

**Facilitating the
development of the
Vegetable Industry in
Northern Australia
(continuation of VG03052)**

Jan Davis
GROWCOM

Project Number: VG07169

VG07169

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VG03052 – VG07169

**FACILITATING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE
VEGETABLE INDUSTRY IN
NORTHERN AUSTRALIA
– STAGE II**

2003 - 2008

30 June 2008

Jan Davis

Growcom

VG03052 – VG07169

**Facilitating the Development of the Vegetable Industry in Northern Australia
– Stage II (2003-2008)**

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Purpose: The purpose of the project was to facilitate the development of the vegetable industry in Northern Australia

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Introduction

The original project (VG 03052) commenced in July 2003 and was extended in July 2007 to become VG 07169 with an end date of 31 May 2008. This report provides an overview and final report for the two projects as VG 07169 was essentially a continuation of the initial project.

Due to the number of commodities captured in the vegetable framework, the project focused on delivering targeted services based on emerging strategic needs. The plans for both projects were focused on a number of critical objectives that required facilitation support for the industry to collectively accomplish.

The project focused on activities that supported the objectives of the plan:

- Increased communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements
- Improved access to information services and events that assist the vegetable industry
- Increased knowledge and adaptation of R & D outcomes and new technology
- Delivery of National R & D programs at State and Regional levels

Activities coordinated by the project ranged from the development of a Queensland Strategic Plan to complement the AUSVEG 2020 Strategic Plan, to grower supply chain tours, both intra and inter state to working with local grower groups, for example the Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association to the mundane yet essential activity of maintaining the accuracy of the grower data base. This last one created a challenge due to the transient nature of the industry, with growers regularly switching crops.

The project reinforced the importance of industry-led initiatives. The facilitation of collective industry planning and strong stakeholder networks was able to ensure high participation and commitment to industry initiatives, and resulted in successful outcomes throughout the value chain.

The key learning that has resulted from this second stage project is the need for Australian horticultural industries to continue to invest in industry development support. Industry level service provision that is flexible and focused has great potential to alleviate significant industry hurdles and motivate critical industry progress, without onerous and cumbersome strategies that lack grass-roots engagement. The key is to provide this support as close to growers as possible to ensure a source of understanding of the whole of the industry, not just localised issues and to be able to assist in grower initiated industry wide growth activities.

Methodology

Growcom employed a full time Northern Australia Vegetable Industry Development Officer based at the Growcom office in Brisbane; the Vegetable IDO travelled to regional areas as required.

The progress of the IDO was monitored by a steering committee. This committee met a minimum of twice a year to review project activities and plan for forthcoming periods. Meetings provided an opportunity for industry to provide feedback to Growcom on project performance and the work direction of the IDO. Meeting project milestones was the key performance indicator of the project. Day to day oversight of the Vegetable IDO was undertaken by the Growcom Industry Services Manager.

The IDO developed and maintained linkages with industry stakeholders, including growers, wholesalers, retailers, other industry bodies, research and extension staff and a range of service providers. These linkages formed the core of project information collation and dissemination and allowed cooperative resourcing and activity coordination.

The IDO assisted in the development of a new strategic plan for the duration of the project. This Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012 drew on inputs from the industry and harmonised with the Vegevision 2020 plan developed at a national level.

The IDO also revisited the existing communications strategy in consultation with industry. The implementation of the communications plan included a range of 1-way and 2-way communication tools. Communications methodology and frequency differed based on the target audience and purpose of the communication. The IDO attended several cross-industry workshops to develop and maintain good working relationships and communications linkages with IDOs and service providers working in other horticultural industries.

The IDO facilitated industry prioritisation of research and development needs linked to strategic goals. Industry meetings were held with growers, both in the regions and in eastern state cities with the support of supply chain stakeholders. These meetings enabled projects to be formulated and resourced effectively, and be incorporated in to national research and development planning.

The IDO reviewed and maintained industry data. Details regarding grower business production areas and varieties grown were maintained and regularly updated as accurately as possible given information constraints.

The IDO assisted all sectors of the supply chain to share information and improve their understanding of industry issues. Supply chain stakeholder details were collated and included in communications activities, including information exchange opportunities such as facilitated market trips. Details of key suppliers and service providers were

collated and utilised in the organisation of regional activities including the annual industry conference.

The IDO assisted in technology transfer activities. The IDO facilitated meetings with industry researchers. The IDO sourced and included information on state and national project outcomes in communications activities. The IDO also participated in interstate travel to participate in information exchange with researchers and extension staff in southern Australia.

A work plan was reviewed by the steering committee approximately every six months during the project. Each work plan included a review of activities in the previous period, and detailed the objectives, activity plan and calendar of events for the forthcoming period. The steering committee was satisfied with the progress of the project at each review.

Activities

The results of this project have been presented in a comprehensive table of activities as illustrated in Table 1. Activities are organised by core project objectives and by industry strategic objectives, with outputs and outcomes noted. Only activities that have provided significant beneficial results to industry or were very time consuming have been included. There are many day-to-day functions of the IDO that have not been included.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- IDENTIFICATION & UTILISATION OF INDUSTRY NEEDS & ISSUES (1)
- INCREASED KNOWLEDGE & ACCESS TO THE VAST RANGE OF INFORMATION SOURCES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VEGETABLE ENTERPRISES (2)
- TO ENHANCE & IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY (3)

