

# **2008 Seed Potato Industry Conference**

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Seed Potatoes Victoria

Project Number: PT07059

## **PT07059**

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## The 2008 Seed Potato Conference

Horticulture Australia  
Project PT07059  
September 2008

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N.S.Crump *et al.* September 2008

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On behalf of the 2008 Seed Potato Conference Organising Committee

Secretary Adie Kriesl (Seed Potatoes Victoria)

### **Acknowledgements**

The Conference Organising Committee is acknowledged for their dedication and professionalism in organising the conference and Horticulture Australia, Vin Rowe Farm Machinery, Dobmac Agricultural Machinery, Syngenta, Elders, West Gippsland Catchments Authority and Landpower Australia, for financial sponsorship of the conference.

### **The 3rd Biennial Seed Potato Conference 2008**

#### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the project was for sponsorship of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seed Potato Conference held in Marysville, 21st-22nd July 2008. The sponsorship supported conference activities, including funding of travel and subsistence for a keynote speaker, Mr John Sarup (Scottish Agricultural College).

#### **September 2008**

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## Media Summary

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Seed potato conference was held at the Maryslands Country House in Marysville, Victoria over the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2008. The conference attracted 180 registrants, significantly more than anticipated. The theme of the conference was “*Your Industry Your Business Your Event*”, the purpose of which was to inform and update the industry the advances in new technology, outcomes of research and development, know-how and industry trends. The agenda of the conference addressed future challenges faced by the industry. The conference theme was achieved through presentations by international and national experts. Generous sponsorship facilitated the running of the conference and support of speakers. International delegates at the conference (notably John Sarup, Dr Jon Pickup and Dr Vivian Blok) were involved in post conference activities, including a PCN meeting involving regulators, scientists and growers.

Horticulture Australia sponsorship specifically supported Mr John Sarup from the Scottish Agricultural College who presented a keynote address at this conference. Mr Sarup also visited key growing regions within Victoria.

Additional goals were achieved at the seed potato conference. They included

1. A celebration of the International Year Of The Potato
2. A celebration of 70 years of certified seed production. ViCSPA members and buyers to recognised the contribution of certified seed potatoes to the Australian potato industry.
3. An opportunity to recognize industry leadership and succession – Industry awards were given to individual who had made significant contributions to the industry.
4. The conference was an opportunity to get industry members together to
  - a. Develop pride in their industry
  - b. Develop their networks to assist their businesses
  - c. Provide a range of information to assist their businesses

## VicSPA

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VicSPA provides a range of professional certification and quality assurance services and operates the Seed Potato Certification Scheme. Victorian based ViCSPA also provides services to NSW, SA and Tasmania.

## Seed Potatoes Victoria

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Seed Potatoes Victoria Inc. (SPV) represents over 110 certified seed producers in Victoria and South Australia; central to Ballarat, Kinglake, Gippsland, Portland and the Otway's.

The representative body is made up of delegates from each seed growing area. The delegates meet regularly to discuss issues pertinent to its members. These meetings are also attended by members of the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and the certifying authority, ViCSPA.

With input from each seed growing area, VicDPI, ViCSPA and various other industry representatives, members can be assured that when decisions are made, they are made with the involvement of the seed potato industry as a whole.

Disease, pests and other threats, marketing, OH&S, technology and innovation are some of the issues discussed at the meetings. With the support of this cross section of industry representatives, SPV is capable of handling any new issues efficiently and initiating new projects that are relevant to the ever changing environment in which its members operate.

## Seed Potatoes Conference

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The 3rd Biennial Conference, organised and managed by VicSPA, SPV and DPI Victoria with was held at the Maryslands Country House in Marysville, Victoria - 21st to the 22nd of July 2008.

The organising committee comprise of the following members

- Con Powell (ViCSPA Director, President SPV, ViCSPA Seed Grower)
- Wayne Tymenson (ViCSPA Director, crising potato grower)
- Keith Ingleton (ViCSPA Director & seed grower)
- Gordon Jones (Secretary/Treasurer SPV, ViCSPA certified seed grower)
- Des Jennings (AUSVEG Director, SPV Delegate and ViCSPA seed grower)
- Joy Ward (ViCSPA seed grower)
- Dot Chapman (ViCSPA seed Grower)
- Adie Kriesel (EO Seed Potatoes Victoria)
- Keith Blackmore (Manager ViCSPA)
- Nigel Crump (Research Scientist DPI)

## Conference Theme

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The theme of the conference was "*Your Industry Your Business Your Event*", the purpose of which was to inform and update the industry the advances in new technology, outcomes of research and development, know-how and industry trends.

