

**2009 conference
(Vegetables, Potatoes and
Onions)**

Richard Mulcahy
AUSVEG Ltd

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MT07077

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Telephone: (02) 8295 2300

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MT07077
Australian Vegetable Industry Conference
Melbourne, 4 - 6 May 2009

Hugh Tobin
Communications Manager
AUSVEG



MT07077

Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, Melbourne, 4 – 6 May 2009

A national conference focused on conveying research and development outcomes and facilitating discussion about the future direction for a profitable industry.

The purpose of this final report is to communicate the successful delivery of project MT07077, Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, Melbourne, May 2009.

Compiled by Hugh Tobin, Communications Manager, AUSVEG

AUSVEG Ltd

Suite 7, 756 Blackburn Rd, Clayton North, VIC, 3168

PO Box 563, Mulgrave, VIC, 3170

Phone: 03 9544 8098

Fax: 03 9558 6199

Mobile: 0431 939 920

Email: hugh.tobin@ausveg.com.au

Web: www.ausveg.com.au

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- National Processed Potato Levy
- HAL
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- Onions Australia
- Potato Processing Association Australia
- Delegates
- Sponsors

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Report due: 30 June 2007

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Media summary

The 2005 audit of Communication of Research and Development (R&D) in the vegetable industry showed that there was a very low level of knowledge and recall of R&D project outcomes amongst vegetable levy payers. The audit and subsequent communication strategy showed that one of the most popular methods of communications with growers was direct face-to-face communication. The inaugural National Vegetable Industry Conference in 2006 demonstrated that effective communication could be achieved in this forum, prompting a follow-up conference in 2007 and subsequent conference in 2009.

The vegetable industry spends approximately \$8.5 million per year on R&D. The National Vegetable Industry Conference 2009 in Melbourne provided an excellent method for transfer of the results of this R&D to levy payers and those who service the vegetable industry. In addition, the conference provided a great opportunity for the industry to come together to look at domestic and global vegetable industry trends. It provided a forum for the industry to discuss strategies to ensure its prosperity amid the global financial crisis and to successfully compete in a globalised economy.

Despite deterrents such as drought and the economic downturn, 365 delegates attended the conference. This validates the emphasis that industry places on face-to-face communication as one of the best means for communicating R&D outcomes.

Conference objectives:

- Improve levels of knowledge amongst National Vegetable Levy, Onion Levy and Potato Levy payers of the outcomes of their investment in R&D
- Increase uptake of R&D outcomes by the more direct delivery of R&D outcomes to growers and service providers to the Australian vegetable industry
- Provide a nationally focused forum to discuss issues affecting the viability of the Australian vegetable industry and to discuss marketing opportunities for the industry
- To provide an opportunity for growers to network with all members of the industry supply chain
- Provide a professional image of the Australian vegetable industry

The conference program included:

- Concurrent commodity-specific vegetable levy R&D sessions
- Onion-specific R&D presentations

- Processed potato R&D presentations
- National issue-focused sessions on supply chain, environmental factors, current and future trends, innovation, marketing and the future of the Australian vegetable industry
- Trade exhibition showcasing the latest knowledge, machinery, equipment, services and recent research
- International supply chain speakers and industry experts
- Annual levy-payer meetings
- Social program including welcome cocktail reception, trade exhibition drinks and conference gala dinner
- 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Awards presentations
- Bus charters to the National Vegetable Expo in Werribee

The results:

- Attendance of 365 delegates
- 40 trade displays:

Agsafe Ltd	National Harvest Labour Information Service
Aperio (Filmpac) Australia	Nufarm- Australia and Croplands
Australian Hydroponic & Greenhouse Association Inc. (AHGA)	Omni Environmental Group
AUSVEG	Organic Show Case
Barmac Industries Pty Ltd	Primary Industries and Fisheries - Queensland
BASF Australia Ltd	Processed Potato IAC (APRP)
Bayer CropScience	Rhima Australia
Bejo Seeds	Seasol International Pty Ltd
Crop Care	Seminis Vegetable Seeds
Dobmac Agricultural Machinery	South Pacific Seeds
Dow AgroSciences Australia Ltd	Spraygro Liquid Fertilizers
DuPont Australia Ltd	Sumitomo Chemical Australia
Elders Rural Services	Syngenta Crop Protection
Green Agricultural Irrigation Recycling Pty Ltd	Terranova Seeds Pty Ltd
Grow Green Technologies	Ulma Packaging
Landmark Operations Ltd	Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria Inc
Measurement Engineering Aust. P/L	Vin Rowe Farm Machinery
Melbourne Wholesale Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market	Withcott Seedlings
Muddy Boots Software	Wyma Engineering
Naandan Jain Australia	YARA Australia Pty Ltd

