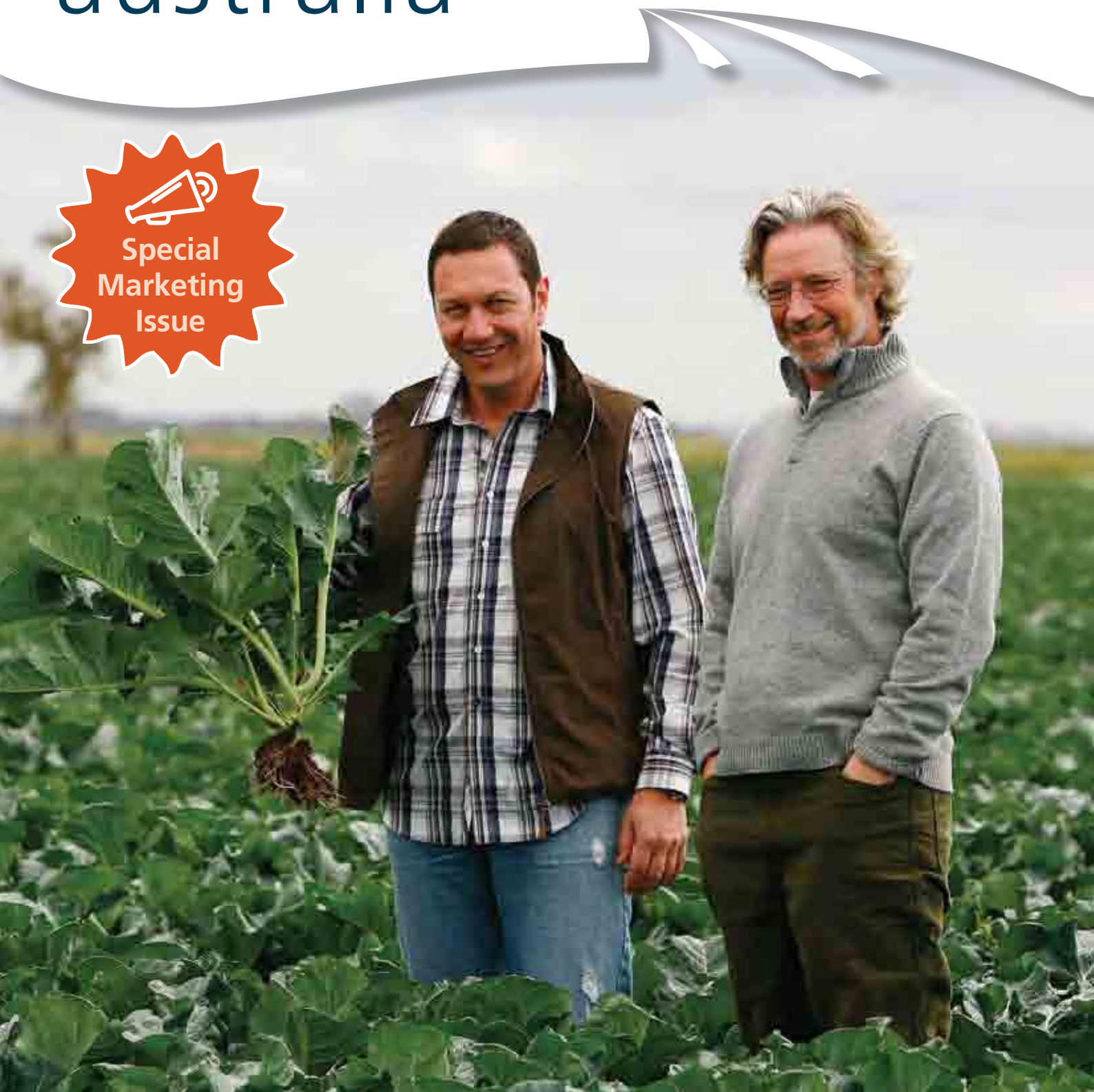


volume **5.2**
Sept/Oct 2009

vegetables australia



Meet the next generation of industry marketing:

14 Market development

16 Vital Vegetables

32 Consumer insights

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A word from the AUSVEG Chairman

As the industry focuses its attention on crucial issues such as the Award Modernisation process, biosecurity, rising imports, and minor use chemicals, it's important that we continue to take every opportunity to engage with consumers. To grow our industry, we must be constantly looking for ways to educate consumers about the health benefits of vegetables and excite them about eating the diverse range of fantastic produce we supply on a daily basis.

With this in mind, this issue of *Vegetables Australia* focuses on marketing initiatives happening in Australia and abroad. There are opportunities for growers to get involved with programs such as the Domestic Market Development Strategy (DMDS) and Vital Vegetables—a range of nutrient-

rich vegetables that was launched last month with the commercial release of Booster Broccoli.

Horticulture Australia Limited supplied some initial funding for Vital Vegetables, though the majority of funds were contributed by the Victorian and New Zealand Governments. Growers are already benefiting from the opportunities this project presents, and as more products are launched, there'll be even greater scope for growers to get involved.

In other opportunities, AUSVEG is organising a grower study tour to the USA, which will take place in October. This follows hot on the heels of a successful Young Growers Tour to New Zealand in July.

Up to 10 Australian vegetable growers will be given the opportunity to visit agricultural facilities in

the USA and attend the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit convention and expo in California.

The tour will be substantially subsidised by the National Vegetable Levy, with attending growers making a contribution of \$3,000 towards the costs. For more information, call the AUSVEG office on 03 9544 8098.

In further good news, ongoing discussions with the Federal Workplace Relations Minister, the Honourable Julia Gillard, regarding impending changes to the Horticulture Industry Award, are proving fruitful.

Last month, the Minister wrote to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission requesting that the Commission take into account the specific requirements of the horticulture industry. Her



John Brent
Chairman
AUSVEG Ltd

requested provisions will help keep wage costs at manageable levels for growers.

AUSVEG is determined to continue representing growers' needs to decision-makers, to ensure that government agencies have all the facts before implementing policies that will affect the livelihood of growers nationwide.

From the editor



Is marketing the answer to increasing vegetable consumption in Australia? Or is it—as some argue—a band-aid solution when what's really needed is a significant cultural shift, one where consumers are fully aware of the effect their diet has on their health, and are sufficiently educated to make smart food choices.

These are big questions, which we look at in detail in this special marketing-themed issue of *Vegetables Australia*.

There's consumer insight research, conducted to get a handle on the difference in attitudes between high and low vegetable consumers (page 32); there's the launch of Booster Broccoli, part of the Vital Vegetables range and 10 years in the making (page 16); and we also revisit marketing initiatives previously conducted in Australia and see what lies ahead (page 26).

Steve Skopilianos from Ladybird Organics discusses the steps he took to build his company's

brand, and the positive response he's had from consumers (page 34).

Look for the marketing logo, pictured right, to read articles that are part of this special feature.



We meet Jane Lovell, this year's vegetable-industry participant in the Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP), who talks us through the program's first two courses (page 40).

Finally, it's time for our annual reader survey. Make sure you have your say about the future direction of *Vegetables Australia* by completing the enclosed survey. Do this by 9 October to enter the draw for a fantastic prize, courtesy of Syngenta (page 9).

Enjoy this issue of the magazine.

Jim Thomson
Editor, *Vegetables Australia*



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“Heroes need to be created. This isn't about pitching carrots against potatoes; it's about driving interest in the category as a whole.”

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vegetables australia

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Cover

Grower John Said [left] and researcher Dr Rod Jones have the first Vital Vegetables product—Booster Broccoli—well in hand. Image supplied by Edelman.

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Know-how for Horticulture™

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For more information visit
www.ausveg.com.au

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Beet your personal best

Beetroot juice can increase stamina by up to 16 per cent, according to a new study.

The roll-out of health claims made about vegetable consumption continues to grow. As a result, these claims are becoming increasingly diverse. Recent findings to come out of the University of Exeter and the Peninsula Medical School in the UK relate to the stamina-improving properties of beetroot juice, which reduces the required uptake of oxygen during strenuous exercise by up to 16 per cent.

The star performer in this instance appears to be the nitrate found in beetroot juice, with researchers claiming that a reduction in oxygen uptake to this extent cannot be achieved by any other known means, including training.

While these findings will be of interest to athletes, the researchers say they will also impact on elderly people or those with cardiovascular, respiratory or metabolic diseases.

Put to the test

The study was conducted with eight men aged between 19 and 38. Each subject was given 500 ml per day of organic beetroot juice for six consecutive days before completing a series of physical tests, including the use of an exercise bike. Follow-

ing this, they were given a placebo of blackcurrant cordial for six consecutive

days before completing the same tests.

After drinking the beetroot juice, the test subjects cycled for an average of 11.25 minutes—92 seconds longer than when they were given the placebo. This is a two per cent reduction in the time taken to cover a set distance.

Additionally, after consuming the beetroot juice, the test subjects had lower resting blood pressure.

Interest piqued

“Our study is the first to show that nitrate-rich food can increase exercise endurance,” said Professor Andy Jones of the University of Exeter’s School of Sport and Health Sciences.

“I am sure professional and amateur athletes will be interested in the results of this research. I am also keen to explore the relevance of the findings to those people who suffer from poor fitness and may be able to use dietary supplements to help them go about their daily lives.”

While the research team has not yet isolated exactly how beetroot juice boosts stamina, they suspect it could be a result of the nitrate turning into nitric oxide in the body, reducing the oxygen cost of exercise.

It is hoped that funding can be secured for further research into the effects of nitrate-rich foods on exercise physiology. [va](#)



Levy-funded project call opens soon

It's time to complete your proposal for National Vegetable Levy-funded projects.

Applications for National Vegetable Levy research and development projects starting in 2010/11 will soon be open. The official Industry Call submissions period is from 3 October to 16 November.

The National Vegetable Levy project call is for industry-specific R&D proposals involving R&D levy funds. Proposals are reviewed by

the vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) and must align with the industry strategic plan, VegVision 2020, and annual priorities.

Applications must be made through the HAL website. HAL's online application system is available for the preparation of proposals, which allows researchers to work on their proposals

outside the official call periods. However, proposal submissions to the Industry Call will be restricted to the official dates.

HAL invests around \$80 million annually in projects in partnership with the horticultural sector. Projects are funded through R&D levies, marketing levies and voluntary contributions. All HAL's R&D activities are supported

by the Australian Government through the provision of matching funding. [va](#)

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

Help guide *Vegetables Australia*


Have your say on the future direction of *Vegetables Australia*.

The Australian vegetable industry is changing and *Vegetables Australia* is changing with it. To ensure that the magazine continues to deliver relevant, informative and useful editorial, we need to hear from you.

Funded by the National Vegetable Levy, *Vegetables Australia* is dedicated to communicating levy benefits to growers—research and development outcomes, training opportunities, projects beyond the farm-gate—it's about helping you become the most efficient, profitable and environmentally aware growers you can be.

Enclosed in this issue of the magazine is a reply-paid reader survey. By completing the survey and returning it to AUSVEG you can let us know what you like about the magazine, what you'd like to change, and what you want to read about in future issues.

Surveys received by Friday 9 October will go into the draw to win a five-litre pack of Amistar, valued at approximately \$1,000, supplied by Syngenta.

Vegetables Australia thanks Syngenta for its support. 

 For more information: See the enclosed reader survey or contact Jim Thomson, Editor *Vegetables Australia*
Email: <editor@ausveg.com.au>
Phone: 0407 242 788

On-farm experience for university students

The Brolga Project gives urban students a taste of the rural life while putting their skills to good use on-farm.

The Brolga Project places final-year university students into short-term work experience positions with rural and regional host agencies, including businesses, government departments and non-profit organisations.

“With a presence in a dozen universities from South Australia to North Queensland, up to five students a day are expressing a willingness to participate. With such strong student response, project managers are looking for

more host agencies to offer student placements,” said Richard Cowley, who manages the Brolga Project.

Placements may be as short as a week of unpaid experience, or as long as four months paid. Each placement is unique and is negotiated via internet teleconference after an initial introduction.

“There's enormous scope within the project, for example a produce group could use a marketing student to help promote

its product, or an IT student to streamline online programs,” said Richard.

Host agencies interested in finding out more are encouraged to contact the Brolga Project [va](mailto:va@brolgaproject.com.au)

 For more information contact:
Richard Cowley, Manager, The Brolga Project
Phone: 07 3366 1005
Email: <richard@brolgaproject.com.au>
Website: www.brolgaproject.com.au

'Veg-pledge' hopes to woo consumers



High-profile Australians pledge to increase their vegetable consumption as part of this year's National Vegetarian Week.

The third annual National Vegetarian Week will be held from 28 September to 4 October. As in previous years, the campaign aims to boost awareness of the effect of meat consumption on consumers' health and the environment, and encourage people to increase their consumption of vegetables.


“Pledge to Try Veg” is the theme of this year's week, with Australians asked to pledge to try a plant-based meal, increase the number of plant-based meals they consume, or commit to eating vegetarian for the week. For every pledge, one dollar will be donated to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.



Cricket legend Brett Lee, world surfing champion Stephanie Gilmore and head of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Dr Rajendra Pachauri are among those who have made a pledge to support the week.

“We are not asking people to make a complete switch to a meat-free diet,” said television and radio personality and

National Vegetarian Week Ambassador Sami Lukis. “Rather, we are encouraging them to consider how they can make a difference globally and within the skin they're in, by eating more vegetarian meals.” [va](http://www.vegetarianweek.com.au)

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

Award concessions on the cards

Revised conditions for workers to take into account the requirements of the horticulture industry.

In a win for growers, Federal Workplace Relations Minister, the Honourable Julia Gillard, has written to the President of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, Geoff Giudice, requesting changes to the Horticulture Industry Award, which is due to come into effect on 1 January 2010.

Vegetable growers were preparing themselves to be affected by revised conditions for employees under the new award, including proposed hours of work provisions, piece rates, and casual loadings. Growers faced rises in piecework loadings from 12.5 per cent to 15 per cent and casual loadings from 15 per cent

to 25 per cent.

The proposed changes prompted industry groups, including AUSVEG, to lobby the government for concessions to be made.

Flexible arrangements

In her letter, the Minister asked for the Commission to provide for roster arrangements and working arrangements that are flexible to accommodate for seasonal demands and restrictions caused by weather, *The Australian* newspaper reported.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy has welcomed the news.

"We are delighted that the Minister has requested that the

Commission continue to enable employers in the horticulture industry to pay piece rates of pay to casual employees who pick produce. This will avoid wage increases and allow the industry to continue to be a major employer of Australian workers," said Richard.