The agenda of the conference addressed future challenges faced by the industry. The conference theme was achieved through presentations by international and national experts. A copy of the conference program is in Table 1

**Table 1 Conference program**

Time	SUNDAY 20 <sup>th</sup> July	MONDAY 21 <sup>st</sup> July	TUESDAY 22 <sup>nd</sup> July
8:30 – 10:30		<p>WELCOME (8.30–9.00 Haycraft 1 &amp; 2 )  <b>Chair SPV &amp; VICSPA</b>                      Session 1: (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. Crop Uniformity –  <b>John Sarrup (SAC) 40 min</b>                      TBA</p>	<p>Session 5: (9.00 Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. Can potatoes cotton on?  <b>Harvey Gaynor (Auscott) 60 min</b>                      2. SRW – Water  <b>Chris Hughes 30 min</b>                      3. Irrigation – what’s new and news  <b>Vernon Costello Typac 30 min</b></p>
10:30 – 11:00		<b>Morning Tea</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>
11:00 – 12:30		<p>Session 2: PCN (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. EU PCN – lessons for Australia  <b>Jon Pickup (SASA) 40 min</b>                      2. UK PCN research  <b>Vivian Blok (SCRI) 20 min</b>                      3. PCN – where are we at?  <b>David Beardsell (DPI Vic) 10 min</b></p>	<p>Session 6: (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. Family Farm Business Succession Planning  <b>proAGtive – Sara Roche 40 min</b>                      2. Other than the tractor what else needs a service?  <b>Stuart Willder 40 min</b></p>
12:30 – 13:30		<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30 – 15:00		<p>Session 3: (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. Genetically Modified Potatoes:                      A Decade of Lost Opportunities                      But Great Potential!  <b>Prof Ric Roush (Melbourne Uni) 30 min</b>                      2. Precision Ag  <b>Martin Peters (Farm Works) 30 min</b>                      3. Banking and finance–  <b>Scott Dimond (??) 30 min</b></p>	<p>Session 7: (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. Managing aphids and viruses of potato UK perspective  <b>Jon Pickup (SASA) 30 min</b>                      2. Potatoes Viruses down under  <b>Brendan Rodoni (DPI Vic) 30 min</b>                      3. Fungicide application – it not all up in the air  <b>Trevor Stebbing (Syngenta) 30 min</b></p>
15:00 – 15:30		<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>
15:30 – 17:00	Poster Placement	<p>Session 4: (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      Discussion on the industry – “<i>lookin’ forward lookin’ back</i>” what are the issues facing the industry, what can be done, who is going to do it</p>	<p>Session 8: (Haycraft 1 &amp; 2)                      1. Rapid diagnostics tests for the potato industry  <b>Kathy Ophel-Kellor (SARDI) 20 min</b>                      2. Common scab – what do we know?  <b>Tonya Wiechel (DPI Vic) 20 min</b>                      3. TBA</p>
17:00+	<b>Welcome Reception</b> (7:00 – 10:00)	<p><b>Happy hour</b> (17:00 – 18:00)  <b>Conference Dinner</b> (19:30 – 23:30)                      Guest Speaker <b>DAVID PARKIN</b></p>	Dinner

## Sponsorship

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The conference was generously sponsored by several sponsors (Table 2). This sponsorship was used to support national and international experts invited as quest speakers.

**Table 2** Conference sponsors and financial supporters

Platinum	Gold	Silver	Supporters
Horticulture Australia Elders Limited Vin Rowe Syngenta	Landpower Australia	WGCMA Dobmac	Ausveg H Polesy & Co Farm Mapping Services National Australia Bank EE Muir & Sons Nufarm

## Key Outcomes of the Conference

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A total of 180 delegates (including sponsors) were registered for the conference. Of the total registrations, 133 were industry participants and 47 were sponsors and their representatives. 192 delegates attended the conference dinner.

