

**Publication of the bi-monthly  
vegetable grower magazine  
'Vegetables Australia' -  
continuation of VG06005**

Richard Mulcahy  
AUSVEG Ltd

Project Number: VG08105

## **VG08105**

This report is published by Horticulture Australia Ltd to pass on information concerning horticultural research and development undertaken for the vegetable industry.

The research contained in this report was funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd with the financial support of the vegetable industry.

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

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

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Level 7

179 Elizabeth Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone: (02) 8295 2300

Fax: (02) 8295 2399

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*Know-how for Horticulture™*

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

Jim Thomson  
AUSVEG Ltd

Project Number: VG08105

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Level 7  
179 Elizabeth Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
Telephone: (02) 8295 2300  
Fax: (02) 8295 2399  
Email: [horticulture@horticulture.com.au](mailto:horticulture@horticulture.com.au)

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VG08105

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

Jim Thomson, Editor—*Vegetables Australia*  
AUSVEG Ltd

July 2009



*Know-how for Horticulture™*



VG08105

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

The purpose of this final report is to communicate the successful delivery of project VG08105, *Publication of the bi-monthly vegetable grower magazine Vegetables Australia*.

Project Leader: Jim Thomson, AUSVEG Ltd, 03 9544 8098

AUSVEG Ltd  
Suite 7, 756 Blackburn Road, Clayton North VIC  
PO Box 563, Mulgrave VIC 3170  
Telephone: 03 9544 8098  
Fax: 03 9558 6199  
Mobile: 0407 242 788  
E-mail: editor@ausveg.com.au  
Web: www.ausveg.com.au

Funded by:

- HAL using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Australian Government
- Advertising revenue

Report date: Friday 31 July 2009

*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 52-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 projects VG04086 and VG06005.

Launched in July 2005, *Vegetables Australia* was initiated as the key vehicle for the dissemination of information on the National Vegetable Levy 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. Twenty-five 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 directly 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 continued for the first three years *Vegetables Australia* was produced (as milestones of VG04086 and VG06005). At the commencement of the publication's fourth year, Hyde Media was hired on a commission basis for all advertising revenue. Previously Hyde Media was employed as a contractor, receiving a set payment each month.

*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.

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

## 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 an annual readership survey distributed with the magazine (included with the September 2008 issue)
- Readers indicated a high level of acceptance of the magazine, and a high level of interest in the R&D component of the publication (71 per cent of survey respondents nominated R&D findings as their favourite magazine section)
- Survey results indicated 69 per cent recognition of the Vegetable R&D Program and National Vegetable Levy. Additionally, 79 per cent of respondents wanted more information about how the National Vegetable Levy benefits them beyond the farm-gate. This is an increase of 17 per cent from the 2007 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 advertisers (current and prospective).

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 by an in-house part-time editor (0.8 EFT), Jim Thomson, who has edited the magazine since June 2007.

Members of the editorial committee were:

- Figaro Natoli, WA grower
- John Mundy, SA grower
- Anthony Brandsema, Tasmanian grower
- Glenn Abbott, Queensland grower
- Therese Schreurs, Victorian grower
- David Chung, NSW grower
- Alison Anderson, NSW Industry Development Officer
- Toni Davies, 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 the 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
- Inclusion of a broad cross-section of information and R&D findings
- Adherence to 85 per cent 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. Initially, 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.

As the magazine established itself as a vehicle for communicating R&D findings to the national vegetable industry, project leaders, researchers and extension officers began to approach the editor with prepared editorial or to discuss potential coverage of R&D outcomes in the magazine. The editor worked with these industry representatives to help shape stories so they were suitable for inclusion in the magazine.

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

Across the 13-month duration of the project (seven issues), *Vegetables Australia* reported on more than 110 R&D related topics and projects funded through the National Vegetable Levy and matched Australian Government funds. This was an average of 16.1 stories per issue, an increase on the 14.4 stories per issue in years two and three, and 11 stories per issue in year one.

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 19 to 25 of *Vegetables Australia***

