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July/August 2015

Nicolas Trandos

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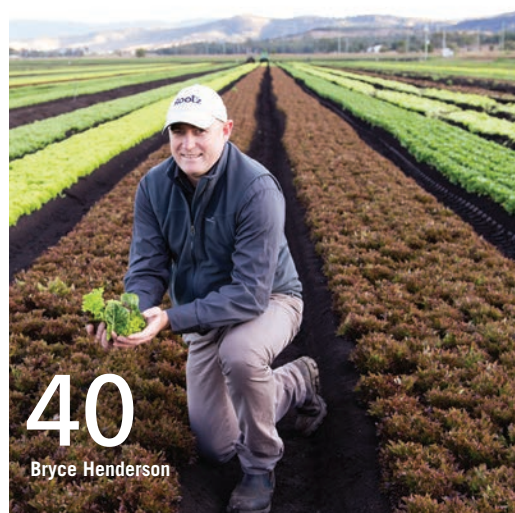
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AUSVEG Chairman and CEO messages



Geoff Moar

AUSVEG Chairman

The National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence is always a highlight on the AUSVEG calendar, and I was pleased to see that this year's collaboration with Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) produced the most successful event to date. From 25-27 June the Convention attracted a record number of more than 1,400 delegates to Jupiters Gold Coast, making the event a tremendous success by any measure. I would like to thank APAL, our Strategic Partners, delegates, exhibitors and speakers for their contribution to the overall success of the 2015 Convention.

A personal highlight for me was the National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner, which recognised the vegetable, potato, apple and pear industries' best and brightest members. I congratulate all of the AUSVEG and APAL award winners on their achievements, in particular two of my colleagues from New South Wales: Young Grower of the Year Erika Watson and fellow potato grower John Doyle, who received the highly prestigious Grower of the Year award. I would also like to extend my congratulations to industry stalwart Nicolas Trandos from Western Australia, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades of hard work in furthering the development of the Australian vegetable industry, as well as Richard Dickmann from Bayer CropScience, who received the coveted Industry Leader Award.

These award winners have not only shown dedication to their own businesses and the wider industry, but have also been at the forefront of innovation in various ways. Undoubtedly, innovation is a key part of continuing success in the vegetable and potato industries, and this was also addressed in a recent levy-funded event that showcased some of

the leading global technologies that Australian growers could introduce to their own businesses.

I was very impressed with the presentations at the Global Technologies in Horticulture Seminar, which discussed a range of emerging technologies for use in the Australian vegetable industry including aeroponics, non-lethal lasers that can deter birds and other pests, hyper-localised weather prediction systems and robotic machinery for use in vegetable greenhouses.

There was also an opportunity to learn about the leading innovation of three vegetable farms throughout South East Queensland during the Horticultural Field Day, which was the perfect bookend to the Convention. We enjoyed an informative tour of Qualipac and Windolf Farms and also witnessed the passion that Kalfresh has for improving the health of its soils and crops through the implementation of a Soil Wealth demonstration site on the property.

While it is imperative for growers to continue developing their own businesses, events such as the National Horticulture Convention highlight the importance of networking and talking to your colleagues in the industry, as this can open your eyes to the opportunities available to add a little bit of innovation to your businesses.

Geoff Moar
Chairman
AUSVEG



Richard Mulcahy

AUSVEG Chief Executive Officer

The biggest event in Australian agriculture has recently drawn to a close, with more than 1,400 delegates visiting the National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence over three days at Jupiters Gold Coast.

It was undoubtedly the most successful Convention that AUSVEG has ever hosted and was made possible through the valuable collaboration with our colleagues at Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL), which brought a new element of interest to the event overall. I would also like to congratulate our hard working marketing management team, Lauren Winterbottom and Nathan McIntyre, for their efforts in organising this event.

In addition to the engaging speaker sessions and Trade Show, which featured the highest number of booths in AUSVEG history, it was pleasing to see so many vegetable growers participate in two events that coincided with the Convention to maintain the industry's focus on developing export activities.

The 2015 Reverse Trade Mission hosted over 40 leading international buyers from Asia and the United Arab Emirates, opening up the opportunity for growers to directly build and establish key export contacts. The delegation toured vegetable farms in South Australia and Queensland before meeting with a range of growers at a Produce Display on the Gold Coast, where they had a chance to see and taste the high quality produce that Australian growers are renowned for.

More than 80 levy-paying vegetable growers also gained invaluable information and advice at the South East Asia Export Symposium, which featured a range of speakers who highlighted the main considerations that growers should take into account when exporting Australian

produce to countries that have been identified as potentially lucrative export markets.

In recent weeks AUSVEG has also kept an eye on matters close to home, launching the "Cool Change" campaign in the lead-up to the National Horticulture Convention. In June, we embarked on a Twitter and lobbying call for politicians and the Australian public to express their support for much-needed reform to our current Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) system.

To highlight the depth of confusion that results from the current misleading system, we interviewed everyday Australians to find out how important it was for them to know where their food comes from and their interpretation of current labels such as "Made in Australia". The individuals were extremely confused when informed that this phrase does not necessarily mean that products are genuinely from Australia and reinforced their strong, common desire to know the exact origin of their food.

While AUSVEG supports the work that the Federal Government is undertaking to enact reform, there is no question that now is the time to make strong, lasting improvements to the current CoOL system for the mutual benefit of Australia's primary producers and the general public.

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**FRONT COVER:**

Nicolas Trandos

Photograph by Chris Kershaw



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Harvest Farms

It was great for the team at *Vegetables Australia* to catch up with so many vegetable growers and industry members during the National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence, which was held at Jupiters Gold Coast from 25-27 June. A record-breaking 1,400 delegates attended the three-day event this year and, for those who missed out, you can find a wrap-up of the Convention highlights on page 9. The annual National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner also celebrated the achievements of outstanding members of the vegetable industry, with a full list of award winners detailed on page 12.

Two vegetable levy-funded events were also held on either side of the Convention, addressing major topics of interest to the industry. The Global Technologies in Horticulture Seminar on 25

June gave growers a unique insight into some of the leading technologies from around the world with untapped potential for use in the Australian vegetable industry (page 16), while the Exporting to South East Asia Seminar on 28 June provided key facts and practical advice on exporting Australian produce to this lucrative region (page 22).

The AUSVEG Export Development team was also busy during the Convention, facilitating over 40 international buyers who took part in the 2015 Reverse Trade Mission. It was encouraging to see so many local vegetable growers participating in the event, displaying their produce at the Convention and discussing potential business opportunities with the delegates. More information on the mission can be found on page 20.

Back on the farm, our Young grower profile for this edition focuses on Kane Busch from Victoria, who provides an overview of his organic vegetable growing operation in East Gippsland (page 18). Meanwhile, we speak to Lawrence Cowley at Harvest Farms about the challenges of setting up the vegetable growing operation in Richmond, Tasmania and the goals ahead for the company (page 32).

Also, our EnviroVeg grower profile for this edition is Bryce Henderson, who has successfully introduced a range of environmentally-friendly farming practices to his property in Queensland, which have ultimately allowed him to expand his business (page 40).

There is plenty in store for readers in the R&D sphere as well, with the latest instalment to the Veggie Stats series of commodities focusing on sweet corn production (page 27). The

key findings from an in-depth research project conducted by Euromonitor International on vegetable innovations in fresh and minimally processed vegetables across the globe is also outlined on page 34.

In a timely biosecurity update, red imported fire ants form the focus of this edition's Front Line column, which outlines some of the most useful methods that vegetable growers can use to detect and eradicate colonies as the pest continues its march from the Brisbane region (page 36).

Finally, readers can learn more about the key highlights from the 2015 USA Industry Leadership and Development Mission earlier in the year, which gave nine vegetable growers the chance to visit some of the most successful vegetable growing regions in California and Arizona, as well as the World Agriculture Expo. To find out the key points of interest to participants, turn to page 30.



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2015 Reverse Trade Mission

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Veggie bites

Facts & figures...

70%

Approximately 70 per cent of respondents to AUSVEG's inaugural Economic Confidence Survey gave a pessimistic ranking of farm costs such as freight, energy and labour.

5%

The proportion of people over the age of two in Queensland, the Northern Territory and the ACT who eat the recommended daily intake of vegetables, as reported in the *Australian Health Survey: Nutrition – State and Territory results, 2011-12*.

900g

The March 2015 Project Harvest report found the typical consumer purchases 900g of sweet corn, which is stable across previous waves of the study.

\$20 million

The amount allocated in the 2015 Federal Budget to extend the access to social and mental health services in drought-affected communities.

14%

The importance of vegetable provenance among consumers increased by up to 14 per cent in the February 2015 Project Harvest report directly following the recall of multiple brands of frozen mixed berries that were linked to an outbreak of hepatitis A.

91%

Prices of fruit and vegetables in emerging market countries rose by 91 per cent from 1990 to 2012, while the costs of ultra-processed, ready-to-eat meals dropped by up to 20 per cent in Brazil, China, South Korea and Mexico, according to a study from the UK's Overseas Development Institute.

17

According to the US Government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 17 of the 26 El Ninos since 1900 have resulted in widespread drought in Australia. This year, El Nino is expected to affect crops in eastern states of Australia.

5th

Turkey ranks fifth in the world for having close to 714 thousand hectares of greenhouse agricultural land, as reported by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Antalya Food, Agriculture and Livestock Directorate.

2015 National Horticulture Convention becomes biggest event in Australian ag

AUSVEG AND APPLE AND PEAR AUSTRALIA LIMITED (APAL) UNITED IN JUNE TO HOST THE 2015 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION, TRADE SHOW AND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE, WHERE MORE THAN 1,400 DELEGATES DESCENDED ON JUPITERS GOLD COAST FOR THREE ACTION-PACKED DAYS OF INNOVATION, INSIGHT AND NETWORKING.

THURSDAY 25 JUNE

You could sense the excitement in the air as a record number of delegates made their way to Jupiters Gold Coast for the 2015 National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence, incorporating AUSVEG and Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) in a first for the Australian horticulture industry.

The unique partnership presented an array of new opportunities to delve into broader areas of interest in Australian horticulture, allowing the nation's vegetable and potato growers to network with their apple and pear growing colleagues and discuss mutual areas of concern. This collaboration also cemented the 2015 Convention's place as the largest and most successful event in Australian agriculture to date.

On the first day of the Convention, APAL held its Annual General Meeting and

Speed Updating sessions, where a series of researchers presented key findings on apple and pear projects. As night fell, delegates gathered for the Welcome Reception, where AFL legend and Master of Ceremonies Peter Daicos marked the official opening of the 2015 Convention and Trade Show to the delight of many long-time Collingwood fans in the crowd. With more than 90 industry booths on show, there was certainly plenty of food for thought for visitors in the coming days.

FRIDAY 26 JUNE

On Friday morning, delegates were treated to a thought-provoking start to the day with a breakfast presentation from Rob de Castella, Director of the Indigenous Marathon Project. This initiative aims to promote healthy lifestyles to Indigenous communities by selecting a group of young men and women to compete in the New York City

Marathon with just six months of training.

Many delegates noted their newfound inspiration to go for a run along the beach and were keen to hear more from the first instalment of Convention speaker sessions. The opening address was presented by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited CEO John Lloyd, who called for greater unity among the horticulture industry

and highlighted the broad opportunities that exist through innovation.

Coles General Manager of Fresh Produce Brad Gorman also presented on strategic investment in the fresh food sector, noting that the quality of fresh food determines where a consumer wants to shop. His presentation was followed by some helpful advice on workplace issues

United States Potato Board President and CEO Blair Richardson.



Photography by Andrew Beveridge.



The 2015 Trade Show and Produce Display.



Attendees at the DuPont Mexican Fiesta.

facing horticulture growers from National Workplace Lawyers Special Counsel Tass Angelopoulos, who stressed that every business must have the processes, policy and training in place to deal with complaints.

Attracting younger generations into the horticulture and wider agriculture industries was also addressed by University of Queensland Dean of Agriculture Professor Neal Menzies. He gave a powerful example of how the mining industry works hard to market a happy, lucrative and successful industry to the public and reinforced that horticulture needs to sell its industry as a wonderful place to work, particularly as he believes it is entering a 'boom' period.

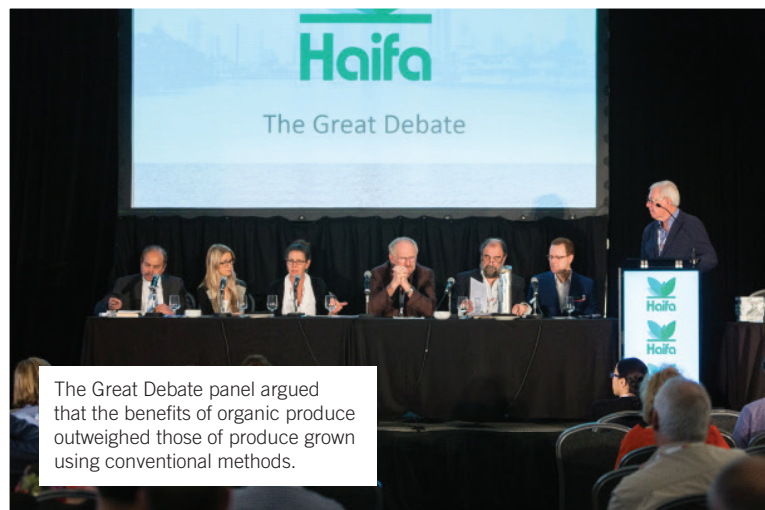
The keynote speaker for the 2015 Convention was Blair Richardson, President and CEO of the United States Potato Board, who gave an insightful presentation on marketing fresh produce to Millennials (Generation Y). He noted that growers need to ensure their produce remains relevant to this generation, whose habits and ideals are vastly different to older consumers.

Industry updates were also provided by Bureau of Meteorology Senior Research Scientist Dr Debbie Hudson,

who spoke about the latest developments in seasonal forecasting for horticulture, while Valagro Global Crop Manager Gianluca Di Tommaso presented on the future of biostimulants in the horticulture industry, which can help to increase plant productivity and provide value for growers.

On a more sombre note, Federal Assistant Minister for Health, Senator Fiona Nash, addressed the Ice epidemic gripping rural and regional Australia. Ms Nash said that arrests were not the answer, but rather reiterated the need for local communities to join a national strategy to tackle the issue head-on.

Friday's speaker sessions wrapped up with presentations from Western Australian researcher Dr Peter Batt, who discussed consumer preferences for quality, competitive prices and service when buying fresh produce. Bayer CropScience Managing Director Tobias Marchand also addressed partnerships in innovation and sustainability in Australian horticulture, noting the company's passion for mentoring youth and collaborating with the wider industry to move forward.



The Great Debate panel argued that the benefits of organic produce outweighed those of produce grown using conventional methods.

Meanwhile, a selection of export-ready Australian growers took hold of the opportunity to show off their high quality produce to more than 40 international buyers during the 2015 Reverse Trade Mission, with many developing new leads to export their produce to key markets in Asia and the United Arab Emirates.

After a busy day of speaker sessions and visits to the Trade Show, delegates had an opportunity to relax and have some fun by donning a sombrero for the DuPont Mexican Fiesta, where they networked with friends and colleagues to the entertaining soundtrack of a live Mariachi band.

