

vegetables australia

volume **5.1**
July/Aug 2009



16 Meet the new
AUSVEG CEO

26 **Patti Flannery: Top
marks in the Top End**

34 Conference speakers
wow delegates

Suddenly...



...insect control is headed
in a whole new direction.

2XSYS

2-Way systemicity is coming

www.bayercropscience.com.au

Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd, ABN 87 000 226 022, 391-393 Tooronga Road, Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123.
Technical Enquiries 1800 804 479.



Bayer CropScience

A word from the AUSVEG Chairman

After a thought-provoking, informative and engaging Australian Vegetable Industry Conference in Melbourne in May, the industry is poised to carry itself forward on the momentum this event has brought about.

Issues highlighted were changing consumer preferences, carbon trading, and market opportunities in value-adding and packaging, along with a host of findings from research and development projects funded by the National Vegetable Levy.

It was my pleasure to talk with many growers and industry representatives at the conference and the gala dinner, at which the winners of the Australian Vegetable Industry Awards were announced.

The industry needs to work

together to overcome the challenges it faces, from water concerns to increased imports and input costs, and the conference was a great opportunity for all to share ideas and make contacts for the future.

Keynote presentations can be accessed at www.vegieconf.com.au, so if you were unable to attend or would simply like another opportunity to hear the experts speak, I encourage you to visit the conference website.

I was pleased to announce the appointment of new AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy when I addressed conference delegates.

Richard brings to the industry years of experience at the fore of many leading government and private enterprise organisations, including a significant talent for

lobbying key policy-makers.

He has already initiated a series of meetings with principal policy-makers, including an appearance before the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties in relation to the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. He also arranged for the AUSVEG Board of Directors to meet with The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, at Parliament House last month.

As a result of the Award Modernisation process—which will have potentially devastating impacts including a loss of jobs and increased costs for growers—discussions with the Minister centred on economic challenges facing the industry and AUSVEG's role in making the Australian veg-



John Brent
Chairman
AUSVEG Ltd

etable industry more profitable for growers at the farm gate.

Finally, I also take this opportunity to thank interim AUSVEG CEO Robert Lawler for his outstanding commitment to the industry and his dedicated work over the past year.

From the editor



For those who were unable to attend the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference in May, this issue of *Vegetables Australia* has a recap of all the happenings, along with profiles of this year's Australian Vegetable Industry Awards winners.

From my conversations with delegates at the conference, it's clear that Australian growers are keen to try new ideas, varieties and growing methods, and become more involved in the supply chain—this all makes for a vibrant and progressive industry.

In this issue of the magazine we meet participants from the inaugural Vegetable Industry Strategic Leadership Course, which finishes in August, who talk about what they've learnt so far and their plans for guiding the industry forward (page 22).

For those who wonder about the difference one person can make, read our feature profile on produce consultant Patti Flannery. Patti moved to the Northern Territory in 1984, where she's made a career of helping growers overcome language

difficulties, as many Top-End growers are first-generation Vietnamese (page 26).

We meet the new AUSVEG CEO, Richard Mulcahy (page 16), and hear about his plans for industry, and there's also a warning about a new pest that has arrived on Australian shores. Read about the Q biotype whitefly on page 8.

Finally, for an explanation of how the Australian Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) will affect vegetable growers, see the Economic Outlook on page 44.

We'll see you in September with a look at vegetable marketing initiatives from around the world; until then, good growing.

Jim Thomson
Editor, *Vegetables Australia*



26

Patti Flannery:
Top marks in
the Top End

contents

july/august

Features

- 16** Meet the new AUSVEG CEO
- 18** Industry awards recognise diverse talents
- 26** Top marks in the Top End
- 42** “Labour of love” draws a crowd
- 46** Tassie marketing on the front foot

News

- 8** New pest comes to town
- 9** Concessions sought on awards modernisation
- 9** Briefly—news from around the country
- 10** Budget results in R&D re-think
- 11** Progress at PEP
- 11** AUSVEG fights for fair-go FTA
- 13** Gosford researchers to relocate in 2010
- 14** No cost to find workers

R&D

- 8** Time to prioritise R&D investment
- 14** Gutsy effort by baby broc
- 22** Next generation of leaders steps up to the plate
- 24** Too much of a good thing?
- 31** Project preview: Control of slugs in the Australian vegetable industry
- 34** Consumers, carbon, cooperation: three Cs for a vibrant future
- 38** Show and tell

Industry update

- 12** Recent minor use permits
- 25** Asian vegetable profile—Perilla
- 30** EnviroVeg goes to next level
- 32** Jam-packed conference impresses industry
- 33** US tour opportunity for levy payers
- 33** Ask the industry
- 41** Profile—Sapphire Coast Producers Association
- 49** Around the states

“**Packaging is a tremendous opportunity; it creates a physical connection with the consumer.**”

– page 38

Regulars

- 3** Chairman’s message—John Brent
- 3** From the editor
- 44** Economic Outlook—Outcomes uncertain from controversial carbon scheme
- 48** AUSVEG report
- 50** Calendar of events



vegetables australia

AUSVEG Chairman

John Brent

AUSVEG CEO

Richard J. Mulcahy

Editor

Jim Thomson
Phone: 03 9544 8098
Fax: 03 9558 6199
Mob: 0407 242 788
Email: editor@ausveg.com.au

Editorial Committee

Anthony Brandsema
Tasmanian vegetable grower
John Mundy
South Australian vegetable grower
Figaro Natoli
Western Australian vegetable grower
Glenn Abbott
Queensland vegetable grower
Thérèse Schreurs
Victorian vegetable grower
David Chung
New South Wales vegetable grower
Alison Anderson
News South Wales
Industry consultant

Advertising

Max Hyde
Phone: 03 9870 4161
Email: max@hydemia.com.au

Contributors

Brea Acton, Jill Briggs, Phil Hoult, Ian James, Lucy Jarman, Alisha Johnson, Chris Knight, Dan McGuire, Sophie Parks, Karen Shaw, Hugh Tobin, David Wells, Helena Whitman, Andrew Wuttke.

Cover

Produce consultant Patti Flannery, at Van Thah Dan and Pham Phung Kim's farm in Humpty Doo, Northern Territory.

Photography by Chris Knight.

Design

Arris
www.arris.com.au

Printer

Erwins Printing Pty Ltd

Distribution

Mailcare

Mailing data supplied by Arris, Growcom, New South Wales Farmers Association, Tasmanian Farmer's and Graziers Association, Victoria Vegetable Growers Association and vegetablesWA.

Thank you to all growers and researchers for your participation in the interviews.




Know-how for Horticulture™

All research and development projects have been funded by HAL using the National Vegetable Levy and/or voluntary contributions from industry, and matched funds from the Australian Government.

For more information visit
www.ausveg.com.au

Vegetables Australia is produced by AUSVEG Ltd and is free for all National Vegetable Levy payers.

Disclaimer

AUSVEG Ltd makes this magazine available on the understanding that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use. Before relying on or altering any business practices users should carefully evaluate the accuracy, completeness and relevance of the information for their purpose and should obtain appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances. This magazine contains views and recommendations that do not necessarily reflect those views of AUSVEG Ltd.

Special care should be taken with agriculture chemicals which may have been used experimentally but are not yet registered for commercial usage. Clarification should be sought from the researchers or the chemical manufacturers.

© Copyright AUSVEG Ltd 2009

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior permission from AUSVEG Ltd. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to The Editor, *Vegetables Australia*, PO Box 563, Mulgrave VIC 3170.

ISSN 1882-3340

AUSVEG Ltd
PO Box 563
Mulgrave VIC 3170

Vegetables Australia is printed using soy-based inks on EMS accredited pH-neutral paper produced from sustainable fibre plantation ECF pulp.

Vegetables Australia is distributed using OxoBiodegradable plastic envelopes.

MAXIMISE YOUR PROTECTION

APPLICATION

STANDARD PROTECTANT

MAXIMISE PROTECTION WITH ACROBAT SC
AND POLYRAM DF OR PENNCOZEB 750 DF



Why take chances when you don't have to.

Acrobat SC builds a more robust disease control program as it:

- Maximises protection against disease
- Provides a resistance management option
- Is now available in an easy to pour liquid formulation
- Tank-mixed with Polyram DF or Penncozeb 750DF# for resistance management and extended spectrum of disease control

www.nufarm.com.au

Disease protection that simply measures up.

© Acrobat and Polyram are registered trademarks of BASF.
Penncozeb is a registered trademark of United Phosphorous Limited.
Refer to the product label for specific crop use registrations.



New pest comes to town

The last thing the industry needs is another pest to contend with—unfortunately, with the arrival of the Q biotype whitefly, that's exactly what's happened.

When growers in north Queensland's Bowen-Burdekin districts noticed their usual insecticide treatments for silverleaf whitefly were not as effective as they had been previously, tests in late 2008 confirmed the presence of a new pest: Q biotype whitefly.

The pest has since been discovered in south Queensland and north-west New South Wales.

While the Q biotype and silverleaf whitefly (B biotype) look the same, and have a similar lifecycle and range of host plants, they can be separated using biochemical or molecular techniques. The range of host plants for Q biotype—more than 500 species in total—includes pumpkin, eggplant, broccoli and potatoes.

According to overseas experience, the Q biotype differs from the B biotype by not inducing physiological changes such as silverleafing in pumpkin and zucchini, or colour changes in the stem and floret of broccoli and cauliflower.

Quick resistance

Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) entomologist Dr Siva Subramaniam said the Q biotype has the ability to develop resistance quickly to some insecticide groups, particularly if they are used repeatedly.

"Overseas, Q biotype has developed high-level resistance to insect growth regulators and neonicotinoids. However, there are other chemicals and an effective biological control agent to keep the pest under manageable levels," he said.

The best early advice for crop producers who suspect they have the Q biotype is:

- continue to practice a management strategy that preserves and encourages the activity of parasites and predators, such as brown smudge bug, big-eyed bugs, lacewing larvae and ladybirds
- avoid the early-season use of broad-spectrum insecticides such as organophosphates, carbamates and pyrethroids
- check crops for whitefly weekly and apply treatments only when whitefly numbers reach spray-threshold levels
- rotate insecticide groups and avoid the overuse of any single group of insecticides
- discontinue whitefly pesticide treatment if it is not working.



Q biotype whitefly is a recent arrival to Australian shores. Image supplied by Zara Ludgate, Queensland DPI&F.

Growers are advised that any signs of whiteflies withstanding control treatments should be reported to Queensland DPI&F. [va](#)

For more information contact:
i Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries Business Information Centre on 13 25 23
 or visit www.dpi.qld.gov.au

Time to prioritise R&D investment

Priority determination for levy-funded R&D projects commencing in 2010 has almost finished, but there is still time to participate.

Until 31 July, National Vegetable Levy payers and other vegetable industry stakeholders are invited to identify priority areas for research and development (R&D) projects scheduled to commence mid-2010. This will help guide the industry's R&D investment plan, which is funded by the National Vegetable Levy,

matched dollar-for-dollar by the Australian Government.

Growers can identify priority areas for R&D by completing a template, which is available from vegetable industry organisations and on the AUSVEG website, www.ausveg.com.au.

Completed templates must be returned to Richard Mulcahy,

AUSVEG CEO, by 31 July 2009.

Priorities nominated by growers will be categorised in-line with the five strategic imperatives identified in the industry's strategic plan, VegVision 2020.

The imperatives are:

- leadership & people development
- market development

- information & technology development & dissemination
- production
- consumers. 

For more information contact your state or territory industry organisation, IDO or visit the AUSVEG website at www.ausveg.com.au.

Concessions sought on awards modernisation

A potential 30 per cent rise in wages under the Horticulture Industry Award 2010 could spell the end for many businesses already struggling with high input costs.

In good news for growers, the Office of the Minister for Workplace Relations, Julia Gillard, has responded to a request from a joint Horticulture Australia Council (HAC)/National Farmers' Federation (NFF)/Australian Industry Group (AIG) delegation to examine horticulture's concerns about the impending Horticulture Industry Award, which is due to be introduced on 1 January 2010.

The Minister's Office has said that if the Minister is not satisfied that the government's framework for award modernisation has been followed, she may intervene.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy has welcomed this news, as restaurants and pharmacies have successfully negotiated with the government for concessions.

"The Minister for Workplace Relations instructed the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) to set up a process that would benefit neither employers or employees," said Richard.

"The proposed awards changes will have a significant impact on the Australian vegetable industry, ranging from increased costs for producers to a rise in unemployment in regional areas. AUSVEG has been in regular contact with HAC, NFF and AIG regarding Awards Modernisation. These groups share many of our concerns."

Expensive changes

Under the new award, vegetable growers will be particularly impacted by the hours of work provisions, piece rates, and casual loadings proposed. Growers face rises in piecework loadings from 12.5 per cent to 15 per cent and casual loadings from 15 per cent to 25 per cent.

Horticulture has made a submission to the AIRC regarding the transition process to the new award, requesting a hold on the contentious clauses until the review of the new awards in 2012. Failing that, an extended transition phase of five years has been requested, which will assist growers by allowing the significant cost increases to be introduced gradually.

Award Modernisation is the process currently being undertaken by the AIRC to create Modern Awards covering employers in the federal workplace relations system.

The Horticulture Industry Award 2010 will replace all Notional Agreements Preserving State Awards (NAPSAs) and Pre-Reform Federal Awards, with the exception of those industrial instruments—such as enterprise agreements—confined to a single business. [va](#)

Briefly

Access economic data

Industry economist Ian James has compiled commodity-specific data for vegetables, which can be accessed via the 'Statistics' tab on the AUSVEG website, www.ausveg.com.au. Data is available for 2006 and 2007. The 2008 data was expected to be updated after it became available in June. [va](#)

PMA downunder

Produce Marketing Association's (PMA) first-ever affiliate is now being formed for members in Australia and New Zealand. It will officially begin operating later this year, according to PMA President and CEO Bryan Silbermann, who announced the formation of PMA Australia/New Zealand on 25 May to attendees of the association's 2009 Fresh Connections: Australia and New Zealand conference held in Sydney.

In separate news, AUSVEG has joined as a member of PMA. [va](#)

New Growcom advocate

Rachel Mackenzie has been appointed as Growcom's Chief Advocate, replacing Mark Panitz.

Growcom CEO Alex Livingstone said that Rachel has a wealth of experience in strategic planning and policy development and had developed policy positions on key natural resource management issues in her previous position as Growcom Operations Manager. [va](#)

FarmPlus online soon

FarmPlus, an agricultural information, search and delivery system, is expected to be online in mid-August at www.farmplus.net.au.

The system combines a search engine facility and content management system that amasses research from information providers such as R&D Corporations, CRCs, government departments and universities. Subscription fees were still to be finalised at the time of writing. [va](#)

Ag info in schools

The Australian Government has committed \$175,000 in funds to support the Primary Industries Education Foundation, a not-for-profit company formed to provide factual and relevant materials about modern agriculture for use in Australia's primary and secondary schools.

The foundation aims to facilitate better education of school children on rural issues, including water use, sustainability, and career options. The National Farmers' Federation is a founding member of the initiative, and the driving force behind its creation. [va](#)

Budget results in R&D re-think

Tough decisions were made for this year's Federal Budget, with Land and Water Australia being abolished and RIRDC having its funding substantially cut.

