

Collaborative Industry Organisation - Victoria - Support to VIDP

Helena Whitman
Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria

Project Number: VG10099

VG10099

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.

All expressions of opinion are not to be regarded as expressing the opinion of Horticulture Australia Ltd or any authority of the Australian Government.

The Company and the Australian Government accept no responsibility for any of the opinions or the accuracy of the information contained in this report and readers should rely upon their own enquiries in making decisions concerning their own interests.

ISBN 0 7341 2991 2

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

© Copyright 2012



Horticulture Australia



Collaborative Industry Organisations – Victoria Final Report

Helena Whitman
Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA Vic)

Project Number: VG10099



Horticulture Australia Project Number: VG10099

Key Personnel

Project Leader: Helena Whitman
Executive Manager
Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria

Purpose

This report is the Final Report of the project known as VG10099 “**Collaborative Industry Organisations – Victoria**”

Funding

This project has been funded by HAL using the Vegetable Industry Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

Date

14th September 2012

Disclaimer

Any recommendations contained in this publication do not necessarily represent current Horticulture Australia policy. No person should act on the basis of the content of this publication, whether as to matters of fact or opinion or other content without first obtaining specific, independent professional advice in respect of the matters set out in this publication.

Table of Contents

1. MEDIA SUMMARY	2
2. INTRODUCTION	2
3. METHOD AND ACTIVITIES.....	4
3.1 Communications.....	4
3.2 Representation	5
3.3 Other Activities.....	5
4. EVALUATION.....	7
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	8
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – External Funding.....	9
6.1 DPI Vic – HIN program	9
6.2 DAFF – Next Generation Farmers program.....	9
6.3 HAL funding	9
7. APPENDICES.....	9
7.1 VG10099 Work Plan.....	10
7.2 Example of In-the-Field publication	13
7.3 Example VGA Magazine page.....	14
7.4 IDO Activities (Photos).....	15
7.5 IDO Activities	16

1. MEDIA SUMMARY

Victorian vegetable growers consider the position of Industry Development Officers (IDO) as an integral part of industry development and have fully appreciated the support of the Department of Primary Industry Victoria (DPI Vic) in allocating funding through the Horticultural Industry Network (HIN) program to provide the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA Vic) with the ability to engage an IDO on a part time basis since October 2009.

The allocation of funding from the Vegetable industry to support the delivery of outputs of the Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) allowed VGA Vic to upgrade its IDO service from one part-time IDO to two part-time IDOs covering an area that stretches from Mildura to Myrtleford in the north and Colac to Lindenow in the south as well as provide a wider range of services to all Victorian vegetable growers.

The funding provided VGA Vic with the capacity to serve as a delivery agent for products and services produced by VIDP through extension and interaction with growers for adoption and implementation, increased awareness of the research outcomes and development of opportunities in collaboration with InnoVeg and the other VIDP sub-programs.

The main role of the IDO has been to provide industry communication between grass roots vegetable growers, grower groups, produce commodity delegates, research and development organisation (R&D) and service providers. This has been achieved through one-on-one visits, the In-The-Field newsletter, the VGA Vic quarterly magazine, workshops and forums. The IDOs have been responsible for obtaining funding for several external projects as well as identifying research needs for the Victorian industry.

The IDOs have also been of great assistance to researchers, resellers and stakeholders by organising farm visits, identifying potential trial sites and promoting field days and workshops then disseminating the information to other growers through In-the-Field and Vegetables Victoria magazine articles.

VGA Vic has worked towards better communication across the State of Victoria through modern technology with improvements to its website which is now proving to be the forefront of the vegetable industry and would rank as one of the most up to day sites in the industry providing growers with regular industry information. The site has over 2,500 'hits' each month.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA Vic) is a member based organisation that engages consultants on a part-time basis to deliver its services. This applies to all appointments including the Executive Officer, Executive Manager and Industry Development Officers. As with most member organisations resources are limited, and the Association is dependent on external funding to provide additional services to the Vegetable Industry of Victoria.

Since the introduction of the National Vegetable Levy, VGA Vic has been able to engage the services of Industry Development Officers to communicate research and development outcomes and extension to all growers, not just its membership base. When the Levy funding for this service ceased nationally, the Department of Primary Industry in Victoria (DPI Vic) provided VGA Vic with the ability

to continue to employ an IDO under its Horticulture Industry Network (HIN) program all-be-it in a diminished capacity, one part-time officer.

The Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) was a key initiative for the vegetable industry which began in July 2009. The VIDP outcomes addressed the key strategic issues facing the vegetable industry. The intended project outcomes were;

- A more profitable, sustainable and internationally competitive vegetable industry due to higher adoption of innovative technologies and improved collaboration by growers
- Improved relevance and usefulness of information packages for growers
- Improved capacity to identify new networks to deliver targeted industry development to the diverse vegetable industry
- A research and development program responsive to industry and market needs

The Collaborative Industry Organisations (CIO) proposal was designed to ensure support and engagement of the State vegetable Industry Representative Bodies for delivery of the products and outputs of the VIDP.