SATURDAY 27 JUNE

Following breakfast, AUSVEG and APAL delegates broke off into two concurrent speaker sessions that targeted issues in their respective industries. AUSVEG delegates heard from Harris Farm Markets Co-CEO Tristan Harris, who compared the vegetable industry to a game of "floating poker", where players can float or sink but have an equal chance of getting rich, noting that a culture of innovation was necessary to deliver sustainable growth to the industry.

It was also a numbers game on Saturday morning as Equity Economics Director James Bond delivered an overview of



Federal Assistant Minister for Health Senator Fiona Nash.

potato grower Susie Daly led the celebration of women in the horticulture industry. Meanwhile, a group of young guns carved up the Gold Coast waves during the NextGen Hang Ten event.

A class act

As the 2015 Convention drew to a close, Jupiters Gold Coast was transported back to the sophistication of the 1920s for the National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner, where both AUSVEG and APAL celebrated the achievements of leading members of the vegetable, potato, apple and pear industries. Of the 14 AUSVEG awards presented, innovative New South Wales potato grower John Doyle was named Syngenta Grower of the Year in recognition of his involvement with numerous trial demonstrations on his farm and collaboration with the wider industry. Organic vegetable grower Erika Watson, also based in New South Wales, was crowned Young Grower of the Year in light of her excellent business acumen and high level of commitment to the wider industry.

The formalities ended with the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to vegetable grower Nicolas Trandos from Western Australia, who has dedicated his life to furthering the Australian industry. A profile on Mr Trandos and the full list of award winners can be found in the following articles.

Most importantly, AUSVEG would like to thank APAL for its partnership in hosting the 2015 Convention, as well as its Strategic Partners, delegates, speakers and exhibitors who attended for their support, without which the event would not have been such a success.

domestic and international drivers of growth and exports in the Australian vegetable industry. He forecasted a drop in the Australian dollar, which is welcome news for export-ready growers.

Syngenta APAC Head of Vegetables and Specialties Andreas Steiner also presented his view on Integrated Crop Management as the key to sustainable and profitable vegetable production, noting that water, land and increasing costs all pose challenges to vegetable growers. In welcome news for growers and agronomists alike, Adama Digital Innovation Manager Alex Mills launched Trapview®, a new product that uses photo recognition technology to detect, track and provide real time insights into insect populations.

The opportunities that the recent Free Trade Agreements present to Australian horticulture growers stimulated an interesting discussion from the Kalfresh panel of speakers,

comprising AUSVEG National Manager – Export Development Michael Coote, Export Council of Australia CEO Lisa McAuley, Montague Fresh National Sales and Procurement Manager Scott Montague and Citrus Australia Market Access Manager David Daniels.

This discussion was followed by an address from Dr Luis Teixeira from DuPont Product Support and Renewal for Insecticides, who noted the growth of illegal products in the market and the importance of the diamide class of insecticides. Independent Economics Director Chris Murphy also presented key facts and figures on the vegetable industry's link to the national economy.

Finally, conventional and organic growers alike packed the venue for the Great Debate, where one of horticulture's most pertinent issues was passionately addressed. Under the watch of Moderator and

National Press Club of Australia President Laurie Wilson, Swinburne University's Dr Antonio Lobo, Changing Habits nutritionist Sheridan Williamson and organic grower Katie Finlay from Mt Alexander Fruit Gardens argued that the benefits of organic produce outweighed those of produce grown using conventional methods. They were fiercely rebutted by the opposition, which consisted of Tasmanian School of Business and Economics Professor Aron O'Casey, University of Adelaide Pharmacologist and Toxicologist Dr Ian Musgrave and AUSVEG Biosecurity Adviser Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene.

With lively discussion continuing among delegates long after the speaker sessions had concluded, it was time for some fun away from the farm. The Women in Horticulture Taste of Success attendees visited the picturesque Cedar Creek Winery, where APAL Chair Dr Michele Allan and Tasmanian



2015 National Awards for Excellence

THE 2015 NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE CELEBRATED THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO THE AUSTRALIAN HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY BY GROWERS, RESEARCHERS AND ORGANISATIONS, AT A MAGNIFICENT GALA DINNER.

Grower of the Year

John Doyle (NSW)

Proudly sponsored by Syngenta

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L-R: Syngenta Head of Specialty Crops Bob Mullins and AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar (on behalf of John Doyle).

Lifetime Achievement Award

Nicolas Trandos (WA)



L-R: AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar and Nicolas Trandos.

Industry Leader Award

Richard Dickmann (VIC)



L-R: Bayer Head of New Business Development Richard Dickmann and AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar.

Young Grower of the Year

Erika Watson (NSW)

Proudly sponsored by Dow AgroSciences

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L-R: Dow AgroSciences Horticulture Business Manager John Gilmour and Erika Watson.

Rising Star of the Year

Shaun Reina (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by Coles



L-R: Shaun Reina and Coles Business Category Manager Fresh Produce Ruth McLennan.

Industry Impact Award

Matt Cocciolone (WA)

Proudly sponsored by VISY



VISY National Sales Manager Wayne Dunne (on behalf of Matt Cocciolone).

Women in Horticulture Award

Kerri Lamb (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by Steritech



L-R: Steritech CEO Murray Lynch and Kerri Lamb.

Community Stewardship Award

Michael Quoch (NT)

Proudly sponsored by DuPont



L-R: NT Farmers Association Vegetable Grower Engagement Officer Greg Owens (on behalf of Michael Quoch) and DuPont Marketing and Sales Manager Jeremy Cocks.

Researcher of the Year

Dr Doris Blaesing (TAS)

Proudly sponsored by Bayer CropScience



L-R: Bayer Head of New Business Development Richard Dickmann and Dr Doris Blaesing.

Innovative Marketing Award

Kees Versteeg (QLD)

Proudly sponsored by CMAA



L-R: CMAA's Andrew Young and AUSVEG Director Matt Hood (on behalf of Kees Versteeg).

Environmental Award

Adam Schreurs (VIC)

Proudly Sponsored by Netafim



L-R: Netafim Queensland Manager Jeremy Evans and Adam Schreurs.

Productivity Partner Award

Adama Australia

Proudly sponsored by Boomaroo



L-R: Boomaroo Head of Sales and Marketing Emily White and Adama Australia CEO Darrin Hines.

Trade Display of the Year Award

Single-booth (see below)

Propak Industries



Propak Industries Managing Director Garry Sandercock.

Trade Display of the Year Award

Multi-booth (see below)

VISY



VISY National Sales Manager Wayne Dunne.



Celebrating a lifetime of achievements

SINCE ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA AS A YOUNG MIGRANT, NICOLAS TRANDOS HAS BUILT A SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS THE PATRIARCH OF TRANDOS FARMS, WHICH NOW SPANS ACROSS THREE LOCATIONS ON AUSTRALIA'S WEST COAST. RECENTLY, NICOLAS'S 64-YEAR CONTRIBUTION TO THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY WAS OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED WHEN HE RECEIVED THE 2015 AUSVEG LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.

It's hard to truly appreciate the difficulty of moving to a foreign country on the other side of the world and building a new life from scratch.

Yet this is exactly what was in store for 14-year-old Nicolas Trandos when he arrived in Western Australia in 1949. Due to the trauma of the Second World War, he and his family left behind everything they had known in Greece in search of a better life in a new country.

As he couldn't speak a word of English on his arrival, you could say Nicolas was fortunate that farming was a somewhat universal language – the Trandos family were farmers in Greece and so they continued this profession after settling in Wanneroo, just north of Perth.

"If it wasn't for the Second World War we would have probably stayed in Greece but ... as a result, we remained here and I'm glad we have," Nicolas says.

At 16, Nicolas decided to leave school and join his father in the family's vegetable market garden, cementing the beginning of a long and successful career in the Australian vegetable industry.

A family affair

Trandos Farms began as a small enterprise growing tomatoes, lettuce and cabbage on two hectares of leased land. Over time, the business has continued to expand and it now produces beans and sweet corn for local and international markets on three sites: Neerabup, Broome and Gingin.

A passion for growing vegetables is ingrained in the Trandos family's ethos, and Nicolas attributes the ongoing support of his wife, brothers,

children and nephews as key to his success in the industry. While he considers himself to be semi-retired, Nicolas continues to work closely with his two sons, Jim and Arthur, and his nephew Michael, who strive to maintain the innovation and sustainability that has made Trandos Farms a well-known name in the vegetable industry.

"I'm very proud of my sons and my nephews who continue on in the industry. They have been very successful in what they do," Nicolas says.

Lasting legacy

Over the years, Nicolas's contribution to the vegetable industry was not only limited to the farm. He also played an imperative role in industry organisations, serving as President of both the WA Market Gardeners' Association and the Australian Vegetable Growers' Federation.

Nicolas also became heavily involved in local government in Western Australia, serving a total of 24 years in Wanneroo's local council. It was perhaps this extensive experience in government that gave Nicolas the skills to successfully lobby for two of the most important policy changes in the Australian vegetable industry.

The first was the introduction of plant variety rights in 1985-86, which allowed breeders of superior vegetables to make seeds from new hybrid varieties and receive royalties as compensation for their work, leading to a dramatic improvement in the quality of vegetables in Australia.

The second was the introduction of the National Vegetable Levy, where Nicolas



Photography by Chris Kershaw.



travelled around Australia in a bid to convince both vegetable growers and the Federal Government that the introduction of a levy, with funding from the government, would help secure the future development of the industry through commissioned R&D projects.

"To go from nothing to \$20 million annually, plus the matching money, that would have to be my biggest achievement in the industry," he explains.

Nicolas's accomplishments have since been celebrated at local, state and national levels.

He is the first Freeman of the City of Wanneroo and the City of Joondalup; he has been inducted into the WA Agricultural Hall of Fame; and he has received the prestigious Order of Australia medal for services to local government and the vegetable industry.

The 2015 AUSVEG Lifetime Achievement Award is a fitting way to celebrate Nicolas's strong contributions to the Australian vegetable industry and growers throughout the country will undoubtedly continue to benefit from his leadership for many more years to come.

GLOBAL TECHNOLOGIES IN HORTICULTURE

Vegetable growers plug into profitability



IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE 2015 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION, TRADE SHOW AND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE, THE GLOBAL TECHNOLOGIES IN HORTICULTURE SEMINAR WAS CREATED TO EXPOSE GROWERS TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT MAY HELP THEM BECOME MORE EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND ULTIMATELY MORE PROFITABLE IN THEIR BUSINESSES.

Eight leading international speakers presented to over 100 Australian levy-paying vegetable growers at the Global Technologies in Horticulture Seminar, discussing the latest in cutting edge vegetable R&D from around the world.

During the Seminar, AeroFarms CEO and Co-Founder David Rosenberg impressed growers with the attractive commercial prospects presented through aeroponics. Growing plants in vertical, soil-less beds using 95 per cent less water than conventional methods has led to the success of the company, which is based in New Jersey in the United States. Using patented LED lighting technology – said to be more powerful than the sun – Mr Rosenberg spoke about AeroFarms’ ability to grow over 200 different varieties of leafy greens, herbs and micro greens using a unique growing medium. Another advantage of the technology is the ability to skip the washing process, due to the non-existence of pesticides or manures.

Greenhouse powerhouse

Vegetable Greenhouse Specialist from the Arava in Israel, Rivka Offenbach, captivated the audience with her experiences of growing premium export-grade vegetables in one of the most arid regions on Earth. With temperatures ranging between



Photography by Andrew Beveridge.

Bird Control Group founder Steiner Henskes holds an autonomous laser that repels birds and other pests.

zero and 45 degrees Celsius and just 50mm of rain per year, the region’s Central and Northern Arava R&D station has proven critical to local farmers’ successes.

In relation to the area’s remoteness, Ms Offenbach spoke about the advantages of having no nearby fields in the area, leading to the Arava being a phytosanitary “clean-zone”. To combat the region’s harshness, sandy soil and saline water, she touted the creation of a unique capillary barrier for bed land (local soil), which has

led to increased water content in the root zone and reduced soil spatial variability, while also protecting the root zone from salinization.

Also discussing greenhouse technology was robotics expert Dr Jan Bontsema. Based in the Netherlands, Dr Bontsema has leveraged his PhD in mathematics and relevant horticulture experience to coordinate several of the European Union’s most exciting R&D projects on the use of robotic machinery in vegetable greenhouses.



The audience was enthralled to hear about Dr Bontsema’s latest robot, which can autonomously move through capsicum and cucumber greenhouses, identifying and harvesting the vegetables that are ready to be picked. Dr Bontsema noted that the robots he has designed



AeroFarms CEO and Co-Founder David Rosenberg.

for harvesting did not feature human-like hands, as his research team found that a soft, pincer-style system was more effective. The program aims to deliver a market-ready robot by the end of 2018.

Lasers lead the way

Still in his early 20s, Steinar Henskes, Founder of Bird Control Group based in the Netherlands, has shot a figurative and literal laser beam across the bird deterrent industry. Of particular interest to growers was the start-up's Agrilaser Autonomic product – an autonomous laser that repels birds and other pests from an area of up to 12 square kilometres.

Mr Henskes also spoke about Bird Control Group's laser

technology, which is already being used in the aviation industry to deter birds from airport runways. The benefit is that birds do not become desensitised to the laser beam, nor does it have a lethal effect.

Innovation in plant nutrition

While breakthroughs in robotic technology and lasers captivated the audience, non-mechanised horticultural advancements such as plant nutrition were covered by Roger Tripathi, Managing Director of Marketing and Sales at Cytozyme. Travelling from Salt Lake City in the United States, Mr Tripathi spoke about managing biotic pressure and how we sometimes disregard the proactive management of abiotic stresses.

Mr Tripathi noted that, in looking at Australia's unpredictable environmental stresses, it is critical that we seek solutions to optimise the natural processes in plants, aid growth and provide strength to resist and tolerate external threats of abiotic and biotic pressure. In discussing this issue, Mr Tripathi suggested that a suitable solution is Cytozyme's advanced MAO Trigger

Technology, which harnesses the power of Metabolically Active Compounds to enhance plant performance. However, eager growers will have to wait until its official Australian launch in 2016.

Food for thought

As the term "Big Data" becomes one of the major buzzwords in US agriculture, climatologist and aWhere Inc. CEO Dr John Corbett delivered an interesting presentation on climate prediction. Using agricultural intelligence in the form of geo-analytics and localised agronomic 'smart content', Mr Corbett said the company can deliver location-centric data management, analysis, visualisation and reporting; integrating on-the-ground observations to provide hyper-localised weather forecasting for growers around the world. As complex as this sounds, Mr Corbett explained that this technology would ultimately allow growers to pinpoint in advance the optimum time for harvesting.

With growers seeking to gain more value from their produce, Dr Tara McHugh, a Research Leader within the United States Department of

Agriculture, showed delegates how her cutting-edge research is currently allowing growers to convert excess produce into transformed consumer products, from clothing to snacks. Of particular interest to growers was Dr McHugh's use of infrared technology to create vegetable chips.