"Furthermore, we are impressed that the Minister has asked that the Commission take stock of the perishable nature of produce grown in this industry and to set hours of work provisions accordingly. These changes will avoid excessive wage increases, job losses and business failure. **va**

New rules for Vic growers

New laws have been introduced for chemical use in Victoria.

Several changes have been made to the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992*, which controls the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals in Victoria. The changes, which took effect on 1 July 2009, have been introduced to reduce regulations, clarify inconsistencies and strengthen the Victorian Department of Primary Industries' ability to take appropriate action in the few cases where it is deemed necessary.

One of the main changes is the recognition of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) established by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Previously the Act recognised only MRLs established by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

The changes include:

- recognising APVMA MRLs for agricultural chemicals
- repealing the requirement for mandatory insurance by agricultural aircraft operators
- a new offence for selling contaminated produce
- a new offence for breaching a condition of chemical use licence or permit.

The changes were developed in consultation with industry, including the Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria. **va**

Development update

Nearly all components of the revised Vegetable Industry Development Program have been contracted.

Five of the six components of the Vegetable Industry Development Program have been endorsed by the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) and contracted by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). They include program coordination, and four of the five sub-programs.

Industry development service providers met in Sydney in August to map out strategies for the program's delivery. Rural Directions, an agribusiness consultancy, is responsible for the overall delivery of the program.

The following components have been contracted:

- Program Coordination—Rural Directions
- Knowledge Management—Freshlogic
- People Development—Dianne Fullelove and Associates
- Consumers and Markets—Freshlogic
- Economics—Industry Data Economic Analysis (previously contracted, this sub-program will integrate with the four other sub-programs).

At the time of writing, the Local

Information and Farm Productivity sub-program was yet to be contracted.

Future issues of *Vegetables Australia* will detail the workings of the Vegetable Industry Development Program and expected outcomes for growers. **va**

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

For more information visit:
www.dpi.vic.gov.au

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ALLIUM VEGETABLES				
PER11479	Linuron / Leeks / Grass and broadleaf weeds	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-11	All states except Vic
PER11508 *	Secure 360SC (chlorfenapyr) / Spring onions, shallots / Western flower thrips	10-Jul-09	31-Jul-11	All states except Vic
BRASSICAS				
PER10497	Imidacloprid / Brassica leafy vegetables / Aphids, whitefly, thrips	11-Jun-09	31-Mar-14	All states except Vic
PER10845	Zineb / Brassica leafy vegetables / Cercospora leaf spot, Downy mildew	11-Jun-09	31-Mar-15	All states except Vic
PER10920	Chlorpyrifos / Brassicas / Vegetable beetle (adults)	09-Jun-09	30-Sep-12	WA
PER11475**	Alpha-cypermethrin / Brassica leafy vegetables, radish / Redlegged earth mite, Plague thrips, Lepidoptera	11-Jun-09	30-Jun-12	All states except Vic
FRUITING VEGETABLES				
PER10934	Applaud (buprofezin) / Tomato (protected) / Greenhouse whitefly	09-Jun-09	30-Sep-13	All states except Vic
PER11472	VectoBac WG Biological Larvicide (Bacillus thuringiensis) / Protected cropping capsicum, cucumber, eggplant, herbs, lettuce, ornamentals (including potted plants & tomato) / Fungus gnats // Mushrooms / Sciarids	18-Jun-09	30-May-14	All states except Vic
LEAFY VEGETABLES				
PER11474	Ridomil Gold 25G (metalaxyl-M) / Lettuce / Damping off	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-11	All states except Vic
LEGUME VEGETABLES				
PER6611	Clethodim / Peas / Fops-resistant ryegrass and winter grass	13-Feb-06	12-Feb-10	Tas & WA
ROOT VEGETABLES				
PER10283	Chlorpyrifos / Potato / African black beetle, Wingless grasshopper, Redlegged earth mite	09-Jun-09	30-Sep-14	All states except Vic
PER10914	Amistar (azoxystrobin) / Radish, leeks, carrots / Powdery mildew, Downy mildew, White blister	09-Jun-09	31-May-14	All states except Vic
PER10946***	Rovral (iprodione) / Celeriac / Sclerotinia rot	09-Jun-09	30-Jun-12	All states except Vic
PER11438 ^	Glyphosate (shielded sprayer) / Specific Asian root vegetables / Grass and broadleaf weeds	05-May-09	30-Jun-19	All states
PER11443^^	Sencor or Lexone (metribuzin) / Specific root and tuber vegetables, snow and sugar snap peas / Various grass and broadleaf weeds	18-Jun-09	30-Jun-11	All states except Vic
PER11450	Tramat (ethofumesate) / Beetroot, onions / Grass weeds	08-Jun-09	30-Jun-15	Tas (Onions) & WA (Beetroot)
STEM & STALK VEGETABLES				
PER11358	Clethodim / Rhubarb / Grass weeds	24-Jun-09	30-Jun-14	All states except Vic
GENERAL - VEGETABLES				
PER10675^^^	Dual (metolachlor) / Spinach, silverbeet, spring onions, shallots, green beans, navy beans, celeriac, celery / Grass and broadleaf weeds	14-Jun-09	30-Jun-12	All states except Vic

* Additional residue data required for renewal

** Additional residue data required in brassica leafy vegetables and radish for renewal

*** Additional residue data required in celeriac for renewal

^ New rate added for perennial weeds

^^ Additional residue data required in specific root and tuber vegetables, snow and sugar snap peas for renewal

^^^ Additional residue data required in celeriac and celery for renewal

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Market development is in the bag

Existing resources will be used to educate consumers about the health benefits of increased vegetable consumption, via the industry's market development strategy.

The vegetable industry's Domestic Market Development Strategy (DMDS) was developed in 2007/08 through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and overseen by the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group (AVIDG).

The DMDS aims to change consumer attitudes towards vegetables and encourage increased vegetable consumption. The strategy comprises four main programs that serve to develop tools and resources to educate and assist consumers, while building industry capability to meet consumer needs.

Program 7.3: Specific health benefits for specific vegetables / groups of vegetables

This program will oversee the production of tools to be used by government and non-government organisations, health practitioners, the education system and retailers to educate consumers about the health benefits of vegetables and encourage increased consumption.

Significant consultations with stakeholders will result in prepared material targeting different demographics and age-groups.

Program 7.4: Reconnecting consumers with the supply chain

Industry will be better placed to understand consumer needs through the development of a Consumer Preference Guide (CPG). As a large amount of vegetable-specific consumer

information already exists, this program will summarise relevant findings from organisations such as the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), World Health Organization (WHO), and service providers that have engaged in R&D projects funded by the National Vegetable Levy.

This information will be repackaged to highlight major trends and issues, and ensure that the industry has a blueprint for which consumer needs are priorities.

Program 7.5: Driving knowledge and involvement

This program plans to access existing community and school initiatives to assist industry in increasing consumers' involve-

ment with vegetables.

The key to this program's success is delivering projects that more effectively engage consumers, and leverage from existing channels and programs, such as kitchen gardens in schools, to further educate communities. The aim is to teach consumers about vegetable seasonality and quality issues, so they better understand vegetables and consume them more frequently.

Program 7.6: Maximising food-service opportunities

Food-service outlets, such as restaurants and cafes, will be used as a channel for educating consumers about vegetables. This will lead to the development

of a major food-service initiative designed to drive out-of-home vegetable consumption.

The DMDS will conclude in 2012, and is being project managed by Sydney-based consultancy Brand Story. The project commenced in April this year and will ensure that existing knowledge and resources are used to their full advantage.

As Heather Jones, Strategic Research Manager for Brand Story, said, "We're not trying to reinvent the wheel; we want to make best use of the available information to create a market development strategy that will best educate consumers about the health benefits of increased vegetable consumption".



THE BOTTOM LINE

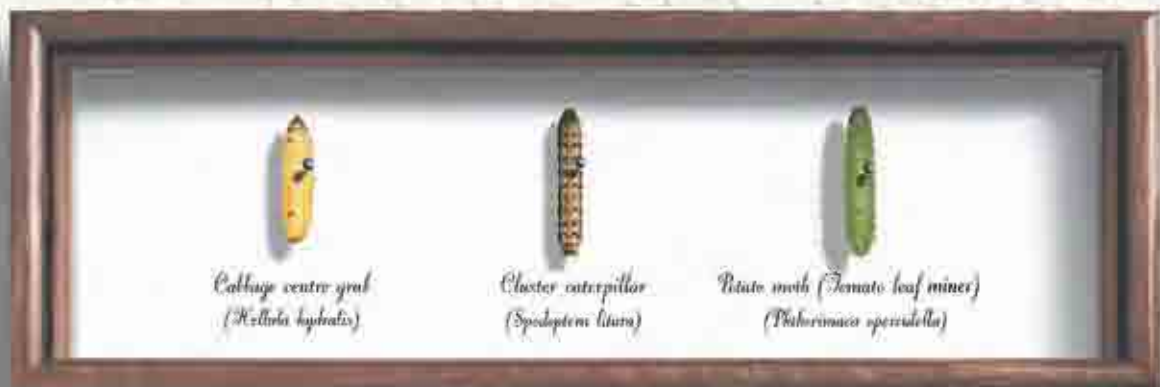
- The vegetable industry's Domestic Market Development Strategy (DMDS) commenced in April this year and will conclude in 2012.
- The strategy comprises four major programs that aim to educate consumers about the benefits of increased vegetable consumption.
- Existing resources and communications channels will be used, so the project will focus initially on summarising the current findings and practices. Stakeholders will also be consulted.

For more information contact:
 Steve Sheppard, Managing Director, Brand Story
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 Phone: 02 8399 3850
 or visit www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
 Project number: VG08077
 Keywords: Domestic marketing

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Vital launch worth the wait



The antioxidant-rich Booster Broccoli has kicked off the commercial launch of the Vital Vegetables brand, and interest in the product has already surpassed expectations, writes Jim Thomson.

The familiar adage, “good things come to those who wait”, is particularly fitting when it comes to a new line of ‘super’ broccoli, released commercially last month after a decade of research and development. The best part is that both consumers and the Australian vegetable industry are set to benefit.

The first product in the Vital Vegetables brand—a range of sustainably-grown, non-GMO vegetables that are packed with nutritional goodness—has hit the shelves of supermarkets and independent grocers nationally. So what separates this product, Booster Broccoli, from the pack? It’s scientifically proven to contain 40 per cent more antioxidants than regular broccoli varieties.

Premium product

“This is one of the most important developments in Australian horticulture, with the potential to change the health of all Australians,” said Dr Rod Jones, a researcher from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) who heads the Australian arm of the Vital Vegetables Research Partnership (VRP). Horticulture Australia Limited

contributed a small initial investment into the project which has primarily been funded through millions of dollars of investment from the Victorian and New Zealand Governments.

“The powerful antioxidants found in Booster Broccoli, like sulforaphane, can remove damaging toxins, chemicals, and other cancer causing agents in the body,” said Rod.

Sulforaphane is a naturally occurring, long-lasting antioxidant found in vegetables that is scientifically proven to have multi-action, anti-cancer fighting properties.

At the Sydney launch of Booster Broccoli in July this year, media and industry representatives attended a lunch where three members of Vital Vegetables team gave presentations: John Said, AUSVEG Board member, Victorian grower and Chairman of the Vital Vegetables Marketing Partnership (VVMP); Dr Rod Jones; and Dr Joanna McMillan Price, nutritionist, accredited dietician and Vital Vegetables Brand Ambassador.

“Vital Vegetables will provide benefits to growers, right up the supply chain. It has the potential





Dr Rod Jones said Booster Broccoli had been selected from more than 420 broccoli lines.

to change to health and well-being of Australians,” said John Said.

AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer, Richard Mulcahy, said the Vital Vegetables project was one of the most exciting initiatives undertaken within the Australian vegetable industry and it would pay dividends for growers.

“Australian vegetable growers are already benefiting from the opportunity to grow Booster Broccoli and will soon be able to grow other exciting new products that are in the final stages of development,” he said.

Serious business

The tagline included with all Vital Vegetables branding is: “nurtured by nature, certified by science”. This is the first time that a scientifically-backed media campaign regarding the health benefits of fresh vegetables has been run in Australia, and it’s an opportunity that the VVMP is taking very seriously.

“The VVMP was formed to get Vital Vegetables products to consumers’ tables. This will involve a

“The Vital Vegetables launch is already a resounding success, with more than 200 media hits in the first few weeks.”

12-month advertising and public relations campaign,” said John.

At the time of writing, the Vital Vegetables launch was already a resounding success, with more than 200 media hits, including coverage on national televised evening news bulletins and interest from overseas media outlets.

From the success of the launch, there is obvious media interest in the product and brand; now, all involved are waiting to see how consumers respond.

Booster Broccoli will be sold as individual heads, film-wrapped to ensure lasting freshness. A frozen variety is also in the pipeline, though it will be some time before this becomes commercially available.

There are also big plans to expand the Vital Vegetables brand, with high-lycopene tomatoes (research has found lycopene to be a potential agent for prevention of some types of cancers, particularly prostate cancer), mini-capsicums with Vitamins A, E and C, and mixed lettuces with increase antioxidants all slated to hit supermarket and

independent-grocer shelves in the future.

At the Sydney launch, Joanna McMillan Price spoke of her initial concerns when she was first approached about Vital Vegetables—specifically whether the research incorporated any form of GM. However, when she met with the VVMP, she was assured that no GM was involved and was so impressed by the product that she agreed to be the brand ambassador within the week.

Health benefits are key

Booster was developed with an eye to prioritising the health benefits of vegetables, said Joanna.

“Traditional breeding techniques have been used to assist in easy harvesting or universal head size. Similarly, different plant lines have different nutritional values. The process was, ‘Let’s make nutrition a priority and a key criterion for some of our plant lines’,” said Joanna.

continued page 18

Rod said that Booster Broccoli was selected from 420 broccoli lines.

"This is a rapidly evolving field, and an enormous amount of research has been and is being conducted globally, especially in Australia, Europe and the US. Now we're looking at international lines, so there are literally thousands to choose from," he said.

For Vital Vegetables to be successful, consumers must have confidence in the brand. The product undergoes rigid Quality Assurance to guarantee consumers that every head of Booster they purchase will have at least 40 per cent more antioxidants than regular broccoli varieties.

"Every crop will be tested to ensure the claim is verified," said Rod.

Collaboration is key

The success of this project is in the willingness of all parties to collaborate. For the research component, this was very much a cross-Tasman project, with

funding and expertise provided by both Australia and New Zealand. The key research partners were the Department of Primary Industries Victoria and Crop and Research New Zealand, with scientists and researchers working together towards a common goal.