Project number	Article title	Issue published
VG06127	VegeNotes survey winner	July 2008
VG07193	HAL seeks grower feedback	July 2008
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	July 2008
NA	Tour Asia	July 2008
MT08014	2009 conference to “grow a healthy Australia”	July 2008
VG07062	Changing of the guard	July 2008
VG06114	Prevention is better than cure	July 2008
VG06129	Growth spurt needed for future leaders	July 2008
VG07150	Code Red	July 2008
VG06066	Many languages, one voice	July 2008
VG06011	Avoid the silver lining	July 2008
VG07153	R&D preview: Nutrient management of leafy Asian vegetables	July 2008
NA	Researcher profile: Dr Leigh Pilkington	July 2008
VG08115	It’s nearly time to fly	July 2008
VG03092	Take a leaf out of their book	July 2008
VG06032	Take a leaf out of their book	July 2008
VG08105	Help guide <i>Vegetables Australia</i>	September 2008
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	September 2008
VG08900	Levy-funded project call begins in October	September 2008
VG07100	Future shock	September 2008
VG05005	New disease is difficult to counter	September 2008
VG06018	New disease is difficult to counter	September 2008
VG07062	IPM info at your fingertips	September 2008
VG02030	You-beaut ute guide—the bible for green bean growers	September 2008
VG06016	You-beaut ute guide—the bible for green bean growers	September 2008
VG07193	Grower opinions shape industry development services	September 2008
VG08900	HAL releases 2008/09 R&D project list	September 2008
VG97036	Secondary pests need a soft approach	September 2008
VG05035	Secondary pests need a soft approach	September 2008
NA	Extension officer profile: Jeremy Badgery-Parker	September 2008
NA	Levy report on its way	November 2008
VG07030	Brassica toolkit is all-encompassing	November 2008
VG07193	New industry development program	November 2008
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	November 2008
VG08105	Survey winners announced	November 2008
VG07146	R&D preview: Australian Vegetable Industry Soil and Land Management Knowledge Exchange	November 2008
VG07168	On the right track	November 2008
MT08014	Seeds firmly planted for industry conference	November 2008
VG07100	Mechanise to improve growing techniques	November 2008

VG04032	Spread the word	November 2008
VG08113	Tailor-made leadership development	November 2008
VG07035	Help sweet corn fulfill its potential	November 2008
VG07175	Young growers take the challenge	November 2008
VG07146	Soil website now online	January 2009
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	January 2009
VG08113	New dates for leadership course	January 2009
VG07192	Steps taken for carbon footprint measurement tool	January 2009
NA	Healthy return on rural R&D investment	January 2009
VG07062	Register to keep informed	January 2009
VG06138	Manage water for yield and profit	January 2009
VG04031	Help consumers embrace the unknown	January 2009
VG08029	R&D preview: Design and demonstration of precision agriculture applied to different vegetable crops	January 2009
VG07100	Smart growers embrace the future	January 2009
VG07058	No more traffic jams	January 2009
MT08014	Healthy focus for conference	January 2009
VG06092	Completing the picture of pathology research	January 2009
VG07128	Virus education a national concern	January 2009
VG04020	Make light of cold-storage hurdles	January 2009
VG06045	Make light of cold-storage hurdles	January 2009
VG05095	Dutch innovation sets pace for greenhouse industry	January 2009
HG08012	PEP gears up for 2009	March 2009
MT08014	Elders signs on	March 2009
VG07140	IDO program extended	March 2009
VG03076	IDO program extended	March 2009
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	March 2009
VG06117	Sell what you sow, more or less	March 2009
MT08014	Q&A—Jin Ju Wilder	March 2009
VG08115	Lessons learned on US tour	March 2009
VG08900	Help direct R&D investment	March 2009
MT08014	World-class speakers confirmed for conference	March 2009
VG08004	Compare profits for smart decisions	March 2009
VG07063	Bumper 06/07 incomes unlikely to be repeated	March 2009
VG08044	R&D preview: Investigations and developing integrated management strategies for carrot powdery mildew	March 2009
NA	Researcher profile: Rachel Lancaster	March 2009
MT06044	Viral warfare reduces chemical usage	March 2009
VG07193	Industry development tenders in	May 2009
VG06066	AUSVEG meets Darwin LOTE growers	May 2009
HG08012	More funds for PEP	May 2009
VG08084	Applications sought for the 2010 ARLP	May 2009
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	May 2009
VG08012	Levy funds Nuffield Scholarship	May 2009
MT08014	Vegie conference ready to launch	May 2009
MT08014	Australian Vegetable Industry Conference 2009 conference program	May 2009
MT08014	Develop capabilities for competitive edge	May 2009
VG05054	Milk cucurbit protection for all it's worth	May 2009
VG08088	R&D preview: Rhubarb group scoping study	May 2009
VG08094	Access all areas	May 2009
MT08014	IPM and market realities	May 2009
VG07015	Cucurbit pest guide available soon	May 2009

