

vegetables australia

September/October 2011

Helping to shape
horticulture

Mark Napper

Young Growers'
Study Tour
New Zealand

Vegetable
growing and
the carbon tax
Economic outlook

Nick Patsuris
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Horticulture Australia

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Mark Napper

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A clean start for the perfect finish



John Brent AUSVEG Chairman

AUSVEG has been proactive in making representations on behalf of growers on a number of topics affecting the horticulture industry.

In recent months, this has involved submitting responses to consultation papers relating to the development of a National Food Plan and the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) review of Food Safety.

In August, AUSVEG put forward comments and recommendations to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) in response to the Issues Paper to inform the development of a National Food Plan.

The key points highlighted in this submission were that high quality vegetables would become increasingly important as the population continued to rise and that we should aim to provide nutritionally balanced locally produced food for all Australians in a sustainable manner, which would mean producers maintaining high levels of efficiency and

effectiveness.

In order for this to happen, AUSVEG recommended that any National Food Plan should include assistance that provided ongoing support for research and development and ensured that it focused on commercially applicable outcomes with an emphasis on heightened economic viability.

The submission stated that major risks to Australia's food supply were water scarcity, labour shortages and the misuse and degradation of arable land, as well as the destruction of local food industries due to unregulated importation from overseas.

It also highlighted that rising input costs were posing a large burden on the food industry supply chain.

AUSVEG also outlined the importance of ensuring that the resources required for food production were protected and remained available for Australian food producers and that issues of succession and skills retention were addressed through tertiary institutions and

labour integration programs.

A response from AUSVEG was also put forward to the FSANZ Improving Food Safety for Fresh Horticultural Produce Consultation Paper.

Foremost, the submission explained that AUSVEG did not support the introduction of further regulatory intervention to be imposed upon Australian vegetable growers and that self-regulation had proven to be far more effective. It stated that the focus needed to move away from increasing government regulation and concentrate on educating growers in better on-farm practices.

A recommendation was made that FSANZ should determine where the high risk area of food production was and focus attention on that section of the supply chain. Farm visits were highlighted as an effective way of determining where the risk lay for a range of different horticultural commodities.

AUSVEG also called for FSANZ to clarify the foodborne illness origin statement included in the Food Safety

for Fresh Horticultural Produce Consultation Paper, which indicated that horticultural commodities made up 80.4 per cent of all food incidents. The statement seemed incorrect as the figure did not include any meat, seafood or dairy.

AUSVEG strives to uphold the interests of Australian growers and believes it is important that its comments and recommendations are considered.




John Brent
Chairman
AUSVEG

Richard Mulcahy AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer

The AUSVEG Board met on 22 August in Melbourne to consider how it would deal with a range of issues affecting the sector.

The AUSVEG Board has formed a view that in contemporary food production it's essential that all vegetable and potato growers are actively involved with recognised quality assurance programs and chemical certification training, whether they are suppliers to the large retailers or not. Clearly, appropriate food safety programs and chemical certification underpins community confidence and validates good operational practices. It's critically important that there is a uniform approach across the industry in this regard, no matter which retail channel the grower supplies to,

whether it's a farmer's market, through an intermediary, or direct to a retailer.

The ChemCert program, for example, was created to address the community's concerns about the use of farm chemicals and the requirement to protect the health and safety of farm workers. While AUSVEG believes it's important to minimise the regulatory burden on growers where possible, food and chemical safety is incredibly important and it's important that when regulation is applied, that it is applied consistently across the board affecting all growers. AUSVEG encourages all vegetable growers to undertake these training courses and actively engage in quality assurance certification, if they are not already.

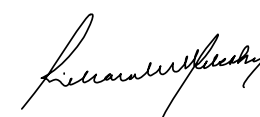
In other news, I am able to announce that Mr Geoff Moar, a current AUSVEG Director and a leading potato grower from New South Wales, has been appointed to the position of Deputy Chair of AUSVEG. Mr Moar succeeds Dr Elizabeth Duncan who has decided to step down from that role to enable a grower to serve in the Deputy Chair role.

For the past 40 years, Mr Moar has grown fresh and processed potatoes in the Riverina area of NSW for crisper and fresh markets. He is a member of the Horticultural Committee of the NSW Farmers Association, and I'm sure will be a great asset to the board in his new role.

Dr Duncan will continue to serve as Chair of the AUSVEG Audit & Finance Committee and

as a Director of AUSVEG.

I would like to personally thank Dr Duncan for all of her work in the role of Deputy Chair with AUSVEG.

Richard J Mulcahy
Chief Executive Officer
AUSVEG

Editorial

Spring is in the air and a new season is beginning for growers around the country.

In this edition of *Vegetables Australia*, we talk to two such growers about their enterprises and gain an insight into their lives on the farm, their paddock practices and the challenges they face.

Carrots and crop rotation are the focus of our feature on Phil Lamattina (page 36), who runs two 6,000-acre farms in Victoria with his father and brothers. Producing up to 1,000 tonnes of carrots per week, sustainable farming practices are pivotal for the business and Phil explains how they have returned to the grass roots of growing to ensure consistency within the crop and to safeguard the farm for the future.

Staying in Victoria, *Vegetables Australia* also spoke to budding grower Nick Patsuris (page 30), who is a third generation farmer from Werribee. Working

alongside his father, uncle and cousin on their family farm, the 19-year-old has embraced the business of vegetable growing with gusto and is already playing a key role within the industry.

AUSVEG Director Mark Napper provides an inspiring subject in our lead feature (page 16), which looks back over his 28-year career and reveals how he went from a background in finance to running a leading Australian food processing company—and how he became an influential figure in horticulture along the way.

It has been a busy few months for AUSVEG, and this edition of *Vegetables Australia* brings you a host of updates on the organisation's activities.

We have full coverage of the Young Growers' Study Tour to New Zealand (page 14), led by AUSVEG Communications and Public Affairs Manager William Churchill, as well as exciting details of an upcoming



Nick Patsuris: Young grower feature - Pg 30

AUSVEG-led grower tour to Germany and the Netherlands in 2012 (page 50).

There is also an update on the Strategic Investment Plan (page 10) and details of forthcoming consultations that are taking place with growers around the country, as well as news about AUSVEG appointing a new Technical Biosecurity Advisor (page 12).

Vegetables Australia also brings you a plethora of cutting-edge R&D information, with articles on the integrated management of soilborne pathogens (page 26), the taste and health promoting factors of brassica compounds (page 32), setting new WHP and NRL for linuron in carrots (page 44)

and an update on the crop gross margin calculator VegTool (page 38).

This edition also boasts the latest brand health data on Asian vegetables from Nielsen (page 48) and showcases a new feature—Veggie bites—which offers a snapshot of facts and figures relating to the industry (page 8).

Regular features also include the industry economic update—which focuses on what the carbon tax will mean for growers—EnviroNews, a Vegetable Industry Development Program update and the latest news about the 2012 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence.

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Phil Lamattina

Soil survival - pg 36

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Veggie bites

\$95 million

The current domestic retail market value of fresh cauliflower purchased by consumers is \$95 million, according to data released by Freshlogic.



75%

Overall, 75% of shoppers reported purchasing fresh vegetables from supermarkets during the first quarter of 2011, according to figures published by Freshlogic.

31%

Victoria produced 31% of Australia's total vegetable exports in 2009-10, making it the largest exporting state in the country, according to statistics published by the Department of Primary Industries Victoria.

\$125.4 million

Retail sales of all vegetables increased by \$125.4 million or 7.5% in the first quarter of 2011, compared to the same period in 2010, as recorded by Freshlogic.



It is estimated that there will be two billion more mouths to feed over the next 40 years, with the population expected to top nine billion by 2050, as highlighted in a report by Growcom into Australia's food security.

Two billion

399 million hectares

The total area of land used for farming in Australia is 399 million hectares (ABS).

78.5%

New data issued by Nielsen reveals that a total of 78.5% of Australian households purchased cucumbers between June 2010-June 2011.



10.3%

CPI figures confirmed a 10.3% drop in vegetable prices for the June 2011 quarter.



Agricultural showcase in Asia

AUSVEG will fly the flag for the Australian vegetable industry at AgriPro Asia 2011 in Hong Kong.

AUSVEG is set to support Asia's acclaimed agribusiness showcase for a second year.

AgriPro Asia (APA), which takes place from 30 November to 2 December, is an industry event that is dedicated to promoting the international trading activities of agricultural products.

After being present at the inaugural event in 2010—which attracted visitors from 28 countries—AUSVEG will once again be exhibiting alongside the many other organisations that are expected to attend from around the world.

Suppliers, manufacturers and traders who supply agri-products such as fruit and vegetables; aqua products and seafood; meat and poultry; general provisions and organic produce will descend on the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, where they will have the opportunity to showcase their products, conduct valuable business-

to-business networking and engage potential business partners.

The Agricultural Conference Asia will also run alongside APA, with the aim of presenting the latest ideas and solutions for the agricultural industry to a captive audience. Government officials, trade bodies and leading academic staff will be among the key speakers at the event and will have the chance to share views on the latest agricultural trends, including market intelligence, technology, environmentally-friendly agriculture, investment opportunities and trade rules and regulations for specific countries.

Food safety and traceability certification will also be among the topics covered.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy was among the speakers at the 2010 Conference, when he gave the audience an insight into the Australian vegetable industry.

The APA is considered a 'trade

junction' for those involved in the agricultural supply chain, with countries such as Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam all invited to take part.

President of the Hong Kong Imported Vegetable Wholesale Merchants Association, Yuen Cheung, said: "We welcome all potential business partners around the world, especially vegetable suppliers. There is much potential in the Chinese market as the population is so big."

Chief Executive of Vertical Expo, which organises the APA, Kenny Lo said: "The existing trend is very favourable and the strong demand for quality agri-products has convinced the organisers to do the event."

"The feedback from our 2010 exhibitors and visitors has given us the encouragement for this year."

To find out more about AgriPro Asia visit www.verticalexpo.com



AgriPro Asia 2010

Vegetable Industry Strategic Investment Plan to be road tested

Levy payers are being given a unique opportunity to preview the draft Vegetable Industry Strategic Investment Plan, writes AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy.

Vegetable levy payers in nine locations across Australia will soon be able to review the draft Vegetable Industry Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for future Research and Development (R&D) investment.

Meetings to gain grower feedback will be held in Bathurst (NSW); Bowen, Bundaberg and Boonah (Queensland); Wanneroo (Western Australia); Virginia (South Australia); Devonport (Tasmania) and Werribee and Cranbourne (Victoria) throughout September and October.

Following a period of more than six months of discussions with growers, researchers and others in the supply chain, the draft plan is now being presented to growers for review.

The Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) recently took a decision to create the consultation opportunity, but wanted contributors, on this occasion, to be growers rather than consultants, researchers and others in the supply chain.

Growers are funding R&D investment, along with the Australian Government's matching funds, so the IAC has formed a view that it is imperative that 'we get it right' in terms of confirming the grower perspective on preferred areas for future investment.

It is anticipated that the

vegetable industry R&D investment program over the next five years will run to around \$60 million, so the priority concerns of growers are vital when settling the direction for the investment.

To date, around 200 parties have contributed to the process, including the Peak Industry Body AUSVEG, Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), individual levy payers—both large and small—and others within the supply chain such as companies specialising in pesticides and herbicides, re-sellers, those in the field of Integrated Pest Management and major retailers.

The industry strategic plan and strategic R&D investment plan was initiated earlier this year after being endorsed by the Vegetable IAC and approved by HAL. The project is being managed by AUSVEG.

Each industry grouping within HAL must develop a strategic investment plan. This is to ensure the appropriate investment guidelines are in place to protect the interests of levy payers and their investment.

The plan also ensures taxpayers, who are providing matched funds for R&D through the Australian Government, have their interests taken into account.

AUSVEG commissioned Melbourne-based consulting

firm Consulting Implementation Services (CIS) to undertake the review earlier this year.

The principal consultant of CIS, Greg Spinks, recently presented a draft report based on the firm's extensive consultation. The 100-plus page report recommends new approaches for the funding of R&D and the expenditure of levies.

The CIS report is supported by economic modelling that indicates that a realignment of R&D investment could significantly enhance profitability in the vegetable industry.

Research conducted by CIS suggests that a significant proportion of growers are struggling to cope financially. Those growers may have a bleak future if growth in profitability and per capita consumption in the vegetable sector at a greater rate than is presently experienced is not achieved.

Full details of the grower meetings are listed opposite and those who wish to attend are asked to register with AUSVEG ahead of the relevant meeting in their area to assist with catering requirements.

Levy payers can register by emailing info@ausveg.com.au or by phoning AUSVEG (03) 9822 0388 or faxing on (03) 9822 0688.

An anonymous survey will also be conducted at the meetings to determine

levy payers' views, and those attending are encouraged to bring their estimated annual levy contribution for last year to the meeting to include in the survey. Personal details **will not be sought** for the survey, but including the value of levies paid will enable our consultants to gauge the extent of industry participation in the consultation process by value of production.

I would encourage all growers to take time out of your busy lives to participate in a seminar in your area. To those growers who are not located sufficiently close to the planned meetings, I sincerely apologise, but we have limited resources to undertake these sessions and have tried to capture as many growing areas as we could with the time and budget we have available.

I would encourage you to email, fax or write a letter to AUSVEG outlining any thoughts you may have in relation to the SIP.

A summary document of the SIP is available on the AUSVEG website or can be emailed/posted to you on request by contacting AUSVEG.

The plan being developed will guide the R&D expenditure for a number of years to come. It is important that every levy payer takes the time to contribute to the process to ensure you derive the maximum benefit from the investments being made on your behalf.



AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy speaking to growers at a levy payer workshop

To RSVP please call AUSVEG on 03 9822 0388. Alternatively please fax this completed slip to AUSVEG on (03) 9822 0688 or scan and email to info@ausveg.com.au.



Yes, I (Name) _____

of (Address) _____

will attend the meeting indicated below (please tick).

I can be contacted on: (Phone) _____

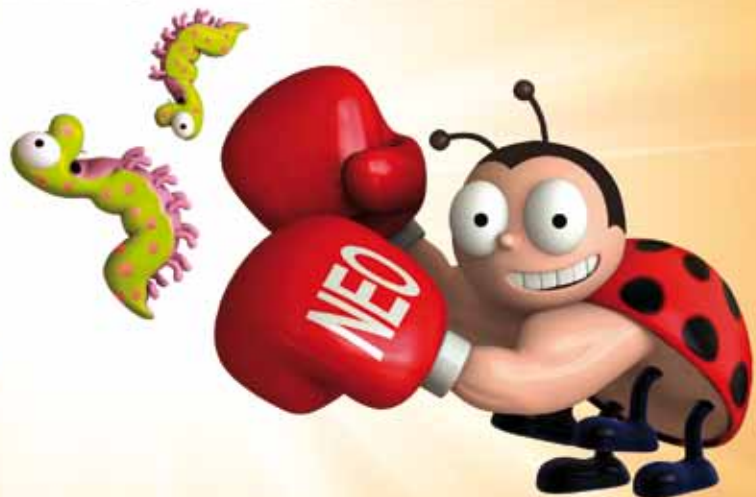
(Email) _____

QLD:	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 September: 6:00pm – 8:00pm Meeting: Simon's Tavern, 88 High St, Boonah	SA:	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 October: 6:00pm – 8:00pm Meeting: GrowSA Headquarters, Old Port Wakefield Rd, Virginia
	<input type="checkbox"/> 21 September: 6:00pm – 8:00pm Meeting: Elders Bowen, Lot 21, Bowen Developmental Rd, Bowen		TAS:
	<input type="checkbox"/> 22 September: 6:30pm – 8:30pm Meeting: Bundaberg Enterprise Centre, Tantitha St, Bundaberg	NSW:	
WA:	<input type="checkbox"/> 23 September: 6:30pm – 8:30pm Meeting: Bathurst RSL, 114 Rankin St, Bathurst	VIC:	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 October: 6:00pm – 8:00pm Meeting: Settlers Run Golf Club, 1 Settlers Run, Cranbourne South
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 October: 6:00pm – 8:00pm Meeting: Wanneroo Villa Tavern, 18 Dundobar Rd, Wanneroo		



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Labour relief

Industry lends support to labour scheme that offers boost for vegetable growers.

AUSVEG is backing a national scheme that aims to give growers a helping hand.

The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS) has been established through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in a bid to help growers obtain reliable labour in the form of willing assistants from islands such as Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga.

At the recent PSWPS Conference at the Gold Coast, Queensland, AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy urged vegetable growers in need of seasonal labour to utilise the scheme.

Addressing the Conference, Mr Mulcahy said: "Vegetable and fruit growers previously relied on backpacker labour, which is becoming increasingly scarce with the current uncertain global financial situation leading to less people spending on travel."

"The pilot scheme benefits

growers as the workforce remains at their farm for periods of four to six months, which cuts down on the amount of re-training that they need to do during their busiest periods of the year."

"Another benefit of this scheme is that often workers return to the same farm year after year, meaning skills are retained and overall efficiency improved."

"The scheme also assists keen workers from Pacific Islands, where opportunities for work can be scarce, as they are paid to Australian standards, with money earned often used to support their families back home."

Mr Mulcahy added: "A scheme like this is beneficial for all parties involved, as growers benefit through access to reliable and skilled workers, Australian industries are supported through improvements in efficiency and the workers benefit through



Workers participating in last year's annual Guyra Christmas Parade

employment that they might not otherwise have had access to."