Finally, United States Potato Board President and CEO Blair Richardson also gave growers an insight into what may occur in horticulture through the exciting technological developments in smartphones. With apps such as Uber revolutionising the ride-sharing industry, Mr Richardson discussed how similar apps could be used in the future to promote 'Uber-app' style ride sharing as a simple and effective way for growers to seek on-demand transport for their produce. Such apps would allow growers to not only monitor their produce being transported in real-time, but also rate transport providers on their level of service.

The 2015 Global Technologies in Horticulture Seminar provided attendees with many thought-provoking ideas and concepts. Growers were highly inquisitive during the Q&A sessions, with many sure to incorporate the technologies discussed into their own growing operations.



All Seminar presentations will be made freely available on the AUSVEG website www.ausveg.com.au. For further information on the 2015 Global Technologies in Horticulture Seminar or any of the presenters, please contact AUSVEG.

Phone: (03) 9882 0277

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This project has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG13116



Mighty tough on chewing pests

with a little soft spot for beneficials





Photography by Lisa Hayman.



Q&A Young grower profile

How did you first become involved in the vegetable industry?

I first became involved in the vegetable industry in 2009 when I offered to take on the production and marketing of the family's certified organic vegetables. That day I asked my grandfather if he needed a hand. He replied, "Yes we need a hand but if you're talking about one year, forget it. We need someone who's in it for the long haul." Looking back, I am so glad I made that decision.

What is your role in the business?

I am responsible for co-ordinating the planting, harvesting, marketing and transport for our vegetables. We need to continually move with our changing seasons, market

and consumer trends to ensure our products are competitive in all key areas. This means being in control of as many aspects of vegetable production as possible, and being able to identify potential problems before they occur. To achieve this, we need key people in areas of our business who are all thinking the same way. There are four of us, spread across three generations, who have built what is now known as Busch Organics. My grandfather Lex, my father Chris, my brother Matthew and I are responsible for key operational areas that make the farm tick.

How would you describe your average day at work?

In the peak of our season, I prepare a production plan based on existing and incoming orders from the previous



evening. Transport is booked, labour arranged and harvest equipment prepared. In the morning we have multiple crews harvesting, washing and packing in the processing shed. We have the ability to grade and pack four different types of vegetables simultaneously, so we achieve efficiency and ensure orders are packed on time. Orders are collected in the afternoon, headed for the capital cities.

What do you enjoy most about working in the vegetable industry?

For me, working in the vegetable industry is rewarding to no end.

It demands a high level of commitment not only in the day-to-day activities but in forecasting growth areas to keep in touch with the consumer. To then incorporate that into our operation and see the results that come from being proactive is extremely satisfying. I have the chance to discuss issues with many people in different markets and network with individuals and groups to learn new techniques and expand my knowledge of marketing and farming. Organic vegetable production is growing strongly, and the more we can close the gap between people and organic food with greater accessibility and affordable



Lindenow, Victoria

Name: Kane Busch
Age: 27
Location: Lindenow, Victoria
Works: Busch Organics
Grows: Beans, beetroot, broccoli, sweet corn and parsnip



prices, then I believe we are on the right track.

What are the biggest challenges you face working in the industry?

Vegetable producers battle with low prices while dealing with increasing costs of production. There is a common misconception that only greater efficiency will make a business more profitable, but this is just one way to do it. Farmers often don't have the ability to increase their return price with rising costs and are left with no choice but to be price takers. It doesn't take much to swing it around the other way.

Where do you see opportunities for growth in the Australian vegetable industry?

If a producer is turning over what is equal to the cost of production, then a mere 5-10 per cent increase in return price has the ability to put the cream on the top and provide not just enough to continue for another year, but put a bit in their pocket. Anything over that five to 10 per cent would be the fruit on the pavlova I guess!

I believe producers must demand recognition for what it takes to put food on a dinner plate, and there must

be greater appreciation of agriculture in Australia, putting the humble farmer closer to the top of the list. After all, we do provide the most essential service imaginable.

How do you think more young people could be encouraged to take up jobs in the vegetable industry?

I see education and opportunity as key to encouraging young people to become active in the vegetable industry. This can be gained in a number of ways, including a combination of university or TAFE studies and hands-on work. Not all young farmers have the opportunity to continue a family enterprise as I have, so financial consideration needs to be given to facilitate an acquisition or lease arrangement.

There is no better teacher than an experienced farmer who has a lifetime of proven skills in production and problem solving. This knowledge is often lost when family farming operations are sold, but this needn't be the case. Budding farmers are in touch with the latest

technology and have youth on their side, so if a connection can be made between the two then we give ourselves a chance of ensuring vegetable production in Australia remains strong.

If you weren't working in the vegetable industry, what would you be doing?

It's hard to imagine where I would be if I hadn't started working on our farm. I would probably be using the hard working and innovative values I gained in my childhood on the farm and applying them to another industry. I am certainly grateful for my farming background as this has put me in good stead and equipped me with a lifetime of skills.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years I would like to be working alongside my family in a continually successful certified organic farming operation, continuing to be innovative and grabbing every opportunity with both hands.



R&D
Market &
Value Chain
Development

The AUSVEG SA and Adelaide Produce Market International Trade Evening was held at Sprout Cooking School operated by Adelaide Produce Market ambassador, Callum Hann.

Exports to rise as Aussie growers see benefits from 2015 Reverse Trade Mission

THE 2015 REVERSE TRADE MISSION WAS AN UNQUESTIONABLE SUCCESS, WITH AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS ALREADY SEEING THE BENEFITS FROM THE INITIATIVE. THE MISSION WAS HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 2015 NATIONAL HORTICULTURE CONVENTION AND RAN FROM 21-28 JUNE.

More than 40 international buyers from Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei, Macau and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) gained a unique insight into the Australian vegetable industry during the 2015 Reverse Trade Mission. This was the first year that buyers from the UAE have been involved in the mission, highlighting an additional destination for Australian vegetable exports.

Delegates represented international supermarket chains and large fresh produce importing businesses from across Asia and the Middle East. Additionally, Austrade representatives from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore joined the mission to enhance their knowledge of the Australian vegetable industry and better represent growers' interests in-market.

Industry collaboration

During the week, the Reverse Trade Mission delegation toured growing operations in South Australia and Queensland. These were well-received by the international buyers, as it allowed them to see first-hand

the scale and quality of produce from Australia's vegetable farms.

An additional highlight was the AUSVEG SA and Adelaide Produce Market International Trade Evening, which was held at Sprout Cooking School operated by Adelaide Produce Market ambassador,



Reverse Trade Mission delegates.



Western Australia's Bruno and Dane Capogreco participate in the Produce Display.



Western Australia's Troy Cukrov speaks to Reverse Trade Mission delegates.

Callum Hann. Buyers had the opportunity to network with over 100 representatives from the Australian vegetable industry and witness a live cooking demonstration from the former MasterChef contestant.

Other activities on the mission included a visit to the Adelaide Markets and Coles flagship store in Indooroopilly, Queensland. The buyers were also treated to a produce-themed lunch hosted by the Lockyer Valley Regional Centre after touring a number of Queensland growing operations.

Produce on display

The mission culminated at the 2015 National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence

at Jupiters Gold Coast from 25-27 June. A highlight for international buyers was the Produce Display on Friday 26 June, where more than 40 vegetable growers showcased their fresh produce.

The displays provided buyers with a greater understanding of the high quality vegetables that are being offered for the international market. It also facilitated one-on-one discussions on potential business opportunities and ways to enhance trading relationships. Early feedback suggests that the participating growers each received valuable leads in export markets, with several arranging sample shipments at the conclusion of the Convention.

Overall feedback indicated that 93 per cent of buyers

who participated in the 2015 Reverse Trade Mission are likely to increase the amount of Australian vegetables they currently import. As 19 per cent of buyers estimated that they expect over \$500,000 of trade with Australia following the mission, there are significant opportunities for export-ready Australian producers to capitalise on the networks and relationships built during the event.

Where to now?

The 2015 Reverse Trade Mission is one part of a considered effort to increase Australia's vegetable exports. The mission will be followed by Australian vegetable industry participation at Asia Fruit Logistica, the premier trade show for fresh produce

in the Asia Pacific, which will be held in Hong Kong from 2-4 September 2015.

The 2015 Asia Fruit Logistica trade show is expected to attract significant involvement from across Australian horticulture. The industry's representation at the event also includes funded positions for vegetable growers to display produce and establish new business contacts.



A full project report will be made available on the InfoVeg website: www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

This initiative was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions from industry and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG12700

Recent FTAs continue to make progress

Australia currently has nine Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in force with New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, Chile, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Malaysia, Korea and Japan.

These countries represent over 42 per cent of Australia's total trade. This number does not include China, which will enter

into force following the completion of relevant domestic processes.

The table outlines the progress being made from the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA), Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAPEA), Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement (KAFTA) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Agreement	Outcome for the Australian vegetable industry	Current progress
ChAFTA	Phase out of tariff to zero per cent in equal annual stages over four years.	ChAFTA was signed by Federal Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb and Chinese Commerce Minister Gao Hucheng in Canberra on 17 June 2015.
JAPEA	Immediate elimination of three per cent tariff on entry into force.	JAPEA entered into force on 15 January 2015.
KAFTA	Phase out of tariff to zero per cent in equal annual stages over five years.	KAFTA entered into force on 12 December 2014.
TPP	Further liberalisation to deliver greater export potential to vegetable growers.	Currently in final negotiation stage. Expected to be signed by third quarter of 2015.

2015 Export calendar of events

2 - 4 September 2015
Asia Fruit Logistica
Lantau, Hong Kong

5 - 7 October 2015
World of Perishables
Dubai



Growers become experts in exporting to South East Asia

OVER 80 VEGETABLE GROWERS WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM LEADING EXPORT PROFESSIONALS AND TRADING REPRESENTATIVES FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA ABOUT THE PROCESSES INVOLVED IN EXPORTING TO THE REGION AND THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS THAT CAN BE GAINED AT THE 2015 EXPORTING TO SOUTH EAST ASIA SYMPOSIUM ON 28 JUNE.



While the majority of those who attended the 2015 National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence were recovering and relaxing, over 80 vegetable growers took the opportunity to learn about the processes and potential benefits of exporting to South East Asia at a levy-funded seminar designed to educate growers about exporting to the region.

South East Asia presents an alternative market for Australian vegetable growers, with the region increasing its demand for fresh Australian produce and the local domestic market providing limited scope for growers to increase their production.

Given their proximity to the region, their ability to produce many varieties of vegetables all year round and the stellar reputation of local vegetable produce, Australian growers have a unique opportunity to take advantage of this potentially lucrative market. However, as with any new frontier, there are always questions that need to be answered.

Symposium insights

The 2015 Exporting to South East Asia Symposium was held on Sunday 28 June at Jupiters Gold Coast following the Convention, and equipped attendees with the necessary tools and knowledge to begin exporting their vegetable produce to the region.

The Symposium was the third in a series of annual levy-funded forums developed to increase the potential for Australian growers to boost their production and trade through exports, and to demystify the exporting process.

Local and international speakers presented on topics such as vegetable trends in the region, trade arrangements and cultural do's and don'ts. They also touched on the opportunities, limitations and pitfalls of the exporting process. Experts came from the fields of logistics, packaging and trade, as well as growers who have successfully exported to the region.

Stellar speaker line-up

Attendees were treated to an opening address by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) General Manager of R&D Services David Moore, who explained the recent transformation of the former Horticulture Australia Limited into HIA, the grower-owned research and development body, and how this impacts the vegetable sector.

The morning session of the Symposium provided attendees with three additional speakers who delved into different aspects of exporting to South East Asia. Luisa Rust, Senior Trade Adviser from Austrade, gave attendees a market overview of exporting to South East Asia and Indonesia, while Cynthia Leung, Group Sales and Marketing Manager from Good View Group Development, discussed changing consumer habits in the region and the opportunities for Australian growers who are willing to

export. Rodney Wee from Asia Cold Chain discussed the ASEAN market, emphasising the good reputation that Australian produce has in the region.

Throughout the Symposium, attendees were also treated to presentations from other speakers who could provide the necessary tools to export Australian produce to the region. Anthony MacKay from VISY spoke about the packaging considerations that need to be addressed to successfully export produce over long distances to ensure it remains fresh and undamaged, while OneHarvest Business Manager – Sales and Marketing Sarah Huntley discussed how innovative and new approaches to packaging results in higher sales, using the company's Love Beets product as a case study.

Attendees also heard from Leela Hanson, State Director from Export Finance and Insurance Corporation, about the services available for growers to access finance for export-related activities, while Watermark IP Professional Dr Renee White discussed the importance of



establishing proper trademarks for exporting businesses. Richard O'Brien, the former Irish Ambassador to Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor Leste, also gave attendees a presentation on the practical aspects of doing business in South East Asia.

A further highlight was the grower panel, which comprised of Sarah Huntley, Dr Rodney Wee, Troy Cukrov from Trodan Produce and Eric Qu from Green Consolidated. Each member addressed the opportunities and challenges involved in trading to the region, but emphasised that there are long-term

opportunities for those who are willing to establish exports to South East Asia.

Overall, attendees walked away from the Symposium with a much greater knowledge of the intricacies of exporting Australian vegetables to South East Asia.



A full project report will be made available on the InfoVeg website: www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

The 2015 Exporting to South East Asia Symposium was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australia Government.

Project Number: VG14708



Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited General Manager of R&D Services David Moore.

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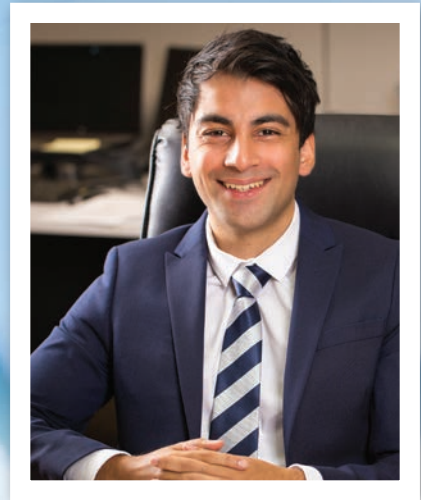
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R&D

Drive Train

2015 Federal Budget provides opportunity and relief to vegetable growers

FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF THE 2015 FEDERAL BUDGET BY TREASURER THE HON. JOE HOCKEY MP, AUSVEG ECONOMIST STEVE RAZDAN EXAMINES THE KEY IMPACTS ON VEGETABLE GROWERS AND EXPLAINS WHEN THEY CAN EXPECT TO BENEFIT FROM THE ANNOUNCEMENTS.



with Steve Razdan

Australian vegetable growers have been suffering financially for many years now, with increasing production costs and low retail prices having an adverse impact on grower margins.

This year's Federal Budget is expected to benefit vegetable growers throughout the country, as it includes provisions for drought assistance, infrastructure support, deductions on asset expenditure and a boost to trade and employment.

Drought relief

Given the tough business conditions facing Australia's vegetable growers, they can simply not afford to be exposed to challenging natural weather events such as a prolonged drought, which has been predicted to occur in Australia over the next five years.

In the 2015 Federal Budget, approximately \$270

million has been committed to continue to support drought-affected communities across Australia and increase drought resilience for growers in need. These measures include concessional loan schemes worth \$250 million, which roll over existing measures and are subject to an eligibility criteria.

