

Collaborative Industry Organisation - Western Australia - Support to VIDP

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Vegetable Growers Association of WA Inc

Project Number: VG10102

VG10102

This report is published by Horticulture Australia Ltd to pass on information concerning horticultural research and development undertaken for the vegetables industry.

The research contained in this report was funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd with the financial support of the vegetables industry.

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ISBN 0 7341 2999 8

Published and distributed by:
Horticulture Australia Ltd
Level 7
179 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 8295 2300
Fax: (02) 8295 2399

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Horticulture Australia



VG10102

Final Report

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VG10102

Collaborative Industry Organisation - Western Australia - Support to VIDP

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This report is to give an overview on the delivery of industry development information

This project has been funded by HAL using the Vegetable Industry Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government and also support by the WA Vegetable Growers Association



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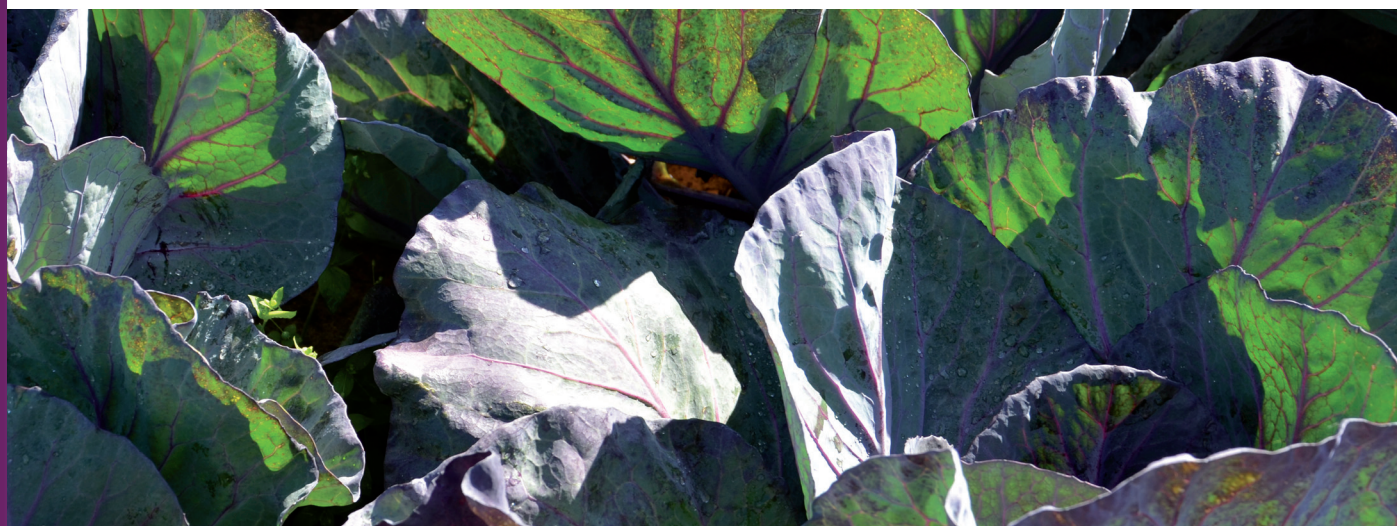


16th October 2012

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Media Summary

The national industry development has been delivered under the Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) for the last three years. Through this program vegetablesWA has successfully delivered extension and communication services to assist with the uptake of research and development findings as a Collaborative Industry Association.

The project in Western Australia (WA) has:

- linked growers with national Research and Development (R&D) providers, agronomists, field officers, Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA), and other industry providers;
- improved awareness of national R&D programs and assisted growers to incorporate the results into their business and growing practices; and
- Provided feedback to HAL about program performance and future industry development needs.

The project communicated with growers and industry through partially funding a full-time Field Extension Officer, the quarterly *WA Grower* magazine, fortnightly E-News, phone calls, faxes, mail outs and the vegetablesWA website. The project provided for the translation of many VIDP materials into Vietnamese, who form a significant portion of the WA growing community. These efforts were underpinned by ongoing work with good practice demonstration sites, partnerships with other industry service providers and a comprehensive database. The other funding contributor to the project was the WA Agricultural Produce Commission Vegetable Producers Committee.