AUSVEG's support of the scheme attracted national media attention, with Mr Mulcahy carrying out a series of interviews with ABC, Win News and Radio National, which also broadcasts across Asia and the Pacific region as part of its network. As a result of the international exposure that the interview received, AUSVEG has been contacted by parties from overseas who are interested in the scheme.

Growers interested in the

PSWPS are advised to plan ahead and prepare early, as the process of arranging Pacific labour can take a number of months.

i For more information on the PSWPS, contact the information line:

Phone: (02) 6240 5234

E-mail: seasonalworker@deewr.gov.au

Alternatively, visit the website www.deewr.gov.au and click on 'Employment' and 'Programs' and 'Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme'.

Knowledge sharing

Award-winning horticultural expert is set to help AUSVEG tackle some of the complex challenges of vegetable growing.

AUSVEG has welcomed the expertise of an esteemed member of the industry to assist with issues surrounding biosecurity within horticulture.

Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene, from Tasmania, has undertaken a part-time role with the organisation as a Technical Biosecurity Advisor, which will see him tasked with providing industry representation, input, guidance and feedback in the areas of biosecurity and other technical issues.

This will include participation in technical meetings with

Plant Health Australia (PHA), the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Biosecurity Australia and other relevant working and advisory groups as required.

With more than 30 years' experience in the horticulture industry, Dr Clayton-Greene has extensive knowledge in both university and public service environments, as well as in the private industry.

Dr Clayton-Greene began in the industry as a tutor in plant ecology at the University of Melbourne, before going on

to lecture in plant physiology and later working as a research scientist.

He later joined leading vegetable producer Harvest Moon, in Tasmania, where he currently works as the Production Manager for Potatoes on a part-time basis.

In April, Dr Clayton-Greene was honoured by his industry peers when he received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2011 AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence.

"I am really pleased that I have been asked to come on



Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene

board with AUSVEG," said Dr Clayton-Greene.

"I have been involved in the industry for a long time and I feel like I will bring a good level of expertise to this field and I hope I can make a difference."

"This is a way of putting something back into the industry and helping growers."

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Participants on the New Zealand Young Growers' Study Tour [L-R] Mark Slater, Lee Bellenger, Jordan Bullock, Nicholas Koch, William Churchill, Joe Boratto, Kain Richardson, Lydia Rigby, Daryl Wilson and Natalia Wilson

Nine days in New Zealand

In August, a tour group of 10 young Australian vegetable growers ventured to the Land of the Long White Cloud - New Zealand - to learn and experience a foreign country and its best growing practices. The Young Growers' Study Tour ran for nine days and covered the major growing centres of the North Island. Here, tour leader and AUSVEG Communications and Public Affairs Manager William Churchill relives the journey.

Our Kiwi colleagues and their motivations are often questioned in Australia. With a substantially smaller domestic market and a large focus on exporting to support the enormous size of some of their businesses, it's no wonder Australian growers keep looking over their shoulders for a stampede of New Zealanders.

But as the recent Young Growers' Study Tour to New Zealand discovered, many of the challenges faced by growers in Australia were also significant concerns across the Tasman Sea.

Days 1 and 2

The tour started in Auckland, with trips out into the Pukekohe region, which is approximately one hour from Auckland. Many of New Zealand's largest producers are based in this area.

The first farm we visited in the area was RC Hari and Sons, a local family-run operation exclusively servicing the city of Pukekohe. Geographic isolation from their competitors and having a close proximity to town minimises transport costs and are key drivers for RC Hari and Sons' to keep their overhead costs down.

Similar to Australia, the New Zealanders have difficulty in sourcing labour to work on-farm during picking seasons, and we learned that this farm suffered from a lack of locals who were willing to work the hard labour during the summer periods.

Secondly, we visited AS Wilcox and Sons, also known as Wilcox's. This farming operation sets a world standard for

potato growing in New Zealand and boasts a quality that any Australian grower would aspire to. The enterprise is wholeheartedly recommended to anyone to see.

Wilcox's places a high emphasis on its staff and making the work environment as comfortable for them as possible. For example,

one employee asked for some natural light in the packhouse and the response was a 4m x 6m glass window built into the side of the building.

Throughout the same packhouse "problem identification boards" are visible everywhere. All staff are encouraged to give as much feedback as possible on how to make their workplace better. This is a great concept for management at the strategic level to drive feedback from the operational level, so that workplace protocols set by upper management are practical and easily implemented.

Day 3

The third day was spent visiting marketing operations in Auckland and along the way to Rotorua. The tour visited Fresh Direct and Bidvest.

Fresh Direct was run by Peter Turner, a member of the family that ran the Turners and Growers group. Both of these companies gave growers an impression of the crate system that is used in New Zealand, which is similar to the major supermarkets' system in Australia with black crates.

The coloured crates are managed by third party companies and are leased to hire. Unlike Australia, the system in New Zealand is significantly more affordable, with an \$11 bond per crate repayable on return and a daily hire rate, which in many cases is non-existent.

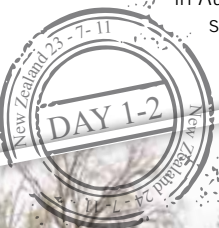


Days 4 and 5

The next two days were spent at the Horticulture New Zealand Conference in Rotorua. It was an opportunity to meet growers from other regions of New Zealand and listen to the current political climate growers are working through.

New Zealand is currently debating Government Industry Agreements (GIAs). GIAs will fill a similar role to the proposed Plant Biosecurity Levy in Australia. Similar to our domestic arrangements where the response mechanism is through a separate biosecurity levy, GIAs will be another levy for the New Zealand industry.

Subsequently, there is significant debate taking place in New Zealand about how these should be managed, as growers do not wish to be levied twice.



Days 6 and 7

The tour left Rotorua after visiting the local geysers, mud and sulphur pools and a Maori culture centre. While the memories of our visit remain, the smell could not sooner be forgotten!

We proceeded east and south towards Gisborne and then Napier, our destination in Gisborne being Leader Brand.

If AS Wilcox and Sons is considered the king of their potato operation, then Leader Brand must be considered the Napoleon. With biblical operations in the North and South Islands and a substantial export operation into Japan and other countries, Leader Brand truly raises the bar.

The tour visited Leader Brand's processing plant, where they bag salads in pressurised clean rooms to ensure product integrity. So substantial is its size that the company has a team of mechanics (including three full-time apprentices) just to maintain the equipment.

We got to fully comprehend

just how much equipment the operation needed to operate when we visited Leader Brand's personal seedling nursery and its local planting fields.

The machinery storage facility on-site at the fields contained no less than 30 tractors and sprayers, including a CASE IH 9380 that was used for GPS levelling of the ground and managing water run-off.

Growers on the tour asked how Leader Brand could justify so much hardware and capital sat around and not working. We were assured that when the operation hit its peak of the season, all of the vehicles were used for the entire day. The scale of a farm that required that much hardware was impressively frightening.

Days 8 and 9

The final two days of the tour saw the group visit Lawson's True Earth, near Hastings, and Halford's Exotic Produce.

Lawson's True Earth, an organic farm, focuses on using best practice guides to manage its soil structures and combat

pests and diseases without having to resort to chemicals.

Unlike conventional farming, where herbicides are applied to knock out weeds, Lawson's True Earth uses a burner machine to spit flames in between rows of crops and literally incinerate weeds.

In summary

Overall, the tour was an exciting way for young growers to experience the international growing scene and come to better understand our counterparts across the Tasman Sea.

For the full tour report examining every farm visit

and stop along the way, please refer to the AUSVEG website (www.ausveg.com.au) through the Knowledge Management System. The final report will be uploaded in the near future and registrations for the AUSVEG website are available to any grower wishing to access the 10 years of vegetable industry R&D now available online.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions and matched funds from the Australian Government.

Project code VG11704.

Minor-use permits

Permit Number	Permit Description (pesticide/crop/pest)	Date Issued	Expiry Date	States Covered
PER12995	Herbicides (various) / leeks and garlic / weeds (various)	17-Aug-11	31-Mar-12	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12442	Trichlorfon / eggplant, pepino, cape gooseberry / Qld fruit fly & Med fruit fly	10-Aug-11	31-May-14	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12504	Permethrin / Cucurbits: rockmelons, watermelons, pumpkin & cucumber / Cucumber Moth Larvae (Phakelura Indica)	22-Jul-11	31-Dec-13	Valid for WA only
PER12400	Iprodione / Carrots / Suppression of Black Rot	15-Jul-11	30-Sep-12	Valid for SA and WA only
PER11991	Legend Fungicide (quinoxifen) / Silverbeet / Powdery mildew	29-Jun-11	31-Mar-16	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12386	Dacthal (chlorthal-dimethyl) / Lettuce / Stinging nettle.	29-Jun-11	31-Aug-16	Valid for SA and WA only
PER11778	Agri-fos 600 (phosphorous acid) / Capsicums & Eggplant / Phytophthora soil fungus	29-Jun-11	30-Nov-15	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER11849	Ridomil Gold MZ (mancozeb + metalaxyl-M) / Chicory, Endive and Radicchio / Anthracnose, Downy Mildew & Septoria	30-Jun-11	31-Mar-13	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER11919	Flint (trifloxystrobin) / Beetroot / Alternaria leaf spot and Cercospora leaf spot	29-Jun-11	30-Sep-13	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12047	Tecto Flowable SC Fungicide (thiabendazole) / Sweet potato / Field rots caused by scurf & root rot	29-Jun-11	30-Sep-16	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12862	Zineb / Eggplant, Spinach & Silverbeet/ Anthracnose (Colletotrichum spp.)	4-Jul-11	31-Jul-14	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12052	Phosphorous acid / Beetroot, Carrot, Parsnip & Brassica leafy vegetables / Damping off and downy mildew	29-Jun-11	30-Jun-13	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12659	Admiral (pyriproxyfen) / Nursery Stock / Whiteflies and Fungus gnats	29-Jun-11	31-May-15	Valid for all states (other than Vic)
PER12354	Ridomil Gold 25G (metalaxyl-M) / Parsnips / Pythium Spp. and Phytophthora Spp.	29-Jun-11	30-Apr-14	Valid for all states (other than Vic)

These permits have had their additional data requirements changed.

Full details of all permits are available on the APVMA website: www.apvma.gov.au/permits

Helping to shape horticulture

Mark Napper may have fallen into agriculture some 28 years ago, but having established himself as an influential industry figure it seems that it was his destiny all along, writes Lisa Higginson.

Moving from a background in figures and finance to leading an Australian food processing enterprise and holding key positions on a number of horticulture boards, Mark Napper has carved out a notable career in the agriculture industry during a journey that has spanned almost three decades.

During that time, the New South Wales businessman has also embarked on his own growing enterprise in the form of a fruit orchard in the Byron Bay Hinterland.

Mr Napper made the transition from accounting to agriculture in 1983, when he undertook an insolvency role at a marketing board involved with the grains industry in New South Wales. He continued in similar roles until his calling came for horticulture.

"I got into horticulture through the Australian Horticultural Corporation, which I joined in 1992," said Mr Napper.

"I became Managing Director in 1996 and was the Managing Director for the period when it was merged with the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation and I was part of the team that brought both bodies together to form Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL)."

"The formation of HAL has been a major thing. Actually having R&D and marketing under one roof is a major thing for the industry."

Mr Napper then joined Windsor Farm Foods, based in Sydney and Cowra, in 2005 and became the Chief Executive Officer a year later.

Established in 1975 as a small canned mushroom range, the

New South Wales company now produces a range of vegetable products, as well as dried herbs and spices, bakers fillings and nutritional snacks. The business comprises two factories in Cowra, as well as a head office and dry goods factory in Sydney.

"We are like the little Aussie battler; we are the only Australian-owned vegetable cannery in the country now," said Mr Napper.

"All the vegetables we process are Australian-grown, except for some of the kidney beans, but we are trying to encourage more people to grow those."

"In Cowra, our largest product is mushrooms. We also process potatoes, green beans, kidney beans, beetroot and asparagus,





[Above] Mark Napper and Glenn McLeish inspecting potatoes upon arrival at Windsor Farm Foods, [Below] Nancy Wall, Glenn McLeish and Mark Napper weighing potatoes in their tins to ensure a uniform product
Photographs by Justine McGregor

as well as a fresh apple range, soups, canned meals, mushy peas and salad dressings.”

“We use and promote the Australian product. The heritage of Windsor Farm Foods is taking the C-grade product that the grower wouldn’t use and processing it and that’s how it all started.”

Windsor Farm Foods uses produce from growers across Australia, while some crops come from just a few kilometres down the road, with Cowra grower Ed Fagan being among the regular suppliers.

Although Mr Napper sits further along the supply chain, he has a sound understanding of the challenges that vegetable growers face - both through his own experiences within the industry and through his positions as a Director on the AUSVEG Board and as

a member of the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC).

Mr Napper is also on the Board of the Australian Mango Industry Association and a committee member of Low Chill Australia Inc.

“In one sense, the issues effecting the horticulture industry have not changed over the years, as we are still wrestling with some of the same issues,” said Mr Napper.

“But there are many things that have changed. We are seeing something of a rising of the horticultural profile. The formation of HAL has brought the industry together under one voice, which has been a goal for all of us.”

Mr Napper explained that as both a manufacturer and a fruit grower, he saw the threat of imports, particularly with the



“All the vegetables we process are Australian-grown, except for some of the kidney beans, but we are trying to encourage more people to grow those. ”

dollar where it was, as a big challenge for the industry.

"I also think retailer consolidation is a major issue. We need to spend more time to see how we can work together through the supply chain so we can have more constructive engagement. When it works well, it works well, but when it doesn't work well it becomes a power chain."

The need to promote the horticulture industry as one that was mindful of the environment and practiced sustainable methods, Mr Napper said, was also an important consideration.

"We've seen more of an increase in the ethical and environmentally-minded consumer and we are seeing more things around us relating to sustainability," he said.

In explaining that some challenges could also be seen as opportunities, Mr Napper drew on an example of how his company was tackling the issue of "brain drain and age drain" within horticulture.

"Another issue is, of course, the ageing workforce in horticulture and trying to get

young people to come into the industry is challenging," he explained.

"At Windsor Farm Foods we are trying to get engaged more with TAFE colleges and get students to come on work experience to give them a taste of working in a manufacturing plant and show them that the cannery might have been built

“It's an exciting industry to be in and it's something we should be proud of.”

in 1943, but that it's still a modern business."

"We have got a lot of people at our place who are more than happy to be mentors to younger people. We can't just sit and wonder why people aren't coming to us, we need to engage with them."

Since being appointed to the AUSVEG Board of Directors in 2009, Mr Napper has played

an integral role alongside the other directors in overseeing the operation and direction of AUSVEG and providing national representation for vegetable and potato growers.

"To see the change in the period since I've been on the board is excellent and to have a glimpse of what the future holds is great," said Mr Napper.

payers' money is best invested.

"I bring a bit of a different perspective to the IAC as I'm not a vegetable grower," he said.

"The thing that growers can be sure of is that anything that comes through the IAC undergoes strict scrutiny. The members have great knowledge and experience and they are not afraid of expressing it."

Going forward into the future, Mr Napper said that the industry would benefit from looking beyond the farm gate and gaining a global perspective.

"We need to lift our sights more," he said.

"That's why I encourage people to travel and go and see things and the AUSVEG Grower Tours are great for that. People elsewhere are doing different things and their approach is different."

"We need to think about things in the bigger picture. You can be in the moment and think that you are going well, but you always need to keep your eye on the horizon."

"It's an exciting industry to be in and it's something we should be proud of."

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Taking shape

The 2012 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence is gathering momentum, with three lead sponsors back on board, Trade Show exhibitors snapping up booths and events undergoing transformation.

AUSVEG has welcomed new sponsorship deals from three leading strategic partners hot off the heels of the announcement of the 2012 National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence.

Elders, DuPont and Syngenta have reaffirmed their positions as lead sponsors of the 2012 National Convention, which will take place at Wrest Point Hotel Casino in Hobart from 10-12 May.

The partnerships reflect the companies' support of the Australian horticulture industry and reinforce their commitment to best serving growers.

AUSVEG National Marketing Manager Simon Coburn said: "We at AUSVEG are proud of the relationships we have formed with leading companies within the industry."

"The support that Elders, Syngenta and DuPont have shown, not only to AUSVEG, but more importantly to our industry, is instrumental in ensuring the long-term viability of horticulture. These companies

have demonstrated commitment and it is important that we continue to support them in return."

"I look forward to continuing to develop these relationships and working together to achieve great things for our growers."

Marketing Manager Crop Protection at DuPont Australia and New Zealand Steven Stillone said: "DuPont is a proud sponsor of AUSVEG. We see significant value delivered by AUSVEG in providing a key voice across our industry in a challenging landscape."

"We've enjoyed the opportunities AUSVEG has provided us to engage with growers and help us to better understand their needs.

At every connection point with growers, including the National Convention, AUSVEG has created a refreshingly professional approach."

Segment Manager for Horticulture at Elders Tennille Reed said: "At Elders, we're committed to maximising the performance of our client's horticulture enterprises, and

through our continued strategic alliance with AUSVEG our staff can be at the forefront of production trends, techniques and innovation, helping improve productivity for our clients."

Syngenta Territory Head–Australasia Paul Luxton added that Syngenta was excited to continue its strong partnership with growers.