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Output</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan (2007-12) – Extensive consultation with all sectors of industry culminating in a series of workshops facilitated by an independent consultant to create a new long-term strategic plan for the State industry with linkages to the national plan (<i>VegVision 2020</i>) and the plan co-authored by Growcom & Qld Government for the state’s horticulture industry “<i>Future Directions</i>”. Three key issues: Communication & information dissemination across Qld industry / Unified presentation of vegetable industry / Raising awareness of industry profile at regional level. <i>Reference MS#11 and Appendix #3 & #4 (1,3,2)</i> ▪ FarmReady / Skills Passport – Assisted with the development of a regional horticultural labour strategy; engaged with University of Qld and Beaudesertshire Council to implement rural skills passports and helped facilitate the roll-out of the program in the Bundaberg, Bowen and Stanthorpe regions. <i>Reference MS#05 & 06 and Appendix #5 (1,2)</i> ▪ Plant Health Aust. “Biosecurity Awareness Training” – facilitated & disseminated learnings to growers/industry. <i>Refer Appendix #6 (2)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practical processes to initiate strategy delivery through projects and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Growing Wiser” workshop - Issue of peri-urban encroachment and its affect on horticultural practices. Recognised the need to improve collaboration between all parties involved; a workshop was designed to ensure recognition of best practices in residentially sensitive areas, improve image of horticulture & build confidence in the importance of retaining sustainable horticultural areas. There was particular emphasis and engagement with members of the LOTE community. <i>Reference MS#12 & 102 (1,2)</i> ▪ Workforce Development Case Studies – assisted the Agri-Food Skills Council to promote and brand horticulture nationally as a preferred career choice (<i>Refer MT06065: Case Studies in video format to promote careers in horticulture</i>) <i>Reference MS#12 (1,3)</i> ▪ VG07173: AustSafe Growcom Qld Young Leaders Study Tour to Perth, May 2008 - “Training Needs Analysis in Business Skills & Leadership Development” (AVIDG – D. Fullelove <i>Refer Appendix #</i>) Further to the recommendations of the Fullelove report the IDO organised sponsorship for a HAL study grant. (1,2) ▪ Supply Chain Analysis ~ Value adding vegetable products. Assist growers identify their position within the supply chain they support; a pilot program was developed to assess what information growers required to better manage marketing of their products. <i>Reference MS#12 - Gatton Study Tour. Refer Appendix #8 ((1,2)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practical processes to initiate strategy delivery through projects and services <i>(continued..)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements <i>(continued..)</i> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry <i>(continued..)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-ordination of Industry Partnership Program (IPP) response – <i>“The Australian Vegetable Industry: Taking Stock & Setting Directions”</i>. Facilitated and provided input to grower/industry interviews/meetings with the consultants engaged by the Australian Government and assisted to implement the report’s recommendations. <i>Reference MS#06 and Appendix #9 (1,2,3)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration with international, national, state, regional & local networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of Australian Grown Logo – attendance at Ministerial launch and efforts to increase awareness of the superior quality of domestic produce. <i>Reference MS#12 (3)</i> ▪ Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, Brisbane, May 2006 (VG05079) – Assisted with the preparation and co-ordination of the Brisbane conference together with the organisation of a program of farm tours (field demonstrations and presentations) following the conference for participants. <i>Reference MS#07 and Appendix #10 (2,3)</i> ▪ Co-ordinate visit/tour of AusVEG CEO to growers/researchers and industry contacts before and after the Industry Conference. ▪ Assistance to promote and disseminate Australian Vegetable industry (AusVEG) Communication Strategy initiatives – viz, Eyes on Potatoes (PT00001) and Potato Archives CD-ROM (PT00027) and in addition help Hannah Burns (AusVEG) develop a communication strategy to address the needs of the LOTE community (introductions to major LOTE representatives/community leaders). <i>Reference MS#102 (2,3,1)</i> ▪ Collaboration with the National Vegetable IDO network – attendance at regular workshops/meetings, extensive input/feedback on key developments and the implementation of various initiatives, proposals and programs. Included the provision of secretariat services to vegetable IAC meetings and conferences. (1,3) ▪ Co-operation/liaison with HAL Chemical Access program co-ordinator – AH04009: Co-ordination of Minor Use Permits for Horticulture & MT07029: Managing Pesticide Access in Horticulture – to ensure that industry needs are identified and addressed and developments regarding those requirements affecting industry are effectively communicated. (1,2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration with international, national, state, regional & local networks <i>(continued..)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry <i>(continued..)</i>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration with Regional Industry Development Officer network – liaison with IDOs in the Bundaberg, Stanthorpe and Bowen regions (HG04050 / HG04051 & HG04016); co-ordination of network resources to address needs of vegetable growers and industry issues in an integrated manner. (1,2,3) ▪ Assisted Regional Grower Organisations – work together with such grower organisations as <i>Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers</i> and <i>Bowen District Growers Association</i> to address the needs of local vegetable growers and integrate with their communication channels. (3,2,1) ▪ Liaison with State Departments of Primary Industries – both QLD & NT; regular interaction with regional centres to ensure contact with their industry networks, agronomists et cetera. (1,2) ▪ Industry Waste Reduction Scheme: Nationwide Chemical waste disposal service – DrumMuster™ & Chemclear™ are programs that focus on the collection of clean, non-returnable chemical containers for recycling. Promotion of the scheme benefits to growers & industry and worked to encourage participation. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration with international, national, state, regional & local networks <i>(continued..)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology <i>(continued..)</i> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry <i>(continued..)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horticulture Code of Conduct - A number of industry-specific, regional workshops and public forums were organised concerning the introduction of the Code, with presentations (incl. Q&A) by ACCC staff. These meetings enabled the raising of all relevant concerns and opportunities well in advance of the implementation of the new regulation. Resources (incl. website downloads) were provided to industry to enable growers to effectively develop and review Horticulture Produce Agreement documentation. Subsequently, a presentation on collective bargaining agreements by ACCC staff was organised for interested stakeholders. <i>Reference MS#05 & 10</i> (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater promotion of issues that affect business sustainability and profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased networking and collaboration of industry stakeholders ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Rural Advisory Committee – assessment of SEQ exceptional circumstances drought status – co-ordinated tours of the affected regions and facilitated access for growers to information and resources to assist with appropriate applications et cetera. <i>Reference MS#07 (2)</i> ▪ Asian Export Strategy development – initiated a partnership with HAL Vegetable Export (R&D) Group to ensure a co-ordinated approach from the various State bodies involved in export markets (growers, DPI&F, Austrade, State Development, and Premier & Cabinet). Subsequently produced a market profile to assist grower groups. <i>Reference MS#05 and Appendix #11 (1,2,3)</i> ▪ Established the Qld Reference group for ‘Enviroveg’ – ongoing support to the environmental program for vegetables recognised by industry as being essential in being proactive and demonstrating that growers are farming in an environmentally friendly manner. (2,3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater promotion of issues that affect business sustainability and profitability (<i>continued..</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communications Strategy – following the recommendations made from <i>VG98121: Facilitating a Vegetable Industry Development Service for Northern Australia</i>, one of the first tasks undertaken was a thorough review of the existing industry communications channels and networks. This included an integrity overhaul to the industry contact database which was extensively revised to capture all relevant industry stakeholders including researchers, agronomists et cetera and also the accuracy and currency of grower details (incl. crops). These measures allowed a higher degree of confidence that the maximum possible coverage to industry was being pursued; ongoing integrity maintenance was of course a priority throughout the project. <i>Reference MS#02</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective extension and communication packages distributed and available to the industry including an information database, website material and newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology

<p><i>Newsletters</i> – regular printed newsletters detailing current industry news, issues, project progress reports, training opportunities, meeting notices, publication reviews and relevant industry research and data.</p> <p>Example: bi-monthly “<i>vegelink</i>” Refer Appendix #12</p> <p><i>E-newsletters</i> – regular e-newsletters are sent to industry stakeholders with summary information on industry news & events</p> <p><i>Mail outs (postal)</i> – issue specific information sent as required; including handbooks, guides & other grower resources</p> <p><i>Fax outs</i> – urgent issue specific information sent as required</p> <p><i>Website</i> – internet based information for vegetable industry stakeholders hosted by Growcom website - http://www.growcom.com.au/home/inner.asp?pageID=34</p> <p>During the course of the project, the resources available via the website were continually updated and improved to incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vegetable information & downloads ○ Vegetable industry links ○ Public research reports & tech a ○ Vegetable R&D projects <p>and a weekly update communicating new materials - “<i>What’s Happening in Vegetables</i>”</p> <p>A web monitoring strategy was also introduced to analyse web-traffic with a view to increasing awareness and access. Recorded were:</p> <p>Most popular pages / most downloaded files / most requested directories / top entry pages / top path through site. (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Media – Articles were written and provided regularly to: <i>Fruit & Vegetable News</i>, <i>Vegetable News</i>, and <i>Good Fruit & Vegetable News</i> and <i>Hort Now</i>. Additional articles and media releases were provided on an ad hoc basis to communicate and promote specific industry issues and events. Reference MS# <all> (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective extension and communication packages distributed and available to the industry including an information database, website material and newsletters (continued..) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements (continued..) ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology (continued..)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VegeNotes – contribution, support and dissemination of the national IDO network’s production of the <i>VegeNotes</i> series of on-farm resource manual style fact-sheets. (2,3) ▪ Promotion of new Vegetable R&D Levy – the new arrangements were communicated to growers and the wider industry to explain and provide greater clarity as to the source of R&D funding; ensuring compliance with the AusVEG corporate style guide in an effort to build logo recognition and brand value associated with the Vegetable R&D program. (2,3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective extension and communication packages distributed and available to the industry including an information database, website material and newsletters (continued..) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements (continued..) ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology (continued..)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vegetable “Road Show” – a significant road-show style (incl. dinners & informal gatherings) tour of the major growing regions was undertaken in late 2004 in order to take a policy sounding from industry stakeholders, but particularly growers, about the major topics and issues most directly affecting business sustainability and profitability. The main topics identified from the feedback obtained were – Labour, OH&S, Skills, Product prices, Input costs, Competition from imports and Meeting the changing demands of customers. This sounding provided the platform from which many of the subsequent project activities, policy formulations, network integration direction and stakeholder collaboration was informed. (1,2) ▪ Regular visits to major growing regions – the IDO frequented all the previously identified major growing regions, with the possible exception of the Cudgen/Tweed Valley area; this was due to declining local production (peri-urban/land valuation/use issues) (<i>Reference MS#<all></i>). A large number of issue-specific field days, on-farm demonstrations, workshops, meetings and events were organised or facilitated during the project term and details of these activities will be found in the individual milestone reports which form Appendices to this report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events and Catalysts that target the whole industry and help connect people directly to information & services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology

<p>Some of the wide variety of topics featured included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ R&D results – Technology transfer ○ Bio-security / Plant Health ○ Chemical Gap Analysis ○ Climate Change / Drought ○ Labour / Skills / Migrant workers ○ Industrial Relations ○ Workplace Occupational Health & Safety ○ Water Use Efficiency ○ Succession Planning ○ Farm Management Systems (FMS) ○ Environmental – Natural Resources Management ○ IPM scoping ○ Supply/Value Chain assessment ○ Market Access ○ Horticultural Code of Conduct legislation ○ Healthy Soils Awareness ○ Spray Solutions Training ○ Greenhouse/Hydroponics Information ○ Crop-specific, disease related issues <p>(1,2,3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assisted with the State co-ordination of the ABARE Cost of Production Study - (Aust Vegetable Growers Survey 2004/05 ABS/ABARE) and promoted the use and industry analysis of the resulting data. <i>Reference MS#06 and Appendix #13 (2,3)</i> ▪ Climate Change – growers were encouraged to participate in a variety of forums organised by Growcom to develop an industry response to the issue of climate change and its potential affect upon industry interests. Specifically the IDO assisted and supported the work undertaken by Peter Deuter (QDPI&F) and was instrumental in involving industry’s key players to participate in the research (<i>VG05051: Scoping Study into climate change & climate variability &</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events and Catalysts that target the whole industry and help connect people directly to information & services <i>(continued..)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements <i>(continued..)</i> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry <i>(continued..)</i> ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology <i>(continued..)</i>
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<p><i>AH06019: Australian Horticulture response to climate change and climate variability</i>). As indicated elsewhere, a substantial amount of work was also undertaken specifically in relation to helping address issues of drought and on-farm water management (<i>refer also Water for Profit remarks below</i>) (1,2,3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tropical Cyclone Larry – following the devastating events of late March 2006 in FNQ the IDO visited the region and rendered assistance to affected local growers by co-ordinating the resources of the emergency response teams, both State and industry players such as Growcom. (2) ▪ Sugar cane ‘smut’ – during the recent outbreak of the disease (2007) the IDO offered assistance to those capsicum growers that were affected by the eradication program. (1,2) ▪ Silverleaf Whitefly – assistance was provided on a number of occasions to the CSIRO researchers working on the release of a parasitoid and a variety of information meetings, resources and workshops established. (2,3) ▪ Water for Profit – the Qld State Government <i>Rural Water Use Efficiency Program</i> as successfully delivered by Growcom on behalf of horticulture (<i>Water for Profit</i>) has resulted in significant financial savings and farm management practice benefits for farm businesses, resulting in improved profitability and environmental gains. Vegetable growers were encouraged by the IDO to participate in the scheme’s workshops, which were promoted extensively. (1,2,3) ▪ Farm Management Systems (FMS) – the technical input and experience of the IDO has assisted the development of the Growcom FMS which was created as part of the Qld Farmer’s Federation FMS initiative. The Growcom FMS is a computer program developed to assist horticultural growers with managing risks to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events and Catalysts that target the whole industry and help connect people directly to information & services (<i>continued..</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements (<i>continued..</i>) ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry (<i>continued..</i>) ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology (<i>continued..</i>)
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<p>growth and durability of their agribusiness. It provides a structured risk based approach to assist in decision making that can have long term benefits for grower capacity and also act as a benchmarking tool to measure improvements. Two modules have been rolled out: water use efficiency and soil health and nutrient management. Modules on WH&S, water quality and business are planned. An action plan is generated with target dates for each grower to work towards. The action plan also links growers with existing information sources to assist them in implementing those actions. The IDO ensured that linkages for vegetable growers were appropriate and avoided duplication (integration with <i>Enviroveg</i>, for example). (1,2,3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Succession Planning – The IDO assisted in the development of a successful funding application to provide growers with information on the process of passing on their business, either to a family member/s, a worker or outright sale. This was supported by the IDO as the age of growers, anecdotal evidence puts many of them in the middle to late retirement age and this was seen a another means of supporting the industry through a stressful period in their lives. The funding, specifically targeted at horticulture, and provided by the Federal Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources has allowed Growcom to provide up to 120 family businesses with the tools necessary to make decisions in relation to their personal future and that of their business. (1,2,3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events and Catalysts that target the whole industry and help connect people directly to information & services (continued..) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased Communication within the industry and grower ownership of industry achievements (continued..) ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry (continued..) ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology (continued..)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industry stakeholder input – as indicated previously with regard to the Vegetable Road Show, the regular regional visits and the communication strategy employed to inform the IDO of stakeholder feedback regarding the ongoing assessment of vegetable R&D needs identification – this has been a continuing feature of the project. The IDO has integrated a number of industry networks to assist the flow of information and enable the early identification and assessment of issues that affect individual grower’s, crop sectors’ and the wider industry’s sustainability and profitability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuation of R&D needs identification and access to information and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology ▪ Delivery of national R & D programs at state

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Vege Levy R&D process – in addition to the promotion of the levy’s use as a source of funding for industry development and the use of the new logo to build brand value associated with the vegetable R&D program, the IDO has worked to communicate and explain the mechanism by which new research proposals should be developed in an inclusive and consultative process. During the course of the project there was a revision to the nature of the vegetable advisory groups which resulted in formation of five new advisory groups & six new working groups. The IDO ensured that Northern Australia growers were aware of the changes and implications to the system and process. Throughout the project, in accordance with the HAL investment cycles and funding rounds, R&D proposals were accordingly encouraged and sought out, assistance was then rendered where appropriate to produce, disseminate, evaluate and rate according to their merits, potential benefit and industry worth. (1,2,3) ▪ Chemical Management Issues – this topic is a good demonstration of the level to which R&D is considered and investigated within the industry, which has to deal with a significant number of ongoing chemical issues. The IDO was heavily involved in the assessment and ranking of R&D investment priorities and co-ordinating industry input (from growers, researchers, resellers et cetera) into the Strategic Agri-chemical Review Process (SARP). (1,2,3) ▪ Development of Dimethoate/Fenthion alternatives – the IDO in collaboration with Growcom’s Pest Management IDO (Gary Artlett) (<i>HG05005</i>) addressed the need to develop alternatives by working with growers & researchers. A forum was held by Growcom in Brisbane, followed by visits to Cairns/Bowen to review current thinking on alternatives. Discussion was also undertaken with Dimethoate/Fenthion national review co-ordinator, Chris Adriaansen. Research is currently underway. (1,2,3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuation of R&D needs identification and access to information and services <i>(continued..)</i> 	<p>& regional levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access to information, services and events that assist the vegetable industry <i>(continued..)</i> ▪ Increased knowledge and adaptation of R&D outcomes and new technology <i>(continued..)</i> ▪ Delivery of national R & D programs at state and regional levels. <i>(continued..)</i>
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Examples of some of the activities and project evaluation

Project activities ranged widely in their development and delivery. The summaries listed below illustrate examples of the breadth of service provided by the nature of the project.

Growcom Facilitates Case studies in QLD for video format to promote careers in horticulture

The Agri – Food Industry Skills Council (AFISC) obtained matched funds from Horticulture Australia Ltd to document a series of workforce development case studies suitable to screen on programs such as ABC's Landline, Statewide, or ACA (A Current Affair). The case studies aim to promote and brand horticulture nationally as a preferred industry for a career and to attract new existing and younger workers to the industries. Growcom facilitated the filming of the industry perspective in Queensland.

Withcott seedlings, Harslett's farming enterprise, and Northern Australian Industry Development Officer Simon Powell participated in representing career opportunities for horticulture in Queensland.

Harslett's farming enterprise interview was centered on recent Nuffield Scholarship winner Tim Harslett, and the opportunities that are available for enthusiastic growers in horticulture. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of succession planning, and how a successful family business can achieve smooth transition between generations.

Evaluation

Growcom Vegetable IDO for Queensland provided an overview of the exciting employment opportunities available in the horticultural industry, and why it is such a fantastic industry to initiate a career in.