Feedback about the results of this industry service has been overwhelmingly positive. Effective communication and R&D extension is crucial to developing the Western Australian vegetable industry so that it is cohesive, market focused, a producer of quality produce, profitable, environmentally responsible, and positioned as a serious competitor in the global food industry.

Introduction

Following the dissolution of the former national Industry Development Officer (IDO) service, state peak bodies were engaged to provide services under the new Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) as a Collaborative Industry Association. In Western Australia, this enabled vegetablesWA to continue providing a communication and extension service to growers which combined many features of the former IDO role with the organizational capacity of vegetablesWA to drive development of the industry.

This final report will further detail the methodology, results and conclusions of this project.

Technology transfer strategy and methodology/activities

vegetablesWA facilitated industry development by communicating with growers through a range of complimentary methods. The project was implemented by the vegetablesWA Policy and Program Manager and overseen by the growers on the vegetablesWA Committee of Management to ensure that it remained best targeted at client needs.

Field Extension Officer

The field officer provides an integral part of the extension service by visiting growers on farm and reporting back any new information to the Program Manager and Executive Officer.

This role is necessary due to the failure of many projects to deliver the ongoing contact required to ensure the information is adequately available and the support required to achieve implementation. The Field Extension Officer is in a position to develop trust through ongoing relationships and provide the support required over a period of time for growers to implement change.

A total of 376 face-to-face grower visits were made over the course of the project. The Field Extension Officer assisted growers in all growing regions in proportion with their distribution. The Field Extension Officer also fielded approximately 100 grower enquiries via telephone.

Feedback from Western Australian growers strongly supports the provision of this role as a means of obtaining ongoing support, free from any of the commercial imperatives on which other information providers are reliant and may compromise the perceived integrity of their assistance. Different growers prefer to receive information in different forms, however the overwhelming feedback indicates that face-to-face interaction is the preferred method for a great portion of the industry.

The Field Extension Officer role has traditionally focussed on extension of productivity improving measures. However, the vegetablesWA Field Extension Officer position developed improved capacity to also deliver in areas of business management and market dynamics with the appointment of a new staff member in January 2012.



Field Extension Officer Sarah Houston and Grower Ivan Ivankovich



Grower Vince Cavallaro and Field Extension Officer Charlotte Butler

Good Practice Demonstration Sites and Workshops

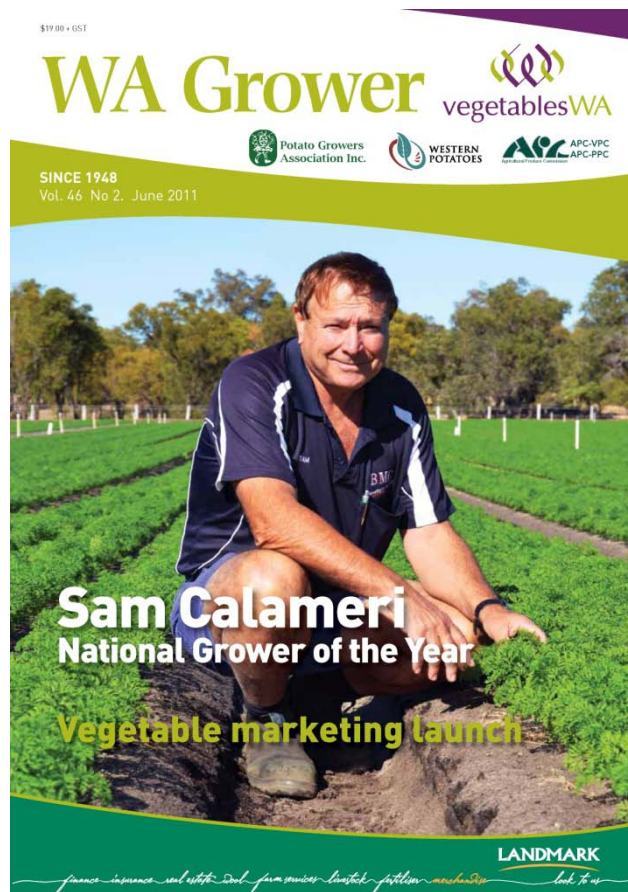
As a key part of its extension and information service, vegetablesWA has a network of Good Practice projects which include demonstration sites hosted by influential growers in each of the three main growing regions: Carnarvon, the Swan Coastal Plain and the South West. A program of workshops tailored to the needs of each growing region and Field Walks were held on grower properties to give demonstrations of where good practice has been successfully implemented. Workshop topics include a range of R&D outputs in the areas of business management, marketing, integrated pest management, carbon farming, soil health, compost application, irrigation and many others. Using the Field Extension Officer, vegetablesWA also extended the Talking Business program suite of materials developed by the Vegetable Industry Development Program.