The relatively high number of delegates was a highlight, suggesting that the conference program had the right topics and the venue/location was ideal.

The Conference Handbook included abstracts of oral papers (provided as hard copy).

Horticulture Australia sponsorship specifically supported Mr John Sarup of the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) where he is a John Sarup a potato agronomist from the Scottish Agricultural College. John works closely with growers in Scotland where his skills are in strong demand. At the conference, John discussed ways of improving potato crop uniformity to maximise crop performance and profits. With costs of inputs (seed, fertilizer, fuel, water) continuing to rise, it is increasing important that the potato crop is managed to obtain the greatest return with minimal wastage.

*Other international speakers at the conference.*

Dr Jon Pickup from The Scottish Agriculture Science Agency who has been involved in the development and implementation of new EU policy directives for PCN. Most significantly, the new Directive addresses the spread of PCN with all potatoes for planting, not just seed potatoes that are marketed. It also sets out a harmonised methodology for soil sampling, incorporating flexibility to accommodate the variation in the incidence of PCN and field sizes that occur across the EU. The Australian potato industry is developing a national strategy to harmonise the containment and testing standards for PCN across state boundaries. Jon's presentation is an excellent opportunity to see how the UK has handled PCN and continues to secure its world leading potato production.

Dr Pickup also spoke on potato viruses and aphid management

Vivian Blok is a research scientist from the Scottish Crop Research Institute who is a nematologist. Dr Blok shared her experiences with PCN and provided an insight into the technology for PCN that is being developed in the UK.



*Survey of Delegates*

To gauge delegates satisfaction of the conference overall, a questionnaire survey of the conference delegates was conducted (see below). Of the 133 delegates there was a 45% response to the survey.

## 2008 Potato Conference Survey

Thank you for your participation in the 2008 Potato Conference.

The organising committee would like to invite you to take a moment to complete our conference evaluation survey. Your feedback will enable us to improve future conferences and better meet your needs.

This survey will take no more than a few minutes of your time and you can choose to remain anonymous. When complete, please fold and place in the box at reception. Thank you for your participation.

1. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with this conference:

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

2. What was MOST VALUABLE about the conference?

3. What was LEAST VALUABLE about the conference?

Please turn over to complete your survey .....

*Results from the survey*

There was a large percentage of the respondents who were “*very satisfied*” with the conference overall (Figure 1). There were no responses that were “*somewhat dissatisfied*” or “*very dissatisfied*.”

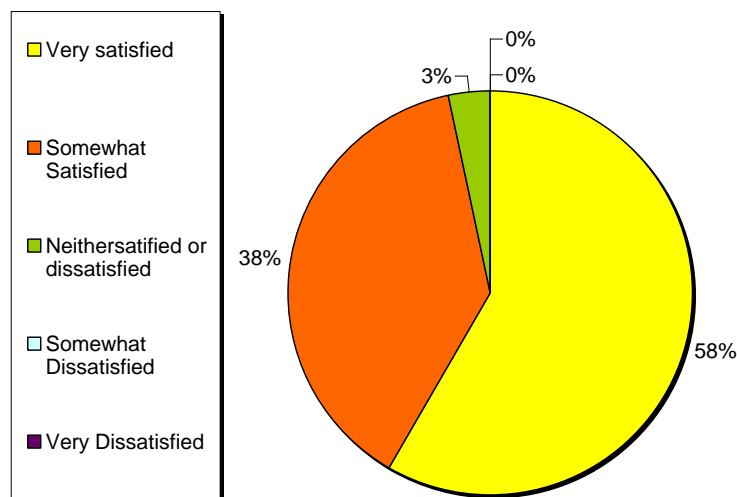
Most respondents noted the opportunity for networking as a valuable part of the conference, followed by the succession farm planning, farmers health, PCN, the general quality of the presentations and crop uniformity (Figure 2). While just under half of the responses reported that there were no *least valuable* parts of the conference, there was a high proportion of respondents who found PCN to be the least valuable session. This was followed by too much science in presentations. Many responses included both PCN commented on too much science. This could be attributed to the

- some presentations on PCN did have technical detail,
- there was a large number of presentations on PCN (the organising committee took advantage of the visiting scientists from the International Nematology conference that was held the week prior in Brisbane).
- PCN is a topic that not everyone needs to know but does not want to know.