Additionally, \$20 million will be spent to extend the access to social and mental health services in communities affected by drought. This is welcome news as the impact of drought on the mental health of rural communities is often neglected, but can have serious widespread ramifications with suicide and depression affecting many farmers. A further \$2 million will be available for an additional 10 counsellors to assist farmers through the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

The government has also outlined a new package that commits almost \$61 million to support local infrastructure

and pest management as a consequence of drought. This package includes a local grants program that targets infrastructure projects with the greatest potential to stimulate the local economy and offer long-lasting benefits. All of these measures begin from 1 July 2015 and will be provided over the next four years.

An opportunity to invest

The government will also allow all primary producers to immediately deduct expenditure on fencing and water facilities, such as dams, tanks, pumps and windmills. Additionally, growers will be able to depreciate fodder storage assets over three years, such as silos and tanks used to store animal feed.

Previously, growers had to wait until 1 July 2016 to purchase the assets, which means they would have to wait until the 2017-18 financial year to claim any benefit. However,

the government announced on 27 May that growers are allowed to purchase these assets from the night the Budget was handed down, and therefore claim deductions on their upcoming tax return. Growers can now reap the benefit of these investments almost two years earlier than anticipated, if the assets are purchased in the current financial year.

Any farm that runs a small business, i.e. with an annual turnover of less than \$2 million, will be able to immediately deduct asset expenditure (in addition to fencing, water facilities and fodder storage), provided the asset costs less than \$20,000 and aids in business operations. This measure was applicable the night the Budget was handed down and is available until 30 June 2017. Additionally, the government will reduce the company tax rate to 28.5 per cent for companies with aggregated annual turnover less than \$2 million.

These measures should inject some much-needed confidence into the vegetable industry, which is made up of a large number of small farms that do not benefit from economies of scale. Growers who are unsure of investing in a new tractor, for example, now have the incentive to go ahead with the investment as they will be able to claim the expense back on their tax return, provided the asset costs less than \$20,000 and aids in business operations.

Trade and employment

The government will provide \$24.6 million over two years from 2015-16 to promote business understanding of the recently concluded Free Trade Agreements in North Asia, and to assist businesses to access and maximise benefits under these agreements.

This will include an online dashboard-portal, which consists of an online tariff finder that will help Australian

vegetable growers make well-informed decisions about trading internationally. Currently, Australia exports approximately six to seven per cent in value of its current domestic production, which is relatively low compared to other sectors of Australian agriculture.

The government will also provide \$30 million over four years to attract employment in key areas, which includes agribusiness and food. Not only will the funding appeal to offshore employment, it will also entail funding for additional staff dedicated to investment promotion within Australia. Attracting domestic employment on Australian farms, particularly during peak seasonal periods, is extremely difficult.

Other measures

- The government will provide additional funding of \$20 million over two years from 2015-16 to support the Royal Flying Doctor

Service deliver emergency and primary health care services to people in rural and remote communities of Australia.

- An additional \$550.2 million over four years from 2015-16 will maintain funding for quarantine and border protection activities on an ongoing basis.
- A change to tax residency rules to remove the Tax Free Threshold for Working Holiday Visa holders from 1 July 2016 means these workers will be taxed from their first dollar of income.
- The provision of \$3.7 million over four years from 2015-16 to develop a new infrastructure projects pipeline will be informed by the priorities identified in Infrastructure Australia's Northern Australia Infrastructure Audit.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Approximately \$270 million has been committed to continue to support drought-affected communities across Australia.
- All primary producers can immediately deduct expenditure on fencing and water facilities, and depreciate fodder storage assets over three years.
- Any farm with an annual turnover of less than \$2 million can immediately deduct asset expenditure, provided the asset costs less than \$20,000 and aids in business operations.

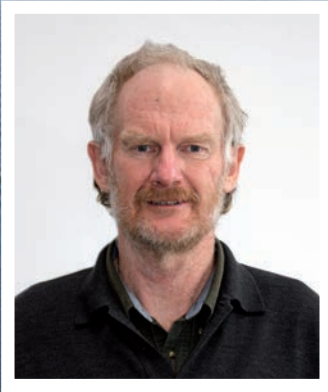


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This project has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG12078



with Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene



WHEN AN EXOTIC PEST IS DECLARED ENDEMIC AND AUSTRALIA CAN NO LONGER CLAIM COUNTRY FREEDOM FROM THAT PEST, WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GROWERS? WHAT PROCESSES MUST BE FOLLOWED TO NOTIFY STAKEHOLDERS? WE SPEAK TO AUSVEG BIOSECURITY ADVISER DR KEVIN CLAYTON-GREENE TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT NEEDS TO OCCUR FOLLOWING A PEST CHANGE OF STATUS.

What leads to a pest change of status?

If the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) determine that a pest cannot be feasibly eradicated, this recommendation is presented to the National Management Group (NMG). The NMG is responsible for making the final decision about pest status. If the NMG decide that the pest is not eradicable, and the pest is not under containment in one area, it will undergo a change of status. For instance, Australia will not be able to claim 'country freedom' from that pest.

What does the notification process involve?

Within the Australian biosecurity system there are strict procedures in place for notifying stakeholders of a change in pest status. Signatories of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed are bound by a strict confidentiality agreement until national talking points are released from the National Communications Network at the Department of Agriculture.

After a decision has been made to change the status of a pest, the first notification must be made to the

International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The IPPC is a multilateral treaty overseen by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, which aims to secure coordinated, effective action to prevent and control the introduction and spread of plant pests. Depending on other measures in place and how far the pest is distributed, Area Freedom may be claimed by certain states and regions. Again there are IPPC protocols for making and sustaining such claims.

When are trading partners notified?

With each change in pest status, trading partners must be individually notified after the IPPC has accepted the new status. Notifications to trading partners are specifically written for each importing country. This includes assurances regarding Australian control measures that are in place to ensure pest-free exports and proposed avenues for quality assurance that may be acceptable to the trading partner.

Once Australia has made an official announcement and has also indicated how the change of status is being managed, we must wait for a response from importing countries as to the acceptance or otherwise of the

proposed measures. Clearly, for Australia to tell other countries how they should manage their biosecurity and import requirements is not an option.

When are industry stakeholders notified?

The Department of Agriculture routinely releases industry advisory notices to notify stakeholders of changes to import conditions, export conditions or changes to pest statuses. However, the reach of Department notices are not infinite. Peak industry bodies play an important role in communicating pest alerts and changes in pest status to members.

Why aren't industry stakeholders notified about a change in pest status before the IPPC and trading partners?

If this were to happen, how long would this information stay within Australia? One day? Half a day? It does not matter because it would soon reach our trading partners and it is not difficult to imagine the consequences.

Questions an importing country could then justifiably ask of Australia would be along the lines of the following.

- How long have you known this disease has been in the country?
- Why did you not notify us sooner?
- What other diseases are found in Australia that we do not know about?
- How can we trust your phytosanitary process and accompanying documents?
- Why should we trade with you while this sort of activity is going on?

It is almost certain that importing countries would enforce immediate trade bans as Australia could no longer be viewed as a trusted trading partner. These bans could be placed not only on the produce in question, but potentially on all of Australia's trade in plant and animal based produce.

For Australia to be viewed as a trusted exporter, it is vital that importing countries have faith in our biosecurity system and the integrity of those responsible for it. This will not occur if an importing country cannot trust Australian phytosanitary declarations issued by our biosecurity officers.

i For more information contact AUSVEG.
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 Project Number: VG11013

R&D

Drive Train

Veggie Stats: Sweet Corn

TO ENABLE DEEPER INSIGHTS INTO THE PRODUCTION AND TRADE PERFORMANCE OF KEY AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE PRODUCTS, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A SERIES OF CROP-SPECIFIC VEGGIE STATS PROFILES. THE NEXT INSTALMENT OF THIS SERIES FOCUSES ON SWEET CORN PRODUCTION.

The following Veggie Stats article has been developed specifically to give readers a detailed snapshot of the key facts and figures on sweet corn. Veggie Stats utilises data from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) and the Global Trade Atlas, funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

It is important to note the data itself provides a broad indication of

the performance of sweet corn growers and should be interpreted carefully. The data is presented at the national level and therefore does not account for differences among jurisdictions.

In addition to this, the information provided is not specific to every Australian grower since each enterprise operates differently from one another.

Please note that ABARES and the Australian Bureau of Statistics do not provide financial data or information on annual trends for this commodity.

Collect the whole set

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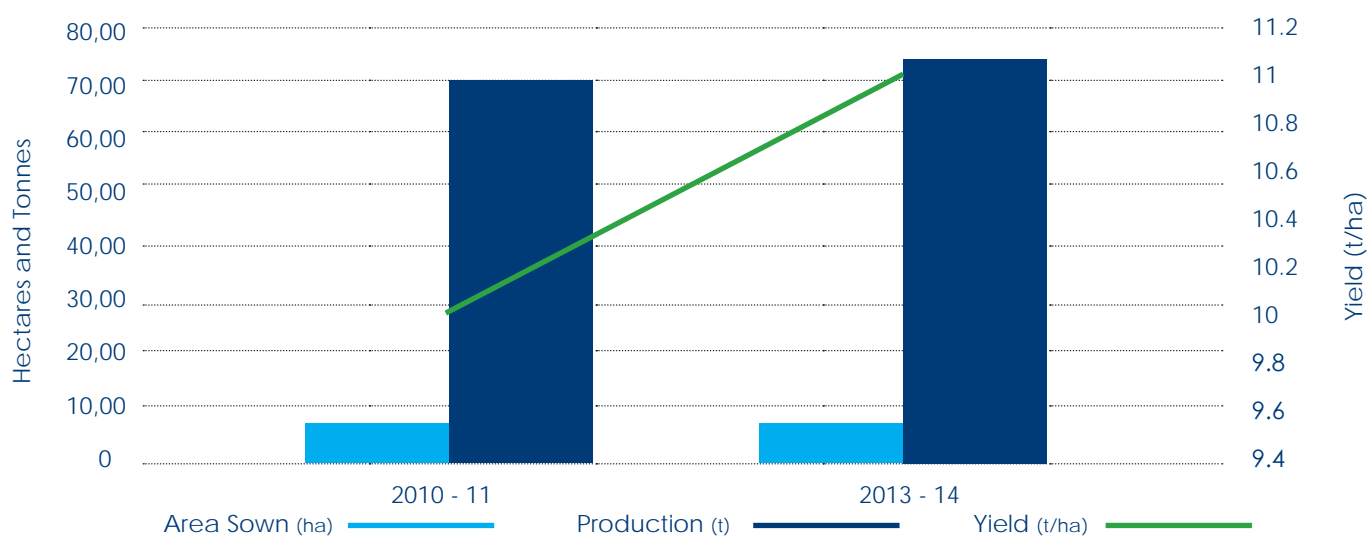
If you've missed any of the previous cards in this series and would like them sent out to you, please call **1800 804 479**

VEGGIE STATS: SWEET CORN

Sweet Corn Production – Key facts and figures

- Since 2010-11, sweet corn production has increased by 5 per cent to 2013-14.
- The number of sweet corn growers has decreased by 38 per cent since 2010-11, to 183 growers in 2013-14.
- The yield of sweet corn has increased from 10 tonnes per hectare to 11 tonnes per hectare from 2010-11 to 2013-14.
- Queensland produces the highest value of sweet corn production out of any state.
- The value of frozen corn exports in 2013-14 were five times greater than in 2009-10.

Farm-Gate Statistics



- Sweet corn production has increased from 70,808 tonnes in 2010-11 to 74,483 tonnes in 2013-14.
- Despite sweet corn production increasing, area sown has remained relatively stable which has contributed to an increase in yield.
- Price per kilo* has decreased from \$1.21 to \$1.12 since 2010-11.

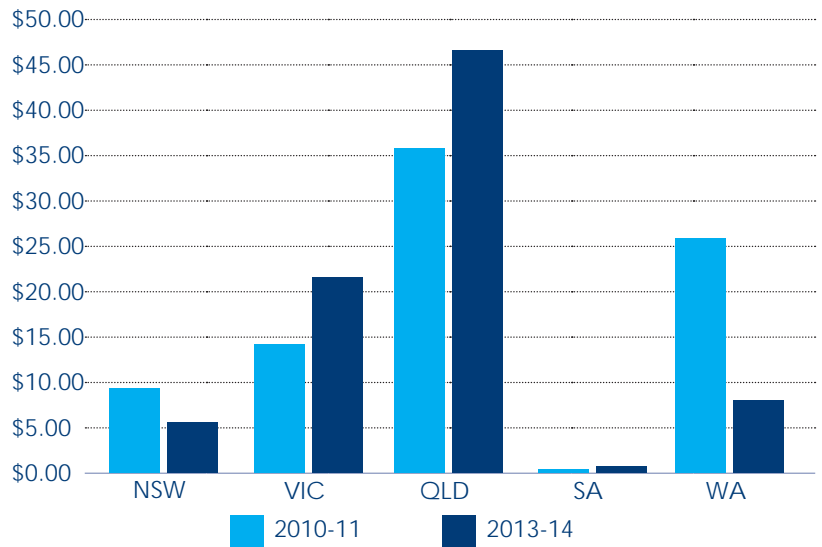
* Price per kilo as calculated by Gross Value divided by Production

Gross Value of Production

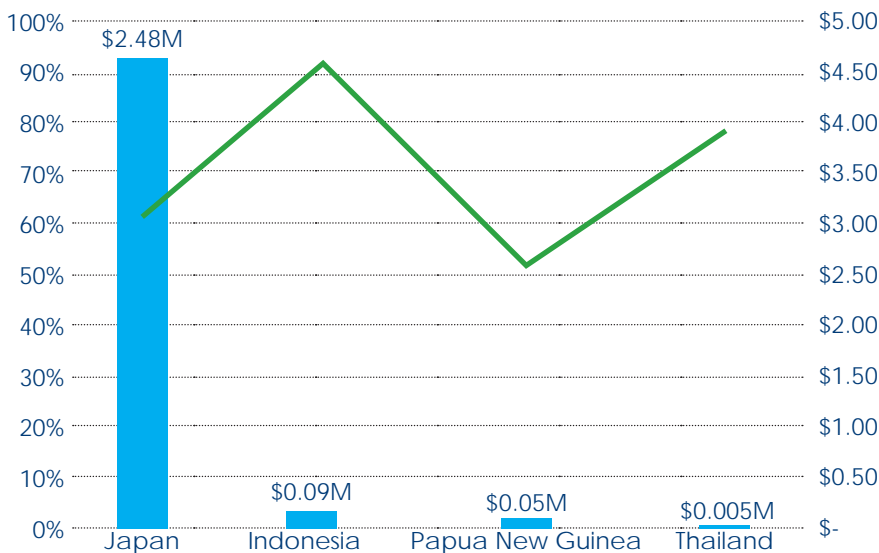
The gross value of sweet corn production declined by 2.7 per cent since 2010-11, to \$83.5 million in 2013-14.

Queensland accounted for over 55 per cent of Australia's gross value in 2013-14.