After a year of economic upheaval, the Australian Government's projections for a \$57.6 billion deficit in the 2009/10 Federal Budget surprised no-one—despite it being a turnaround of \$78 billion from previous estimates.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and its agencies will see a 31.8 per cent reduction in funding in 2009/10, while the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts will have its funding increased 63.9 per cent.

The industry has welcomed certain initiatives, including the \$43 billion investment in the

National Broadband Network, a \$300 million on-farm water efficiency project, and funding for the Bureau of Meteorology to introduce advanced weather forecasting and warning activity.

The abolition of Land and Water Australia (LWA) and substantial cuts for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) made it clear that debt reduction is an important consideration for this and future budgets.

End of an era

The government's abolition of LWA presents a challenge for management of Australia's

land and water when the nation faces the converging issues of climate change, water availability, global food security and declining productivity growth.

RIRDC will also need to revise its investment plan for the next few years with the news that its budget has been reduced by \$12 million. RIRDC will see successive cuts of \$3 million per year over four years, which the government says can be made through reductions in research duplication and organisational efficiencies.

While a spokesperson for RIRDC said that it was still "business as usual", clarification of R&D priorities was expected to occur

when the corporation's annual investment plan was released on 1 July.

No surprises

According to industry economist Ian James, the budget didn't offer too many surprises overall.

"Economists would give ticks to the expenditure boost on infrastructure because it builds for the future and takes out insurance against a worse-than-expected economic downturn. Despite the forecast deficits, the level of debt remains relatively low in comparison to some other countries," he said. [va](#)

Federal Budget 2009/10—Highlights

Trade and quarantine

- The Government provided an additional \$50 million in the 2008-09 budget for the Export Market Development Grants scheme
- Beale Review implemented

Drought assistance

- Remains unchanged with the Australian Government still reviewing the three drought reports
- Small Block Irrigator Exit Package (Murray-Darling Basin) has been expanded to increase the maximum size of farms that are eligible from 15 to 40 hectares
- Taxable grants for the removal of irrigation plantings and infrastructure will increase from up to \$10,000 to up to \$20,000
- Bureau of Meteorology receives funding to roll-out advanced weather forecasting and warning activity and additional weather radar

Infrastructure

- \$4.6 billion to metro rail, Melbourne to Cairns road, and improving export capacity in Darwin and Western Australian ports
- \$43 billion in National Broadband Network
- \$4.5 billion in Clean Energy initiatives

Small business and general business tax break

- The February 2009 Tax Break announcement will be expanded
- A bonus deduction of 50 per cent will be available to small businesses that acquire an eligible asset between 13 December 2008 and 31 December 2009 and install it ready-for-use by 31 December 2010
- The existing 30 per cent and 10 per cent bonuses will continue to apply to all other businesses

Innovation

- Funding to Land and Water Australia will cease. Priority research activities currently being undertaken by LWA will transfer to other agencies.
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation had its budget cut by \$12 million over four years
- The Research and Development Tax Concessions will be replaced with a new Research and Development Tax Credit, with effect from 1 July 2010. This consists of a 40 per cent non-refundable tax credit and a 45 per cent refundable tax credit for firms with turnover of \$20 million or less. [va](#)


Progress at PEP


Program worth the time away from businesses.

The eighth annual Produce Executive Program (PEP) was successfully held from 3 to 8 May at the Mt Eliza Centre for Executive Education in Victoria.

The program aims to impart knowledge about worldwide developments and leading trends; update individual skills in leadership, strategy and working; and expand the network of like-minded industry professionals.

This year, participants were rotated through four different work groups, increasing their exposure to the perspectives of representatives from other industry sectors. In the words of one participant, "the benefits of the program outweigh the costs of leaving the business for five days".

The ninth PEP will be held at the Mt Eliza Centre for Executive Education in May next year. 

 For more information contact:
Anita Pike, Program Manager,
Produce Executive Program
Phone: 03 9904 4172

AUSVEG fights for fair-go FTA

An unbalanced fair trade agreement between Australia and South-East Asia has seen industry officials go in to bat for growers' rights.

On 29 May, AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy gave evidence before the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (Federal Parliament) in relation to the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Australia New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA). This committee, which consists of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, reviews FTAs.

Also giving evidence were vegetable industry economist Ian James and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) consultant Stephen Winter.

AUSVEG was called before the Committee after it submitted a paper on behalf of the vegetable industry expressing concerns over the agreement.

Modest gains not enough

ASEAN has 10 member countries. Of these countries, Australia has peripheral trade with Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia and Brunei. The other six members—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam—are of more interest to the Australian vegetable industry.

Australia already has an FTA with Thailand and Singapore, therefore the new agreement cuts across these.

While the Australia Government has signed off on the AANZFTA, ratification is not expected until the end of this year, with the new regime to be implemented 60 days after ratification.

One of the issues discussed before the Committee was the industry's disappointment that, under the new agreement, ASEAN nations may supply all fresh and processed vegetable imports into Australia tariff free (with the exception of one line of processed vegetables), however, this arrangement is not reciprocated for Australian growers.

While the FTA has modest gains for Australian growers, such as tariffs to Malaysia being removed soon after the agreement is implemented, in some instances, the agreement retains significant tariffs on vegetable lines into ASEAN countries until 2025.

Confusing figures

"Indonesia can apply a tariff of up to 25 per cent on potatoes,

carrots and onions under present World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. It has varied the rate it applies from between five per cent and 20 per cent over the past couple of years and will apply a rate of 10 per cent next year," said economist Ian James.

In a confusing development, maximum tariffs for some vegetable lines in the new FTA are higher than those in existing agreements.

Proceedings at the hearing were televised. Afterwards, the AUSVEG CEO participated in a television interview on behalf of the Australian vegetable industry, outlining the importance of a level playing field for trade.

Since the hearing, the committee has made a recommendation that will prevent an agreed tariff in a free trade agreement from being higher than an existing tariff. It was also recommended that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade prepare a report on how to improve consultation with industry during free trade agreement negotiations. 



No. 1 Choice of Australia's Professional Growers

Contact us to discuss the all NEW
DF CARROT HARVESTERS.....
Harvesters available for most root crops


vin rowe farm machinery

3 Endeavour St, Warragul. Vic 3820 Ph 1300 880 056 Wayne Mills 0417 945584

Recent minor use permits

Permit number	Permit description (pesticide / crop / pest)	Date issued	Expiry date	States covered
ALLIUM VEGETABLES				
PER10596	Success (spinosad) / Spring onions, shallots / Western flower thrips	23-Apr-09	31-Oct-11	All states except Vic
PER10868	Totril (ioxynil) / Spring onions, shallots, Welsh onions / Broadleaf and grass weeds	01-Jun-09	31-Mar-13	All states except Vic
BRASSICAS				
PER10735*	Apron XL 350 ES (metalaxyl-M) / Broccoli / Damping off (Pythium & Phytophthora)	01-Jun-09	30-Sep-11	All states except Vic
PER10737*	Maxim 100FS (fludioxonil) / Broccoli / Rhizoctonia	01-Jun-09	30-Sep-11	All states except Vic
CUCURBITS				
PER9918	Switch (cyprodinil + fludioxonil) / Cucumber, capsicums (greenhouse), lettuce (head - greenhouse) / Botrytis cinerea	04-Feb-08	30-Jun-10	All states
PER10818	Bravo (chlorothalonil) / Cucumber (field and protected crops) / Botrytis rot	01-Jun-09	30-Sep-13	All states except Vic
PER10979	Nimrod (bupirimate) / Cucurbits, peppers / Powdery mildew	31-Mar-09	30-Sep-14	All states except Vic
PER11442	Karate (lambda-cyhalothrin) / Cucumber (field and protected crops) / Heliothis, onion thrips, Rutherglen bug, looper	03-Jun-09	31-May-11	All states except Vic
FRUITING VEGETABLES				
PER7561^	Clethodim / Eggplant / Grass weeds	25-Oct-05	25-Oct-10	NSW, QLD, SA, TAS & WA
PER8489^	Clethodim / Chillii, paprika, silverbeet, spinach / Grass weeds	24-Oct-05	12-Oct-10	All states
PER10433**	Pirimicarb / Sweet corn / Aphids	12-May-09	31-Mar-12	All states except Vic
PER11440	Sumisclex (procymidone) / Peppers (capsicum, chilli, paprika) / Sclerotinia rot	01-Jun-09	31-Dec-11	All states except Vic
HERBS				
PER10816	Amistar (azoxystrobin) / Horseradish / White blister, downy mildew	01-Jun-09	30-Jun-12	All states except Vic
LEAFY VEGETABLES				
239-S25A2b-2009	Methomyl / Lettuce (field grown only) / Cluster caterpillar, Helicoverpa, Western flower thrips		29-Feb-10	Vic only***
PER10727	Ridomil Gold MZ (metalaxyl + mancozeb) / Silverbeet / Downy mildew & Celery / Septoria leaf spot, late blight	31-Mar-09	30-Sep-12	All states except Vic
PER10807	Vertimec (abamectin) / Lettuce (head - field only) / Two-spotted mite	01-Jun-09	31-Mar-14	All states except Vic
PER11395	Marlin or Lannate (methomyl) / Field-grown lettuce / Helicoverpa, cluster caterpillar, Western flower thrips	15-Apr-09	28-Feb-10	All states except Vic
PER11438	Glyphosate / Asian vegetables / Grass and broadleaf weeds	30-Apr-09	30-Jun-19	All states
PER11477	Lannate (methomyl) / Silverbeet / Heliothis, thrips, Western flower thrips, looper	01-Jun-09	31-Dec-10	All states except Vic
LEGUME VEGETABLES				
PER10656****	Scala (pyrimethanil) / Snow peas, sugar snap peas, tomatoes (protected crops), capsicums (protected crops) / Botrytis cinerea	01-Jun-09	30-Jun-12	All states except Vic
ROOT VEGETABLES				
PER9125^	Clethodim / Radish / Grass weeds	17-Jul-06	16-Jul-11	All states
PER9722	Talstar (bifenthrin) / Sweet potato / Wireworm	31-Mar-09	30-Sep-13	All states
PER10468^^	Linuron / Celeriac / Weeds	23-Apr-09	30-Apr-10	All states except Vic
PER10913^^^	Amistar (azoxystrobin) / Carrots / Sclerotinia rot, suppression of black rot	17-May-09	30-Sep-10	SA and WA only
PER10964^^^	Iprodione / Carrots / Suppression of black rot	17-May-09	30-Sep-10	SA and WA only
PER11441	Ramrod (propachlor) / Radish, swede, turnips / Grass and broadleaf weeds	27-May-09	31-Dec-19	All states except Vic

*Additional residue data required in broccoli for renewal

**APVMA requires additional residue data to support a permit renewal

***Valid for Vic only under the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992

****Additional residue data required in snow peas, sugar snap peas and tomatoes (protected crops) for renewal

^Amendment—all registered products containing 240 g/L clethodim included

^^Additional residue data required for renewal—planned to be undertaken in 2009/10

^^^Black rot efficacy data and an integrated disease management strategy required for the renewal of this permit

Gosford researchers to relocate in 2010

Staff from the Gosford Primary Industries Institute at New South Wales DPI's Narara site will shift to the University of Newcastle when the institute closes next year.

New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has bucked the trend for rural R&D providers in Australia by finding a new home for the Gosford Primary Industries Institute. While the institute had been marked for closure, the future of the research staff was previously unknown.

It was announced in May that staff from New South Wales DPI Narara would relocate to the University of Newcastle's Central Coast Campus. Ian Macdonald, Minister for Primary Industries,

and Professor Nicholas Saunders, Vice Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the relocation of the Narara station.

"This includes the accommodation of more than 60 DPI staff and the construction of new state-of-the-art facilities at the Central Coast Campus," said the minister.

Veggie expertise

The Gosford institute is home to many vegetable R&D projects; it develops and implements

science-based technologies and production systems for horticultural crops.

It is intended that the purpose-built facilities will be ready for staff relocation in November next year. The new facilities will include new laboratories and new greenhouses. The greenhouses will be built with an improved configuration of multiple small greenhouses, which are more useful for experimental trials than large greenhouses.

As the university already has

food science researchers on staff, further facilities and expertise will be shared with the Gosford researchers.

"It will result in a critical mass of researchers focusing on key areas of importance to New South Wales—particularly in areas of mutual interest such as plant sciences. New technologies and research findings will reach the primary producers of New South Wales more quickly and efficiently under this new arrangement," said Ian. **va**

How do **GROWERS** find **HARVEST WORKERS**, and harvest workers find **JOBS**?

In all harvest regions growers and harvest workers can find each other by...

contacting FREECALL, the National Harvest Labour Information Service or visiting www.harvesttrail.gov.au

1800 062 332

Right job. Right place. Right time



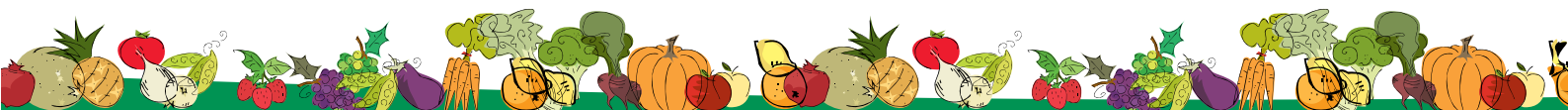
Facebook | Harvest Trail



NATIONAL HARVEST LABOUR
Information Service
"Making sure Growers and Jobseekers find each other"



Harvest Trail
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



Gutsy effort by baby broc

Broccoli sprouts are punching above their weight in the fight against stomach illnesses, according to preliminary findings from international research.

A team of international researchers, including one from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in America, has found that increased consumption of broccoli sprouts may help reduce levels of a common stomach bacterium that causes ulcers, anemia and stomach cancers.

In the study, broccoli sprouts—three-day-old broccoli—were shown to decrease the levels of the harmful bacterium, *Helicobacter pylori*. However, consumption had to be significantly increased before the benefits were realised: test subjects ate 70 grams of broccoli sprouts every day for two months to reduce levels of the bacterium by about 40 per cent.

These levels returned to their original reading eight weeks after the subjects stopped eating the sprouts, which suggests that while broccoli sprouts reduce *Helicobacter pylori*, they do not eradicate it.

Active ingredient

The hero in this instance is a quiet



achiever called sulforaphane, a component that effectively boosts protective genes. While it can be found in other green leafy vegetables, including mature broccoli, its levels are higher in broccoli sprouts.

Sulforaphane appears to trigger cells in the body to produce enzymes that protect against

oxygen radicals, DNA-damaging chemicals, and inflammation.

Classified as a cancer-producing substance by the World Health Organization, *Helicobacter pylori* lives in stomach linings and afflicts about half of the world's population. Associated with stomach ulcers, the bacterium has also been linked to high rates

of stomach cancer.

As this initial trial had only 50 subjects, further research is needed, specifically larger clinical studies. However, the hope is that if this method of reducing *Helicobacter pylori* levels can be proven, it may be adopted worldwide.

According to the researchers, the findings of this study could lead to cheaper treatment of ulcers and cancers in parts of the world where antibiotics are inaccessible due to their expense.