‘Collaborative Industry Organisations – Victoria - Support for VIDP’ was provided by Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA Vic), who served as a delivery agent for products and services produced by VIDP. VGA Vic provided the extension and interaction with growers for adoption and implementation through increased awareness of the research outcomes and development opportunities in collaboration with InnoVeg and the other VIDP sub-programs.

However engagement through face to face contact at group meeting has not proved an easy task in the fringe growing areas of the State. With almost 80% of vegetable production located in the outer metropolitan areas of Melbourne, there have been concerns that areas such as South Gippsland and Murray Valley have not received more frequent personal visits.

The allocation of funding from the vegetable industry through HAL to support the VIDP, allowed VGA Vic to upgrade its IDO service from one part-time IDO to two part-time IDOs covering a larger area that stretches from Mildura to Myrtleford in the north and Colac to Lindenow in the south, more regularly as well as provide a wider range of services to all Victorian vegetable growers. The extremities of the State have been visited on a regular basis of at least 3 times per year while growers in other areas are visited on a weekly basis.

The IDOs have been of great assistance to researchers, resellers and stakeholders by organising farm visits, identifying potential trial sites and promoting field days and workshops then disseminating the information to other growers through In-the-Field and Vegetables Victoria magazine articles. Through In-the-Field articles the IDOs have succeeded in getting Victorian growers to enrol in industry leadership programs such as the Growing Leaders Program and Nuffield Scholarship.

Another valuable role the IDOs have been able to fill is attending workshops and field days and reporting information back to growers through In-the-Field, Vegetables Victoria magazine or one-on-one. During one-on-one visits they are able to deliver information and explain what the information is about, as well as get feed-back on the information or other issues growers are concerned about. These issues are then raised and discussed at VGA Vic Executive Meetings and passed on to AUSVEG or relevant stakeholders for further action.

The farm visits have enabled the IDOs to identify and nominate growers for various awards that have resulted in finalists or winners at the AUSVEG Awards for Excellence each year, including 2 Grower of the Year Awards, 2 Women in Horticulture Awards and 1 Young Grower of the Year, 1 Environmental Award.

The biggest single impact of the IDOs has been the increased number of growers attending events. Through their networks and encouragement, the IDOs have increased attendance by more than 100%, especially in Werribee where historically attendance at workshop and meetings has been very poor especially by young growers.

3. METHOD AND ACTIVITIES

Over the 2 years of the project, growers have been provided with information that has increased their knowledge and encouraged practice change in areas of:

- Chemical use and alternative methods of pest and disease control – reducing chemical use; safer practices; implementing IPM; reducing environmental impact;
- Safer farming practices – reducing injury and increasing productivity;
- Sustainable production methods – better soil management, reduced fertiliser use, improved irrigation methods;
- Adapting to changing conditions, environmental and economical – trialling alternative crops, adapting practices to fit with encroaching urbanisation, reducing cost of production, weather forecasting for pesticide use;
- The use of new technology – iPhones, iPads, wireless farm technology; and
- Energy minimisation and reduction of their environmental footprint.
- CIO teleconferences with HAL (quarterly)
- LOTE program teleconferences
- Connection to InnoVeg (RMCG)
- Consumers and Markets workshop in Lindenow (facilitated by VGA Vic)

3.1 Communications

The program has resulted in the development of several communications products:

- The In-The-Field note (a one page "reader friendly" summary of events, products, reports and research) provides regular industry information covering a range of services and assistance to Victorian vegetable growers. The aim is to produce one or two updates each week. To date over 120 notes have been sent out to Victorian vegetable growers and other interested stakeholders.
- A quarterly "Vegetables Victoria" magazine is produced by the VGA highlighting industry issues and grower information. It is also extensively used by the IDOs as a vehicle enabling them to expand In-The-Field articles, provide information on research findings and also about field days, conferences and workshops that growers may not have been able to attend.
- VGA website – referred to by many as one of the best vegetable industry sites in the country and used widely by growers, researchers and consultants. The site averages over 2,500 'hits' per month.
- Farm visits – the extremities of the State have been visited on a regular basis of at least 3 times per year while other areas are visited on a weekly basis.

3.2 Representation

The ability of IDOs to attend various activities has been invaluable in capturing and then passing on information to time poor growers. For example, the IDOs have:

- Attended over 50 workshops, conferences and field days
 - 2 AUSVEG Conventions
 - Seed Company Field Days
 - Lettuce Anthracnose workshops
 - Various DPI workshops and field days
- Participated in 10 working groups
 - FSANZ review of the Food Safety Code for Horticulture
 - Bunyip Food Bowl Project meetings
 - Small farm safety meetings
- Involved in 5 steering committees
 - Chisholm Institute (Horticulture course)
 - Manual Handling Project
 - Werribee Competitiveness Project
 - National Vegetable Expo Committee

They have assisted:

- DPI researchers with trial/field work
- In organising workshops for stakeholders and DPI
- With field tours for researchers and interstate visitors
- By conducting surveys for researchers and other stakeholders

3.3 Other Activities

The IDOs were successful in securing VC project funding from HAL for an **International Study Tour VG11702** to the USA and Italy to investigate mechanisation and automation of vegetable (lettuce) harvesting.

