

**Publication of the bi-
monthly vegetable grower
magazine 'Vegetables
Australia'**

Lisa Maguire
AUSVEG Ltd

Project Number: VG06005

VG06005

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 vegetable industry.

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ISBN 0 7341 1771 X

Published and distributed by:

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VG06005

Publication of the bi-monthly vegetable grower magazine
Vegetables Australia

Lisa Maguire, Communications Director
AUSVEG Ltd

May 2008



Know-how for Horticulture™



VG06005

Publication of the bi-monthly vegetable grower magazine *Vegetables Australia*

The purpose of this final report is to communicate the successful delivery of project VG06005, *Publication of the bi-monthly vegetable grower magazine Vegetables Australia*.

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Funded by:

- National Vegetable Levy
- HAL
- Advertising revenue

Report date: Friday 30 May 2008

Any recommendations contained in this publication do not necessarily represent current HAL policy. No person should act on the basis of the contents 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 the publication.

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Media Summary

Vegetables Australia is a 56-page, full-colour, bi-monthly magazine mailed directly to Australian vegetable growers, researchers, service providers, advertisers and other key members of the vegetable industry. This project is a continuation of VG04086.

Launched in July 2005, *Vegetables Australia* was initiated as the key vehicle for the dissemination of information on the Vegetable R&D program, as identified in the Vegetable Industry Communication Strategy 2005-2008. Grower communication research showed that growers were low internet and email users and preferred to receive their information in printed format or face to face. Eighteen issues have now been published and mailed to growers.

Vegetables Australia magazine is the key print communication tool for the vegetable industry. The magazine concept was developed in accordance with the National Vegetable Industry Communications strategy, which identified that a bi-monthly magazine, sent direct to growers, was a fundamental tool for effective communication of outcomes for the industry R&D program. This was supported by a national telephone survey of vegetable growers, conducted as part of the Industry Communications Audit, which found that 91 per cent of growers were in favour of the magazine.

To manage the production of the magazine, a part-time editor was employed and advertising services were outsourced to the company Hyde Media. This arrangement, set in place for the first year *Vegetables Australia* was produced (as milestones of VG04086), continued for years two and three of the publication's production.

To retain its position as the nation's leading vegetable-industry publication, *Vegetables Australia* underwent a redesign in July 2007 to cement its branding and identity

Vegetables Australia communicates updates and outcomes of levy-funded R&D projects. It also provides information about key industry figures and bodies, state organisations, researchers, grower profiles and achievements, import and export markets, the economy, and industry-related news.

Distributed in January, March, May, July, September and November, the magazine's glossy full-colour presentation and high production values are well received by its readership, as demonstrated in reader surveys.

Objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- Effectively communicate outcomes of the Vegetable R&D programs to National Vegetable Levy payers
- Provide growers with information about their R&D investment through the National Vegetable Levy
- Provide an effective, direct vehicle for communication of industry-specific information to growers
- Assist in improving recognition of the R&D program, as outlined in the National Vegetable Industry Communications Strategy, and raise the profile of the industry within non-growing audiences
- Assist in driving traffic to the National Vegetable Levy payers website.

Results

- Feedback was sought through the mechanisms of a readership survey distributed with the magazine
- Readers indicated a high level of acceptance of the magazine, and a high level of interest in the R&D component of the publication (80% of survey respondents nominated R&D findings as their favourite magazine section, an increase of 3% from a similar survey conducted in 2005)
- Survey results also indicated 72% recognition of the Vegetable R&D Program and National Vegetable Levy (up 3% from the 2005 survey).

Methodology

Audience

The primary audience for *Vegetables Australia* magazine was Australian vegetable growers. Secondary audiences for the publication included industry bodies, supply chain partners, government representatives, research providers and prospective advertisers.

The design and style of the publication reflected the diversity of these audiences, and served to address the needs of each of these audiences.

Editorial/article collection

Vegetables Australia was managed on a day-to-day basis by an in-house part-time editor (0.8 EFT). Jim Thomson replaced Youna Angevin-Castro as editor in June 2007.

Members of the editorial committee were:

- Figaro Natoli, WA grower
- John Mundy, SA grower
- Anthony Brandsema, Tasmanian grower
- Glenn Abbott, QLD grower
- Therese Schreurs, Victorian grower
- David Chung, NSW grower
- Alison Anderson, NSW Industry Development Officer
- Ross Ord, Industry Development Manager, AUSVEG
- Lisa Maguire, Project Leader & Communications Manager, AUSVEG
- Jim Thomson, Editor, AUSVEG

The inclusion of growers on the editorial committee was integral to the continued success of the magazine. The committee was used as a forum to develop key overarching themes and editorial direction of *Vegetables Australia*, as well as identify the key R&D priorities to be covered.

Editorial plans were developed by the magazine editor, and R&D stories were selected according to a range of criteria. These included:

- Relevance to target audience
- Timeliness of information and project outcomes
- Adherence to 85% R&D quota required from each issue of the magazine.

R&D projects selected for inclusion in *Vegetables Australia* were commissioned to freelance journalists. This was important to the success of the magazine, as it enabled the magazine to maintain a fresh voice. Articles written directly by researchers were avoided, as it was feared that these would be too technical for the target reader, and difficult to commission with consistency and reliability. This was an essential component of the magazine and fundamental to its success.

Journalists were instructed to work closely with researchers in developing the stories, and to actively seek out examples of growers who had successfully implemented the research on-farm as case studies. To ensure technical accuracy, researchers were required to check all articles pertaining to their research before the magazine was printed.

All articles were edited for consistency of style and voice by the magazine editor.

Across the 24-month duration of the project (12 issues), *Vegetables Australia* reported on more than 170 R&D related topics and projects funded through HAL. This is an average of 14.4 stories per issue, an increase from the average of 11 stories per issue that appeared in the first six issue of the magazine.