The case studies were designed to promote and brand careers in horticulture, but also to give insights into training, workplace activities, succession planning and methods of farming, markets and lifestyle. This provided a positive rolemodel and a tool for school Careers Advisors to use to promote the value of a career in horticulture

Establishment of a Shire taskforce to resolve issues between councillors, growers and community groups.

In 2007, the issue of intensive and protected horticulture in Northern Beaudesert Shire was a growing concern with many properties being cleared for greenhouses in the space of a few months. In the Northern Beaudesert Shire we have seen an increase in both horticulture and urban development. What is now zoned as Rural Residential, ownership of the issues needed to be address and resolved.

Alistair Dawson, CEO of Beaudesert Shire, created and chaired the Beaudesert Shire intensive horticulture taskforce. The taskforce found that communication was the key in minimising conflict between residents and growers. We took a whole of industries approach which included representative from State government agencies, industry, local residents and community groups such as the department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHS), Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA), Queensland Police Service, Growcom, Vietnamese Farmers Federation Queensland and the Logan Albert Catchment Association.

One of the issues was the spray drift from the greenhouses, which was alleged to be contaminating neighbouring water tanks. Tests showed that only one of 18 samples taken from rain water tanks in a random sample of neighbouring properties contained detectable amounts of pesticide. The concentration of pesticide in this sample was less than 50 times lower than the allowable levels set out in the *Australian Drinking Water Guideline 2004*.

Evaluation

Another positive outcome was the chance to bring commercial growers together with industry leaders and presenting the outcomes from the taskforce with environmental and nuisance issues affecting neighbouring properties, and also meeting the regulations required from growers. I measured the success by the 34 growers that attended along with the presenters from Beaudesert Shire Compliance, WHS, water for profit – Growcom, IDO Growcom, Elders – Chemicals, and Drum muster. The feedback from the night was, many took away valuable knowledge to maintain and improve their farm operations.

Simon Powell the Industry Development Officer from Growcom, who hosted the evening, summarised it wonderfully with: “As the successful ‘Growing Wiser’ information night held in the Beaudesert Shire highlighted, council has assured local producers that there will be ample opportunity to voice their opinions when legislation concerning future horticultural practice in urban sensitive areas are discussed.”

“Growers welcome this opportunity and are excited about the prospect of moving forward with the support of local council and the wider community,” he added.

“In the interests of preserving the vital need for locally grown fresh produce, communities need to recognise the importance of balancing the development of urban dwellings, and the preservation of areas suitable for horticultural production, and their interaction with each other.

“When considering the need to balance urban encroachment and sustaining production areas, it is essential that community leaders, council authorities, and local producers all have a seat at the table when major decisions for regional planning are discussed,” he said.

As growers, like many other industries we are responsible for our farm practises - the importance of meeting all our business obligations rests with each business owner. I wish to stress the importance of growers and industries working together. By being pro-active rather than reactive, by taking the time to introduce yourself to your neighbours and Councillors. Inform them on your farming practises... educate them! It will stop them from guessing wrongly. Every family needs a farmer.

Supply Chain Analysis

The Vege IDO hosted sixteen vegetable growers from the Lockyer Valley on a supply chain tour of Brisbane metro. The aim of the tour was to gain exposure to organisations that process, and sell vegetable products to the state, national, and international market.

The tour was strategically planned to maximise the number of visits to companies, whilst trying to minimise time spent off farm for the grower. Careful time and consideration was given to try and match the outcome of the tour to the interest of the growers. An extract from the report is as follows:

After leaving from Gatton in the morning the first stop was to pick up Craig Templeman from Air Freight Council Queensland, who provided a fantastic insight into Brisbane Airfreight, and the entire airport ground structure. Visiting DHL freighting service gave the growers first hand experience into the workings of exporting fresh produce internationally.

From here the group travelled to the James Street Markets in the heart of Fortitude Valley to view the arrangement of fresh produce and discuss new thinking in regards to market presentation from market owner Mitch Love. The concept of a 'one stop' market place dealing with only the highest quality product is proving to be a successful business choice.

Next stop - Growcom head office. Here the group was delivered a range of presentations from expert staff on a range of issues pertinent to the horticulture industry of Queensland. Topics included :

- ◆ Chief Advocate, Mark Panitz – Growcom involvement in upcoming election.
- ◆ HR Manager, Donna Mogg – Industrial relation issues including minimum wage, employee contracts, workplace agreements.
- ◆ Training Manager, Paul Westbury - Farmbis Tii training program.
- ◆ Growcom Chairman, Paul Ziebarth - Importance of Growcom as state horticulture representative.

CEO Jan Davies also commented on a range of issues, fielding questions that the growers put forward.

After a delightful lunch the tour proceeded to Snap Fresh in Crestmead. Snap Fresh General Manager Mark Trundle welcomed the group and communicated the challenges in producing 15 million meals for aeroplane companies. The group was then allowed to enter the factory to view the very efficient processing procedures of the company. Snap Fresh has recently undertaken a supply chain analysis that has generated 15% cost and efficiency savings.

The group of growers was then treated to excellent hospitality from Brett's Wharf Restaurant in Hamilton, putting on drinks and nibbles for their arrival. Celebrity Chef Alastair McLeod took time out from his busy schedule to discuss the importance of

sourcing fresh produce for the restaurant. Alastair's enthusiasm was contagious and a real highlight of the day.

The group then had a chance to relax and enjoy an excellent meal at the Elephant and Wheelbarrow Hotel in the city. This provided an excellent venue to discuss various issues facing growers in the industry.

An early start on day 2 allowed access to the Brisbane markets in time for the start of floor trading. Vanessa Kennedy from Brisbane Markets kindly gave up her time to introduce the growers to various wholesalers, and tour the IGA distribution centre. Vanessa organised a group of speakers to discuss the inner workings of the markets, over a hearty breakfast.

From here the group visited Mrs Crocketts Fast and Fresh, a company established in 1983, becoming Australia's largest supplier of freshly prepared bulk and pre-packed salads and side dishes to foodservices and retail outlets. General Manager, Margaret Judge then conducted a tour through the operational workings of the factory. A lot of care was taken to ensure the integrity of health standards and sanitation procedures were maintained.

The bus then moved onto Golden Circle, where a buffet lunch and much needed cup of coffee, were enjoyed. The group then boarded a shuttle bus to tour the factory of Golden Circle to view the Pineapple processing plant, beetroot cooking facilities, and the southern hemisphere Tetra Packing Machine.

Last stop for the tour included a behind the scenes look at Zone Fresh Markets in Windsor. The markets was another example of excellent produce being displayed to target the higher end of the market.

Evaluation

Needless to say the tour was a great success and everyone was exhausted with some growers counting sheep on the bus trip back to Gatton

Special thanks must go to all the organisations that were so generous in opening their doors and making us feel so welcome. Special thanks must go to Michael Sipple from Terranova Seeds for being instrumental in organising growers for the tour. Thanks must also go to all the growers who supported the tour, and made it such a fun and worthwhile experience.

Implications

This report summarises the activities of an industry development officer who, over the course of the 5 year project has interacted with the vegetable industry in Northern Australia and specifically Queensland.

Industry development is a somewhat ill defined concept. The scope of the role is often defined by the perceptive experience of the observer.

In principle, industry development has three key components

- Research
- Development; and
- Extension

The first and last of these components are readily understandable. It is the middle area where confusion lies. It is also this area where the greatest scope for impact of industry development lies.

It is also important to understand that the role of an IDO is not an end in itself. It is actually a way of facilitating delivery and uptake of Research, Development and Extension with the strongest focus on development.

Research is clearly undertaken by scientists and other specialists; and thus is not a role for an IDO.

Extension, in the traditional sense is simply a transference of information from researchers to practitioners. Essentially it is delivery of information. The role of the IDO is as a conduit for this information. Traditionally extension activities have been delivered one on one or to small groups, often by publicly funded agencies.

This approach reflected the difficulty many farmers had in, firstly accessing information, and secondly in then applying it on farm. The environment in which farmers operate has, however, changed greatly in recent years.

With the advent of the internet, farmers have ready access to just about any information that exists – almost instantaneously. Farmers are, by and large, more educated than in the past, and importantly the willingness of government to fund traditional extension has diminished. More and more, there is an expectation that farmers will seek out basic information themselves. This is where industry development activities – and hence IDOs – now have such an important role to play.