Evaluation of effectiveness

An evaluation survey was handed to delegates upon checking in at the conference registration desk. The survey had both a quantitative and qualitative focus (see appendix 1).

Quantitative evaluation results:

Over 80 per cent of surveyed delegates rated the conference as either good or excellent (see Table 1). The conference trade exhibition was also a great success; with almost 90 per cent of surveyed delegates rating the exhibition as either good or excellent (see Table 3).

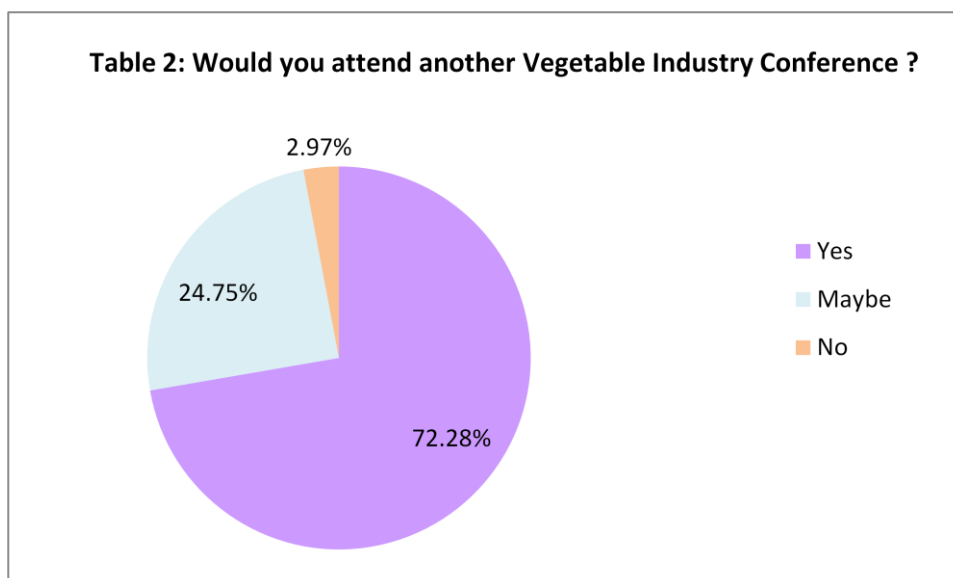
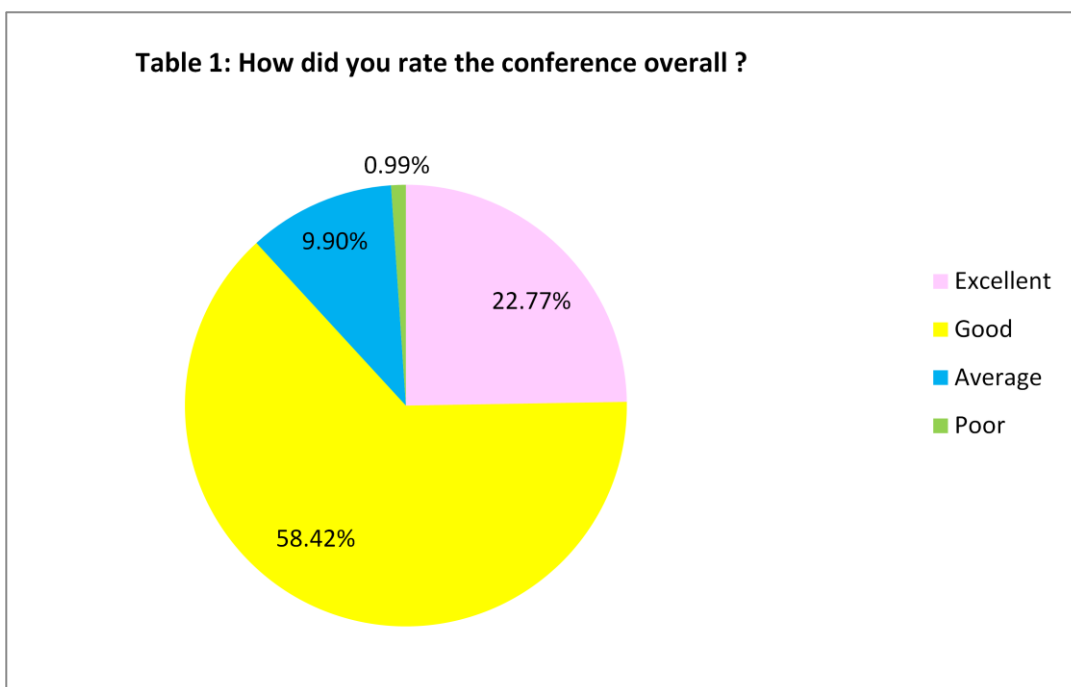