A full list of projects is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. A list of R&D projects and levy-related articles that appeared in issues 7 to 18 of *Vegetables Australia*

Project number	Article title	Issue published
VegVision 2020	Industry prepares to launch VegVision 2020	July 2006
VG05079	National conference declared a success by participants	July 2006
VG03094	National Vegetable Levy explained	July 2006
VG04014	The Better Brassica Roadshow: a model success?	July 2006
VG05014	Versatile natives may hold the key	July 2006
VG04008	Alternative plantings trialled on cauliflower crops	July 2006
VG03084	New research offers boost to hybrid seed availability	July 2006
VG03002	Fronting up to bean fungi	July 2006
VG04006	New research turning up the heat of fruit fly	July 2006
	Researcher profile: Dr Elizabeth Minchington	July 2006
	Pest profile: Diamondback moth	July 2006
HG03072	Queensland labour market study identifies major vacancies in labour practices	September 2006
VG05051	Climate warnings heat up for growers	September 2006
VG04011	Cucumber fight goes nationwide	September 2006
VG03083	A risk worth taking	September 2006
HG04027	Womens' training creates a sense of adventure	September 2006
HG05007	Irrigation conference highlights need for change	September 2006
VG04010	Drought prompts water research study	September 2006
VG05005	Brassica canker solution depends on additional research	September 2006
	Researcher profile: Marc Coombs	September 2006
	Pest profile: Sclerotinia Lettuce Drop	September 2006
VegVision 2020	VegVision 2020 to double value of veggies in Australia	November 2006
HG03071	Global benchmark to drive Queensland value chain	November 2006
VG03052	IDO profile: Kate Dunn	November 2006
MT06064	Vegetables take centre plate	November 2006
VG03029	A milky solution	November 2006
VG02051	Reduced pass harvesting of export cauliflower	November 2006
VG04083	Go online for levy innovation	November 2006
VG05079	Labelling sweet potatoes	November 2006
VG03094	Grower survey results	November 2006
VG04009	Growing better crops with sand	November 2006
VG03029	Monitoring pesticide residue in hydroponic lettuce	November 2006
VG05072	Getting the most from your veggies	November 2006
	Researcher profile: Peter Dal Santo	November 2006
	Pest profile: Heliothis	November 2006
VG06129	National Vegetable Levy Investment process is changing	January 2007
VG06129	IAC and Advisory group structure	January 2007
VG04023	IDO profile: David Ellement	January 2007
MT06064	Vegetable Industry Conference	January 2007
HG03003	New strategies in the war against thrips	January 2007
VG04030	Ancient crop is at home in far north Queensland	January 2007
VG06017	PMA tour grower profile: Rick Butler	January 2007
VG06017	PMA tour summit	January 2007
VG06017	Young vegetable growers take PMA tour of USA	January 2007
VG03092	Training programs to highlight potential improvement in	January 2007

	iceberg and cos lettuce	
VG01092	Research gives growers new access to broccolini	January 2007
VG04024	Fields of gold – protecting your crop	January 2007
VG02035	Hot prospects for new capsicum varieties	January 2007
	Researcher profile: Jenny Ekman	January 2007
	Pest profile: Carrot Nematode	January 2007
VG06015	Is using recycled water an option for you?	January 2007
VG02120	Vegetables that pack a vital punch	January 2007
VG06129	Refined Vegetable Levy R&D process taking shape	March 2007
MT06064	Australian Vegetable Industry conference takes shape	March 2007
VG06017	Loving the lucky country	March 2007
VG05053	New disease cuts rhubarb by half	March 2007
VG05045	Further research required for parsnip canker	March 2007
VG05029	Project tackles growing threat to snow peas	March 2007
VG05035	Sweet corn diseases 'well managed': survey	March 2007
VG06015	Soil guide delivered to growers	March 2007
VG06015	Training survey of Victorian growers	March 2007
	Pest profile: Feared parasite attacks carrots, broccoli and cabbage	March 2007
VG99053	IDO profile: Alison Anderson	March 2007
NA	HAL launches new drought website	March 2007
VG06019	Security sensitive ammonium nitrate fertilisers project	March 2007
VG06129	Vegetable IAC advisory groups formed	May 2007
VegVision 2020	VegVision 2020: a strategic plan for the Australian Vegetable Industry	May 2007
VG04019	Shedding new light on nitrate levels	May 2007
MT06064	Conference program	May 2007
VG06019	Defusing ammonium nitrates: SARDI helps growers with change	May 2007
HG01005	Farming leading the change in addressing global pollution	May 2007
VG06127	<i>VegeNotes</i> returns	May 2007
VG03054	IDO profile: Patrick Ulloa	May 2007
VG06017	Growers tour to New Zealand and USA in 2007	May 2007
VG06017	New Zealand tour	May 2007
VG06129	Speaking from experience	July 2007
VG06129	IAC profile: Roz MacAllan	July 2007
VG06129	Revised R&D structure off to a strong start	July 2007
MT06064	Consumer needs strike a chord	July 2007
MT06064	Meeting vegetables halfway	July 2007
MT06064	Not a drop to waste	July 2007
VG06017	Levy payers to tour California	July 2007
VG02120	Functional foods provide competitive advantage to growers	July 2007
NA	Take cover to restore the balance	July 2007
VG03076	IDO profile: Craig Feutrill	July 2007
VG05008	Easy solution strips away pests	July 2007
VG04013	New model spots the difference	July 2007
VG06131	Industry development program under review	July 2007
VG06066	Language no longer the great divide	September 2007
VG06066	Integration begins with understanding	September 2007
VG06005	<i>Vegetables Australia</i> needs your help	September 2007
VG06127	Make a date with <i>VegeNotes</i>	September 2007