All things Irrigation workshop

WA Grower Magazine

The *WA Grower* magazine provides a means of communicating current information and issues on a quarterly basis. Its distribution covers every vegetable grower in Western Australia as well as key industry stakeholders both in Western Australia and across the other states of Australia. It is a grower-based magazine designed to provide the most relevant and sought-after information with a strong focus on communicating the results of research and development. As well as providing detailed information it also refers growers to the best place to seek further information and assistance. The *WA Grower* is divided into sections with articles divided into topic areas: Your Industry Associations; Your Production; Your Industry; Your Business; Your Environment; Your Market; and Your Self. The magazine also includes a section devoted to key articles translated into Vietnamese. The *WA Grower* has become recognised as one of the leading publications in Australian horticulture and has a distribution of approximately 900 copies each edition which includes every grower in Western Australia and other key stakeholders within Western Australia and nationally.



E-news

E-news is an excellent means to deliver information to a wide range of stakeholders at regular intervals between issues of WA Grower. The E-news delivers time sensitive information to growers and affiliates efficiently.



Website

The vegetablesWA website was an important tool that allows for the latest information to be available to growers and stakeholders and can be updated on a daily basis. The website provided an easy and effective way of delivering free publications, information links and resources to growers.



Phone/fax/mail outs for urgent issues

vegetablesWA disseminated information by mail in order to reach all growers and stakeholders who may be located remotely and may have only limited access to certain electronic technologies. In order to communicate vital or urgent information efficiently, immediate dissemination is sometimes necessary. If relevant, messages are further communicated fortnightly in E-news or quarterly in the WA Grower magazine if the information is still valid.

Press Releases / Community News / Radio

A limited number of media releases, news articles and radio announcements were used to disseminate information in order to achieve optimal market saturation. Communicating through these media channels increase awareness in the wider community as opposed to internal communication methods that are directed to growers and stakeholders alone.

Partnership Organisations

An important mechanism for developing the vegetable industry has been for vegetablesWA to leverage the resources of other organizations through collaboration and partnerships to achieve shared aims. vegetablesWA has developed and utilized long standing relationships with groups and organisations as part of this project.

These include: the Carnarvon Growers Association; the Warren Cauliflower Growers Group; the Department of Agriculture and Food; the Department of Water; the Department of Health; the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry; AusTrade, Woolworths; the national LOTE Community of Practice; Curtin University; Western Potatoes Pty Ltd; the WA Potato Growers Association; the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Fruit West; the Western Australian Farmers Federation; ; the Rural Financial Counselling Service; local NRM and catchment groups; the Stable Fly Action Group; the Perth Market Authority; and local suppliers and service providers to the vegetable industry. These linkages assist in

ensuring information flows throughout the industry and can be reinforced along the way by multiple sources.

Vietnamese Translation

Vietnamese growers comprise approximately a third of the Western Australian vegetable industry. These growers have very low English literacy rates; approximately 30% are also illiterate in Vietnamese; and many are reliant on educated children to translate. To counter the lag amongst Vietnamese growers in adopting research and development vegetablesWA commissioned Vietnamese translations which were delivered through the *WA Grower* magazine. The project also engaged with the LOTE Community of Practice which also fell under the VIDP.

Appendix 1. Figure 1.