"Our partnership with AUSVEG allows us to connect directly with leading Australian vegetable growers, including through our support of the AUSVEG-Syngenta Grower of the Year Award, providing deep insights to drive our solutions development in Australia," said Mr Luxton.

"In the year ahead we will be working with AUSVEG to build on the success of our Syngenta Product Plus Vegetables Workshops—award-winning spray application and stewardship workshops that have focused on giving growers the tools, knowledge and confidence to get the most out of Syngenta's products in the field."

Shaping up

Plans for the highly anticipated 2012 National Convention are continuing to take shape and the event is generating great interest. As well as providing a valuable networking opportunity for delegates, with information sessions and access to the most experienced and knowledgeable people in the industry, the event will also celebrate all that the vibrant city of Hobart has to offer.

The release of the Exhibitor Registration Brochure has resulted in booths at the Trade Show starting to sell quickly, with a number of key members of the supply chain booking their spot. The Trade Show will bring together some of the biggest names in horticulture under one roof and offer delegates access to state-of-the-art technology, the latest R&D and information about the industry.

As the biggest event of its kind in horticulture, the Convention promises to deliver another impressive program of tailored events that will both entertain and inform.

Building on the success of the 2011 Convention—which attracted close to 1,000 delegates—a number of key events will return for 2012 and have been revitalised to ensure they continue to exceed the expectations of delegates.

A special event will once again be dedicated to the next generation of growers. Previous years have seen groups enjoy sessions of paintballing and ten pin bowling and next year's Young Growers Event promises to offer more fun. Any young growers attending the Convention are encouraged to take part and utilise the opportunity to network with fellow growers while having fun.

Having attracted a record number of delegates at the 2011 Convention, the Women in Horticulture Event will also return in Hobart, having undergone a complete transformation that will ensure it is a highlight.

The three-day Convention will once again culminate with one of the most highly anticipated events in horticulture—the AUSVEG National Awards for

Excellence and Gala Dinner.

Held on Saturday, 12 May, the evening will honour some of the industry's most outstanding members with a glittering ceremony and gala dinner, which will also showcase special entertainment and esteemed speakers.

Nominations for the National Awards for Excellence will open soon and categories will include Grower of the Year, Young Grower of the Year, Productivity Partner Award, Industry Recognition Award and Women in Horticulture Award.

More exciting news and information about the 2012 National Convention will be unveiled in the coming months. Meanwhile, growers and industry stakeholders are urged to save the date and support this influential event next year.

To make an enquiry about the National Convention or to request an Exhibitor Registration Brochure contact AUSVEG on (03) 9822 0388 or email: convention@ausveg.com.au



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Channels of communication

Vegetable growers across the country are benefitting from a collaborative program that aims to strengthen their knowledge of the R&D that is taking place and has already been completed within the industry.

The Collaborative Industry Organisations (CIO) sub-program has been established in a bid to support the objectives of the broader Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) through the delivery of services and information that results from other industry development sub-programs such as Economics, Consumers and Markets and Knowledge Management.

The CIOs consist of the AUSVEG State Members (vegetable grower bodies), which are tasked with delivering outputs from the industry development program to their grower networks via electronic and printed material, workshops and grower visits.

Each State Member has embarked on the first stage of the program and has a number of initiatives underway.

Growcom

Growcom is delivering the CIO sub-program to growers in Queensland and the Northern Territory through a publication called Vegie Info. This comprises information from the industry development program

and other vegetable levy-funded projects, which is collated and sent out to growers both electronically and as a hard copy on a monthly basis.

Growcom Commercial Services Industry Programs Coordinator Margie Milgate said the Vegie Info newsletter was also sent to a range of regional and territory partners, including Northern Territory Horticultural Association, Mareeba District Growers Association, Bowen District Growers Association, Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers, Childers Fruit and Vegetable Growers and other valued contacts in related organisations.

Ms Milgate said: "This information is supported by one-on-one presentations at industry functions. Recently, a presentation was given to a group of growers at a Young Growers Forum held at the Research Station in Gatton. The growers came from the Stanthorpe region, as well as Gatton."

"The presentation was on the latest market research from the Consumers and Markets sub-program and produced some

lively debate."

"The Vegie Info program also tries to reach other growers through further training events related to the Reef Rescue Program and at Freshcare training days. Other information will also be available at the combined Growcom/ Queensland Farmers Federation stand at the upcoming state Landcare Conference."

A field day has also been planned on 28 September, 2011 at Gatton as part of the World Congress on Conservation Agriculture, where Vegie Info fact sheets will be available to growers.

Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria

One output of the CIO sub-program for the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA) has been a continuing project with Ballarat University and the Victorian Farm Safety Centre, which aims to observe and identify manual handling hazards on the farm and recommend the most practical, effective and low cost solutions to reducing the risk of injury.

Andrew Sullivan, of the Victorian Farm Safety Centre, has been visiting vegetable farms throughout Victoria to observe work practises associated with planting, picking, and packing.

Mr Sullivan has visited a number of growers in the Werribee, Clyde, Leongatha and Lindenow districts to get a better picture of industry standards. As well as gathering information from growers, Mr Sullivan has also been consulting with transport companies and other supply chain parties.

Growers will be asked to provide valuable feedback on the documented solutions and in some cases will be asked to trial them.

Funding from the CIO sub-program has also enabled VGA to provide its two Industry Development Officers (IDO) and a Grower Services Coordinator with additional resources to offer more services to vegetable growers in the state.

The extra resources for the IDOs, Slobodan Vujovic and Helena Whitman, has assisted them in arranging two recent study tours.

Ten young growers have just returned from a successful study tour to Western Australia, where they had the opportunity to inspect irrigation systems first-hand. Meanwhile, a second study tour saw four growers embark on a trip to the USA and Italy to assess the operations of lettuce harvesting machinery.

TFGA

As part of the CIO sub-program, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) has been providing information to Tasmanian growers through mail-outs, email updates, workshops



L to R - Grow SA CEO Mike Redmond, Adelaide Produce Market CEO Angelo Demasi and Nick Mecozzi at the 2011 AUSVEG National Convention



Helena Whitman, Andrew Bulmer, Daniel Fragapane, Joseph Ruffo, Slobodan Vujovic, Vo Vu, Travis Talbot, Philip Cochrane, Frank Ruffo, Gurinda Singh and Kane Busch outside Perth Market on the VGA Victoria grower tour to Western Australia

and through its website.

TFGA Policy and Advocacy Manager Nick Steel said: "Just recently the TFGA has been holding grower forums to provide information to growers on what is happening at TFGA and as part of this we also provided information about the VIDP program."

"The TFGA is just about to mail out another update to growers that will assist them on where they can find information relating to research and development projects that might be of interest to their business."

NSW Farmers' Association

Horticulture Policy Manager at NSW Farmers' Association (NSWFA) Alison Anderson said that CIO-based activities in New South Wales had focussed on disseminating direct updates to growers through phone calls and farm visits.

"The purpose has been to ensure that growers know the key communication channels in the vegetable industry and, in particular, they have been encouraged to register on the AUSVEG website so that they can search for R&D updates and other news," said Dr Anderson.

"In NSW, workshops and farm visits have been held so that growers could provide input to the vegetable levy-funded review and scoping study on issues facing vegetable production in peri-urban areas."

"More workshops will be held in the next couple of months. Two will be held for the protected cropping industry in mid-October, with information being presented on disease management, benchmarking and how to get the best out of

high volume spraying, as well as outcomes of the national greenhouse recycling project and the pesticide residues in hydroponics project."

"A workshop will also be held in Bathurst with a focus on precision agriculture and the EnviroVeg Program."

Dr Anderson added that fact sheets produced by InnoVeg had also been distributed to growers, along with Brassica Best Practice and Lettuce Best Practice ute guides as part of their activities.

Looking ahead, Dr Anderson

Veginsights remained the state's most popular industry development publication and had standing orders for every edition.

Mr Redmond added: "All Grow SA field staff carry a folder with up-to-date lists of the information available through the program and copies of fact sheets etc. In discussions with growers, any fact sheets of interest are either supplied directly or ordered and sent out by mail or e-mail."

Mr Redmond added that Grow SA included an industry

produces a quarterly magazine, as well as a fortnightly E-Newsletter that is delivered to registered growers to keep them updated with the latest news, events and opportunities.

VegetablesWA Policy and Program Manager John Shannon said: "VegetablesWA's quarterly WA Grower magazine is continuing to be recognised as the premier source for detailed vegetable industry news and analysis. In addition to relaying industry development content and R&D updates, it includes articles from a range of industry sources, so growers get the best information and contacts if growers have further queries."

Mr Shannon said that vegetablesWA was also organising Field Walks on a number of growers' properties in the northern and southern metropolitan zones for all growers to get together and share good practice ideas and discuss R&D results. He added that similar activities were also planned in the south west and Carnarvon regions, as part of separate Caring for our Country Good Practice projects, as well as workshops on specific topics such as plant pathology.

VegetablesWA is also continuing to roll-out spray workshops in partnership with Syngenta, as part of an ongoing series. The workshops cover the basics of spraying, as well as exploring increased efficiencies to be gained by using new and appropriate nozzles. So far, workshops have been held at Wanneroo, Baldivis and Carnarvon. The next workshop is planned for Manjimup and more will be held in the future.

Project code: VG10096

“The purpose has been to ensure that growers know the key communication channels in the vegetable industry.”

said that activities specifically for LOTE growers would be delivered in the next nine months, following planning between the NSW Department of Primary Industries, InnoVeg and NSWFA.

Grow SA

In South Australia, growers are continuing to benefit from the delivery of industry development information through face-to-face meetings, the publication Ripe and static displays in regional offices and at industry events.

Chief Executive Officer of Grow SA Mike Redmond said

development display as part of its stand at the 2011 AUSVEG National Convention in Brisbane.

vegetablesWA

In Western Australia, information distributed as part of the CIO sub-program is even being translated for growers. VegetablesWA is translating a number of industry development materials into Vietnamese for distribution via on-farm visits to individual growers and by the Field Extension Officer.

The organisation also

New South Wales celebrates conference success

The spotlight shone on Sydney Showground as horticultural minds gathered for New South Wales' key industry event.

The 2011 New South Wales Farmers' Association Horticulture Conference has been hailed a huge success, attracting around 70 members and a number of key industry stakeholders.

Delegates travelled from the major horticultural regions of NSW, including Central West, Riverina, North Coast and Hunter Hawkesbury to attend the Conference in July and hear presentations from high profile speakers on the theme of food security, as well as discuss current and emerging issues and set policy for the Association's horticulture section.

Industry organisations and government departments represented at the Conference included AUSVEG, APAL, Freshcare, Horticulture Mediation Adviser, Sydney Markets Ltd, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ),

NSW Department of Primary Industries, University of Western Sydney and the NSW Food Authority.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson opened the conference, informing delegates about the NSW Government's investment in research and development and the opening of a new research centre on the Central Coast for horticulture and protected cropping.

The Minister also highlighted that horticulture contributed around \$1.2 billion to the NSW economy each year and made up some 15 per cent of the state's agricultural production and output.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy was among the speakers invited to address the topic of Australia's food security.

In his speech to delegates, Mr Mulcahy warned that Australia did not have an infinite amount

of agricultural resources and said that action needed to be taken to protect the security of the country's home-grown food supply.

"Increased global demand for food will both challenge and provide opportunities for Australian agriculture," said Mr Mulcahy.

"Australia needs to focus on maintaining quality of land and water availability if it has any hope of being able to feed the nation for the future, let alone trying to supply on an international scale."

Mr Mulcahy added that the increase in global food demand was a serious issue and needed to be a high priority for Australia to ensure that Australian growers were given the tools to keep up with rising demand, as well as to preserve quality in resources such as soil and water.

"With a predicted two billion

more mouths to feed over the next 40 years, we need to safeguard the horticulture industry in Australia, because if international growers replace our local producers we shall be vulnerable as a nation," he said.

Independent Senator for South Australia Nick Xenophon also delivered an impassioned speech to delegates on the issues of food security, biosecurity and country of origin labelling.

Amanda Hill, Principle Advisor Food Safety at FSANZ, and Dr Kerry Mills, Senior Scientist Food Safety at FSANZ, also spoke about the process currently underway by FSANZ to examine food safety in Australian horticultural industries.

The Conference and Horticulture AGM took place prior to the three-day NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference.

“Australia needs to focus on maintaining quality of land and water availability if it has any hope of being able to feed the nation for the future, let alone trying to supply on an international scale.”

Photos courtesy of Mike Lamond, Good Fruit and Vegetables



Peter Darley (NSWFA Horticulture Committee Chair) with Senator Nick Xenophon



Jeff McSpedden (NSWFA Horticulture Committee and Vegetable IAC Chair) with Lesley Moar



Geoff Moar (NSWFA Horticulture Committee and AUSVEG Director), AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy and Chris Nelson (Horticulture Committee)

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Stepping forward with Sclerotinia solutions

A collaborative project has developed a series of new strategies to help control Sclerotinia disease—the most damaging soilborne disease in vegetable crops, writes Karen Shaw.

New Australian research has found that rotating biofumigants—such as mustards with lettuce and green bean crops—has the potential to improve yields, as well as manage Sclerotinia long term.

The research, released as part of the National Sclerotinia Program, also analysed site specific risk factors associated with Sclerotinia, developed sophisticated molecular-based detection methods and recommended that two pre-planting soil treatments and fungicides be registered to help with control.

The project, entitled *Integrated management of soilborne pathogens (Sclerotinia)*, has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy, matched funds from the Australian Government and contributions from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Agri-Science (DEEDI) Queensland, the University of Tasmania (UTAS)

and the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR).

It aimed to develop long-term strategies to manage Sclerotinia, which costs the industry upwards of \$10 million a year.

National project leader Oscar

Filan™ for control and there was concern the Sclerotinia pathogen could become resistant to the fungicide.

The program focused on *Sclerotinia minor* lettuce drop affecting lettuces Australia-

called Switch™ and Shirlan™ that could be used in rotation with Filan™. But both products were still waiting for registration from authorities for use against Sclerotinia.

“Others also waiting for registration include two mustard oil-based pre-plant soil treatments, both of which were effective at killing the pathogen’s sclerotia,” he said.

But for Mr Villalta, the most pleasing results came from field trials that tested the biofumigants. Victorian field trials showed that biofumigation with Mustclean™ significantly reduced root infection of green beans by 35 per cent, while lettuce drop was reduced by 62 per cent in a Tasmanian trial.

The mustard crops were incorporated into the soil just at flowering, when the content of the antifungal compounds, the isothiocyanate producing glucosinolates, were highest. And some green manure crops also improved soil quality by increasing soil nitrogen and

“Where once there was only one fungicide treatment available to help manage Sclerotinia, growers now have a range of alternatives.”

Villalta is excited by the results.

“Where once there was only one fungicide treatment available to help manage Sclerotinia, growers now have a range of alternatives,” he said.

Previously, farmers relied on

wide, and *S.sclerotiorum* white mould, which affects green beans, grown mainly in Tasmania and Queensland.

Mr Villalta said early research had already alerted growers to new fungicide treatments



Bean white mould



Biofumigation with Mustclean™

organic matter.

However, the biofumigant crops tested also had some limitations. They took between 60 to 90 days to grow and hosted some pests and diseases, limiting their use on some farms.

The next phase of the research aimed to develop biofumigant crops with shorter growing seasons, high biomass and glucosinolate content that were also frost tolerant and pest and disease resistant, Mr Villalta said.

Meanwhile, Dr Frank Hay, from the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR), worked with colleagues to develop sophisticated techniques to predict infection of green bean crops at flowering time.

"Spores collected in field traps were DNA tested to detect Sclerotinia," Dr Hay said.

An important aspect of this work was testing these isolates for resistance to boscalid (Filan™) and establishing a baseline for future testing.

"Our monitoring found no evidence of resistance at this

stage and now has a benchmark for future analysis," he said.

The team also developed a method of sampling green bean crops to determine the presence of Sclerotinia.

"We tested 53 crops in 2010 and there was less than five per cent presence on pods, which indicates that current fungicide treatment is working," Dr Hay said.

"We found the timing of fungicide spraying was also important – too late led to more disease and spraying too early was a problem."

"We also monitored spore release and found that it peaked just before or after rainfall. The changes in humidity seemed to help with spore release."

Dr Hay added: "Having all this information, coupled with an on-farm weather station, might help farmers in future to develop better timed fungicide applications."

Other important research included developing a predictive model by monitoring site-specific factors that triggered Sclerotinia in green beans. Some of the data collated

included weather information, site details, bean varieties and planting densities.

The trials found that of six commercial cultivars, Flavour Sweet was the most susceptible to Sclerotinia. A dense canopy also led to more disease, by creating a humid microclimate that was more conducive to spore release and infection.

Dr Hay suggested growers decreased bean planting density and also reduced the application of nitrogen as fertiliser to help control canopy growth.

"We can't control temperature or rainfall, but reducing the canopy density is possible," he said.

"Growers who know they have a problem might also investigate varieties less susceptible to Sclerotinia," he said.

*Find more information in the publication **Managing Sclerotinia Diseases in Vegetables**, which is distributed to growers through national workshops or available online at www.vgavic.org.au*

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The major findings of the National Sclerotinia Program included a recommendation that Switch™ and Shirlan™ be registered for use in rotation with Filan™ in lettuce and green bean crops.
- Growers were urged to plant biofumigant crops in rotation with lettuce and green beans for a sustainable strategy to control Sclerotinia. The biofumigants reduced inoculums, broke the disease cycle, and improved soil health.
- New monitoring tools were developed to help researchers and industry better understand white mould development.