In this environment, the market failure is in synthesis and analysis of information coming from research. The key deliverables then are;

- identifying methods of applying new technologies, strategies, thought processes to existing practices.

- Facilitating understanding and uptake of these methods; and
- Through interactive processes, refine and improve practices and methods.

For that reason, this project has been focused on these three approaches.

This in itself poses serious issues in assessing success. Development of KPIs for these sorts of projects is in its infancy. For that reason, it is difficult to assess objectively the impact of activities undertaken as part of this project.

However without any empirical evidence to quantify outcomes, Growcom believes that the concept of a state based IDO network is adding value to the industry. The management of the project has not been without its challenges, especially in relation to the relentless strain that the ongoing reviews have placed on individuals who hold the position of IDO and the personal career uncertainty that this creates.

In addition, it requires careful management to ensure that the IDO remains apolitical, even when the IDO's employer performs a political lobby function. The relationship of the IDO with AusVeg and the chain of reporting/command required constant vigilance to ensure that the IDO was not being pulled in competing directions and the responsibilities of the contracted partner (in this case Growcom) were not compromised.

Recommendations

Industry development is an important plank in encouraging a sustainable vegetable industry.

- Recognising the stage at which the industry now is, and the delivery of industry development strategies requires an identifiable ~ “face”. Therefore the continuance of the role of IDO is important.
- A more detailed analysis of the implications of the VegVision 2020 strategy needs to be undertaken to contextualise its outcomes in a Qld sense
- Clear mapping of roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the industry development environment is essential
- The review of the IDO role be finalized ASAP
- The review into the IDO role be finalized ASAP

Acknowledgements

The Vegetable Industry Development Officer would like to thank the following people who provided ongoing support and advice during the project and whose assistance and counsel was greatly appreciated in contributing to the benefits delivered to the vegetable industry in Northern Australia:

- QFVG/Growcom Vegetable Special Interest Group members, 2003-08
- Lisa Crooks, Riverview Herbs
- David de Paoli, Austchilli Pty Ltd
- Martin Wilson
- Daryl Wilson
- Max Durham
- Howard Poole
- Lorelle McShane
- Denise Harslett, Harslett Farms
- Rodney Wolfenden, Chair, Australian Sweet Potato Growers Association

Additional thanks for their invaluable support and assistance goes also to:

- Simon Drum, Industry Services Manager – Vegetables, HAL
- Lucy Keatinge, Industry Services Manager – Vegetables, HAL
- Richard Stephens, Industry Development Manager, HAL
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- Clinton McGrath, Snr Extension Officer, Applethorpe, QDPI&F
- Rodney Turner, Acting CEO, Plant Health Australia
- Janine Clark & Gary Artlett, Pest Management IDO, Growcom
- Jo Embry, Regional IDO – Bundaberg, Growcom
- Denise Kreymborg, Regional IDO – Bowen, Growcom
- Ray Palmer, Regional IDO – Stanthorpe, Growcom

The role of Northern Australian Vegetable Industry Development Officer for the period 2003-2008 was performed by:

- Matt Dent
- Jack Milbank
- Kate Dunn
- Simon Powell
- George McDonald

Appendix

- 1) Project Milestone Reports
 - a) VG 03052 — Milestone Reports — 02 to 12
 - b) VG 07169 — Milestone Report — 102
- 2) QLD Vegetable Industry — IDO's Overview
- 3) Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan 2007-2012
- 4) Queensland Horticulture Industry – Future Directions
- 5) FarmReady / Skills Passport – Presentation
- 6) Plant Health Australia — Biosecurity Awareness Training
- 7) *“Training Needs Analysis in Business Skills & Leadership Development”* (AVIDG – D.Fullelove)
- 8) Supply Chain Analysis — Gatton Study Tour
- 9) IPP | Australian Vegetable Industry *“Taking Stock & Setting Directions”*
- 10) Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, Brisbane, May 2006 (VG 05079)
- 11) Asian Export Strategy development — Export market profile
- 12) Examples of Qld industry newsletter — *vegelink* - #1,2,3
- 13) Farm Surveys Field Work - *Vegetable Cost of Production Survey* (R. Paton, Surveys Training & Development Officer, ABARE)

APPENDIX #1 (A)

Project Milestone Reports

**VG 03052
Milestone Reports — 02 to 12**

APPENDIX #1 (B)

Project Milestone Reports

VG 07169
Milestone Report — 102

APPENDIX #2

QLD Vegetable Industry — IDO's Overview

APPENDIX #3

Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan 2007-2012

APPENDIX #4

Queensland Horticulture Industry – Future Directions

APPENDIX #5

FarmReady / Skills Passport – Presentation

APPENDIX #6

Plant Health Australia — Biosecurity Awareness Training

APPENDIX #7

*“Training Needs Analysis in Business
Skills & Leadership Development”*
(AVIDG – D.Fullelove)

APPENDIX #8

Supply Chain Analysis — Gatton Study Tour

APPENDIX #9

IPP

Australian Vegetable Industry

“Taking Stock & Setting Directions”

APPENDIX #10

Australian Vegetable Industry Conference,
Brisbane,
May 2006

(VG 05079)

APPENDIX #11

Asian Export Strategy development — Export market profile

APPENDIX #12

Examples of Qld industry newsletter

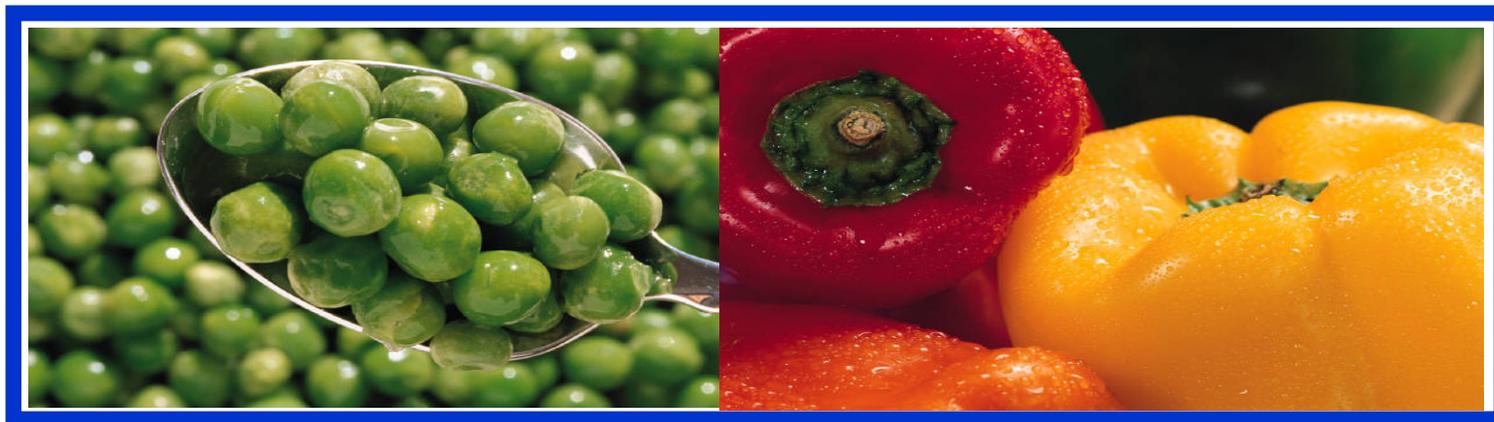
vegelink - #1,2,3

APPENDIX #13

Farm Surveys Field Work - *Vegetable Cost of Production Survey*

R. Paton,
Surveys Training & Development Officer
ABARE

Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan 2007 - 2012



Prepared on behalf of:
Growcom and the Queensland Vegetable Industry
May 2007

FINAL

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About Strategic Business Development

Strategic Business Development Pty Ltd works with commercial, industry and government clients to add tangible value through rigorous process and quality people. We typically work on assignments involving strategic input that is commercially focused and results in sustainable change. We add value through rigorous processes and thinking that empower stakeholders to move from “Strategy to Action”

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Disclaimer

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Every effort has been made to ensure the information presented and the conclusions reached are realistic and not misleading. However, Strategic Business Development makes no warranty as to the accuracy of the information contained in this report and will not accept responsibility or liability for any loss incurred by any person or entity relying on the information in this report.