"We know that a dose of a couple ounces a day of broccoli sprouts is enough to elevate the body's protective enzymes," said Jed Fahey, author of the research and a nutritional biochemist at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

"What we don't know is whether it's going to prevent people from getting stomach cancer. But the fact that the levels of infection and inflammation were reduced suggests the likelihood of getting gastritis and ulcers and cancer is probably reduced." **va**

No cost to find workers

The National Harvest Labour Information Service (NHLIS) has been helping growers find workers for six years.

The NHLIS actively sources people who are looking for harvest or picking jobs by advertising on television and in backpacker and caravanning magazines, exhibiting at backpacker and caravanning con-

sumer shows, visiting hostels and information centres, and taking up public speaking opportunities.

As the service is fully funded by the Australian Government, there is no cost for growers or workers.

As a complement to the service's

National Harvest Guide, a *Grower Guide* has been produced to educate horticultural employers about the NHLIS. The guide contains instructions for registering vacancies with the service.

The NHLIS Grower Guide is

a free publication. To order a copy, phone 1800 062 332 or email <nhlis@madec.edu.au>. If emailing, include your contact name, business, postal address and phone number. **va**

Why is Success²

AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE INSECTICIDE?



Because It Works!



Meet the new AUSVEG CEO

From being a senior executive of a Fortune 500 company to serving as a Member of Parliament, recently appointed AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy talks to Jim Thomson about challenges faced by growers and his plans for helping the industry assume its rightful position on the national stage.

You've worked in a number of different industries, including government and private enterprise. How will this experience benefit the vegetable industry?

The various industries I've worked in have all had a number of similarities: their full economic worth was not being recognised federally, they were confronted with a range of issues—legislation, tax issues, economic concerns and industrial relations—and they all had a very good story to tell that wasn't being heard. As a result, there was scope for dramatic improvement. The vegetable industry is no exception.

While good work has gone on at state level, which is very important in terms of national policy, AUSVEG's voice has not been strong at a national level.

We have many effective research and development projects that deliver outcomes for growers and help the industry, but we tend to hide our light under a bushel. As an organisation we need to be front and centre in terms of our engagement with government.

I've initiated dialogue with bureaucrats at a national level, along with key Members of Parliament from both sides of politics. There'll be ongoing discussions as we establish our credentials, ensuring that when matters arise that impact on the vegetable industry, we will be consulted and our point of view heard.

We're in the introductory stage, but the office of Tony Burke, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, has already agreed to further

scheduled meetings with AUSVEG. Similarly, the office of John Cobb, Shadow Minister for the same portfolio, has indicated that they would like to have detailed discussions in coming weeks on issues that they have identified in relation to water and AQIS charges.

What are the top challenges faced by the industry, and how can these be turned into opportunities?

As an industry, we offer a product that is essential to society. We have an established reputation as growers of high-quality produce, and there is fantastic diversity within the industry, representing a range of different groupings and nationalities.

However, we are under serious challenge from imported products. While this presents an immediate threat, we must also recognise the enormous challenges we face in the retail area, with two major retailers dominating the grocery trade in Australia. This situation is likely to be with us for a long time, so we have to find ways of working through it to ensure that Australian-grown products are given greater prominence and support at the retail level.

The presentation by Jin Ju Wilder, President of California's Coast Produce Company, at the recent Australian Vegetable Industry Conference showcased innovative ideas that have been employed in retail locations for American vegetable outlets.

I plan to have discussions in the coming weeks at the retail level to



see if we can trial some of these ideas. This will increase awareness of the quality of our products and use the locally-grown label as a selling point over imported products.

Can growers expect to see a greater focus on retail in the future?

The vegetable industry has a stronger message to sell than any other industry I've been involved in—the role that vegetables can play in a healthy diet. Bringing the health benefits of our product to the attention of consumers will result in increased sales and greater consumer awareness.

“Bringing the health benefits of our product to the attention of consumers will result in increased sales and greater consumer awareness.”

Discussions have been held with Department of Primary Industries Victoria, which is a partner in the Vital Vegetables program.

Over \$12 million has already been invested in this program; it's a serious initiative that has potential to significantly improve production in the industry. I'm excited about this project as it has similarities to programs in other industries I've been involved in, including a successful marketing campaign for a Chicago-based Fortune 500 company that was structured around the health aspects of the company's products. This campaign resulted in increased global sales that have lasted to this day.

What forces will shape the industry in the years to come?

The number of issues that the vegetable industry contends with is astounding. Trade, biosecurity, labour force, urban sprawl, water access, consolidation of competitors, and interconnection within the retail sector are all matters that present significant challenges for growers;

they underline the importance of AUSVEG playing a major role in tackling these issues to help protect its members.

Imports are a major issue, as are treaty negotiations. AUSVEG recently lodged a submission with the Federal Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, giving evidence in relation to the concerns we have over the free trade arrangements in Asia, particularly impediments to Australian exports into Indonesia and the Philippines.

Meanwhile, in the area of industrial relations, pending changes to the Horticulture Award will also have adverse economic consequences, presenting the industry with significant challenges in terms of increased labour costs.

What type of support can growers expect from AUSVEG?

The first thing we're working towards is greatly enhancing the communications we have with our state members and allied organisations—those that share our concerns in the horticulture sector. We're also improving our communications with decision makers in the parliamentary sphere. I've had an extensive briefing with the Levies Revenue Service and members will see significantly more information coming from AUSVEG, which will help them better understand the issues they face.

I'm anxious to ensure that there is a strong level of transparency and accountability. I've had the privilege of serving as a Member of Parliament in the role of Shadow Treasurer and as Chairman of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, so I have a considerable awareness of processes in terms of expenditure of funds. Levy-paying growers must be confident that funds from the national vegetable and potato levies are deployed in the most efficient and effective way. To facilitate this transparency, more information will flow, not less.

We had a report on the rural aspects of the Federal Budget out to all members by 8.15 pm on Budget night. This information provision is a sign of things to come. I hope that state organisations will help by ensuring these briefings and reports are disseminated within their own membership.

While AUSVEG will continue to give great importance to research and development projects, there's an intention to significantly improve our capacity to lobby, so public affairs is a priority for the future. We also hope to develop partnership arrangements with many industry providers and suppliers to assist them in communicating with members. **va**

Industry awards recognise diverse talents



Marketing solutions for organic producers, new paths to consumers for growers, and the delicate balance between IPM and chemical controls were all represented on the winners' podium when the Australian Vegetable Industry Awards were announced at the Australian Vegetable Industry Conference gala dinner in Melbourne on 6 May.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy welcomed all finalists and guests when he addressed the gala dinner, and said he was impressed with the caliber of growers and researchers nominated.

"Congratulations to every winner and finalist for their commitment to excellence and for setting a benchmark for the Australian vegetable industry," he said.

AUSVEG Chairman John Brent thanked the finalists for progressing the industry, and said they led by example

when it came to horticulture's contribution to the Australian economy.

"This year's finalists and winners are champions of the industry whom we congratulate and encourage to continue their excellent work," said John.

Awards winners were selected by expert panels from nominations representing industry leaders from around the country.

Landini Grower of the Year

Sponsored by Landini Tractors



2009 winner: Kim Vincent, New South Wales

Landini Grower of the Year, Kim Vincent, has been in the vegetable industry for only eight years, but that hasn't stopped her from making an impact. In addition to being a member of the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), Kim has been proactive in promoting local produce in the Coffs Harbour region, where her property is located. She recently opened a retail outlet that sells only local produce, giving primary producers in the area another avenue for reaching consumers.

Kim congratulated the other finalists—Lisa Crooks and Tom Schreurs—before thanking AUSVEG Environmental Consultant, Helena Whitman, and New South Wales Industry Development Officer, Alison Anderson, for their encouragement and the success of the EnviroVeg program, of which Kim is a member. She also thanked Lucy Keatinge, HAL Industry Services Manager Vegetables, for her support.

"I came into this industry at an older age and I'd like to thank the members of the Vegetable IAC for their patience and guidance. I'd also like to thank my husband and my family for all their help during the hard times. My first year was horrific, with every plant that died, I cried and my family had to live through it all," she said.

Kim ended her speech by encouraging industry members to "keep on keeping on".



Kim Vincent accepts the Landini Grower of the Year Award.



[From left] Dr Paul Horne, Steve Skopilianos, Kim Vincent, Nathan Clackson and Peter Dal Santo.

Australian Vegetable Industry Awards winners 2009

- Landini Grower of the Year:
Kim Vincent, New South Wales
- Landmark Young Grower of the Year:
Nathan Clackson, New South Wales
- Syngenta Researcher of the Year:
Dr Paul Horne, Victoria
- Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award: **Ladybird Organics, Victoria**
- AUSVEG Industry Recognition Award:
Peter Dal Santo, Victoria

Landmark Young Grower of the Year

Sponsored by Landmark



Landmark Marketing Manager, Karl Gawlick [left] and Landmark Young Grower of the Year, Nathan Clackson.

2009 Winner: Nathan Clackson, New South Wales

New South Wales grower Nathan Clackson has another feather in his cap after winning the Landmark Young Grower of the Year Award.

Only two years ago, Nathan designed and built an 11-acre NFT hydroponic facility that employs more than 20 staff and produces between 60,000 and 85,000 bunches of Asian vegetables per week.

Nathan said Australian growers still have many opportunities to grow their businesses, despite current hurdles. He thanked his wife; his employer, Barden Produce; and the growers from the 2008 Young Growers New Zealand tour, who he said he'd learned a lot from.

He also took the opportunity to increase awareness about issues affecting the vegetable industry.

"We need to secure farm land so we can continue to feed our nation. The 'Greenports' of the Netherlands are areas of land that have special zoning designed around farming and agricultural development, and I think we can learn a lot from that. We don't want to import vegetables, nor is it preferable to transport produce thousands of kilometers just to reach local consumers," he said.



Peter Dal Santo accepts the AUSVEG Industry Recognition Award.

AUSVEG Industry Recognition Award

Sponsored by AUSVEG Ltd



2009 winner: Peter Dal Santo

After nearly 20 years working in pest management for the agrichemical industry, and nine years working primarily with vegetables, Peter Dal Santo received the AUSVEG Industry Recognition Award.

When accepting the award, Peter said that while his work coordinating pesticide access and providing pest management options for horticulture was rewarding, it has become increasingly complex due to consumer, environment and trade issues.

"The industry is going through some big changes with regards to pesticide access and control strategies, but thanks to past and present Industry Development Officers, the various state Departments of Primary Industries, and horticultural consultants, we have access to some very clever people and resources," he said.

Peter has a particular interest in providing growers with sound pest-management strategies by substituting currently-available older pesticides, for newer, reduced-risk pesticides with strong integrated pest management (IPM) profiles and international market acceptance.

He thanked Brad Wells, HAL Plant Health Manager; Lucy Keatinge, HAL Industry Services Manager; Alan Norden, APVMA Minor Use Manager; and many others for their support.

"There are challenging times ahead for pesticide access and usage as we have significant pest issues that we can no longer manage with just chemical controls. We must keep working to bring in best practice and place greater emphasis on IPM," he said.

Syngenta Researcher of the Year

Sponsored by Syngenta



2009 winner: Dr Paul Horne, Victoria

Entomologist Dr Paul Horne has been involved with the development and implementation of integrated pest management (IPM) in a wide range of crops, specialising in helping growers adopt IPM on-farm.

“What an honour it is to be selected out of all the researchers in all the disciplines,” he said, when accepting the award.

Paul started his company, IPM Technologies, 13 years ago. Since then he has conducted research on how to use biological control agents, cultural methods and selective pesticides.

Paul thanked Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) for facilitating the funding for his projects but noted that the value of research is not seen until growers implement the results.

“I’d like to acknowledge the growers who’ve listened to me over the years, especially those who took what may have seemed strange advice at the start. I’d also like to acknowledge Jessica Page, who has worked with me for over 13 years. We hope that we can continue to help growers adopt IPM in the years to come,” he said.



Stewart Kerr, Specialty Crops Lead, Syngenta [left], and Syngenta Researcher of the Year, Dr Paul Horne.

Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award

Sponsored by Brisbane Markets Limited



2009 winner: Ladybird Organics, Victoria

When accepting the Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award, Ladybird Organics Director Steven Skopilianos acknowledged the hard work and long hours that are part and parcel of being a vegetable grower.

“It also takes a lot of faith to plant a seed. Then you come back day after day and pray that pests don’t destroy the crop, that the crop doesn’t succumb to disease, and that it isn’t destroyed by hail. In my 25 years as a grower, one thing I’ve learned is how to pray,” he said.

Ladybird Organics’ innovative contribution to the industry has been the introduction of a biodegradable plastic bag for its range of organic pre-packed salads.

“We’d never allocated funds to marketing, but over the past four to five years, as we’ve converted to organic production, we wanted a new face, a new identity, so we engaged a consultant to help us achieve this,” said Steven.

“To be recognised for our efforts in this time of drought and bad economic news is very encouraging.”

Steven thanked Andrew Monk, Director of Biological Farmers Australia (BFA), saying he was instrumental in helping the company make the change.

“This one is for organics,” he said. **va**



Steven Skopilianos, Director Ladybird Organics, accepts the Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award.

For more information visit:
www.vegetableindustryawards.com.au

Next generation of leaders steps up to the plate

Participants in the inaugural Vegetable Industry Strategic Leadership Course are using their new skills to make plans that will benefit all of industry.

The six-month HAL Vegetable Industry Strategic Leadership Course 2009 (VISLC) has drawn participants from across the nation and the supply chain. Concluding in August, the course was developed in line with the vegetable industry's strategic plan, VegVision 2020, to foster industry leadership.

For Tasmanian grower Marcus Brandsema, the diversity of participants has been one of the course's greatest strengths.

"We are developing relationships that I expect will continue, particularly as we progress our leadership within the industry," he said. The broad experience and industry knowledge of group members means that networking and information sharing has become second-nature for all involved.

Course participant and Industry Development Officer for Queensland's Bowen district, Denise Kreymborg, said the opportunity to gain vital leadership skills was too good to pass up.

"I can use these skills to encourage industry to implement change for a more sustainable future," she said.

Worth the effort

The course requires participants to attend three three-day residentials, one each in Devonport, Melbourne and Canberra. Industry dinners, guest speakers and panel sessions are all essential elements.

Networking opportunities aren't restricted to group discussions. An industry dinner held in Melbourne in June saw participants mingling with industry leaders, including AUSVEG CEO, Richard Mulcahy, and Victorian Minister



Industry dinner guests and participants: [Clockwise from top left] Roger Jaensch, Cradle Mountain Authority (CMA); participants Tundra Howe and Andrew Craigie; Eliza Wood, ABC Rural reporter; Guy Robertson, CMA; Nick Steele, TFGA; and participant Marcus Brandsema.

for Primary Industries Chief of Staff, Tony White.

By offering a range of workshops and skill-building sessions, the course gives participants a firm understanding of what it takes to be a leader—and makes it clear that strong leadership isn't always easy. Course facilitator Jill Briggs said that the sessions on conflict resolution and public speaking, while well received, were challenging but rewarding.

The course structure allows group members to set personal benchmarks, which gives them the opportunity to assess their strengths and weaknesses while learning new skills that will help them achieve their goals. Marcus said the course has given him greater awareness about his capabilities and the types of support he needs to more effectively run his business.

"Adults learn in many different ways, so we craft our sessions to

accommodate this," said Jill.