Find more information
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Supplying magnesium to crops

Rohan Davies, Research and Product Development Manager at Incitec Pivot Fertilisers, discusses the differences between sources of magnesium.



Question: Are all magnesium sources equal?

Magnesium is a macro nutrient, usually applied with manure applications or dolomitic limestone.

Organic sources of magnesium, normally manures, will supply 0.05 to 0.1 per cent of magnesium. This is in a very soluble form and can be expected to be available for

short-term use by the crop, but not to build soil magnesium levels, as soluble magnesium is mobile in the soil and prone to leaching.

Mineral magnesium sources are also available. These can be compared by looking at the solubility of the source and its nutrient content. Table 1 shows

the various mineral magnesium sources currently available in Australia.

Oxide and carbonate forms of magnesium need to be reacted with acids to increase solubility, so that their magnesium is made available to crops.

Particle size does also have an influence on availability, with smaller particles providing better availability than larger. These forms are generally only suitable for long-term availability and are unlikely to alleviate acute deficiencies in crops. They must be incorporated into the soil to be effective.

There is also some potential inconsistency with magnesium oxide production and therefore a wide variance can be seen in magnesium availability from this type of product.

For acute deficiencies, it is important to apply a readily

soluble form of magnesium, which is immediately available to plants.

The magnesium can be applied in liquid or granular applications. Epsom salt (magnesium sulphate heptahydrate) is a popular choice for foliar application or fertigation solutions because of its high residue-free solubility and lack of nitrogen.

Decisions on the rate and choice of magnesium product should be made based on your specific soil and crop requirements. Consider the likely leaching potential for magnesium and the potential for other nutritional imbalances to occur.

See a Fertcare®-accredited fertiliser adviser for further information and advice when applying magnesium for soil health or to address crop deficiencies.

Table 1: Mineral magnesium sources and their solubility

Material	Magnesium %	Solubility in water (g L ⁻¹)	Other nutrients
Dolomite ¹	3-12	0.01	14-32% calcium
Magnesium carbonate ¹	27	0.011	
Magnesium oxide ²	>42	0.0062	
Kieserite (magnesium sulphate) ³	15	340	22% sulphur
K-Mag (potassium magnesium sulphate) ²	11	280	18.3% potassium, 22% sulphur
Epsom salt (magnesium sulphate heptahydrate) ¹	10	710	13% sulphur
Magnesium nitrate ¹	9	1250	10% nitrogen

Source: ¹ Handreck and Black (2005), ² K-Mag Frequently Asked Questions, Mosaic, ³ Material Safety Data Sheet, K+S Kali GmbH

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Name: Nick Patsuris of N. Patsuris & Sons
Age: 19
Location: Werribee South
Grows: Broccoli and cauliflower

Q&A Young grower feature

Following in the footsteps



Growing up on his family's Werribee South farm, Nick Patsuris has been tending to vegetable crops from an early age. With a passion for farming instilled in him, the 19-year-old has adopted vegetable growing with gusto and now plays an integral role in the industry—both on his farm and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria.

How did you first get involved in the vegetable industry?

The farm was started by my grandfather and then my dad and my uncle continued it. I was involved in the farm from an early age, from ever since I could walk, and then I started full time about four years ago.

Working on the farm is what I've always wanted to do ever since I was a little kid. I used to wake up at weekends and be excited to go and help out in the paddock.

What is your role on the farm?

I work with my dad, my uncle and my cousin and I get involved with everything. I work out in the paddock and I also work at the Melbourne Wholesale Market with my dad.

We go to the market three times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and we start at midnight.

Dad has been doing the market for more than 30 years and I've been going with him since I left school. Before that, I also used to go with him in the school holidays and I never missed a day. I really enjoy the market because I think I'm more of a salesperson. I really like the environment there.

Describe your average day on the farm.

On a market day, we start at about midnight and we will be back home by about 8.30am. If there is work to be done in the paddock, which there usually is,



Three generations: Nick with his father Peter and grandfather Nicholas Patsuris

we will then go out and get on the tractor or get out and cut.

Once we've finished that, we'll have a rest and then we'll pack in the afternoon and work to get ready for the next market.

It's a family business, so me and dad do the market side of things and my uncle and my cousin do more of the farm side. But we always help each other out.

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

I really enjoy the market side of things, but I also think the tractor work can be quite exciting. I also enjoy the harvesting aspect; I find it very interesting.

How do you think more

young people could be encouraged to take up jobs in the vegetable industry?

It is hard to get someone of my generation out in the paddock in the freezing cold or the blistering heat. It's a good experience being out in the paddock; a lot of my friends have come and helped on the farm and enjoyed it. But it's hard to say what the industry could do to encourage people of my age to work through the night and day for this job.

There are a lot of people who don't have the motivation to go into things like farming. I've been brought up in the industry, so it's different for me. When I was little I would walk out to the back and the farm and the tractor and the crops were always right there.

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

I had a passion for landscaping when I was younger. We did a gardening program at school and I ended up being a leader of the class. I had a passion for making things look good.

When I left school, I thought I might do an apprenticeship in landscaping, but I wanted to wait and see how things worked out on the farm first. I fell in love with the farm and couldn't leave.



Do you see your future being in the industry?

I would love to continue the farm for as many years as possible, but with things going the way they are with costs going up and everything, it's getting harder and harder to survive in this business.

There are many farmers leaving the industry and there are also farmers getting bigger, but nothing is changing or getting easier. If costs keep going up the way they are, I don't think farms in areas like Werribee South will always be around in the future.

There are always challenges with keeping costs down, but we try to keep things to a minimum. Things like doing all the tractor work in a day and using only the recommended amounts of chemicals. We try not to waste anything at all. It is hard, because it can mean you don't get a full 100 per cent out of the crop, but we try our best.

Do you enjoy being a member of the Executive Committee of the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria?

It is good to be a member of the committee. It has really opened my eyes a lot to see what problems the industry faces. It's good to be able to get together and to try and tackle the challenges we all face. It is up to us to try and hold the industry up.



Brassicas: taste vs health

The age-old conundrum of how to convince consumers to eat their vegetables has just got a little more scientific, writes David Hastie.

Recent research conducted by CSIRO scientists in Sydney and Adelaide attempted to determine whether taste characteristics or health properties were more likely to convince the public to eat particular varieties of *brassica oleracea* vegetables.

The project, entitled *Taste and health promoting factors of brassica bioactive compounds*, was funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funding from the Australian Government.

The results of the project surprised even the researchers themselves.

CSIRO Food and Nutritional Services Research Scientist Dr Dimitrios Zabarar headed up the two-year study, which examined the trade-off between taste characteristics and health properties of six varieties of brassica vegetables.

They included broccoli, broccolini, red and green cabbages, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.

Concluding in May, the research used sensory and consumer science, phytochemistry and cell biology

“Our hypothesis was that knowledge of the health benefits would have increased their liking and intention to consume these vegetables. However, it didn’t.”

in a bid to understand how to increase consumer acceptance.

While Dr Zabarar initially believed promoting the high levels of cancer-fighting antioxidants contained in the vegetables would be the strongest selling point of brassicas, his research said otherwise.

A consumer test of 200 adults found that taste was in fact more important.

“In one of the studies within this project, we provided consumers with health information related to the consumption of the brassica vegetables,” Dr Zabarar said.

“Our hypothesis was that knowledge of the health benefits would have increased their liking and intention to consume these vegetables. However, it didn’t.”

“It shows that taste is still the number one driver for perception. That was something we certainly didn’t expect.”

The research was the first time that a “systematic, interdisciplinary attempt” had measured the contribution of phytochemicals to the taste and health properties of brassica vegetables.

With taste perception—and to a lesser extent attitude—influencing the consumer’s intention to purchase brassica vegetables, Dr Zabarar said it was important to establish whether improving the taste could be achieved without compromising the health benefits attached to the vegetables.

Sensory characterisation, conducted by a panel of 10 experts, was used to determine the contribution of major phytochemicals, including glucosinolates, free sugars, and phenolics, to the taste profiles of the vegetables.

Dr Zabarar said the findings showed that the phytochemicals responsible for the undesirable taste of brassica vegetables were also major contributors to their health properties.

Therefore, an improvement in taste properties (by reducing glucosinolates and phenolics) would lead to a loss of health properties.

“Some of the other findings revealed that most of the beneficial components were also the ones that were contributing to the undesirable taste,” he said.

Dr Zabarar believed that increasing the sugar content of

brassica vegetables in a bid to improve their taste was a viable option.

Further sensory evaluation found sweetness and bitterness were the most important distinguishing attributes, followed by saltiness and astringency.

Dr Zabararas said an increase in sweetness would reduce perceived bitterness when consuming brassica vegetables.

"It should not have an effect on the health properties of the vegetables, provided that we are not talking about a dramatic increase in the level of sugar," he said.

"Over-consumption of sugar can have its own negative health concerns. So what we are trying to say here is that because consumers are concerned about the taste, if they were to have a little more sugar in them, consumption should increase."

capacity."

Dr Zabararas said the development of new and improved brassica varieties could be beneficial for the industry as it could lead to increased consumer acceptance.

Moreover, he said adding either red or purple pigments to existing varieties of brassica vegetables would be relatively easy to achieve through selective breeding.

"The thing I would do would be to try and add a bit of colour into your broccolis and cauliflowers," he said.

"In Britain, they are starting to produce red Brussels sprouts, so consumers are starting to see new varieties come into the market that will be better for their health."

"But the public needs to be educated about the health benefits."



“Some of the other findings revealed that most of the beneficial components were also the ones that were contributing to the undesirable taste.”

The studies reaffirmed the notion that brassica vegetables were a rich source of antioxidants.

With regard to the potential health benefits of consuming them, Dr Zabararas said that his research confirmed that vegetables with red pigment—such as red cabbage—had the best health benefits.

"It was by far the best for antioxidant activity because of the red pigments," he said.

"But these are the vegetables that consumers don't typically prefer. They prefer your typical broccolis and cauliflowers. That's possibly related to the fact that it comes down to what people are used to."

"When we asked people which vegetables they were likely to purchase in the future, broccoli and cauliflower were the popular ones."

"But what we found was that some of the red-pigmented vegetables actually tasted better because they had naturally a bit more sugar, while the red colour gives more antioxidant

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Removing key components of most brassica vegetables to improve the taste cannot be achieved without stripping the vegetable of its crucial health benefits.
- Better consumer acceptance of brassica vegetables can be achieved through producing varieties with increased levels of natural sugars. Cauliflower and red cabbage are examples of sweeter varieties available.
- Brassica vegetables containing red pigment have greatly increased health properties, including heightened antioxidant activity, compared to the traditional green and white coloured brassica vegetables.

Find more information:
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CSIRO Food and Nutritional Sciences
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New EnviroVeg Manual released

Manual reveals the latest on-farm environmentally sustainable practices.

Version 3 of the EnviroVeg Manual is now available for members of the EnviroVeg Program and for any growers who would like to sign up.

All existing information has been updated to reflect the most current environmentally sustainable agricultural practices and new information on climate change has also been included.

Although the EnviroVeg Program is a program designed and developed specifically for the vegetable industry, the EnviroVeg Manual also complements other existing environmental programs, such

as Integrated Pest Management programs and whole farm planning projects.

The EnviroVeg Program can also be used as a management tool for growers who want, or have a need, to show their environmentally sustainable credentials. This is done through documentation of practices that growers are implementing on-farm, as part of the management and marketing of their businesses to the community, suppliers and when trading at the likes of farmers markets.

Additionally, there is a dedicated space set aside in

the new EnviroVeg Manual to accommodate specific information about different vegetable growing regions throughout Australia, which is currently being developed. The information, once finalised, will provide practical information and advice to growers on environmentally sustainable farming practices and will further assist and enable members of the EnviroVeg Program to gain an increase in production and marketing potential.

The EnviroVeg Program has started liaising with regional NRM bodies to customise

the manuals and make them regionally specific for growers. This initiative tailors the EnviroVeg Program to individual growers, which will assist them in keeping up-to-date with the relevant environmental issues affecting their specific region.



EnviroVeg Committee meeting

Committee discusses ways to take the EnviroVeg Program forward and welcomes new specialist on board.

A meeting of the EnviroVeg Committee was held at the Sebel-Citigate Hotel in Brisbane, where a number of items were discussed with regards to the EnviroVeg Program.

One of the EnviroVeg Committee's actions was to confirm the appointment of Dr Doris Blaesing, after members identified the need for a specialist to be appointed to the Committee.

Dr Blaesing has a robust background specialising in soil nutrition management, as well as integrated crop management. Dr Blaesing has also been employed by a number of companies that service the agricultural industry, in Tasmania, including agronomy company Serve-Ag and soil nutrition testing company Ag-Vita, in natural resource management roles.

A major focus of the meeting was the discussion of on-farm environmental management and

the potential effects of future regulation on the vegetable industry.

E-coli outbreaks in Europe were used as an example of how future environmental legislation may, as a result of these issues occurring, gain more potential. The Committee felt that it was evident that the enforcement of sustainable environmental practices and procedures would become regulated in the future like other industries in the agricultural sector.

The advantage of the EnviroVeg Program is that it is an existing proactive program designed and developed specifically for the vegetable industry that addresses the regulation of sustainable environmental management processes and procedures, which can be documented.

The Committee also highlighted the need to further increase the EnviroVeg

Program's membership levels, as well as develop the Program to ensure the industry's needs are continually being met.

The implementation of devising regional NRM inserts into the EnviroVeg Manual was also discussed by the Committee. Since the meeting, nine NRM regions throughout Australia, covering the key vegetable growing regions, have been targeted to design and develop relevant regional specific inserts for the EnviroVeg Manual.

These regionally specific inserts will be designed to further assist growers with implementing environmentally sustainable management practices and techniques on-farm, as well as communicate and make growers aware of their NRM body's catchment management plans that are specific to the region where their enterprises exist.

The importance of AUSVEG's

Environment Coordinator Christian Malins having a face-to-face presence on-farm and engaging with growers and active members of the EnviroVeg Program was also highlighted at the meeting.

Mr Malins has since visited growers in Somerville, Pittsworth, Gatton, Stanthorpe, Bundaberg, Latrobe, Don, Marrakai, Humpty Doo/Lambells Lagoon and Kindred.

As a result of the farm visits, there has been an increased level of communication and understanding between Mr Malins and growers involved in the EnviroVeg Program.

This has been achieved through Mr Malins gaining a first-hand understanding of the issues and requirements that need to be addressed to best cater for the growers undertaking the EnviroVeg Program to ensure it continues to best meet their needs.

Benefits of on-farm windbreaks and shelterbelts

Natural wind defences could prove productive for growers, writes AUSVEG Environment Coordinator Christian Malins.

Areas containing established trees and shrubs, known as shelterbelts, can offer a number of benefits to vegetable growers.

They are strategically designed, constructed and maintained to act as windbreaks, provide habitat for native wildlife and provide shelter and shade, as well as to preserve favourable climatic conditions for growing.

The establishment and implementation of shelterbelts on-farm can offer a diverse range of ecological and economic benefits.

From a conservation perspective, shelterbelts attract a number of native wildlife species that are endemic to the area, as they provide needed habitat for native fauna species.

Shelterbelts also assist in increasing farm water efficiency, stabilising groundwater levels, increasing atmospheric carbon absorption and enhancing fertility in soil and pasture.

From an economic perspective, established shelterbelts will assist in increasing on-farm yields by having a positive influence on crop and pasture production, as

they significantly reduce plant and soil moisture loss caused by extreme wind.

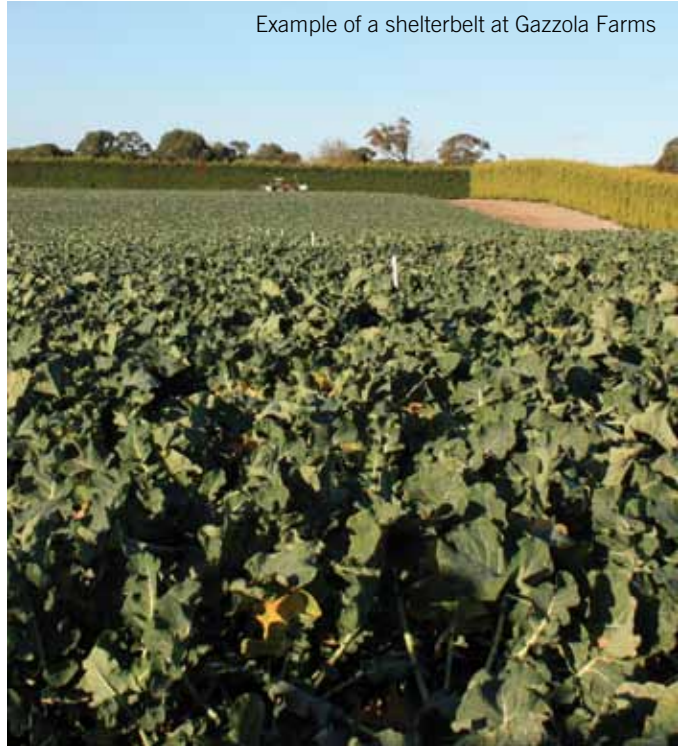
This results in healthy vegetable crops containing higher moisture levels and enables favourable conditions for faster growth rates. Large shelterbelts can also be used for timber production purposes, providing an additional source of on-farm income for land holders.