Table 3: How did you rate the trade exhibition ?

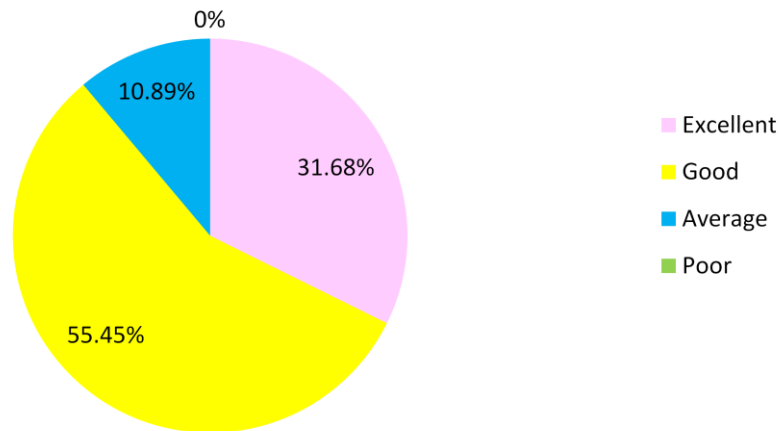
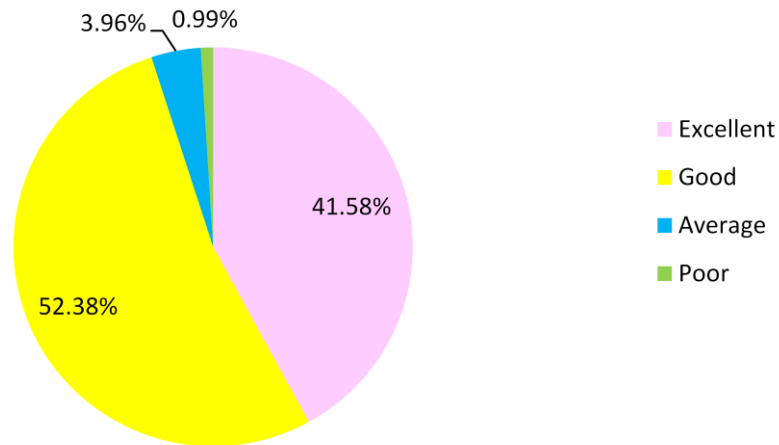


Table 4: How did you rate the venue ?



Selected qualitative feedback results:

“Speakers were very interesting with well thought-out talks” - Researcher, Victoria

“Enjoyed the R&D reports” - Grower, Queensland

“Multi-faceted conference- good topics with diverse inputs” - Researcher, Tasmania

“Enjoyed the networking...excellent first-class speakers” - Industry representative, Victoria

“Keep with the excellent work!” - Research Horticulturalist, Queensland

“Good industry stats- domestic and international updates” - Service provider, New South Wales

“Very well-run conference...very professional” - Consultant, Tasmania

Conference Program

Day 1: Monday 4 May

4.00pm	Registration Desk opens Annual Fresh Potato Levy Payers' Meeting
4.30pm	Annual Processed Potato Levy Payers' Meeting
5.00pm- 6.00pm	Annual Vegetable Levy Payers' Meeting
6.30pm	Welcome Reception & Trade Exhibition Opening in the Bellarine Banquet Hall 6 & 7