VG06003	EnviroVeg launches new manual	September 2007
VG03094	National Vegetable Levy project call opens in October	September 2007
VG05019	Gain export edge from MRL research	September 2007
VG05034	Help nature fight back	September 2007
VG03052	IDO profile: Simon Powell	September 2007
VG03094	HAL releases 2007/08 R&D project list	September 2007
VG06100	Testing times for healthier soil	September 2007
NA	Cut to the chase	September 2007
VG06015	Strong attendance for environmental conference	September 2007
VG06015	Former IDO moves to EMS pathways project	November 2007
VG06005	Winners are gridders	November 2007
VG04023	Good practice makes good sense	November 2007
VG06017	Young growers learn the alternatives	November 2007
VG06017	Renewed commitment to industry	November 2007
VG06046	Stop the rot	November 2007
VG06129	Cater to demand	November 2007
NA	Growth spurt in the top end	November 2007
	Researcher profile: Dennis Phillips	November 2007
VG04004	Hold off spraying to reap the beneficiaries	November 2007
VG04083	Log on to keep current with minor permits	November 2007
AH04009	Recent minor use permits	November 2007
AH04009	Expiring minor use permits	November 2007
VG06129	Strong support for restructured R&D process	November 2007
VG07035	Project preview: Understanding spatial variation in sweet corn production	November 2007
VG06087	Pesticide effects list available online	November 2007
VG03054	IDO profile: Craig Murdoch	November 2007
VG04012	Lettuce symposium sets the scene	January 2008
VG04014	New herbicide now available	January 2008
AH04009	Recent minor use permits	January 2008
NA	Charm consumers with interaction and information	January 2008
VG05050	Adaptive pest meets its match	January 2008
	Extension officer profile: Tony Burfield	January 2008
VG03094	Have your say on R&D direction	January 2008
VG06129	Give consumers more than they expect	January 2008
VG07023	Project preview: Driving better vegetable irrigation through profitable practice change	January 2008
AH05018	It pays to let customers speak their mind	January 2008
VG06090	Plan for increased soil health gains momentum	January 2008
VG06129	Strong representation for sustained growth	January 2008
VG05095	Pave the way to greenhouse success	January 2008
NA	Fertiliser research centre an Australian first	March 2008
AH04009	Recent minor use permits	March 2008
VG06129	Don't sweat the small stuff, it's time to think big	March 2008
HG06173	Aussies on familiar ground in Texas	March 2008
VG02125	Vital research boosts the market	March 2008
VG03095	Vital research boosts the market	March 2008
VG07103	Bring innovation back home	March 2008
VG06015	The secret's out on sustainable practices	March 2008
VG03076	IDO profile: Melissa Fraser	March 2008
VG03094	Consultation costs explained	March 2008
VG07128	Project preview: Integrated viral disease management in vegetable crops	March 2008

VG05052	Beat the invisible assassin	March 2008
VG06014	Celibate pests? Must have gone native	March 2008
	Researcher profile: Frank Hay	March 2008
VG03095	Cabbage family may ward off cancer	May 2008
VG07100	Apply for a Nuffield Scholarship	May 2008
AH04009	Recent minor use permits	May 2008
VG07101	Applications sought for ARLP	May 2008
VG06015	Cooperative EMS partnership catches on	May 2008
VG07118	Project preview: Build capacity of greenhouse growers to reduce crop loss through adoption of preventative disease management practices	May 2008
NA	Natural remedy for diabetes	May 2008
VG03094	R&D—what’s important to you	May 2008
VG07103	Young Growers New Zealand tour	May 2008
VG05043	When one thing leads to another	May 2008
VG06086	When one thing leads to another	May 2008
VG06087	When one thing leads to another	May 2008
VG06094	When one thing leads to another	May 2008
VG04008	Dense crops are ahead of the pack	May 2008
VG06129	Information transfer—a hands on process	May 2008
VG04012	Protecting the Achilles’ heel of hydroponic lettuces	May 2008
VG04069	Various ‘Economic Outlook’ articles—12 in total	All issues

R&D articles published in *Vegetables Australia* are made available to levy payers via the AUSVEG levy payers’ website: www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers/login.cfm

R&D articles published in *Vegetables Australia* promoted this website by listing the web address at the end of each article.

The website is available to all registered levy payers, but is password-protected from non-levy paying readers. This mechanism for archiving allows ongoing access to the articles. Readers can also download supporting material from the website, as provided by research providers. This may include downloadable final reports, research papers and images.

Back issues of *Vegetables Australia* are available for levy-payers to download from the grower portal of the AUSVEG website, ensuring that all issues of the magazine can be referenced. Thirty-four per cent of survey respondents said they would read or download *Vegetables Australia* from the AUSVEG website.

Expansion of editorial coverage

In addition to R&D-specific articles, grower profiles were included and the magazine was used as a vehicle to communicate important industry news to levy payers, such as information about conferences, Vegetables Industry Awards 2007 and 2008, and professional development and leadership opportunities such as Nuffield Scholarships, ARLP Scholarships, and the Produce Executive Program.

The restructure of the Vegetable IAC and its five advisory groups was communicated in depth, tying the five strategic pillars of industry plan VegVision 2020 to the advisory groups. In November 2007 (issue 3.3), a five-part series was begun, profiling each of the five pillars of VegVision 2020. The aim of this series was to help growers understand and appreciate how and why the levy allocation process had changed. Articles were also included about the R&D priority nomination process. This encouraged grower participation in the levy-allocation process and increased the transparency of the process.

The integration of R&D projects received greater prominence, with articles explaining how individual projects were connected. This was to help growers gain a better understanding of the structure of R&D in Australia, and an appreciation for the time R&D takes to be correctly and successfully conducted.

Previews of newly-approved levy-funded projects were included as of November 2007 to give growers a better indication of current projects and how these projects aim to benefit levy payers on- and off-farm

Researchers, extension officers and IDOs were regularly profiled and, in November 2007, a commitment was made to the Asian vegetables industry with the regular inclusion of the 'Eastern i' pages. 'Eastern i' communicates outcomes and information about the Asian vegetable industry to growers nationally, regardless of whether their operation focus on more 'traditional' commodities.

To help cement *Vegetables Australia* as a ready reference guide, recent minor use permits were included, keeping growers current with available permits for crops. This information was also made available on the grower portal of the AUSVEG website.

A regular column, 'Media matters', was included from September 2007 (issue 3.2). This demonstrated how the vegetable industry was being portrayed in mainstream print publications, so growers were aware of what issues consumers were reading about, and how these issues were being presented.