Additional benefits of established on-farm shelterbelts are the created microclimates that reduce impacts caused by hot, cold and windy conditions and create a further favourable growing climate for vegetable crops.

On-farm shelterbelts can also be used as a tool to manage insect pests through the increased number of native wildlife living within them, which prey on pest insects known to harbour within vegetable crops.

With native wildlife reducing the number of invasive insect pests on-farm, benefits can be gained through alternative or reduced chemical pest control, saving money on chemical costs and enhancing environmentally

Example of a shelterbelt at Gazzola Farms



sustainable outcomes. As established shelterbelts provide an adequate habitat for native wildlife, they can effectively act as a natural form of pest control.

To maximise their many benefits and increase the number of native wildlife species on-farm, a diverse range of native plant species, including trees, shrubs, understory plants and native grasses, need to be factored into the design and establishment of shelterbelts.

Plants that are native to an area will respond well to their environment and have greater success with re-establishing and regenerating if conditions are in their favour. Endemic plant species also create a habitat that is ideal for the native wildlife existing within the area.

Shelterbelts also provide a solution to addressing increased levels of biodiversity on-farm, as they do not need to be

established on productive land and work well along fence lines and unproductive areas.

On the farm, shelterbelts will not compromise the economic viability of the enterprise, rather they can enhance the aesthetics and capital value of it.

As well as increasing yields and productivity on-farm, established shelterbelts can also assist in improving on-farm sustainability through enhancing soil health and structure, which will lead to a reduction in erosion and the impacts of salinity on-farm.

In summary, established shelterbelts can result in increased levels of native wildlife, a reduction in pest insects and lead to higher yields in favourable growing conditions.

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Soil survival

When it came to adopting sustainable farming practices and ensuring a consistent crop, Phil Lamattina returned to the grass roots of growing to find solutions. Talking to *Vegetables Australia*, the Victorian carrot grower reveals how using traditional methods in modern times has proved fruitful for his family farm.

Prevention is better than cure.

At least it is in the eyes of Wemen-based carrot grower Phil Lamattina, who firmly believes that the outcome of a crop is already determined by the time the seeds hit the ground.

"We are a big believer that how your crop is going to turn out is already determined when the seed goes into the ground," he said.

"You can work your hardest to fertilise, irrigate and spray and keep an eye on your crops as best you can, which you do, but at the end of the day if you've not got the foundations right before you plant that crop of carrots then it's going to be all over."

Sharing the same ethos are Phil's brothers Angelo and John and his father Rocky, who operate the family-run enterprise-Rocky Lamattina and Sons-together in northern Victoria.

Established in 1991, the Lamattina's 6,000-acre home base farm in Wemen sits on the banks of the River Murray, while a second 6,000-acre cooler climate farm is situated at Kaniva. The business has the ability to grow up to 1,000 tonnes of carrots per week, making it one of Australia's leading carrot producers.

With that in mind, it is clear to see why it is imperative to the Lamattinas to ensure their crops are given the best possible chance of survival as soon as

the seeds are sown.

"We've got a plan that we stick to when it comes to growing," explained Phil, who has worked on the farm since he was 15-years-old.

"You need a plan because you can lose your way very easily when things go a little bit wrong."

"In the earlier years, we used to grow reactively and then we identified that it wasn't a good way of growing, so now we are proactive with a plan. You stick to the plan because you know it works. There are always going to be a few things popping up, but it's because you've got a plan that you are able to respond to those situations and rectify them quite quickly."

Part of the Lamattina's proactive plan involves implementing environmentally sustainable methods of farming, the key practice being crop rotation.

"A lot of the time you see the carrot tops and they look nice, but you are not selling the tops, you are selling the roots," said Phil.

"When you've got a root crop you predispose yourself to a lot of diseases that are soilborne. With constant cropping, especially of the same crop, you can build those diseases up really quickly."

"By introducing a cover crop, you rotate the crop. The best formula we've found is a three-year rotation for carrots; it's the perfect formula we've found."

Phil explained that a variety of

different cover crops were used during the rotation, including brassicas, which had enabled them to cut chemical use on the farm.

"A lot of the brassica-type cover crops have a natural fumigant, so by using them we've been able to stop using a soil fumigant," he said.

"We don't use any on the property anymore and we haven't done so for the last 10 to 15 years."

As well as being able to cut chemical use, Phil said the benefits of the crop rotation system also included the ability to reduce water usage and irrigate more efficiently.

"That environmental footprint

Phil Lamattina at his 6,000-acre farm in Wemen





“There are a lot of environmental issues that you alleviate by just having good soil husbandry.”

Photographs by Darren Seiler

that you could cause gets smaller and smaller by coming back down to good practices when it comes to soil management,” said Phil.

“There are a lot of environmental issues that you alleviate by just having good soil husbandry.”

“We’ve been doing this program now for the last 15 years and we knew that it would take 20 to 30 years before we started to see the real big benefits. But we see small benefits every year.”

While perseverance with the practice of crop rotation is now paying off, Phil admitted that there was a sense of nervousness when it was first

introduced on the farm.

“Deep down we knew it was what we had to do, but without seeing results immediately it was challenging,” he said.

“However, we stuck to the plan and slowly over the days, the months and the years we’ve seen the benefits of sticking with it and every year you get more and more confident.”

“It’s not rocket science what we do. The fundamentals of growing and sustainable agriculture over the years have always been to look after the soil.”

Ensuring the consistent production of carrot crops is undoubtedly the key objective of the Lamattinas, but equally

as important to the family is safeguarding the farm for the next generation.

“My children and my nephews and nieces will grow up and come into the family farm,” said Phil.

“We are farming today for the next generation. We had that philosophy very early on, and implementing environmentally sustainable farming is a tool to achieve that.”

Recognising there were always going to be challenges to face as a vegetable grower, Phil said that it was how they were dealt with that made the difference.

“We work fairly closely with an agronomist pretty much full

time and we are always analysing different things and making sure that any changes we make are small,” he said.

“We are always talking about next year and about how we want to do things that little bit better or that little bit different.”

Having recently signed up to the EnviroVeg Program, Phil said that it provided a useful way of monitoring environmental practices and encouraging farmers to improve on things.

“Any sort of self-assessment is always good,” he said.

“It always makes you ask yourself if you can do things better in certain ways. The harshest critic a lot of farmers have is themselves.”

Counting the costs

Vegetable growers will soon have a modified program to help them determine gross margins at the touch of a button.

Getting to grips with the financials of vegetable growing can be a gruelling task.

Calculating production costs, making sense of market prices and striving to get the best bang for your buck are often challenges in themselves, yet are a pivotal part of business.

It was with this in mind that the VegTool was launched in 2009 as a program to enable growers to determine a crop gross margin by calculating returns and costs of production. The information could then be analysed and used to make decisions about farm and business practices.

The computer-based program was the key output of the project *Grower-friendly tool comparing management and profitability of vegetable crops (VG08004)*, which was managed by Scholefield and Robinson Horticultural Services Pty Ltd.

Following the initial distribution of the VegTool, which was available to download from the AUSVEG website, an evaluation was conducted

with around 150 users of the program in a bid to gather feedback, identify ways to improve the utilisation by industry, seek improvements and pinpoint errors.

The results of the evaluation have now been used to guide the project *VegBiz, Vegetable Enterprise Decision Support Systems*, which is being conducted by the NSW Department of Industry and Investment in a bid to enhance the VegTool and assist with communicating it to the industry.

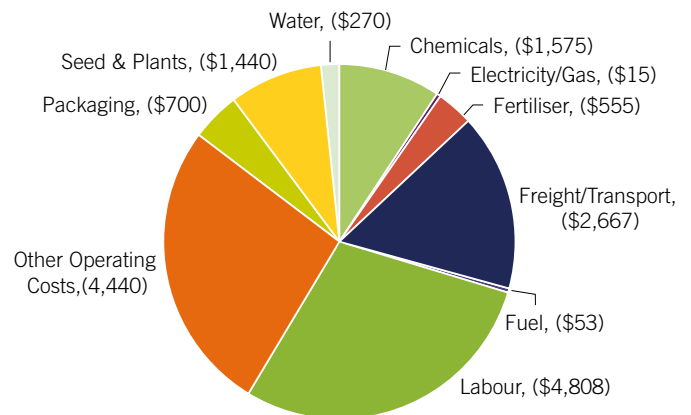
This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

Chief Investigator Gerard Kelly, of the NSW Department of Industry and Investment, said: "The feedback we got from the evaluation was quite interesting, as people had varying experiences of the tool."

"This has led to modifications and enhancements of the tool.

Financial Summary - Operating costs per hectare

Scenario: Onions - Traditional Fertiliser Program



We have tried to address the feedback we got and have done things to improve the continuity of the program."

"There were also a couple of gaps here and there with the program and we have done our best to fill them in."

Mr Kelly said that one of the main things that the feedback showed was that some growers had challenges with using computer programs, which had led to the development of a separate VegTool workbook.

"The workbook is like a paper version of the program," he said.

"When growers are looking at

and then put the information into the computer and let the program finish it off."

Mr Kelly explained that a number of video tutorials had also been developed and incorporated into the VegTool computer program.

These included 'How to use VegTool', 'Manage Scenarios', 'Enter Crop Details' and 'Enter Operating Costs'.

"If someone gets stuck at a point on the program, then they can click on a tutorial and get some basic instructions of how to use it," he said.

In a bid to improve the aesthetics of the VegTool and

“The VegTool can be used to develop an improved understanding of costs of production for growers.”

the workbook they can see what type of figures they are going to need and then enter them either onto the paper or onto the program. It is designed to be used as either a standalone version or like a pre-cursor for the computer version."

"This will be great for someone who is not too confident with the computer, as they can prepare in the book

ultimately make it easier for growers to capture and digest the program's information, work has also been done to enhance its graphics.

"We've been able to put the financial information into a graphic or a diagram, such as a pie chart or bar chart," said Mr Kelly.

"So instead of growers looking at tables of data, they can see

Screen shot of the VegTool



the information in a graphic presentation."

"We have also developed a few more options to enable users to print the information."

The next stage of the VegBiz project will involve developing a training schedule to increase the uptake of the VegTool program within the vegetable industry, which is set to be rolled out in the near future.

"We are looking at holding workshops and also doing some of them electronically via webinars," said Mr Kelly.

"We also want to involve state organisations in a training capacity such as Growcom and NSWFA, as well as IDOs and bodies like the Department of Primary Industries. We want to keep them up-to-date with the VegTool and how they can work it in with their existing services."

Mr Kelly said that commercial service providers in the vegetable industry, including rural financial counsellors and commercial agronomists, would also receive instruction about the VegTool to explain how it could be incorporated into their service and how they could use it with their grower clients.

The modified version of the program is called VegTool 1.1 and will be available to growers soon via the AUSVEG website and on CD.

Mr Kelly added: "The VegTool can be used to develop an improved understanding of costs of production for growers, to review and manage production costs or investigate growing practices."

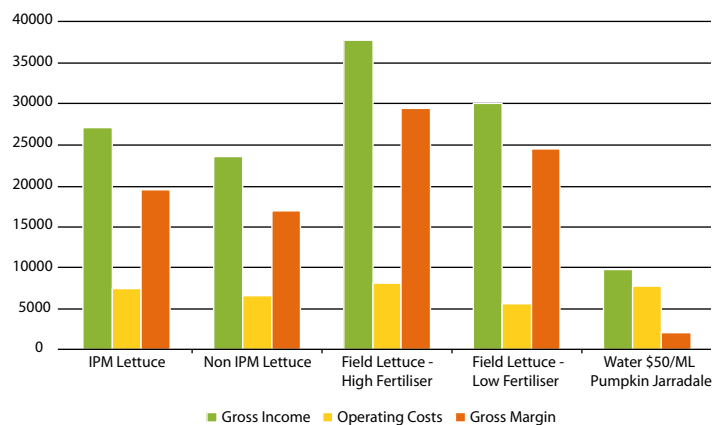
"It also helps with decision-making around crops and on-farm growing practices. It is

a grower-friendly tool and could be helpful to businesses of all sizes."

Mr Kelly explained that growers could also customise the data that the VegTool produced by putting in details about their growing practices and rates of application etc, and stressed that all reports remained confidential to the grower as it was a computer-based program and not web-based.

Compare Scenarios (Per hectare)

Comparison Report 27-Jul-2011



THE BOTTOM LINE

- The project *VegBiz, Vegetable Enterprise Decision Support System* has been developed to improve and increase the uptake of the VegTool—a program that enables growers to determine a crop gross margin by calculating returns and costs of production.
- The VegTool has now been enhanced with several modifications, including new graphics, a printed workbook to compliment the program and video tutorials to guide users.
- The new improved VegTool 1.1 will be available to growers soon and training at workshops, industry events and through industry organisations will be rolled out across Australia.

i For more information and to request a VegTool CD contact:
Gerard Kelly Chief Investigator—
NSW Department of Industry and Investment
Telephone: (03) 5019 8406
E-mail: gerard.kelly@industry.nsw.gov.au
Project number: VG08021

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NSW		WERRIBEE SOUTH	03 9742 1600	MCLAREN VALE	08 8323 8339
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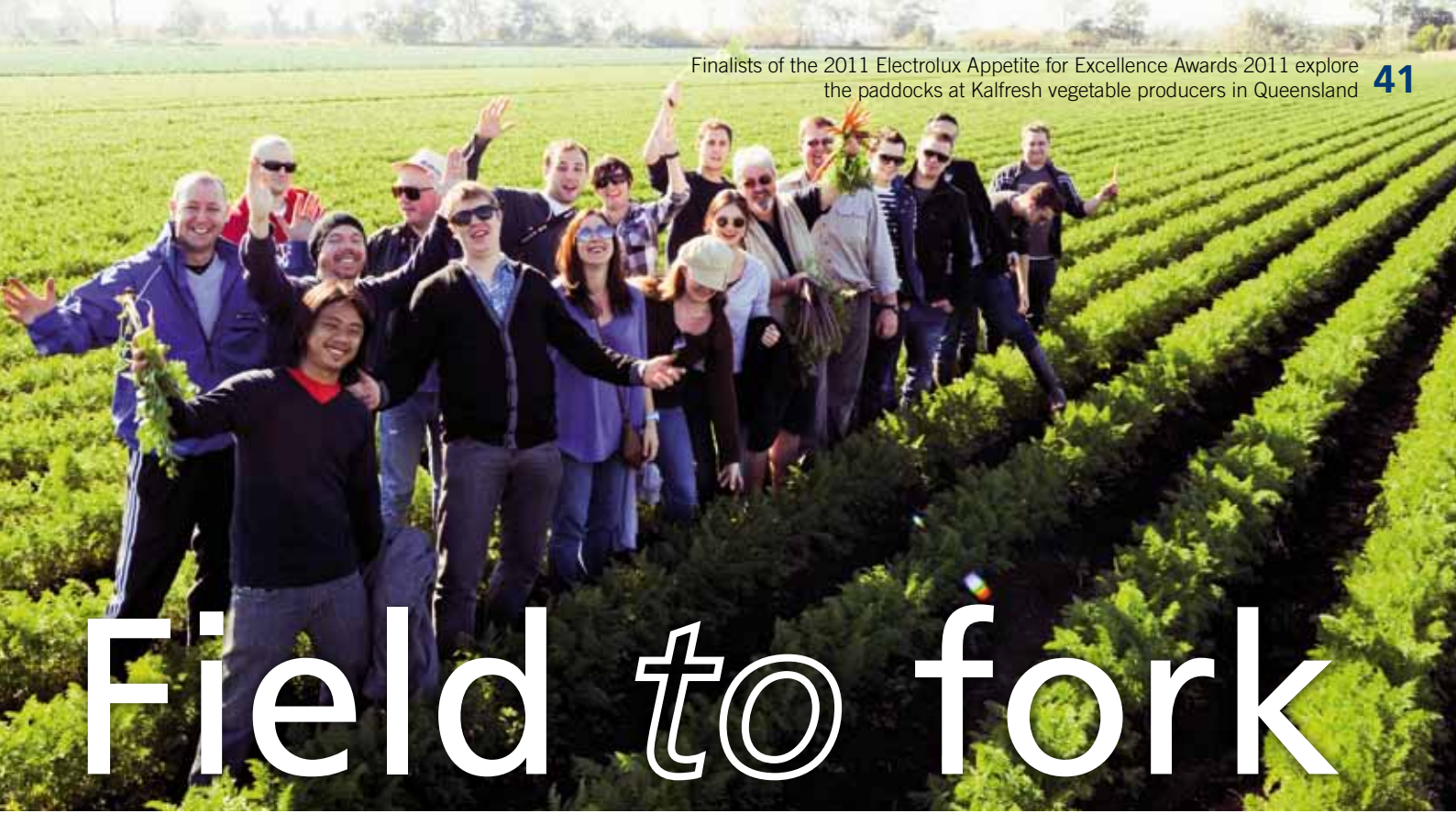
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Field to fork

Queensland growers help to guide a group of rising food stars on a journey from paddock to plate.

A group of young Australian chefs, waiters and restaurateurs have been discovering the art of vegetable growing as part of an inspiring produce tour in Queensland.

The group of 17 were finalists in the Electrolux Appetite for Excellence 2011 competition, which is a national awards program for young hospitality professionals. The food tour formed part of the finalists' prize package and culminated in a 'Hunt and Gather' dinner in Brisbane.