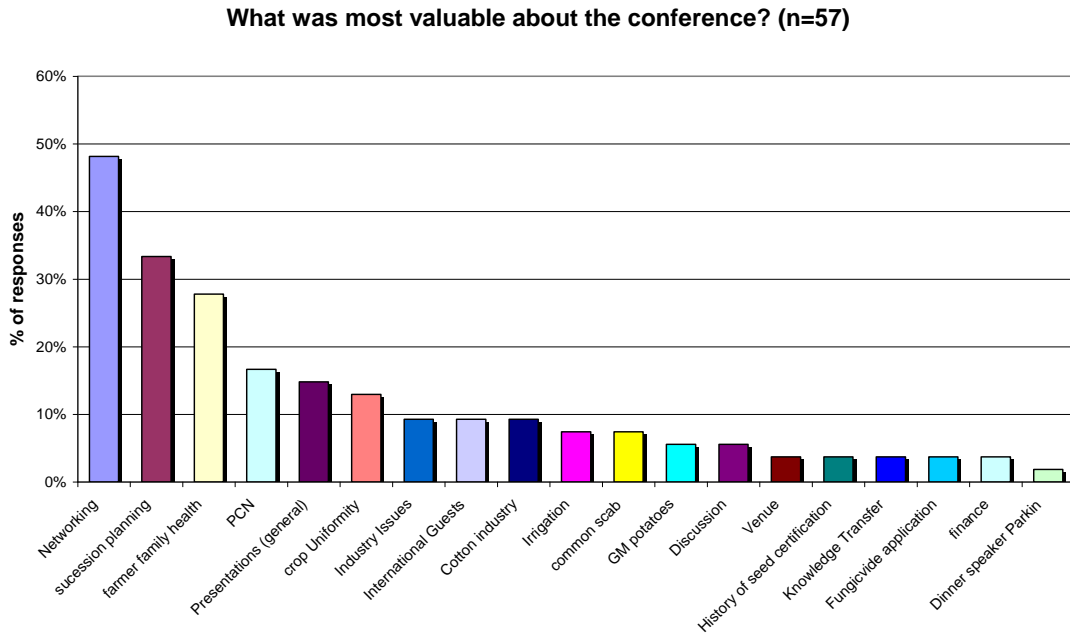
Strategies were used to reduce technical jargon and avoiding too much science stuff, such as 2 min introductions by the presenter to deliver take home messages before their full presentations and keeping participation activities between speakers e.g. throwing beach ball over audience.

Most respondents rates the conference venue highly and also viewed the conference as an opportunity for information exchange (Figure 4).

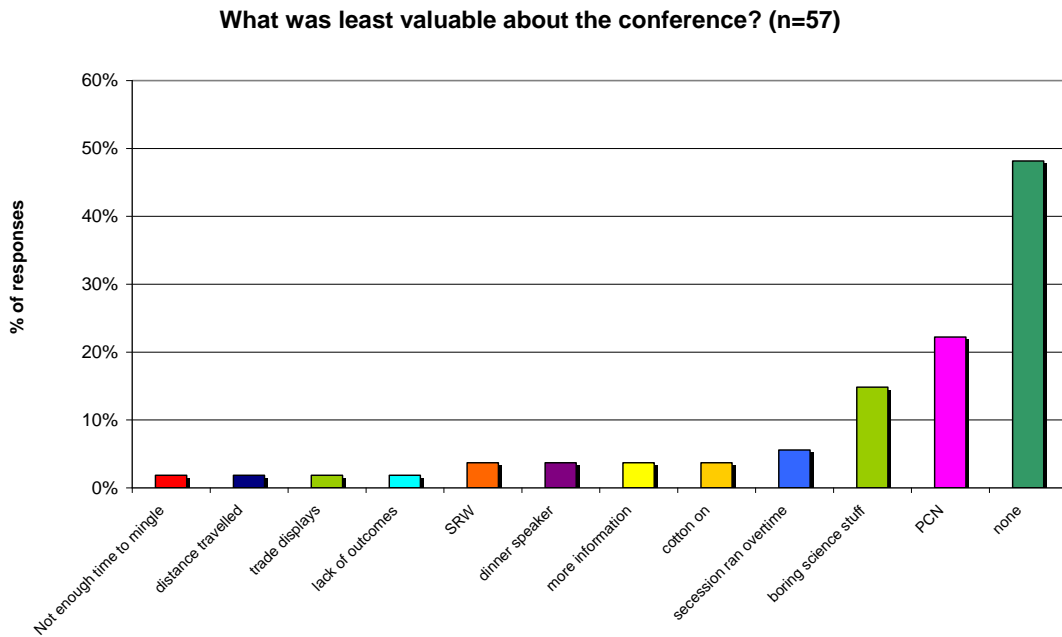
**Overall satisfaction of the conference as a percentage of response ( n= 60)**