Vital Vegetables was jointly funded by Plant & Food Research, Victorian DPI, Horticulture Australia Limited, AUSVEG and HortNZ.

Once the research had advanced to a significant degree—along with the assistance of leading seed companies—the next step was for the VVRP to work with the VVMP to get the product to consumers. The VVMP was itself a collaboration of six companies: Fresh Select, CostaExchange, Perfection Fresh, Salad Fresh, Houston's Farm and Simplot.

In another promotional coup, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Honourable John Key, and the Victorian Minister for Innovation, Gavin Jennings, both attended an industry launch

at the Australian Synchrotron in Melbourne in August.

The Synchrotron, Australia's largest standalone piece of scientific infrastructure, is a source of intense light that is used to analyse a range of materials, including human tissue, plants and protein.

The Vital Vegetables team used the Synchrotron in July this year to isolate where the trace element selenium can be found in Booster Broccoli tissue. Selenium stimulates proper cellular functioning within the human body and has significant properties that may resist cancer development.

At the Synchrotron launch, both the New Zealand Prime Minister and the Victorian Minister for Innovation talked up the benefits of cross-Tasman collaboration and said that initiatives such as Vital Vegetables were well placed to deal with challenges faced by the global community, such as food security.

"There is enormous and growing demand for food. Modern

THE BOTTOM LINE

- After a decade of research, the first Vital Vegetables product, Booster Broccoli, has been commercially released nationally.
- A sustainably-grown, non-GMO product, Booster Broccoli is scientifically proven to contain 40 per cent more antioxidants than regular broccoli varieties.
- Media coverage of the launch has been widespread, with more than 200 stories in the first few weeks of the product's launch.

For more information visit:
www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
 Project numbers: VG02125 and VG03095
 Keywords: Vital Vegetables

science can be our friend in finding solutions around the world, but you need to have both the hardware and the brightest brains. In this respect, collaboration is extremely important," said the Prime Minister.



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HAL releases 2009/10 R&D project list


The list below is of newly approved projects that the National Vegetable Levy will invest in for the 2009/10 financial year.


This suite of projects covers major industry issues, from pathology research to study tours to water usage. The projects have been endorsed by the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) and approved

by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), but in some cases are yet to be contracted. Please note that the list does not include ongoing projects funded in previous years.

All projects have been aligned with the five strategic imperatives,

outlined in the vegetable industry strategic plan, VegVision 2020.

Information was provided by HAL, and correct at the time of printing. 

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

Project No.	Project title	Proposed start date	Finish date	Service provider	Strategic imperative
VG09037	Importance of high vegetable consumption in controlling weight studies	01-Sep-09	30-Jun-12	University of Wollongong	1
VG09084	Health promoting vegetables that do not compromise on taste	01-Sep-09	30-May-11	CSIRO Division of Food and Nutritional Sciences	1
VG09009	Evaluating sweet potato varieties to meet market needs	01-Sep-09	30-Jun-13	Australian Sweet Potato Growers	2
VG09023	Alternative fruit fly control for market access and IPM enhancement in eggplant	19-Nov-09	30-Dec-12	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	2
VG09086	Evaluation of vegetable washing chemicals	01-Sep-09	31-Mar-11	Global F.S.	2
VG09002	Environmental management strategy for the vegetable industry	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-12	AUSVEG	3
VG09015	Improved chemical management of Currant-Lettuce aphid	01-Jan-10	30-Sep-12	NSW DPI	3
VG09020	IPM of black root rot in carrots	01-Oct-09	01-May-13	Department of Agriculture & Food Western Australia	3
VG09024	Pesticide effects on beneficial insects and mites in vegetables 2	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-12	IPM Technologies	3
VG09029	Development of trapping to monitor Lepidopteran vegetable pests in Tasmania	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-12	TIAR	3
VG09030	Implementation of IPM on-farm	06-Jul-09	30-Jun-14	IPM Technologies	3
VG09031	Efficiency of SAR for disease control in rhubarb: a preliminary study	01-Sep-09	28-May-10	Applied Horticultural Research	3
VG09032	Identification of pheromone for monitoring cutworm in vegetables	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-12	TIAR	3
VG09034	Feasibility of suction trapping for assessment of DBM migration	06-Jul-09	27-Feb-10	The University of Adelaide	3
VG09038	Soil Pest and Disease Suppression (Soil PADS) framework	01-Nov-09	30-Mar-13	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	3
VG09040	Improving IPM of melon thrips, mites and heliothis in vegetables	01-Oct-09	28-Sep-12	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	3
VG09041	Environmental effects of vegetable production on sensitive waterways	01-Nov-09	31-May-13	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	3
VG09046	Alternative control options for sucking pests in key vegetables	01-Oct-09	01-Oct-12	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	3
VG09047	Endemic biodiversity to strengthen biocontrol and crop biosecurity	01-Oct-09	01-Jul-12	South Australia Research & Development Institute (SARDI)	3
VG09051	Scoping study on attracting insects away from vegetable harvest zones	01-Sep-09	07-Sep-10	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	3
VG09052	Integration of crop and soil insect management in sweet potatoes	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-13	Australian Sweet Potato Growers	3
VG09053	Investigating options for the management of Rutherglen bug	01-Oct-09	30-Sep-12	NSW DPI	3

Project No.	Project title	Proposed start date	Finish date	Service provider	Strategic imperative
VG09055	Tomato-potato psyllid management	01-Oct-09	30-Jun-12	Victorian DPI	3
VG09060	Adoption of integrated pest and disease management in the vegetable industry of Western Australia	01-Sep-09	01-Nov-12	Department of Agriculture & Food Western Australia	3
VG09065	Water sustainability for the future	24-Jul-09	31-May-10	Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Cooperative	3
VG09070	Managing a greenhouse capsicum crop: interactive DVD demonstration and resource package	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-10	Bwize Performance Management	3
VG09073	National greenhouse waste-water recycling project	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-10	Graeme Smith Consulting	3
VG09075	Developing biocontrol agents to combat food poisoning bacteria	01-Aug-09	31-Jul-11	The University of Queensland	3
VG09082	Inducible host plant defences to improve insect management in brassicas	01-Sep-09	30-Jun-12	The University of Queensland	3
VG09085	Scoping study to develop a regional biosecurity framework for the Northern Adelaide plains	01-Jul-09	30-May-10	Scholefield Robinson Horticultural Services	3
VG09099	Active surveillance of pests and diseases: a scoping study in vegetables	15-Aug-09	01-May-10	Victorian DPI	3
VG09100	Influence of vegetable production on off-farm ecosystems through farm run-off water monitoring	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-10	Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Cooperative	3
VG09113	Entomology and IPM project allocation	01-Nov-09	01-May-14	To be advised	3
VG09119	Minor Use allocations for 2009-2010	01-Oct-09	01-Dec-10	To be advised	3
VG09121	Neutralising pesticides in recirculating water systems in a protected cropping system	02-Nov-09	01-May-10	To be advised	3
VG09122	Minor Use harmonisation	01-Feb-10	01-May-10	To be advised	3
VG09124	Implementing alternative energy technologies	01-Jan-10	01-May-12	To be advised	3
VG09126	Vegetable IPM workshops for pathology and entomology	01-Oct-09	01-May-12	To be advised	3
VG09130	On-farm diagnostic kits for brassica disease: phase II	15-Aug-09	31-Aug-11	Victorian DPI	3
VG09134	Generation of residue data for pesticide Minor Use permit applications in vegetable crops 2009	01-Jul-09	31-Dec-10	Peracto	3
VG09135	Generation of residue data for vegetable Minor Use permit applications 2009 - AgriSolutions	15-Jul-09	31-Dec-10	AgriSolutions Australia	3
VG09136	Generation of residue data for pesticide Minor Use permit applications in vegetable crops 2009	01-Jul-09	30-Dec-10	Agronico Research	3
VG09139	Management of insecticide resistance in silverleaf whitefly in vegetables	01-Jul-09	31-May-10	To be advised	3
VG09140	Generation of residue data for pesticide Minor Use permit applications in vegetable crops 2009	15-Jul-09	15-Dec-10	Agrisearch Services	3
VG09142	Australian Vegetable Industry Carbon Footprint Tool: stage 2	31-Jul-09	15-Apr-11	Provisor	3
VG09011	Understanding growers' decision-making to deliver improved IPM adoption	01-Sep-09	30-Jun-12	Victorian DPI	4
VG09019	Economic and carbon emissions model for controlled traffic farming in vegetables	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-11	TIAR	4
VG09021	Grower registration scoping study	01-Aug-09	01-Dec-09	GHD	4
VG09048	Improved IPM implementation through "knowledge hub" pilot	01-Sep-09	31-Mar-12	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	4
VG09074	Taking stock of the Australian Asian vegetable industry	01-Aug-09	30-Jun-10	Connectica International	4
VG09095	Publication of <i>Vegetables Australia</i> grower magazine	01-Feb-10	30-Jun-12	AUSVEG	4
VG09096	Production of Australian vegetable industry <i>VegeNotes</i> series	01-Feb-10	30-Jun-12	AUSVEG	4
VG09098	National vegetable industry communication strategy: management and implementation	01-Feb-10	30-Jun-12	AUSVEG	4
VG09101	Continuation of the access to Asian foods newsletter project	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-11	Rural Industries R&D Corporation (RIRDC)	4
VG09114	Vegetable Conference 2011	01-Sep-09	01-May-11	AUSVEG	4
VG09123	Usefulness of ute guides: scoping study	01-Oct-09	01-May-10	To be advised	4
VG09125	Vegetable statistics & data integration	01-Oct-09	01-May-12	To be advised	4
VG09131	Vegetable communications package (continuation of VG08105 and VG07062)	01-Aug-09	30-Jan-10	AUSVEG	4

Project No.	Project title	Proposed start date	Finish date	Service provider	Strategic imperative
MT09030	Facilitating IPM adoption in the melon/cucurbit industry of northern Australia	01-Sep-09	01-Jul-11	NT Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines	4
VG09057	Leafy vegetables think tank	01-Sep-09	31-Dec-09	ARRIS	5
VG09067	Multimedia tools to showcase career opportunities in the Australian vegetable supply chain	01-Oct-09	30-Jun-10	Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Cooperative	5
VG09069	Addressing labour skills shortages in horticulture through targeted programs and activities	01-Jan-10	30-Jun-11	Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Cooperative	5
VG09078	Root vegetables think tank	01-Sep-09	28-Feb-10	ARRIS	5
VG09081	Improving business skills and value chain awareness for young Queensland vegetable growers: phase I	01-Aug-09	29-Jun-11	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation	5
VG09087	Capacity building in the Australian vegetable industry through people development	01-Nov-09	30-Jun-11	ARRIS	5
VG09115	VG leadership course	01-Nov-09	01-May-12	Horticulture Australia Limited	5
VG09116	New Zealand Study Tour 2010 - 2012	01-Dec-09	01-May-12	AUSVEG	5
VG09117	PMA Study Tour 2010 - 2012	01-Dec-09	01-May-12	AUSVEG	5
VG09120	Program administration	02-Nov-09	01-May-10	Horticulture Australia Limited	5
VG09141	Growers Study Tour PMA/USA 2009	31-Jul-09	30-May-10	AUSVEG	5
VG09144	Vegetable Industry Development Program: national program coordination	01-Jul-09	01-Jul-12	Rural Directions	5
VG09145	Vegetable Industry Development People Development sub-program	01-Aug-09	01-Jul-12	Dianne Fullelove and Associates	5
VG09146	Vegetable Industry Development Consumers and Markets sub-program	01-Aug-09	01-Jul-12	Freshlogic	5
VG09147	Vegetable Industry Development Knowledge Management sub-program	01-Aug-09	01-Jul-12	AUSVEG	5
VG09900	Vegetable Partnership Agreement 2009-10	01-Jul-09	30-Jun-10	AUSVEG	5
VG09910	Vegetable Partnership Agreement 2009-10 (consultation)	15-Aug-09	30-Jun-10	AUSVEG	5

VegVision 2020 strategic imperatives

1. Delivering to changing consumer preferences and increasing demand
2. Market recognition for Australian quality, safety, reliable supply and innovation in products and services
3. Internationally competitive vegetable production and supply chain
4. Advanced industry data and information systems to meet future needs
5. Visionary leadership and managing change, including people development



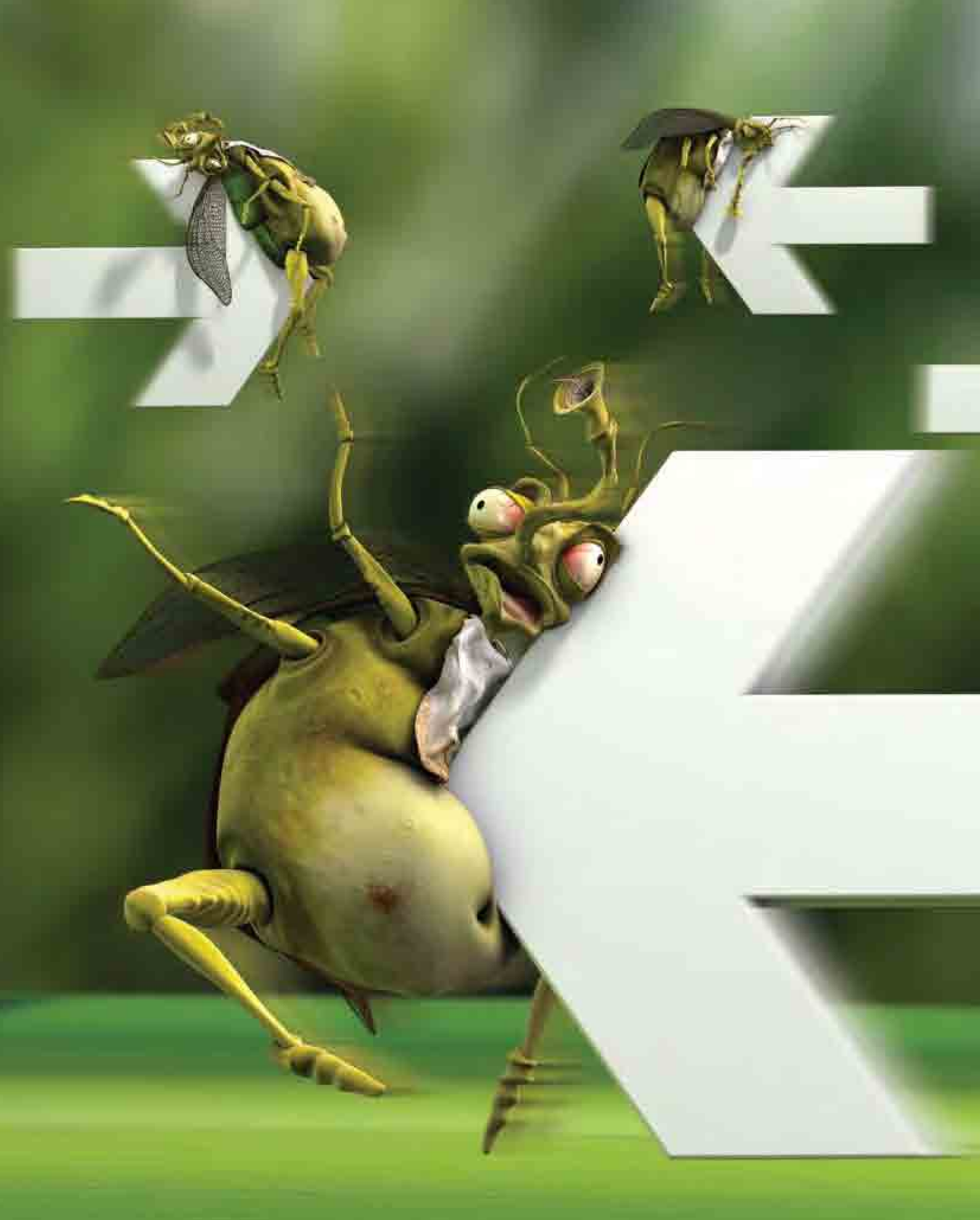
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Industry legend speaks out

VGA President Luis Gazzola believes the Melbourne Markets' impending shift may dramatically change vegetable marketing in Victoria.