The participants hailed from some of the country's most acclaimed establishments such as Quay, in Sydney; The Press Club, in Melbourne; Marque, in Sydney; Red Cabbage Food and Wine, in Perth and Urbane Restaurant in Brisbane.

In a bid to experience the passion of producers that are responsible for the ingredients enjoyed in the country's best restaurants, the group visited a range of meat, seafood, fruit and vegetable suppliers on the tour.

Offering an insight into vegetable growing was Kalfresh, in the Fassifern Valley, where the group was given the opportunity to explore the paddocks and see how the produce is grown and prepared.

Kalfresh grows, packs and markets fresh produce, in particular carrots, beans and

onions.

General Operations Manager at Kalfresh Richard Gorman, together with Director and Field Manager Robert Hinrichsen, led the group on a tour of the property, discussing topics such as vegetable varieties, growing conditions, agronomy, cooling techniques and shelf life.

"It's just great to talk to passionate people at the other end of the supply chain," said Mr Gorman.

"They already had an appreciation of what goes into growing—they were chasing a perception of what food and farming is about. Their perception isn't 100 per cent right but it's close."

"There's a yearning within the food industry for everyone to understand everyone.

These guys are taking it upon themselves to get out there and do the research and get to the core of what food is, what nutrition is and how food and value goes together."

Mr Gorman added: "They understand the importance of providing nutrition to people and they're passionate about it. It was great to meet up with people who have passion for what we do and it was also good to get some invites to some of Australia's best restaurants... their invites I plan to take up in the near future!"

The finalists said that knowing about the origin of the food served in their restaurants and building relationships with producers was becoming increasingly important.

"Chefs need to be aware of where the produce is coming from, we need to have a relationship with the producer," said finalist Todd Moses, who is Sous Chef at Circa the Prince in St Kilda, Melbourne.

"It's been great to see first-hand how producers go about their daily work; it gives us an insight into how we end up with our produce. There's definitely been a change in the way we buy our produce, we try to buy locally to ensure the produce is fresh and of great quality."

"We also like to know that the produce we're buying is going to provide income to our local community, which ensures production is kept local and

sustainable."

Co-founder of the Electrolux Appetite for Excellence program, Luke Mangan, said: "Queenslanders have had an incredibly tough year. Understanding how these hardships affect the producers and the produce available in our restaurants is an important learning for all young hospitality professionals."

"Queensland is a produce-rich state and together with our partners there is nowhere else we'd rather conduct the produce tour for 2011."

The winners of the Electrolux Appetite for Excellence Awards were: Electrolux Young Chef—Richard Ousby from Quay in Sydney; Electrolux Young Waiter—James Sexton from Sepia Restaurant and Wine Bar in Sydney and Electrolux Young Restaurateur—Clint Hillery from Time to Vino in Sydney.



[L-R] Young waiter finalist Anthony Moore, Bentley Restaurant and Bar in Sydney; Director and Field Manager at Kalfresh Robert Hinrichsen and young chef finalist Todd Moses, Circa The Prince in Melbourne

Growing relationships

While DuPont has long been recognised for its products and services within agriculture, the worldwide company is now enhancing its engagement with vegetable growers in a bid to better serve their needs. Mark Swinchatt, Regional Business Director of DuPont Asia Pacific, spoke to *Vegetables Australia* about the company's focus for the future and his role within it.

With more than 30 years experience within the crop protection industry with DuPont, Mark Swinchatt has helped take the company to new heights, playing a pivotal role in its growth in Spain, Asia Pacific and in particular in Australia.

Mr Swinchatt took on the role of Regional Director of Marketing and Strategic Planning Asia Pacific in 2004, before moving on to his current role as Regional Business Director Asia Pacific in 2007.

Based at DuPont's regional headquarters in Singapore, Mr Swinchatt is accountable for the business, strategy, core values and performance of the Asia Pacific region and is key to the development of people across areas of the business.

Speaking to *Vegetables Australia*, Mr Swinchatt explained that DuPont had increased its focus on horticulture with the aim of providing positive outcomes for the industry.

"DuPont has been in horticulture for a long time, but for many years in Australia we

were probably more associated with broadacre markets like wheat and barley, just because we had a great range of products for that," said Mr Swinchatt.

"In the last four or five years, we've shifted a lot more emphasis back towards

in this industry and hopefully become part of a solution for some of the problems that are in horticulture."

While recognising that no one company had all the answers, Mr Swinchatt said that DuPont aimed to bring positive benefits to growers and explained that

used," explained Mr Swinchatt.

"It is highly effective and is an extremely good fit with IPM, as it is very mild on beneficial insects and the environment. It has been widely taken up by farmers and is much appreciated as part of good, safe, sustainable pest control in Australian vegetables."

Mr Swinchatt said that another product from the Coragen® family was due to be released in the next couple of years.

"We also have a couple of fungicides that will be easier to use and effective and safe. They will also be very compatible with IPM programs and the demands that consumers and supermarkets are placing on growers."

In moving forward with DuPont's focus on the horticulture industry, Mr Swinchatt said that there were people who had traditionally worked in broadacre areas that would engage with the industry to learn how to properly serve Australian vegetable growers.

"We are really ramping up our engagement with the industry," he said.

“In the last four or five years, we've shifted a lot more emphasis back towards horticulture.”

horticulture as a focus for our business and we've got some really great recent introductions that have solidified that shift."

"More importantly, there is a lot of new chemistry that is re-enforcing our interest to stay engaged and be involved

specialist products had been developed to assist growers with some of the challenges they faced.

"Recently launched in the past couple of years is the DuPont™ Coragen®, which is very well-known and widely



"We are making sure that particularly with the newer chemicals that are still finalising their development, we are really getting them properly developed and focused on the needs of Australian growers."

Mr Swinchatt said that new introductions to horticulture were not just about adding more products to the choice.

"There are things like White blister, which is not a massive disease problem to all growers, but it is very severe in localised areas. It is very important to brassica crops and it is spreading, but there are very few solutions for it."

"There are a number of things like that, where there is not nothing out there for it, but there are few and declining good solutions. So new introductions are not just about adding more products to the choice. In many cases that is true, but in some cases there are some real issues that are starting to become a problem for successful growing and new chemistry is needed."

Travelling from Singapore, Mr Swinchatt attended the 2011 AUSVEG National Convention,

Trade Show and Awards for Excellence in Brisbane in April, where he spoke about the role DuPont played within horticulture and gave his perspective on the crop protection industry from a global position.

"For a company like us that is trying to strengthen its position within the industry and get better connected with growers, the Convention is an ideal opportunity," said Mr Swinchatt.

"Part of the message I gave was that, along with many other people, DuPont is very much aware that sustainable food supplies have become a much more important issue globally."

"Therefore, for producers and people involved in the industry it's a very positive situation. It's finally been recognised that food isn't something you just buy in the supermarket and that it's always just going to be supplied and at a low cost."

"There are a lot of challenges, but there is a lot of interest from R&D companies of various kinds to come up with technologies to help growers deal with those challenges."

Mark Swinchatt at the 2011 AUSVEG National Convention in Brisbane



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Herbicide hope for carrots

Carrot growers could soon be getting a boost following new research that aims to help reduce restrictions on the herbicide active ingredient linuron.

Consumers are officially going crazy for carrots.

Recent data from Freshlogic has revealed that carrots are currently the most frequently purchased vegetable on a weekly basis, while figures released by Nielsen show that 95.2 per cent of Australian households purchased carrots in the last year.

So it is no surprise that carrots are grown in every Australian state, with some 234,250 tonnes being produced across the country.

The herbicide active ingredient linuron is widely used among carrot growers as both a pre and early post-emergence herbicide for control of grass and broadleaf weeds in crops. All carrot crops require good weed control, especially during the establishment period, as the crops are delicate and do not compete well with weeds.

The carrot industry has identified the need for maintaining the use of linuron for grass and broadleaved weed control for both domestic and

export markets. However, the withholding period means that it currently cannot be used on all carrot crops.

The issue has formed the basis of a project called *Generation of GLP Accredited Residue Data for linuron herbicide to set new WHP and MRL for domestic and export carrots*, which was undertaken by Peracto Pty Ltd in a bid to generate data to determine if the withholding period could be reduced to more acceptable levels.

The project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions from industry and matched funds from the Australian Government.

When applied for weed control in long season carrots, the withholding period of 10 weeks is considered acceptable. However, the short season carrot varieties - which are important to both domestic and export markets - cannot utilise the benefits of linuron as the season is shorter



Field trial site for testing levels of linuron residue in carrots

than 10 weeks.

The country's different carrot growing regions have different growing times and a wide maturity time, depending on the season. They can range from 60 days for baby carrots to 120 days for early spring crops.

Project Leader Phillip Frost, of Peracto, explained: "Linuron is a herbicide that carrot growers all over Australia use to control weeds in their crops."

"At the moment, you can't harvest your crops for 10 weeks after the herbicide has been sprayed. A lot of the time, growers want to use it closer to harvest and there are also varieties that are often not in the ground for 10 weeks."

Mr Frost said that in order for the withholding period to be shortened from 10 weeks, residue data had to be generated to show what levels would be present in the crops at the point of harvest.

"We conducted eight trials at different field sites, where we applied the linuron to the crops at four, six, eight, 10, 12 and 14 weeks before harvest," explained Mr Frost.

The trials were conducted at Binningup, Western Australia; Wanneroo, Western Australia; Devon Meadows, Victoria; North Motton, Tasmania and Kindred, Tasmania. They were also carried out on heavy and light

post-sowing pre-emergence treatment, followed by post-emergence treatments at either four, six, eight, 10, 12 and 14 weeks before harvest.

"The results of the trials were favourable and should help to

“The results of the trials were favourable and should help to allow the withholding period to be reduced.”

soil types; domestic, baby and export carrots and crops with different sowing timings.

The levels of linuron residue in the carrot samples were determined for carrots treated with linuron post-sowing pre-emergence alone and also carrots treated with a

allow the withholding period to be reduced," said Mr Frost.

"The data will be submitted to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) and they will make a decision on reducing the withholding periods of linuron in carrots."

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The carrot industry has identified the need for maintaining the use of linuron, however, the withholding period of 10 weeks means that it cannot be used on certain varieties of carrot crops.
- A project entitled *Generation of GLP Accredited Residue Data for linuron herbicide to set new WHP and MRL for domestic and export carrots* was undertaken by Peracto Pty Ltd in a bid to generate data to determine if the withholding period could be reduced to more acceptable levels.
- Results of the field trials are expected to support a reduction of the 10-week withholding period and have been submitted to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), which will make a final decision.

i Find more information:
Phillip Frost
Project Leader, Peracto Pty Ltd
Telephone: (03) 6423 2044
Project number: VG08131

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Ask the industry

with
Scott Mathew

Scott Mathew, Technical Services Lead at Syngenta, reveals how to get optimum performance from crop protection applications.

Question: What is the key to getting application right in most situations?

Getting the best performance from any crop protection product is dependent on a number of factors.

The target for spray applications can vary enormously from bare ground to upright leaf crops such as onions to horizontal leafed brassica crops. The canopy structure of the crop also changes as the plants develop.

Obtaining coverage only on the tops or outside of target plants may not control pests or diseases that spread from underneath or within the leaves. Achieving an equally distributed deposit on the target surface is not always possible.

Optimum performance from any application of a crop protection product is a function of:

- **Retention:** In general, small droplets are well-retained on plant surfaces (particularly shiny and smooth leaves), compared to large drops that tend to bounce off. Fine and medium sprays are important for retention on difficult to wet plants like onions, but are more prone to drift. Large drops are surprisingly well retained on easy to wet leaves, such as mature carrot plants, and many broadleaved weeds. Adjuvants also have a considerable influence on the retention of sprays.
- **Coverage:** Penetration into the crop is one of the key factors that will govern the performance of an applied crop protection product. In general, coarse drops which fall vertically will provide the best penetration in upright leaf crops, while finer drops which move horizontally will achieve better penetration in broadleaf crops. The number of droplets required to achieve adequate cover will be determined by the target surface and size. Crawling insects and broadleaved weeds provide a larger target and therefore require fewer droplets and coverage. As grasses and flying insects offer smaller target areas, they require more droplets and coverage.
- **Mode of action:** Penetration and spreading within the treated plant surface will depend on the site of action of the applied product. The activity of protectant fungicides is determined largely by the even spreading of the active ingredient(s) across the plant surface to form a protective barrier. The activity of systemic fungicides and insecticides is influenced by the ability of the active ingredients to penetrate, and form a reservoir within, the plant tissue.



Scott Mathew, Technical Services Lead at Syngenta

Question: Why has Syngenta developed a new range of nozzles?

We have divisions within Syngenta that work on achieving the best biological activity from our products, as well as another UK-based division that focuses solely on products' practical use and application, so that farmers can get the best results from those products in the field.

The production of these nozzles has been the result of extensive research and development. Six patented nozzle designs have been developed exclusively by Syngenta Crop Protection and Hypro EU Ltd. This new nozzle range varies in use from horticultural through to broadacre.

For more information on the nozzles, and the crops they are suited for use on, please contact Syngenta Crop Protection.

Ask the industry

If you have a question that you would like addressed, please ring Syngenta on 1800 067 108 or email Vegetables Australia: <info@ausveg.com.au>

Please note that your questions may be published.

Spending trends

Recent data collected from 10,000 households across Australia is helping to give a valuable insight into the vegetable industry.

A series of reports on the brand health and consumer demographics of different vegetable commodities has been compiled by Nielsen in a bid to help members of the industry understand how products fare in the consumer market.

The reports have been produced as part of the multi-industry project entitled *Understanding purchase behaviour of fresh produce consumers (Project code MT10017)*.

The reports, which are available to read on the AUSVEG website, are created using Nielsen's Homescan®

Consumer Panel, which is designed to monitor and understand household purchasing of packaged grocery and fresh produce.

And with 10,000 households on the Australian Homescan® panel, it is now the second largest panel per capita in the world (behind the New Zealand panel of 2,500).

Homescan® comprises a sample of households that is selected and controlled to be demographically representative of the Australian household population. Each household is equipped with a hand-held scanner through which details of all purchasing are entered,

including product, quantity, price and outlet.

The electronically-captured data, which is collected on a continuous basis, is linked with the demographic details of the household and its purchasing history.

The consumer insights delivered by Homescan® represent a definitive source for understanding purchase behaviour and shopping patterns for any segment of the population across all retail outlets. The system provides information to determine how many households are buying a commodity, how much they buy and who they are.

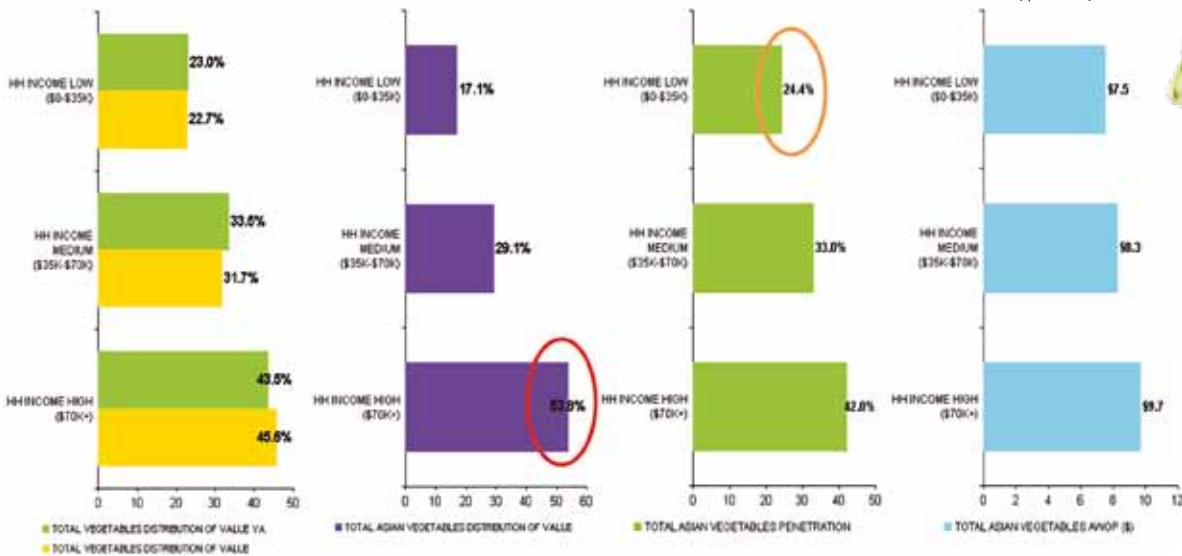
As the data is continuously collected, it enables the measurement of ongoing changes and interactions of households' purchasing behaviour across all grocery and fresh products.

The latest series of vegetable reports includes data on pumpkin, cauliflower, cucumber, capsicum, sweet potato and lettuce, as well as Asian vegetables.

The Asian Vegetables Report – Brand Health and Demographics details summaries of the data collected for the period June 2010-June 2011.