Day 2: Tuesday 5 May

8.00am	Trade Exhibition opens
9.00am	Australian Vegetable Industry Conference Opening
9.00am	Welcome - John Brent, AUSVEG Chairman
9.10am	Dr Nigel Steele Scott, HAL Chairman
9.20am	Signature Sponsor - Elders Managing Director, Mike Guerin
9.30am	Platinum Sponsor – Bayer CropScience Horticulture Portfolio Manager, Scott Ward
9.35am	MC Beat-up
'Speakers Mix' Session Sponsor: Elders Rural Services	
9.40am	'Speakers Mix' Snapshots Speakers: Peter Pokorny, Jin Ju Wilder, Michael O'Keeffe and Tom Rafferty
10.00am	Morning Tea
10.30am	Speaker: Peter Pokorny, General Manager, Fresh Food, Coles
10.50am	Speaker: Jin Ju Wilder, President, Coast Produce Company, Los Angeles
11.10am	Speaker: Michael O'Keeffe, Director, O'Keeffe & Associates
11.30am	Speaker: Tom Rafferty, Director, Supply Chain STO
11.50am	Panel Q&A
12.20pm	Lunch
Session Topic: Growing a Healthy Business - Current Trends and Obstacles Session Sponsor: Bayer CropScience	
1.35pm	Speaker: Professor David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing, Imperial College, London
2.05pm	Speaker: Dr Joanna McMillan Price, Nutritionist and Dietitian
2.20pm	Speaker: Martin Kneebone, Director, Freshlogic
2.35pm	Panel Q&A
Session Topic: Soil Health	
2.55pm	Speaker: Dr Frank Louws, Extension Plant Pathologist, North Carolina State University

3.20pm	Afternoon Tea
Session Topic: Carbon Trading and Climate Change in Agriculture	
4.00pm	Speaker: Professor Colin Birch, Vegetable Centre Leader, Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Science
4.10pm	Speaker: The Hon Andrew Robb AO, MP, Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design
4.20pm	Speaker: Peter Deuter, Senior Principal Horticulturist, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, QLD
4.30pm	Speaker: Allison Clark, Quality and Innovation Manager, Houston's Farm, Tasmania
4.40pm	Panel Q&A
4.55pm	Close
5.00pm onwards	Trade Exhibition Drinks

'Innovation and R&D Showcase' - Wednesday 6 May, 2009

Time	Vegetables	Potatoes	Vegetables/Onions/General	
9.00am	Keynote Speaker: Professor David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing, Imperial College, London	Optimising Production of Processing Potatoes Speaker: Dr Steven Johnson, Extension Crops Specialist, University of Maine	Improving the market development for Asian vegetables Speaker: Dr Jenny Ekman, Department of Primary Industries, NSW	
9.15am			Cucurbit Ute Guide Speaker: Tony Napier, Department of Primary Industries, NSW	
9.30am	Grower friendly tool for comparing management and profitability of vegetable crops Speaker: Alison MacGregor, Consultant, Scholefield Robinson Horticultural Services	Fertiliser management for potatoes Speaker: Tony Pitt, Principal, Ag-Challenge	Is there a market pool for IPM? Speakers: Dr Sandra McDougal, Department of Primary Industries, NSW and Peter Schreurs, Peter Schreurs & Sons	
9.45am	Economic Update Speaker: Ian James, Vegetable Industry Economist	PCN - onwards and upwards Speakers: Des Jennings, Chairman, Victorian Potato Growers Council, Thorpdale potato grower; and Dr Nigel Crump, Plant Pathologist Department of Primary Industries, VIC		
10.00am	Recycled Water use in Horticulture Speaker: Dr Daryl Stevens, Principal Scientist, Arris; Australian Coordinator for Recycled Water Development in Horticulture	Enhancing resistance to common scab by somaclonal selection Speaker: Dr Robert Tegg, Research Fellow in Plant Pathology, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture Research		
10.15am	MORNING TEA			
11.00am	Keynote Speaker: Jin Ju Wilder, President, Coast Produce Company, LA	Breeding Program Speakers: Tony Slater, Department of Primary Industries VIC; Allan Smith, National Agronomy Manager, Snack Brands Australia; Rene de Jong, National Potato Coordinator, Elders; and Keith Blackmore, Manager, ViC SPA	Nutrient Mapping/Yield response: An agronomy package to grow maximum yield Speaker: Trevor Twigden, Senior Agronomist, National Onion Lab Australia	
11.15am			Brassica ICM Toolkit CD Speaker: David Carey, Department of Primary Industries, NSW	Agronomic and postharvest improvement in iceberg and cos lettuce to extend shelf life for fresh cut salads Speaker: Dr Gordon