Luis Gazzola began his association with the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Markets more than 50 years ago, when it was called the Queen Victoria Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market. In those days, he worked with his father, uncle and cousins, growing vegetables at Naree Warren South and Cranbourne. Trading as "Favero & Gazzola", this partnership dated back to 1932.

In 1985, Luis changed tack by becoming a wholesaler at the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Markets on Footscray Road in West Melbourne.

This business was run in conjunction with two of his sons, Paul and Colin, and it set the stage for the Gazzolas' return to growing in 1988, although this time it was sugarcane plantations in Bundaberg, Queensland. They also grew watermelons, pumpkins, zucchini, capsicums and avocados.

However, with vegies in their blood, in 1991, Luis purchased land in Somerville on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, and later in Boneo. Gazzola Farms now cultivates 660 acres in those two locations.

"We grow celery, broccoli, Asian vegetables and Cos lettuce 12 months of the year, while carrots and iceberg lettuce are grown between six and eight months of the year," said Luis.

In recent years, Luis has taken a step back from the business, which is now ably managed by his three sons, Paul, Colin and



[From left] AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy, Rosebud grower James Cochrane, and VGA Victoria President Luis Gazzola at the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Markets in West Melbourne.

Andrew.

"It's a hands-on business and it's their future now. I'm very proud of what they're doing," said Luis, who acts as a senior director.

To market, to market

Reducing his time on the farm has allowed Luis to assume a more prominent position in agri-politics. Currently serving his fifth year as President of the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria, Luis is also a member of the Policy Council of the Victorian Farmers Federation Horticultural Group.

Luis is concerned that the Victorian Government's plan to shift Melbourne's wholesale markets from West Melbourne to

Epping is an unnecessary move that will have a lasting affect on the market's operation.

"In my view, Epping will not fulfil its intended role. It is on the fringe of the metropolitan area, so it is too far away for 70 per cent of the retailers. It will increase transport and logistics costs, and if the market trades later hours—which wholesalers have been pushing for—it'll be a nightmare trying to get out of the market as we will hit the peak-hour, south-bound traffic," said Luis.

Originally, the market's governing body, the Melbourne Market Authority (MMA), was given a choice of three sites for a potential shift: Epping, Werribee or Dandenong. Dandenong suited growers in Melbourne's east,

while Werribee suited growers in Melbourne's west. Epping was seen by the state government as a compromise.

"I believe that the best site is West Melbourne; however, the government has said that we must leave our current site. Now, after four years of battling this move, I'd say that 80 per cent of the market community believes that Epping is the wrong way to go," said Luis.

Capitalise on consumer interest

Luis said that the industry will survive a shift to Epping because growers who don't sell at the markets themselves will sell through wholesalers, pack-houses or distribution centres—an increas-

ingly common trend. However, if this happens, there is a risk that buyers will lose a direct link to producers.

“Greengrocers and retailers love buying from growers because that’s where everything starts. With growers, you get the full story. Equally, growers get direct feedback from the retailer in regards to the consumers’ needs in fresh vegetables,” said Luis.

“I’d be prepared to pay a levy on each carton that left my property, provided this money was used for promotion.”

This comes at a time when consumers want to know the stories behind their meals. Luis knows this firsthand from his involvement at the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival in March this year.

“It was great. I was at the MMA’s stand as a grower, and people were coming to me to ask about the different vegetable varieties and how to cook them,” he said.

Luis believes that the industry needs to educate young adults about healthy diets and the importance of eating fresh vegetables.

“The primary school programs we have are very good—what we need now is to go into secondary schools and universities and teach the next generation of cooks how to cook. Many young people don’t eat at home any more.”

According to Luis, these sorts of initiatives would best be funded by a promotional levy.

“I’d be prepared to pay a levy on each carton that left my property, provided this money was used for promotion. We need \$10 million to \$20 million a year for promotion. We would we see a sizable return on that investment by teaching the importance of eating ‘fresh and healthy’.”

Grower ID needed

Another passion for Luis is the desire for vegetable growers to

be nationally registered with a property identification number.

“This would be no different to the cattle industry, where you can’t sell cattle unless you’re registered and your cattle have an ID number.”

An ID number for each vegetable-growing property would allow growers to purchase chemicals and fertilisers, sell produce at markets, and provide links to their

businesses’ quality assurance, and environmental and land management. IDs would also confirm grower numbers in Australia and assist in the collection of funds for research and development.

“From a business perspective, three of the main issues we face are occupational health and safety, food safety and quality assurance. Industry registration would assist in facilitating all of these. For many growers, it would require no extra work, as the larger commercial growers are doing all this already.”

Count the costs

Luis advises all growers to identify and understand the true value of their costs of production.

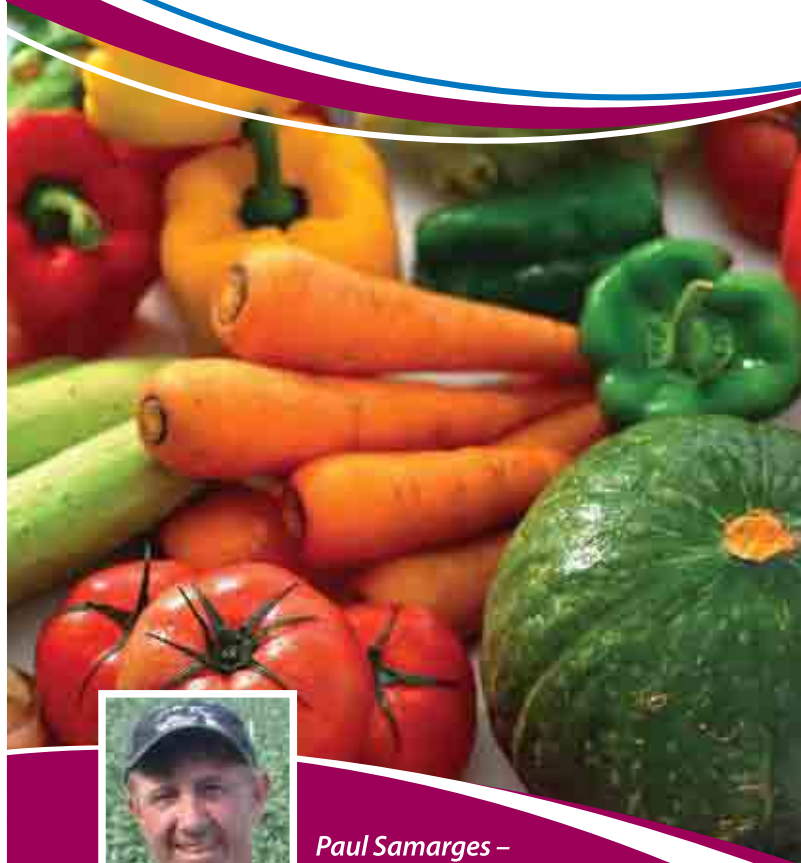
“Every grower should work out their costs because they are constantly on the increase. A further burden for the industry will be the Horticulture Industry Award, due to start on 1 January 2010. The only way the industry will survive is by convincing wholesalers and retailers that the cost of growing must be passed on. We need to get a reasonable profit from our produce; otherwise the industry will be unsustainable.”

Finally, Luis believes that to facilitate communication, “all growers should be members of an association. Membership provides our industry with the numbers needed to give us a stronger voice.” va

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Excite consumers to increase veg consumption

Collaboration and education are crucial to the success of industry marketing endeavors, which may see the creation of ‘heroes’ in the vegetable category to help engage consumers, writes Jim Thomson.

Many industry pundits consider a concerted marketing campaign about vegetables to be the Holy Grail in terms of increasing Australians’ regular consumption of vegetables.

While it’s true that marketing could help achieve the aim of doubling the value of fresh, processed and packaged vegetables in Australia by 2020—as laid out in VegVision 2020, the industry’s strategic plan—no-one expects that airing a couple of television advertisements will automatically lead to growers sitting back and watching their sales rise.

What is needed first and foremost is a cultural change, one that shifts how consumers understand and value vegetables.

For Steve Sheppard, Managing Director at Brand Story—a Sydney-base consultancy that is overseeing both the vegetable industry’s Domestic Market Development Strategy (DMDS) and the bi-annual Vegetracker consumer survey—marketing refers to many things.

“Marketing is commonly the vehicle for informing and educating consumers, encouraging them to try new things,” said Steve.

“It is often about getting some-

one’s attention in a short space of time. However, what’s more crucial is what to do with a person’s attention once you have it.”

Funding barrier

A lack of available funds is one of the main barriers between the industry and a concerted marketing campaign. While the National Vegetable Levy has been put in place to fund research and development projects, no levy funds can be used for marketing initiatives.

However, in a bid to better understand how the industry can best engage with consumers, levy funds have been invested in researching consumer attitudes to vegetables and vegetable consumption, and developing the opportunities for educating consumers.

After a successful one-year pilot program [see *Vegetables Australia* issue 4.3, page 24] Vegetracker is now in the first year of a three-year funding cycle to chart consumers’ attitudes to vegetables, including taste, usage, storage and consumption. These findings will help guide the development of the DMDS.

Similarly, Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries

“**Heroes need to be created. This isn’t about pitching carrots against potatoes; it’s about driving interest in the category as a whole.**”

has released research findings about the differences between low and high vegetable consumers [see page 32]. Collectively, this research serves to point the vegetable industry in the right direction when it comes to marketing, because it’s crucial that early initiatives are strategic.

“Marketing is an umbrella term for so many diverse activities around communication and creating opportunities,” said Heather Jones, Strategic Research Manager at Brand Story.

“There are numerous tactics that can be used, but what’s important is that they all have to work together. You need cut-through and consistency.”

The tactics include packaging; brand awareness; point-of-sale and in-store promotions; value adding; print, television, radio and online promotions; school gardens and in-school initiatives; market promotions; education; and festivals and conventions—and these just scratch the surface.

A work in progress

The good news is that the industry is not working from a blank page. Marketing initiatives, such as “Go for 2&5”, are already in the public sphere, and



supermarkets often promote fresh food specials in their advertising campaigns.

“In terms of previous marketing activity, there hasn’t been much from growers,” said Heather Jones.

“We’ve had initiatives from retailers such as IGA and the fresh market update from Woolworths. Small-scale initiatives have been happening as well, such as boxes of vegies for local schools.”

Growers who have engaged in marketing activities have worked hard to successfully develop and maintain their brands, including Perfection Fresh, Ladybird Organics, Houston’s Farm and Flavorite Tomatoes.

Regional branding is also on the rise, such as Tasmania’s “Taste is in our nature” campaign [see *Vegetables Australia* issue 5.1, page 46], Western Australia’s “Buy west, eat best”, and South Australia’s “SA Grown”. The national “Australian made, Australian grown” campaign is also an established brand, recognised by many consumers.

Separate to the general horticulture or agriculture brands, other industries continue to invest in marketing campaigns, such as the banana, apple and avocado industries. The meat and livestock industry also has aggressive advertising campaigns, which are invariably built on the health benefits of eating selected products. Nutritional information is usually available in-store, as are recipe suggestions. These campaigns value-add both education and convenience for consumers.

Think big

For the vegetable industry, the consensus is that social marketing campaigns aren’t the answer. These are campaigns that put the onus on individuals to change their behaviour.

“Campaigns such as ‘Go for 2&5’ have done a great job of raising awareness about the benefits of eating fresh produce on a regular basis. They create a ‘halo of health’, which is great, but now we need to put more layers on that information,” said Steve.

“For years, people have been told, ‘Eat your vegies because they’re good for you’—but that’s not enough any more. We need to find a point of connection with consumers so they can develop a relationship with the category.”

The segmentation of consumer groups necessitates a varied approach, said Heather.

“Some consumers need to know how to prepare, select or store fresh produce. Some consumers need to be re-engaged. They say, ‘I’m bored. I’ve over vegetables’. These are the people we need to excite,” she said.

Dr Jennifer Jobling, a researcher with the University of Sydney, said it’s a matter of looking at the big picture. Together with Associate Professor Ruth Colagiuri, also from the University of Sydney, Jenny is keen to develop policy strategies for increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables to help reduce chronic disease and obesity.

Jenny said that social marketing campaigns have short-term benefits, but once the campaigns run their course, the long-term effects aren't as promising.

"We need to research policy options to increase the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables when food choices are being made—we want to go beyond social

“Marketing is commonly the vehicle for informing and educating consumers, encouraging them to try new things.”

marketing campaigns to look at broader changes implemented by governments. Individuals can only do so much if there are barriers to good choices. Availability is a big barrier—fast food is more readily available. We're asking, can this be changed and how?" said Jenny.

Another question Jenny asks is why are Australians working long hours to the point where they do not have time to go home and prepare meals with healthy, fresh ingredients?

She mentions an example in the US where some state governments have restricted the proximity of fast-food outlets.

"This might mean that fast-food outlets are restricted to one or two within a shopping strip, which reduces the number of fast-food options consumers have," she said.

Of course, for these initiatives to be successful there needs to be an increased presence of food outlets that supply fresh produce to consumers.