Redesign

To retain its position as the nation's leading vegetable-industry publication, *Vegetables Australia* underwent a redesign to cement its branding and identity. The redesign was finalised after quotes and sample pages were received from an open tender.

The following elements of the magazine were strengthened or introduced:

- **Typography**
 - Use of text as a design element
 - Text alignment
 - Improved readability
- **Layout**
 - Greater use of white space
 - 'The bottom line': re-imagined
 - Alteration to magazine dimensions
 - Decreased colour palette.

Use of text as a design element

To encourage growers to read *Vegetables Australia*, page spreads needed to be fresh, inviting and eye-catching. A new template was introduced that had greater flexibility in text placement. Headings, subheads, preceeds, pull-quotes, pull-out panels—these were all elements that have been used to greater advantage to create a point of difference for growers.

Text alignment

The body copy on each spread now aligns across all columns. Subheads, pull-quotes and pull-out panels do not disturb this alignment. Why go to this effort? It's an area of production that readers may not consciously appreciate, but it promotes a professional and dependable style with exacting standards. This is the attention to detail that *Vegetables Australia* encouraged growers to embrace in their own practices.

Improved readability

The labour force in the vegetable industry is ageing. Growers must be able to read *Vegetables Australia* with little effort. Tables, picture captions and reverse text were reformatted, and in the case of reverse text, used sparingly. Growers have many demands on their time, so it's crucial that when they do commit to reading *Vegetables Australia* that they receive as much information, from as little effort, as possible.

Greater use of white space

To further improve readability, more white space has been included in the page spreads. This avoids overcrowding of spreads and works in conjunction with text as a design element.

'The bottom line': re-imagined

If *Vegetables Australia* was to bolster its role as the catalyst for growers seeking more information about levy projects, 'The bottom line', included after all levy articles, needed to be redesigned. It remained separate from the article, continued to distill the article information into three main points, and included contact details for further information. A new style was created for 'The bottom line' to give it prominence on the page.

Alteration to magazine dimensions

Vegetables Australia was originally 280 mm high and 210 mm wide. As A4 insertions from levy-funded projects and advertisers were often included with the magazine when it was mailed, the magazine dimensions were increased to A4. This aligned the publication with industry-standard dimensions and ensured that insertions were not damaged during transit. There was no increase in cost to change magazine dimensions.

Decreased colour palette

Before the redesign, *Vegetables Australia* used a broad colour palette. However, images of vegetables were already bright and colourful, as were advertisements, and these elements competed with the colour palette for attention on the page.

By reducing the number of colour used for headlines, tables and panels, a cohesive brand was created for the magazine. Three colours were chosen, blue, green and orange. The blue represented dependability; vegetables are an important part of feeding the nation—the Australian vegetable industry needs see itself as reliable.

Conversely, the vegetable industry is in a state of transit. It is shifting from a supply-based industry to one that places greater importance on demand. A global market, free trade agreements, increased competition from imports, time-poor and health-conscious consumers, sustainable farming, reduced reliance on pesticides, integrated pest management, new technology and research—it's an exciting time to be part of the industry. The other colours used in the magazine reflected this vibrancy and partnered well with the dependable blue mentioned above.

Advertising

As a means of securing the long-term future of the publication, it was decided that the project would need to solicit advertising as a means of additional funding. However, due to the nature of the publication as an industry publication (as opposed to a commercial publication), it should only ever be anticipated that advertising would provide supplementary funds, and should not expect to become self-sufficient.

The project continued to use the services of Hyde Media to manage the sale of advertising in *Vegetables Australia*. Feedback from advertisers indicated that the publication is well liked, and a number of advertisers have committed to *Vegetables Australia* as part of their regular advertising campaigns.

Advertisers included:

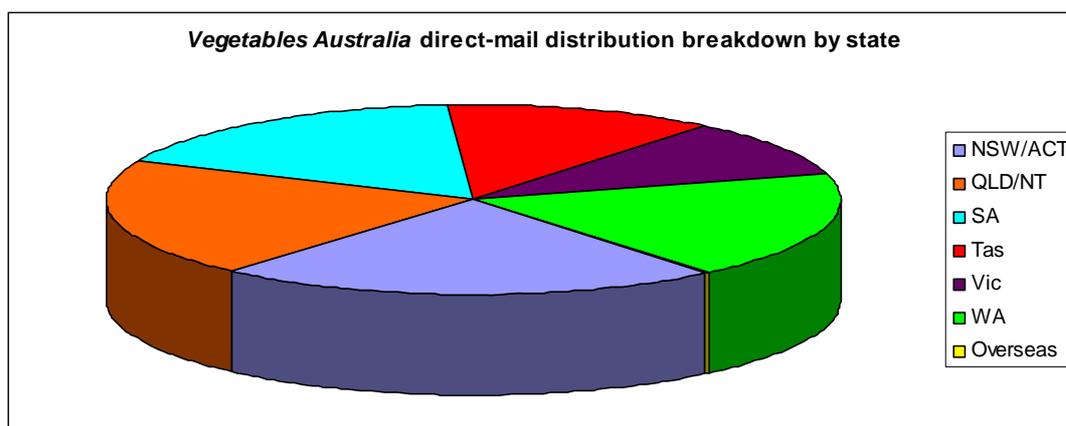
- Nufarm
- Dupont
- Crop Care
- Bayer
- Dow Agrosiences
- Seminis
- South Pacific Seeds
- Syngenta
- Scholefield Robinson Horticultural Services
- Terranova Seeds
- South Pacific Seeds
- Bejo Seeds
- Hardi
- Nelson Australia
- MEA
- Vin Rowe
- TeeJet
- Claus Vegetable Seeds
- Viscount Plastics
- Incitec Pivot
- Chep
- Australian Government
- Ultimate Agri-Products

While it is anticipated that advertising revenue will demonstrate modest growth over time, it is important to recognise that agricultural advertising is seasonal, and fluctuations in advertising revenue are common. This would make it unrealistic to expect complete cost recovery for the production of the magazine in the longer term.