Participants have already put their new leadership skills to work, with an emphasis on increased time management, effective communication, and understanding others' strengths and using them efficiently.

"The skills I've gained have enabled me to better understand the industry at all levels. The course has helped me to enhance the flow of information," said Denise.

Lasting legacy

The group is passionate about the industry and believes that participants will have a positive impact on future industry development. As such, the group has refined a mission statement for the course: to enhance communication to benefit the vegetable industry.

Three strategies are being developed to help make this goal a reality:

1. Identify existing networks including relevant groups and bodies
2. Create a network to improve communications
3. Develop a National Vegetable Industry Services Guide, which will increase industry transparency by informing growers what the various industry association and service providers do, and how to contact them.

Most importantly, the VISLC aims to show participants that while leadership skills can be learned, the journey to becoming a leader is about leaving your comfort zone and being prepared to make mistakes.

"The course is about learning, trying things out, practicing and possibly making mistakes—after all, isn't that what happens when you provide leadership?" said Jill.

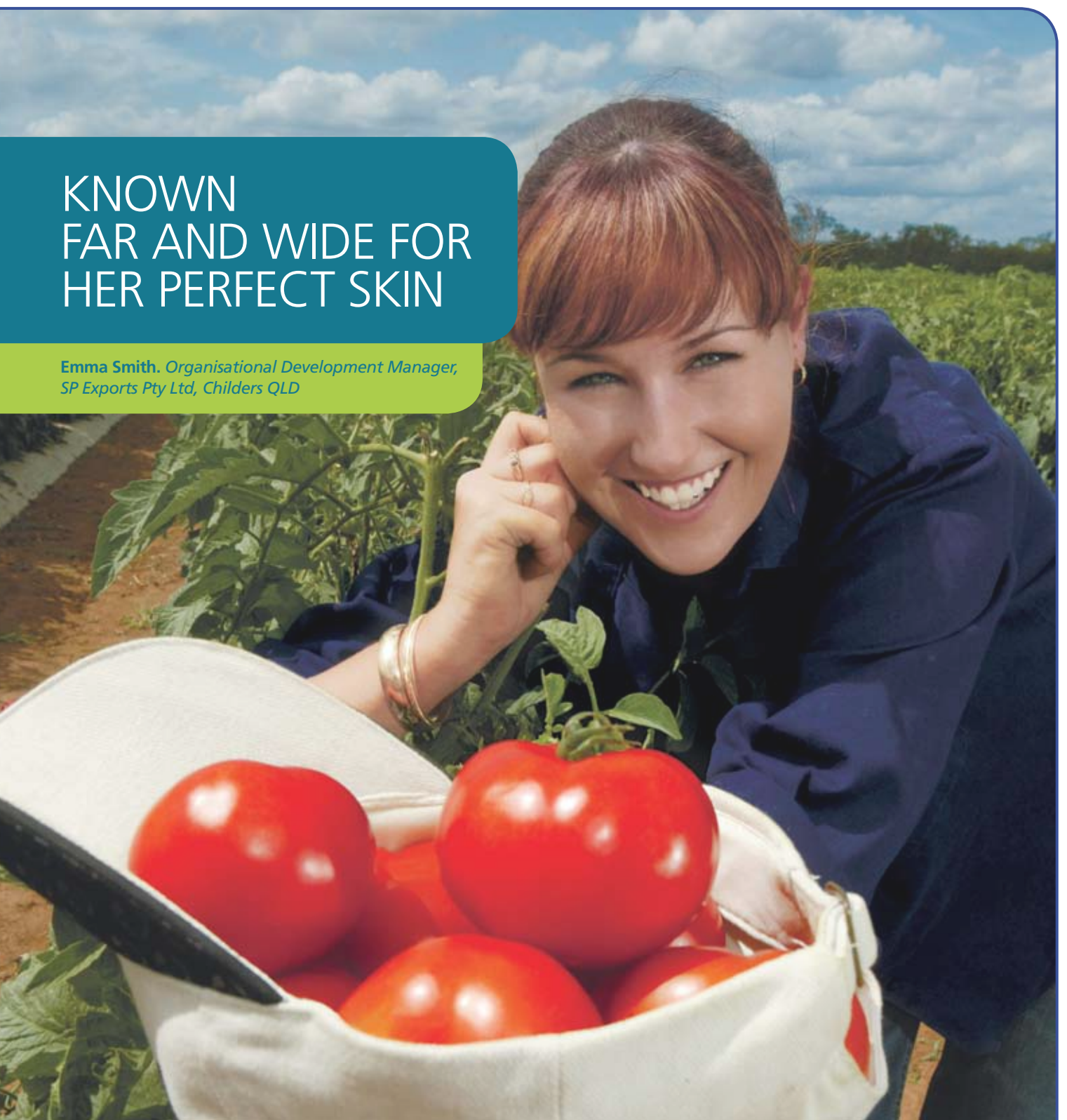
THE BOTTOM LINE

- The inaugural Vegetable Industry Strategic Leadership Course will conclude in August. It has been specifically designed to develop leadership within the vegetable industry.
- Course participants include representatives from across the supply chain, ensuring ample opportunity to network and share industry knowledge.
- Participants are already using their newly acquired skills within the industry, and plans are being made to roll-out projects that will benefit all of industry.

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

KNOWN FAR AND WIDE FOR HER PERFECT SKIN

*Emma Smith. Organisational Development Manager,
SP Exports Pty Ltd, Childers QLD*



Being a devout vegetarian and part of the largest producers of tomatoes for the fresh market in Australia, Emma knows too well that skin blemishes on her produce just won't do. "The skin has to look perfect," says Emma. That's why she uses the broad spectrum capabilities of AMISTAR® as a part of her crop programme, controlling fungal diseases such as Target Spot and Late Blight.

All the 1½ million 10kg cases of freshly picked tomatoes have to go through a stringent quality assurance programme. So when it comes to preventing blemishes due to Target Spot, Emma says, "AMISTAR is in a league of its own".

Emma is passionate about maintaining SP Exports' reputation for continual customer satisfaction. "It all comes down to producing a consistent top quality product". Not an easy task, but with the help of AMISTAR, this is something that Emma and SP Exports continue to do.

Amistar 
GROW your reputation

**For further information, please contact the Syngenta Technical Advice Line
on Freecall 1800 067 108 or visit www.syngenta.com.au**

© Registered trademark of a Syngenta Group Company. ABN 33 002 933 717. RENARD SYN5830/TOMATO/VA/FPC

syngenta

Too much of a good thing?

A lack of information about the nutrient requirements of Asian vegetables is being rectified, allowing growers to more effectively manage these increasingly popular commodities.

Efficient nutrient management in the production of leafy Asian vegetables is important to minimise production costs, prevent nutrient runoff and ensure that produce is of a high quality.

An excess of nutrients such as nitrate, which occurs from excessive fertilisation in production, can be taken up and accumulated by plants. This can increase the risk of bacterial soft rots and reduce vegetable quality, including lower vitamin C concentration. Additionally, there may be a food safety concern as a diet high in nitrates has been associated with some cancers.

Information shortage

As the demand for Asian vegetables increases in Australia, growers new to producing these vegetables seek information about how best to grow them.

Unfortunately, limited information is available about Asian vegetable fertiliser or nutrient management.

This problem was identified initially by Dr Sophie Parks, a Plant Physiologist with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (DPI), when she led a project that researched nitrate and nitrite in Australian vegetables.

As part of the project, a market survey was conducted. It showed that, on the whole, Asian leafy vegetables had a higher nitrate concentration than other leafy vegetables including lettuce, silverbeet and spinach. This led to the question: do leafy Asian vegetables have a high nitrate requirement or are they just being supplied with too much nitrate in



Leafy Asian vegetables growing in a hydroponic system at NSW DPI, Gosford, for an experiment testing nutrient supply strength. Image supplied by Dr Sophie Parks.

production in Australia?

Inspection of scientific literature revealed that there were few studies on the nutritional requirements of leafy Asian vegetables. As a result, a follow-on project was initiated to develop relevant information for nitrate management of Asian vegetables grown in Australia.

Closed systems protect waterways

The project aims to determine general nutrient requirements—with a focus on nitrate—for a range of leafy Asian vegetables. Initial trials have determined the responses of Thai basil (Siam Queen), bunching onion, coriander, flowering choy sum, mustard cabbage, pak choy (varieties Sumo, Yangtze and Miyako),

“Kang kong can be produced in a closed, low-input, low-technology system that poses no risk to natural waterways.”

en choy and tat soi to a complete nutrient solution supplied at low- to high-concentrations in a hydroponic recirculated nutrient film technique (NFT) system.

A further trial was performed on kang kong, except this commodity was grown in still solution in tanks—a production system that better suits this plant.

In some southern states of the US, kang kong has invaded waterways and been declared a noxious weed. In Australia, kang kong has reportedly caused some problems around the Darwin area but not in temperate areas where its growth is limited in winter by cool temperatures and frost.


The kang kong experiment investigated plant responses to five rates of nitrate supply. The solution was not replenished

and the plants were harvested when the solution in the tanks had run out. This simple system demonstrates that it is possible to produce kang kong in a closed, low-input, low-technology system that does not pose a risk to natural waterways.

Established requirements

Further work was planned for June 2009 with pak choy (variety Sumo), coriander and en choy, as each variety represents a different plant family.

AgVita Analytical, a Tasmanian laboratory that specialises in plant and soil nutrient analysis, is working with New South Wales DPI to provide data on different analytical techniques. Quick-test techniques such as nitrate test strips will also be used in the experiment.

As a result of this work, the nitrate requirements of these vegetables will be established and protocols for plant analysis—including on-farm plant analysis—will be developed. 

THE BOTTOM LINE

- In Australia, leafy Asian vegetables generally have a higher nitrate concentration than other leafy vegetables.
- Research is being conducted to ascertain whether leafy Asian vegetables have a higher nitrate requirement or if they are simply being supplied with too much nitrate in production.
- It is expected that the nitrate requirements of these vegetables will be established and protocols for plant analysis will be developed.

 For further information contact:
Dr Sophie Parks, Plant Pathologist, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries
Phone: 02 4348 1914
Email: <sophie.parks@dpi.nsw.gov.au>
or visit www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
Project numbers: VG04019, VG07153
Keywords: Assessing nitrate, nutrient management

Asian Vegetable Profile

Perilla (*Perilla frutescens* var. *crispa*, var. *frutescens*, var. *japonica*)

Otherwise known as: Beefsteak plant, Chinese basil, purple mint, wild sesame, shiso, egoma, silam

Background

A member of the mint family, perilla is an annual herb with attractive, crispate foliage that can be green, red or purple.

Native to South-East and East Asia, perilla is a fragrant herb. While its odour is unique, some say it has similarities to cinnamon, anise, or mint. It tastes both spicy and sweet.

Perilla is used in Chinese medicine to stimulate the body's immune system. Its anti-microbial properties have been documented to be 1,000 times stronger than synthetic food preservatives, and in Asian countries it is used often when pickling food.



Where and how does it grow?

Perilla is grown easily from seed or propagated from existing plants. It grows best under full sun or partial shading in mild climates, where it has been known to reseed itself. It ranges from 50 cm to 150 cm tall.

Perilla seeds have a dormant stage and will not germinate during this period, which can begin any time after fresh seeds have been harvested. The dormant period may last up to two years, but seeds will have good germination after this period finishes. Growers are advised to use post-dormant old seeds when planting.


Preparation and cooking

While the leaves of perilla are generally used fresh, they can be cooked in stews and sim-

mered dishes, or frozen.

This aromatic herb is popular in parts of the Far East. In Vietnam and Korea, perilla is served as a fragrant garnish for noodle soups and spring rolls, while in Japan it is used as readily as westerners use parsley.

The Japanese also eat perilla with sashimi (sliced raw fish) and in salads. For some meals it is used as a basil replacement. Perilla cultivars with red or purple leaves are preferred to add both flavour and colour to pickles.

Perilla oil is obtained by pressing the seeds of perilla, which contain 35 to 45 per cent oil. In parts of Asia, perilla oil is valued more for its medicinal properties than its flavor. It is a very rich source of the omega-3 fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid. 

 For more information contact:
Dr Jenny Ekman, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries
Email: <jenny.ekman@dpi.nsw.gov.au>an@dpi.nsw.gov.au>

Top marks in the Top End

If there's one person who can bridge the language divide in the Northern Territory's horticulture industry, it's produce consultant Patti Flannery. Dan McGuire finds out more. Photography by Chris Knight.

Patti Flannery never expected to live in the Northern Territory—much less be an integral part of Darwin's fruit and vegetable industry—but when her sister moved to the Top End, it seemed like the ideal opportunity for a six-month working holiday.

That was in 1984. With a lifelong background in the fruit and vegetable trade—her family owned fruit shops in Albury-Wodonga—doors opened quickly, friendships were forged and an enthusiastic Patti never looked back.

"I started at McGowan's Produce and Export as an office worker and before I knew it they asked me if I would be a partner in the business," she said.

It was an ideal fit. Years working in her parents' fruit shop had taught Patti what retailers were looking for in their produce. As a wholesaler, she had a passion for communicating these issues to growers and retailers.

It's a passion that continues today in her work as an inde-

“We're really lucky to have these growers in the Northern Territory. They work hard and they grow a beautiful product.”

pendent produce consultant—her clients include a national supermarket chain—and as a largely voluntary liaison officer for growers and the Northern Territory Horticultural Association (NTHA).

Overcoming language barriers

"A lot of my work is trying to help growers meet their customers' quality assurance standards," said Patti.

The role can be particularly challenging because around half the region's growers are first-generation Asian immigrants, mostly Vietnamese and many with limited English skills.

Patti has known some of them for a quarter of a century now and has tremendous respect for the Vietnamese community.

"Many find it difficult relating to the non-English-speaking-background sectors, however, we all manage to communicate and understand each other. I feel we're really lucky to have these growers in the Northern Territory.

Many of them live very simply, they're very good recyclers, they work hard and they grow a beautiful product," said Patti.

Nevertheless, distribution of industry information to growers can be difficult, as many growers do not have computers, let alone email addresses.

As a result, when the NTHA, the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIF&M) or CSIRO need information distributed to non-English-speaking growers, they call on the busy soccer mum.

"For instance, when the new Horticulture Code of Conduct came out, we arranged for translated versions to be distributed. This was mainly for Vietnamese growers, as they are in the majority," said Patti.

This service is provided for other documentation such as information about plant diseases and growing trials that are produced by DPIF&M, and water study



projects conducted by CSIRO. For Patti, it's about helping growers access as much information as possible.

Ground support

James Gorrie, Director of training company Train Safe NT, relies on Patti to bring growers to the workshops he presents.

"She's definitely out there doing a lot of work to get growers into the courses, especially the Vietnamese growers," he said.

"She finds very good translators—usually one of the growers' children—and she always explains to the growers all the things to help them, like Occupational Health and Safety on the farm, Freshcare so they can sell their product, and chemical use so they can reduce their chemical costs and use them more efficiently."

“Growers of all ethnic backgrounds have a confidence in Patti’s transparent and enthusiastic method of doing business.”

It's impossible to mistake the obvious passion Patti has for all aspects of the industry.