Celebrate heroes

The time is ripe for vegetable marketing initiatives. Consumers are increasingly searching out information about where their food is coming from, how they can cook it and why it's good for them. There are also concerns about price.

To tap into this, some campaigns focus on the seasonality of vegetables. When vegetables are in season,

they taste best and they are usually at their cheapest. Tasmania's "Taste is in our nature campaign" uses its campaign website to leverage off the seasonality of produce and educate consumers.

"The vegetable industry offers consumers a product that is fundamentally good for them and critical to life. Additionally, consumer trends are on our side: ageing population, and growing knowledge of health issues and life choices," said Steve.

"The diversity of vegetable varieties adds complexity, but the positives far outweigh the negatives. Diversity is the industry's real strength. Many varieties are misunderstood or underappreciated by consumers, when they can offer so much to the community in terms of health benefits."

Heather agrees, saying that the industry's diversity should be celebrated.

"We need people in the industry to take a big-picture perspective and allow for heroes to be created within the category. This isn't about pitching carrots against potatoes; it's about driving interest in the category as a whole," she said.

"Rather than marketing all the varieties together, we need to find those stories and dissect

continued page 30

The 'Go for 2&5' campaign has helped encourage Australians to increase their consumption of vegetables.



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the category. In this way we let consumers in and help them explore.”

Initiatives such as Vital Vegetables, launched recently around Australia, could be an example of the way forward. At the moment, the campaign's 'hero' is Booster Broccoli, a nutrient-rich variety. However, the media coverage this product has received also serves to increase the consumers' awareness of vegetables overall.

“Vital Vegetables sees the industry pushing the message about health benefits. It's about getting consumers to become more engaged with vegetables,” said Steve.

Get involved

For growers who want to be on the front foot with marketing initiatives, there are opportunities to get involved.

“The success of any marketing initiatives relies on the industry's willingness to collaborate,” said Steve.

He points to the DMDS, which aims to develop a Consumer Preference Guide to help direct growers in terms of how and what they grow, and how they process or package their produce.

“There will also be opportunities for growers to support school and community initiatives, such as being part of a school ambassador program,” said Heather.

“This would be where growers engage with their local school to help students better understand vegetables and how to use them. It's a great way to join the grassroots development.” **va**

Marketing initiatives in Australia and abroad

Make a week of it

With the support of celebrity ambassadors, National Vegetarian Week encourages all Australians to increase their consumption of plant-based meals. This year marks the third in the annual campaign.

www.vegetarianweek.com.au

Fresh fleet

Brisbane Markets has launched a fleet of promotional vehicles that depict images of fresh fruit and vegetables. It is planned that they will visit schools participating in the Queensland Kids Fresh Net (QKFN) program.

Stately business

South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania have all tried their hand at stamping the state brand on their fresh produce to encourage increased consumption of local goods. The “SA Grown” and “Buy west, eat best” campaigns hope to increase intra-state consumption.

www.tasteisournature.com.au

www.virginiahc.com.au (then follow the links to “SA Grown”)

www.buywesteatbest.wa.gov.au

Eat the rainbow

Campaigns in Canada and the UK encourage consumers to eat five ‘colours’ of fresh produce each day, as different vitamins and nutrients are present in different-coloured fruits and vegetables.

Treasure, without the trash

Think Easter-egg hunts, but swap the chocolate for fruits and vegetables. The World's Biggest Healthy Foods Treasure Hunt—an American initiative held this month—aims to empower children to make healthy food choices.

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Cartoon branding

The use of animated or television characters on pre-packaged fresh produce is increasingly used in the US and Canada to encourage kids to eat more fruit and vegetables. Disney Garden branded produce experienced 300 per cent growth in Canada in 2008.

www.i-farms.com

Stay in school

The European Union is launching a program in nearly all of its 27 countries, offering free fresh fruit and vegetables to school students in a bid to target chronic health issues, such as obesity. This initiative will be funded by national and private sources.

ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/fruitveg/sfs

What's in a name?

Plenty, if the results of US research are anything to go by. When children were given vegetables with funky names, such as “X-ray Vision Carrots”, they ate twice the amount than when they were given ‘regular’ vegies. **va**





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Help consumers make the right choice

In-season produce that is quick to prepare will encourage low vegetable consumers to up their intake of fresh vegetables.

Understanding the differences between the attitudes of low vegetable consumers and high vegetable consumers is crucial to expanding the Australian vegetable market, according to a study conducted by Innovative Food Technology (IFT), a workgroup within Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, in collaboration with the Plant and Food Research Institute New Zealand.

Katrina Gething, Consumer Research Scientist for IFT, said studies of consumers' vegetable

purchasing and consumption behaviours helped to create a more market-oriented industry.

"Rather than pushing product through the market and hoping it sells, a more market-oriented approach would be to find out the specific needs of consumers and devise products or breeding programs to meet those needs," said Katrina.

Incorrect perceptions

The study, conducted in Brisbane, targeted young professionals and families with young

children. "Older Australians tend to eat their vegies, so we targeted segments of the population where a real change could be initiated," said Katrina.

Participants were required to keep a food diary for one week and attend a focus group. It was found that one of the biggest issues impacting on vegetable consumption was the perception that their use was confined to evening meals.

"People who ate vegetables at night didn't think they needed to increase their vegetable consu-

mption because they couldn't imagine where they could add more veg," said Katrina.

The perception of vegetables as expensive was also a considerable barrier. According to one group member: "We have a budget every week and if we're over budget my wife would say, 'Well, we didn't get this, this week'. Normally [this means fewer] vegies because they're too expensive".

Katrina believes this misconception can be overcome through better education and marketing.

“In-season vegetables are not expensive, and the perception of vegetables as expensive is a complicated one that includes issues with wastage, perceptions of quality and a preference for meat over vegetables,” she said.

“We need to educate people about the true worth of vegetables, provide a product that is valued for its quality, and develop easy, tasty and price-comparative vegetable products that reduce waste issues for buyers.”

Consumers did value vegetables for occasion-type meals, such as roast dinners and, to a lesser extent, salads for barbecues.

“This is an opportunity to market vegetables according to usage. Occasion-type meals often have social value with deeper psychological meaning for consumers, and the vegetable industry could leverage that in some campaigns,” said Katrina.

The kid factor

Taste was a further obstacle for low vegetable consumers.

Responses from focus group members indicated that low vegetable consumers’ tastes leaned toward take-away and protein foods, whereas high vegetable consumers were more likely to suggest fruit and vegetables as favourites.

The children of low vegetable consuming families were also a major factor in the decision to buy and eat vegetables, as parents felt competing pressures to cater to their children’s tastes while providing healthy, easily-prepared meals.

“The best way to market to low vegetable consuming parents is to provide healthy, convenient vegetable products that are palatable and ‘kid friendly’ in design,” said Katrina.

Low vegetable consumers exhibited a lack of meal-preparation skills and considered themselves to be poor or adequate cooks. In many instances, the ‘meat and three veg’ meal was being replaced by quick pasta or stir fry options that contained few vegetables.

In contrast, high vegetable

consumers rarely cited time-constraints as a barrier to vegetable consumption. When time was an issue, high vegetable consumers used pre-prepared homemade frozen vegetable portions, chose quick-cook vegetables for stir fries or bought convenient frozen options. They claimed to have good or great kitchen-skills and while meat was still included in meals, it was usually a small portion and vegetables were considered to be essential ingredients.

Fashionable food


Positive consumer attitudes towards vegetables were grounded in the perceived health benefits of vegetables. For families, this translated chiefly into the desire to be a good parent. Mental acuity, increased energy and better skin and hair were also associated with increased vegetable consumption.

The most influential trend observed within the young professional group was their self-indulgent eating behaviours. This

group often engaged in impulse buying, readily purchasing convenience meals, and shopped more frequently, often stopping on the way home to purchase dinner ingredients.


Vegetable products more likely to appeal to young professionals were those that echoed restaurant trends.

Additionally, young professionals expressed concern about their looks and the environment. For women, vegetables were associated with losing weight, clear skin and healthy hair, as well as overall health. Young professionals were increasingly concerned with food miles, packaging and buying Australian-grown produce.

Developing products that meet the high-end desires of young professionals, in addition to educating low vegetable consumers about affordable, tasty and quick-to-prepare in-season produce will help to grow these market sectors. 

Endless possibilities

In light of the differences in attitudes between high and low vegetable consumers, some suggestions for new vegetables products and marketing strategies have been compiled:

- **Target parents with “healthy-kids” marketing messages, and partner this with easily-prepared products that are palatable to children. Be sure to advertise how many serves of vegetables are included**
- **Target women with messages about the beauty and health attributes associated with vegetables**
- **Develop convenient vegetable options for meals other than evening meals, including:**
 - crudité-type single-serve snacks that come with a condiment
 - microwavable vegetable snacks
 - vegetable-based, restaurant-type convenience meals
- **Educate consumers about the true value of vegetables**
- **Target vegetable products to particular demographics and consumption moments, for example fathers and barbecues, or mothers and weekend roasts**
- **Develop marketing messages that highlight the versatility of vegetables for meals and snacks other than evening meals. Link this to social marketing campaigns designed to increase vegetable consumption.** 

THE BOTTOM LINE

- A study has found that low vegetable consumers perceive fresh vegetables to be expensive and time consuming to prepare.
- In contrast, high vegetable consumers view vegetables to be essential ingredients for evening meals, and have developed strategies to include vegetables even when time is short.
- Young professionals perceive vegetables to have health benefits; they are more likely to purchase vegetables that they have consumed in restaurants.

 For more information contact: Katrina Gething, Consumer Research Scientist, Innovative Food Technologies, Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries
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Phone: 07 3406 8635
or visit www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers
Project number: VG08000
Keywords: Consumer insights



The biodegradable packaging for Ladybird Organics' salad mixes has proved to be a hit with consumers.

Calculated risk pays dividends

For Steve Skopilianos, Director of Melbourne's Ladybird Organics, the rebranding his company after switching to organic farming has brought commercial success, writes Youna Angevin-Castro.



Over the past four years, Steve Skopilianos has converted each of his nine properties, totaling 100 acres, to organic production. In the process he has cemented his position as one of the country's leading organic vegetable producers.

"It's definitely been a positive move for us. In conventional farming circles, we were a very small fish in a large pond. Now, in organic circles, we're a large

fish in a small pond—it gives us a point of difference," he said.

Early bird

An early adopter of the EnviroVeg program, Steve credits the program with setting his wheels in motion towards more sustainable farming practices when, in the late-1990s, he realised that his growing practices weren't working.

"We were spending more and

more money on chemicals. When EnviroVeg was launched, we were one of the first 10 growers on board, and it certainly got us thinking about being more sustainable in our approach to vegetable production," said Steve.

In 2005, Steve commenced the conversion process, and in a relatively short time has become a leading example of how organic production can be commercially viable. Now, Ladybird Organics

grows lettuce, pumpkins, sugar snap peas, snow peas, strawberries and watermelons.

Earlier this year, Steve's achievements were recognised at the Australian Vegetable Industry Awards. Ladybird Organics was awarded the 2009 Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award for the development of biodegradable packaging for its

continued page 36



Building the brand

According to Steve Skopilianos, building a recognisable brand requires a clear vision, determination, and the willingness to take a risk.

When Steve Skopilianos converted the family's farming business to organic production, it was the perfect time to give the company a new name and identity.

"We had been operating under the name of Keilor Valley Gardens for a long time, but I felt that our move to organics required a fresh look and feel for the business," he said.

Seeking the expertise of a marketing agency, Steve was presented with the concept that now embodies the Ladybird Organics brand.

"I knew that I was looking for something contemporary and professional that would reflect the vision of the company. At the same time, it was an entirely new look for us and I wasn't sure how the market would respond."

After consultation with friends, family and colleagues, Steve took the plunge and he hasn't looked back since. His strikingly-packaged produce can be found in most supermarkets, and is recognised by consumers as one of the leading organic salad brands in the country.



Steve Skopilianos, Director Ladybird Organics, accepts the Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award at the Australian Vegetable Industry Conference gala dinner in Melbourne in May this year.

In the bag

A significant element of the Ladybird brand ethos is its environmental consciousness, and it is Steve's response to waste management that has packed the greatest punch with respect to marketing his product.

Concerned about how the market would respond to conventional packaging of organic produce, Steve set out to find alternatives that would lessen the impact of plastic packaging on the environment. It is this spirit of innovation that led him to win the 2009 Brisbane Produce Market Innovative Marketing Award at the Australian Vegetable Industry Awards.

"In 2006 I attended the PMA conference in San Diego in the United States, where I discovered a number of producers using biodegradable packaging for their fresh produce. This got me thinking about how I could package my own produce. When I returned to Australia, I began the hunt for a suitable product," he said.

Months of research revealed that no locally-made products suited Steve's needs, so he had to look elsewhere. Manufactured in Germany, the biodegradable bags used at Ladybird Organics are made from PLA, a polymer derived from cornstarch. It is completely biodegradable, turning into water and carbon dioxide during composting.

"The bags can be placed on a compost heap—not in a compost bin—and, provided they are exposed to sufficient heat and air, they are designed to break down after eight to 12 weeks," said Steve.

The bags cost around four times as much as conventional produce bags; however, Steve believes that the returns on his brand make the investment worthwhile. ^{va}

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salad range [see panel].

“Becoming an organic producer was just the first step towards a broader commitment to becoming sustainable producers, and the biodegradable packaging is part of that vision,” he said.

Steve acknowledges that switching to organic production can be a lengthy process, and the experience has presented challenges along the way.

“All farming is difficult, irrespective of whether you farm organically or otherwise. When we converted from a conventional farming operation we eliminated some of our problems, but we also experienced a new set of problems that we have had to learn to overcome.”

Hands-on solutions

One of the biggest issues for organic producers is effective weed control. At present there are no suitable organic herbicide alternatives, so weeds must be controlled manually.

“It’s probably the number one issue I have to tackle as an organic producer. We mechanically cultivate between the crops as much as possible, but essentially the only way to control weeds is to employ more people to manually pull them out,” said Steve.

As well as removing unwanted vegetation, Steve has also made a commitment to improve the natural vegetation surrounding his land and waterways. This has included building up natural habitats adjacent to his crops to encourage the establishment of beneficial insect populations.

“In the early days we used to spray the natural vegetation with molasses to keep the local insect populations at beneficial levels,” he said.

Water savings

A large part of Ladybird’s environmental management plan is the efficient and responsible use of water. Strategies for reducing water use include the introduction of computer-controlled irrigation, and irrigating at night to reduce evaporation.

“Night-time watering also means



Steve Skopilianos was one of the first 10 growers to join the EnviroVeg program.