Stakeholder Database

An important element underpinning the delivery of services to industry was the vegetablesWA database. Initial information gathering was undertaken by the former IDO and under this project the database was expanded to include every vegetable grower in Western Australia in addition to other key stakeholders within Western Australia and nationally. New database software was commissioned and implemented to further improve the capacity of this resource.

Evaluation and measurement of outcomes - impact and adoption

The Collaborative Industry Associations project had a series of goals and associated Key Performance Indicators.

1. *Industry communication supporting the VIDP and support for VIDP sub-program products, services and information.*

The Key Performance Indicator for this Goal was:

- an increased understanding by growers and other stakeholders about the VIDP and VIDP sub-programs.

Initial feedback from growers generally showed a lack of detailed understanding of the vegetable industry innovation system. There was often confusion about the varying roles of AUSVEG, Horticulture Australia Ltd and government at a national level. Therefore, this goal was achieved from a low base.

The vegetablesWA Field Extension Officer did extensive work with growers raising the profile of the VIDP. The *WA Grower* magazine has continued to feature a comprehensive range of detailed VIDP materials. E-News and the vegetablesWA have also distributed information to growers. A series of grower meetings and workshops have been held in Carnarvon, the South West and Metropolitan regions.

2. Delivery to growers of VIDP products and services, including through new and innovative methods and cooperative arrangements.

The Key Performance Indicators for this Goal were:

- demonstrated uptake of VIDP products and services in the areas of integrated pest management, consumers and markets, economics, people development and business skills so growers evolve their business models to meet challenges posed by the market.

Through extension efforts vegetablesWA achieved the demonstrated uptake of VIDP products and services in the areas of integrated pest management, consumers and markets, economics, people development and business skills. However, monitoring and evaluating the quantum of uptake and the economic outcome of this uptake provides a difficult challenge for accurate assessment.

Therefore, the monitoring of this project was largely based on a qualitative action research model, which has the express purpose of achieving an understanding of issues that lead to practical applications and solutions. This solution-focused approach

has allowed the vegetablesWA service provision to adjust our methods to suit the needs of the industry.

The economic returns of the project are particularly difficult to assess. However, an independent economic evaluation by the BDA Group in Canberra found a significant economic impact from a separate associated project to implement a single practice uptake provides an indicative case study:

- undertake new and innovative methods and cooperative arrangements to optimize extension efficiency and effectiveness.

As detailed previously, an important mechanism for developing the vegetable industry has been for vegetablesWA to leverage the resources of other organizations through collaboration and partnerships to achieve shared aims efficiently and effectively. vegetablesWA has developed long standing relationships with partner groups and organisations such as: the WA Agriculture Produce Commission; the Carnarvon Growers Association; the Department of Agriculture and Food; the Department of Water; the Department of Health; the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; AusTrade; Woolworths; the national LOTE Community of Practice; Curtin University; Western Potatoes Pty Ltd; the WA Potato Growers Association; the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Fruit West; the Western Australian Farmers Federation; local NRM and catchment groups; the Stable Fly Action Group; the Perth Market Authority; and local suppliers and service providers to the vegetable industry. These linkages assist in ensuring information flows throughout the industry and can be reinforced along the way by multiple sources.

3. Gather industry feedback for R&D priorities.

The Key Performance Indicator for this Goal was:

- Grower feedback about industry R&D priorities is returned to HAL.

vegetablesWA provided HAL with feedback about industry R&D priorities through a range of mechanism. These included ongoing dialogue with the relevant HAL Program Manager and Industry Services Manager. vegetablesWA made a series of submissions to the development of the latest vegetable industry Strategic Investment Plan in addition to assisting to facilitate the relevant grower meetings.

4. Gather feedback for VIDP via HAL Program Coordinator.

The Key Performance Indicator for this Goal was:

- Feedback about the VIDP is returned to the HAL Program Coordinator.

vegetablesWA has participated in providing feedback to HAL regarding the VIDP both through formal teleconference participation in addition to ongoing informal discussions as required and in consultation with the industry strategic investment planning process.