"I love it because the Department of Primary Industry does a lot of great work up here and I'm becoming involved with some of their projects on the ground. Also, if I'm visiting a farm and notice anything that might be a problem I speak to the grower and get it looked at—just to let them know there's support out there," she said.

Patti has also completed a ChemCert course and a number of Quality Assurance programs, which enable her to help growers if they have questions about chemical use or QA issues.

"With the assistance of the NTHA, we organised a three-day HACCP Woolworths Quality Assurance course in Darwin with 14 attendees," she said.

Trustworthy advice

Anne Arthur, a grower from Acacia Hills Farm, 70 kilometres south-east of Darwin, said Patti's warmth and winning personality had gained the trust of all growers.

"Patti has a formidable knowledge of fruit and vegetables and her knowledge base isn't just that of a marketer. It's founded on a thorough understanding of her grower base," said Anne.

"She is a major focal point who is able to visit farms regularly, build up trust and confidence and help growers through the minefields of paperwork attached to quarantine, safe food quality accreditations and building up a supply chain for their products.

"Growers of all ethnic backgrounds have a confidence in her transparent and enthusiastic method of doing business." **va**



[From left] Patti Flannery talks with growers Doa and Hung Nguyen at their farm in Humpty Doo.

Industry issues

Transport, weather and an ageing grower population are pressing issues the Northern Territory industry needs to deal with.

"It's a long way to the shop if you want a salad roll," goes the old parody of the AC/DC song, but when the shop is in Melbourne and the salad is in Darwin, it's a bloody long way.

Distance from markets is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges facing growers in the Northern Territory, along with labour shortages, an ageing grower population, a lack of training opportunities and—not surprisingly—the heat.

Produce consultant Patti Flannery points out that much of southern Australia relies on northern regions to supply fruit and vegetables during the winter months.

"We grow when other areas in Australia are out of season. When it's cold down south, it's our dry season. But the big challenge is transport. We have to move things by train or road train and it's very expensive," she said.

Too hot to handle

The weather is a double-edged sword for Darwin growers. On one hand, it provides market opportunities, it's very predictable, there is plenty of sunlight and there's no shortage of water.

"We can get 300 mm of rain here in two days," said James Gorrie, Director of Train Safe NT.

On the other hand, it's incredibly hot.

James said the heat makes the work even harder, which exacerbates the problem of finding labour. "It's always a struggle trying to get pickers for farms. It's an issue every year."

Then there is the question of the next generation. Around half of Darwin's growers are Vietnamese and like so many of Australia's successful immigration stories they work hard to get their children a good education in hope of a better life.

"They send their children to university so they can get good-paying jobs in the professions," said James. "I'm not sure in 20 years' time where the Vietnamese will be in this industry."

Patti said that more industry-related educational opportunities are needed.

"There's not much available to help our very experienced growers. A lot of the important courses are not available in Darwin—we have to go down south, which is very expensive for growers." **va**



EnviroVeg goes to next level

EnviroVeg continues to evolve in line with changing industry requirements with the introduction of a second-part audit.

As environmental issues become more prominent and public awareness increases, the vegetable industry needs to be more proactive in demonstrating its environmental credentials. In the main, vegetable growers look after their natural resources very well, the most valuable assets being the soil and water that enables the growth of produce. Through EnviroVeg, the vegetable industry's environmental program, growers have been encouraged to record their achievements and gain recognition for their good environmental practices.

Sign of the times

Recently, EnviroVeg provided members with an option to undergo a second-party audit that enables their business to display the EnviroVeg logo on signage and packaging. Growers who

have undergone this process believe that displaying the logo demonstrates to the public that vegetable growers care about the environment and manage their businesses accordingly.

Steve Skoplianos, Director of Ladybird Organics, this year's winner of the Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award, said that Ladybird's involvement with EnviroVeg was the first step in the company's conversion to organic production.

"For us, it was the stepping stone. I also see it as a great advantage having the recognisable EnviroVeg logo, which we can display at the farm gate and use for marketing purposes."

To date, nine businesses—five in Victoria, two in Western Australia and two in New South Wales—have undergone the second-party audit and now

display their signage informing the public that they are "Vegetable growers caring for the environment". These businesses were presented with certificates at the Australian Vegetable Industry Conference gala dinner in May.


Ongoing benefits

The second-party audit consists of an audit checklist that is completed by AUSVEG Environmental Consultant, Helena Whitman, during a two-hour farm visit. The visit also includes a visual appraisal of the property to ensure that it meets EnviroVeg guidelines and standards.

Members who successfully complete the audit are issued with a letter of authority allowing them to use the EnviroVeg logo on signage and packaging. Pending completion of an annual internal audit, which is recorded by

EnviroVeg, the business maintains continual use of the logo.

While EnviroVeg membership is free for growers, there is a nominal charge of \$110 for the audit and logo usage. The program does not tell growers how to grow; it simply informs them of the best options for increased sustainability, efficiency and profitability.

Should they choose, growers can remain at Self-Assessment level, which requires them to complete an annual checklist that is recorded by EnviroVeg. The information provided is confidential, and used only to identify issues that need to be addressed, such as alternative water supplies, better choice of native species, and the monitoring of pests in adjacent vegetation. 



EnviroVeg growers accept their second-party audit certificates: [from left] Richard Mulcahy, AUSVEG CEO; Paul Gazzola; Kim Vincent; Helena Whitman, AUSVEG Environmental Consultant; Silvio Favero; Marty Fields, gala dinner MC; Peter Schreurs; Steve Skoplianos; Kevan Dobra; and John Brent, AUSVEG Chairman.

R&D project preview

Control of slugs in the Australian vegetable industry

Project number: VG08152

Start date: March 2009

End date: March 2010

Project leader: Dr Paul Horne, Entomologist and
Director of IPM Technologies

Team member: Jessica Page


Email: ipmtechnologies@bigpond.com

Phone: 03 9710 1554



Supported by the processing vegetable industry, this project will provide information about the control of slugs in horticultural crops (including non-processing crops) using a range of methods, such as biological, cultural and chemical options. It will provide information about the range of species and the differences in biology and pest status.

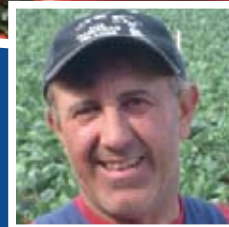
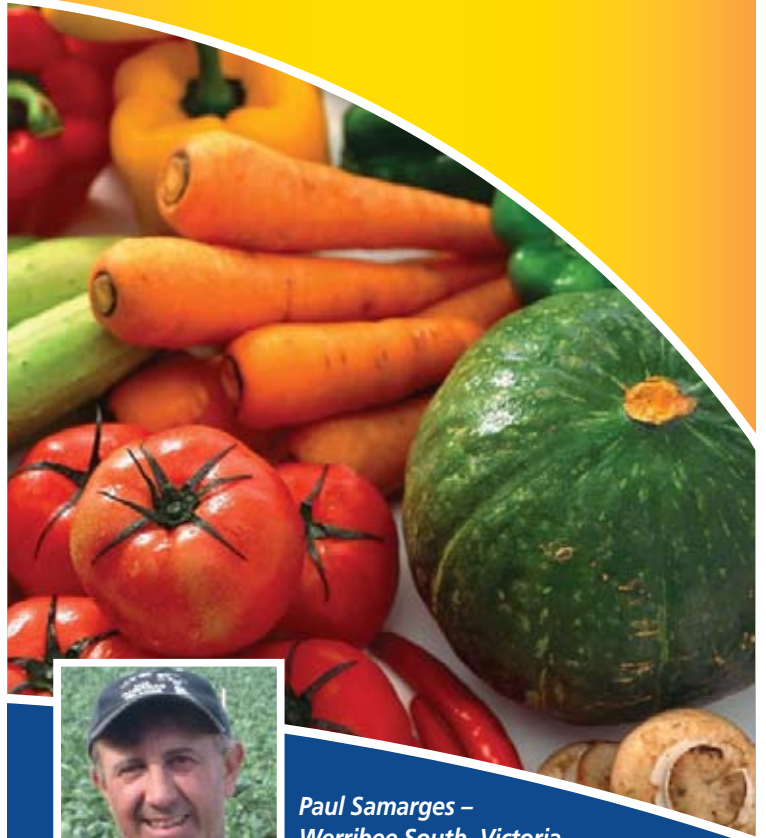
A draft guide to species of slugs and key biological control agents—and how to monitor them—will be prepared. This will help growers and agronomists easily identify different species and target control measures in a more precise manner.

Different slug species have different timings of life-cycles and are not equal in terms of their pest status. Demonstrations of an integrated control strategy will be made in the field with collaborating growers, agronomists and processors. It is intended that the project will be conducted in northern Tasmania where processing vegetables are important crops. 

GYPSUM...

Gyp-Flo
LIQUID GYPSUM

- **Breaks up Clay Soils**
- **Increases Calcium**
- **Removes Sodium**



*Paul Samarges –
Werribee South, Victoria*

"I have been using GYP-FLO for nearly 10 years now, it keeps my soil in great shape and I don't have salt or sodium problems anymore. GYP-FLO really works well and saves me money!"

**ULTIMATE
AGRI-PRODUCTS**

1800 003 244

sales@ultimateagri.com.au

Jam-packed conference impresses industry

This year's Australian Vegetable Industry Conference featured more speakers and showcased more levy-funded R&D project outcomes than ever before.

Held from 4 to 6 May at the Melbourne Convention Centre, the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference featured more than 70 speakers, including many of Australia's leading industry researchers and experts. International guests included Professor David Hughes, Jin Ju Wilder, and extension specialists Dr Frank Louws and Dr Steve Johnson. A highlight for many delegates, these experts provided valuable insights into trends and practices in overseas markets, particularly in the US and the UK.

More than 450 people attended the conference, drawing from the vegetable, potato, onion, protected cropping and organic sectors, among others. Attendees comprised growers, researchers, and representatives from government agencies and other service providers.

Networking opportunities

The trade exhibition was highly regarded by delegates, with almost 90 per cent rating the exhibition as either good or excellent. Featuring 40 exhibitors, the trade exhibition featured rural and farm service providers, state primary industries, and companies from the seed, packaging, software, machinery, engineering and chemical control sectors. This broad industry representation gave delegates outstanding opportunities to network.

The conference Welcome Reception and Trade Drinks were held in the exhibition area, creating a relaxed environment for delegates, speakers and exhibitors to meet and mingle, and for old acquaintances to catch up.



Comedian Marty Fields entertained guests at the gala dinner. [Inset] Table centrepieces followed the conference theme.

At the welcome reception on the evening of Monday 4 May, AUSVEG Chairman John Brent thanked exhibitors and sponsors, including signature sponsor Elders and platinum sponsor Bayer CropScience, for their support. After extending his welcome to delegates, John took the opportunity to announce the appointment of Richard Mulcahy as CEO of AUSVEG.

In his formal address the following morning, John implored delegates to actively strive for the betterment of the industry.

"Every one of you has a vital part to play and it's important that we get together, we network, we share ideas, we listen to speakers and we take things back home that can advantage this very

important \$1.4 billion industry we have in Australia," he said.

Winners announced

Many delegates took the opportunity to attend the conference gala dinner at Crown Palladium on Wednesday 6 May, where the winners for the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Awards were announced.

It was a night of fine dining, conversation and many laughs as comedian Marty Fields entertained guests as MC for the evening.

At the dinner, John Brent officially welcomed AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy to the industry.

Richard congratulated all vegetable growers for the outstanding work they do each and every day.

"The past few years have been full of challenges for growers and the industry as a whole. But you have shown your resilience once again. By making smart decisions based on solid research and through hard work we can stay ahead of our global competitors and defeat the challenges that nature continues to hurl at us," he said.

Once the formalities were over, The Daryl Cotton Band summoned guests to the dance floor—a fitting end to the information-packed conference.

To access audiovisual records for conference presentations visit:

www.vegieconf.com.au

US tour opportunity for levy payers

Expressions of interest are being sought for the annual levy-subsidised tour to the USA.

The Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) has endorsed a tour by vegetable levy growers to the USA later this year. Ten growers will leave for the US in late September, returning to Australia in October.

The tour—open to all vegetable levy payers, with no age restriction—will include visits to farms in prime vegetable-growing regions, retail outlets, and distribution and processing facilities in California.

The second major component of the tour is attendance at the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) Fresh Summit Conference in Anaheim, California, which will be held from 2 to 5 October.

Participants from similar tours in previous years have gained benefit from:

- their exposure to a range of on- and off-farm businesses practices
- developing networks and


participating in forums with Australian and overseas growers

- learning about technological innovations, and the latest farm techniques and practices.

Tour costs are substantially sponsored by the levy, though growers will be required to contribute a portion of the costs. All air (including to and from tour departure point Sydney) and land travel, share accommodation, reg-

istration at the PMA conference and some meals are included.

Expressions of interest can be forwarded to Hugh Tobin, AUS-VEG Communications Manager, on 03 9544 8098 or at <hugh.tobin@ausveg.com.au>.

For more information visit:
 www.ausveg.com.au

Ask the industry

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

How does spray water quality affect the performance of a pesticide?

Most pesticide labels will carry a recommendation to apply with “clean or good-quality water”, however, with continued dry conditions in some growing regions, accessing good-quality water for spraying can be difficult.

Use of poor-quality water for mixing and application of pesticides can seriously affect a product’s efficacy and may cause compatibility issues when multiple products are tank mixed. This can lead to blockage of nozzles, filters and spray lines, decreasing the usable life of your spray equipment.

Growers use numerous water sources for spray application—including dam, river, rain and bore—which vary greatly in quality throughout the growing season. Water with high levels of soil particles and organic matter; hard and saline water; or variations in water pH can all affect pesticide efficacy.

Why is pH so important?

In simple terms, pH is a measure of acidity or alkalinity on a scale between 1 and 14, with 7 being classed as neutral. Readings less than 7 are acidic, while readings greater than 7 are alkaline.


While acidic water may affect the chemical stability of some products, highly alkaline water can severely impact on chemical performance. This process, known as alkaline hydrolysis, causes the breakdown of the pesticide or active ingredient and reduces its effectiveness.

It particularly affects organophosphate and carbamate insecticides, and the process escalates with increased alkalinity, water temperature and the length of time products are left in the spray tank.

Insecticides dimethoate and omethoate, and the fungicide iprodione, are all affected by alkaline hydrolysis. While buffering agents or water acidifiers can be added to spray solutions to adjust alkalinity, always check that these agents are compatible with the pesticide in question before using them.

What is the key to improving water quality?

A simple water test will determine if your spray water source is likely to affect the chemicals you intend to use. Your agronomist can provide information about water testing and recommend products available to help correct water-quality issues, such as adjusting water pH. Some product labels carry details about the quality of water to use when mixing. If in doubt, contact the manufacturer prior to use. **va**

 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.

Consumers, carbon, cooperation: three Cs for a vibrant future

Tough economic times still hold plenty of opportunities for selling fresh vegetables, according to experts who presented at the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference. Karen Shaw reports.

“**G**rowing a Healthy Australia” was the theme of the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, which was held in Melbourne in May. Local and international presenters spoke about changing consumer trends. There is enormous interest in food and where it comes from; people are cooking more at home but they want ideas about how to do this.

Together we stand

General Manager of Fresh Food, Coles, Peter Pokorny, said that there are opportunities within the vegetable industry and working together is the key to success.

