

**Facilitating the
communication and
development of the
Vegetable Industry in
NSW**

Alison Anderson
NSW Farmers Association

Project Number: VG99053

VG99053

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.

ISBN 0 7341 1595 4

Published and distributed by:

Horticultural Australia Ltd

Level 1

50 Carrington Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone: (02) 8295 2300

Fax: (02) 8295 2399

E-Mail: horticulture@horticulture.com.au

© Copyright 2007



Know-how for Horticulture™

Facilitating the Communication and Development of the Vegetable Industry in NSW

Growing
the Business
of Farming

NSW
Farmers
ASSOCIATION

Project Number: VG99053

Milestone No. 19

AUSVEG



Alison Anderson
NSW Vegetable Industry Development Officer



Milestone Description: 8 month work plan to 28 Feb 2008 with key performance criteria. Past 6 months activities and outcomes reviewed.

Payment: \$20,000

The Management Committee of VG99053 will be attending the Industry Development Review meeting to be held in Sydney on the 20th August, 2007. They keenly await the outcomes of this review and of the IAC meeting in September 2007.

A new contract was recently signed for the 8 month extension of VG99053.

Activities & Events Attended (January – June 2007)

1. NSW VegeLink newsletter

The autumn 07 NSW VegeLink newsletter was sent to the NSW vegetable industry and some interstate industry people. Distribution is approximately 1300. Topics featured in the autumn edition included the soil ute guide, upcoming conferences and workshops, minor use update, Australian vegetable industry strategic plan, Sydney field vegetable good agricultural practice demonstration block, Horticulture Code of Conduct and SSAN fertilisers project.

2. Chemical use in the NSW hydroponic lettuce industry

The Sydney Basin hydroponic lettuce growers have become very concerned about their image earlier this year when NSW DPI released some concerning results from their chemical residue surveys. The hydroponic lettuce grower who attended the NSW DPI chemical residues meeting at Sydney Markets on the 9th February decided it was best for the hydroponic lettuce industry to be proactive and to meet as a group to be advised about the surveys and agree on how they could address chemical issues.

The first Sydney hydroponic lettuce growers meeting was held at Richmond on the 23rd February. The majority of Sydney hydroponic lettuce growers attended. The meeting was chaired by a grower and NSW DPI provided several speakers. I was able to talk to the group about a proposed hydroponic lettuce IPM project and gain feedback from the growers. This project was later approved at the National Vegetable R&D meeting on the 6th March. Luke Jewell and Frances Vella (NSWFA) also provided valuable input into the meeting and growers agreed that they should form a branch of NSWFA so they would be better advised about important issues and because they felt they could work together more constructively if they formalised their group.

A follow-up meeting was organised by the growers and NSWFA for the 19th June. We were able to get Peter Dal Santo (AgAware Consulting) to speak with the growers about chemical use in hydroponics at the meeting. Following the meeting Peter provided me with extra information for the growers and he has also gained approval from HAL and AUSVEG to compile a list of permitted chemicals in hydroponics for several crops as a result of requests from NSW growers.

3. Soil UTE guide for vegetable growers

Following on from the distribution of the soil management ute guide in January 2007 the soil project team (Project Leader is Helena Whitman, AUSVEG) planned and held the first 3 'Soil Awareness Days'. These field days introduced growers to using the ute guide in the field and introduced them to basic soil concepts. The first field days were held in Victoria (Werribee), NSW (Dareton) and SA (Northern Adelaide Plains). Additionally the ute guide was launched by Minister Peter McGauran at the Werribee Vegetable Expo. Feedback from growers and industry people about the ute guide has been very positive.

The Management Committee has agreed for me to work on this Land & Water Australia funded and AUSVEG managed project as it is an important development project for the Australian vegetable industry.

4. NSW Vegetable Industry Database

In the last few months an update of the NSW vegetable industry database has been done, in particular of the Cambodian and Chinese speaking growers in the Sydney region. Following two field days at which I spoke, growers asked for their names to be added to the database or for their details to be checked. The NSW database now has approximately 1050 growers and approximately 300 industry people based in NSW. The database continues to be updated.