The gross value of production in Western Australia decreased by 70 per cent from 2010-11 to 2013-14.



Key Export Markets in 2013-14



Japan was Australia's biggest frozen sweet corn export market in 2013-14, accounting for 94 per cent of total export value.

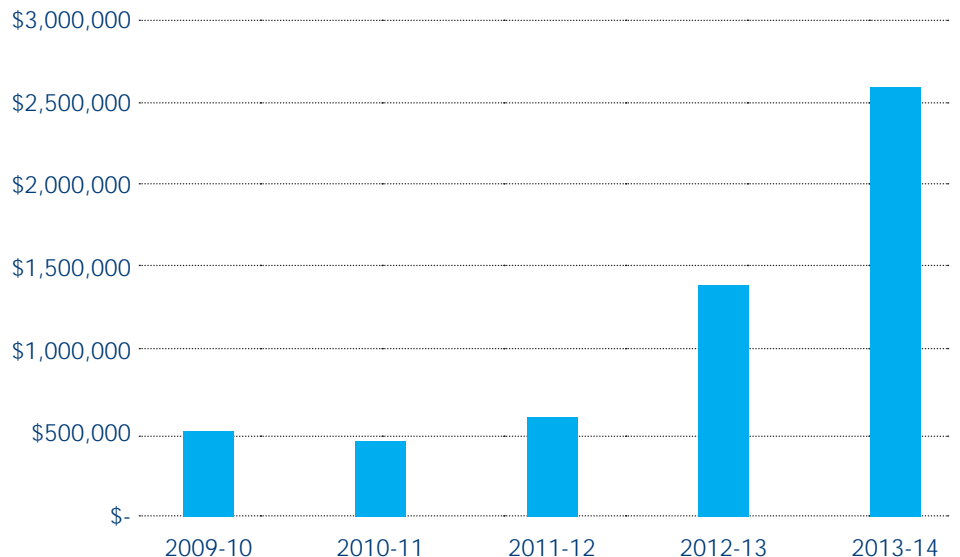
Papua New Guinea received the cheapest price per kilo of Australian frozen sweet corn at \$2.57.

Total Exports

Exports

Export value of frozen sweet corn increased by 84 per cent from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

Frozen sweet corn exports increased every year except in 2010-11, where a slight decrease of 9 per cent was seen from the previous financial year.



Aussie growers gain unique insights into U.S. vegetable industry

THE 2015 USA INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT MISSION PROVIDED NINE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE LEVY PAYING GROWERS WITH THE CHANCE TO VISIT LEADING VEGETABLE OPERATIONS, PACKAGING FACILITIES, SEEDLING NURSERIES AND THE WORLD AGRICULTURE EXPO IN THE UNITED STATES. THE MISSION ALLOWED GROWERS TO ACCESS NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND HELP THEM IDENTIFY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR THEIR OWN FARMS.

Over 12 days in February, participants in the 2015 USA Industry Leadership and Development Mission gained an in-depth understanding of the processes, procedures and issues facing vegetable growers in the United States. After visiting growers and industry representatives in California, Delaware and Arizona, participants were able to build contacts in the industry, discuss mutual areas of concern and compare the similarities and differences between the two industries.

Global tech

The mission kicked off with a visit to the large-scale vegetable growing operation, Bolthouse Farms in Bakersfield, California, which grows the majority of its carrots for processing. As Bakersfield only receives six inches of rainfall per year, the farm is reliant on the Colorado River for its water supply but must also share it with larger cities such as Los Angeles, Las Vegas and San Diego.

The farm's processing facility is mostly automated to reduce labour costs and second-grade carrots are used for juicing or concentrate. The organic and conventional carrot juice market is the largest section of the business and the products are exported to many Asian countries, including Japan and Malaysia. The potential of this lucrative market was of particular interest to the Australian carrot growers in the group.

While in California, the group also visited the World Agriculture Expo in Tulare over two days. With over 1,400 companies exhibiting the latest in farm equipment and technology, there was something of interest for all members of the group. Delegates gathered information relevant to their businesses and formed valuable industry contacts in the process.

Salinas Valley

After the expo, the group travelled to the Salinas Valley in California to visit several farms and processing facilities. At Rio Farms, participants witnessed onions being seeded in the ground and heard about the farm's crop rotation policies to combat the high level of salt in the earth. The farm overcomes its high salinity soils and low annual rainfall with the use of overhead irrigation and leaving onion fields empty for three years before planting another crop. The group also toured an onion composting site on the farm that is used to mitigate the losses from poor quality produce.

At King City Nurseries, which is owned by Rio Farms and is one of the largest seedling nurseries on the west coast, participants were shown the entire process of transplanting seedlings and were extremely impressed with the level of automation and efficiency used to minimise waste and maximise productivity. Participants also saw a unique invention: an all-terrain vehicle with a forklift



Romaine harvest at Vessey Farms in Arizona.



Participants witnessing the seeding process at Rio Farms in the Salinas Valley.



Inside one of the greenhouses at King City Nurseries in the Salinas Valley.

prong fitted on the front to provide a steadier mode of transportation for the seedlings.

The last stop in the Salinas Valley was Taylor Farms, a highly efficient and automated processing facility that supplies salads to McDonald's restaurants. In the washing and packing area, plastic

bins are covered in a special metallic coating, which allows the company to detect if any pieces of the bin contaminate the produce as it passes through a metal detector.

The growers also appreciated the high level of biosecurity that was implemented at Taylor Farms, as all workers and guests



had to wear protective clothing and walk through a shoe sanitiser at various points of the facility to ensure the highest level of product safety.

Industry visits

Far from the hot Australian summer, participants braved a bone-chilling -20 degrees Celsius to visit the DuPont museum in Delaware, where they learnt about the 200-year history of the company. Originally starting as a gunpowder company, DuPont is now a household name in global horticulture and crop protection.

Arizona

From New York, the group travelled to the Imperial Valley in Yuma, Arizona for the final two days of the mission. At Vessey Farms, participants

were impressed with the high level of detail in every aspect of the farm, particularly the daily planning sessions that are necessary to manage over 60 lines of produce across approximately 12,000 acres. The group also toured the machinery yard and workshop, which plays a pivotal role in maintaining farm equipment onsite.

A business that thinks outside the square was the next stop on the itinerary: innovative salad grower GreenGate, which supplies the food service sector and many prisons throughout the United States. The company has recently introduced a value-add system for its prepacked salads through the inclusion of items such as grated carrots and cabbage. To reduce product spoilage, the business has also invented a bag that is sealed on three sides rather than four to improve its structural integrity.

The mission continued with a visit to Top Flavor Farms, which grows about 25 lines of product including lettuce and baby leaf varieties, across 3,000 acres. Participants witnessed a field being ploughed and noted the machine's efficiency, particularly as only one is needed to perform the task. However, the high levels of salt in the earth mean the blades need to be replaced on a weekly basis.

The final stop was Greenheart Nursery, which supplies seedlings to farms across California and Arizona. Rather than using overhead heating, Greenheart Nursery has installed innovative heating systems underneath the plants to ensure the roots receive adequate heat. Participants were also interested in the large variety of organic seedlings, which further highlighted the demand for organic produce in the United States and its similar rate of growth to Australia.

A successful journey

The 2015 mission allowed participants to network extensively with their Australian colleagues as well as world-class growers and operators throughout the United States. Participants were also able to identify potential growth markets for their Australian produce.

After witnessing many efficient farm management systems on a large scale, this has opened up the potential to investigate the benefit of introducing further automation to their Australian operations to negate high labour costs. As both the United States and Australia are facing droughts, the mission highlighted the fundamental importance of water conservation on-farm and introduced various irrigation techniques that could be implemented in Australia.

All participants agreed that Australian fresh produce was of a higher quality than its American counterpart, as the domestic market in the United States is more concerned with a convenient product that requires minimum preparation.

The high level of networking between Australian growers will ensure that the information gathered from the mission will continue to be circulated and shared among a large number of growers.



A full project report will be released in coming weeks and will be made available on the InfoVeg website: www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

This initiative was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) using the National Vegetable Levy, voluntary contributions from industry and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG12700

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More than just plastic pallets.



Full steam ahead for Harvest Farms

AS ONE OF THE YOUNGEST VEGETABLE GROWING OPERATIONS IN SOUTH EAST TASMANIA, HARVEST FARMS IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A UNIQUE CLIMATE AND NEW TECHNOLOGY TO HELP ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND DELIVERY OF ITS SALAD PRODUCE TO THE MAINLAND. DIMI KYRIAKOU SPEAKS TO HARVEST FARMS GENERAL MANAGER LAWRENCE COWLEY ABOUT HOW THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW COOLING FACILITY AND OTHER INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IS ONLY THE BEGINNING FOR THE BUSINESS.



When Harvest Farms first set up camp in Richmond, Tasmania in September 2013, the team was faced with the challenge of transforming 40 hectares of sheep and cropping paddocks into a fully operational vegetable farm.

Just 18 weeks later, the first semi-trailer of salad produce was on its way to OneHarvest's Vegco processing facility in Bairnsdale, East Gippsland, where it was packaged into bags and bowls for sale across the eastern seaboard.

Harvest Farms is the latest

addition to the OneHarvest group of companies and currently produces 20 tonnes per week of baby leaf spinach, rocket and lettuce to complement the produce grown by more than 50 contracted growers throughout Australia.

As Harvest Farms General Manager Lawrence Cowley explains, achieving this volume of produce in a short amount of time was no easy feat.

"That was a very interesting time to get this operation off the ground. Since then we have

managed to successfully grow and ship to our processing facility nearly 200 tonnes of baby leaf and by the end of the season it will be well over 600 tonnes of leaf," he says.

"The business specifically came to this part of Tasmania because of the climate. Hobart is the second driest capital city in Australia and in the south east we've got a temperate maritime climate, which is an ideal combination for leafy salad crops.

"This climate is almost unique within Australia in the key

summer months, which are the peak salad consumption months of the year. During that time, other traditional salad growing regions can be subject to summer storm activity, high temperatures and high humidity. This gives us a geographical spread of supply, so that we manage the risk associated with salad cropping."

Introducing innovation

Starting off with a fairly blank canvas meant that Harvest Farms was perfectly positioned

to introduce a range of technologies to the business. The most recent addition to the farm is a high humidity cooling system, which was installed with the help of an \$80,000 grant from the Tasmanian Government.

As Lawrence explains, the cooling system has allowed the business to harvest and ship produce to the mainland in the same day, which has ultimately helped to increase the freshness and quality of the product itself.

"Typically we can cool the product from an ambient temperature of 25-30 degrees Celsius to 2-4 degrees Celsius in 30-45 minutes in the middle of summer. The aim is to keep the product moving through that system and straight onto refrigerated vehicles for shipment later that day," Lawrence says.

"The cooling system also requires less maintenance and less capital costs than alternatives and there is less risk of dehydration of the produce after cooling. It also uses a different refrigerant which is not ozone depleting and has greater energy efficiency, so it is much more environmentally friendly."

In addition to the cooling facility, Harvest Farms has also implemented a permanent bed

system to assist in managing soil compaction and drainage. These are maintained by GPS systems linked to the local Tasmanian CORS network of base stations, which gives the business some flexibility to use precision agriculture on different sites throughout the state. A smartphone/tablet system is also used for record-keeping and communication on-farm.

"We've got high precision in our cultivations, but we want to move towards capturing real-time, key information about the cost of production, productivity and information about the crop while it's growing," Lawrence explains.

"Bringing our own growing capability online has helped our broader business immeasurably by being able to understand so much more of the growing side of the operation. That will continue to help us improve our business going forward."

Plans to expand

Now that the operation is running smoothly, Lawrence hopes to build on Harvest Farms' existing technological advances through new opportunities.

"We're aiming to do a lot more of our early product

development trials on this site," Lawrence explains. "In the coming season we will start producing lettuce crops, including cos lettuce, and supply our other processing facilities on the east coast with raw salad materials. There is further opportunity to expand the range of crops that we're growing and build on that volume."

Access to high quality water via the South East Irrigation Scheme will also benefit the business, as it will not only improve water security but assist in the expansion to additional sites in the area.

"We're talking to other producers in this region about producing salad crops in future using a rotation on neighbouring properties. We think there is significant potential to use the water resource to expand our operation and increase the diversity of enterprises in this district," he says.

Given sustainability is a major focus for the operation, compost is applied to the cropping area in the winter to help manage organic matter within the soil and ultimately improve overall crop productivity. Implementing soil rotations with green manure cover crops over the winter also assists in the management of

pests, diseases and organic matter, and reduces leaching of nutrients and soil erosion.

"In the coming season we are looking to become part of the EnviroVeg program and work toward Integrated Pest Management accreditation. I think that will help us continue learning and get recognition for some of the sustainable practices we're employing," Lawrence explains.

"I'm looking forward to better understanding the work of the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and also discussing local industry issues, particularly freight distribution and support for the broader vegetable industry."

Salad trends

While salad consumption in Australia had reportedly doubled over the last five years, the team at Harvest Farms believe there is room for growth, particularly in regards to improving the quality and freshness of salad products.

"We have a climate that is ideal for salad consumption so I think there is an opportunity to grow both the frequency of purchase and the weight of purchase. The challenge is to make sure the consumer gets the freshness, quality and consistency that keeps them going back and buying more," Lawrence says.

"It's an exciting opportunity for the vegetable industry as a whole. This sector of the industry is very dynamic; it's at the forefront of the latest trends in food so it's quite exciting.

"You've got to be constantly looking at new ways to adapt to those trends and the inherent benefits of our product makes us uniquely placed to convince consumers to eat produce that is good for you."



Photography by Loïc Le-Guilley



R&D
Market &
Value Chain
Development

R&D
Consumer
Alignment

Searching for vegetable innovation

MARKET RESEARCHER EUROMONITOR INTERNATIONAL RECENTLY CONDUCTED A GLOBAL SCAN OF VEGETABLE INNOVATIONS IN FRESH AND MINIMALLY PROCESSED VEGETABLES, IN A BID TO HELP AUSTRALIAN GROWERS DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES.

For Australian grown produce to remain relevant in the face of the increased availability, flow and competition of the globalised vegetable marketplace, Australia's growers may need to continuously adopt innovative, new technologies to enhance the superior quality of their vegetables.

This was one of the key findings in research conducted by Euromonitor International from April 2014 to January 2015, in conjunction with Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) and AUSVEG. The project aimed to identify new and commercially viable approaches for the Australian vegetable industry to enhance its overall competitiveness. These findings are detailed in the report, *Global scan for vegetable innovation – Fresh and minimally processed vegetables*.

“Competition from Asian markets, due to the unparalleled rise in agricultural output, high productivity and the wide availability of arable land for vegetable production, has reduced the overall attractiveness of Australian produce,” Euromonitor International project leader Umesh Madhavan explained.

“However, key characteristics observed across Asia suggest that Australian grown vegetables can remain competitive and retain their strong value proposition through the selective adoption of innovations detailed within this study.”

Asian marketplace

Asia consists of diverse country markets and consumer groups, and it is this market diversity that is likely to

create demand for vegetable innovations, through stronger supply chains that are driven by the proliferation of modern grocery retailing channels in both developed and developing Asian economies.