VG07126	Smart strategy beats cabbage-patch killer	May 2009
VG05029	Wilting away	May 2009
VG06024	Living on the edge	May 2009
VG08900	Time to prioritise R&D investment	July 2009
VG08040	Access economic data	July 2009
NA	FarmPlus online soon	July 2009
HG08012	Progress at PEP	July 2009
VG08047	Recent minor use permits	July 2009
VG08113	Next generation of leaders steps up to the plate	July 2009
VG04019	Too much of a good thing?	July 2009
VG07153	Too much of a good thing?	July 2009
VG06015	EnviroVeg goes to next level	July 2009
VG08152	R&D preview: Control of slugs in the Australian vegetable industry	July 2009
MT08014	Jam-packed conference impresses industry	July 2009
VG08081	US tour opportunity for levy payers	July 2009
MT08014	Consumers, carbon, cooperation: three Cs for a vibrant industry	July 2009
MT08014	Show and tell	July 2009
VG08040	Various 'Economic Outlook' articles—7 in total	All issues

R&D articles published in *Vegetables Australia* were made available to levy payers via the AUSVEG levy payers' website: [www.ausveg.com.au/levy-payers/login.cfm](http://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. Contact details for project leaders were included with articles where appropriate, enabling growers to easily contact researchers and extension officers for further information.

The website, available to all registered levy payers, 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-five per cent of survey respondents said they would read or download *Vegetables Australia* from the AUSVEG website.

## **Continued 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 (including the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference), the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Awards, and professional development and leadership opportunities such as Nuffield Scholarships, ARLP Scholarships, and the Produce Executive Program.

A series of articles profiling the five strategic pillars of industry plan VegVision 2020 was concluded in issue 4.1 (July 2008) with a look at the Leadership and People Development Advisory Group. The aim of this series was to help growers understand and appreciate how the National Vegetable Levy investment plan is moving beyond its production focus to encompass other areas of critical interest:

- Leadership and People Development
- Consumers
- Market Development
- Information and Technology Development and Dissemination.

This aligns with results from the reader survey that show 79 per cent of readers want to receive more information about levy benefits beyond the farm gate.

## **Themed issues**

In response to the 2007 reader survey, increased editorial coverage was given to equipment and technology (65 per cent of 2007 survey respondents requested this). To help cement this shift, the January 2009 issue (issue 4.4) had a technology theme, with the specific intent of highlighting levy-funded R&D in technology and equipment.

A conference-themed issue of the magazine was also produced (issue 4.6). This issue was distributed three weeks earlier than usual (late-April 2009) to encourage growers to register for the 2009 Australian Vegetable Industry Conference, which was held in early-May.

Along with showcasing keynote speakers and the conference program, all R&D articles in issue 4.6 highlighted levy-funded projects that were included as part of the Innovation and R&D Showcase, which was held on 6 May.

While this issue raised awareness about the conference, it was also an example of industry sectors (researchers, growers and service providers) working together to communicate a consistent message.

## **R&D focus**

The integration of R&D projects continued to receive greater editorial coverage, with articles explaining how individual projects were connected. This helped 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 in each issue, providing growers with a clearer indication of current projects and how these projects aim to benefit levy payers on- and off-farm. Previewing recently-begun also increased coverage of levy benefits beyond the farm gate, as many projects that have findings or outcomes to report are production-based.

## **Industry issues**

Grower profiles remained popular (increasing five per cent to 76 per cent of most enjoyed sections, according to the reader survey). To build on this interest, grower profiles were used as a platform to explore industry issues and innovation, such as the effects of urban sprawl on horticulture production regions (“Not in my Backyard”, issue 4.3, November 2008), controlled traffic farming (“No more traffic jams”, issue 4.4, January 2009), selling direct to consumers (“100-mile gamble reaps rewards”, issue 4.5, March 2009), and the industry’s need for funding for marketing initiatives (“Bitter-sweet

business”, issue 4.6, May 2009).

*Vegetables Australia* is a fantastic vehicle for communicating at-times complex issues to the industry, such as the rapid increase in fertiliser prices. The cover story for issue 4.2 (“Dirt cheap returns on input investment”, September 2008) investigated the reasons behind the sudden and drastic rise in fertiliser prices, and input costs generally, to explain to growers why these increases had occurred, and what they could expect to see in the future.

Another feature was a round-up of the seven Foundation Projects conducted by the AVIDG, which clearly illustrated to growers that the industry is undertaking and delivering large-scale, industry-wide initiatives (“Pass the baton”, issue 4.1, July 2008).

### **Regular features**

Regular features such as researcher and extension officer profiles, ‘Eastern i’ (communicating outcomes and information about the Asian vegetable industry to growers nationally), state reports, news in brief, and the Economic Outlook all continued to be included.

Reader interest in the Economy Outlook section increased by nine per cent to 49 per cent, as many growers continued to rely on economist Ian James’s regular updates about economic issues and how these affect the industry (articles delivered as part of VG08040).

Recent minor use permits were also included in each issue, keeping growers current with available permits for crops. This information was also made available on the grower portal of the AUSVEG website.