“We need an aligned industry that responds to the customers. We need to understand the customers—what drives and motivates them. There is great

interest in food and we need to capitalise on that,” he said.

“We also need to be aware of the importance of listening. After the devastation of the Black Saturday Bushfires in Victoria we had growers call and talk about the effects of temperatures on vegetables in production. We were able to respond to the situation and tell customers that although produce, such as cauliflowers, were yellow coloured, that was because of the weather conditions. The produce was still OK.

“We are also training store managers in back-to-basics information about vegetables so they have the skills to engage customers and sell the products.”

Vibrant wholesalers

Michael O’Keeffe, Business

Strategist and advisor to fresh food firms globally, explained the structure of Australia’s fresh fruit and vegetable market. “The conventional wisdom that Australia is a highly concentrated market does not really apply to produce,” he said.

“In the UK, the two largest retailers—Tesco and ASDA—account for 55 per cent of the retail fruit and vegetable market, and access to the other 45 per cent is through retailers such as Sainsbury, Morrison’s, Marks & Spencer. It’s very clear how the market is segmented,” he said.

“In comparison, the Australian market is more diverse. Woolworths and Coles account for about 50 per cent of the fresh fruit and vegetable market; the other 50 per cent is sold mainly through independent fruiterers.”

Michael said that it was expected that wholesale produce markets in Australia would remain vibrant because they were the only way to reach about 50 per cent of the retail fresh food market.

“Experience overseas has shown that retailers need suppliers to work together to grow sales. To ensure future success we need to develop supply systems to meet demand, and then systems to grow demand and sales,” he said.

“Leading retailers around the world, such as Tesco and Wal-Mart, work with selected partners to grow category sales. But what’s important is consistency of taste and quality. For example, in the UK the Jaffa citrus brand has successfully been relaunched, and the reason underpinning





its success is the promise of consistency of both flavour and taste.”

Michael suggested that rewarding growers for producing improved-quality product could be a strategy used in the future.

Connect with consumers

President of Coast Produce Company in Los Angeles, Jin Ju Wilder, inspired delegates with her presentation about creating a relationship with consumers.

“We need an emotional connection with the consumer. People want to know where food comes from; they want a personal connection with it,” she said.

“In the US, people are eating out less. They have less discretionary income; they are buying value packs and shopping at discount stores. Consumption

“ We need to develop supply systems to meet demand, and then systems to grow demand and sales. ”

of fresh fruit and vegetables has dropped. People are worried about jobs; putting fruit and vegetables on the table is not a priority.”

Jin Ju said that consumers were shopping with a comprehensive list and that growers needed to make sure that vegetables were on that list.

Sydney-based Nutritionist and Dietician Dr Joanna McMillan Price had a simple message: “We want Australians to eat more vegetables and to do that we need to change the image of the industry”.

For Joanna, this is a matter of showing consumers that vegetables are a sexy and fun food to eat. “They shouldn’t be just a side dish, but an important, fun and vibrant part of our diet. Half the meal on each plate should include vegetables. They provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre that are readily absorbed by the body,” she said.

“People are busy and many don’t have the skills to cook vegetables in an interesting way. Some have fears about vegetables

continued page 36

[Clockwise from top left] Jin Ju Wilder is interviewed for ABC’s Landline; the Elders crew at their stand; NSW DPI researcher Sandra McDougall talks with delegates; AUSVEG Chairman John Brent [L] with The Hon Andrew Robb MP, Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design, and AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy; VGA Executive Officer Tony Imeson [L] with Managing Director of Favero Gardens Silvio Favero; Professor David Hughes.





Delighted delegates

"I was surprised that Jin Ju Wilder's introduction was dominated by the organic industry. She mentioned how more people are looking towards organic products. I was most interested in the packaging section, and how important this is."

Monika Fiebig, South Australian Grower, Monika's Organics

"I was particularly interested in the soilborne diseases session, identifying and managing plant pathogens. We're currently doing this sort of work in animals and we see this as a growth area in the coming years."

Andrew Bradbury, Sales Director, Advanced Analytical Australia

"I have been interested in hearing about how the marketplace changes to consumer demands. People now want to buy produce closer to home. I sell at a farmers' market and have seen more and more people want locally-grown produce."

Brett Connors, Tasmania Grower, B&S Connors

"It has been a motivational conference for me. I really liked Jin Ju Wilder's talk, especially the packaging element. I think the industry needs to work together more to deal with these post farm-gate issues. I also really enjoyed the VegeTracker session and Martin Kneebone from Freshlogic."

Debbie Lowenstern, Rural Manager, Rabobank

being full of pesticides, but they will sit down and eat a ready-made frozen meal. We should be convincing people that vegetables are the main event of the meal."

Carbon conscious

While consumer trends were high on the conference agenda, the other major issue tackled was carbon trading and climate change in agriculture.

Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design, The Hon Andrew Robb MP, said the world needed to reduce CO₂ emissions quickly.

"It's a global situation—we can't do it by ourselves, we need a comprehensive scheme. This is the biggest structural change in our history and we have to get it right. We are concerned that there are costs with producing vegetables. The best way of lowering emissions is for companies to have their own balance sheet to find efficiencies," he said.

"There is also scope to stop carbon in the atmosphere and increase and grow biomass in

the soil. This gives great scope in Australia to rehabilitate the soil with known agricultural practice."

Professor Colin Birch, from the Tasmania Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR), explained that agriculture was not scheduled for inclusion in the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme until 2015, if it was included at all. He said that costs would increase if a scheme was introduced.

"There aren't many opportunities for offsets, so industry will need to look at appropriate adaptations. It will be important for industry to look for new vegetable cultivars and implement efficient water-use strategies. More research is needed into new opportunities, industries, and products," he said.

Calculating emissions

Houston's Farm Quality and Innovation Manager, Allison Clark, talked about the development of a carbon (greenhouse gas) calculation tool. Houston's Farm is based in Cambridge, Tasmania, and produces 50 to 60 tonnes of


salad greens per week, 363 days per year.

"We set out to develop a carbon calculation tool because we wanted to understand the environmental sustainability of our company, including the products we produce. To do this we needed to take into account everything that happened in the product's lifecycle—from seed, to processing, to transportation," said Allison.

"We wanted to look at how much greenhouse gas it takes to produce the end product. For example, we looked at food miles—how much greenhouse gas it takes to transport our product to retail customers—in addition to packaging, fertiliser use and staff travel: absolutely everything involved in producing the salads."


These inputs were used to calculate carbon usage. "It has helped us determine which area we should focus on, and we've changed some decisions about what we do," said Allison.

"Horticulture Australia Limited

will use the tool that we have developed to create other models that will ensure everyone in the industry has access to information about calculating greenhouse gas use." 

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Keynote speakers at the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference focused on two main topics: targeting consumers to increase consumption, and the potential costs to industry of carbon trading and climate change.
- Australia's wholesale markets are likely to be an industry mainstay as they service the independent grocer sector, which accounts for 50 per cent of fresh produce sales.
- An industry tool is being developed that will help growers calculate how much carbon their growing, packing and transporting processes emit.

 To listen to keynote presentations visit:
www.vegieconf.com.au



DEMAND MORE VISIBILITY

Now is the time to see your Case IH dealer about productivity-enhancing equipment for your vegetable cropping business. Case IH's new VISION-LIFT loaders enclose the hydraulics and wiring to give you greater visibility, safety and ease of operation. Your Case IH dealer can offer excellent value on new Case IH tractors and VISION-LIFT loaders to make more profit this season. **CASE IH. FOR THOSE WHO DEMAND MORE.**



Show and tell

Future trends, IPM, packaging, leadership, and growers' health all featured at the Innovation and R&D Showcase held at the Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, writes Brea Acton.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The Innovation and R&D showcase at the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference included sessions devoted to future trends, IPM, organics, packaging, leadership and biosecurity.
- At a session devoted to soil health, growers stated that they wanted to learn more about nutrient management, IPM and water efficiency.
- The health of farmers was discussed at one session, where delegates were informed that life expectancy for farmers is around seven years less than for urban counterparts.

For more information about the Innovation and R&D Showcase presentations, visit: www.vegieconf.com.au

The jam-packed Innovation and R&D Showcase, which was held on day three of the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, covered a broad range of topics led by expert growers, researchers, and other industry representatives.

Keynote speaker Professor David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at the Imperial College in London, kicked off the proceedings with his session, "The 21st Century: Looking Ahead", during which he discussed international market trends over the next few decades.

Focusing on larger companies such as Wal-Mart (with a turnover of \$1 billion per day), David said that, "we are now seeing a bigger presence of fewer international retailers". The impact of this on the Australian market will be

market pool for integrated pest management (IPM). New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (DPI) researcher Dr Sandra McDougall said that there was potential "for the market to pull IPM along, rather than push it". She added that pesticide usage needed to be replaced with knowledge.

Victorian grower Peter Schreurs spoke about his experience with IPM over the past 30 years. A trip to Holland in the 1980s was an eye-opening experience for Peter, who saw practical examples of IPM working effectively. When he returned home, he applied IPM techniques to his business, including soil biology, water conservation, implementation of a biodiversity policy, and energy conservation.

"We wanted to leave the land

"Organic fruits and vegetables performed better than conventional fruits and vegetables in the fourth quarter of 2008," she said.

Jin Ju also spoke of the power of branding a business. "Packaging is a tremendous opportunity; it creates a physical connection with the consumer. They're touching the packet, taking it home, looking at it. It really can engage and excite the consumer."

She said that packaging needed to make an impact with consumers, and designs should be updated every few years.

Risky business

Another highlight was Stuart Willder's session on Family Farming Health.

"Australian farming families make up a significant portion of Australia's population yet we have minimal data revealing the health needs of this valuable population," said Stuart.

With programs now running around the country, this project aims to achieve better health for the farming industry.

"Life expectancy for farmers is around seven years less than for their urban counterparts," said Stuart.

Diabetes is one of the main risks, with one in three farmers affected. Other serious issues include airborne respiratory diseases, high cholesterol, accidents, depression, and binge drinking.

"A farmer's health is the most important asset on-farm. There's no point in a better bottom line if you're not there to enjoy it," said Stuart.

“Packaging is a tremendous opportunity; it creates a physical connection with the consumer.”

significant as these companies begin to utilise local producers.

David said that growth is at the value end of the market, and increased pricing transparency will be a driver of competition as more companies offer consumers the choice between products.

IPM opportunities

In a more localised session, a panel of experts discussed the merits and likelihood of a

in a better state than it was," he said.

In a separate session, President of California's Coast Produce Company, Jin Ju Wilder, spoke about opportunities available as a result of the global financial crisis. Coast Produce focuses mainly on conventional produce, but a request to assist a client with the marketing of their organic range helped Jin Ju's company expand its market share.



[Clockwise from top] HAL Industry Services Manager Vegetables Lucy Keatinge at the trade exhibition; NSW DPI researcher Jenny Ekman; DPI Victoria researcher Caroline Donald [L] and Queensland DPI&F researcher Chrys Akem; Industry economist Ian James [L] and Victorian Potato Growers Council Chairman Des Jennings; DPI Victoria researcher Ian Porter.

Long-term security

Soil expert Dr Frank Louws, from North Carolina State University, led a session where audience members were asked to identify the most important requirements for a soil-health program.

Growers said they wanted a better understanding of nutrient management, IPM and water efficiency. Responses from other industry sectors included greater risk management to make sure the soil continues to produce over an extended period, as well as the benefits of increasing carbon in soil.

"We need to focus on profitable, sustainable systems rather than

just on yield," said Frank.

"The goal is to look at the indicators over a long period to understand what is happening in the soil."

A concurrent session explored issues of on-farm health in the context of biosecurity. "Farming biosecurity is insurance for your farming future," said Dr Lois Ransom, Chief Protection Officer at Plant Health Australia, adding that many growers are already engaging in some form of biosecurity without realising it.

"The concept of managing crops to reduce the impact of pests, diseases and weeds is not new. For the most part it consti-

tutes good agricultural practice, and nearly always makes good business sense," she said.

Lois advised growers to follow a six-point plan:

1. Know the health status of your property
2. Be able to identify what pests you do and don't have
3. 'Clean on, clean off'— anything entering or leaving a property must be cleaned
4. Use good-quality seed
5. Check for pests regularly
6. Rotate crops for good plant health.

Organic trends

Trends in the Australian Organic Industry, including data on consumer perceptions of organic products, were the focus of one session presented by Dr Andrew Monk, Director of Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA).

Andrew said that 83 per cent of those interviewed perceive organic food to be chemical free, 70 per cent believe it to be environmentally friendly, 49 per cent believe organic food to be

continued page 40

Picture perfect

A colourful addition to the Trade Exhibition was found at the Bayer CropScience stand, where artist Matthew Cotter used vegetables to recreate Manuela Valenti's famous landscape, *The Red Poppies*.

Matthew created the 2.2 m by 1.2 m canvas over two days at the conference, using broccoli, potatoes, capsicum, chillies, mushrooms, leeks, eggplants and carrots.

"The most difficult aspect was finding something blue for the sky, but I settled for an overcast white sky, with clouds, using cauliflower florets," he said. [va](#)



more nutritious and 44 per cent believe that it tastes better.

In contrast, the barriers the industry face are the cost of organic food (82 per cent say it is too expensive), lack of convenience (54 per cent), not trusting that it is organic (54 per cent), and being unable to identify organic produce (43 per cent).

Research conducted by the University of New England has found that there is a five per cent increase of organic farmers in Australia each year. Organic produce has also increased by

80 per cent in the supermarket sector.

Leading the field

A key area for industry growth is in leadership, said training facilitator Jill Briggs when discussing the Vegetable Industry Strategic Leadership Course (VISLC), which was designed to develop leadership within the vegetable industry.

VISLC participants come from a range of sectors including growing, harvesting, processing, exporting, importing and marketing. Jill said that the industry


required 60 new leaders each year to maintain strong networks.

The day's final session reported on data collected about consumer expectations of health and wellness from vegetables.

"We wanted to understand how health and wellness influences motivation when consumers buy vegetables," said Jess Sanderson, Research Scientist at Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F).

Results showed that consumers choose according to freshness, then taste, quality, price, and

nutritional value. Perceptions also varied between vegetable 'attributes' (appearance and nutritional content), 'consequences' (the perception of well-being or avoiding weight gain) and 'personal values' (living longer and being active).

"We found that different messages resonate with different people. Ultimately, values drive a consumer's decision-making process," said Jess. 

Proactive community creates niche markets

Fortnightly farmers markets and connecting local restaurants with growers are two winning initiatives of SCPA, writes AUSVEG's Lucy Jarman.

In 1992, a group of 50 growers in the Bega Valley on the New South Wales coast met to talk about a common goal—becoming more involved in the mainstream discussion and management of issues that affect horticulture and agriculture.

A direct result of this meeting was the formation the Sapphire Coast Producers Association (SCPA).

With its membership tipping 150 at one stage (and currently standing at 75), the association is based on creating “niche markets and an alternative agricultural pursuit in a collective form”, said Executive Member John Champagne.

With a mission to develop wealth and quality of life for members by promoting and engaging in ecologically sustainable land management in south-east Australia, SCPA is on the right track and hopes the rest of regional Australia will follow suit.