Given the rise of the new rich in Asia, the region is fostering a burgeoning culture of health consciousness, with higher-quality vegetables, fresher and healthier ingredients and more environmentally-friendly packaging ranking highly among consumer priorities.

So what does this all mean for Australian vegetable growers?

The research shortlisted several innovations that are best suited for Australian fresh and minimally processed vegetables within Asian markets. This included:

- Micro-perforations.
- Compostable packaging and

labelling.

- Recycled materials for packaging.
- Peel-and-reseal lidding films.
- Ethylene scavengers.
- “Bibimbap” packaging.
- Quick Response (QR) codes on vegetable packaging.
- Living salads.
- Fresh vegetable snack packs.
- Microgreens.

Key themes that emerge within these recommendations are the importance of longer shelf life, extended freshness, protecting the integrity of the vegetables through effective post-harvest packaging, reduced costs through the supply chain and/or manufacturing process, increased resonance with environmentally-conscious



consumers and building consumer affinity through culturally inspired packaging.

"Extended product shelf life and freshness reinforce Australia's association with quality produce, especially in Asian markets, most of which have a positive view of Australian grown produce," Mr Madhavan said.

Food safety is paramount

Technology can also play an important role in reassuring

wary consumers of food safety, particularly in the wake of suspected or actual food scares. As a result, food traceability as an assurance of food safety is a major issue. QR codes, although originally developed for non-food promotional codes, have subsequently been widely installed on vegetable packaging to provide a greater degree of quality assurance, as consumers can obtain more information about the products before purchase.

Today's consumer is

increasingly informed, health-conscious and concerned about their environmental footprint. Recognising this will undoubtedly benefit Australia's vegetable growers, particularly as consumers across Asia are steadily shifting their buying habits from traditional wet markets to organised, modern retailing. As the research findings reinforce, this will ultimately allow Australian growers to differentiate themselves from lower-priced, locally grown Asian produce.



A full project report will be made available on the InfoVeg website: www.ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

This initiative was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG13080

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with Dr Jessica Lye

March of the red imported fire ant

RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS (RIFA) ARE NATIVE TO SOUTH AMERICA, BUT HAVE SPREAD TO THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, TAIWAN, THE PHILIPPINES AND AUSTRALIA. SINCE 2001, RIFA HAS BEEN ON THE MARCH FROM BRISBANE, WHICH ULTIMATELY LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL ERADICATION PLAN. IN THIS EDITION OF THE FRONT LINE, AUSVEG NATIONAL MANAGER – SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS DR JESSICA LYE DISCUSSES THE METHODS USED TO DETECT AND ERADICATE RIFA COLONIES AND HOW GROWERS CAN HELP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS PEST.

As far as pests are concerned, the red imported fire ant (RIFA) is notable for several reasons. They are highly aggressive, with a venomous sting used to defend their nest. They swarm in large numbers to attack any animal disturbing their nest, placing humans and livestock at risk. In addition, their ability to form super colonies with multiple queens allows this pest to spread rapidly and form extensive nests.

Impact on vegetable growers

These ants are opportunistic feeders that are omnivorous and prey on invertebrates, vertebrates and plants. Overseas, RIFA nests are commonly found around the edges of vegetable fields, where they can damage crops by consuming developing vegetables, seeds, roots or tubers.

"In the United States, more than 50 crops are adversely

impacted by fire ants," Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre, Manager for Scientific Services, Dr Ross Wylie said.

"These include vegetable crops such as artichoke, asparagus, bean, broccoli, Brussels sprout, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, lettuce, okra, onion, capsicum, potato and spinach. The ants can tunnel through roots and stems and can fatally damage plants."

RIFA has the potential to not only affect crop quality and yield, but also farm workers. A RIFA sting is extremely painful and, as the name suggests, can look and feel similar to a burn. These stings often form into pustules and, when scratched, can become infected and lead to scarring. Much like a bee sting, a RIFA sting has the potential to lead to anaphylaxis.

It does not end there – infrastructure and farm machinery are also at risk, as Dr Wylie explained.

"Fire ants can also cause

damage to harvesters, leading to electrical problems with pumps and machinery, and cause damage to irrigation lines."

Extent of the spread

Genetic analysis reveals there have been four different incursions of fire ants in Australia.

"Fire ants were first discovered at the Port of Brisbane and at Richlands in February 2001. It is estimated that fire ants were here at least 20 years prior to this. Fortunately, we believe the pest was identified before it had caused significant damage or spread too far for eradication," Dr Wylie said.

The third and fourth incursions were found in Yarwun, Central Queensland, in 2006 and 2013. Both the Port of Brisbane and the 2006 Yarwun incursions have been successfully eradicated. Isolated infestations have also

been found in the Scenic Rim, Gold Coast and Lockyer Valley areas.

"Fire ants are contained in a relatively small area of South East Queensland and the level of infestation remains low," Dr Wylie said.

"While the Restricted Area for the ant is 341,000ha, the actual area of infestation is 2,715ha, which is less than one per cent of the restricted area."

RIFA eradication program

The National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program formally commenced in September 2001. The plan for RIFA consists of repeated treatment of areas that are infested or suspected of being infested, principally with baits containing insect growth regulators (IGRs). There is also a strong focus on widespread surveillance, movement controls on substances



Red imported fire ant. Image courtesy of Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org.

Pest, disease and weed surveillance

Routine checking of crops is an important aspect of maintaining crop health and gives you the best chance of identifying a new pest before it becomes established. It is important to be aware of major pests, diseases and weeds in your region, especially those that are often found on your property.

Common symptoms of pest infestation or plant disease include:

- Stem or leaf wilt.
- Leaf chlorosis or mottling.
- Puncture wounds, chew marks or tunnelling tracks in leaf tissue.
- Reduced fruit or vegetable

size and reduced crop yield.

- Underdeveloped root systems.
- Pale fuzzy or powdery growth on leaves, indicating mildew.
- Decayed roots, leaves, stems, fruit or vegetables.

It is also important to consult with neighbours about anything suspicious, as it is unlikely that the problem is restricted to one property.

What information should be recorded?

During routine monitoring, record the date and all observations, such as pests identified, growing area affected, the level of infestation and

proposed treatment plans. If no detections of pests are made, this observation should also be recorded.

Surveillance for exotic pests should also be incorporated into surveillance activities, as these records can be important for retaining market access. If an unusual pest is found on-farm, take the following actions.

- Report the pest to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.
- Record the pest or disease symptoms and take photographs.
- Record the location of the pest and restrict access of farm workers and

equipment to that zone.

- Wash hands, clothes and boots that have been in contact with affected plant material or soil.
- Do not move the affected plant – incorrect handling could further spread the pest.
- Identify equipment and machinery that have recently been used in the affected zone and decontaminate.



A list of exotic pests that may impact vegetable growers can be found in the Vegetable Industry Biosecurity Plan at www.ausveg.com.au/biosecurity.

likely to harbour fire ants, community engagement and supporting research.

“The bait used is comprised of small pieces of corn grit (about 1-3mm in size) that are soaked in soybean oil and infused with an IGR. The IGRs target the fire ants and essentially work by interrupting the ants’ reproductive cycle, therefore mitigating the risk of spread,” Dr Wylie explained.

“The fire ant nest is also treated by a direct nest injection of chemicals, which is carried out by qualified pest management technicians. Direct nest injection involves spearing a rod into the ground around the nest and flooding the nest and tunnels with insecticide.”

Effective detection

The program uses a diverse range of techniques to detect RIFA colonies. This includes remote sensing, which is comprised of thermal, near-infrared and colour imagery to

detect fire ant mounds. This technique is most effective during cooler months of the year when the mounds are up to 20 degrees Celsius hotter than the surrounding soil. Sniffer dogs, as Dr Wylie explains, are also useful for RIFA detections.

“Fire ant odour detection dogs are mainly used to confirm that sites which have been treated for fire ants are free of the ant and the treatment has been successful. The dogs have almost 100 per cent success rate in detecting if fire ants are present on a site.

“Odour detection dogs are used for targeted surveillance while remote sensing is used for surveillance of broad areas on the margins of the infestation. Australia is the only country in the world to be utilising odour detection dogs for the eradication of fire ants and electric ants.”

Remote sensing together with targeted community engagement activities have been effective in determining

the edge of the South East Queensland infestation. However, due to the spread of RIFA towards the Lockyer Valley growing region, it is clear that grower awareness will increasingly become a crucial element in the fight against this pest.

Biosecurity: Reducing the threat

Carrying out routine surveillance for pests, such as RIFA, is key to detecting pests during the early stages of an incursion. It is also important to reduce the risk of spreading pests by ensuring that farm inputs and outputs have been visually inspected for signs of pest infestation. RIFA in particular can be spread through the movement of high risk materials, such as soil, timber, mulch and gravels.

“Growers need to be aware of the risks associated with movement of these materials and follow measures

recommended by the fire ant eradication program to mitigate the risk,” Dr Wylie said.

“It is particularly important to clean soil from machinery or equipment that is moved from property to property as this soil could harbour fire ants.”



Growers can obtain more information about on-farm biosecurity measures in the Vegetable Industry Biosecurity Plan at www.ausveg.com.au/biosecurity.

Any unusual plant pest should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881). For further information, see the farm biosecurity website at www.farmbiosecurity.com.au, or contact AUSVEG National Manager – Scientific Affairs Dr Jessica Lye on (03) 9882 0277 or email jessica.lye@ausveg.com.au.

Complete the EnviroVeg Biosecurity Quiz for a FREE biosecurity gate sign

A Biosecurity Quiz is now open on the EnviroVeg website. Old and new members alike can complete the quiz, with the first 150 participants who score over 80 per cent eligible to receive a free 900mm x 600mm corflute biosecurity gate sign.

Developed as part of the EnviroVeg program, the quiz is

a great resource for increasing knowledge about good on-farm biosecurity practices. In turn, the gate sign can help growers limit the spread of plant pests into Australian growing regions.



Please visit the EnviroVeg website at www.enviroveg.com to complete the quiz.

WARNING

FARM BIOSECURITY IN PLACE

Please contact the office before entering.



**Do not enter property without prior approval.
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Do not enter growing areas.**

AUSVEG

Plant Health AUSTRALIA

EnviroVeg

Horticulture Innovation Australia

Don't miss out: EnviroVeg could be coming to visit you!

During August and October, EnviroVeg will host the following three workshops across the country in conjunction with the AUSVEG Minor Use, Biosecurity and Export programs.

- **Tuesday 25 August:** Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) Vegetable Research Facility, Forth (Tasmania)
- **Thursday 27 August:** Cranbourne Golf Club, Mornington Peninsula (Victoria)
- **Thursday 15 October:** Joondalup Resort, Perth (Western Australia)

These programs will also feature a panel of expert speakers who will deliver important R&D information for the vegetable industry.

Providing resources to growers

The AUSVEG Biosecurity, Minor Use, Export and EnviroVeg

programs are here to benefit and assist growers. By attending a workshop, you can find out about sustainable growing practices from AUSVEG Environment Coordinator Andrew Shaw, as well as access the knowledge of AUSVEG National Manager – Scientific Affairs, Dr Jessica Lye; AUSVEG Minor Use Coordinator, Scott Kwasny; and AUSVEG Assistant Manager – Export Development, Claire McClelland.

These speakers will cover on-farm biosecurity practices, obtaining access to chemicals and export readiness. Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss these programs with speakers after the presentations and maximise the knowledge they can gain from these workshops.

EnviroVeg looks forward to seeing you at one of these exciting events!

Fact sheet snapshot: Reduced till in vegetable production

The Integrated Crop Protection (ICP) extension team is currently providing key information on a variety of practical areas for growers through a series of fact sheets.

One topic of interest is reduced till in vegetable production. This process promotes soil health without frequent cultivation, using permanent beds, controlled traffic, cover cropping and crop rotation. Improving soil health in this way reduces input costs and provides many other benefits, such as a reduction in fertiliser and irrigation requirements and better soil structure and stability.

Reduced till has been used in broad acre agriculture since the mid-1980s, with the benefits over conventional tillage seen particularly over drought years.

Case Study: Mulyan Pty Ltd, Cowra NSW

The reduced till fact sheet also includes a case study on

Mulyan farm in New South Wales. Ed and James Fagan began using reduced till farming in 2008 and within one year, the extra returns and increased yields had outweighed the costs of cover cropping and composting.

Spraying for weeds over summer was not required as the ryegrass left a 'thatch' on top of the field, while soil health improved greatly due to the profusion of worms that performed the work of conventional tillage.

The ICP team consists of RMCG, Applied Horticultural Research (AHR) and IPM Technologies and is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.



For more information on available resources, visit the RMCG website at www.rmccg.com.au or contact the AUSVEG Environment Coordinator on 08 8221 5220 or andrew.shaw@ausveg.com.au.

Biologicals: Expanding options in crop protection

VEGETABLE GROWERS NEED ALL THE TOOLS AND KNOWLEDGE THEY CAN GET TO PROTECT THEIR CROPS. BIOLOGICAL CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS (BIOPESTICIDES) ARE CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS DERIVED FROM NATURAL MATERIALS SUCH AS PLANTS, FUNGI, BACTERIA, PROTOZOANS AND SOME MINERALS THAT WORK ALONGSIDE NATURAL PROCESSES TO DELIVER ANOTHER OPTION FOR CROP PROTECTION, WRITES BAYER CROPSCIENCE VEGETABLE PRODUCT MANAGER LACHLAN BIRD.

Around 40 per cent of global crop production today is lost due to weeds, insects and plant diseases. This figure would double without crop protection products, according to crop protection and seeds association CropLife International. Therefore, providing more crop protection options is vital for future sustainable agricultural practices.

A developing area in crop protection is biologic control agents. The promising expansion of biologicals is great for sustainable agricultural practices, as it provides enhanced Integrated Pest Management (IPM), improved resistance management and increased efficacy of spray programs through new and unique modes of activity.

Nurture through nature

No matter what crop is being grown, growers often recognise the mounting pressure to expand their range of crop protection solutions. Too much

reliance on too few pest and disease control products and solutions creates resistance issues, limits control options and in many cases reduces profitability.

Growers are under increasing pressure to implement a broader range of integrated solutions that can assist business operations to:

- Sustain high yields and even increase them.
- Fulfil growing consumer demand for high quality foods produced with minimal environmental impact.
- Meet retailers' increasingly stringent quality and stewardship targets.
- Comply with increased restrictions on the use of traditional crop protection products.

Bayer CropScience will soon be integrating a range of biological products into its existing crop protection range. The new 'biologicals' range will be derived from plants, bacteria and fungi with unique

plant protection properties that improve plant health and yields.

Biological products can also strengthen yield, vitality and stress tolerance in different crops through mutually beneficial relationships. An example of this is the Serenade® range of products (containing *Bacillus subtilis* strain QST713), which are based on bacteria that can revitalise soil health and consequently stimulate growth.

Sustainable solution

As naturally occurring products, a large body of information is already known about biological products, which means the period required to generate regulatory data for these products can be shorter than for traditional chemical products. However, isolating the most beneficial strain for each biological product and perfecting the ideal environment for multiplication and consistency, means their production is highly specialised.