### **Design and lay out**

After the redesign of *Vegetables Australia* was launched in November 2007, issues 19 to 25 retained this design template, tweaking where necessary to ensure that concepts and information were communicated as clearly as possible.

Text continued to be used as a design element, encouraging growers to read *Vegetables Australia*. Headings, subheads, precedes, pull-quotes, and pull-out panels were all used to greater advantage to create a point of difference for growers.

As 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 continued to have clear, readable formatting, and white space was used to further improve readability.

While the colour palette of *Vegetables Australia* was reduced to help cement a cohesive brand for the magazine (three colours were used each issue: blue, green and orange), a changing “feature colour” was introduced to create a point of difference, highlighting each issue’s lead story.

Where necessary, design broke from the standard template to give prominence to special features, such as the Australian Vegetable Industry Awards, or to signpost articles that appeared as part of themed editions (such as the technology-themed issue 4.4 and the conference-themed issue 4.6).

## Advertising

As a means of securing the long-term future of the publication, it was decided that *Vegetables Australia* 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*. At the commencement of year four of *Vegetables Australia*, Hyde Media was hired on a commission basis for advertising revenue. Previously, Hyde Media was employed as a contractor, receiving a set payment each month.

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
- Bayer CropScience
- Dow Agrosiences
- ASP
- Elders
- Lefroy Valley
- Case IH Agriculture
- National Harvest Labour Information Service
- Chemtura
- Landmark
- Green AIR
- AAMO
- Syngenta
- South Pacific Seeds
- Withcott Seedlings
- Bejo Seeds
- Nelson Australia
- Vin Rowe
- Claus Vegetable Seeds
- Ultimate Agri-Products

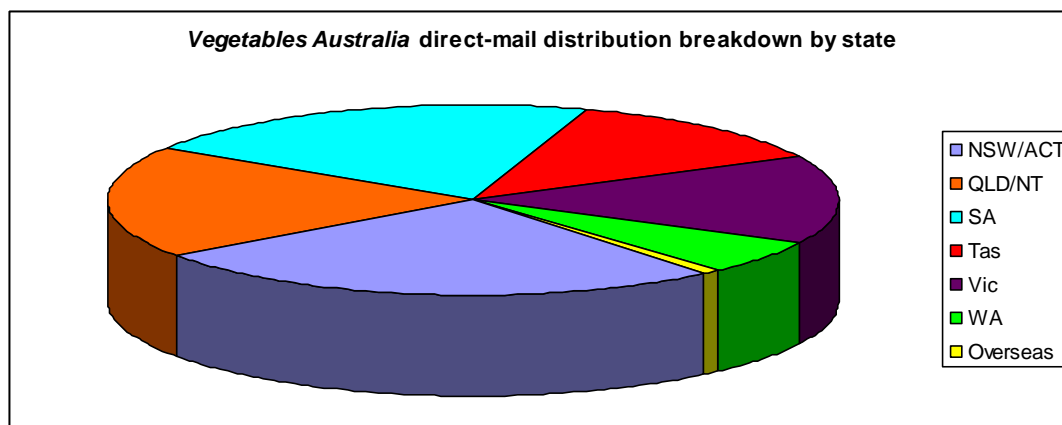
While it is anticipated that advertising revenue will demonstrate modest growth over time, it is important to recognise that agricultural advertising is seasonal, and fluctuations in advertising revenue are common. This would make it unrealistic to expect complete cost recovery for the production of 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 5,705 recipients (as at July 2009), which is broken down state-by-state as follows:

	NSW/ACT	QLD/NT	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Overseas	Total
Total recipients	1480	1081	1200	702	863	328	51	5,705
Percentage	25.9%	18.9%	21.1%	12.3%	15.2%	5.7%	0.9%	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.

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 (1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009).

Item description	Amount* (\$)
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salary and wages (including annual leave provision, superannuation, and other related expenses)	59,742.18
Overheads (including administration, accounting, cleaning, phone, internet, computer, electricity, lease, web hosting, storage, insurance, and other related expenses)	24,599.49
Management/Governance fee	9,319.13
Design	43,420.00
Advertising rate card	380.00
Print magazines	58,590.50
Readership survey	1,850.00
Flysheet Printing	649.00
Postage – magazine distribution	45,797.29
Journalists	11,630.03
Photography	2,507.46
Printing, stationery, photocopying, journals & publications, and postage	3995.72
Professional development	719.00
Total expenses	263,199.80
<b>Income</b>	
Total income to date (Includes advertising revenue of \$57,793.97) <i>Please note that outstanding milestone payments totaling \$89,339.80 are included in this income</i>	272,381.04
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2009</b>	<b>9,181.24</b>

\* Please note that the expenditure is only representative of six issues of the magazine.