DAFF through its Next Generation Farmers Program funded the **Young Grower Tour of WA** – to study alternative irrigation methods.

Impact – the formation of a young grower network sharing information and ideas; young growers attending industry events; young growers taking on leadership roles; trying new practices – different irrigation, soil preparation, crops; influencing/encouraging other young growers to participate in events. The group have since kept in regular contact and implemented some of the ideas gained during the visit. Most of them now attend industry events on a regular basis and several were finalists in the categories for Young Grower of the Year or Rising Star Award at the AUSVEG Convention in 2012.

The IDOs were also involved in a **Worksafe funded Manual Handling project** to identify 10 solutions to injuries caused through manual handling in vegetable production. The IDOs have been an integral part of the project from involvement in the Steering Committee, assisting with farm visits, distributing information and organising workshops for growers. The material developed has been widely dispersed throughout the horticulture industry.

Since the information was produced VGA Vic through the IDOs organised three well attended workshops (Werribee, Cranbourne and Lindenow) to promote the information and the IDOs have visited many other farms to explain the findings face-to-face.

Impact - this project has resulted in a general raising of awareness of OH&S issues facing the vegetable industry. Most of the larger growers, with large staff numbers, have implemented safety measures on their farms, however the smaller growers, family farms, hadn't seen this as an issue until visited by the IDOs. The adoption of the information by growers has been high with many implementing at least some changes; many enquiries to the IDOs about accessing the information; interest from other States and industries for approval to use the information that has been produced.

Another valuable role the IDOs have been able to fill is attending workshops and field days and reporting information back to growers through In-the-Field, Vegetables Victoria magazine or farm visits.

Impact - This enables those growers who are time poor or too distant to access this information, information which they otherwise would not get.

The IDOs have also been of great assistance to researchers, resellers and stakeholders by organising farm visits, identifying potential trial sites and promoting field days and workshops then disseminating the information to other growers through In-the-Field and Vegetables Victoria magazine articles.

Melbourne University student visit to a Hydroponic Farm. The IDO East was approached to organise a visit for 30 Master's students participating in a project "Buildings to Beans: Food in Cities". The idea was to see first-hand some of the challenges of farming carried out in an inner-city suburb.

Impact – a practical (not just books) experience for the students and a chance to promote the industry to consumers and, possibly, future policy makers. Students said that they had gained a new appreciation for the work that goes into growing food.

South Australian LOTE grower visit to Victoria. The IDO West assisted in organising a tour by a group of 15 South Australian Vietnamese and Cambodian growers of like growers in the Lara area as well as a visit to Boomaroo Nurseries.

Impact – networking and sharing of ideas; invitation for reciprocal visit; sharing of resources – translated material; and raising the interest of Victorian growers to organise similar tours.

The IDO East was approached by **Snow/Snap Pea growers** to assist with information on pest and disease control (peas being seen as a minor crop, not many chemicals are available for use). The IDO organised a workshop and invited Dr Paul Horn and Jessica Page to present options to growers including IPM.

Impact - Following the workshop many of the pea growers introduced IPM practices on-farm. One of the growers now monitors his crops two to three times a week and says that this provides him with real data on pest and beneficial presence and crop damage. He is now able to make timely decisions about crop protection. The outcome is a change of practice and reduced chemical application.

Assisting growers to identify research needs has been a priority for the IDOs with the IDO East working closely with **parsley growers** to identify issues requiring further research. This information has been presented to ASUVEG for consideration by the Design Teams for funding.

During farm visits the IDOs are able to deliver information and explain what the information is about, as well as get feed-back on other issues growers are concerned about. These issues are then raised and discussed at VGA Vic Executive Meetings for further action.

Through In-the-Field articles the IDOs have succeeded in getting Victorian growers to enrol in industry leadership programs such as the Growing Leaders Program and Nuffield Scholarship. *Impact - There have been numerous Victorian participants over the past 3 years many of these are now taking on industry leadership roles on Committees – there are two on the VGA Executive and several on AUSVEG working groups.*

4. EVALUATION

The following Key Objectives of the Collaborative Industry Organisations program were achieved:

Support of VIDP through communication with members of industry organisations and additional networks.

Support the objectives of the VIDP through the delivery of services, information and products from the various VIDP sub programs (Economics, Knowledge Management; Consumers & Markets; People Development; InnoVeg; IPM).

The allocation of funding from Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) enabled VGA Vic to provide a wider range of services to all Victorian vegetable growers as well as direct distribution of VIDP publications through:

- Engagement of two part-time IDOs to extend area coverage
- Publication of over 150 In-the-Field newsletters
- Improvement of the VGA website
- Farm visits, and
- Articles in the VGA quarterly magazine.

Use the information generated from the Innoveg sub programs to use new and innovative methods as well as cooperative arrangements involving multiple industry networks in the delivery of VIDP products and services:

The program enabled improved capacity to identify new networks to deliver targeted industry development to the diverse vegetable industry. As a result of this Victorian and NSW IDOs worked collaboratively to organise a workshop for growers in the Mildura/Dareton region. This also involved NSW DPI and DPI Vic.