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- ❖ Vision, Strategies and Strategic Actions
- ❖ Priorities

Strategic Action 1: Improve industry communication networks

Strategic Action 2: Unite Growers and Industry Bodies

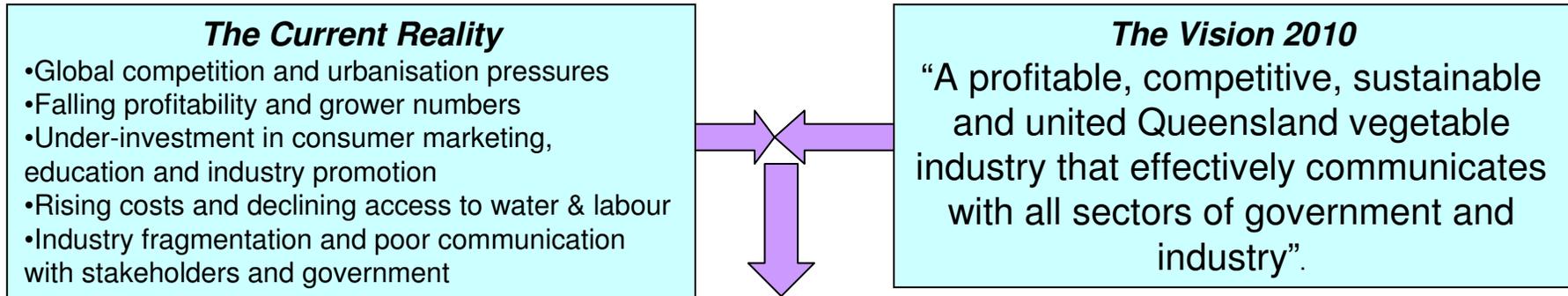
Strategic Action 3: Develop a local Vege Education Program

Attachment A. - Linkages to VegVision 2020

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The Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan



Our Strategic Actions		
<p style="text-align: center;">1. Improve industry communication networks</p> <p>1.1 Improve electronic communications by upgrading web-based information and services and actively promoting this to industry – <i>Growcom</i></p> <p>1.2 Increase regional activities & presence to enhance existing relationships with Growcom and industry through attendance and sponsorship of local/regional events</p> <p>1.3 Support and encourage the establishment, and maintenance, of local/regional grower organisations eg. LPA's. - <i>Growcom</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2. Unite growers and Industry Bodies</p> <p>2.1 Establish a Vegetable SIG based on regional representation with links to local areas</p> <p>2.2 Overcome negative perceptions</p> <p>2.3 Secure funding and resources</p> <p>2.4 Establish a program of tiered meetings</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3. Develop a local Vege Education Plan</p> <p>3.1 Utilise currently successful programs as a basis for a template for other regional groups</p> <p>3.2 Develop a state-wide program based on the successful template integrating farm visits with curriculum support material for teachers</p> <p>3.3 Establish key liaison people in each region to coordinate and organise the programs with schools, “tuck shops” and P&C groups</p> <p>3.4 For older students, develop careers-based linkages to high schools and TAFE Colleges</p>



Section 1

The Overview

Background Information and Summary Plan



Section 2

The Situational Analysis

Situational Analysis, Key Issues and Industry SWOT



Key trends impacting on the industry

Globalisation will continue to be an issue for the vegetable industry.

Urbanisation, water and labour pressures will continue to be important issues for vegetable growers

Queensland-focused issues related to:
Industry communication, representation and unity and the raising industry profile at a local level

There are a number of issues facing the Queensland Vegetable Industry:

- Globalisation pressures will put both vegetable processing and fresh markets under extreme pressure
- Grower numbers and industry profitability are falling
- There has been limited industry marketing and promotion and consumer knowledge at an industry level is poor
- Urbanisation pressures will drive up land values leading to alternative viable land uses driven by ROI. It will also increase costs and controls for farmers
- Water and labour costs will continue to rise and availability will be an issue.
- Communication across the vegetable industry could be improved along with linkages to Government and local regional communities
- Industry representation is often fragmented and poorly coordinated with varying organisations servicing growers at national, state, regional and commodity levels.

Many of these issues (listed above) are of national importance and are being addressed by national planning initiatives such as Vegvision 2020.

Workshop participants identified that there are 3 key issues that Queensland-based organisations can address:

1. Communication and information dissemination across the Queensland Industry;
2. Vegetable Industry representation and unity; and
3. Raising awareness of the vegetable industry at a regional level.



Section 3

The Vegetable Industry Future

The Future and Strategic Actions



Linking the Industry Vision to Outcomes

The workshop participants agreed that the overarching intent of the Vision and Mission Statements from *Vegvision 2020* and *Future Directions* is in clear alignment with the future directions of the Queensland Industry.

The workshop participants summarised the key outcomes of a Queensland industry plan as: improve industry profitability; enhance industry communication and unity; and to improve industry support and understanding from all levels of government.

Similarly, the primary strategies of Queensland industry will reflect the *Future Directions* (and *Vegvision 2020*) strategies: Smart Marketing, Achieving Business Success, an Environmentally Sustainable Industry and Co-operating to Deliver. Growcom was perceived to be addressing many of these issues across Queensland horticulture, which will impact positively on the vegetable industry.

The workshop participants acknowledged that there are issues that are required to be addressed at a national level, while others are to be addressed at a state level. Other issues are local, or regional, in impact and are best addressed at this level. Hence, the focus of the actions from this plan is to be at the Queensland State level and, in particular, actions that are specific to the vegetable industry.

These actions include:

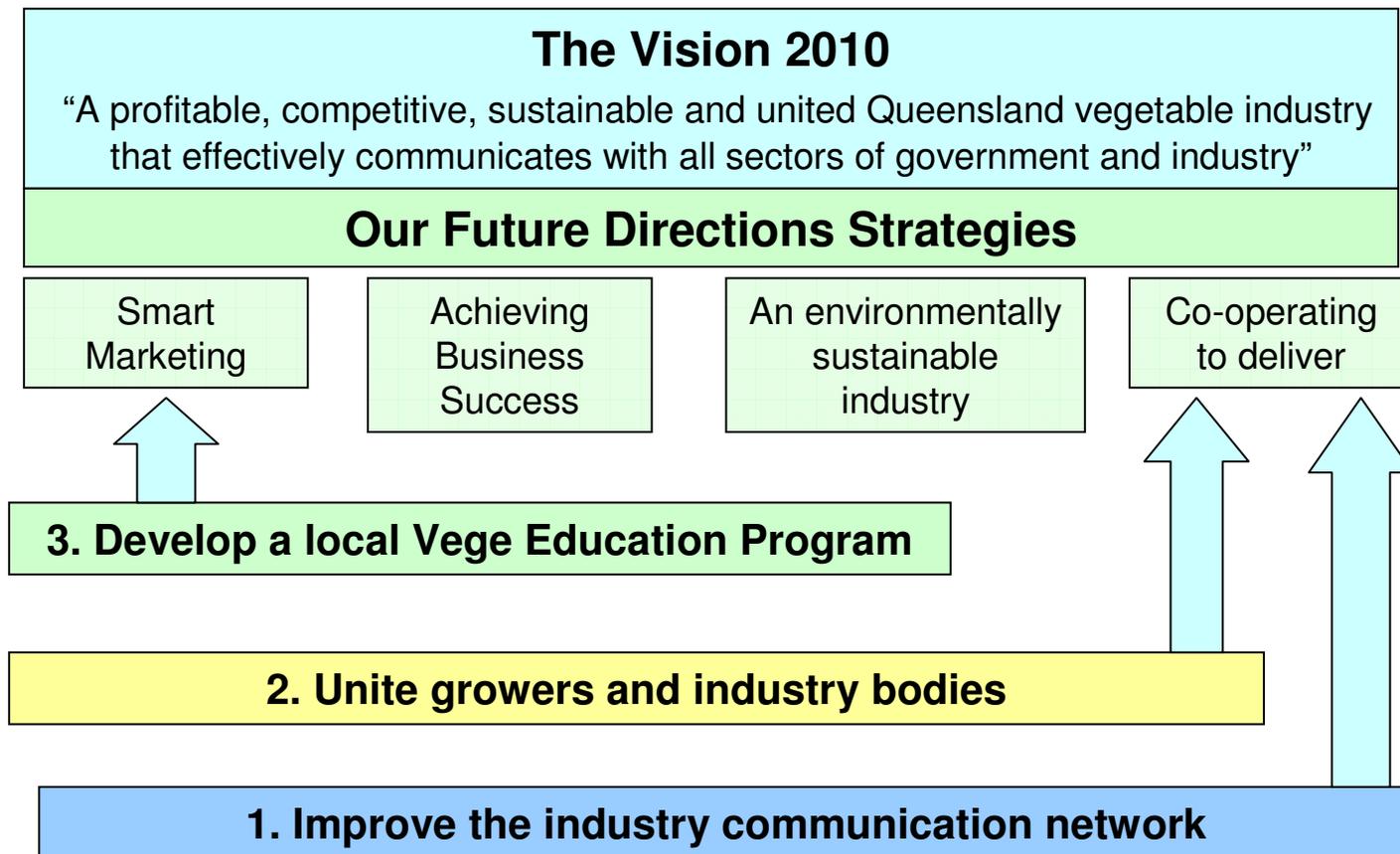
- improving the effectiveness of communication throughout the vegetable industry;
- improving industry representation and unity; and
- developing a Local Vege Education Program to increase local awareness of the industry, its products and its value to the community.