# 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 4.2 of the magazine in September 2008. (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.

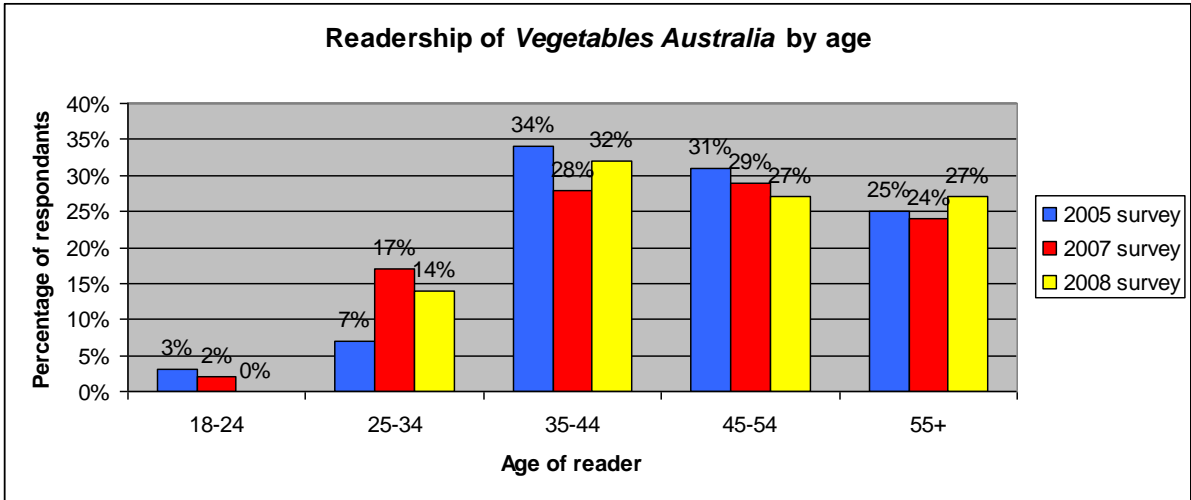
Where possible, the results of the 2008 survey have been compared with results from similar surveys conducted in 2005 and 2007.

## Key Survey Results

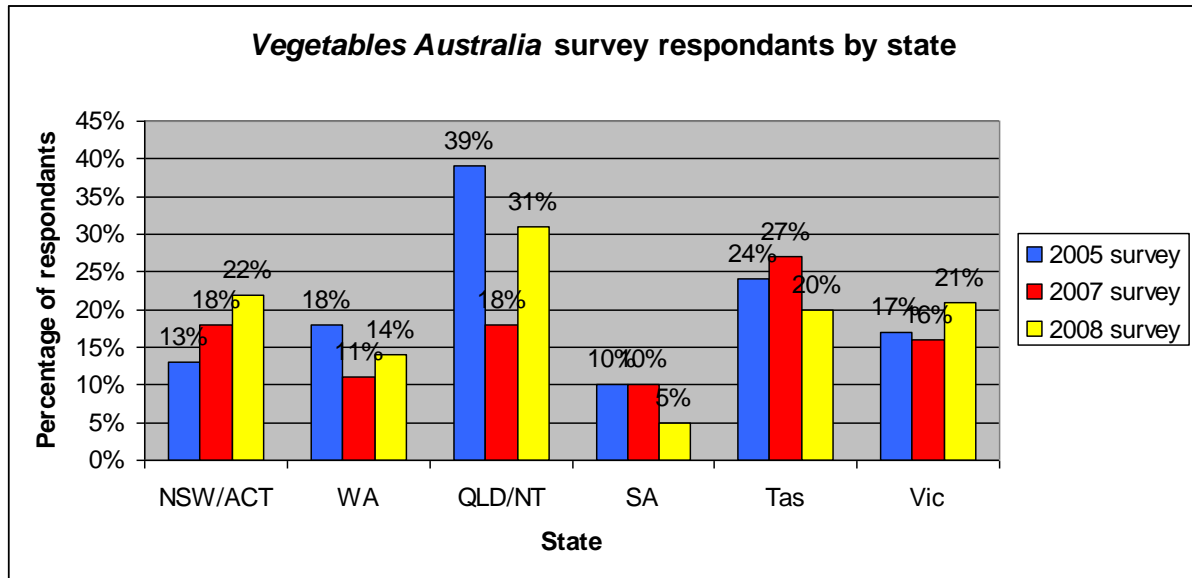
Response rate:

- 135 responses
- 79% growers
- 21% other (including researchers, advertisers, industry representatives)
- Overall response rate approximately 2.4% of total distribution list.