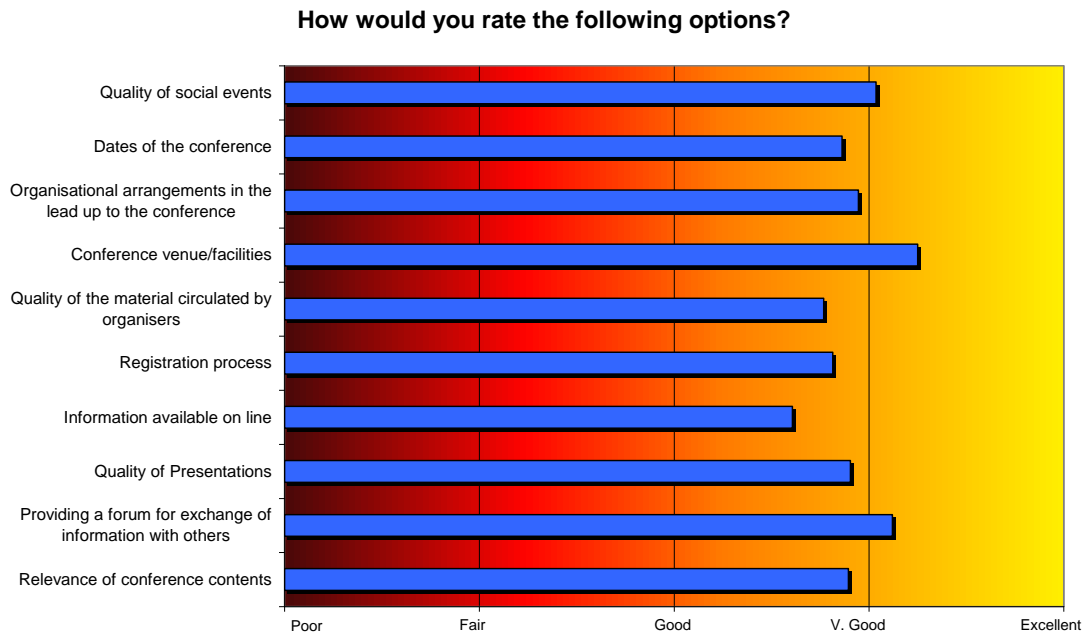
**Figure 1 Overall satisfaction of the conference**



**Figure 2 What was most valuable about the conference?**



**Figure 3 What was least valuable about the conference?**



Average of responses 1 = poor, 2= Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = very good, 5 = Excellent. Note each category may have variable number of responses.

**Figure 4 Average ratings of various aspects of the conference.**

## Delegate List

2008 Conference Reg Delegate	Num	Name
	2	Abel Agrico
	2	AG Challenge
	1	Agronico Technology
	2	AUSVEG - Customer
	1	Bayer Cropscience
	1	Biggs, GR & PM
	1	Bone, A & N
	1	Bone, D & J
	1	Bone, Gavin
	1	Brewer, Brian
	1	Canadian Food Inspectoin Agency
	1	Chapman Farms Produce
	1	Chep
	1	Cheque Onsite Admin Support
	1	Cirillo, John
	2	Coal Valley Seed
	1	Coolibah Herbs
	1	Corcoran Bros Pty Ltd
	2	Crick & Co Pty Ltd
	1	Cummaudo Farms
	2	Cuppup Valley Seed Potatoes
	1	Cutbush & Co
	2	Denney, B & V
	2	Dept of Primary Industries – Bairnsdale
	1	Dept Of Primary Industries - Ballarat