5. Contributions to GF&V

I have continued to provide articles for each edition of *Good Fruit & Vegetables* magazine. However with the new editor and format for the magazine the IDOs have recently been advised that there will no longer be a regular vegetable R&D section.

6. Mail out of Industry Information

Targeted mailouts to growers who have let me know what crops they grow have continued (e.g. Brassica IPM newsletter and the new VegPASH newsletter). An email update of minor use permits also goes to those who have requested it (mainly extension staff, consultants and rural suppliers who give chemical advice to vegetable growers).

7. *Other Events/Activities*

Other events attended and activities included:

- Meeting with Richard de Vos, Sydney (31st January).
- Submitted nominations for the AUSVEG Awards (February/March).
- Assisted growers to apply for positions on the new R&D advisory groups (February/March).
- IPM pathology gap analysis workshop, Richmond (6th February). I was responsible for organising the NSW meeting.
- NSW DPI chemical residues meeting with growers and industry representatives, Sydney (9th February). This meeting reported on the findings of the NSW DPI residue survey and asked industry how issues could be addressed.
- Sydney Markets tour for Sumitomo staff (14th February).
- NSW vegetable R&D meeting, Bathurst (26th February).
- AUSVEG/HAL/IDO meeting, Sydney (5th March).
- National Vegetable R&D meeting, Sydney (6th March).
- NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee meeting, Sydney (12th March).
- Greenhouse modification workshop (12th March).
- Greenhouse Better Management Practices Workshop (14th March).
- Soil Ute Guide project meeting, Adelaide (19th – 21st March).
- NSW DPI vegetable compost field day, Camden (27th March).
- NSW DPI Sydney field vegetable good agricultural practices demonstration block information day, Richmond (29th March).
- Zucchini virus management field day, Freemans Reach (3rd April).
- ACCC/NSWFA Code of Conduct meeting, Richmond (4th April).
- Meeting with Levies Revenue Unit at Sydney Markets, Sydney (17th April). I meet with officers at the LRU approximately every 6 months to let them know about vegetable R&D activities and to get feedback from them about their dealings with vegetable growers.
- Werribee vegetable field days and the launch of the Soil Ute Guide for Vegetable Growers by Minister McGauran, Werribee (2nd – 4th May).
- AVIDG workshop, Sydney (8th May). I was involved in invitations and giving the consultants industry contacts.
- Meeting with Luke Jewell (NSWFA) and Lucy Keatinge (HAL), Sydney (11th May).
- Soil Awareness Days for vegetable growers in Werribee, Dareton and Adelaide (13th – 18th May).
- Lettuce training day, Cowra (24th May). Involved in invitations.
- Cambodian growers field day, Cecil Park (25th May) – I spoke about the R&D program and the information growers could receive if they were on the IDO database.
- RIRDC Asian Foods Program R&D meeting, Sydney (29th May).
- Vegetable Industry Conference, Sydney (30th May – 1st June). Chair of some R&D sessions. On the last day of the conference I led a tour group to Sydney Markets, a local hydroponic lettuce farm and the Gosford Horticultural Institute).
- Vegetable R&D Working Groups meeting, Sydney (13th June) and associated teleconferences following the meeting (IPM, soil health).

Work Plan (July 2007 – February 2008)

Key performance criteria:

- Successful Brassica IPM workshops, with good attendance and grower involvement.
- Reports for the Vegetable R&D Environmental Working Group from the TQA EMS Conference and the joint Fertiliser Application Technology Workshop and Australasian Precision Agriculture Symposium.
- Attendance and input into key grower workshops (e.g. lettuce training day, LVHN annual meeting).
- Organisation of a hydroponic workshop for the Australian Chinese Growers Association of NSW.
- Completion of Land & Water Australia funded and AUSVEG managed soil awareness days.
- Completion of VG99053 final report.

Four Brassica IPM workshops will be held in NSW in July (23rd – 25th) with the Brassica DBM team from SARDI. Workshops will be held in Bathurst, Leppington (with Chinese translation), Camden and Richmond. The Brassica IPM workshops in previous years have been well-received by the growers and it is hoped that these growers that have attended previously will return for the final workshops of this project.