The Serenade products are produced in large-scale pharmaceutical-grade liquid fermentation vessels under controlled conditions in a closed-loop production process with little purification, where the end material is the end-use product. This highly controlled production environment ensures that Serenade products maintain a consistent formulation and a consistent result.

These living products are great for growers who place high importance on sustainable vegetable production. Biopesticides used in grower programs can also provide the additional benefits of lower environmental impact and improved worker safety. They have very specific effects that reduce the risk of resistance, giving the grower more options for long-term crop defence.



For more information, visit www.cropscience.bayer.com/Magazine/The-Power-of-Nature.aspx



Doing your homework, reaping the rewards

THROUGH A WILLINGNESS TO INNOVATE, ENVIROVEG GOLD MEMBER BRYCE HENDERSON HAS SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCED SOME ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRACTICES TO HIS FARMING OPERATION IN QUEENSLAND. HE TALKS TO *VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA* ABOUT HOW THESE PRACTICES, WHICH HE SEES AS COMMON SENSE, HAVE ENABLED HIM TO EXPAND HIS BUSINESS.



For more than 10 years, Bryce Henderson has been growing baby leaf and lettuce products in the Lockyer Valley of Queensland. His crop area currently covers 150 acres and, due to product demand, he is looking to expand onto another 300 acres. He attributes this growth potential to extensive research into crop varieties and health, coupled with knowing exactly what is present in his soil and crops at all times.

"The cost of a soil or leaf test is \$300 – you can save so much on your input costs,"

Bryce says. "I guess that's been a success for me, constantly monitoring and changing my inputs instead of just sticking to a program year in, year out."

This approach to business has allowed Bryce to reduce input costs for all aspects of his operation. These savings are then used to fund on-farm research and innovation. Bryce says that by simply monitoring his soils regularly, before and after the growing season, he has cut fertiliser use in half over three years.

"It's quite amazing when you

unlock the soil and it starts doing wonderful things. Then the crop is naturally healthy and wards off pests. Therefore, we can use softer sprays which let the beneficials in," he explains.

Making use of common sense

Bryce manages the soil on his farm very carefully, with new land nurtured for a year before use. In the summer off-season, he only plants cover crops to let the soil recover, as he finds this is more profitable than



constantly using the soil for commercial growing all year.

“It pays dividends; I have cut down a lot on fertiliser and chemicals from doing that,” he says.

Bryce also monitors the water on an ongoing basis to ensure the crops do not receive too much or too little, and tests the quality of the water for variables such as salinity. He was also one of the first to install water efficient poly pipes in the region, and is frequently on the lookout for pests in his crops.

His pest monitoring system includes manual field inspections and the latest technologies in insect removal along his packing line, with five water filter stations along the line. The information he receives from the packing line is another point of reference for Bryce to monitor his crops and alter spraying regimes accordingly.

“It’s the best indication for me, to see what comes out of the wash. We can change our on-farm inputs based on that,” he says.

Research worth the input

Bryce invests a lot of time and effort into researching what to use on his farm. In particular, he believes variety trials are a necessity for good business.

“There is always a variety trial in the ground and, once it has been grown, we run it through the processing facility to see how it handles that aspect. If it all works well, we move it into production.”

He also looks for varieties with specific beneficial attributes. He chooses the varieties to



Photography by Love and Light Images.

trial and consequently use on farm based on characteristics including ground cover shape, how it handles processing and shelf life, as well as resistance to diseases, humidity, frost and heavy rain.

Bryce keeps informed with the latest innovations by working closely with seed companies and breeders whenever new varieties are available. He is always looking for new ideas and is travelling to America later this year for this very purpose.

“It starts with an idea, which is researched in collaboration with people with the right knowledge. Getting people who know what they are doing is important. It may or may not work, but I see the benefit of investing money to see how we go and to change the way we do things,” he says. Bryce does not just apply his research to the varieties of plants

grown; he also invests in new technologies and on-farm practices. He is currently looking to improve the method by which lettuce is cut from the ground without a reduction in quality.

Importantly, these investments relate to every aspect of his business, not just the obvious large-scale mechanical operations. His tractors are chosen specifically because of their reduced energy use and their movement is minimised, ensuring they only cover necessary ground.

In the end, the introduction of these on-farm systems sustain both the environment and Bryce’s bottom line.

“A lot of operations on the farm can be cut down by doing things a little bit differently,” he says.





with Scott Mathew

SOMETIMES THE TERMINOLOGY USED TO DESCRIBE THE DISEASE RESISTANCE BRED INTO VEGETABLE VARIETIES CAN BE A LITTLE CONFUSING. IN THIS EDITION OF ASK THE INDUSTRY, SYNGENTA TECHNICAL SERVICES LEAD SCOTT MATHEW DEFINES SOME OF THE COMMONLY USED PHRASES.

In short, disease resistance refers to a plant's ability to protect itself against infection and reduce disease development on or in the plant. The term "disease tolerance" describes a plant that shows little damage from a disease despite high levels of disease being present.

Looking at technical material for vegetable varieties, much of it talks about High Resistance (HR) or Intermediate Resistance (IR), but what does this actually describe?

HR is the ability of a plant to highly restrict the activities of a specific disease (or an insect pest) and/or restrict the visible symptoms of the disease. However, varieties with high resistance may still exhibit some symptoms when disease or insect pressure is severe.

IR is the ability of a plant variety to restrict the growth and development of the disease or insect, but will possibly show a greater range of symptoms compared to HR varieties. IR plant varieties will still show less

severe symptoms or damage than susceptible plant varieties when grown under similar environmental conditions and/or pest or pathogen pressure.

Important notes

While plants that are HR or IR provide an excellent management tool to greatly reduce the effects of plant disease, you should remember that disease resistance in plants is only one of the management tools available. Even plants with a HR rating may still show some symptoms when disease or insect pressure is severe.

There are also trade-offs for those varieties that have increased resistance to disease or insect infection. The resistance of these varieties may lack other qualities such as flavour, yield or quality.

A variety that is resistant to one disease may also be more susceptible to another that is equally important. For example, a lettuce cultivar that is resistant to Mosaic virus may be sensitive

to Corky root disease, while another that resists Corky root may be vulnerable to Downy mildew (*Bremia lactucae*).

Another potential downside to resistance, depending on the host disease system, is that resistance sometimes breaks down quickly under the pressure of fast-developing new disease strains. In this instance, the resistance traits fail to protect the plant.

Tips for disease management

- Use resistant cultivars when available.
- Use cultural practices including:
 - o The establishment of a crop-free period.
 - o Crop rotation.
 - o Destruction of possible weed hosts.
 - o Increasing space between plants to improve air circulation and reduce humidity.
 - o Minimising leaf wetness.

- o Removing all crop debris as soon as harvest is complete.
- o Irrigation management.
- Use chemical control with fungicides or insecticides registered for or issued as a minor use permit by the Agricultural Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) for the disease or insect that you are targeting.



For more information or to ask a question, please contact your local Syngenta Territory Manager, the Syngenta Advice Line on 1800 067 108, visit www.syngenta.com.au or email Vegetables Australia: info@ausveg.com.au. Please note that your questions may be published.

More in store for Integrated Crop Protection extension project



PROTECTING CROPS IS VITAL FOR VEGETABLE PRODUCERS TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY, PROFITABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY ON THEIR FARMS. THE INTEGRATED CROP PROTECTION EXTENSION PROJECT HAS HAD MANY ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR, WITH MORE DEVELOPMENTS UNDERWAY TO COMMUNICATE KEY R&D INFORMATION.



On site discussing IPM and soil management.

The Integrated Crop Protection (ICP) extension project, run jointly by RMCG, Applied Horticulture Research and IPM Technologies, aims to promote best management practices for plant health in the Australian vegetable industry, including responsible chemical use. The project is continuing to work closely with growers, advisers, industry and the Soil Wealth extension project to provide tailor-made solutions to growers throughout the country.

Demonstration sites

Demonstration sites for the project aim to show real-time crop protection improvements in a practical way. Regional demonstration sites have been established for training, events and other communication activities with the following themes:

- **Sydney Basin, NSW:** Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- **Bundaberg, QLD:** Pest management and nematode control.
- **North West, TAS:** ICP and beyond IPM.
- **Cranbourne, VIC:** Using IPM and disease management.
- **Koo Wee Rup, VIC:** Biofumigation/cover crops and soil borne disease control in conjunction with the Soil Wealth project.
- **Manjimup, WA:** Soil borne disease, biofumigation and nutrient management in conjunction with the Soil Wealth project.

- **Adelaide Hills, SA:** Using IPM (under development).
- **Virginia Plains, SA:** Soil borne disease and nutrient management in conjunction with the Soil Wealth project (under development).
- **Swan Coastal Plain, WA:** Biofumigation, soil borne diseases and alternatives to metham sodium (under development).

Industry networking

The ICP project is also working closely with grower groups to help communicate information from the program. This includes the Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Group, Vegetable Graduate Alumni Industry Network and the AUSVEG EnviroVeg program.

Master classes, think tanks and champion networking events have also been developed to connect like-minded growers and advisers with industry leaders on ICP issues. Upcoming master classes include *Soil borne disease management – Now and in the future* in September 2015, which will be held in conjunction with the Soil Wealth project.

In addition, the ICP Community of Practice has been established to bring together individuals who share a passion for the management of insects, diseases and weeds in Australian vegetable crops. It provides a valuable opportunity to learn from other members, increase networks, keep updated on ICP news and

access a free advice hotline. Please contact Carl Larsen on 03 9882 2670 or carll@rmcg.com.au to register your interest.

Training and events

Over 200 growers and advisers have participated in a range of training activities to improve the knowledge and capacity of ICP in the vegetable industry. Information sessions were held on the control of pests in brassicas in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia; controlling Diamondback moth, Rutherglen bug and Brassica whitefly in the Sydney Basin, NSW; and spray application workshops for getting the most out of your chemicals in Victoria and South Australia.

Information sessions on preparing for the season ahead and additional spray application workshops are also under development.

Knowledge hub

The ICP project team is also looking to prioritise and repackaging the wealth of existing information on ICP and communicate this to the vegetable industry in an accessible way. Electronic and hard copy fact sheets on a range of topics have been developed, while videos developed in conjunction with the Soil Wealth project are available on YouTube.

A website (www.protectingcrops.com.au) has also been developed to act as a repository for publications produced, information about



Results from a cover crop leek trial.

training, field days and other upcoming events and will be used for general communication and blogs.

Growers can also follow the project on Twitter using the handle @ProtectingCrops or by visiting twitter.com/ProtectingCrops. Progress in demonstration sites can also be viewed at www.facebook.com/protectingcrops.



For more information or to register your interest, contact Gordon Rogers on 0418 517 777 or gordon@ahr.com.au and Anne-Maree Boland on 0427 679 042 or anne-mareeb@rmcg.com.au. You can also register your interest online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/soilwealth_ICP_EoI.

This project is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA) using the National Vegetable Levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG13078



AUSVEG has confirmed its strong media presence in the lead-up to July, particularly due to the success of the 2015 National Horticulture Convention and the prominent coverage of the “Cool Change” campaign, which calls for meaningful reform to Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) laws.

AUSVEG reached a national audience of 2,864,441 throughout the month of June, with a total of 576 media reports mentioning AUSVEG across print and broadcast media.

Record-breaking Convention attendance

The 2015 National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence held from 25-27 June attracted a record number of delegates and received a steady flow of media attention throughout the successful event. After teaming up with Apple and Pear Australia Limited for 2015, over 1,400 Australian and international delegates flooded Jupiters Gold Coast to hear about the latest developments in horticulture and network with their colleagues.

In the lead-up to the event, AUSVEG Manager – Events and

Marketing Lauren Winterbottom featured across both print and broadcast media to discuss how the 2015 National Horticulture Convention injected millions of dollars into the Gold Coast economy. AUSVEG Manager – Communications Andrew MacDonald carried the message further, frequently discussing the latest updates for the event.

The National Horticulture Convention received media coverage Australia-wide, particularly the speaker sessions, Great Debate and the National Awards for Excellence, with award winners featuring in media stories in their home states.

AUSVEG reignites CoOL message

The launch of the Cool Change campaign in June received prominent national media coverage across all media platforms. AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy appeared in national media discussing the launch of the campaign and video, calling for meaningful labelling improvements.

AUSVEG Deputy CEO Andrew White also featured extensively in print and on broadcast media, reinforcing the need to reform

Australia’s CoOL laws.

Mr White emphasised that a recent World Trade Organisation ruling that the CoOL system in the United States breached international trade regulations was not a barrier for the successful implementation of CoOL laws in Australia, adding that Australian reform didn’t need to be as complex.

Mr White also highlighted that numerous major economies, including the European Union, the UK and Japan, have implemented CoOL systems with ease.

Rogue PIBs should be named and shamed

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy featured across broadcast media calling for any rogue operators in the horticulture sector to be named and shamed, following recent evidence given to a Senate Inquiry into agricultural levies that referred to one unnamed Peak Industry Body (PIB) suspected of financial impropriety. Mr Mulcahy said those responsible should be named, and failing to do so tarnished the reputations of all PIBs doing the right thing, including AUSVEG.

Consumer research highlights

AUSVEG Assistant Manager – Industry Development Kurt Hermann widely discussed Project Harvest data across print and broadcast media, saying that the number of consumers opting to buy their vegetables from local greengrocers has increased.

Mr Hermann also discussed recent Colmar Brunton research findings that suggested the weekly shop is dead, with Australian consumers going through the checkout on average more than 135 times per year – almost three times per week.

Key Topics

- The 2015 National Horticulture Convention receives record-breaking numbers.
- AUSVEG ramps up pressure for meaningful Country of Origin Labelling reform with launch of Cool Change campaign.
- AUSVEG calls for rogue PIBs to be named and shamed.
- Consumer research breaks down shopping habits of Australian buyers.



Strong leader drives success for Haifa Australia

EXPERIENCE IN DIVERSE SECTORS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FERTILISER INDUSTRY HAS PUT SAFE HANDS AT THE WHEEL OF HAIFA AUSTRALIA.

Trevor Dennis has been the Managing Director of the Israeli manufacturer and supplier's Australian arm since its establishment in Melbourne in 2008. The company has continued to grow from strength to strength under his guidance.

While the Australian office is only young, it also supports New Zealand and other Pacific markets including New Caledonia and Tahiti. As a result, Haifa's range of products has built a strong reputation with local growers over the past 23 years and through other regions of the world for more than 40 years.

From farm to business

Achieving a degree in agricultural science from Melbourne University, Trevor's experience extends from the paddock to international trade.

He has worked in a range of areas and business levels including agronomy; territory management; fertiliser sales and distribution; fertiliser and agricultural chemical product development; latest technology systems including GPS; irrigation and water management; marketing; business development; and general business management.

Trevor is highly passionate about the future of the agricultural industry and has always played an active role in communities. He also runs his own small property

and this, combined with the ongoing commitments of a proud parent, has given Trevor a vital perspective when it comes to important business management decisions.

He currently manages all levels of the Haifa Australia business, from staffing through to global sales and logistics.

A leader in fertiliser solutions

Haifa is a world pioneer in using potassium nitrate for agriculture and is known for its specialty fertiliser solutions. In Australia, it is the largest supplier of water soluble fertilisers through all major national rural resellers.