	Dept of Primary Industries -	
15	Knoxfield	
1	Dillon, BM & ML	
2	DiSisto, D & K	
1	Dowling Agritech	
1	Durkin Produce Pty Ltd	
1	Elders – Virginia	
2	ELDERS VP	
1	Farm Mapping Services	
2	Frawley, C & M	
2	Gannon, JV & CR	
1	Haintz & Sons, R & L	
2	Hann, GR & B	
1	Horticulture Aust Ltd	
4	Ingelton & Sons	
3	Jennings, Des	
2	Johnson, BE & LE	
1	Jones, G & L	
1	Kinglake Produce	
1	Labbett Potatoes	
2	Landpower Australia Pty Ltd	
1	Lyons, PJ & AL	
1	Maughan, Jackie	
2	Maxwell, AH & LD	
1	McCain Foods	
1	McCain Foods	
2	Muir & Sons, EE	
1	Murphy Farms	
1	National Australia Bank	
1	National Australia Bank	
2	Nufarm	
2	O'Connell, Graeme	
2	Polesy & Co	
2	Powell, C & J	
2	Pyksis	
3	Red Mountain Industries	
1	Robinson & Sons Pty Ltd, J I	
1	Rovers, Frank	
1	Scott, PG & SL	
1	Shaw L & J	
1	Simplot Aust Pty Ltd	
1	Snack Brands Aust	
2	Southern Choice	
2	Tasmanian Inst of Ag	
1	Tasmanian Inst of Ag	
2	Tourello Pastoral Co	
1	Trigg, T & M	
1	Ure, B & L	
11	ViCSPA	
1	Vin Rowe Farm Machinery	
2	Ward, B & J	
1	Williams, DJ & K	
<hr/>		
Total		
Registrations	133	

## Conference accounts

	Jan 1 - Oct 6, 2008	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
<b>Income</b>				
<b>605 - Conferences</b>				
<b>2008 Seed Potato Conference</b>				
Evening Meal	398.18	0.00	398.18	100.0%
Exhibitors	8,727.27	11,000.00	-2,272.73	79.34%
HAL Funding	25,130.94	25,000.00	130.94	100.52%
Registrations - Conference	32,708.73	46,400.00	-13,691.27	70.49%
Registrations - Partners	3,681.76	8,100.00	-4,418.24	45.45%
Sponsorship - Gold	6,000.00	12,000.00	-6,000.00	50.0%
Sponsorship - Platinum	8,500.00	20,000.00	-11,500.00	42.5%
Sponsorship - Silver	4,000.00	6,000.00	-2,000.00	66.67%
<b>Total 2008 Seed Potato Conference</b>	<b>89,146.88</b>	<b>128,500.00</b>	<b>-39,353.12</b>	<b>69.38%</b>
<b>Total 605 - Conferences</b>	<b>89,146.88</b>	<b>128,500.00</b>	<b>-39,353.12</b>	<b>69.38%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>89,146.88</b>	<b>128,500.00</b>	<b>-39,353.12</b>	<b>69.38%</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>89,146.88</b>	<b>128,500.00</b>	<b>-39,353.12</b>	<b>69.38%</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
<b>712 - Conference Expenses</b>				
<b>2008 Seed Potato Conference</b>				
<b>Advertising</b>				
Advertising - Media & Printing	0.00	3,000.00	-3,000.00	0.0%
Advertising - Souvenirs & Bags	1,380.81	2,000.00	-619.19	69.04%
Advertising - Sponsor Board	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.0%
Advertising - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total Advertising</b>	<b>1,380.81</b>	<b>6,000.00</b>	<b>-4,619.19</b>	<b>23.01%</b>
<b>Awards</b>	<b>220.91</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>-279.09</b>	<b>44.18%</b>
<b>Coach Hire</b>				
Coach Hire - Day Tours	1,569.70	1,720.00	-150.30	91.26%
Coach Hire - Driver	0.00	845.00	-845.00	0.0%
Coach Hire - Refresh'mnts	0.00	400.00	-400.00	0.0%
Coach Hire - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total Coach Hire</b>	<b>1,569.70</b>	<b>2,965.00</b>	<b>-1,395.30</b>	<b>52.94%</b>
<b>Committee Meeting Costs</b>	<b>584.37</b>	<b>600.00</b>	<b>-15.63</b>	<b>97.4%</b>
<b>Donated Exhibit Space</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>-3,000.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Drinks - Evening Meals</b>	<b>3,721.36</b>	<b>3,400.00</b>	<b>321.36</b>	<b>109.45%</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>2,051.38</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>51.38</b>	<b>102.57%</b>
<b>Misc Expenses</b>	<b>6,681.36</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>1,681.36</b>	<b>133.63%</b>
<b>Partner Programme</b>				
Partner Programme - Day 1	509.09	450.00	59.09	113.13%
Partner Programme - Day 2	1,621.82	3,600.00	-1,978.18	45.05%
<b>Total Partner Programme</b>	<b>2,130.91</b>	<b>4,050.00</b>	<b>-1,919.09</b>	<b>52.62%</b>
<b>Photographer</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>-3,000.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Printing</b>				
Printing - Programme	2,325.90	1,000.00	1,325.90	232.59%
Printing - Tickets/Lanyards	520.95	800.00	-279.05	65.12%