The association is actively involved in lobbying the local council and is a firm supporter of locally-grown produce. Its community outlook encourages members to do everything they can to develop sustainable agribusinesses.

An \$80 membership fee gives members a number of benefits, including access to a password-protected website for networking, a group insurance policy for farmers markets and a quarterly magazine.



Creating local opportunities

SCPA has achieved a great deal since its inception. Having established a monthly farmers market five years ago, the market's popularity has grown and it is now held fortnightly. “We're keen to get it to a weekly occurrence, as the market continues to grow, getting bigger and bigger each year,” said John.

area, and it anticipates that more vegetable growers will join. “There is always the need to meet the demand from local restaurants sourcing locally-grown produce,” said John.

The password-protected community website is a great forum for members to network and share information about current issues.

“The website is also a linkage between restaurants and growers,” said John. It provides a point of contact that encourages local restaurants and businesses to source fresh produce from local farmers.

Helping hand

An accomplishment that the association has prided itself on is a group called the Bega Valley Loomgrowers, a special-interest group of the SCPA.

The group's name originates from the looming wove, which is used in China's remote areas. The aim is to help women in third-world countries by making looms available to them so they can generate an income to support their community and families.

“The Bega Valley Loomgrowers are constantly involved with helping women in third world countries” said John. **va**

While SCPA has members from across Australia, including Tasmania and Queensland, the majority of its membership—90 per cent—is based in and around the Bega Valley Shire. They are generally people who have moved to the area for a lifestyle change, hoping to enter the industry.

SCPA supports new members and those who already grow in the

For more information contact:
Phone: 02 6492 0161
Web: www.thebegavalley.org.au/scpa.html



“Labour of love” draws a crowd

Record-breaking crowds at this year’s successful National Vegetable Expo are no guarantee that the event won’t undergo drastic changes in 2011, writes Jim Thomson.

The biennial National Vegetable Expo at Werribee has long been a calendar event for growers around Australia, and while this year’s expo was no exception—with close to 1,000 people attending and more than 55 exhibitors—the future of the event remains uncertain.

Access to water was a huge challenge for this year’s expo, which was held on 7 and 8 May, as was ensuring the field trials survived the February heatwave, said Expo Chairman Les Giroud.

“Planting began back in January and February for many of the varieties. The seed companies know their stuff—they plan it all out beforehand. They’ll plant one section of brassicas and come back a couple of weeks later to plant another section, so if the first section comes up early, they’re still safe. Even so, 80 to 90 per cent of the time, trials are held at the perfect time for crop inspection,” he said.

“Different commodities need different water requirements. Also,

it's unusual for different commodities to be planted so closely together. During the February heatwave we had to water the crops by hand, which were still at seedling stage, so it's been a labour of love this year."

Record breaking

However, these efforts paid off, and if footfalls are any indication, the expo will be a mainstay in the industry for some time yet.

"At more than 500 people, Thursday was the best opening-day's attendance we've had. When you compare this against other agricultural shows, such as Tasmania's Agfest, you have to remember that this event caters solely to the vegetable industry," said Les.

Attendees included growers from most states in Australia, plus a number New Zealand delegates. Many horticulture students also came along to get a taste for the industry and help paint a picture of the seed varieties and technology that is in development or already available.

Renowned for its field trails, which allow growers to directly compare vegetable varieties that are planted side by side in company-specific plots, the expo boasted a presence from research and development organisations, such as Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Victoria, and exhibitors in the fields of irrigation, specialist planting, fertilising, soil health and cultivation equipment.

Ivan Hazelden, a cucumber grower from Seymour, Victoria, said that he'd been attending the expo for 10 years, and had returned this year to see if there had been any improvements on previous expos. He wasn't disappointed.

"There were more field trials and more exhibitors. I have a particular interest in water issues and sterilisation technology for hydroponic systems. I'll definitely be back again," he said.



Alison Anderson, New South Wales Industry Development Officer, conducted a soil-health presentation on the second day of the expo.

Expert advice

According to DPI Victoria researcher Caroline Donald, growers who visited the DPI tent had specific queries in mind.

"There was a lot of interest in green mulch and white blister. Many growers in Victoria are affected by it, so there were a few questions," she said.

"It's common for growers to come in with specific queries. Between myself and the other DPI representatives we can usually answer any questions they have about problems they're having on-farm."

Another bonus for attending growers was a soil-health demonstration held on day two by Jim Kelly, Managing Director and Senior Technical Officer at Arris, and Alison Anderson, New South Wales Industry Development Officer (IDO), who talked growers through the benefits of conducting soil analysis on-farm to better understand the properties of their soils and how this affects their business.

“There was a lot of interest in green mulch and white blister, which affects many Victorian growers.”

Katie Fisher, Victorian IDO and member of the expo's Organising Committee, said that the response from suppliers and growers was as strong as ever.

"VGA Victoria would love to see the expo continue, and the response from various sectors is that they would like to continue as well. For the industry, it's a must. Growers said it was the best seed display they've seen for some time, while seed companies were happy with the number of attendees," she said.

Providing that industry support continues, the expo will live on—though it may be held at a different site.

"If there's enough support from local growers, and with strong backing from the seed companies, the expo will continue. Although, next time it could be on the other side of Melbourne, perhaps in Cranbourne," said Katie. **va**

Outcomes uncertain from controversial carbon scheme

Vegetable growers will fare better than other ag producers if the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is introduced, explains Industry Economist Ian James.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) aims to reduce gas emissions caused by human activity.
- A decision about whether agriculture will be included in the scheme will not be made until 2013, with potential inclusion happening in 2015, at the earliest.
- Various economic models have calculated that the scheme, if introduced, will reduce farm cash margins for vegetable growers by between 1.5 per cent and 4 per cent.

As I write, the future of proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) is unclear. If you don't have much understanding of whether the scheme will be implemented and what it entails, you are with 99 per cent of Australians.

The CPRS is highly controversial, to say the least. Climate change sceptics see no need for it, and it has supporters and opponents on both sides of the political divide. Ultimately, a scheme of some sort is likely to be introduced. The debate is akin to that which Australia had in the 1970s over tariff protection for the manufacturing industry. As with that, the losers are easily identifiable; this makes for easy media grabs and quantifiable costs. The beneficiaries are more diverse and the gains not easily measured.

From an economic perspective, the CPRS will raise costs (more so for heavily polluting industries), lead to changes in production methods, and shift resources between industries across the economy.

The literature on the scheme is voluminous. In a short article like this it is impossible to provide a detailed analysis of all it entails, but I suspect that this won't worry too many vegetable growers. While the likely response is, "Cut the crap and tell me how it'll affect

the bottom line", it does help to have some background.

Reduce emissions or pay the price

The CPRS was originally called the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). It evolved out of the 'Garnaut Report' on climate change. The CPRS is a response to global concerns about climate change and the need to reduce gas emissions caused by human activity.

emission. Some permits will be issued free, especially for trade-exposed industries, and permits can be earned for carbon reduction activity. The centrepiece of the CPRS is the use of the market mechanism for the trading of permits. This cap-and-trade system will help support the mandated reduction in emissions. The alternative would have been to impose a tax on pollution or regulate to remove polluting activities.

“Regardless of whether agriculture is included in the scheme, the main cost to the vegetable industry will be higher prices for inputs.”

The scheme uses a 'carrot and stick' approach to encourage businesses to reduce their emissions. Businesses will either reduce their carbon pollution or pay for permits that gradually reduce in number, enabling Australia to meet its international commitment to reduce emissions. The implication is that permit costs will increase over time.

All polluting activities will be converted to a carbon equivalent. Permits will have to be bought for each tonne of carbon equivalent

Unknown impacts

The legislation before the Parliament gives us some idea of the CPRS's general direction but its eventual design is open to amendment as the government lacks the numbers in the senate to have its existing proposal passed.

For vegetable producers, the impacts are uncertain. Agriculture is not included in the scheme, and at this stage it is not known whether it will be. The government's preference is to include

agriculture, mainly because it is a major contributor to emissions (accounting for 16 per cent of the national total) and could play an important role in helping meet the pollution-reduction targets. The government hopes to decide whether to include agriculture in the scheme by 2013, but if it is included, this will not be before 2015.

The CPRS will impact on vegetable growers in two ways: through increasing the price of inputs used by growers (which will happen regardless of whether agriculture is included) and through the need to buy permits corresponding to emissions (which will happen if the scheme does include agriculture).

The good news for vegetable growers is that, unlike other agriculture industries, gas emissions attached to vegetable growing are minimal. The major emission is through the use of nitrogen fertiliser, and the application of fertiliser through a drip system can reduce emissions. To a large degree it won't matter to vegetable growers whether agriculture is included in the scheme; the main cost to the vegetable industry will be higher prices for inputs.

What's the damage?

A number of economic studies have been conducted on the scheme's impact on agriculture. Two approaches can be adopted. One is to use economic modelling to assess the broad sectoral and industry impacts of the introduction of the CPRS into agriculture. Many of these models project out beyond 2030, and over time the adverse impacts of the CPRS are smaller. The second approach is to compare the impact of introducing the scheme with a

business-as-usual approach to calculate the impact on farm cash incomes assuming no change in production practices.

The latter approach was adopted in work completed by the Australian Farm Institute (AFI) late last year. Using data on

The Australian Government's carrot and stick approach to reducing carbon emissions will increase costs for growers.

costs and revenues taken from the annual Farm Surveys undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE), the AFI derived estimates of the impact on farm cash margins for different agriculture activities following the introduction of the CPRS. Vegetable growers were included as the industry had committed National Vegetable

Levy funds to an annual survey. It was found that farm cash margins for vegetable growers would reduce around 4 per cent, regardless of whether the vegetable industry was

included in the CPRS. In May, the Centre for International Economics (CIE), using a combination of the two approaches,

came up with a fall in farm income of between 1.5 per cent and 2 per cent for both root and leaf vegetables if agriculture was excluded from the CPRS, and just over 2 per cent if agriculture was included and growers had to pay the full cost of emission permits. In June, this methodology was confirmed by the ABARE who, while not covering vegetables, came up with similar findings to the CIE in other agriculture industries.

Further considerations

If anything, the adverse impacts on farm income from these stud-

ies are an overestimation as they assume no change in practices in response to the introduction of the CPRS. This is highly unlikely. Of course, these studies are of a general nature and the cost impact on growers will differ depending on their use of inputs.

For instance, the impact will be greater if packing houses are on-farm, and undercover vegetable producers

would have a greater adverse impact because of their electricity usage. Growers producing for the processing sector may have their incomes squeezed if the processors pass down the increased costs attached to their activities to growers through lower prices, rather than passing them up to consumers through higher prices.

While these studies suggest that vegetable growers have less to fear than other agriculture producers from the incorporation of agriculture into the CPRS, further research is required. The industry may become a carbon sink if recognition was given to the contribution to carbon reduction that occurs as vegetables grow. More on this and the CPRS in the next edition of *Vegetables Australia*. [va](#)



Tassie marketing on the front foot



The “Taste is in our nature” branding campaign that appeared in magazines nationally is linked to the “Taste is in our nature” website, which provides recipes, seasonal information and contact details for local stockists of Tasmanian produce.



Leading by example, the Vegetable Industry Marketing Committee is targeting consumers in a bid to boost demand for Tasmanian produce.

Pundits in the vegetable industry have long bemoaned the lack of activity when it comes to marketing and consumer awareness initiatives. In Tasmania, steps are being taken to rectify this, with the establishment of the Vegetable Industry Marketing Committee (VIMC). The committee has been created to guide state government investment in targeted media and consumer study campaigns, including print advertisements, a website targeted at consumers, and a project researching the science of taste.

The aim of the VIMC is to raise the awareness around Australia as to the flavour and freshness of Tasmanian vegetables and, in doing so, encourage more demand for the island’s produce, boosting production.

To do this the committee is focusing on three objectives: building brand benefits for Tassie vegetables, developing innovative products and delivery systems, and capturing the lessons learned and turning them into useful tool-kits for growers and processors.

“The VIMC will support projects in two ways: through initiating

projects based on identified market opportunity and through supporting projects with industry sponsors,” said VIMC Chair Susan Nelle.

Communicate with consumers

Many of the projects under the VIMC banner are aimed at value-adding opportunities such as promoting seasonality and the region of origin of Tasmanian vegetables. They will also encourage growers and processors to develop speciality products.

An early initiative was the “Taste

is in our nature” campaign, which included a range of high-visibility point-of-sale and poster promotional items. This has been coupled with a 12-month targeted national advertising campaign through a selected group of widely-read lifestyle magazines promoting the uniqueness and flavour of Tasmanian vegetables.

To support this promotion a website with consumer and buyer portals has been built. In collaboration with the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR) Vegetable Centre, a register of participating producers and their distributors, along with a merchandising program supporting selected retailers, is being constructed with the view to releasing the first stage in the next few months.

“This will encourage direct interaction of the consumer with the retailer and it is hoped that the increased knowledge of availability of Tasmanian vegetables, particularly on the mainland, will generate more demand for our produce,” said David Wells, TIAR’s Marketing and Business Development Officer.

Collaborative committee

The VIMC was appointed by David Llewellyn, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, in March 2008. It comprises 10 members, including one representative from the TIAR Vegetable Centre, one from the Australian Innovation Research Centre at the University of Tasmania, and eight growers and processors.

The committee aims to lead the implementation of the Tasmanian vegetable Industry Strategic and Marketing Plans by working with key industry stakeholders such as processors, growers and industry associations. The committee operates within TIAR, which is a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water. **va**

Educate consumers to increase demand

The VIMC has wasted no time in getting a diverse group of projects underway, all designed to stimulate market development and increase consumption of Tasmanian vegetables.

Market Fresh Schools Program

“Key barriers to children’s consumption of vegetables are boredom and dislike,” said David Wells, TIAR’s Marketing and Business Development Officer.

Partnering with the successful Melbourne Marketing Authority’s schools program, this project aims to overcome those barriers by increasing children’s interest in vegetables at a younger age.

By educating younger generations, it is hoped that the habit of increased vegetable consumption will follow through as a sustained eating pattern and be passed on to future generations. Children becoming involved in and embracing vegetables will put pressure on parents to purchase and consume more vegetables.

“Taste is in our nature” website

The consumer website, www.tasteisournature.com.au, was conceived as a follow-through for the successful “Taste is in our nature” branding campaign. Designed to link the printed advertisements to a vehicle that directs consumers to their nearest retail stockist, the website also provides consumers with nutritional and seasonal information about Tasmanian vegetables. Point-of-sale reinforcement through participating stores concludes the linkage between advertisement, consumer and retailer.

The concept was piloted in Sydney using 60 retail outlets. Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide will be included in the program gradually.

The science behind the taste—Carrots

The VIMC engaged the services of Dr Phil Brown from the University of Tasmania to conduct a two-part research project into the feasibility of scientifically identifying the factors that influence taste and linking those with environmental and geographical variables such as weather, temperature and soil. The aim of the project is to effectively ‘prove’ that some vegetables are tastier than others, and that Tasmania’s growing conditions fit the criteria for producing tastier vegetables.

If successful, this experiment will categorically determine that, under certain conditions and geographic areas, optimum taste can be achieved and that this can be validated by measuring the determining chemicals that influence taste in a carrot.