The IDO was also able to assist in co-ordinating a SA LOTE grower visit to Vic LOTE growers, Melbourne Markets and Boomaroo Nursery.

Farm visits included demonstrations of various useful websites and applications for iPads and iPhones.

VIDP information was included on the VGA website and in VGA publications.

Grower interaction increased through workshops and farm visits.

Work collaboratively with InnoVeg sub-program and the other VIDP sub-programs as the state delivery agents for the dissemination of VIDP information and resources direct to growers:

The level of distribution of all information resources direct to Victorian vegetable growers was increased significantly through farm visits, workshops and publications.

Develop and maintain a unified approach between the state industry organisations to ensure national consistency and will committed to assisting in the achievement of VIDP objectives:

The level of direct communication with vegetable growers was increased for State and interstate industry issues and correspondence.

VGA Vic was able to provide on-going support for industry issues in conjunction with AUSVEG and RMCG and work more collaboratively with interstate Grower Associations.

Growers were circulated with information or publications on business models and industry training available under the VIDP.

Record industry feedback from growers and input into levy funded R&D priorities for the vegetable industry:

Inform and encourage state and regional based growers to register on the new Ausveg website for access to new R&D information and tools and receive 'e' communication tailored for their area of interest via the VIDP Knowledge Management system:

Communicate feedback into the VIDP sub-programs through the HAL program coordinator:

Through its various publications and website, VGA Vic was able to maximise the benefits of the R&D program, promote adoption of good practices and increase interaction and co-operation between vegetable growers and ensure a research and development program responsive to industry and market needs.

Industry engagement provided feedback and input into levy funded R&D priorities for the vegetable industry which were then passed on to AUSVEG.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The limited part-time capacity of VGA Vic to service all vegetable growers within the State is of concern not only to the Association but to all growers who have benefitted from the funding of IDOs over the past years.

The funding enabling the continued engagement of IDOs and has enabled better access to information and communication within the Victorian Industry. It has contributed to the unity of the industry and Victorian vegetable growers are now expressing their serious concern that in the future this valuable resource may cease to exist.

VGA Vic would strongly recommend that this valuable resource continue to be funded and made available through VGA Vic.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – External Funding

6.1 DPI Vic – HIN program

VGA Vic would like to take this opportunity to thank DPI Vic, which through its Horticulture Industry Network (HIN) program, has provided funds over the past three years complimenting and enabling the continuation of the IDO program through expanded services to all vegetable growers.

6.2 DAFF – Next Generation Farmers program

VGA Vic would like to thank DAFF's Next Generation Farmers program for providing funds to enable a young grower tour to Western Australia to investigate alternative methods of irrigation. Ten young growers participated in the four day tour which covered the outer metro area as well as Carnarvon.

6.3 HAL funding

VGA Vic would also like to express appreciation to HAL for providing funding through VC for the US/Italy Study Tour VG11702 to investigate mechanical lettuce harvesters.

Most importantly for the opportunity to participate in the VIDP's CIO program through the provision of funds to employ our Industry Development Officers.

7. APPENDICES

- 7.1 VG10099 Work Plan
- 7.2 Example of In-the-Field publication
- 7.3 Example VGA Magazine page
- 7.4 IDO Activities (Photos)
- 7.5 IDO Activities

7.1 VG10099 Work Plan

VG10099 WORK PLAN

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	OUTPUT/OUCOME	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
<p>Support VIDP through communication with members of industry organisations and additional networks.</p> <p>Support the objectives of the VIDP through the delivery of services, information and products from the various VIDP sub programs; (Economics, Knowledge Management; Consumers & Markets; People Development; InnoVeg; IPM).</p>	<p>Increased capacity to deliver information and industry development packages to industry participants, regions and groups ensuring they have access to levy funded R&D outcomes.</p>	<p>VIDP 'Task Notes'</p> <p>IDO Network</p> <p>Two part-time IDOs</p> <p>VGA Vic Administration</p>	<p>The allocation of funding from Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP) provided a wider range of services to all Victorian vegetable growers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two part-time IDOs • Fax/email/post • In-the-Field newsletters • VGA Magazine • VGA website • Direct distribution of publications 	<p>VIDP has been supported through communication with Victorian vegetable growers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of VIDP publications • VGA website • Farm visits • In-the-Field • VGA Magazine • Fax/email/post
<p>Develop and maintain a unified approach between the state industry organisations to ensure national consistency and will committed to assisting in the achievement of VIDP objectives.</p>	<p>Improve working relationships with State and National bodies.</p> <p>Closer working relationship and on-going support of State issues through AUSVEG.</p>	<p>VIDP 'Task Notes'</p> <p>IDO Network</p> <p>VGA Website</p> <p>VGA Vic Executive Committee and staff</p>	<p>Direct communication with vegetable growers increased for State and interstate industry issues and correspondence.</p> <p>Provision of on-going support for industry issues in conjunction with AUSVEG and RMCG.</p>	<p>Improved collaboration with Interstate Grower Associations.</p> <p>Growers have received circulation of business models and industry training available under the VIDP.</p>