The Management Committee has approved my attendance at two conferences that are relevant to the National Vegetable R&D Environmental Working Group (of which I am part of). It is essential that the Working Groups have up-to-date information about research and development nationally and internationally in their relevant areas so that they can make sound investment decisions. They have asked that I write a report for the Working Group on the outcomes of the two conferences – the TQA EMS Conference (6th – 9th August, Hobart) and the joint Fertiliser Application Technology Workshop and the Australasian Precision Agriculture Symposium (13th & 14th September, Wellington, NZ).

The Chinese growers in Sydney are becoming increasingly interested in growing Asian leafy brassicas hydroponically. They have asked me to organise a hydroponics workshop for them.

Before the end of September three more soil awareness days need to run as part of the Land & Water Australia funded and AUSVEG managed soil project. Additionally a DVD is to be developed to support the use of the soil ute guide (particularly by those growers who are unable to attend a soil awareness day). This DVD is to be filmed before, during and after the soil awareness day in Sydney. I will be involved in filming and in writing the script for the DVD.

The final report for VG99053 will be written in January/February 2008.

Other planned activities include:

- HAL Soil Health Group Teleconference (11th July). It has been decided that this group, lead by Alison Turnbull (HAL) will have a teleconference every 2nd week.
- Waste Management Association Compost Meeting, Sydney (18th July). A summary to be given to the Soil Health Group.
- TQA EMS and QA conference, Hobart (6th August – 9th August). I will be assisting in the running of the Salinity Workshop.
- Industry Development Review meeting, Sydney (20th August). I am organising the venue and invites.
- LVHN annual meeting, Cowra (22nd August). I will be speaking about the vegetable R&D program. Helena Whitman (AUSVEG) will be jointing me at the meeting to talk about the Enviroveg program.
- Lettuce training day, Sydney (31st August). I am involved in invitations.
- National Vegetable R&D meeting (19th September).
- Production of 'VEGELink' newsletter.
- Continue targeted mailouts to growers.
- Continue updating database.

Alison Anderson
NSW Vegetable Industry Development Officer
PO Box 1, Sydney Markets, NSW, 2129
Phone: (02) 9746 1865
Fax: (02) 9746 2971
Mobile: 0409 383 003
Email: alison.anderson@bigpond.com

Facilitating the Communication and Development of the Vegetable Industry in NSW



Project Number: VG99053
Milestone No. 19



Alison Anderson
NSW Vegetable Industry Development Officer



Milestone Description: 8 month work plan to 28 Feb 2008 with key performance criteria. Past 6 months activities and outcomes reviewed.

Payment: \$20,000

The Management Committee of VG99053 will be attending the Industry Development Review meeting to be held in Sydney on the 20th August, 2007. They keenly await the outcomes of this review and of the IAC meeting in September 2007.

A new contract was recently signed for the 8 month extension of VG99053.

Activities & Events Attended (January – June 2007)

1. NSW VegeLink newsletter

The autumn 07 NSW VegeLink newsletter was sent to the NSW vegetable industry and some interstate industry people. Distribution is approximately 1300. Topics featured in the autumn edition included the soil ute guide, upcoming conferences and workshops, minor use update, Australian vegetable industry strategic plan, Sydney field vegetable good agricultural practice demonstration block, Horticulture Code of Conduct and SSAN fertilisers project.

2. Chemical use in the NSW hydroponic lettuce industry

The Sydney Basin hydroponic lettuce growers have become very concerned about their image earlier this year when NSW DPI released some concerning results from their chemical residue surveys. The hydroponic lettuce grower who attended the NSW DPI chemical residues meeting at Sydney Markets on the 9th February decided it was best for the hydroponic lettuce industry to be proactive and to meet as a group to be advised about the surveys and agree on how they could address chemical issues.