Distribution

Distribution of *Vegetables Australia* was achieved through two main avenues. The primary distribution method for the magazine was via direct mail to readers. The direct mailing database consisted of 5,962 recipients (as at May 2008), which is broken down state-by-state as follows:

	NSW/ACT	QLD/NT	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Overseas	Total
Total recipients	1,326	1,201	1,038	701	5,85	1,093	18	5,962
Percentage	22.24%	20.14%	17.41%	11.76%	9.81%	18.34%	0.30%	100%



Grower mailing data was obtained and maintained through the assistance of state-based Industry Development Officers (IDOs), in conjunction with vegetable-industry associations in each state. This data was provided directly to the mailing house prior to each mail out, and was maintained by the IDO network.

Other industry databases (eg. research providers, industry representatives, potential advertisers, supply chain networks) were collated by AUSVEG, and updated data was regularly sent to the mail-house prior to each mail out.

While a central mailing database would be the optimal scenario for the effective distribution of *Vegetables Australia* to levy-paying growers, this was not achievable due to industry structures, and privacy issues. This would also have required additional resources to source and maintain the data.

However, while distribution figures were relatively stable, at times they did shift. For example, issue 3.5 (March 2008) had only 5,405 on its distribution list, which meant that more than 500 people did not receive that issue of the magazine. A centralised database, maintained by one organisation, would ensure that all levy payers would receive every issue of the publication they fund.

Also, with the eventual dissolving of the state-based vegetable IDO projects, the question remains: who will maintain state mailing data in the absence of IDOs? This is a crucial point as some states are already without IDO representation.

This situation is predicted to change as a National database was recommended by the IAC in March 2008. This will see a dramatic improvement in management of mailing data.

The second avenue for distribution of *Vegetables Australia* was via bulk delivery of the magazine to various key industry collection points. This included providing bulk numbers of magazines to:

- State associations
- Industry events (such as conferences and tradeshow)
- IDO network
- Advertising representatives.

Budget summary

An outline of the budget is outlined below (30 June 2007 – 30 April 2008).

Item description	Amount* (\$)
Expenses	
Salary & Wages	56,656.35
Advertising Management	32,812.50
Overheads	14,023.35
Management/Governance Fee	16,223.80
Design	34,177.13
Print Magazines	62,662.40
Readership survey	544.54
Flysheet Printing	2,968.00
Postage – Magazines	42,862.09
Journalists	17,551.12
Photography	2,155.88
Travel & Accommodation	693.81
Total Expenses	283,330.97
Income	
Total Income to date (Includes advertising revenue of \$112,896.71) <i>Please note that a milestone of \$80,000 is due at project end</i>	309,103.72
Balance as at 30 April 2008	25,772.75

* Please note that the expenditure is only representative of five issues of the magazine, as figures are as of April 30 2008.

Evaluation and measurement of outcomes

The success of this project was dependent on the continued acceptance of the publication by growers. Feedback was solicited from growers via a reply-paid readership survey that was returned to the editor. This survey was distributed with issue 3.2 of the magazine in September 2007. (Refer to Appendix 1)

The purpose of the survey was to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from readers. The readership survey solicited feedback from grower and non-grower readers, providing a rounded industry perspective on the role of the publication within the Australian vegetable industry.

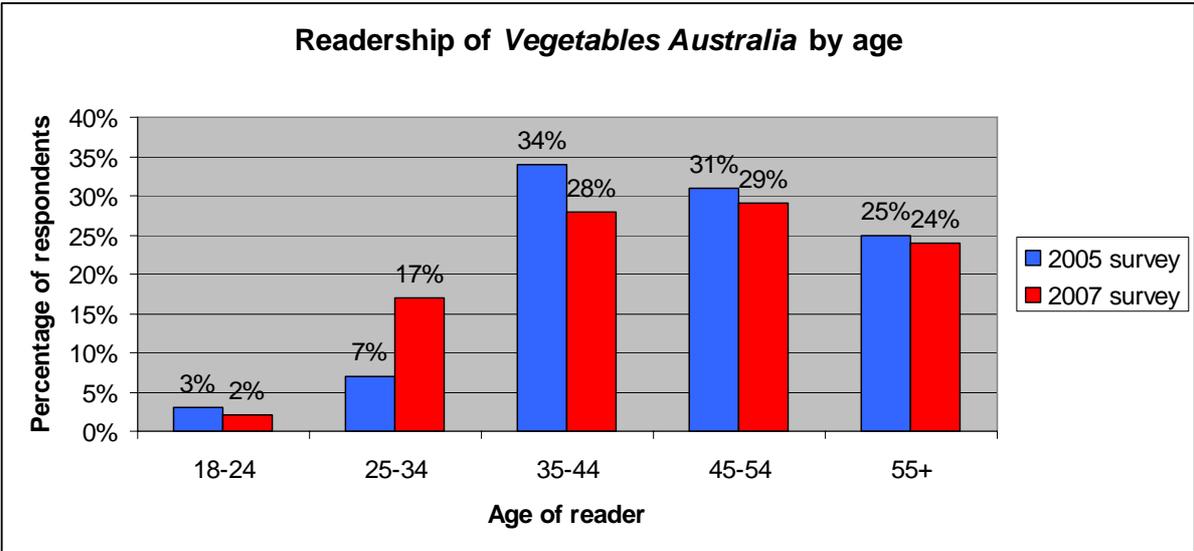
Where possible, the results of the 2007 survey have been compared with results from a similar survey conducted in 2005.