			Rogers, South Australian Research Development Institute
11.30am	Quality Requirements for Fresh Cut Vegetable Manufacturers Speaker: Dr Robert Premier, Technical Manager, Salad Fresh	Working together in the supply chain Speaker: David Antrobus, Field Manager McCain Foods	IPM Disease Program Overview Speakers: Program overview – Dr Ian Porter Department of Primary Industries, VIC
11.45am	Vegetracker Speaker: Steve Sheppard, Brand Story	Potato viruses and vectors Speaker: Brendan Rodoni, Research Scientist, Department of Primary Industries, VIC	Program 1 Pesticide Strategies – Dr Leanne Forsyth, Department of Primary Industries, NSW Program 2 Soil borne Diseases – Oscar Villalta and Caroline Donald Department of Primary Industries, VIC
12.00pm	Controlled Traffic Farming Systems for the Tasmanian vegetable industry Speaker: John McPhee, Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research	Irrigators and calculators - getting water management right Speaker: Paul Frost, Agronomist, Safries	Program 3 Foliar Diseases – Dr Chrys Aken, Department of Primary Industries, QLD
12.15pm	Family Farming Health Speaker: Stuart Willder, Sustainable Farm Families, Western District Health Services	Soilborne diseases Dr Nigel Crump, Plant Pathologist, Department of Primary Industries, VIC	Program 4 Viral Diseases – Denis Persley, Department of Primary Industries, QLD Program 5 Communication and Extension – Jeremy Badgery-Parker, Department of Primary Industries, NSW
12.30pm	LUNCH		
2.00pm	Soil Health Workshop Speakers: Dr Frank Louws, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, North Carolina State University; Jim Kelly, Business Manager, Arris; Dr Alison Anderson, NSW Industry Development Officer; and Dr Ian Porter, Department of Primary Industries, VIC	Australian Potato Research Program One (APRP1) Potato R&D Overview - what are we doing and where are we going Speakers: Dr Iain Kirkwood, Director of APRP, Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research; Hugo LeMessurier, Managing Director LeMessurier Solutions; Frank Mulcahy, Senior Agronomist, Simplot; and Lucy Keatinge, Industry Services Manager, Horticulture Australia Limited	Family Farming Health Speaker: Stuart Willder, Sustainable Farm Families, Western District Health Services
2.15pm			Work Cover Speaker: Bruce Butler, Partner, Monahan and Rowell