<p>Use the information generated from the INNOVEG sub program to use new and innovative methods as well as cooperative arrangements involving multiple industry networks in the delivery of VIDP products and services.</p>	<p>Expand IDO tasks to facilitate product development, education and training services to growers.</p> <p>Increase adoption of electronic communication tools through use of iPads to demonstrate and alert vegetable growers to industry web-sites and current information.</p> <p>Maintain a high quality website for the Victorian vegetable industry.</p> <p>Improve industry's mailing list.</p> <p>Increase face to face contact with growers.</p>	<p>VIDP 'Task Notes'</p> <p>IDO Network</p> <p>VGA Website</p>	<p>Improved capacity to identify new networks to deliver targeted industry development to the diverse vegetable industry.</p> <p>A collaborative workshop coordinated by VGA Vic & NSWFF IDOs for growers in the Mildura/Dareton region. This also involved NSW DPI and DPI Vic.</p> <p>Co-ordinated SA LOTE grower visit to Vic LOTE growers, Melbourne Markets and Boomaroo Nursery.</p>	<p>The level of distribution of all information resources direct to Victorian vegetable growers was increased.</p> <p>Cooperative workshops with NSWFF IDO.</p> <p>Cooperative grower tour with SA growers.</p> <p>Farm visits include demonstration of various useful websites and applications for ipad and iphones.</p> <p>Information included in VGA website and publications.</p> <p>Grower interaction increased thru workshops and farm visits.</p>
<p>Work collaboratively with InnoVeg sub-program and the other VIDP sub-programs as the state delivery agents for the dissemination of VIDP information and resources direct to growers.</p>	<p>Continue to improve working relationships with State and National bodies.</p>	<p>VIDP 'Task Notes'</p> <p>IDO Network</p> <p>VGA Website</p>	<p>A more profitable, sustainable and internationally competitive vegetable industry due to higher adoption of innovative technologies and improved collaboration by growers.</p> <p>Improved relevance and usefulness of information packages for growers.</p>	<p>The level of distribution of all information resources direct to Victorian vegetable growers is maintained.</p> <p>Information included in VGA website and publications.</p>

<p>Record industry feedback from growers and input into levy funded R&D priorities for the vegetable industry.</p> <p>Inform and encourage state and regional based growers to register on the new AUSVEG website for access to new R&D information and tools and receive 'e' communication tailored for their area of interest via the VIDP Knowledge Management system.</p> <p>Communicate feedback into the VIDP sub-programs through the HAL program coordinator.</p>	<p>Encourage adoption of good practices and increase interaction and cooperation between growers.</p> <p>Distribute a range of information products (e.g. fact sheets) on issues of interest to vegetable growers (as identified by the vegetable IAC and the CIO sub-program).</p> <p>Customize information acquired from study tours to meet the needs of Victorian vegetable growers.</p> <p>Disseminate this information through presentations and publications.</p>	<p>VIDP 'Task Notes'</p> <p>IDO Network</p> <p>VGA Website</p>	<p>Benefits of the R&D programme are maximised.</p> <p>Adoption of good practices and increase interaction and co-operation between vegetable growers.</p> <p>A research and development program responsive to industry and market needs.</p>	<p>Industry engagement in providing feedback and input into levy funded R&D priorities for the vegetable industry.</p> <p>R&D priorities identified and passed on to AUSVEG for action.</p> <p>Information distributed and included in VGA website and publications.</p>
---	--	--	---	--

7.2 Example of In-the-Field publication



In The Field
News for Victorian Vegetable Growers

14 AUG 2012

Parsley & Parsnip Workshop

A disease management workshop was held at Chisholm Institute of TAFE at Cranbourne on 2nd August 2012.

Researchers presented their latest findings to growers who are keen to reduce the yield and quality losses caused by root rot diseases in Parsley & Parsnip crops.

The workshop presentations included:

Jane Parker (QLD) - Practical Soil Health - conventional & organic. Jane discussed the practical implications of changing from a conventional farming system to an organic farming system to produce organically grown herbs.

Dr Joanna Petkowski - Identifying *Pythium* and *Aphanizemia* species. This project used DNA technology to identify fungal species involved in parsley and parsnip root rot. Improved fungal identification will assist in further work to reduce the cost impact of these diseases to industry.

Dr Doll deBoer - Disease Management. Discussion of a range of field trials designed to evaluate the benefits of a range of fungicides, biocontrol agents and cultural methods, in the control of parsnip and parsley fungal diseases.

Vegetable growers and researchers discuss practical solutions to root rot

Dr Liz Minchinton - Parsley Project. Liz provided a review of current research into the role of soil fungi in root rots and cankers of Parsley and Parsnip.

These advances were made possible through HAL R&D levy funding. Further research and field trials are needed to provide vegetable growers with better tools to combat these fungal diseases.