Printing & Postage	500.55	2,000.00	-1,499.45	25.03%
Printing - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total Printing</b>	<b>3,347.40</b>	<b>3,800.00</b>	<b>-452.60</b>	<b>88.09%</b>
Refreshments - Exhibitors Rec	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.0%
Registration Costs - Delegates	49,036.30	44,800.00	4,236.30	109.46%
Registration Costs - Gold	0.00	1,680.00	-1,680.00	0.0%
Registration Costs - Partners	0.00	1,800.00	-1,800.00	0.0%
Registration Costs - Platinum	0.00	5,600.00	-5,600.00	0.0%
Registration Costs - Silver	0.00	870.00	-870.00	0.0%
Secretariat Costs	0.00	7,000.00	-7,000.00	0.0%
Speakers	10,631.74	20,000.00	-9,368.26	53.16%
<b>Total 2008 Seed Potato Conference</b>	<b>81,356.24</b>	<b>117,065.00</b>	<b>-35,708.76</b>	<b>69.5%</b>
<b>Total 712 - Conference Expenses</b>	<b>81,356.24</b>	<b>117,065.00</b>	<b>-35,708.76</b>	<b>69.5%</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>81,356.24</b>	<b>117,065.00</b>	<b>-35,708.76</b>	<b>69.5%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>7,790.64</b>	<b>11,435.00</b>	<b>-3,644.36</b>	<b>68.13%</b>

**Note: Due to the details of the invoice issued by the venue operators, it was not possible to separate Sponsor Expenses. These have all been included in Registration Costs.**

#### **Expenses not incurred:**

Coach Hire (x Ballarat) and driver costs did not occur. The bus service was not used.

ViCSPA paid for refreshments at the Exhibitors Reception.

Total Discluded expenses from initial budget amount to \$3,100 other minor adjustments to Expenses amount to -\$1,055

## **Conference Handbook**

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The conference handbook will be sent as a hard copy has supplement to this report.

## **Post Conference**

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The Committee of Seed Potatoes Victoria Inc conducted a general meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The Conference was discussed in detail and the committee members agreed that the event was a success on every level. Informal feedback indicated the industry's satisfaction with the calibre of speakers, the relevance of session topics and the level of professionalism displayed by the event co-ordinators. The location and venue encouraged networking and helped to socially knit industry participants together. It is not often that the industry communes on such a large scale.

#### *Actions*

The conference committee have met to discuss the outcomes of the event. All members have a sense of achievement and feel that the goals and objectives of the conference have been met. Concepts and ideas were discussed for the next conference which will probably occur in 2010. Since the conference there have been significant changes to the industry, resulting in a new set of challenges for producers of potatoes. The committee believes that a conference is the best method of combating these challenges and uniting the industry.