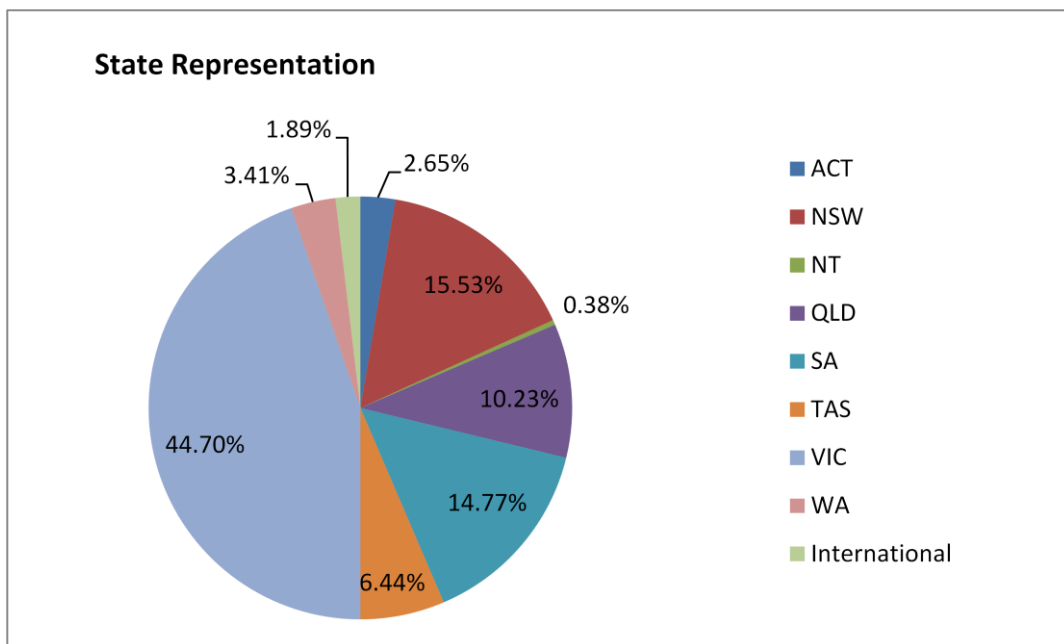
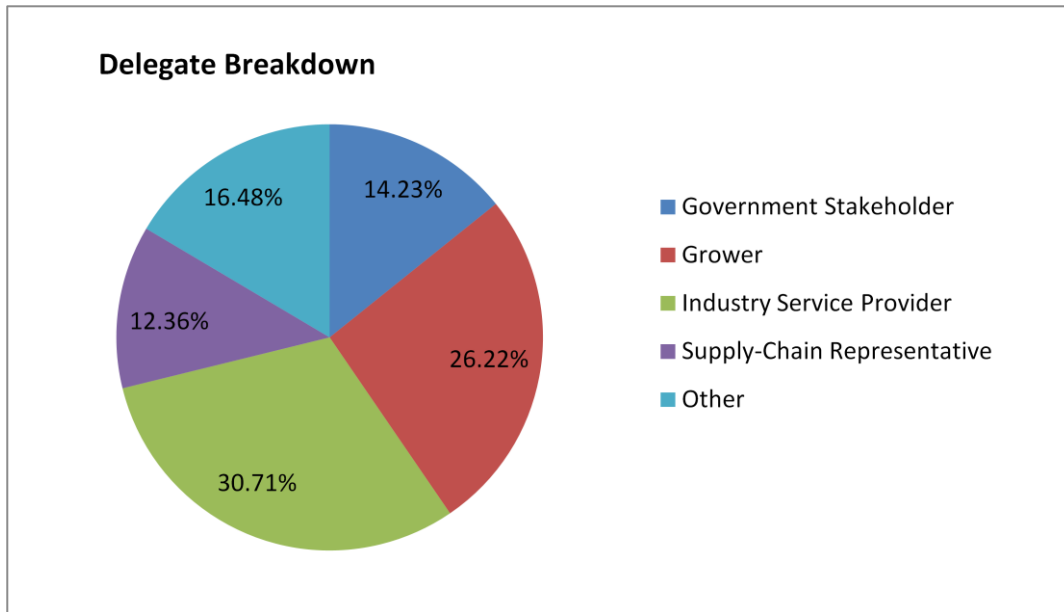
2.30pm		Seed certification and the future Speakers: Mark Holland, Department of Agriculture, Manager, Agwest Plant Laboratories	Biosecurity on-farm Speaker: Dr Lois Ransom, Chief Plant Protection Officer, Plant Health Australia
2.45pm			Australian Organic Industry Market Data and Trends Speaker: Dr Andrew Monk, Director, Biological Farmers of Australia Co-op Ltd (BFA)
3.00pm	Succession Planning Speaker: Kim Lee, Succession Planning Facilitator, Rabobank	Late Blight - a neighbours story Speaker: Dr Dolf de Boer, Research Scientist, Department of Primary Industries, VIC	
3.15pm		Soilborne disease diagnostics tests - a new tool of the growers toolbox Speaker: Dr Alan McKay, Plant and Health Scientist, South Australian Research Development Institute	Biocontrol of thrips in stored onions Speaker: Greg Baker, South Australian Research Development Institute
3.30pm	AFTERNOON TEA		
4.00pm	HAL Strategic Leadership Course Speakers: Jill Briggs, Program manager and facilitator, Rural Training Initiatives; Denise Kreymborg, Industry Development Officer, Bowen District Growers Association; Andrew Bulmer, Bulmers Fresh Farm Vegetables Pty Ltd; and Kim Vincent, Vincent's Produce	Optimising Processing Quality of Processing Potatoes Speaker: Dr Steven Johnson, Extension Crops Specialist, University of Maine	Phase II: Native vegetation to enhance biodiversity, beneficial insects and pest control in horticulture systems Speaker: Dr Nancy Schellhorn, CSIRO
4.15pm	Vegetable plant and soil health Speaker: Tony Pattison, Principal Nematologist, Department of Primary Industries, QLD		Determining the cause of onion stunting in South Australia Speaker: Sue Pederick, South Australian Research Development Institute