For more information contact:

Rod Hall IDO - West 0403 215 935
John Runtig IDO - East 0417 356 364

ldowest@vgvic.org.au ldoeast@vgvic.org.au

Helena Whitman
VGA Executive Manager
0407 772 299
helena.w@vgvic.org.au

To The Field is published by VCA-Victoria (Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria Inc.)
Mail Box 111, Melbourne Markets
542 Footscray Road, West Melbourne, Vic. 3009
Jointly funded by VCA-Victoria, DPI Victoria and Horticulture Australia Limited

Issue: Tony Imeson, 03 9687 4707
03 9687 4723
0414 458 561
tony.i@vgvic.org.au



In The Field
News for Victorian Vegetable Growers

07 AUG 2012

New R & D Process

A recent report from AUSVEG CEO **Richard Mulcahy** outlined the new structure for project funding by HAL.

IAC Committee chair **Jeff McSpedden** says over the next three years, two thirds of the \$45 million research funding will go into studying consumers and developing markets, and just one third will be spent on farm projects.

Under the new Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), the previous Working and Advisory Groups will be replaced by 3 Design Teams - one each for Consumer Alignment, Market & Value Chain Development and Farm Productivity, Resource Use & Management.

The IAC will determine the priority areas for the Design Teams to focus on and design projects around. The projects will then be commissioned by HAL, who will invite service providers to submit proposals for these projects on a select tender basis.

The new system will not be based on submissions being called for as in the past, that is, an open call each October, where researchers and industry were able to put up projects for consideration by the Working Groups.

The Design Teams will then consider these projects and make recommendations to the IAC who in turn will recommend projects to HAL for funding. There will also be a Technical Advisory Group who will provide guidance to the IAC and Design Teams.

IAC members Mark Napper and Danny De Ieso

Mr Mulcahy said that every effort has been made to ensure strong grower representation on all teams and AUSVEG will continue as the secretariat for the IAC and Teams and will play an advisory role.

Industry is encouraged to make representations through the appropriate organisations - HAL or AUSVEG.

For more information contact:

Rod Hall IDO - West 0403 215 935
John Runtig IDO - East 0417 356 364

ldowest@vgvic.org.au ldoeast@vgvic.org.au

Helena Whitman
VGA Executive Manager
0407 772 299
helena.w@vgvic.org.au

To The Field is published by VCA-Victoria (Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria Inc.)
Mail Box 111, Melbourne Markets
542 Footscray Road, West Melbourne, Vic. 3009
Jointly funded by VCA-Victoria, DPI Victoria and Horticulture Australia Limited

Issue: Tony Imeson, 03 9687 4707
03 9687 4723
0414 458 561
tony.i@vgvic.org.au



In The Field
News for Victorian Vegetable Growers

26 April 2011

Young Grower of the Year

Fourth generation Victorian vegetable farmer **Andrew Bulmer** has been named Young Grower of the year at the AUSVEG 2011 National Convention and Awards for Excellence held in Brisbane on 16 April.

At just 30, Andrew is an experienced Operations Manager on his family business **Bulmer Farm Fresh Vegetables**, which employs 40 staff at Linderoo in East Gippsland.

The business produces lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet corn and spinach on the fertile plains of the Mitchell River, supplying local processors as well as central fresh markets.

Andrew joined the family business after he graduated from secondary school and hasn't looked back since. He recently completed an **Industry Leadership Course** and the **AusVeg Grower Study Tour** to New Zealand.

"To be a successful vegetable grower you have to love what you do, work hard and be an optimist", said Andrew.

In addition to working in his family business, Andrew is an active member of the Gippsland vegetable industry and the National Industry Leadership Advisory Committee as well as the Vice President of the local football club.

Over the last 2 years, Bulmer Farms have made substantial investments in water infrastructure, expanded their production area from 250 to 700 acres and modernised their processing, packing and storage facilities.

Andrew Bulmer - 2011 Young Grower of the Year
"Since I started to be active in the industry I've gained a lot of knowledge, met many successful industry people and growers from different parts of Australia. I've become more confident and better able to use the learning experience to make positive changes to my family's business."
"I'd like to encourage others, especially young vegetable growers, to get out there and give to their industry and local community, great rewards and personal satisfaction will follow."

Your Industry Development Officers

Slobodan Vujovic IDO - East 0422 583 784
ldoeast@vgvic.org.au

Helena Whitman IDO - West 0407 772 299
ldowest@vgvic.org.au

To The Field is published by the VCA (Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria Inc.)
Mail Box 111, Melbourne Markets
542 Footscray Road, West Melbourne, Vic. 3009
Jointly funded by the VCA, DPI Victoria and Horticulture Australia Limited

Issue: Tony Imeson, 03 9687 4707
03 9687 4723
0414 458 561
tony.i@vgvic.org.au



In The Field
News for Victorian Vegetable Growers

17 Apr 2012

AUSVEG Levy Payers Meeting

The final division of HAL project funding under the **Strategic Investment Plan** was reported to Victorian growers on Tuesday 3rd April at the Italian Social Club in Werribee. The decisions followed an extensive consultative program undertaken by AUSVEG.

Mr **Jeff McSpedden**, Industry Advisory Committee Chairman, opened the program with a detailed report on the range of investment issues raised through the consultative process. The emphasis was on the underlying reasoning for the shift to a new division of project funding.

The Q & A session included growers queries on assessment of past funding, suggestions for inclusion in the new "consumer alignment" studies and queries why "promotion" was outside the Levy charter.