Discussion

The adoption of research and development (R&D) across an industry is generally a slow process for a variety of reasons. In many cases grower hesitance to embrace new practices is not any sign of their ineffectiveness, but a legitimate exercise in risk management when viewed from a business perspective. The risk aversion of a grower regarding any given topic will itself be informed by a range of factors such as previous knowledge, training, culture, experience etc.

As a result of this, R&D extension needs to consider the best ways to promote practice change within the context of different risk aversion profiles. In the experience of vegetablesWA, innovation uptake by many growers can be characterized by a bell-curve. At one end of this curve there are a very small number of growers who are active in seeking and implementing R&D outputs from a variety of channels from within Australia and often overseas. Further back along the bell curve there are a small number of growers who will themselves further research and embrace practice change when presented with initial information in forms such as written materials and workshops. A larger number of growers within the bell-curve will implement R&D outcomes when they observe them being successfully implemented by others recognized as industry leaders. Another large number of growers will implement new practices when provided with tailored, one-on-one service to assist them adopt the change. There are also a portion of growers whose risk profile prevents them from considering practice change at all.

With this insight, the vegetablesWA service delivery under the VIDP sought to engage with growers across the adoption bell-curve by providing: broad information in written and workshop form; good practice demonstrations and field days; and individual face-to-face contact and assistance. vegetablesWA also recognized that better grower outcomes could be achieved by leveraging the benefits of collaboration with other entities with shared goals, both public and private. We also sought to leverage grower contact by providing feedback to the R&D system about industry needs where possible.

Recommendations

Research and development is only as useful as its uptake and adoption by industry. To achieve adoption it is important that both communication and extension mechanisms are in place and that the research and development occurring is relevant. Therefore it is recommended that:

1. Extension via the successful methodology adopted by vegetablesWA continue to be provided for by industry, recognising the additional value a state industry association can provide in delivering this service.
2. Research and development focus more on the needs of specific regions to ensure that products are relevant to growers and therefore adopted.

Acknowledgments

vegetablesWA would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following in assisting with the development of the Western Australian vegetable industry through this project:

- Western Australian vegetable growers who continue to provide ongoing collaboration and support;
- The vegetablesWA Committee of Management for the provision of supervision and direction in a supportive manner;
- Other sub-program service providers under the VIDP who delivered products and assistance;
- The Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia for their support of the industry and this project specifically; and
- Horticulture Australia Limited staff for their assistance and understanding of this service.

Appendix 1

Figure 1.

YOUR PRODUCTION

MEGA PESTS: THE BASICS OF PROTECTING YOUR CROPS — VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION

Chương Trình Phát Triển Ngành Rau Quả

Sâu bệnh lớn

Những điều cơ bản trong việc bảo vệ cây trồng của quý vị

Các Nguyên Tắc ICP Then Chốt

- Hiểu rõ nguồn gốc và bản chất của các loại sâu bệnh trong vườn ương cây giống và trang trại của quý vị
- Chủ động — hướng tới phòng ngừa, hơn là diệt trừ. Không đợi đến lúc xảy ra khủng hoảng về kiểm soát sâu bệnh mới hành động. Các loài sâu bệnh đều có thiên địch — hãy hướng tới việc bảo vệ và giúp chúng gia tăng số lượng, và nếu thiên địch sẵn có tại các cơ sở nuôi côn trùng, hãy xem xét việc thả thiên địch nuôi (còn được gọi là “côn trùng có lợi”) ra chỗ cây trồng của quý vị
- ưu tiên hàng đầu cho việc vệ sinh trang trại, chỉ sau an toàn của người lao động
- Thường xuyên theo dõi cây trồng của quý vị và môi trường trồng
- Ghi chép lại các quan sát về cây trồng và sâu bệnh. Xem xét tính hiệu quả của hóa chất và phát triển việc kháng bệnh
- Tự tin thực hiện ICP thông qua giáo dục, giám sát và hành động. Tìm những người có vấn đề trình độ cao và đáng tin cậy để có thể bắt đầu và hỗ trợ việc thực hiện ICP
- Tiếp cận với khá đào tạo về nguyên tắc ICP cho bản thân quý vị và nhân viên
- Sử dụng các nguồn lực sẵn có — nhà tư vấn, nhà nghiên cứu, sách, tờ thông tin và internet
- Hiểu rõ tại sao phương pháp “kết hợp” lại cần thiết cho sự thành công.