“We get emails and phone calls from consumers thanking us for being thoughtful about the environment.”

that we can take advantage of off-peak electricity rates, which means further financial savings,” he said.

Where possible, the business recycles and re-uses water, and an onsite recycling system collects wash water for use on crops. Where overhead irrigation is used, Steve has reduced the size of nozzles; however, he believes that the greatest savings are achieved through a combination of drip irrigation, compost and soil-moisture monitoring equipment. He claims to have achieved up to a 70 per cent saving on water use with this system.

“There are so many advantages. Not only can we make every megalitre of water stretch further, but it is also more efficient for the plants because the water is supplied at the roots and it minimises weeds.”

Perfect packaging

One of the more innovative changes to Steve’s business includes the decision to use

biodegradable packaging for his range of packaged lettuce. Made from polylactic acid (PLA), a plastic derived from cornstarch, the packaging offers an ethical alternative to conventional plastic, with the added benefit of a longer shelf life.

“We felt that if we had packaged our product in normal plastic, consumers would have rejected our prices. Also, the ethos of organic production is about reducing our environmental impact. The packaging is fabulous, and the marketing advantage it has given us is phenomenal. We get so many emails and phone calls from consumers thanking us for going that extra step, and being thoughtful about the environment,” he said.

“Even our slogan, ‘Crawling with natural goodness’, has prompted positive feedback. Earlier this year we had a lady buy one of our bags of rocket from a supermarket, and she emailed us because she found a ladybird inside the bag. Normally, when we get someone contacting us about insects in our produce, it’s not very favourable. But on this occasion this lady was delighted to find that our slogan was more than a catchphrase.

“It’s refreshing to get a comment like that, and it really reiterates that our branding works well.”

On the farm, Steve has taken additional measures to reduce packaging waste, asking suppliers to minimise external packaging. He encourages other growers to do what they can to run their businesses more sustainably.

“I’m not suggesting that organic production is the way to go for everyone, but there are certainly small changes that can be made that can make a difference. If we can trigger a new way of thinking about how we produce food, then maybe we can make inroads into a more sustainable vegetable industry.” **va**



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Climate change – What are the opportunities and risks for your business?

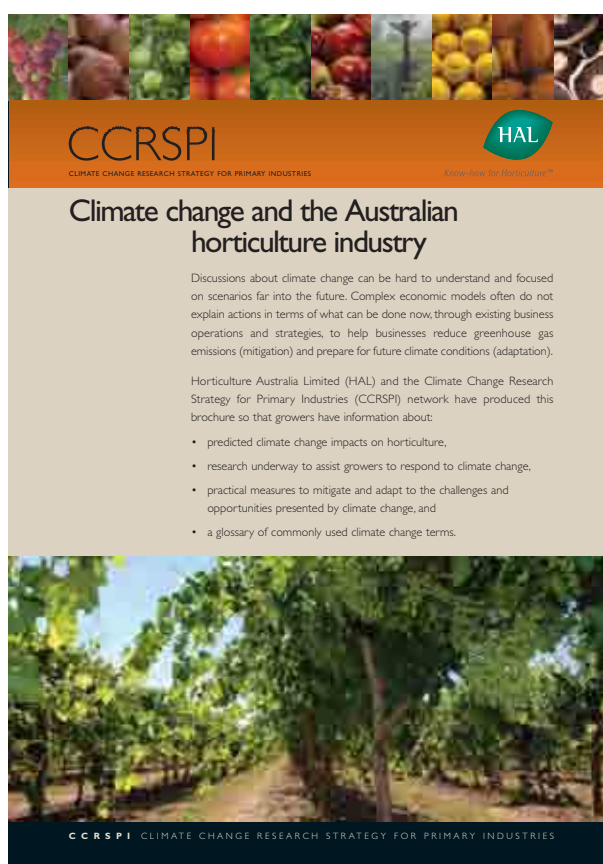
Confused about the impact of climate change on your business? A new brochure produced by HAL should help clear the fog.

Australia's increasingly variable climate poses challenges for vegetable growers given the sector's dependency on natural resources, especially water for irrigation. This makes the sector inherently vulnerable to the impacts of both short-term climate variability and long-term climate change. The extent these physical impacts affect products and businesses will be further shaped by the:

- growing global demand for food
- impacts of climate change policy
- increasing demands for productivity growth
- increasing competition for natural resources
- requirements for ever more efficient and sustainable production practices.

Most of the anticipated climate change scenarios point towards the need for a very high standard of crop management. Growers will need to distinguish between 'old climate expectations' and 'new climate realities' in determining and implementing adaptation strategies or options.

It will be important for management strategies to be identified and implemented by growers to either offset negative impacts or take advantage of positive responses. It will also be necessary to develop capacity and knowledge so that growers can make effective business decisions, minimise risk, and manage their response to climate variability more effectively.



EnviroVeg

Brochure available

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and the Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries network have produced a new brochure so that growers have information about:

- predicted climate change impacts on horticulture
- research underway to assist growers in responding to

climate change

- practical measures to mitigate and adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change
- a glossary of commonly used climate change terms.

The brochure clarifies what can be done now—through existing business operations and strategies—to help growers


reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and prepare for future climate conditions (adaptation).


Register for workshops

EnviroVeg will provide a series of four workshops in October and November to consider the impacts of climate change on the vegetable industry, and explain the latest research and practical tools for growers, including the Houston's Farm and Vegetable Carbon Footprinting Tool project [see panel].

The workshops will be held on:

- 16 October, Perth, WA
- 23 October, Cowra, NSW
- 6 November, Stanthorpe, Qld
- 27 November, Ulverstone, Tas.

If you are interested in attending a workshop, please contact the new EnviroVeg Consultant, Siwan Lovett. 

 For more information about EnviroVeg, and the EnviroVeg Manual and workshops, contact: Dr Siwan Lovett, EnviroVeg Consultant
Phone: 02 6247 7997
Email: <siwan.lovett@ausveg.com.au>
For more information about climate change visit:
www.managingclimate.gov.au
or www.ccrspi.com.au

Dr Siwan Lovett is the new EnviroVeg Consultant. She has worked for many years as an independent consultant and brings with her natural resources management and science communication skills.

Eco-jargon explained

Carbon footprint

Carbon footprints calculate the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by an activity, a business or a country.

In its strictest sense, a carbon footprint accounts for both direct emissions (those that a business or activity is wholly responsible for, which means all on-farm activities that produce greenhouse gases) and indirect emissions (those related to activities such as transport of raw materials to a business, and transport of a product to the consumer).

Other greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming are often converted to 'carbon dioxide equivalents' (CO₂-e), which is the amount of carbon that would have a similar effect to the actual amount of the greenhouse gas released.

The carbon footprint combines the impact of all CO₂ and CO₂-e gases in terms of carbon. Growers will need to look at their exposure to all greenhouse gases for potential new product labeling and regulatory reporting under either the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) or the National Greenhouse Energy Reporting Framework.

Life cycle assessment

A life cycle assessment is an assessment of the environmental, economic and social impacts of a production system or product. The life cycle commences from the raw materials stage through to processing, transport, use, reuse, recycling or disposal. Sometimes it is described as analysing a product's impact from the 'cradle to the grave'. A new fact sheet has been produced on life cycle assessment, if you would like a copy contact EnviroVeg Consultant, Siwan Lovett, or visit www.ausveg.com.au.

Food miles

Food miles are the distance food travels throughout the complete production process ending with the consumer. The concept allows for a simple comparison to be made among different foods in relation to energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. **va**



Taking the first step

Houston's Farm is developing new tools for the industry to assess the impacts of climate change.

Houston's Farm is a fully integrated grower and processor of fresh-cut salads supplying more than 1,400 major retail outlets nationally.

In light of the retail focus in UK and US supermarkets on food miles, and the growing debate in Australia about greenhouse gas emissions, Houston's Farm developed a strategy to calculate its business carbon footprint using product life cycle assessment.


Using its fully integrated grower, processor and distribution model, Houston's Farm developed a calculation tool that has the ability to analyse the relative impact and merit of proposed changes to its production and distribution model.

In 2007, Houston's Farm was the inaugural winner of the Woolworths Fresh Food Grant in recognition of its strategy. It chose to leverage award funds by investing

in a project through HAL to develop a project of wider significance.

The Houston's Farm project commenced in June 2008 and has three stages:

1. The development of the tool using Houston's Farm modeling
2. Development of a simple interface to enable adoption across industry
3. Dissemination to industry.

The first stage (June 2008 – June 2009) has been completed, and stages two and three (July 2009 – June 2011) are ready to commence. These involve the modification of the Houston's Farm tool into a more widely applicable Vegetable Carbon Footprinting Tool and will include dissemination to industry through an education process. 

Future leaders put through their paces

If it does nothing else, sheer exhaustion encourages complete honesty—ARLP participants found this out the hard way when they trekked through the Kimberley region to kick-start this year's program.

Each year around 33 people are selected to participate in the Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP). Participants meet every couple of months in different locations around Australia to expand their leadership skills and knowledge.

Jane Lovell, Managing Director of TQA Australia and 2009 Tasmanian Rural Woman of the Year, is a participant in course 16 of the program. Her involvement is funded by the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government. *Vegetables Australia* is following Jane's progress over the program's 15-month duration to see what she learns.

Hardly a walk in the park

"Every year the program kicks off in the Kimberley and past participants are under strict instructions not to divulge too many details. As there's a 'cone of silence' around what goes on in the Kimberley, I can neither confirm nor deny the rumours," said Jane.

"However, it's fair to say that the instructions you receive before leaving: 'It is important to be confident that you can walk some kilometres over broken ground with a pack on your back containing your needs for about three days', give you a hint that this isn't lounging around at a fancy resort."

Living in Tasmania, Jane was lucky enough to train on some nearby mountains. This was a wise move as the Kimberley experience provided many emotional



Then there were six: Jane Lovell [centre front] with her ARLP team-mates. Image supplied by Leith Bouilly.

and physical challenges, and brought new meaning to the word 'teamwork'.

"Our team was identified early on as one with 'lots of energy' and, at first, I was flattered. However, it was soon clear that unbridled passion has its downsides. It took us a while to become a team, and not a group of people with their own agendas, sensitivities, strengths and weaknesses. But once we got there, we were fantastic," said Jane.

In all honesty

A pivotal event for the group was

an honest conversation about values.

"We had been asked to identify our personal values in the lead up to the Kimberley and one of the first activities when we got there was to come up with our team values," said Jane.

"Initially, we came up with a longish list of 'expected' values, such as integrity, truth, and respect. We rattled these off pretty quickly without much consideration—our values were really just words we could hang on the wall or send to our customers to assure them that we were a

fine, upstanding group."

However, the gruelling physical challenges inevitably stripped away these niceties.

"Over the next few days, as we became more physically and emotionally exhausted, the politeness of our interactions wore off and the insincerity of our values really bit us. Early one morning we sat down and had an honest discussion about our values and, most importantly, the behaviours that go with these values. As a team, we haven't looked back."

Jane's group agreed on three core values: honesty, commitment

and respect. It was from this base that the group navigated the remaining challenges.

Manage the media

After the ARLP's Kimberley session, Jane quickly applied the lessons learned with her team at TQA Australia.

"If you had told me that clearly defining a team's values was going to have such far-reaching consequences, I wouldn't have believed you. Initially, I thought that all this was too touchy-feely and 'American' to be of any use to me," said Jane.

However, she's since changed her tune.

"The TQA Australia employees have just completed a similar exercise, looking at our team values and behaviours. This gives us a strong reference for our interactions with each other and

our clients," she said.

The second stage of the program—a focus on media training—was held in Adelaide last month. The group received tips on writing press releases and were taught how to respond to interview questions for radio and television.

"One of the most important

“Develop relationships with media representatives and provide information in a format that they can readily digest.”

points when dealing with the media is to stay in control. This means emotional control as well as controlling the topics you want to discuss," said Jane.

With the emergence of online media there is now greater demand for news than ever before.

"Like a ravenous beast, the media is hungry for information. We can use this to our advantage by developing relationships with media representatives and providing information in a format

that they can readily digest," said Jane.

"We came to the session with prepared press releases. It was impressive to watch the interviewer scan our releases

and then launch into a discussion of the topics. I learned that an article you write for print media does not necessarily work for television. Despite most participants feeling nervous about the process and being on camera, everyone emerged unscathed and more confident for the experience."

Next up for Jane and her fellow ARLP participants is a trip to Canberra and Sydney in November to look the realities of lobbying parliament, and issues of welfare.

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Collaborative models inspire young growers

Participants in the Young Growers New Zealand Tour discovered the value of industry cooperatives, writes tour leader and AUSVEG Director, Paul Bogdanich.

In mid-July, seven enthusiastic young Australian growers embarked on a nine-day study tour through New Zealand's south island. The tour, subsidised by the National Vegetable Levy, exposed the young growers to a host of great initiatives and provided fantastic networking opportunities.

Better together

Upon arriving in Christchurch, the group traveled to Timaru to visit Southern Packers, an operation that packs and grades onions for the European and Asian markets, as well as producing seed potatoes for McCain. Tony Howey, one of three major growers who own Southern Packers, spoke with the growers, readily sharing his knowledge of vegetables, grass seeds and property development. From there, it was off to Temulka to meet with Peter Scott, Director of Horticulture New Zealand.

As the group traveled through the region, it became obvious that the local farmers had successfully tackled issues of fertiliser and water access by taking a cooperative stance.

"I was very impressed by how the growers have worked together to create answers to issues in their farming community," said Tasmanian grower Claire Farrell.

The Ravensdown Fertiliser Co-Operative Ltd, the largest supplier of fertiliser in New Zealand, is one such example of this cooperative approach. Owned solely by farmers, Ravensdown has kept costs to growers low by providing products that are ap-



Tour participants visited the Opuha dam, located on Opuha River in South Canterbury. The host for this portion of the tour was Tony Howey [third from left].

proximately 20 per cent cheaper than competitors' prices.

The Opuha dam, also fully owned by farmers, was built to provide a consistent water supply for local users and is based on a share structure.

"It's a great example of New Zealand innovation to create longevity in their industry," said tour participant Troy Cukrov.

A visit to Turley Farm was enjoyed by all. The farm runs a large-scale operation that includes peas, sweet corn, seed beetroot and hybrid seed carrots, as well as wheat, barley and rye. Everyone was amazed to learn that the carrot seed crops grow for 13 months—planted in February, they are not harvested until the following April.

The group toured vegetable processing plants, pack-houses and seed producers through the Ashburton and mid-Canterbury regions. While there, they met with local growers, learned about different farming techniques and water irrigation systems, and saw GPS-fitted tractors in action.