Who buys my brands? (Income) - Demographics - Value

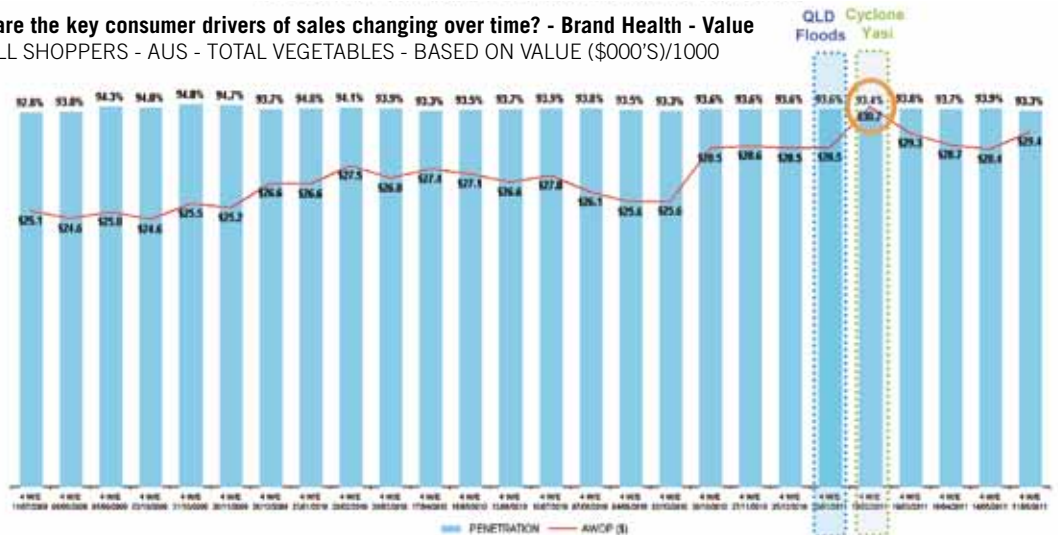
AUS - TOTAL ASIAN VEGETABLES - MAT* TO 11/06/2011 - BASED ON VALUE (\$000'S)/1000



Over the last year, high income households have had the most significant contribution to Asian vegetable sales, in line with total vegetable sales. However, Asian vegetables under index within low income households.

How are the key consumer drivers of sales changing over time? - Brand Health - Value

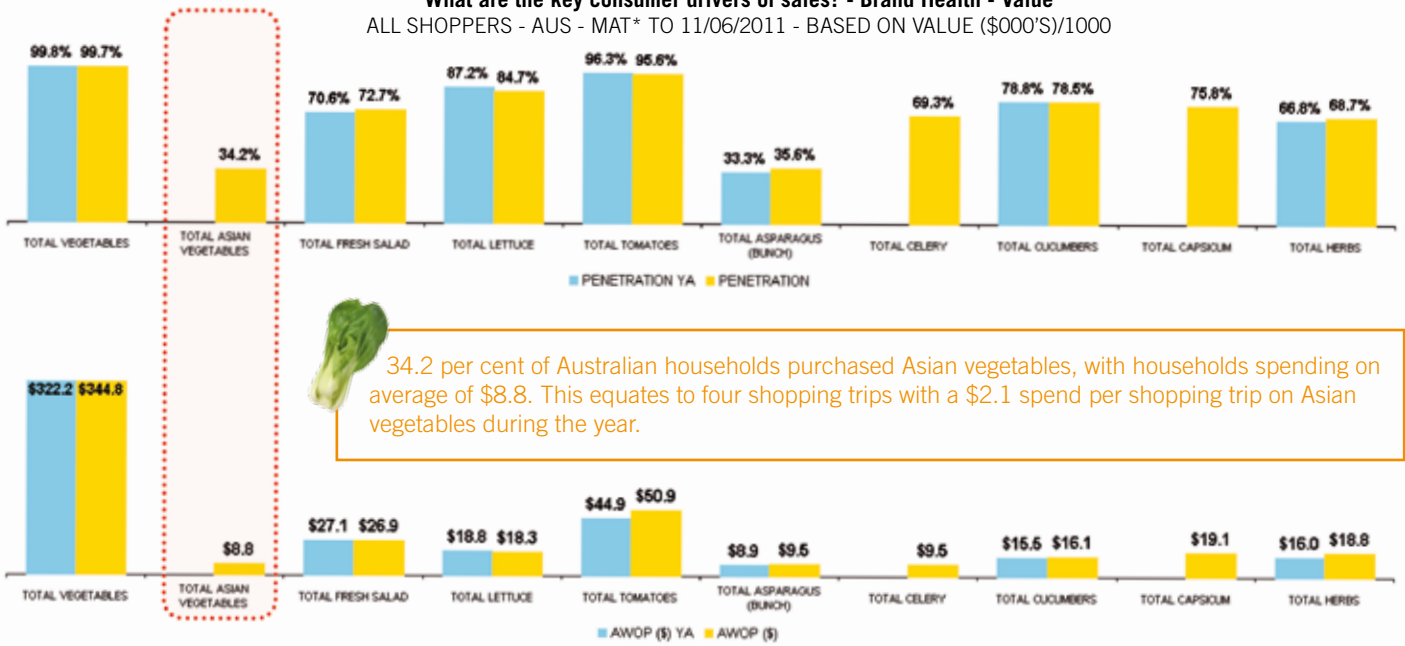
ALL SHOPPERS - AUS - TOTAL VEGETABLES - BASED ON VALUE (\$000'S)/1000



Average household spend on vegetables peaked immediately following the natural disasters in February.

*MAT- Moving annual total; a rolling yearly total which accumulates 52 weeks of data.

What are the key consumer drivers of sales? - Brand Health - Value
 ALL SHOPPERS - AUS - MAT* TO 11/06/2011 - BASED ON VALUE (\$000'S)/1000



34.2 per cent of Australian households purchased Asian vegetables, with households spending on average of \$8.8. This equates to four shopping trips with a \$2.1 spend per shopping trip on Asian vegetables during the year.

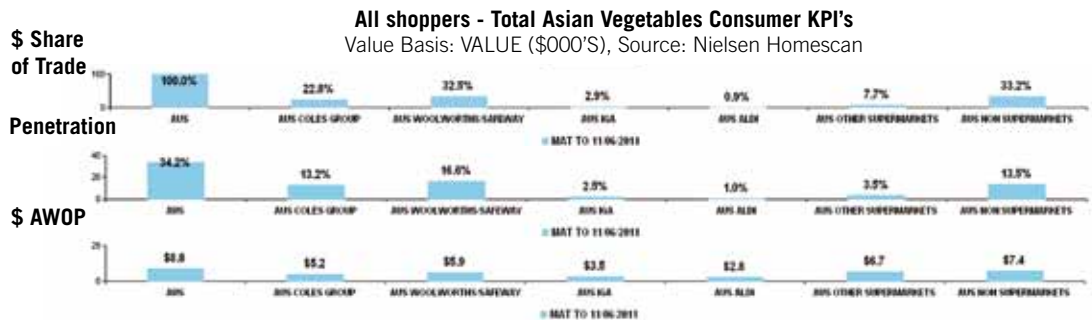


Woolworths remains a dominant player in the market and holds a third of the share of Asian vegetables, although greengrocers have a much higher Average Weight of Purchase.

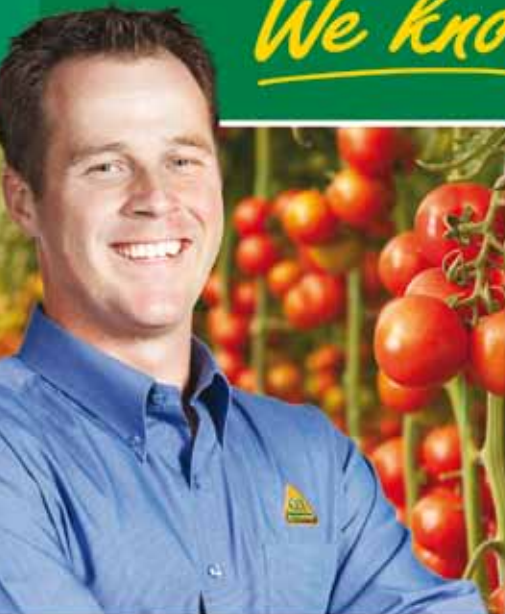
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2012 Vegetable Growers' Study Tour

Germany and the Netherlands



Vegetable growers are being offered the chance to embark on a bespoke tour of Berlin and the Netherlands to discover a flavour of the horticulture industry in Europe.

Taking place from 7–18 February 2012, the AUSVEG-led tour will provide exposure to technological, marketing and business development initiatives being undertaken by European growers and will establish closer contact with Australian growers.

Kicking off the 11-day tour will be a visit to Fruit Logistica at Messe Berlin—the world's leading trade fair for fruit and vegetable industries. Participants will have the

chance to see more than 2,000 companies from across the fresh produce supply chain, including global players and smaller businesses.

The tour will also take in the Berliner Großmarkt GmbH, where participants will be able to view the famous wholesale market's vast array of fruit and vegetables.

As well as visiting a number of farms along the way, there will also be exclusive tours of the Bayer CropScience headquarters in Monheim, the John Deere Werke factory and the Research Unit of Applied Plant Research for Arable Farming, Multifunctional

Agriculture and Field Production of Vegetables in the Netherlands.

Participants will also hear from a vegetable specialist from the University of Bonn, who will provide an overview of the vegetable industry in Germany.

Rounding off the tour will be an inspection of the glasshouse vegetable production area in the west of Holland, which is responsible for around 50 per cent of the product value of fruit and vegetables, as well as a visit to FloraHolland—the world's largest building and flower auction.

Expressions of interest welcomed

Anyone wishing to express their interest in taking part in the tour should contact AUSVEG National Marketing Manager Simon Coburn on (03) 9822 0388 or e-mail simon.coburn@ausveg.com.au

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Decades of dedication

Principal Plant Pathologist with the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), Denis Persley, has committed his career to identifying diseases that can be detrimental to crops in an effort to help safeguard the vegetable industry. After more than 40 years in his field, the Queensland-based researcher has not only become a highly-regarded figure, but has also received national recognition for his outstanding contributions to horticulture.

Denis Persley has long been dedicated to nurturing the growth and prosperity of Australia's vegetable industry through his work. And his distinguished career of more than 40 years is proof of his fervent commitment.

During those years, Mr Persley has not only made ongoing contributions to the control of several challenging plant virus diseases in vegetable crops, but has also published an extensive range of books and mentored new generations of vegetable pathology researchers.

As one of Australia's leading authorities on plant virus pathogens, Mr Persley also gained recent recognition from his industry peers when he received the Researcher of the Year Award, sponsored by Bayer CropScience, at the AUSVEG National Awards for Excellence in April.

The award acknowledges

researchers who have a track record of research or extension work that has advanced the vegetable industry long term.

Starting as a cadet while studying part time at the University of Queensland and

sweet potatoes, and for the past 15 years he has focused almost all of his research on the development of control measures for plant virus diseases in vegetable crops.

"In my role as a virologist,

pesticide use and encourage other good farming practices," he explained.

As a leading researcher for the vegetable industry, Mr Persley has also published his findings in a number of technical articles and co-authored two handbooks.

One of Mr Persley's most significant achievements was his co-authorship of the reference book 'Diseases of Vegetable Crops in Australia', which was published by CSIRO in 2010. The book provides practical information and images of important diseases affecting vegetable crops grown across the country.

During the last decade, Mr Persley has also been a team leader and mentor for plant pathologists at DEEDI.

"One can never achieve outstanding results alone," he said.

"Good outcomes always resolve from good teams working together. Therefore, the achievement award, of which I am very proud, reflects upon the work we have done as a team, as well as the department's commitment to basic research in the area."

Looking to the future, Mr Persley's goal is to one day achieve the greatest possible control of virus diseases in the vegetable industry. In a bid to achieve this, Mr Persley said he always looked for new alliances across the industry.

"At DEEDI, we have great research facilities and we are continuously looking forward to new collaborations to advance in our ability to understand what the important virus diseases in vegetable crops are, how they spread and what effective management can look like," he said.

“In the end, our work feeds back to the vegetable industry and finally to growers to enable them to grow healthier crops more profitably.”

the Queensland University of Technology, Mr Persley's first project area included work on summer cereal crops such as maize and sorghum.

Gradually, his research began to include vegetable crops such as cucurbits, capsicums and

I identify virus resistance sources among crops, do some testing, look at strain variations and work together with plant breeders to cross trait characteristics and develop resistant crop varieties," said Mr Persley.

"In the end, our work feeds back to the vegetable industry and finally to growers to enable them to grow healthier crops more profitably."

"If growers can learn from our research how to avoid or manage plant diseases, this will benefit them financially and ultimately deliver a better product to consumers. Communicating this information to farmers is one of the most important aspects of my work. I've worked on many projects that help growers use our research in their day-to-day farm management."

Mr Persley's research into environmentally-friendly practices when treating or preventing plant diseases is also helping to create a sustainable future for the vegetable industry.

"By identifying and managing viruses we are able to reduce

2010 Researcher of the Year Award winner Len Tesoriero, 2011 winner Denis Persley and Richard Dickmann of Bayer CropScience



Vegetable growing

Legislation for the government's proposed carbon tax is expected to pass. James, Industry Economist and Leader of the Vegetable Industry Development need to get to grips with the economics of the carbon tax and this article on grower operations.

The carbon tax proposal is part of the government's Clean Energy Future Package. Households and most businesses will be exempt from the carbon tax, although 500 of Australia's businesses will pay the tax.

Each of these companies will, from 1 July, 2012, pay an initial price of \$23 for each tonne of carbon they emit. The price will rise by around 5% per year (depending on the rate of inflation) in the subsequent

two years.

From 1 July, 2015, the carbon tax will be replaced by an emissions trading scheme, where the price of carbon will be set in the market place. The government will issue permits, which will be capped so as to achieve the government's pollution reduction targets.

Businesses involved in the scheme will have to buy a permit in the market place and surrender it to the government for each tonne of pollution they produce.

Australian Treasury modelling suggests that the price will rise by 5% in real terms, which at the current inflation rate suggests a rise of 8.6% per annum. At this rate, there will be a strong incentive to reduce carbon emissions or to engage in or encourage other firms to undertake carbon mitigation measures or soil sequestration.

The origin of the scheme

Pricing of carbon has deep roots in economic theory. Sometimes markets do not correctly price the social cost of an economic activity. This leads to externalities or spill-over effects that may be a cost to society. The government has decided that carbon emissions are one such externality.

Economists, like the rest of the population, will have divergent views as to the government's position. However, overwhelmingly they would advise that if society believes that curbs need to be placed on carbon emissions

that the least cost and most efficient way is through the use of market pricing rather than government decree. Hence the carbon tax and eventually an emissions trading scheme.

The economic impact

Pricing carbon involves raising the cost of production techniques that generate carbon emissions. By raising costs (price) of production, carbon-emitting industries are encouraged to look for alternative production methods, which will reduce carbon emissions.

One of the major contributors to carbon emissions in Australia is the energy sector, which has been built on the existence of plentiful and cheap coal.

Energy powers the economy and is an essential input into many businesses. Make no mistake that this is a major structural change in the economy.

The pain is being eased by all sorts of exemptions and phasing in, but the intent is clear. The cost of doing business using existing methods of production for energy will rise.

Economic modelling on the vegetable industry

We don't have any economic modelling on the impact of the carbon tax on vegetable growers' cost of production. That may be a blessing, for some of the modelling on other industries leaves a lot to be desired.

There was some earlier work done at the time when the previous emissions trading scheme that was defeated in parliament was being proposed. That scheme was more ambitious than the present proposed carbon tax and had fewer exemptions, so the increases in costs of production were higher. This modelling suggested an increase in

vegetable production costs of around 2%.

The impact on vegetable production costs

While agriculture emissions, hence vegetable growing, are exempt, the carbon tax will have a direct impact on vegetable growers' costs. With costs already on the rise and the industry unable to pass cost increases on due to the lack of pricing power in downstream market, margins will be squeezed.

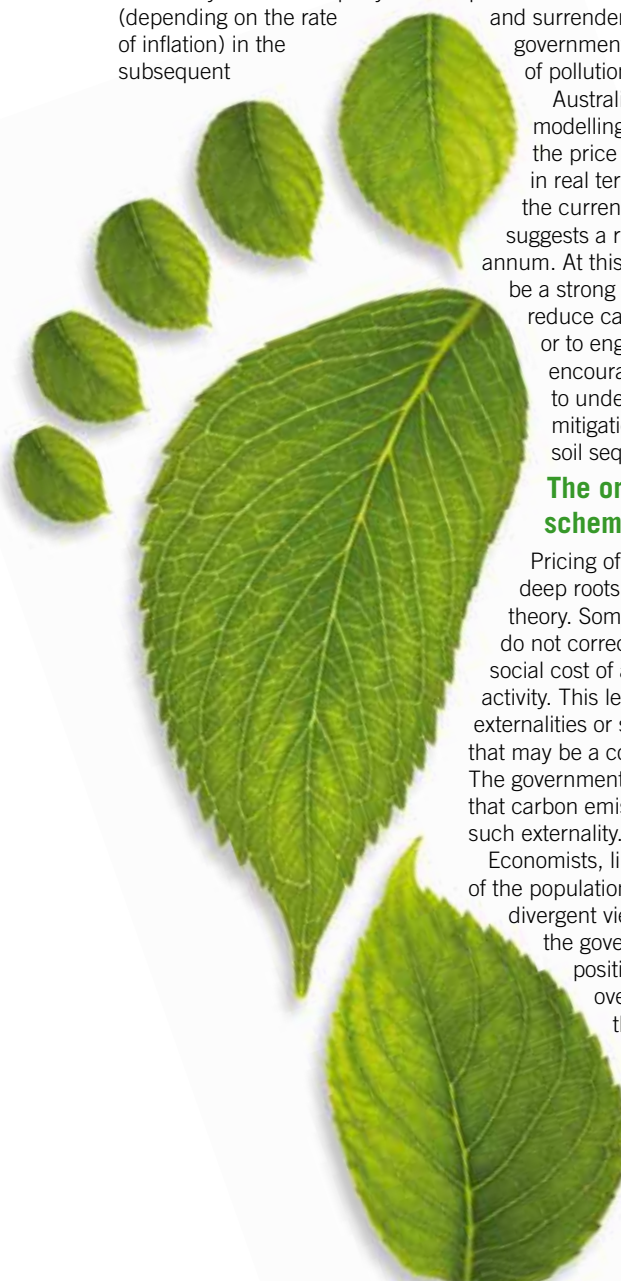
The big known is that electricity charges will rise by 10% due to the carbon tax. Electricity use on vegetable farms varies widely depending on a range of factors, including whether the farm has a packing house, whether the production is in the field or undercover, irrigation techniques used and whether there are alternative on-farm sources of energy.