Restaurant 09

As a follow on from its participation in the Fine Foods Exhibition held in Melbourne in September last year, the VIMC has committed to the Restaurant 09 Exhibition in Melbourne, which is directed at a targeted audience of top restaurateurs and restaurant suppliers. Attendance is expected to be about 5,000 people.

7th World Potato Congress

Formed five years ago, the International Potato Network Group represents seven countries that regularly attend the World Potato Congress. The group comprises marketing and business development officers (MBDO) and research scientists.

The network group met two days before the conference, where each country was given the opportunity to showcase their latest research and development or marketing activities. Tasmania’s “Taste is in our nature” campaign took centre stage and received accolades from group members. **va**

AUSVEG CEO Message

The number of issues that affect the vegetable industry is astounding: trade, biosecurity, labour force, urban sprawl, chemical control use, water access, consolidation of competitors, and supply chain matters all present significant challenges—and numerous opportunities.

My first few months as Chief Executive Officer of AUSVEG have been spent immersing myself in the realities of horticulture, so I can better help growers achieve sustainable, efficient and profitable businesses, while ensuring that the Australian vegetable industry remains a significant force in the global market.

In consultation with the AUSVEG Board of Directors and members, we have introduced a number of key initiatives to serve the ongoing interests of levy payers and other industry stakeholders, as well as increasing the transparency of levy processes.

These initiatives include:

- Improving communication channels between AUSVEG, our member bodies and associations, and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). This includes the publication of a periodic online *CEO Update* designed to complement our current weekly AUSVEG update, and meeting regularly with member bodies, and AUSVEG directors.
- Increasing our representation and visibility at government levels and engaging with key policy-makers. This includes

initiating regular meetings with Ministers, Ministerial Advisers, and other key decision makers. The AUSVEG board meeting in June was held at Parliament House in Canberra, where directors met with The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and The Hon John Cobb MP, Shadow Minister for the same portfolio.

- Strengthening and developing links between local, national and international stakeholder bodies. This includes strengthening our ties with HAL and developing ongoing dialogue with overseas associations and agencies such as Produce Marketing Association (PMA), which AUSVEG recently joined as a member.
- Increasing our public profile. This includes establishing a stronger media presence in local, regional and national broadcast and print formats, such as television and press interviews regarding the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Agreement and the Awards Modernisation process that will see the new Horticulture Industry Award beginning on 1 January 2010.

The AUSVEG board and I share a common vision to elevate AUSVEG to the position of being one of Australia's leading agricultural bodies. This plan aims for greater representation of the vegetable industry's concerns at all levels of the governmental and parliamentary process. The board meeting in Canberra represents a small step in the long-term development of AUSVEG's public affairs presence.

Whilst I've worked for government and private industries nationally and abroad, the vegetable industry has a stronger message to sell than any I've been involved in—the role that vegetables can play in a healthy diet. We must work hard to ensure that consumers understand the health benefits of our product, as increased sales and greater consumer awareness will result.

We need to explore initiatives—some of which were highlighted at the recent Australian Vegetable Industry Conference—that will place vegetables front and centre in consumers' shopping baskets and on their plates.

Finally, I would like to thank interim CEO Robert Lawler for his hard work and dedicated efforts over the past year.

AUSVEG looks forward to keeping you fully informed about industry happenings. I invite growers and industry stakeholders to contact us with your views and suggestions for progressing this fantastic industry. Simply contact the office on 03 9544 8098 or email <info@ausveg.com.au>.



Richard Mulcahy
Chief Executive Officer
AUSVEG

AROUND THE STATES

New South Wales



The Horticulture Committee's main policy-formation event for members, the Horticulture Annual General Meeting and Conference, will be held at Sydney Olympic Park on 27 July 2009. Featured topics at the conference will include horticulture developing a future with carbon as the industry continues to work towards sustainable healthy soils, healthy foods and a healthy nation.

The Horticulture Code of Conduct process still needs greater transparency before we can properly consider growers' interests. The committee, through Horticulture Australia Council, has been active in improving the code's operations.

Finally, the Horticulture Committee aims to have a trial of its market-price publishing service available soon for current members. The service will allow horticulture members to provide weekly reports about commodity prices received at the farm gate.

Peter Darley

Horticulture Committee Chair
NSW Farmers' Association
Phone: 02 8251 1804

Northern Territory



Northern Territory Horticultural Association

The inaugural Katherine Community Market, which was developed to make local produce available to local people, took place on 20 June in Katherine. The event was a resounding success with stalls attracting a large crowd.

The market is the result of a Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award

won by Katherine resident Norma Higgins in 2008. Norma, who was awarded Northern Territory Rural Woman of the Year, established the Katherine Community Market to assist local producers in delivering their produce directly to consumers.

For more information, visit www.katherinemarkets.com.au.

Kate Peake

Executive Officer
Northern Territory Horticultural Association
Phone: 08 8983 3233

Queensland



Growers north of the Sunshine Coast will benefit from the Queensland Government's allocation of funds to continue the Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiative (RWUEI) program.

Due to finish on 30 June, the program now has a further \$4.5 million of funding over four years to be used across all industries in farming areas north of the Sunshine Coast. Additionally, the South East Queensland Irrigation Futures program will continue, benefiting the vegetable growing regions of the Lockyer and Brisbane Valleys, among others.

Since being officially launched in April 2000, the Growcom component of RWUEI, Water for Profit, has provided growers with an on-farm service focusing on improving irrigation management to increase productivity, improve yield quality and reduce operational costs.

In addition to learning where to make on-farm water savings, growers have also learned how to increase productivity and capitalise on irrigation investments to improve farm production and sustainability at a time when

water and resources were scarce.

The program has demonstrated its ability to move with the times by encompassing a broader natural resource management (NRM) and climate change agenda in recent years.

Rachel Mackenzie

Chief Advocate
Growcom
Phone: 07 3620 3844



Eight major pests of horticulture crops in Bundaberg will be targeted over the next two years by the Australian-Government-funded project, "Area-wide integrated pest management for Bundaberg regional production horticulture". The project's Steering Committee confirmed that the project will focus on thrips, heliothis, silverleaf whitefly, aphids, two-spotted mite, fruit flies, nutborer and green vegetable bug.

These priority pests were selected from more than 30 pests that affect Bundaberg's industry, as they impact on 24 major crops that have an estimated collective farm-gate value of around \$360 million.

With so many pests of significance to the industry, we needed to prioritise where to focus our efforts in delivering outcomes. As such, a 'pest selection score card' has been developed that can be adapted for use by other horticultural growing regions.

The next two years will see the project develop concepts, technology and tools for use in on-farm pest management strategies for growers. The urban community will also be included in helping to combat pests. The learning from this project will en-

able other horticulture production regions throughout Australia to implement similar area-wide IPM programs.

Peter Hockings

Project Officer
Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers
Phone: 07 4153 3007
Email: info@bfgv.com.au

Victoria



The 2009 National Vegetable Expo held in May in Werribee was an exceptional success with exhibitors reporting the best attendance and responses to plant varieties and industry displays. Congratulations to all industry supporters who displayed over the two-day event.

Regular communication with our growers through the VGA website, email, fax and mail has become one of the association's drawcards for membership. Renewal details for membership are now being circulated and we urge your consideration to join for 2009/10. Vegetable grower memberships include affiliation with the VFF Horticultural Group.

The 2009 Victorian Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan is now completed and a booklet will be distributed industry-wide. It is coupled with a three-year action plan that requires the VGA to implement the strategic plan with the assistance of Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Victoria Farm Services.

Tony Imeson

Executive Officer
VGA
Phone: 03 9687 4707
Email: contact@vgavic.org.au

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 2009

17-25 July

2009 Young Vegetable Growers' Tour to New Zealand

For more information:

Website: www.ausveg.com.au

Phone: Hugh Tobin at AUSVEG on 03 9544 8098

19-22 July

National Industry Conference of the Australian Hydroponic & Greenhouse Association

Sydney Homebush Showgrounds, Sydney, NSW

For more information:

Website: www.ahga.org.au

Email: administrator@ahga.org.au

Phone: 02 9939 5993

28-30 July

NSW Farmers' Association 2009 Annual Conference

Sydney Olympic Park, Sydney, NSW

For more information:

Website: www.ac.org.au

Phone: Event Directors on 02 8251 1821

August 2009

14 August

Applications close for Tasmanian Quality Assured Global Insights Award

For more information:

Website: www.tqainc.com.au

Email: keepitreal@tqainc.com.au

Phone: 03 6423 6008

31 August - 9 September

2009 Vegetable Growers' Tour to Hong Kong and China

Includes attendance at Asia Fruit Logistica (2-4 September)

For more information:

Web: www.quadrantaustralia.com

Email: qinfo@quadrantaustralia.com

Phone: 1300 301 128

September 2009

2-3 September

Intellectual Property and the Australian Horticulture Industries free workshop and symposium

Launceston Tram Shed Function Centre, Launceston, Tas

For more information:

Contact Carol Ballard

Email: c.ballard@law.uq.edu.au

Phone: 07 3346 7506

8-9 September

Carbon footprinting for your product, your firm, your future

The University of New South Wales Water Research Centre, Kensington Campus, NSW

For more information:

Contact Kirra Dean

Email: k.dean@unsw.edu.au

Phone: 02 9385 5017

10-11 September

13th Symposium on Precision Agriculture in Australasia

The University of New England, Armadale, NSW

For more information:

Contact David Lamb

Phone: 02 6773 3565

Email: parg@une.edu.au

Late-September departure

2009 Vegetable Growers' Tour to the US

Includes attendance at the Produce Marketing Association (PMA)

Fresh Summit Convention (2-5 October)

California, USA

For more information:

Website: www.ausveg.com.au

Phone: Hugh Tobin at AUSVEG on 03 9544 8098

October 2009

14-16 October

Southern Hemisphere Congress

Cape Town, South Africa

For more information:

Website: www.shcongress.com

November 2009

9-12 November

Keep it Real 2009—6th national food safety, quality and environmental assurance conference

Winners announced for Tasmanian Quality Assured

Global Insights Award

Hotel Grand Chancellor, Launceston, Tas

For more information:

Website: www.tqainc.com.au

Email: keepitreal@tqainc.com.au

Call: 03 6423 6008



For top protection against nematodes and weevil borers go for the top banana.

DuPont™ Vydate® L is highly effective against banana weevil borers, and both major species of nematodes in bananas; giving you top protection for higher banana crop yields. Vydate® L assists plants in producing a stronger healthier root system, reducing the incidence of banana plant fall-outs, and improving uptake of water and nutrients. A regular program of Vydate® L can therefore help to prolong your banana plantation's life and increase your crop yields. So, if it's time to get tough with banana pests, it's time for the top banana.

Always read and follow label instructions. Copyright ©2009 E I du Pont de Nemours and Company "DuPont™". All rights reserved. Du Pont (Australia) Ltd. 7 Eden Park Drive, Macquarie Park, NSW 2113. ACN 000 716 469. The DuPont Oval Logo, DuPont™, The miracles of science® and Vydate® are trademarks or registered trademarks of Du Pont or its affiliates. H&T DP1366/VA.

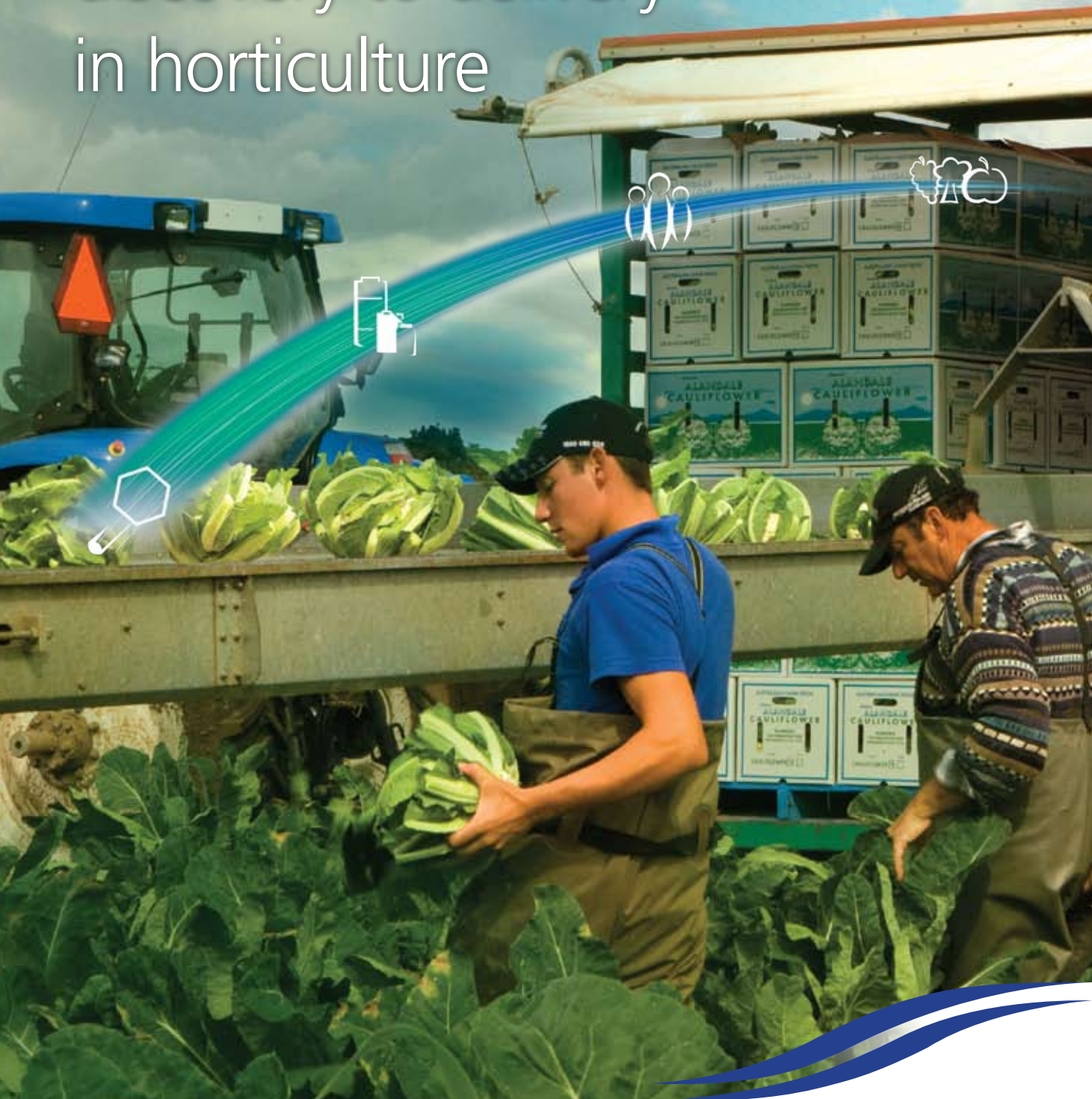
DuPont™ Vydate® L

insecticide



The miracles of science®

With you from discovery to delivery in horticulture



From Discovering Sustainable Chemistry



With Knowledge and Experience



By Developing Innovative Brands



To Delivering Quality Produce

Everyday, Syngenta invests millions of dollars in discovering and developing sustainable horticultural crop protection solutions.

To find out how we can help you deliver quality produce, call the Syngenta Technical Product Advice Line on Freecall 1800 067 108 or visit www.syngenta.com.au

syngenta[®]