Meet and greet

Returning to Christchurch, the group attended the Horticulture New Zealand Annual Conference. This year's theme, "Powered by People", set the tone for three days of innovative discussions led by leaders of different fields.

Keynote speakers included Gordon Tietjens, coach of the New Zealand national rugby union team; Yossi Ghinsberg, renowned motivational speaker and author; and Jackie Furey, clinical relationship specialist. With the vast array of workshops available, the group attended sessions on issues as diverse as the Macro and micro factors affecting food production in New Zealand, Investing in people for the future, and Chinese grower history of New Zealand.

After the conference, tour participants attended the gala dinner, which doubled as the 2009 Young Grower of the Year presentations and Conference Awards. This evening also provided a great networking opportunity for the Australian growers.

A highlight of the tour was meeting the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Honourable John Key.

continued page 44



[From left] Tour leader Paul Bogdanich; Daniel Maher; Troy Cukrov; Mark Elphinstone; the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Honourable John Key; Richard Harslett; Claire Farrell; Jonathan Doust; AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy; and Troy Graymore.

“New Zealand growers have worked together to create answers to issues in their farming community.”

During his address to conference delegates, the Prime Minister launched the Horticulture Industry Strategy, “Growing a New Future”, which aims to increase the value of the horticulture industry from \$NZ4.2 billion to \$NZ10 billion by 2020. To reach this goal, it is expected that an increase in production volumes will not be sufficient—instead, a greater push towards exports and value-adding existing product lines is needed.

Valuable opportunity

Daniel Maher, a vegetable grower from Victoria, enjoyed the networking opportunities the trip presented, and has been motivated by what he saw in New Zealand. “I have gained a lot and will continue to gain from the contacts I have made. It is great to see what is possible if you are prepared to have a go,” he said.

Others were impressed by New

Zealand’s more holistic approach to farming.

“New Zealand growers tend to be very lateral thinkers. They are innovative and model their businesses on vertical integration and value adding. This creates a greater gross margin and helps them deliver a fresher, more price-competitive product to their customers. Australian growers could learn a lot from this mindset,” said Troy Cukrov.

Participants highly recommended the tour and said they were keen to put their ideas into practice on their return home. With levy funding for the tour secured for the next three years, they encouraged other young growers to make the most of the opportunities these tours present. 

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Seven young Australian growers attended the 2009 tour to New Zealand to learn more about farming techniques used across the Tasman.
- Cooperative fertiliser and water initiatives proved to be a big hit, with tour participants remarking on how successful these ventures were.
- Attendance at the Horticulture New Zealand Annual Conference provided ample opportunities for the group to network and learn about the latest industry trends.

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Project number: VG08080
Keywords: New Zealand



R&D project preview

Taste and health promoting factors of Brassica bioactive compounds

Project number: VG09084

Start date: 1 September 2009

End date: 30 May 2011

Project leader: Dr Conor Delahunty, CSIRO

Email: conor.delahunty@csiro.au

Phone: 02 9490 8362




While studies indicate that dietary phytochemicals—or bioactive compounds—may positively affect our health, they also contribute significantly to the taste of vegetables. Some are responsible for bitterness, which is often cited as a cause of relatively low consumption of Brassica vegetables.

This project aims to determine the trade-off between taste properties and health-promoting benefits of bioactive compounds, in a bid to increase consumption of Brassica vegetables. Bioactive compounds in selected Brassica species will be verified and their antioxidant and anti-cancer properties will be evaluated. Additionally, the taste properties of

the most prominent bioactive compounds will be determined.

The willingness of regular and irregular vegetable consumers to trade between taste and health benefits will be clarified, which will help establish to what extent taste is a barrier towards consumption.

Results from this project will help guide breeding programs. They will also align with the vegetable industry's Domestic Market Development Strategy (DMDS) to enable the promotion of Brassica cultivars that have enhanced health benefits without compromising on taste.

Finally, a phytochemistry and sensory consumer science toolbox will be developed that can be applied to other vegetable varieties. 

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ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

No answers yet for complex carbon questions

As the groundswell for action on climate change grows, the introduction of a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is all but inevitable, despite uncertainty about the inclusion of agriculture, writes Industry Economist Ian James.

As flagged in the July issue of *Vegetables Australia* I wanted to further explore the economic impact of the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), which the popular press has reverted back to calling an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

Since my previous article, considerable water has flown under the bridge. The Australian Senate voted down the Australian Government's proposed CPRS, the Federal Opposition has flagged but not adopted an alternative, and heavily-polluting industries have raised the spectre of job losses to push for further compensation. While the Greens and environmentalists argue that the CPRS is fundamentally flawed in failing to achieve the desired results in the necessary time frame, some other parties remain

convinced that climate change is not occurring.

Farmers believe in climate change

Last month the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released further analysis of data collected in 2007 about farmers' perceptions of climate change. Of course, perceptions can be influenced by prevailing circumstances at the time of data collection and in 2007 parts of Australia were hotter and drier than normal.

Nonetheless, two thirds of Australia's farmers indicated that climate change was real, more than 60 per cent believed it was having an impact on their farm, and 50 per cent (or 75 per cent of those who believed the climate had changed) had adjusted management practices to account for the perceived changes.

Changes in rainfall patterns and more extreme weather events were the two most commonly cited changes, while changes in production levels and in pests, diseases and weeds were the most commonly reported impacts (Table 1). Vegetable growers' perceptions were lower than the average response across all agriculture industries (Table 2). However, vegetable growers—especially those producing undercover—were less inclined to change management practices in response to perceptions of climate change.

In the continuing political debate over climate change, which revolves around a cost-benefit analysis of an ETS, economics has been crucial. Climate sceptics highlight the costs. Environmentalists highlight the benefits. Each position on the

issue uses economic modelling to predict the impact of carbon emissions on the economy and the impact of proposed measures to reduce carbon emissions. The fact that every economic model comes up with a different answer says something about economists; but the average Joe has probably worked out that once you get economists involved, this is exactly what happens.

Cut to the chase

If we leave aside all the complicated economic modelling, ignore whether you believe in human contribution to climate change, and take the political manoeuvrings out of the debate, what are we left with? The majority of Australians believe in and want some action on climate change.

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Table 1. Farmers' perceived changes to climate

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	Aust
Total agricultural businesses	47,629	37,410	30,551	15,815	13,592	4,766	640	150,403
Percentage								
Consider climate affecting holding has changed	63.6	74.2	60.6	67.3	58.5	69.4	31.8	65.6
Impact of perceived changes to climate on holding	60.7	71.2	57.3	63.4	54.6	65.8	25.0	62.4
Have changed management practices	47.1	58.0	46.1	50.7	41.8	50.2	14.9	49.5
Perceived changes to climate experienced on holding (%)								
Changes in rainfall patterns	91.1	93.2	90.0	93.5	95.5	91.6	78.9	92.1
More extreme weather events	79.6	75.1	76.7	72.4	50.2	70.4	32.8	74.2
Warmer temperatures	46.7	55.9	44.3	53.2	44.6	51.6	61.2	49.6
Other changes	4.5	6.7	4.8	5.1	3.8	4.5	7.5	5.2

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Table 2. Farmers' perceived changes to climate by industry

	Consider climate affecting holding has changed (%)	Impact of perceived changes to climate on holding (%)	Have changed management practices (%)
Vegetable growing (undercover)	59.2	55.5	27.2
Vegetable growing (outdoors)	61.1	57.1	41.5
Mushroom growing	19.3	11.0	10.4
Turf growing	48.9	39.6	36.0
Sheep farming (specialised)	70.4	66.5	54.6
Beef cattle farming (specialised)	64.6	61.7	50.1
Dairy cattle farming	73.5	70.7	58.7
Poultry farming (meat)	43.9	36.5	21.3
Poultry farming (eggs)	45.1	35.7	18.2
Pig farming	68.6	59.0	47.1
All agriculture	65.8	62.7	50.0

Businesses want politicians to provide some certainty so they can plan ahead and undertake whatever investment is required to ensure they maintain and enhance their viability. As it is highly likely that a scheme will be approved, what are the ideal key components for vegetable growers?

An early decision on whether agriculture is to be included

Under the existing CPRS proposal, a decision on whether to include agriculture will be delayed until 2013. If agriculture is included, this will not happen until 2015.

The incorporation of agriculture into the CPRS raises some difficult questions. Should carbon emissions be monitored on-farm or the administratively easier and cheaper option of putting the point of obligation further up the supply chain? Can farmers accurately measure and monitor emissions in a cost-effective way? In other industries, businesses have to meet a carbon threshold before entering the scheme. At what level should this be set for farmers?

On the positive side, a delay will allow the vegetable industry

to further research the positive contributions agriculture can make to reducing carbon emissions. However, growers are like any other business. Uncertainty delays investment decisions and is detrimental to long-term profitability. A final decision about whether vegetable production will be included is preferable to the existing target dates.

Exclusion of agriculture's contribution to carbon emissions from an ETS

As mentioned in the July article, the impact of an ETS on growers' costs will not be as great as the rest of agriculture. However, nearly all other countries are excluding agriculture from their schemes, most importantly the Waxman-Markey Bill before the US Senate. If growers desire a level playing field, agriculture should be left out of the Australian scheme. Farmer organisations argue that Australia should take this path and permanently exclude agriculture.

Reduce costs imposed on providers of inputs for vegetable production

The cost of inputs used in vegetable growing, including

electricity in the packing houses, will rise under an ETS. A scheme that reduces the cost impact of an ETS on suppliers of inputs to vegetable growers would be of benefit.

Carbon sequestering recognition

Plants absorb carbon and, while growing, act as a carbon sink. Correctly measuring this is difficult, but if it can be done and credits earned are able to be sold to the market, then there are clear gains for growers.

Under the existing Kyoto Protocol rules, carbon sequestering through cropping activities is not recognised. A big win for growers would be a change at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December to allow for recognition of carbon sequestered on farms so that vegetable growers are "out" on the debit side and "in" on the credit side.

Farming practices

Broader recognition of the gains from farming-friendly practices is needed. Under the existing proposals, the only way growers can qualify for credits to offset carbon emissions is through tree

planting. However, there are other ways to reduce carbon emissions. These include changing tillage practices to increase carbon storage in soils, reducing nitrogen fertiliser use or changing the application method, better management of crop waste and, for growers who also run livestock, dietary changes and better management of manure emissions. [va](#)

THE BOTTOM LINE

- According to ABS findings, two thirds of Australia's farmers believe that climate change is real, and more than 60 per cent believe it is having an impact on their farms.
- Despite the ongoing political debate about the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), the majority of Australians believe in climate change, and it is highly likely a scheme will be introduced.
- If a scheme is introduced, a big win for growers would be for agriculture to be excluded from the scheme, but for any carbon sequestering they engage in to be accepted as sellable "credits".

Ask the industry

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

What is the correct water volume for a spray job?

At a recent spray application training forum held in the Lockyer Valley in South-East Queensland, Syngenta staff, growers and members from the local Elders reseller network applied water and fluorescent dye through various sprayer set ups (including differing nozzles, ground speeds, water rates and adjuvants) to determine the best effective coverage in broccoli at pre-buttoning stage and potatoes prior to row closure.

After darkness, a 'black light' was used to view results of each application set-up, which created a great deal of discussion about coverage of the target surface.

Water volume—crucial to achieving good spray coverage?

'Required coverage' is one of the key factors to achieving a good result from an application of an agricultural chemical. Arguably, water volume is the key factor in achieving good coverage of a target surface, but other factors need to be considered. Nozzle selection, operating pressure, spray uniformity (are the nozzles worn or damaged?), boom height, travel speed, target density (how much green material are you spraying?), use of adjuvants and environmental conditions when spraying all impact on spray coverage.

Does increasing water volume give better spray coverage?

Many chemical product labels include details about recommended water volumes for application, which are related to a crop's growth stage or the expected canopy volume being sprayed.

As a general rule, the greater the density of plants sprayed, the greater the water volume needed to provide the required coverage. However, appropriate water volume must be considered in line with the number of droplets and the quality of spray produced (based on the factors mentioned above).

Simply increasing water volumes may be detrimental to coverage. Too much water can result in spray droplets running together on a leaf surface, resulting in the spray running off the plant surface and onto the soil. Depending on the product used, this can have a major negative effect on the chemical's efficacy. When this occurs, it is said that the application has exceeded the 'point of runoff' for the volume of water being applied. **va**

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



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Lighting the way for LOTE growers

Forty per cent of Australian vegetable growers come from a non-English speaking background. They need more resources directed at translation services and increased involvement with grower associations.

Growers who come from a non-English speaking background face many challenges within the industry, including environmental, pesticide and chemical practices, and understanding their responsibilities as growers. While some non-English speaking growers are industry leaders, many are disadvantaged by their poor English skills.

In 2006, AUSVEG responded to these industry needs and began the Language Other Than English (LOTE) project. Jointly funded by the National Vegetable Levy and Rural Industries Research Development Corporation (RIRDC), the project found that growers who speak a LOTE have particular issues that need to be addressed. If the vegetable industry is to progress and develop for the future, LOTE growers cannot be left behind.

Community networks needed

During the two-year project, it became apparent that language difficulties were not the only problem faced by LOTE growers. Community networks and relationships also needed to be forged.

Most Australian states, however, have functioning LOTE grower groups.

Effective strategies for communicating information varied according to language groups



Growers from a non-English speaking background were visited around Australia for the LOTE project, including Dui Phuong, Chairman Vietnamese Farmers Association, from Virginia in South Australia in February 2007.

and geographic areas. Previously, communication was ad hoc, mostly delivered in English and with little coordination between organisations or states. In most cases, the best form of communication was through existing trusted networks, such as government and commercial agronomists and bilingual officers, chemical resellers and rural suppliers, grower associations, and word of mouth.

The project aimed to integrate

LOTE communication activities with the current Vegetable Industry Communication Strategy, and raise awareness about the vegetable industry's structure, levy and responsibilities that LOTE growers were obliged to fulfil. It was also important to increase LOTE grower participation in industry events and forge closer links with the rest of the industry.

Increased involvement

Several methods were used

to form working relationships with LOTE groups, including a National LOTE Grower Forum workshop, which was held in Perth in May 2008, case studies published in *Vegetables Australia*, and a LOTE database, which was used to communicate effectively with industry and LOTE growers nationwide.

AUSVEG also facilitated growers' participation in industry surveys, with LOTE growers included in the Industry Needs Assessment

Asian Vegetable Profile

survey conducted in 2008. Additionally, LOTE growers were successfully encouraged to participate in the 2008 Young Growers Tour to New Zealand and the 2008 Grower Tour to America.

