2300

January 2009

14-16 January

PMA Leadership Symposium

Dallas, Texas, USA

For more information:

Website: www.pma.com/Leadership

February 2009

27 February

Australian Vegetable Industry Awards 2009—Closing date for awards nominations

For more information:

Website: www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au

Phone: Alisha Johnson, AUSVEG, 03 9544 8098



28 February

VicFresh Combined Industry Gala Night

Crown Casino, Melbourne, Vic

For more information:

Contact David Fussell

Phone: 03 9258 6102

March 2009

22-25 March

World Potato Congress

Christchurch, New Zealand

For more information:

Website: www.potatocongress.org

May 2009

4-6 May

Australian Vegetable Industry Conference 2009

Melbourne Convention Centre,

Melbourne, Vic

For more information:

Website: www.vegieconf.com.au

Phone: AUSVEG on 03 9544 8098



6 May

Australian Vegetable Industry Awards 2009 and conference gala dinner

Crown Palladium, Melbourne, Vic

For more information:

Website: www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au

Phone: Alisha Johnson, AUSVEG, 03 9544 8098

7-8 May

National Vegetable Expo

Werribee, Vic

For more information:

Contact Claire Luppino

Email: scluppino@optusnet.com.au

Phone: 0427 335 518

June 2009

16-19 June

AUSPAK 2009

Sydney Olympic Park, Sydney, NSW

For more information:

Email: auspak@etf.com.au

Phone: 02 9556 7999

July 2009

19-22 July

National Industry Conference of the Australian Hydroponic & Greenhouse Association

Sydney Homebush Showgrounds, Sydney, NSW

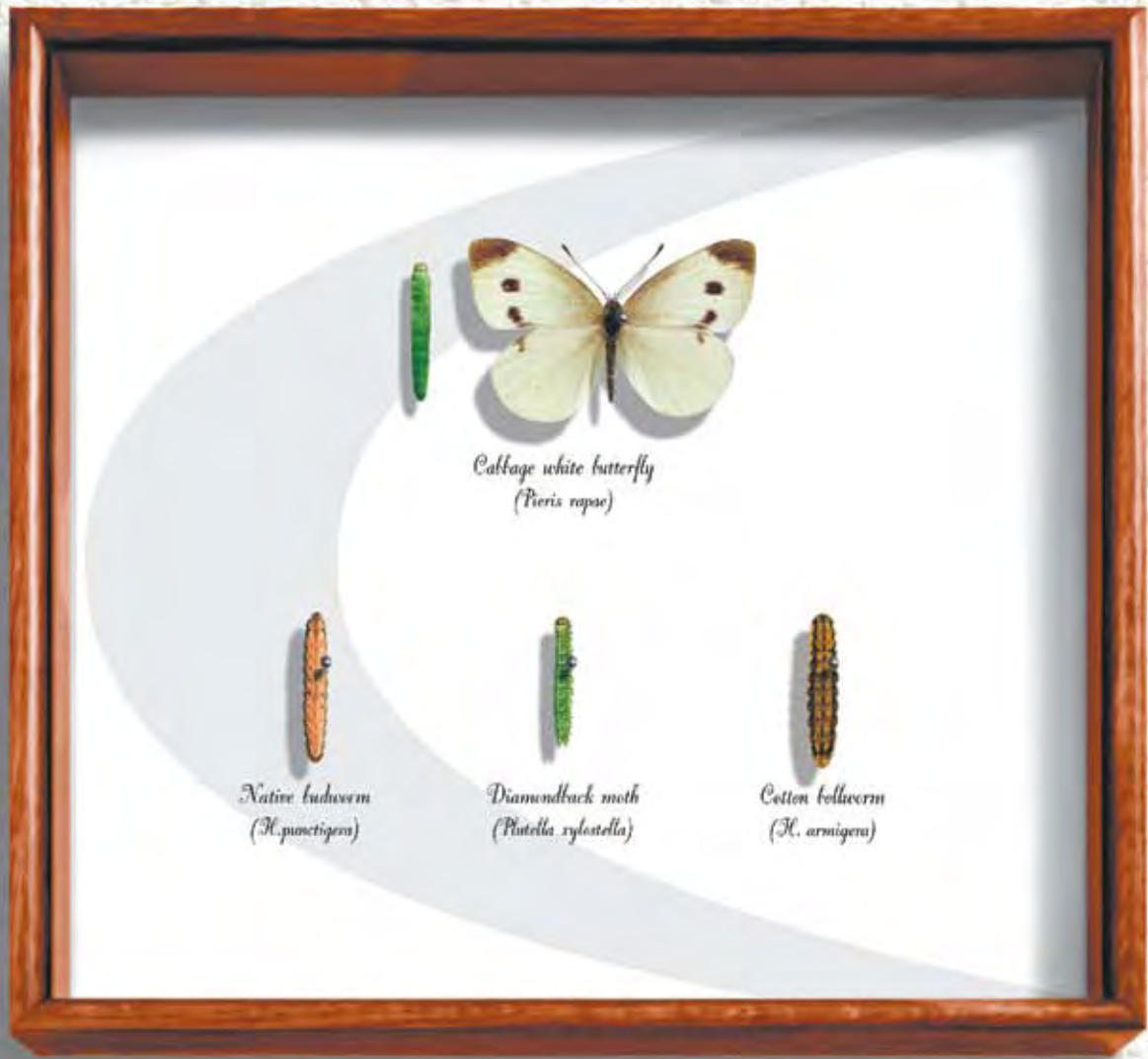
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