Key Survey Results

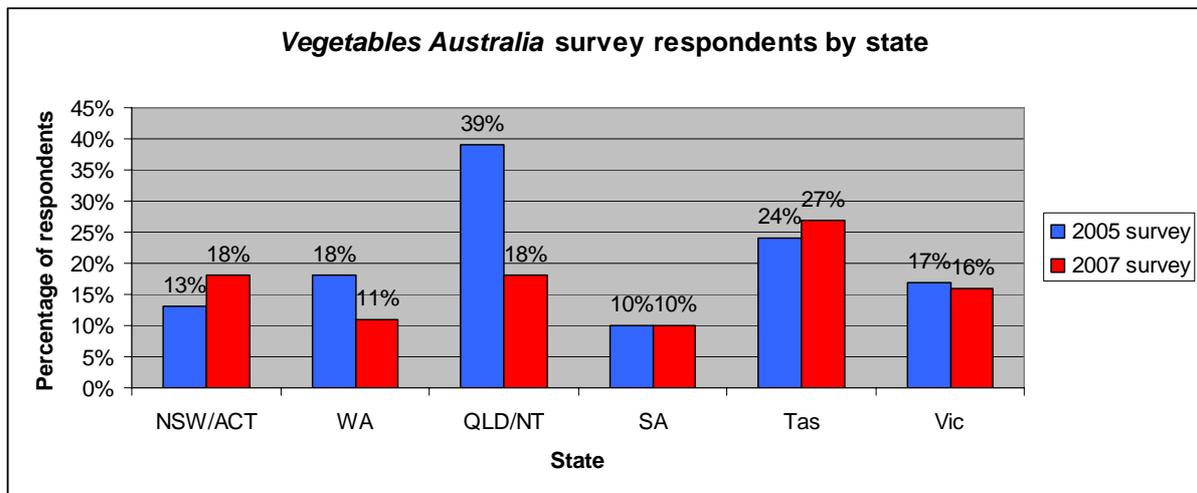
Response rate:

- 139 responses
- 66% growers
- 34% other (including researchers, advertisers, industry representatives)
- Overall response rate approximately 2.4% of total distribution list.

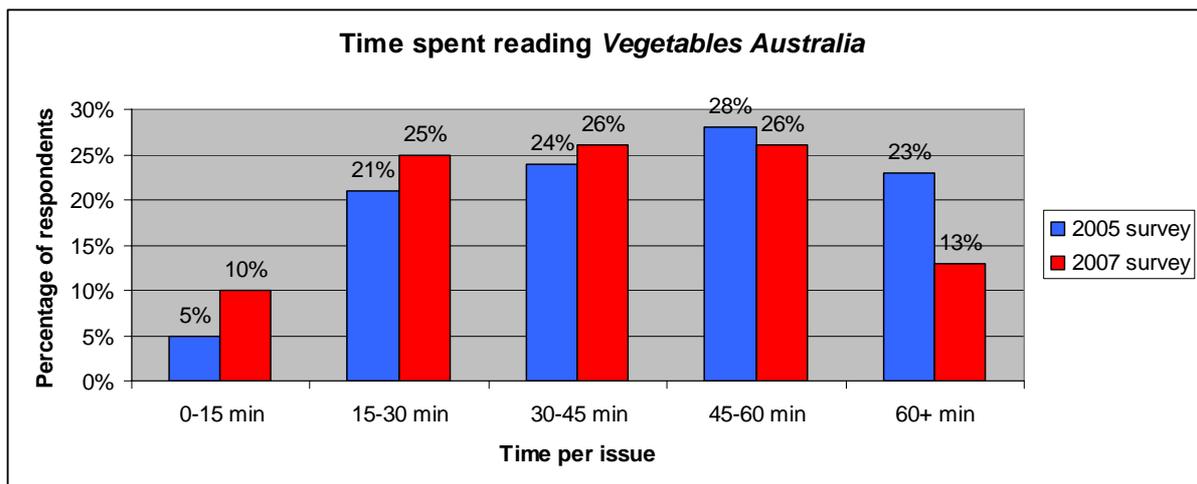
Age of readers



Location of readers



Time spent reading each issue



How many people reader each copy of *Vegetables Australia*?

Average number of readers per issue = 2.2 people

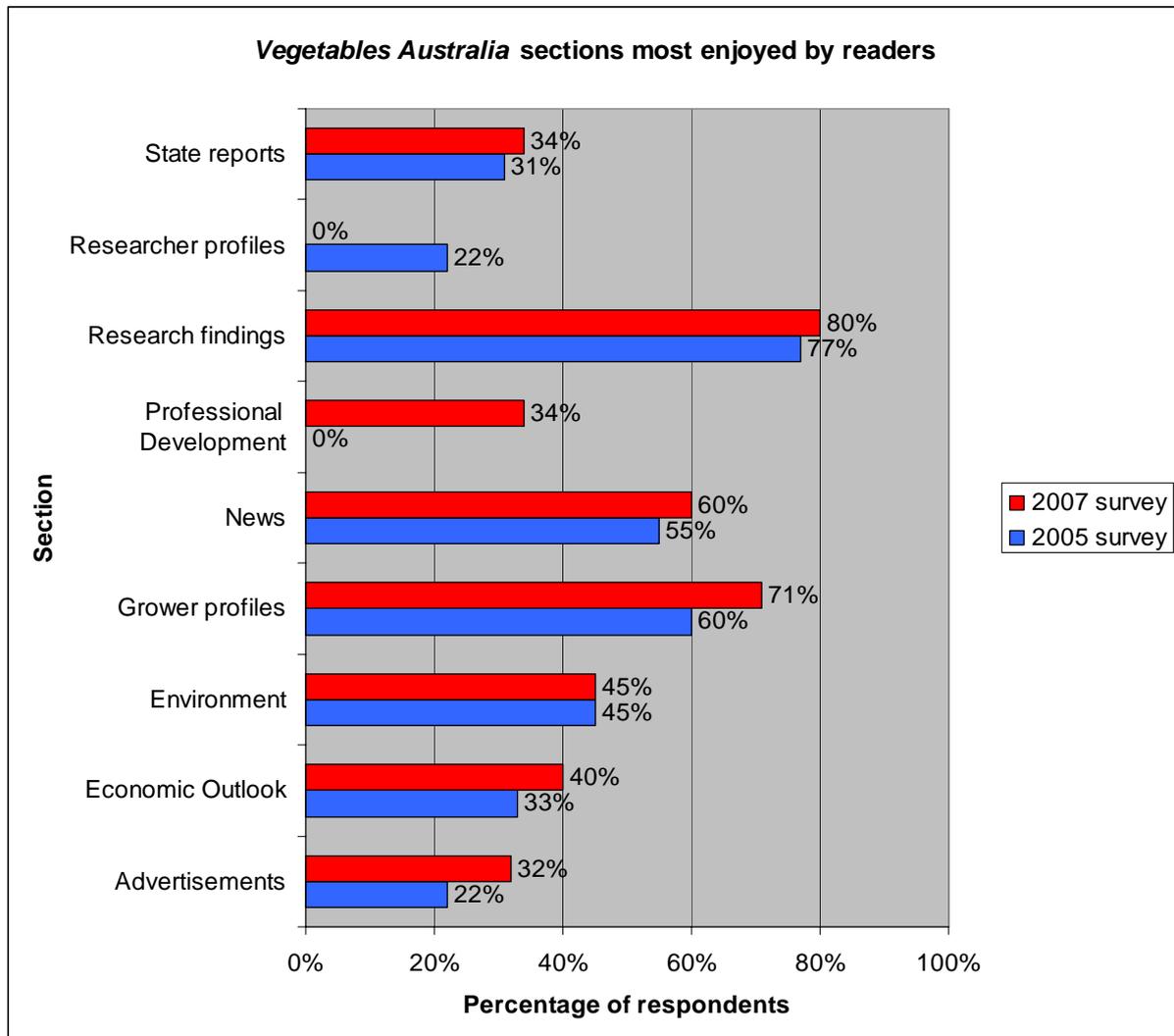
Extrapolated across entire mailout = 2.4 x 6,000