4.30pm	Levies Revenue Service Speaker: Noel Robson, National Compliance Manager, Levies Revenue Service	Common scab - what do we know? Speakers: Dr Tonya Wiechel, Plant Pathologist, Department of Primary Industries, VIC	Managing mildews: prevention using systematic acquired resistance (SAR) in greenhouse and field-grown cucurbits Speaker: Dr Jenny Jobling, University of Sydney and Applied Horticultural Research	Consumer expectations behind health and wellness promises from vegetable consumption Speaker: Jess Sanderson, Research Scientist, Department of Primary Industries, QLD
4.45pm	CLOSE			

Days 4 & 5: Thursday 7 & Friday 8 May – National Vegetable Expo, Werribee

A free shuttle bus service was provided for delegates interested in attending the 2009 National Vegetable Expo in Werribee on Thursday 7 May and/or Friday 8 May.

Delegate demographic



Key outcomes

- Networks established between growers, supply-chain, researchers and service providers
- Face-to-face communication of R&D outcomes
- Successful communication of industry key messages including the importance of engaging consumers, particularly through marketing the nutritional benefits of vegetables; and the benefits of environmentally sustainable farm practices
- Knowledge-sharing between potato, onion, greenhouse, organic and general vegetable growers and industry representatives
- Conference proceedings including audio and powerpoint presentations available to delegates and other members of industry
- Good media coverage of conference and topics covered for wider distribution through the vegetable industry
- An established and well-recognised industry event to communicate key messages, continue to unite the Australian vegetable industry and build a professional image of the industry

Recommendations

- Continue to build the level of industry participation by involving other industry organisations and regional grower associations
- Continue to rotate conference from state-to-state
- Continue to enhance the caliber of speakers, dependent on relevant industry issues at the time of the conference
- Continue to focus the conference on communicating the outcomes of National Vegetable Levy-funded R&D projects
- Continue to raise controversial and thought-provoking issues at conference to challenge and engage delegates
- Provide further informal networking opportunities for delegates
- Provide further incentives and employ innovative marketing techniques to attract more growers
- Consider holding the conference in July/August to facilitate attendance of more potato growers
- Consider holding the conference in a regional location, rather than a capital city, to attract more growers
- Where possible, facilitate face-to-face IAC/ Advisory Group/Working Group meetings in conjunction with the conference, to ensure these members' participation in the conference

Acknowledgements

Conference Steering Committee:

- John Said, AUSVEG Board member, Vegetable industry representative, Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) member
- Luis Gazzola, President, Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria
- Des Jennings, Chairman, Victorian Potato Growers Council
- Joanne Thomas-Ward, Executive Officer, Onions Australia
- Tony Imeson, Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria
- Katie Fisher, Industry Development Officer, Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria
- Dr Nigel Crump, Potato Pathologist, Australian Potato Research Program, DPI Victoria
- Rick Butler, young grower representative, Vegetable Production Advisory Group

Conference Sponsors:

- Signature Sponsor: Elders Rural Services
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- Bronze: South Pacific Seeds, Crop Care, Wyma Engineering, Spraygro Liquid Fertilizers, Dobmac Agricultural Machinery

Appendices:

- Conference Feedback Survey
- Conference Sponsorship Prospectus
- Conference Program Booklet
- Conference Mini Program Booklet