The Queensland Vegetable Industry Future

The Industry Strategic Actions

The Vision of the Queensland vegetable industry future will be achieved by delivering on the following three strategic actions in the period 2007 to 2010. These Strategic Actions have linkages to the Strategies outlined in the Future Directions Plan. The Strategic Actions were reviewed and planned by workshop participants. Details are presented overpage.



Strategic Action 1: Improve industry communication network

Business Case/Rationale:

The QLD vegetable industry is fragmented and geographically dispersed and there is a need to improve communication across the value chain and to increase awareness, information, services and education to growers. This is matched by changing IT and communications infrastructure, access, reach and affordability.

Key Assumptions:

- Communication can be effective and will increase awareness of issues impacting grower profitability and sustainability
- A more aware industry is a more unified industry

Significant Risks:

- Receiver gets the wrong message

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Increasing levels of grower satisfaction and membership in grower organisations

Strategic Actions & Responsibilities:

- 1.1 Improve electronic communications by upgrading web-based information and services and actively promoting this to industry - *Growcom*
- 1.2 Increase regional activities & presence to enhance existing relationships with Growcom and industry through attendance and sponsorship of local/regional events
- 1.3 Support and encourage the establishment, and maintenance, of local/regional grower organisations eg. LPA's. - *Growcom*

Detailed Action Plans are presented overpage.



The Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan

Strategic Action 1 - Detailed Action Plans

Strategy Action 1 - Improve industry communication network

Strategic Actions	Detailed Actions	Timeline	Resp.
1.1 Improve electronic communications by upgrading web-based information and services and actively promoting this to industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and upgrade existing web site and a Web-based resources 2. Promote access, availability and updates to industry 3. Train and educate industry in the use of Web-based tools and information 4. Monitor usage patterns and adjust resources to achieve desired outcomes 	<p>2007</p> <p>2007</p> <p>2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Growcom
1.2 Increase regional activities & presence to enhance existing relationships with Growcom and industry through attendance and sponsorship of local/regional events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilise local Growcom staff 2. Ensure Growcom or Vegetable SIG attendance at regional meetings 3. Provide support at regional events 	<p>2007</p> <p>2008</p> <p>2008</p>	Growcom
1.3 Support and encourage the establishment, and maintenance, of local/regional grower organisations eg. LPA's.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide/organise appropriate venues 2. Ensure Growcom or Vegetable SIG. attendance at regional meetings 3. Provide support through mail-outs, fliers and communications 	Ongoing	Growcom



The Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan

Strategic Action 2: Unite Growers and Industry Bodies

Business Case/Rationale:

The QLD vegetable industry is fragmented with a number of organisations servicing the varying needs of growers. Unifying the efforts of these organisations will concentrate the focus of QLD industry for the benefit of all stakeholders. The purpose of this Strategic Action is to achieve a clear focus and greater outcomes by effectively utilising the expertise of individual stakeholders.

Key Assumptions:

- Stakeholders want to move toward shared goals due to dissatisfaction with the status quo.
- Unity o purpose will improve outcomes for individual stakeholders

Significant Risks:

- Industry stakeholders resistance to change
- Lack of trust
- Some stakeholders could be negatively affected even though overall the goal would be positive for the entire industry

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Increasing levels of grower satisfaction
2. Participation rates in industry organisations and events
3. Increasing representation from all QLD regions

Strategic Actions & Responsibilities:

- 2.1 Establish a Vegetable SIG based on regional representation with links to local areas
- 2.2 Overcome negative perceptions
- 2.3 Secure funding and resources
- 2.4 Establish a program of tiered meetings

Detailed Action Plans are presented overpage.



The Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Plan

Strategic Action 2 - Detailed Action Plans

Strategy Action 2 - Unite growers and industry bodies

Strategic Actions	Detailed Actions	Timeline	Resp.
2.1 Establish a Vegetable SIG based on regional representation with links to local areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a regional SIG structure 2. Ensure that there is a logical sequence to representation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local – nomination ❖ Regional – voting by members ❖ State – skills based selection 	April 2007	Growcom
2.2 Overcome negative perceptions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the new structure to industry highlighting the opportunities 2. Commence the selection process 3. Complete SIG selection 	May 2007 June 2007 July 2007	Growcom Regional Bodies
2.3 Secure funding and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore funding options 2. Secure seed funding through Growcom, HAL, Industry Reserves 3. Secure additional resources eg. DPI, external 4. Review options for rewarding/compensating Representatives, if appropriate. 	May 2007 June 2007 Ongoing	Growcom & Regional Bodies
2.4 Establish a program of tiered meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local shed meetings – monthly • Local Associations – monthly • State (SIG) - quarterly 	Ongoing	Growcom



Strategic Action 3: Develop a local Vege Education Plan

Business Case/Rationale:

Many local communities do not understand the impact of the local vegetable industry on their local community. Many people are not aware of the high-quality products being produced in their own “backyard”. In concert with this there are a number of initiatives are targeted at reducing the incidence of childhood obesity through improved diet and nutrition. Local Vege Programs will target school aged children, teachers and parents in a structured program to raise awareness through improved teaching materials, targeted field trips and career education and training.

Key Assumptions:

- Industry based programs will increase awareness, eating habits and demand
- Children have an impact on eating habits at home

Significant Risks:

- Increasing demand triggers competition and over-supply with in the vegetable industry

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Number of local programs established and operating
2. Increasing numbers of program participants
3. Increasing levels of vegetable consumption

Strategies & Responsibilities:

- 3.1 Utilise currently successful programs (eg. Bundaberg) as a basis for a template for other regional groups - *Growcom IDO*
- 3.2 Develop a state-wide program based on the successful template integrating farm visits with curriculum support material for teachers - *Growcom*
- 3.3 Establish key liaison people in each region to coordinate and organise the programs with schools, “tuck shops” and P&C groups - *Vegetable SIG (in association with Growcom IDO)*.
- 3.4 For older students, develop careers-based linkages to high schools and TAFE Colleges - *Growcom*



Attachment A

Linkages to VegVision 2020



Strategic Linkages to VegVision 2020

In September 2006, the *Australian Vegetable Industry Vegetable Group* (“AVIDG”) launched the Australian vegetable Industry Strategic Plan – VegVision 2020. The table below presents the Queensland Vegetable Industry Strategic Actions cross matched to the VegVision 2020 Strategic Imperatives and the Future Directions Strategies indicating strong linkages to the National Plan and the Queensland Horticultural Plan.