= 13,200 people per issue

How many extra copies of the magazine would you like to receive?

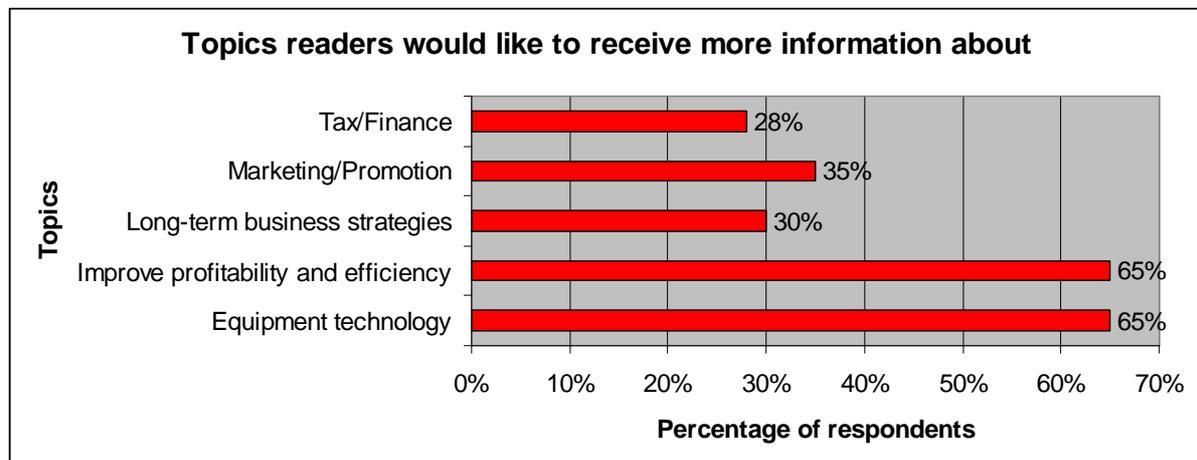
Eighty-seven per cent of respondents said they would be happy to receive more than one copy of *Vegetables Australia*. Of those 87%, respondents wanted an average of 5.6 extra copies.

Identify segments you most enjoy reading



Requested topics

The survey gave readers the opportunity to nominate which topics they wanted to receive more information about.



Sixty-two per cent of respondents wanted more information about how the National Vegetable Levy benefits them beyond the farm-gate.

Website usage

Thirty-four per cent of respondents said they would read or download *Vegetables Australia* from the AUSVEG website.

Magazine funding

Seventy-four per cent of respondents were aware that the magazine is partially funded through the National Vegetable Levy, an increase of five per cent since the 2005 survey.

Grower comments

“Magazine is well constructed, easy to read and well done.”

“Keep up the good work.”

“I like the idea that it is all facts and figures, and not commercial.”

“Keep up the quality.”

“Great magazine; we are happy to be supporters.”

“Set out of magazine is both professional and interesting.”

“Keep up the good work, this is the start of a good relationship with farmers. Let’s build on it.”

“Great magazine, very interesting.”

“Doing a great job; now hopefully growers appreciate it and read it.”

“Keep up the good work.”

“Enjoy the magazine, like the grower profiles.”

“A good magazine.”

Comments from other readers

“It is a great magazine and can only improve with everybody’s input.”

“This is a great magazine, keep up good work.”

“Excellent publication, well done.”

“Good layout, well presented magazine.”

“Find the content and format very good. A high percentage of articles are of interest to me.”

“Quality is very good with a broad range of topics.”

“Keep doing what you are doing.”

“Would like to read more but because time is limited I only read things of relevance.”

“Very good publication, keep it up.”

Discussion

While the results of the reader survey and the willingness of growers to be involved with the magazine through R&D case studies and growers profiles indicate that there continues to be strong support and acceptance of *Vegetables Australia* as the primary communication tool for the industry, there are limitations as to what can be achieved as a result of the magazine's distribution.