Mr **Will Gordon** HAL Vegetable Industry Services Manager, spoke about HAL structures, Levy management, and Vision 2020, focusing on the **Five Objectives** that will underpin the new Strategic Investment Plan:

1. Consumer Preferences & Demand
2. Quality focus to Australian Standard
3. International Competitiveness
4. Data collection, Analysis & Application
5. Leadership & Change Management

Mr Will Gordon presented HAL Information
The announced division of project funding under the Strategic Investment Plan will be:

- Consumer Alignment Projects - 45%
- Marketing & Value Chain Management - 20%
- Farm Productivity Projects - 35%

For more information contact:

Rod Hall IDO - West 0403 215 935
John Runtig IDO - East 0417 356 364

ldowest@vgvic.org.au ldoeast@vgvic.org.au

Helena Whitman
VGA Executive Manager
0407 772 299
helena.w@vgvic.org.au

To The Field is published by VCA-Victoria (Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria Inc.)
Mail Box 111, Melbourne Markets
542 Footscray Road, West Melbourne, Vic. 3009
Jointly funded by VCA-Victoria, DPI Victoria and Horticulture Australia Limited

Issue: Tony Imeson, 03 9687 4707
03 9687 4723
0414 458 561
tony.i@vgvic.org.au

7.3 Example VGA Magazine page



HAL
Horticulture Australia



Government of
Victoria



Horticulture
Industry Network



Issue 48, June 2012

Leafy Veg Field Day & Variety Trials

A weather report setting the scene for these April leafy vegetable trials is relevant - put simply, after three weeks of glorious autumn weather, the south-westerly arrived with squally rain overnight prior to day two.

Being the alternate year to the National Vegetable Expo (held in early May), April this year saw a comprehensive display of salad leaf varieties by four seed companies at several locations across Victoria. The regular field day conducted by Bejo showcasing their full range of vegetable varieties in this April timeslot also took place. Interstate visitors from major salad leaf growing and processing companies attended, along with all significant participants in the Victorian industry.

Bejo continued to work to its strengths with an extensive range of Brassicas, onions, and root vegetables on display at its Head Office trial grounds at Cranbourne. The breeders have been at work in most lines, introducing disease resistance - to both leaf and root diseases where applicable. Other notable offerings were early red onions, cauliflowers with good wrap, varieties with "mini" harvest options, and some novelty lines for colour and leaf appearance. Check with your representative or go to www.bejo.com.au for more details.

At Peter Lowe's farm in Glassicks Road, Lyndhurst, several companies staged trials (pictured above right). Seminis' trials focused on their efforts in the eternal battle to stay ahead of new strains of downy mildew, with some clear success in new lines - as usual, it's a matter of the other agronomic features suiting the grower's requirements - contact your representative or go to www.seminis.com.au for more information.

Leftroy Valley had on show an extensive range of colours, leaf shapes and growth forms in lettuce, rocket, kale, mizuna, asian greens,



beetroots and chards, offering numerous possibilities to the salad mix grower. As well as the form of these varieties, the breeders have been at work with disease resistance being incorporated, to meet the challenge of new strains of the mildews as, or before, they appear in Australian cropping. Comprehensive descriptive literature was provided, including a "Spinach Diseases" brochure. Contact your representative or go to www.leftroyvalley.com.

Fairbanks' Seeds' display was equally as varied and colourful, with a strong emphasis on beets and chards, Asian greens and rocket. The lettuce range was presented for assessment for baby leaf production, with an up-to-date range of options for downy mildew resistance available. See your representative for trial material or go to www.fairbanks.com.au.

In Clyde, on Frank Lamattina's property, Westranel Horticultural Solutions (WHS) conducted its trials of baby leaf varieties. WHS had on display a number of new imported baby leaf varieties, which exhibited a more glossy leaf. The WHS representatives pointed out some of the trial plots that definitely did not suit Australian conditions but it was very interesting to see these next to the more mainstream varieties. A lot of overseas growers use seed that is more suitable for direct sowing while in Australia the majority of growers would use seedlings. Contact your representative or go to www.whseeds.com for more information.

What have our IDOs been doing?

The limited resources of VGA Vic have been considerably boosted over the past three years by DPI Victoria's funding, which concludes at the end of June this year, of two part-time Industry Development Officers through its Horticulture Industry Network (HIN) Program.

So what have the IDOs achieved? I have been doing a quick summary of the IDO activities over this time. The IDOs have been able to visit between them close to 200 growers individually, from Mildura and Myrtleford in the north to Lindenow in the east. They have forged a strong network with researchers, suppliers and other industry representatives.

They have participated in 60 workshops, 90 meetings and three

AUSVEG Conventions. This does not include VGA Executive meetings or HIN meetings. Most workshops have been reported as articles in the VGA Newsletter or In-The-Field notes, which are emailed or faxed to growers at least weekly. If you don't get In-The-Field you are not on our email list. The IDOs' attendance at these meetings and workshops has enabled time-poor growers to be kept informed of issues that may affect them and to advise them of upcoming meetings.