Cây trồng tiếp xúc với áp lực sâu bệnh và môi trường nói chung. Những áp lực này có thể được giảm bớt bằng cách sử dụng phương pháp kết hợp trong việc bảo vệ cây trồng.

Bảo Vệ Cây Trồng Kết Hợp (ICP), còn được gọi là Kiểm Soát Sâu Bệnh Kết Hợp (IPM) tập trung vào việc đưa ra quyết định hợp lý và yêu cầu cân nhắc các vấn đề:

- Cây trồng
- Sâu bệnh
- Sinh vật có lợi
- Môi trường trồng
- Lao động ở trang trại
- Yêu cầu về thị trường.

ICP cung cấp những lựa chọn thay thế thiết thực cho việc kiểm soát sâu bệnh thông thường mà thường phụ thuộc vào việc sử dụng các hóa chất tổng hợp theo lịch.

Bài viết này trình bày:

- Các nguyên tắc ICP then chốt
- Các thành phần của ICP
- Các bước cụ thể của ICP
- Các công cụ và lựa chọn kiểm soát chung trong ICP.

Tại sao lại sử dụng IPC?

Người trồng đã báo cáo rằng việc sử dụng các chiến lược ICP cho phép họ:

- Phục hồi kiểm soát đối với các loại sâu bệnh kháng thuốc
- Giảm thiểu tác động đến người lao động và môi trường
- Giảm thiểu việc sử dụng thuốc trừ sâu tổng hợp và lượng thuốc trừ sâu dư lại
- Đáp ứng người tiêu dùng và thị trường
- Giảm chi phí
- Đạt các yêu cầu về đảm bảo chất lượng.

Việc thực hiện các nguyên tắc cơ bản của ICP chính là điểm khởi đầu tốt nhất. Kết hợp các nguyên tắc này vào cây trồng và tình trạng sâu bệnh cụ thể của quý vị sẽ giúp tối đa hóa lợi ích của các nguyên tắc đó.

‘Kết hợp’ là gì?

Kết hợp nghĩa là phối hợp hai hoặc nhiều thông lệ kiểm soát khác nhau nhưng tương thích với nhau, tức là các thông lệ hoạt động tốt với nhau, không có xung đột. Ví dụ, hệ thống ICP hiệu quả có thể bao gồm các biện pháp về trồng trọt, thả sinh vật có lợi, và sử dụng thuốc trừ sâu ‘nhẹ’ sẽ giúp duy trì thiên địch.



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MEGA PESTS: THE BASICS OF PROTECTING YOUR CROPS – VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/greenhouse/pest-disease/general/preventing/keep-it-clean

Tờ thông tin được phát hành cùng với 'Keep It Clean': những tờ thông tin này cung cấp thông tin khởi đầu tuyệt vời cho cả nhà sản xuất sử dụng nhà kính và ngoài đồng ruộng. Hãy vào trang web Keep it Clean và nhấp vào tiêu đề để tải về các bản sao.

8. Cải Thiện Chất Lượng Đất Trồng để đạt Năng Suất và Lợi Nhuận về Rau Quả. 2010. Tờ thông tin do đội ngũ Chất Lượng Đất Trồng Rau VicDpi phát hành. Tải về từ: www.vgavic.org.au/pdf/VG07008_Soil_Health_brochure.pdf

9. Chất Lượng Đất Sản Xuất Rau tại Úc. 2010. Tờ thông tin do DeeDI phát hành. Tải về từ: www.dpi.qld.gov.au/26_17025.htm

Lời cảm ơn

Văn bản và ảnh do prue mcMichael, Lauren thompson (Scholefield Robinson Horticultural Services Pty Ltd) và Sandra McDougall (Industry & Investment NSW) cung cấp.

Chương trình Phát Triển Ngành Rau Quả được HAL tài trợ bằng cách sử dụng các khoản thuế rau quả và quỹ thích hợp từ Chính Phủ Úc. 