- **Uptake of R&D**
While *Vegetables Australia* can actively report on R&D outcomes and direct readers to suitable resources relating to R&D projects, the publication cannot be held responsible for the acceptance or uptake of R&D by growers. Where possible, the magazine showcases examples of growers who have worked cooperatively with researchers on R&D projects, and have them provide a growers' perspective for how levy-funded projects benefit growers on-farm. However, it is unrealistic to expect *Vegetables Australia* to become a vehicle for measuring R&D uptake and implementation.
- **Expansion of editorial topics**
As industry plan VegVision 2020 is implemented, and levy-funded projects become aligned with each of the five strategic imperatives of the plan, it is important to feature R&D projects and editorial that encourages growers to think beyond the farm-gate. Australian growers operate in a global marketplace and *Vegetables Australia* magazine should reflect this by encouraging growers to think beyond the issues of production and look at other important areas, such as leadership and people development, and market development.
- **Thorough distribution to all levy paying growers**
As discussed earlier in this paper, the distribution of *Vegetables Australia* is dependent on the accuracy of data provided by the State Associations, through the IDO network. This means that inclusion on the mailing database is dependent on growers being members of their state industry association. In some states, this is highly representative of the growing community; however, in other states, low membership to the state associations means that many growers are not represented on the mailing database. It is hoped that with time, these gaps in the database can be filled, and that the magazine's readership will continue to grow. The pending national database should rectify these issues.
- **Reliance on advertising**
As an industry publication, the editorial principles of *Vegetables Australia* are quite different to some of its commercial competitors. As such, it is unrealistic to expect the magazine to ever become fully self-sufficient. To do so would require a drastic re-evaluation of the nature of the editorial, and a change in key priority areas for the publication. It is believed that to do this would compromise the integrity of the magazine. As the response to *Vegetables Australia* is currently very positive, it is believed that levy payers would be supportive of maintaining a certain level of levy funding in order to maintain the current quality of the publication.

Recommendations

Based on the project feedback, it is evident that there continues to be strong support for ongoing investment in *Vegetables Australia* magazine through the National Vegetable Levy. It is on this basis that the following recommendations are made:

- That *Vegetables Australia* continue to be used as the primary vehicle for communicating with Australian vegetable growers about outcomes of the vegetable R&D program
- That a central database be developed and maintained to ensure consistent and accurate distribution to the intended audience
- That *Vegetables Australia* continue to be supported through the National Vegetable Levy as an industry publication, supported by supplementary income derived from advertising
- That *Vegetables Australia* more coherently aligns its editorial with industry plan VegVision 2020, perhaps looking at IAC and advisory group representation on the Editorial Committee to ensure that relevant information makes its way to growers.

Acknowledgements

AUSVEG would like to acknowledge the following for their contributions:

Editorial Committee:

Figaro Natoli, WA grower
John Mundy, SA grower
Anthony Brandsema, Tasmanian grower
Glenn Abbott, QLD grower
Therese Schreurs, Victorian grower
David Chung, NSW grower
Alison Anderson, NSW Industry Development Officer
Ross Ord, Industry Development Manager, AUSVEG
Lisa Maguire, Project Leader & Communications Manager, AUSVEG
Youna Angevin-Castro, past Editor, AUSVEG
Jim Thomson, Editor, AUSVEG

State Associations:

Victorian Vegetable Growers Association
VegetablesWA
Virginia Horticulture Centre
South Australian Farmers Federation
New South Wales Farmers Association
Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
Growcom
Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers
Northern Territory Horticultural Association

Industry Development Officers:

Alison Anderson, NSW
Kate Dunn, QLD (Past IDO)
Simon Powell, QLD (Past IDO)
David Ellement, WA
Stephen Welsh, Tasmania (Past IDO)
Roger Orr, Tasmania
Craig Feutrill, SA (Past IDO)
Melissa Fraser, SA
Patrick Ulloa, Victoria (Past IDO)
Craig Murdoch, Victoria

Appendix 1—Readership survey









Vegetables Australia Reader Survey Issue 3.2 Sept/Oct 2007

WIN an Apple iPod (valued at \$349) or a \$250 Harvey Norman Gift Voucher!

Return this survey to AUSVEG before Friday 12 October to go in the draw to win an iPod (1st prize) or a \$250 Harvey Norman Gift Voucher. To be eligible, you must fill in your details below and return your survey by the due date.

Name: _____ Company: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Contact phone number: _____ Email: _____

Please tick here if you do not wish to be added to our database.

- Are you a:

<input type="checkbox"/> Grower	<input type="checkbox"/> Advertiser
<input type="checkbox"/> Researcher	Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Industry representative	
- Age group:

<input type="checkbox"/> 18 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 34	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 44	<input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 54	<input type="checkbox"/> 55+
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- Crop (please identify your main crop)

- Which state do you live in?

<input type="checkbox"/> New South Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> Tasmania
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Territory	<input type="checkbox"/> Victoria
<input type="checkbox"/> Queensland	<input type="checkbox"/> Western Australia
<input type="checkbox"/> South Australia	
- How much time do you spend reading Vegetables Australia?

<input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 15 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 60 minutes
<input type="checkbox"/> 15 – 30 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 60 minutes
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 – 45 minutes	
- On average, how many people read your copy of Vegetables Australia?

- If you could receive multiple copies of the magazine for staff members to read, how many would you order? _____
- Which stories do you most enjoy reading?

<input type="checkbox"/> Grower profiles	<input type="checkbox"/> R&D articles
<input type="checkbox"/> News	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental articles
<input type="checkbox"/> Advertisements	<input type="checkbox"/> State reports
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic outlook	Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for professional development	
- What topics would you like to receive more information about?

<input type="checkbox"/> Ways to improve profitability and efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/promotion
<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment/technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term business strategies
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax/finance	
Other: _____	
- Do you have any suggestions for new sections or feature articles in the magazine?

- Have you been involved in improved farm practices that other growers would be interested in reading about? Please provide details.

- Would you like more information about how the vegetable levy is used for projects beyond the farm-gate?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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- Would you read or download Vegetables Australia from the AUSVEG website?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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- What kind of advertising interests you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Farm machinery	<input type="checkbox"/> Crop protection products
<input type="checkbox"/> Packaging products	<input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation products
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance services	<input type="checkbox"/> Farm management products
<input type="checkbox"/> Seed products	Other: _____
- Are you aware that Vegetables Australia magazine is partially funded through the National Vegetable Levy?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
- Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for your time.