Electricity prices also vary depending on location, state and region. The latest ABARES annual financial survey of vegetable farms suggested that electricity bills averaged \$11,000 across all vegetable farms. Many growers face bills much larger than this.

Updated economic modelling on work originally done for the National Farmers Federation on the impact of the carbon tax on beef farms showed a \$1,145 rise in costs in the first year and on sheep farms a \$976 rise in costs on sheep farms. So the electricity hit itself will raise costs of production for vegetable growers by more than the total assessed impact on beef and sheep farms.

Then there are other inputs that are essential to vegetable production.

Despite some arguments to the contrary, the carbon tax will place upward price pressure on inputs that use energy in their production such as fertiliser, chemicals, seed and packaging



and the carbon tax

through parliament by the end of the year, writes Ian Program's Economic sub-program. Vegetable growers will seeks to shed some light on the carbon tax and its impact

materials. These four inputs, according to the ABARES survey, averaged \$133,000 across all vegetable farms.

This will not be a one-off hit, as costs will increase as the carbon tax increases. Moreover, at present, heavy on-road vehicles have escaped the tax, but from 1 July, 2014 the government intends to bring these into the scheme. This will involve increased freight costs, so the cost of delivery of chemicals, fuel and fertiliser, as well as delivery of vegetables to markets if carried in non-own

trucks, will all rise.

The economic response

Vegetable growers will have to increase productivity or reduce costs in order to offset the production cost increase imposed by the carbon tax. This is not an easy task. Growers already seek to minimise costs in an environment where other costs continually rise without compensating price increases.

The carbon tax just highlights the ongoing economic challenge to growers. Even without the tax, electricity prices will rise

as electricity companies are investing heavily in upgrading outdated infrastructure. With future productivity gains limited, attention to production techniques that lower costs is the key to long run viability.

A follow-up article in Vegetables Australia (November/December) will analyse some of the positives contained in the overall package and how growers may be able to take advantage of these.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Legislation for the proposed carbon tax is expected to pass through parliament by the end of 2011 and although vegetable growing is exempt, the tax will have a direct impact on vegetable growers' costs.
- It is expected that electricity charges will rise by 10%, which will impact upon growers' costs, and there will be price pressures on other aspects of production.
- Vegetable growers will have to increase productivity or reduce costs in order to offset the production cost increases.



Find more information
Ian James is Project Leader of the Vegetable Industry Development Program's Economic Sub-Program.
Project number: VG08040

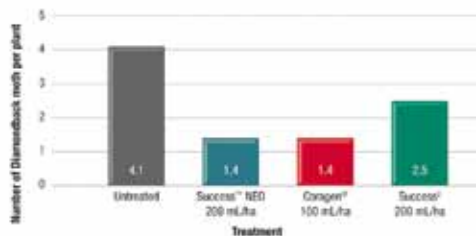
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Around the states

Queensland



More time for diuron review

The herbicide diuron has been under review by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) for some time.

The review was initiated on the basis of environmental and other concerns and the APVMA has released a new environmental assessment and a human health assessment report for diuron.

The environmental report concludes that the continued

use of diuron in many situations may present levels of risk to the environment at current usage rates.

Diuron manufacturers have been asked to 'show cause' as to why the APVMA should not suspend the registration of most diuron products on the basis of the environmental concerns while it prepares to make its final decision on the review.

After taking six years to prepare a report, the APVMA expected the industry to respond by 12 August, 2011. Fortunately, industry protests were heard and the date has been extended until 30 September. However, it still gives little time to enable a proper assessment of industry practices.

Where risks to human health and the environment are concerned, Growcom will accept the decision of the regulator.

However, the horticulture industry needs to be confident that the science is robust.

The use of diuron in the horticultural industry is widespread, but the level of use on particular crops needs careful assessment. Where lower rates are being used in practice than has been assumed, this should be taken into consideration by the regulator.

Unforeseen consequences could follow the phasing out of diuron.

Since the market for these products is comparatively small in Australia, there is a real risk that chemical companies will not be interested in developing alternatives in place of diuron, since there will not be a high enough return on investment.

That could mean growers having to resort to a number of different "older" chemicals

to do the same job. Clearly, growers will continue to be governed by the regulated label rates and minor use permits in their usage patterns, but may have to spend much more time and money to achieve results with corresponding productivity losses.

The product is used in peas and asparagus and a range of fruit crops.

Alex Livingstone

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Fax: (07) 3620 3880

New South Wales



I am pleased to report the NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Conference, held the day before the Association's Annual Conference in June, was very successful. Approximately 65 members and industry stakeholders participated in the event, which was kindly sponsored by Chop and the National Harvest Labour Information Service.

We were fortunate to have the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, open the Conference. The Minister spoke on issues of major concern to horticultural industries, such as biosecurity and flying-fox management, and also had a positive story to tell

about the value of horticulture to the NSW economy and the investment in research and development. In particular, she spoke of a new research centre on the Central Coast for Protected Cropping and Horticulture.

For the 'Food Security' session, the Conference was addressed by Senator Nick Xenophon and Richard Mulcahy, CEO of AUSVEG. They promoted the value and opportunities for horticulture and their presentations generated much discussion in the areas of biosecurity and country of origin labelling.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Principal Advisor Food Safety, Amanda Hill, spoke about the role of FSANZ in horticulture and the advice FSANZ provides to AQIS.

The NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee has provided a submission to FSANZ in response to its

improving food safety for fresh horticultural produce consultation paper. In the submission, the Association said that FSANZ must recognise the commitment the majority of horticultural producers have made to food safety through participation in food safety and quality programs. Additionally, the focus of any food safety compliance must be based on an assessment of risk, not on commodities or commodity groupings.

Recently, Horticulture Policy Manager Alison Anderson and I attended a Small Business Forum hosted by the Minister for Small Business, Senator Nick Sherry, at the invitation of AUSVEG. The purpose of the Forum was for the Minister to hear about issues affecting the small business sector from a broad range of organisations and operators.

I was most disappointed with the Minister's response to my

question about the impact of the carbon tax on horticultural businesses, known to be price takers. The Minister agreed that the carbon tax would have an impact on horticulture because of its high energy inputs. He also stated that consumers would have to pay for these increased costs as they were being compensated.

This infers that horticulturists are able to pass their costs on - which is definitely not true. This will be another input cost that horticultural businesses will have to wear, putting further pressure on their sustainability.

Peter Darley

NSW Farmers' Association
Horticulture Committee
Chairman
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Fax: (02) 8251 1750

Tasmania



TFGA's inaugural Policy Forum a huge success

It is unanimous; the TFGA's first Policy Forum, held at Launceston's Country Club Tasmania on 2 June, was a stunning success.

The forum amply demonstrated that the TFGA is leading the public debate over the future economic direction for Tasmania. At the same time, it is attracting a new demographic of articulate, tertiary-educated young men and women who think deeply and question incisively about the direction ahead.

The forum drew in more than 150 people from throughout the country. They were held spellbound as five eminent experts in their fields examined the crystal ball for Tasmanian

agriculture. These were Demographer Bernard Salt; Science Communicator Julian Cribb; Australian Farm Institute CEO Mick Keogh; Climate Futures for Tasmania CEO Tony Press and the Australian Innovation Research Centre's Anthony Arundel.

What did they learn?

It is not only the climate that is changing. Community values and community dynamics are also changing, driven by the ascendancy of China and India; the arrival of peak oil; the imminent retirement of baby boomers and, as far as Australia is concerned, an approaching crisis in available labour.

Added to this is Bernard Salt's warning that the rest of the world will not sit idly back and watch Australia lock away, in the name of conservation, its resources and land that is able to be populated, while the global food crisis deepens.

Demand for our agricultural produce will increase as the world population reaches somewhere between nine billion or 11 billion by 2070 (Salt and Cribb differed slightly on the number).

Bernard Salt asserted that,

as the baby boomers retired, Australia would need more tax or more taxpayers. We should be aiming for annual immigration of 180,000 rather than 70,000.

Whatever the scale of immigration, the transition from European immigration and culture to Asian would continue, meaning we would have to adapt the food we produced as the population's cultural markers changed.

In simple terms, it is a move away from a Mediterranean focus on pasta and coffee to a growing influence of India and China, epitomised by tea.

As this transition in Australia continues, China runs into a labour problem at the end of this decade because of its one-child policy.

That raises the question of who will produce its food?

Julian Cribb painted the most sobering picture. He said that, though no one had made an accurate assessment, it appeared the world was losing about one per cent (50,000 sq km) of its farmland annually, due to land degradation, urban sprawl, mining, recreation, toxic pollution and rising sea levels.

"By 2050 the total area of

farm land buried under cities may exceed the total landmass of China, and the total area of land diverted to recreation and other non-food activities may rival that of the United States," he said.

"This is nearly all prime farm land in river valleys and on coastal plains."

On top of the scarcities of land, water, energy and nutrients, the world's farmers were driving into what he termed "a huge technology pothole." This is the result of decisions by national and regional governments worldwide, by aid donors and academic institutions, to slash resources for agricultural research and extension over four decades.

On the back of the success of the Policy Forum, the TFGA is already planning next year's event.

Jan Davis

Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association Policy & Advocacy Chief Executive Officer
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Launceston, Tas 7250
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Fax: (03) 6331 4344

Victoria



A new membership year commenced from the 1 July and we encourage all vegetable growers in Victoria to support their vegetable industry.

The Association has provided services for more than 60 years and the quality of growers who have given their time and experience serving as President and on the Executive Committee has been a great contribution to its ongoing success.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 14 October, 2011, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Spencer Street, Melbourne, commencing at 4.30pm. All members are encouraged to nominate for positions of President, Vice President and places on the Executive Committee.

The Victorian Government has finally made the decision that

the Wholesale Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market will move to a new site at Epping in July 2014. VGA Vic welcomes the decision that the Melbourne Market Authority will be retained for market management.

There are still a number of outstanding issues to be resolved, especially the cost of operating a business at the Epping Market. The VGA Vic Executive Committee has nominated Luis Gazzola, David Wallace and Vince Doria to ensure that vegetable growers are equally represented in all discussions regarding trading areas and cost of occupancy for growers' stands at Epping.

The 4th Annual Golf Day, held on Friday, 5 August, 2011, at Lang Lang Golf Club in Nyora, South Gippsland, was proudly sponsored by E.E. Muir & Sons and Melbourne Market Authority and attracted a bumper group of vegetable growers and industry associates.

Numbers have increased over the past four years, with 128 golfers teeing off in this year's Ambrose Competition.

Support from industry associates provided excellent

prizes for the golf event and the raffle, which was held in support of the Royal Children's Hospital.

The VGA Vic President's Gazzola Farms Trophy was won by the team from Gendore Tractors and Machinery for the best score of the day. VGA Vic extends its appreciation and thanks to all industry associates for their generous support in donating prizes.

VGA Vic has been successful in obtaining two funding approvals.

One is from DAFF for a young grower group to visit Western Australia to see different irrigation systems first-hand. The second funding approval has been received from HAL to allow a group of young growers to inspect and assess lettuce harvesting equipment operating in the USA and Italy.

The Annual Growers' Regional Dinner is to be held at Villa Adriana, Frankston-Dandenong Road, South Dandenong, on Saturday, 5 November, 2011 from 7pm.

An invitation is extended to all vegetable growers and industry associates to attend this event. A flyer will be circulated in

September for table reservations.

Take the opportunity and make contact with our two Industry Development Officers Helena Whitman, IDO West (0407 772 299), and Slobodan Vujovic, IDO East (0422 583 784), as well as Membership Services Coordinator Rod Hall (0403 215 935) for all the latest information regarding the Victorian Horticultural Industry Network Program, the National Vegetable Industry Development Program and Victorian vegetable industry issues.

For the latest in vegetable industry information for Victoria take a look at our website: www.vegetablesvictoria.com.au or www.vgavic.org.au

Tony Imeson

VGA Victoria Executive Officer
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South Australia



Grow SA revisits the 2030 blue print for the Northern Adelaide Plains

In July 2007, the Lucas Group compiled a detailed study of the future direction of horticulture on the Adelaide Plains.

The steering committee at that time consisted of the Virginia Horticulture Centre (now Grow SA), Primary Industries, City of

Playford, Wakefield Regional Council and the District Council of Mallala.

Since 2007, the horticultural region around Virginia down to Waterloo Corner and out as far as Angle Vale has continued to come under pressure from urban expansion and a rapid rise in land prices, partially due to compulsory land acquisitions for the new Northern Expressway.

Interstate land developers have estimated that large areas for new housing developments and existing horticulture land is in line to be re-zoned.

With these area-changing developments in mind, Grow SA has been proactive in looking

at opening up new areas north of the Gawler River and is presently in discussions with interested parties in providing a sustainable supply of good water for horticultural purposes and the identification of land suitable for larger scale vegetable growing and green house construction.

In any such expansion into new regions, considerable financial backing is needed, but Grow SA believes that this too can be achieved even in these times of financial uncertainty.

When the blue print was first released for public discussion in 2007, government and grower interest was high, but with the advent of the GFC and

restrained government spending in the agricultural sector, any move north for horticulture will need to be driven by private enterprise.

For further information contact Gavin Limbert at Grow SA on (08) 8282 9200.

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Calendar of events

September 2011

24 – 25 September

Eurofruit Congress Middle East

InterContinental Dubai-Festival City, Dubai

For more information:

Visit: www.eurofruitcongress.com/me

October 2011

14 October

Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria Annual General Meeting and Dinner

Crowne Plaza, Spencer St, Melbourne at 4pm

For more information:

VGA Victoria

Phone: (03) 9687 4707

Email: contact@vgavic.org.au

November - December 2011

30 November - 2 December

AgriPro Asia

Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong

For more information:

Visit: www.verticalexpo.com

25 - 30 September

International Association of Horticultural Producers Annual Congress 2011

X'ian, China

For more information:

Visit: www.aiph.org

November 2011

5 November

Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria Regional Dinner Dance

Villa Adriana Function Centre, Frankston-Dandenong Road, Frankston at 7pm - midnight

For more information:

VGA Victoria

Phone: (03) 9687 4707

May 2012

10 - 12 May

2012 AUSVEG National Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence

Wrest Point Casino Hotel, Hobart, Tasmania

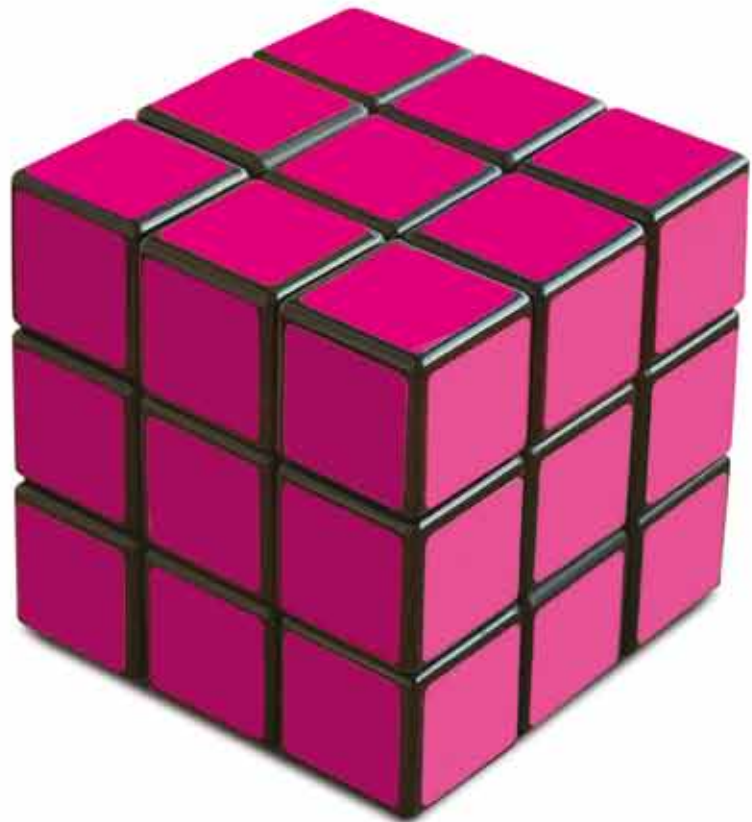
For more information:

AUSVEG

Phone: (03) 9822 0388

Email: convention@ausveg.com.au





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