The first Sydney hydroponic lettuce growers meeting was held at Richmond on the 23rd February. The majority of Sydney hydroponic lettuce growers attended. The meeting was chaired by a grower and NSW DPI provided several speakers. I was able to talk to the group about a proposed hydroponic lettuce IPM project and gain feedback from the growers. This project was later approved at the National Vegetable R&D meeting on the 6th March. Luke Jewell and Frances Vella (NSWFA) also provided valuable input into the meeting and growers agreed that they should form a branch of NSWFA so they would be better advised about important issues and because they felt they could work together more constructively if they formalised their group.

A follow-up meeting was organised by the growers and NSWFA for the 19th June. We were able to get Peter Dal Santo (AgAware Consulting) to speak with the growers about chemical use in hydroponics at the meeting. Following the meeting Peter provided me with extra information for the growers and he has also gained approval from HAL and AUSVEG to compile a list of permitted chemicals in hydroponics for several crops as a result of requests from NSW growers.

3. Soil UTE guide for vegetable growers

Following on from the distribution of the soil management ute guide in January 2007 the soil project team (Project Leader is Helena Whitman, AUSVEG) planned and held the first 3 'Soil Awareness Days'. These field days introduced growers to using the ute guide in the field and introduced them to basic soil concepts. The first field days were held in Victoria (Werribee), NSW (Dareton) and SA (Northern Adelaide Plains). Additionally the ute guide was launched by Minister Peter McGauran at the Werribee Vegetable Expo. Feedback from growers and industry people about the ute guide has been very positive.

The Management Committee has agreed for me to work on this Land & Water Australia funded and AUSVEG managed project as it is an important development project for the Australian vegetable industry.

4. NSW Vegetable Industry Database

In the last few months an update of the NSW vegetable industry database has been done, in particular of the Cambodian and Chinese speaking growers in the Sydney region. Following two field days at which I spoke, growers asked for their names to be added to the database or for their details to be checked. The NSW database now has approximately 1050 growers and approximately 300 industry people based in NSW. The database continues to be updated.

5. Contributions to GF&V

I have continued to provide articles for each edition of *Good Fruit & Vegetables* magazine. However with the new editor and format for the magazine the IDOs have recently been advised that there will no longer be a regular vegetable R&D section.

6. Mail out of Industry Information

Targeted mailouts to growers who have let me know what crops they grow have continued (e.g. Brassica IPM newsletter and the new VegPASH newsletter). An email update of minor use permits also goes to those who have requested it (mainly extension staff, consultants and rural suppliers who give chemical advice to vegetable growers).

7. *Other Events/Activities*

Other events attended and activities included:

- Meeting with Richard de Vos, Sydney (31st January).
- Submitted nominations for the AUSVEG Awards (February/March).
- Assisted growers to apply for positions on the new R&D advisory groups (February/March).
- IPM pathology gap analysis workshop, Richmond (6th February). I was responsible for organising the NSW meeting.
- NSW DPI chemical residues meeting with growers and industry representatives, Sydney (9th February). This meeting reported on the findings of the NSW DPI residue survey and asked industry how issues could be addressed.
- Sydney Markets tour for Sumitomo staff (14th February).
- NSW vegetable R&D meeting, Bathurst (26th February).
- AUSVEG/HAL/IDO meeting, Sydney (5th March).
- National Vegetable R&D meeting, Sydney (6th March).
- NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee meeting, Sydney (12th March).
- Greenhouse modification workshop (12th March).
- Greenhouse Better Management Practices Workshop (14th March).
- Soil Ute Guide project meeting, Adelaide (19th – 21st March).
- NSW DPI vegetable compost field day, Camden (27th March).
- NSW DPI Sydney field vegetable good agricultural practices demonstration block information day, Richmond (29th March).
- Zucchini virus management field day, Freemans Reach (3rd April).
- ACCC/NSWFA Code of Conduct meeting, Richmond (4th April).
- Meeting with Levies Revenue Unit at Sydney Markets, Sydney (17th April). I meet with officers at the LRU approximately every 6 months to let them know about vegetable R&D activities and to get feedback from them about their dealings with vegetable growers.
- Werribee vegetable field days and the launch of the Soil Ute Guide for Vegetable Growers by Minister McGauran, Werribee (2nd – 4th May).
- AVIDG workshop, Sydney (8th May). I was involved in invitations and giving the consultants industry contacts.
- Meeting with Luke Jewell (NSWFA) and Lucy Keatinge (HAL), Sydney (11th May).
- Soil Awareness Days for vegetable growers in Werribee, Dareton and Adelaide (13th – 18th May).
- Lettuce training day, Cowra (24th May). Involved in invitations.
- Cambodian growers field day, Cecil Park (25th May) – I spoke about the R&D program and the information growers could receive if they were on the IDO database.
- RIRDC Asian Foods Program R&D meeting, Sydney (29th May).
- Vegetable Industry Conference, Sydney (30th May – 1st June). Chair of some R&D sessions. On the last day of the conference I led a tour group to Sydney Markets, a local hydroponic lettuce farm and the Gosford Horticultural Institute).
- Vegetable R&D Working Groups meeting, Sydney (13th June) and associated teleconferences following the meeting (IPM, soil health).