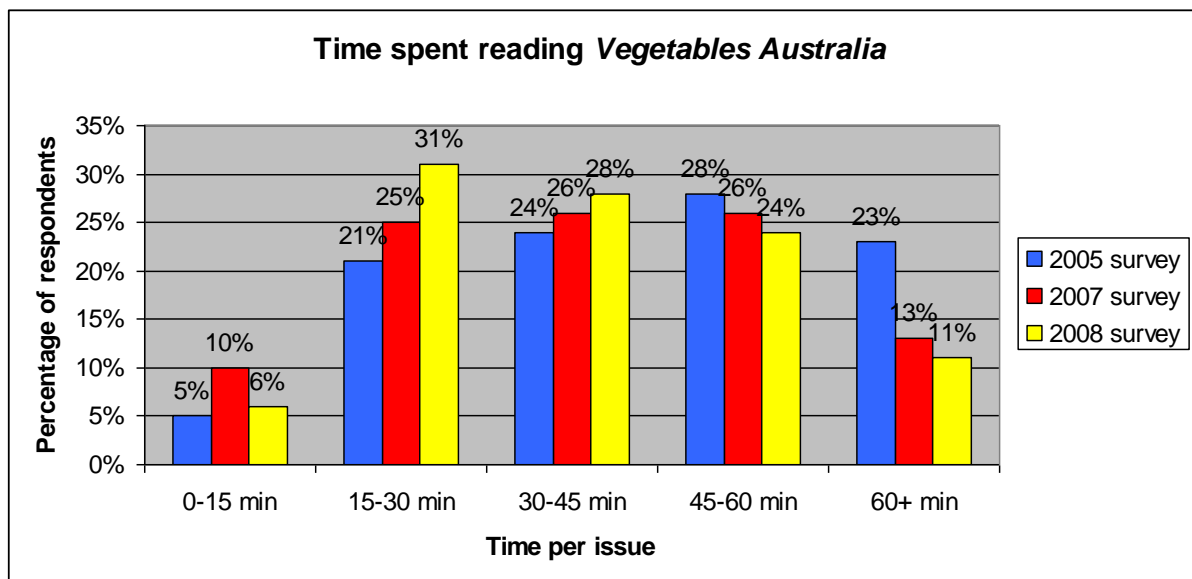
## Age of readers



## Location of readers



## Time spent reading each issue



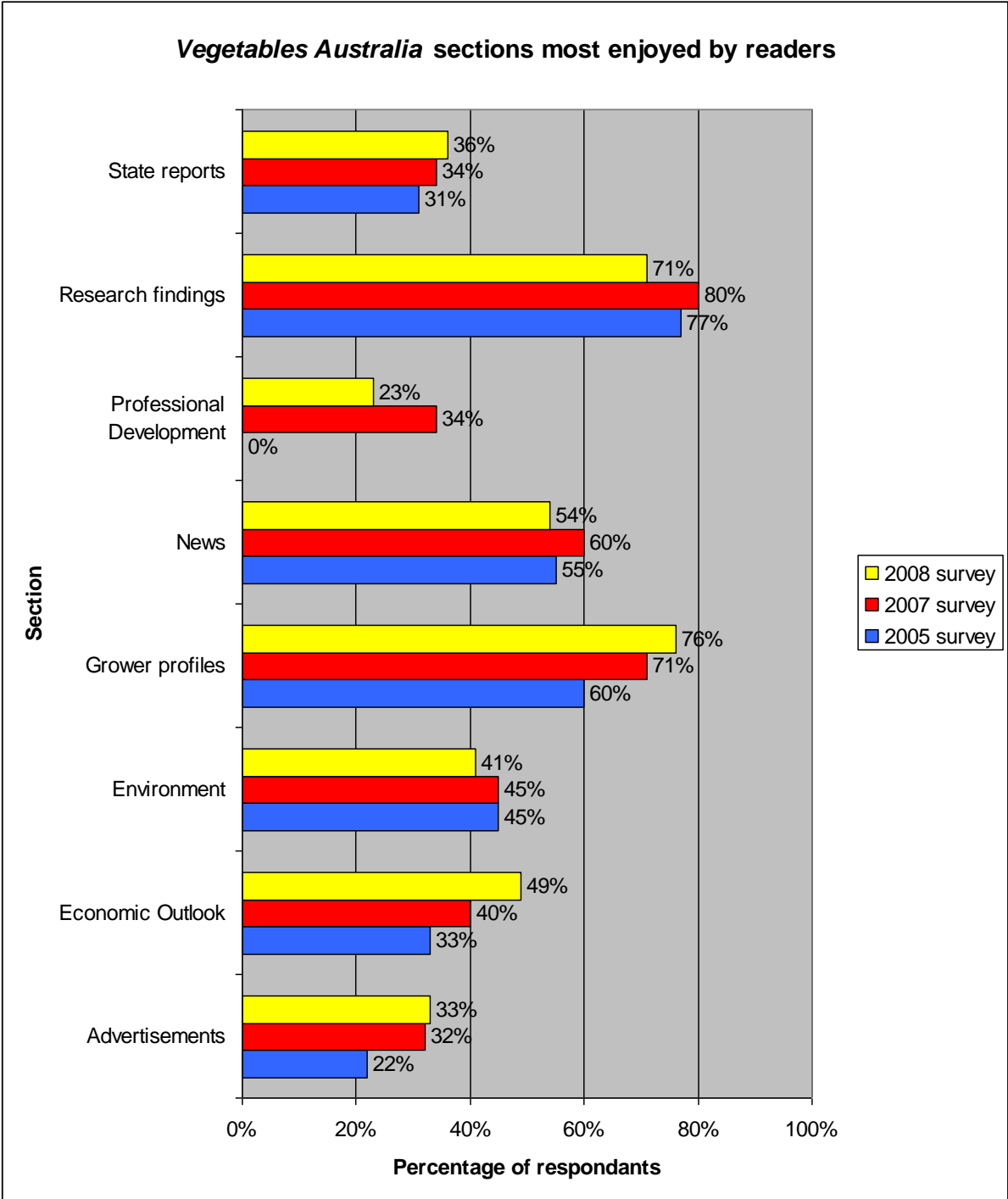
## How many people reader each copy of *Vegetables Australia*?