The IDOs have accompanied individual and group tours of growing areas and organised visits to growers for many visitors, industry representatives and researchers. They have assisted with research projects and reported on them, organised workshops, distributed posters, booklets, DVDs and other information on behalf of the DPI, AUSVEG, HAL, researchers and the Vegetable Industry Development Program. The IDOs have also assisted growers with contacts and enquiries.

Last year the IDOs applied for and received funding for two grower study tours - a Young Grower Tour to Westam Australia and a tour with a group of growers investigating lettuce harvesters in the US and Italy. Reports on these tours are available at www.vgavic.org.au.

So what have they been doing? Nothing much really!

THE JOURNAL OF THE VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (INC)

7.

7.4 IDO Activities (Photos)



IDO East John Runting at AUSVEG Conference



Field Day on grower property



University students visit greenhouse producer



Worksafe workshop – Lindenow



Joint NSW/Vic workshop in Mildura



WA Young Grower Tour group

7.5 IDO Activities

Grower Interaction/Workshops	Event Type	No. Total event attendees
Drought Management Tools to assist Werribee vegetable growers	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	27
Meet with service providers West	office visit	12
Meet with service providers North	office visit	17
Collaborative work between RFCS & VGA	office visit	1
Snow Pea growers	farm visit	10
E Gippsland growers group	farm visit	5
Latrobe Valley Enterprise	farm visit	3
Organic Growers benefiting from past research	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	17
Horticulture Mediation Advisor	farm visit	5
Melbourne Uni Master Students visit	Field Day/Farm Walk	35
Myrtleford region issues	farm visit	7
Vegetable grower meeting in Werribee	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	15
Vegetable growers in Mildura region	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	17
IPM Workshop Snow Pea Growers	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	12
E Gippsland growers group & HIN partnership	farm visit	10
Snow Pea grower adopts IPM	farm visit	1
Lettuce Anthracnose workshop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	65
	Field Day/Farm Walk	4
Manual Handling Project	farm visit	15
First Farm Grant	farm visit	2
Carbon & Nitrogen Field Day	Field Day/Farm Walk	25
Bus tour E Gippsland growers	Field Day/Farm Walk	18
New growers follow-up – clean-up and restoration grant assistance	farm visit	5
WA Young Grower Tour	Group Tour	25
Adapting irrigation methods for climate change workshop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	17
Lettuce Harvester Study Tour	Group Tour	4
LOTE vegetable growers	Field Day/Farm Walk	19
Mildura Meeting	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	19
LOTE community of practice	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	9
Manual handling seminars	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	27
Manual handling	farm visit	15
Skills Training on-farm	farm visit	15
Compost	office visit	4
Bean Research	farm visit	6
Boneo Field Day	Field Day/Farm Walk	35
LOTE group meeting	Producer Discussion Group	21
farm visits	farm visit	10
Seed Company Field Days	Field Day/Farm Walk	125
Workshops/Conferences organised/assisted		
Ausveg soil management x 2	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	32
Brassica workshop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	23
Carbon Tool workshops x 2	Industry Training/Course	25
Enviroveg workshops x 2	Industry Training/Course	18
Creeping Tractor Forum	producer discussion group	29
Seed company Field Days x 2	field day/farm walk	72
Carbon/Nitrogen Stabiliser Use x 3	field day/farm walk	42
Compost trials x 3	field day/farm walk	35
Ausveg Levy Payer Meetings x 4	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	55
Dimethoate & Fenthion workshop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	12

Ausveg x 3	meeting	15
Individual meetings		
Meetings with DPI staff	office visit	39
Meetings with other stakeholders	office visit	20
Southern Rural Water/Melb Water	office visit	4
Resellers	office visit	21
Drought Adjust Project	office visit	2
Watson Creek issue x 2	meeting	24
VIDP Project/CIO x 3	Tele-conference	30
Ausveg x 5	office visit	10
P Dal Santo x 2	office visit	6
Compostors x 3	office visit	6
Workshops/forums attended		
Ag Challenge - trials	Producer Demonstration Site	
Carbon Forum	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Climate Change forum	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Nat Greenhouse Waste Water program	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Agrigater 3 - cost of production	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Farm World Field Day	Producer Demonstration Site	
Locust information session x 2	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Wildfire Risk Management	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Water strategy & spray drift management	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Hort Services Provider w/shop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Futures Workshop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
BFA Organic School Gardens Program	Producer Demonstration Site	
Flood recovery meeting	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
BOM training	Industry Training/Course	
Chemical Residue w/shop	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Food Alliance	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Soils Community of Practice	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Rural Youth Forum	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Ground water open day	Producer Demonstration Site	
Leafy vegetables Think Tank	Forum/Workshop/Seminar	
Steering/Advisory Committees		
Aust Hort Skills Training		
Veg IPM Project		
Bunyip Food Bowl Project		
Werribee Expo Committee		
Manual Handling Project		
Werribee Competitiveness Project		
Chisholm TAFE		
Use of AgVet Chem		
FSANZ mtg - food safety review		
Small Farm Safety meeting		
Biosecurity Strategy workshop		
Working group Fruit Fly Mgmt		