Work Plan (July 2007 – February 2008)

Key performance criteria:

- Successful Brassica IPM workshops, with good attendance and grower involvement.
- Reports for the Vegetable R&D Environmental Working Group from the TQA EMS Conference and the joint Fertiliser Application Technology Workshop and Australasian Precision Agriculture Symposium.
- Attendance and input into key grower workshops (e.g. lettuce training day, LVHN annual meeting).
- Organisation of a hydroponic workshop for the Australian Chinese Growers Association of NSW.
- Completion of Land & Water Australia funded and AUSVEG managed soil awareness days.
- Completion of VG99053 final report.

Four Brassica IPM workshops will be held in NSW in July (23rd – 25th) with the Brassica DBM team from SARDI. Workshops will be held in Bathurst, Leppington (with Chinese translation), Camden and Richmond. The Brassica IPM workshops in previous years have been well-received by the growers and it is hoped that these growers that have attended previously will return for the final workshops of this project.

The Management Committee has approved my attendance at two conferences that are relevant to the National Vegetable R&D Environmental Working Group (of which I am part of). It is essential that the Working Groups have up-to-date information about research and development nationally and internationally in their relevant areas so that they can make sound investment decisions. They have asked that I write a report for the Working Group on the outcomes of the two conferences – the TQA EMS Conference (6th – 9th August, Hobart) and the joint Fertiliser Application Technology Workshop and the Australasian Precision Agriculture Symposium (13th & 14th September, Wellington, NZ).

The Chinese growers in Sydney are becoming increasingly interested in growing Asian leafy brassicas hydroponically. They have asked me to organise a hydroponics workshop for them.

Before the end of September three more soil awareness days need to run as part of the Land & Water Australia funded and AUSVEG managed soil project. Additionally a DVD is to be developed to support the use of the soil ute guide (particularly by those growers who are unable to attend a soil awareness day). This DVD is to be filmed before, during and after the soil awareness day in Sydney. I will be involved in filming and in writing the script for the DVD.

The final report for VG99053 will be written in January/February 2008.

Other planned activities include:

- HAL Soil Health Group Teleconference (11th July). It has been decided that this group, lead by Alison Turnbull (HAL) will have a teleconference every 2nd week.
- Waste Management Association Compost Meeting, Sydney (18th July). A summary to be given to the Soil Health Group.
- TQA EMS and QA conference, Hobart (6th August – 9th August). I will be assisting in the running of the Salinity Workshop.
- Industry Development Review meeting, Sydney (20th August). I am organising the venue and invites.
- LVHN annual meeting, Cowra (22nd August). I will be speaking about the vegetable R&D program. Helena Whitman (AUSVEG) will be jointing me at the meeting to talk about the Enviroveg program.
- Lettuce training day, Sydney (31st August). I am involved in invitations.
- National Vegetable R&D meeting (19th September).
- Production of 'VEGELink' newsletter.
- Continue targeted mailouts to growers.
- Continue updating database.

Alison Anderson
NSW Vegetable Industry Development Officer
PO Box 1, Sydney Markets, NSW, 2129
Phone: (02) 9746 1865
Fax: (02) 9746 2971
Mobile: 0409 383 003
Email: alison.anderson@bigpond.com