Average number of readers per issue = 2.2 people

Extrapolated across entire mailout = 2.2 x 5,700

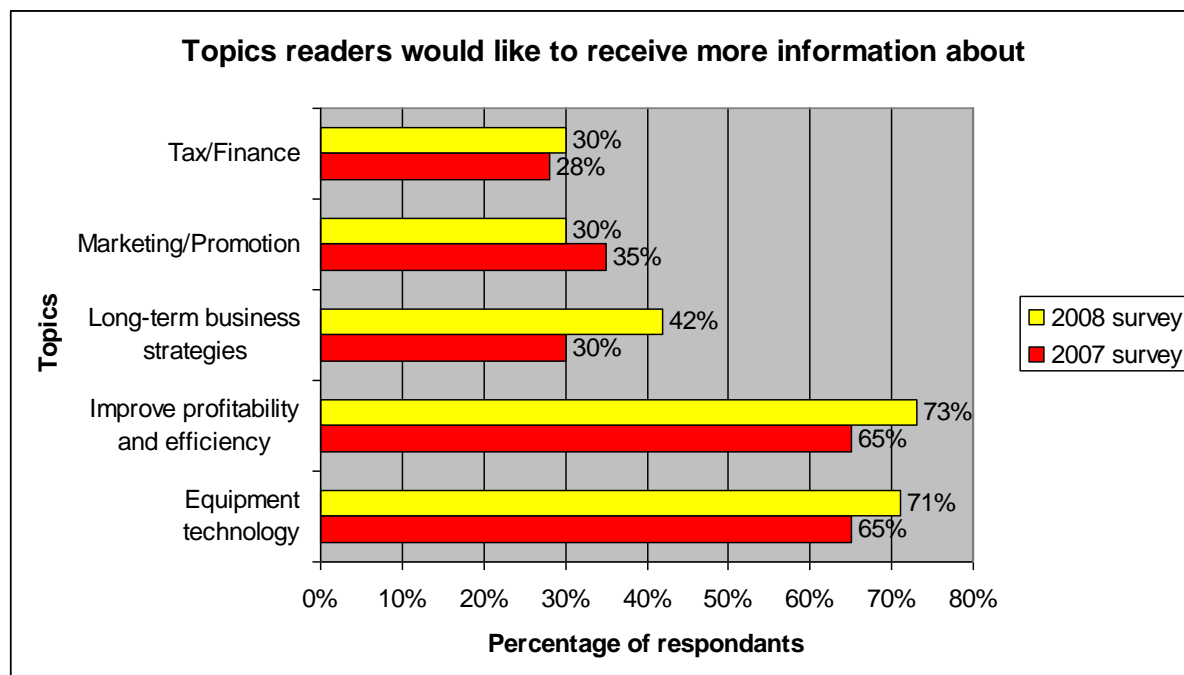
= 12,540 people per issue

**Identify segments you most enjoy reading**



## Requested topics

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



Seventy-nine per cent of respondents wanted more information about how the National Vegetable Levy benefits them beyond the farm-gate. This is an increase of 17 per cent from the 2007 survey.

## Website usage

Thirty-five per cent of respondents said they would read or download *Vegetables Australia* from the AUSVEG website. This is an increase of one per cent from the 2007 survey.