Future Directions Strategies - --→	FD1. Smart Marketing	FD2. Achieving Business Success	FD3. An environmentally sustainable industry	FD4. Co-operating to deliver
VegVision 2020 Strategic Imperatives.				
V1. Delivering changing consumer preferences and increasing demand				
V2. Market recognition for Australian quality, safety, reliable supply and innovation in products and services	SA3. Develop a local Vege Education Plan			
V3. Internationally competitive Australian vegetable supply chains				SA2. Unite Growers and Industry Bodies
V4. Advanced industry data and information systems to meet future needs				SA1. Improve Industry Communication Networks



Attachment B

Workshop Attendees

8 March 2007



Workshop Attendees

The following people attended the planning workshop on 8 March, 2007 at Growcom offices in Brisbane:

- David de Paoli
- Martin Wilson
- Daryl Wilson
- Max Durham
- Howard Poole
- Lorelle McShane
- Denise Harslett
- Rodney Wolfenden
- Kate Dunn (Growcom Vegetable IDO)
- George McDonald (Growcom Industry Services Manager)



Queensland Horticulture Industry

Future Directions

Achieving business success

The majority of businesses in the horticulture supply chain are meeting their financial expectations. We achieve this through:

- adopting best practice
- developing networks and alliances
- investing in our future – products, markets and leaders
- encouraging an achievement culture and a ‘can do’ mindset
- becoming competent employers
- overcoming the challenges to our international competitiveness from the emerging economies in the southern hemisphere and Asia
- developing supply chains that are transparent and responsive to consumers
- embracing innovation to reduce costs and improve quality.

An environmentally sustainable industry

The industry uses sustainable environmental practices throughout the supply chain. We achieve this through:

- meeting the standards expected by discerning customers
- creating a basis for positioning against competitors
- responding to community expectations of responsible industry behaviour
- applying innovative resource management practices.

Co-operating to deliver

Strong cohesion exists between individuals, businesses, industry organisations and government. We achieved this through:

- working collaboratively on the development and implementation of projects
- building alliances and networks to create value for customers
- being focused and flexible in pursuing solutions
- working in partnership with government to facilitate industry adjustment packages where appropriate
- managing communication and relationships well
- using our Future Directions plan as a platform for dynamic industry/government partnerships
- working in partnership with government to achieve workable and equitable policy settings and associated legislation.



This publication was developed with the assistance of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries



Growcom facilitated the development of this document on behalf of the Queensland horticulture industry

Achieving our preferred future

The four strategies, smart marketing, business success, sustainability and cooperation, will be addressed through projects and actions within our industry and government to achieve the outcomes set out in this plan. These projects and actions will occur at a number of levels and include:

- industry bodies working with their stakeholders and other industry bodies to encourage initiatives consistent with the plan
- individual enterprises developing initiatives and making business decisions consistent with the plan
- individuals in the industry continuing the development of the plan and helping to create a dynamic and successful industry
- all supply chain segments (suppliers, growers, cold chain logistics, wholesalers and retailers) and government collaborating and cooperating to achieve outcomes consistent with the plan
- industry and government working together to keep the plan current and top-of-mind throughout the industry and support agencies.

Action plans

The Future Directions plan will be driven forward by a series of very specific action plans to implement the strategies. It is proposed that a Steering Committee led by industry, in conjunction with a Reference Group, will shortly be formed to draft action plans addressing the most urgent of the issues facing the industry.

Dialogue for action

Industry and government will cooperate to maintain the dialogue about the industry’s future. This will stimulate and encourage projects to be undertaken by industry, and assist government to formulate policy settings which enable the Queensland horticulture industry to create a sustainable and prosperous future.

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Richard Lomman Manager - Table Grape Growers Australia (Western Queensland)





Why we need a plan

The Queensland horticulture industry embarked on a structured review of its future during 1999. Through a 'foresight' process, the industry used a range of techniques to develop a picture of its preferred future in 2010. This process included broad consultations within the industry and analysis of a number of different operational scenarios. In early 2006 the plan was tested against current circumstances and expectations. The industry found that with only minor adjustments the plan would remain relevant for the foreseeable future.

The Future Directions plan defines the industry's strategic position. It provides a structure for the future development of the Queensland horticulture industry. It is intended to provide all sectors of the industry (from research to retail) with a broad framework in which to develop their own plans and actions.

It is anticipated that organisations, enterprises and individuals within the industry will continue to use the Future Directions plan to frame their business decisions for the future. The plan will also provide a basis for governments to develop appropriate policy settings and support for the industry. This will ensure that overall development of the industry is undertaken within a structured, sustainable framework.

Achievement of the outcomes envisaged in the Future Directions plan will deliver significant benefits to the industry's partnership with government, including:

- accelerating the growth of horticulture
- building regions
- smart skilling
- safer and more supportive communities
- better quality of life
- valuing the environment.

We see the state's horticulture industry as an important contributor to Queensland's future prosperity.

This plan, developed with significant input from across the horticulture industry, is not a rigid document. The industry expects that it will be revised regularly in response to changing conditions.



Our preferred future

Our preferred future is one in which our industry:

- is the preferred supplier to Australian domestic consumers and value-adders
- services a range of selected market segments around the world
- provides a range of differentiated products, services and technologies
- forms supply chain networks and business clusters to deliver quality assured products and services
- accommodates businesses of varying sizes
- enjoys the benefits of a strong human capital base
- is financially strong, with most businesses achieving their financial expectations
- builds and leverages the knowledge and smart thinking of industry participants
- is benefiting from early investment in industry infrastructure
- is recognised nationally and globally for innovation, food safety and environmentally sustainable practices
- acts in a cohesive and interdependent way
- is fundamentally linked to the success of rural and regional economies
- provides a significant contribution to Queensland's economy
- actively plans and invests in research & development that will ensure profitability and good environmental stewardship.

Characteristics of our industry in 2010

An informed observer in 2010 would see that our industry is characterised by participants who:

- think about solutions rather than impediments
- anticipate consumer lifestyle changes
- research and innovate with a strong market orientation
- manage products and processes from conception to consumption
- cooperate to be competitive, through networks and alliances
- plan for future sustainability
- exit products and services that are at the end of their useful lives
- develop and manage people well
- manage natural resources well
- manage change with a positive attitude.

Our responses to the forces of change

In developing our preferred future we have successfully managed change to capture the opportunities and reduce negative impacts. Some of the forces of change that we have recognised and managed include:

- global protocols changing the rules of international trade
- transport technology, logistics and industry alliances enabling efficient supply chains.
- electronic commerce creating a global business revolution
- consumer lifestyle changes
- significant shifts in the distribution of global wealth and power
- changes in profitability
- industry in partnership with government and the private sector
- the application of innovation and technology to products to increase their value and lower cost of production
- biotechnology becoming an important technology of the 21st century
- global supply chains developing rapidly
- increased community expectations about sustainable management of natural resources
- adaption to climate change.



We investigated evolving issues, including such questions as:

- would the two major grocery retailers distort the fruit and vegetable market?
- would natural resource management become a major obstacle to industry sustainability?
- would consumers pay a premium for local product?
- would organic fruit and vegetables become a significant market niche?
- would consumers embrace GMOs and synthetic foods?
- would competitors capture the highest value market segments?
- would new types of trade barriers emerge?
- would interest, inflation and exchange rates and investment remain stable?
- would new technologies increase global competition?
- would climate change limit industry growth?
- would water quality and availability limit industry growth?
- would the industry be trading on a level playing field?
- would biosecurity impact the industry?
- would we overcome the shortage of labour and industry skills?
- would food security issues become a greater policy concern world environment changes?

Our strategies

To achieve our preferred future, we will be guided by a Future Directions plan that is focused on smart marketing, business success, sustainability and cooperation. The key elements of these strategies are:

Smart marketing

The industry is successfully servicing selected market segments around the world. We achieve this through:

- assessing and responding to consumer preferences and standards
- emphasising differentiated products and services
- utilising high levels of knowledge and skills within the industry
- removing impediments to key markets
- researching new uses for our products – e.g. pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals
- adapting to the challenges of climate change
- innovation: maximising the effectiveness of research & development through relevant structures and systems and reliable funding streams.