Non-English speaking growers appreciated the LOTE project and were grateful for the increased information available to them. Unsurprisingly, they were eager to participate in future projects.

Subject to further funding, the LOTE project will continue into a second phase, where the intention is to employ a bilingual outreach officer to communicate more effectively with LOTE growers and further unite them with the rest of the vegetable industry.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Increased translation services and a greater understanding by industry of the hardship and difficulties that LOTE growers face are important concerns for many LOTE growers.
- LOTE growers have difficulty understanding labels on chemicals controls, which has resulted in some LOTE growers facing fines from the APVMA.
- Larger state-based LOTE-grower associations are willing to support smaller LOTE communities and groups around Australia. LOTE growers based in the Northern Territory have a particular interest in forming a grower group.

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Project number: VG06066
Keywords: LOTE communications

Bamboo shoots *Bambusa sp., Dendrocalamus sp., Phyllostachys sp.*

Background

Most Australians think of bamboo shoots as small, pickled strips that come out of cans or are included in Chinese takeaway. However, there is increasing interest in fresh shoots, both for the local market and as a counter-seasonal export crop.

Bamboo shoots are young, tender stalks harvested just as they emerge from the soil, a little like giant asparagus. Good-quality shoots should be at least 10 cm diameter at the base and 20 cm long—bigger is usually better. However, the best-quality shoots are small and slender, harvested in winter before they emerge from the soil.

Where and how does it grow?

A wide range of clumping (*Bambusa sp.* and *Dendrocalamus sp.*) and spreading (*Phyllostachys sp.*) edible bamboo varieties are cultivated. The main Australian season is from October to March, with commercial farms operating in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Spacing for commercial clumping varieties vary from between four and six metres, depending on the species. Mulching and frequent applications of high-nitrogen fertiliser are recommended.

While scale insects and leaf rolling caterpillars can be present, neither of these pests appear to adversely



Bamboo shoots at a farm in Peats Ridge, New South Wales. Image supplied by Jenny Ekman.

affect the commercial species.

Preparation and cooking

Bamboo shoots are a staple food in many Asian countries, where they are often sold peeled and processed. In Australia they are generally sold whole. Bamboo shoots need to be cooked before eating as they can contain high levels of cyanide as hydrocyanic acid (HCN).

To prepare bamboo shoots, remove the outer layers of husk, slice off the hard base then boil for around 30

minutes to neutralise the HCN. Cutting the shoot into slices and/or changing the water during cooking can help quicken the process. They are cooked when they are no longer bitter to taste. Freshly cooked bamboo shoots have a crisp texture and mild flavour. They can be used in salads, stir fries and soups, or pickled. **va**

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

AUSVEG CEO Message

Recent developments regarding impending changes to the Horticulture Industry Award—due to be implemented on 1 January 2010—are testament to the fact that the Australian Government is listening to the concerns of the vegetable industry.

The Federal Workplace Relations Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard, has requested that the Australian Industrial Relations Commission take into account the specific requirements of the horticulture industry, including provisions for roster arrangements and flexible working arrangements that accommodate for seasonal demands and restrictions caused by weather.

These requested provisions are good news for growers; they will help keep wage costs at manageable levels. Ongoing dialogue in relation to the award also sees the industry forging stronger links with decision-makers in parliament.

In July I had the opportunity to attend the 2009 Horticulture New Zealand Conference in Christchurch and meet with key figures in the New Zealand potato and vegetable industries.

While there, I caught up with the participants on an Australian Young Growers' Tour led by AUSVEG Board member, Paul Bogdanich. We also met the New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, and the New Zealand Minister for Agriculture, David Carter.

Booster Broccoli—the first in the Vital Vegetables range—has garnered considerable media interest, with more than 200 media hits in the weeks following its launch. The New Zealand



The Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Honourable John Key [left], and AUSVEG Communications Manager, Hugh Tobin, at the Booster Broccoli launch at the Synchrotron in Melbourne.

Prime Minister also attended the launch of Booster Broccoli at the Synchrotron in Melbourne in August, along with the Victorian Minister for Innovation, Gavin Jennings.

Horticulture Australia Limited contributed a small initial investment into the Vital Vegetables project, which has primarily been funded through investment from the Victorian and New Zealand Governments. Australian vegetable growers are already benefiting from the opportunity to grow Booster Broccoli and will soon be able to grow other exciting new products, which are in the final stages of development.

In relation to minor use chemi-

cals, the AUSVEG team has met with the Principal of AgAware, Peter Dal Santo. We look forward to working even more closely with Peter to enhance communications between AUSVEG and the industry on his important work.

Finally, we welcome Dr Siwan Lovett as the new EnviroVeg Consultant. Siwan has a distinguished background working in natural resources management as well as writing and publishing a range of materials covering climate change and water allocation.

At AUSVEG we actively pursue the best possible outcomes for growers, and we look forward to keeping you fully informed of these and other industry hap-

penings. In the meantime, I look forward to hearing your views; please email <info@ausveg.com.au> or call 03 9544 8098.

Richard Mulcahy
Chief Executive Officer
AUSVEG

AROUND THE STATES

New South Wales



It has been a busy month for the NSW Farmers' Association with the Horticulture Committee AGM and Annual Conference both taking place.

I gratefully take on a fifth year as the Horticulture Committee Chairman and will continue to lobby on behalf of members on the ongoing issues in horticulture.

The Horticulture Committee welcomes Charles Armstrong as the association's newly elected President and we look forward to working with Charles on issues facing agriculture and horticulture.

As the industry gears up for the new season across many regions we eagerly await the outcomes of the Horticulture Award modernisation process. With the National Farmers' Federation, we have been actively involved in outlining industry concerns and will continue to do so.

This issue affects all of us in horticulture—regardless of what we produce or where we live—and makes us appreciate the need for strength in numbers. This is why the association has launched a membership drive.

We are asking all current horticulture members to help us encourage other farmers to join the association. If you refer a new member, you will receive an extra three months added to your membership when you renew, at no extra cost.

Peter Darley
Horticulture Committee Chair
NSW Farmers' Association
Phone: 1300 794 000

Queensland



Domestic trade within Australia's horticultural sector is worth \$6.5 billion per annum and is the most important market destination for most horticultural products. By contrast, the export market is valued at only \$827 million per annum.

Consequently, equitable science-based access to domestic markets, regardless of where producers are located, should be Australian horticulture's highest priority. However, current roadblocks include:

- the lack of a cohesive industry forum to formally engage domestic regulators
- a disconnect between state and national industries' perspectives on plant biosecurity, which can lead to restrictive trade legislation between states
- poor supply chain communication processes.

Problems that have arisen from these blockages include:

- the enactment of four sets of state legislation to control the inevitable spread of lettuce leaf aphid prior to the state and national vegetable bodies' agreeing not to regulate (the legislation was withdrawn at considerable cost)
- changed plant entry conditions for eggplant (for fruit fly in 2007) without timely supply chain stakeholder consultation (approximately one month before harvest).

In order to solve these and other problems, Growcom has developed a project proposal for the Coordination of Domestic Market Access (CDMA) with the

aim of maximising access to domestic markets for all horticultural industries through a nationally coordinated strategic approach.

This involves the appointment of a domestic market access coordinator and the formation of a stakeholder committee that will liaise with domestic plant biosecurity regulators and the Domestic Quarantine Market Access Working Group (DQMAWG).

We are seeking wider stakeholder support from industry. For more details, contact Growcom Industry Development Officer – Pest Management, Gary Artlett, on 07 3620 3844.

Rachel Mackenzie
Chief Advocate
Growcom
Phone: 07 3620 3844

Victoria



The Annual Vegetable Growers Golf Day at Lang Lang Golf Club on Friday 7 August was a great success for the 98 golfers participating. Seventeen non-golfers enjoyed a day in the club room with host Jack Walker.

A raffle was held with prizes donated by various industry associates. Ladies from the Waverley Auxiliary of the Children's Hospital assisted in the club room selling raffle tickets and a donation from VGA will be sent to President Kath Walker for their assistance.

VGA expressed its gratitude to EE Muir & Sons for sponsoring the golf day, Gazzola Farms for the trophies and Melbourne Market Authority for the vouchers presented to the winning team, 'The Lang Lang Larrikins'.

The generosity of industry

supporters was fantastic, including Australian Crate Exchange, Berwick Insurance Group, Bejo Seeds, Chep Australia, Gendore Tractors & Machinery, QBE Insurance, Rabo Bank, Rice Hull Organic Fertilisers, Syngenta Seeds, Viscount Plastics, Trevor Walker Vegetable Farm, Wesfarmers Insurance and Wilmark Consulting.

On behalf of President Luis Gazzola and the Executive Committee, thank you for your support and attendance.

The 2009 VGA Victoria Annual General Meeting will be held in the Bridge Room at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Spencer Street, Melbourne, on Friday 9 October, at 4.00 pm. All members and intending members are invited to attend the meeting and stay for dinner.

The business agenda includes the election of office bearers and executive committee and all grower members are encouraged to nominate for a position. Notice of the AGM and nomination forms will be distributed in early September.

We welcome the initiative of the Victorian Government and Department of Primary Industries in its new model for better services to the horticultural industry. VGA has been invited to participate in this program and we look forward to providing Victorian Industry Development Officer Services to all vegetable growers.

A diary note: 24 October will be the Vegetable Growers' Regional Dinner in Dandenong South. More details from the VGA office.

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 2009

25 September

Nominations close for the Victorian Department of Primary Industries 2009 Science Awards

For more information:

Website: www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Phone: 03 9658 4000 or 136 186

28 September

Nominations close for the 2009 Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) Awards

For more information:

Website: www.horticulture.com.au/halawards

28 September – 4 October

National Vegetarian Week

For more information:

Website: www.vegetarianweek.com.au

October 2009

1-11 October

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

3 October

Industry Call opens for National Vegetable Levy

For more information:

Website: www.horticulture.com.au

9 October

VGA Victoria Annual General Meeting

4 pm, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Spencer Street, Melbourne, Vic

For more information:

Phone: Tony Imeson at VGA Victoria on 03 9687 4707 or

0414 458 561

14-16 October

Eurofruit Congress Southern Hemisphere

Cape Town, South Africa

For more information:

Website: www.shcongress.com

15 October

Nominations close for the Australian RIRDC Rural Women's Award

For more information:

Contact Edwina Clowes, RIRDC Rural Women's Award National Coordinator

Website: www.ruralwomensaward.gov.au

Email: clowesedwina@bigpond.com

Phone: 07 5445 7282 or 0417 727 544

November 2009

9-11 November

Eurofruit Middle East Congress

Dubai, UAE

For more information:

Website: www.mideastcongress.com

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

16 November

Industry Call closes for National Vegetable Levy

For more information:

Website: www.horticulture.com.au



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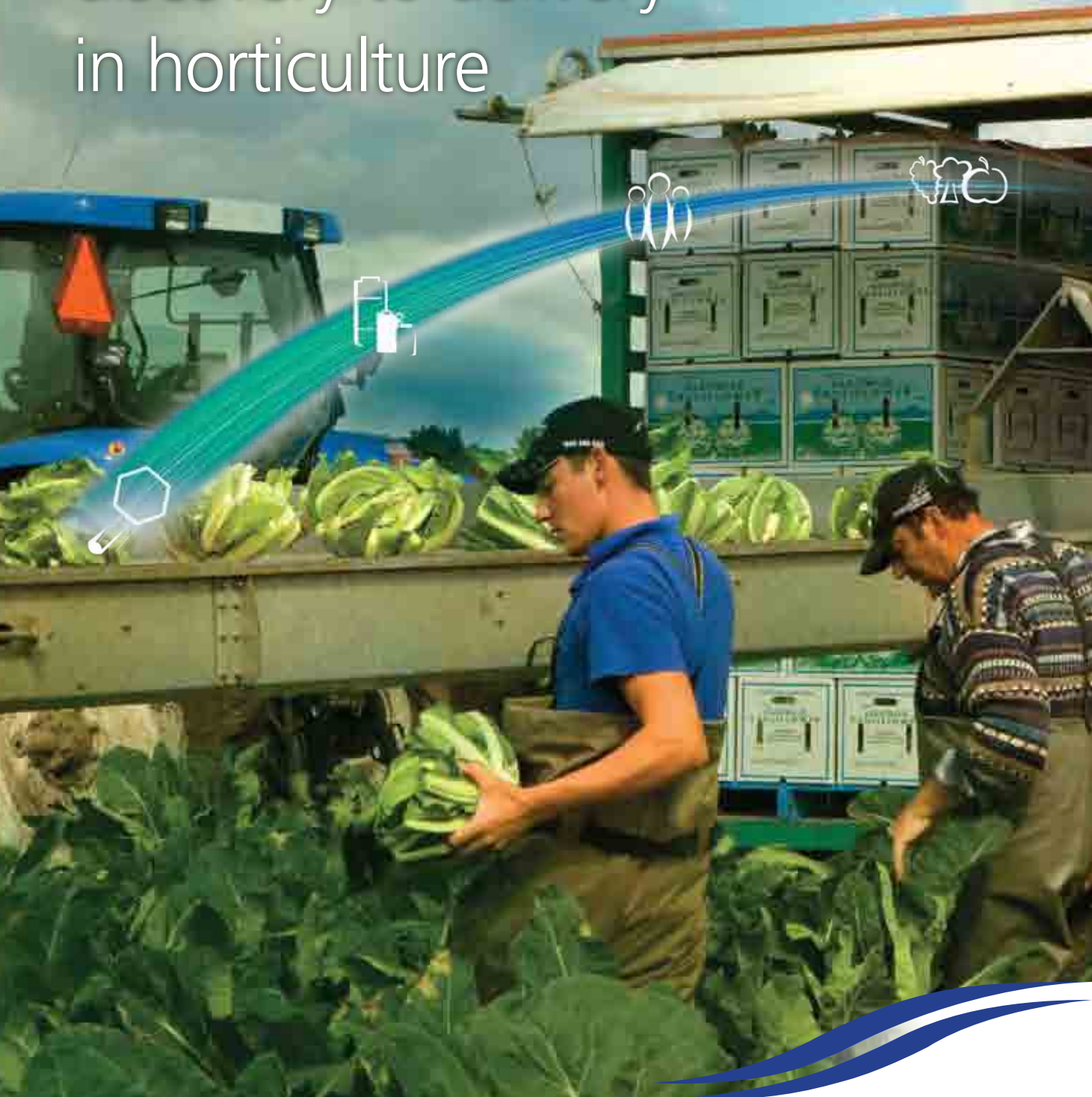
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With you from discovery to delivery in horticulture



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