## Magazine funding

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents were aware that the magazine is partially funded through the National Vegetable Levy.

## Grower comments

“Great magazine. I love farming & everything is interesting to me.”

“I always find the magazine very interesting and enjoy reading it.”

“Keep up the good work.”

“Good magazine with informative articles.”

“Very interesting reading. Comprehensive and very informative!”

“Interesting and well researched magazine, thank you.”

“Keep up the good work as it allows me to keep in touch with industry.”

“As farmers we need to keep up with innovative ideas and what is going on outside the farm. Farmers can get so busy they can’t see much in front of them. Trying to keep the wolf from the front gate is not easy!”

“Very informative magazine, some good articles.”

“*Vegetables Australia* is very informative...keep up the great work!”

“Some articles could be duplicated and shown to the general public.”

## Comments from other readers

“Keep up the good work.”

“A good read!”

## 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 grower's 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**  
Seventy-nine per cent of readers want to learn more about levy benefits beyond the farm gate. As industry plan VegVision 2020 is implemented, and levy-funded projects align with the five strategic imperatives of the plan, *Vegetables Australia* will continue 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.
- **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 *Vegetables Australia* continues to be mailed to growers and industry representatives nationally
- That *Vegetables Australia* continues to be supported through the National Vegetable Levy as an industry publication, supported by supplementary income derived from advertising
- That *Vegetables Australia* continues to align its editorial with industry plan VegVision 2020 and the R&D projects that are funded as this industry works towards achieving the aims of VegVision 2020. Also, the popular grower profiles should continue to be used as a platform to discuss issues that affect many within the industry, and highlight innovation.



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David Chung, NSW grower  
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Toni Davies, Communications Manager, AUSVEG  
Jim Thomson, Editor, AUSVEG

## State Associations:

Vegetable Growers Association Victoria  
vegetablesWA  
Virginia Horticulture Centre  
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  
David Ellement, WA (Past IDO)  
Georgia Thomas, WA  
Roger Orr, Tasmania  
Melissa Fraser, SA  
Craig Murdoch, Victoria (Past IDO)  
Katie Fisher, Victoria

# Appendix 1—Reader survey






**Vegetables Australia Reader Survey**  
Issue 4.2 Sep/Oct 2008

**WIN a \$500 Nufarm Gift Voucher or one of two Nufarm spraywisedecisions annual memberships (valued at \$132 each)!**

Return this survey to AUSVEG before **Friday 10 October** to go in the draw to win a \$500 Nufarm Gift Voucher (1st prize) or one of two Nufarm spraywisedecisions annual memberships. Vegetables Australia thanks Nufarm for its support. To be eligible, you must fill in your details below and return your survey in the supplied reply-paid envelope by the due date.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- Are you a:
  - Grower
  - Researcher
  - Advertiser
  - Industry representative
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Age group:
  - 18 – 24
  - 25 – 34
  - 35 – 44
  - 45 – 54
  - 55+
- What crops do you grow?
 

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_
- Which state or territory do you live in?
  - New South Wales
  - Northern Territory
  - Victoria
  - Queensland
  - South Australia
  - Western Australia
  - Tasmania
- How much time do you spend reading *Vegetables Australia*?
  - 0 – 15 minutes
  - 15 – 30 minutes
  - 30 – 45 minutes
  - 45 – 60 minutes
  - More than 60 minutes
- On average, how many people read your copy of *Vegetables Australia*?
 

\_\_\_\_\_
- Which stories do you most enjoy reading?
  - Grower profiles
  - State reports
  - News
  - R&D articles
  - Advertisements
  - Economic outlook
  - Environmental articles
  - Opportunities for professional development
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*continued over the page*



8. What topics would you like to receive more information about?

- Ways to improve profitability and efficiency  
 Equipment/technology     Marketing/promotion  
 Tax/finance                 Long-term business strategies

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Have you used content/ideas sourced from *Vegetables Australia* in your work practices? If so, please describe.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

- Yes     No

12. Would you like more information about a marketing levy for the vegetable industry?

- Yes     No

13. Would you read or download *Vegetables Australia* from the AUSVEG website?

- Yes     No

14. Are you a registered user of the grower portal on the AUSVEG website?

- Yes     No

15. If not, would you like to be registered? (Registration is free)

- Yes     No

16. Are you a member of a state-based organisation? If so, which one?

\_\_\_\_\_

17. What kind of advertising interests you?

- Farm machinery             Seed products     Finance services  
 Crop protection products     Irrigation products  
 Packaging products         Farm management products

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Are you aware that *Vegetables Australia* magazine is partially funded through the National Vegetable Levy?

- Yes     No

19. Do you have any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time.

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