"We aim to bring the best quality fertilisers to the Australian market. Our products have extremely low levels of any impurity and have a very high solubility index," Trevor says.

The product range is backed by strong agronomic support, field trials and highly valued feedback from growers at regular meetings and industry events. After identifying strong market demand for a low chloride and sodium granular NPK fertiliser, the company moved quickly to develop a new product range known as Turbo K™.

Ideally suited to planting or topdressing of horticultural crops, the major benefit of the fertilisers is that they use potassium nitrate as their potassium source and,



Haifa Australia Managing Director Trevor Dennis.

as a result, have very low chloride and sodium levels. The Haifa team expects the new product range will help Australian growers become more productive by limiting the additional "salts" applied to soils.

Promising results

Commercial field trials with potato growers have also shown up to 25 per cent increased production from using Haifa's controlled release fertiliser (CRF) technology. In particular, its Multicote Agri™ fertiliser is designed to feed crops continuously throughout growing seasons, achieving optimal growth and yield production.

Based on the company's polymer coating technology, it releases nutrients into soils in a gradual manner, according to plant's requirements. This

prevents leaching, thereby improving nutrient use efficiency and allowing reduced application rates.

The product also differs from many other controlled release fertilisers because its release rate is governed by temperature, not moisture. This is important in ensuring the nutrients being supplied to plants are not lost during periods of high rainfall or over-watering.

Trevor says the cost price squeeze and increasing competitiveness remain lasting challenges for the industry, however, there are opportunities to embrace new technologies.

"Good irrigation and fertigation goes hand-in-hand and by using Haifa products, growers can use less water to achieve the same or increased production levels."



For more information, please visit www.haifa-group.com.

MINOR USE AWARENESS PROGRAM

Minor Use Awareness Program: Latest news



GET INVOLVED IN MINOR USE! TAKE PART. BE INFORMED.

The Minor Use Education Symposium, held at Jupiters Gold Coast on 27 June, brought expert speakers from across Australia to present key information to a diverse range of stakeholders and growers.

The speakers included CropLife CEO Matthew Cossey, Applied Horticulture Research agronomist Marc Hinderager, NSW Department of Primary Industries Senior Research Scientist Dr Grant Herron, Bayer CropScience's Robert Vitelli, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority's Dr Jason Lutze and AUSVEG Minor Use Coordinator Scott Kwasny.

The presentations from these diverse speakers covered topics

including the minor use system, responsible use of chemicals and managing resistance in pest populations.

Chemical use and access were presented to the attendees, with questions raised and discussions held between like-minded individuals. AUSVEG sought involvement from stakeholders and growers across Australia to gain further knowledge on chemicals in Australia.

Minor Use Database

Minor use plays an integral role in the Australian vegetable industry, as on-label options are often limited for many vegetable

pest issues. This is especially the case for emerging crops grown for niche markets.

Given this, it is vital that growers and stakeholders register their details on the Minor Use Database as it is a great opportunity to gain improved access to chemicals. You can also have your say regarding minor use requests and priorities for the vegetable industry.

The Minor Use Database plays an essential role in the continuation of minor use permits. Minor use permits need to have direct grower involvement when:

- They are up for renewal.
- There are data generation

requirements to continue the permit.

- Information from growers regarding permit use needs to be gathered.

For these reasons and more, it is incredibly important to have as many growers representing as many different vegetable commodities as possible.



To request any of the minor use forms, please contact AUSVEG Minor Use and Agronomy Coordinator Scott Kwasny on (03) 9882 0277, or email minoruse@ausveg.com.au.

Project Number: VG13096

Minor use permits

Permit Number	Crop	Pesticide Group	Active	Pest	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Permit Holder	States
PER80718	Vegetables, fruit and fruiting crops, food producing plants and ornamentals	Fumigant	Methyl bromide	Fruit fly, Silverleaf whitefly, thrips	12-Apr-15	31-Mar-25	Biosecurity SA – Plant Health Operations	All states
PER13396	Field grown parsley and coriander	Insecticide	Methomyl	Thrips, Western flower thrips	29-Jun-12	30-Jun-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER81241	Lettuce, chicory, endive, radicchio, spinach and baby spinach	Herbicide	Phenmedipham	Broadleaf weeds	29-May-15	31-May-20	Growcom	All states (except Vic)
PER14837	Leafy vegetables including head and leafy lettuce, rocket, silverbeet (chard), endive, spinach, Asian leafy vegetables in field and protected crops	Fungicide	Manipropamid	Downy mildew	24-May-15	31-Mar-18	Growcom	All states (except Vic)

All efforts have been made to provide the most current, complete and accurate information on these permits, however we recommend that you confirm the details of these permits at the following APVMA website: <http://www.apvma.gov.au/permits/search.php>

Introducing Kalettes™

South Australian Brussels sprouts growers, Eastbrook Farm, have teamed up with UK-based vegetable breeder Tozer Seeds and Fresh Select to launch a unique new vegetable, Kalettes™.

The cross between kale and Brussels sprouts was developed by Tozer Seeds using traditional plant breeding methods. The product is said to have a sweet,

nutty flavour which is more subtle than a Brussels sprout and can be steamed, sautéed or eaten fresh in salads. It was initially launched in the United Kingdom in 2010 under the name Flower Sprout™ and later hit shelves in the United States.

The product is available nationally in Coles supermarkets.

Senator Madigan backs CoOL reform at AMFP Industry Day

Independent Victorian Senator John Madigan voiced his support for AUSVEG's campaign for better Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) laws and vowed to fight for their implementation during an address at the Australian Manufacturing and Farming Program (AMFP) Industry Day in Wodonga, Victoria.

AUSVEG representatives manned a stall at the event hosted by Senator Madigan and raised awareness about the need for better CoOL laws, with many attendees praising AUSVEG for its public stance on the issue.

Bob Katter MP, Cathy McGowan AO MP and Senator Janet Rice presented at the event, which included

a trade show of dozens of local manufacturers, small businesses and innovators displaying their products.

AUSVEG would like to congratulate Senator Madigan on a successful event and thank him for his ongoing support for stronger CoOL laws.



Senator John Madigan supporting stronger Country of Origin Labelling laws.

Australia and Israel pursue agricultural opportunities

A delegation from AUSVEG in conjunction with Haifa Australia recently met with Australia's Ambassador to Israel, Dave Sharma, in Tel Aviv to discuss agricultural opportunities between the two countries.

Initiated and coordinated by the Israel Trade Commission, the delegation included leading growers from Victoria and Queensland.

The group overwhelmingly recognised Israel's expertise in research and leading-edge technologies that could benefit

the Australian farming industry. The potential for Israel and Australia to work together on labour markets and supply was also acknowledged.

"Israel has the technologies that Australian growers and industry can utilise and which can then help us meet the growing opportunities in Asia," Haifa Australia Managing Director Trevor Dennis said.

The delegation also visited Agritech, the 19th International Agricultural Technology Exhibition, in Tel Aviv.



CALENDAR



24-28 August 2015

2015 Youth-Ag Summit

Where: Canberra, ACT

What: Falling under the theme, *Feeding a Hungry Planet*, the 2015 Youth-Ag Summit will provide a forum for young agricultural leaders to discuss potential solutions to global issues, discover opportunities and act on solutions for sustainable agriculture that will help feed a growing population.

Further information:

Please visit www.youthagsummit.com

2-4 September 2015

Asia Fruit Logistica

Where: Hong Kong

What: Asia Fruit Logistica is Asia's leading trade show for the international fresh fruit and vegetable business. Last year's event attracted more than 8,100 visitors from 64 countries. The Logistica is accompanied by Asiafruit Congress, which takes place the day before the trade show.

Further information:

Please visit www.asiafruitlogistica.com/en

Around the states

South Australia



The past few weeks have been very busy for the South Australian vegetable industry, following the 2015 Reverse Trade Mission and the National Horticulture Convention on the Gold Coast.

AUSVEG SA joined the Adelaide Produce Market to welcome the Reverse Trade Mission delegation to South Australia from 21-23 June. The mission comprised over 40 leading fresh produce buyers from the key markets of the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei, Macau and Malaysia. We are thankful to the AUSVEG National Export team for bringing the event to South Australia and for arranging yet another successful mission.

The delegation visited a

number of leading South Australian vegetable growers as well as the Adelaide Produce Markets, allowing buyers to see first-hand the exceptional quality and safety of South Australian fresh produce. As part of the mission, AUSVEG SA and the Adelaide Produce Market held an International Trade Evening on Monday 22 June at former MasterChef contestant and Adelaide Produce Market Ambassador Callum Hann's Sprout Cooking School. Around 150 growers and industry members were officially welcomed by the South Australian Minister for Investment and Trade, the Hon. Martin Hamilton-Smith MP, and were treated to a specially-prepared menu using locally sourced produce.

AUSVEG SA thanks the many members of state parliament in attendance including Member for Taylor Leesa Vlahos MP,

Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment Tim Whetstone MP and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Primary Industries, Food and Wine, Forests and Fisheries the Hon. David Ridgway MLC. The evening left a considerable impact on mission attendees who appreciated the opportunity to meet with government officials and a high number of South Australian growers from throughout horticulture.

The following morning, the mission toured the Adelaide Produce Market to meet stall holders before departing for Brisbane. The AUSVEG SA State Manager was fortunate enough to travel to Brisbane with the mission and develop key relationships with the overseas buyers in attendance. Please contact AUSVEG SA if you would like any assistance in making contact with the delegates. It was very pleasing

to see many South Australian growers doing business as a result of the mission and we are very keen to follow-up to support our members to develop export opportunities.

Finally, AUSVEG SA would like to congratulate our national colleagues at AUSVEG and Apple and Pear Australia Limited for running an extremely successful National Horticulture Convention. It was heartening to see a strong contingent of South Australians on the Gold Coast this year and we are hopeful that our growers continue to support this exceptional event.

Jordan Brooke-Barnett

AUSVEG SA
State Manager
Suite 205, 22 Grenfell St
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8221 5220

Victoria



The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) recently outlined its new investment plan for Horticulture 2014-18 at the Centre of Excellence in Tatura. The plan detailed DEDJTR's agricultural portfolio investment priorities for the horticulture sector over the next four years.

This investment plan did not include the vegetable sector, which is most disappointing from the industry's perspective. Although the vegetable sector is a significant contributor to horticultural production in the state, DEDJTR suggested that the industry had not, at the time of printing, sought to co-invest with the government in

a significant way. Both the VGA and AUSVEG are addressing this situation.

The Victorian vegetable industry contributes the following:

- In 2013-14, it consisted of 552 vegetable businesses (excluding potato and tomato production).
- It produced a gross value of \$985 million for vegetable production for human consumption in Victoria in 2012-13.
- It is the second largest vegetable producing state by value, after Queensland, contributing 26 per cent of total production value for Australia.
- It is the largest vegetable exporting state, contributing 31 per cent to Australia's vegetable exports value in 2013-14.
- In 2010-11, there were approximately 4,000 people

permanently employed and approximately 4,000 to 5,000 employed casually in the vegetable industry.

- In 2013-14, the total area sown to vegetables was approximately 27,000 ha (excluding potato and tomato production).

In welcome news, the Epping Fresh Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market will open on 3 August. This project commenced some 11 years ago and has been overseen by five premiers, five project ministers, four CEOs, two Chairmen and countless project consultants to finally deliver a new market which is three years over the original completion date. This project has more than doubled its original budget of \$270 million to more than \$600 million. Many of the growers and wholesalers still have major issues and concerns with the operation of the market, which will be tested on 3 August.

Also, several vegetable farms in Victoria which employ large numbers of permanent and casual labour have been approached by the Trade Union Movement under Fair Work Regulations 2009, Entry Notice Regulation 3.27, to meet with staff during meal times.

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Tasmania



There has finally been some good news for growers who wish to export their goods/produce, as businesses can now receive assistance under the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES).

The TFGA congratulates the Federal Government on making the decision to fund an extra \$50 million per annum over the next four years, starting in 2016. It also needs to be recognised that there has been a lot of lobbying and work undertaken by Tasmanian businesses and individuals to get exports recognised under the TFES.

A couple of key points from the Productivity Commission's final report (2014) into Tasmania's shipping costs and competitiveness of Tasmania's freight industry were:

- Tasmania, like mainland Australia, is an island economy. It is serviced by high quality, yet relatively high cost, containerised domestic shipping services. The viability of direct international shipping services is affected by the cost of coastal shipping. Given its reliance on sea

transport, Tasmania is particularly affected by inefficiencies embedded in coastal shipping regulation. This regulation should be reviewed and reformed as a matter of priority.

- Tasmania faces broader economic and social challenges and the Australian Government should put less emphasis on freight subsidy schemes in favour of reforms that have national and Tasmanian benefits (such as coastal shipping reform) and those that directly enhance the competitiveness and productivity of the Tasmanian economy.

Coastal shipping

Tasmania is an island state. Unlike other states, we are largely reliant on coastal shipping for inbound and outbound services. There are specific circumstances unique to Tasmania that are highly relevant to this inquiry.

However, the *Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian*

Shipping) Act 2012 has had, and is having, adverse effects on agricultural producers through increased shipping costs and reduced access to freight services. The TFGA supports the National Farmers Federation position to repeal the *Coastal Trading Act* to reduce the red tape and compliance burden on the agriculture industry and encourage greater competition in the Australian coastal trade.

Future reform options

The Bass Strait link is an unavoidable part of the supply chain between Tasmania and the mainland. This means that the cost of transport across this tract of water must be competitive to realise economic potential – as must be the cost of moving product and people around the national road highway on Australia's mainland.

It is essential that Tasmania is seen as one link in the national transport network and that its geographical location does not put it at an economic disadvantage. All Australians

have much to gain from the implementation of a fairer transport cost structure. Greater accessibility for tourists would benefit all Australians. Increased profitability for importers, exporters and their customers would enable Tasmania to become more independent financially.

Currently, TFES is the best option to gain a more even playing field for those shipping goods/produce across Bass Strait. It is up to all of us to maintain this assistance until we can consider a better option where we are at an even playing field with our mainland counterparts.

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Around the states

Northern Territory



The vegetable season in the Northern Territory is well underway with okra, snake beans, Asian melons and cucumbers as the major crops from the Darwin region. However, vegetable growing in the NT is still very much affected by the Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV) incursion. The good news so far is that no more vegetable crops have tested positive to CGMMV since the initial four vegetable properties were found to be positive earlier this year.

Market access to the southern interstate markets has been maintained for those farms that have been tested and found to be free of the virus, and can then provide the appropriate

documentation to their agents and interstate authorities. The infected vegetable properties along with the infected melon farms remain in quarantine for all CGMMV host plants until the process for returning these farms to production is developed and agreed to by all parties.

One of the major impacts of the CGMMV incursion is growers' lack of confidence to spend lots of money upfront on high input crops like Lebanese cucumbers. Crops are tested for this virus about four weeks after planting and by this time there has been a considerable investment in hybrid seed, materials and labour. The grower is then on tenterhooks until the result is known. This

has led to an initial reduction in cucumber planting in the NT, with the lower input Asian melons being preferred, but the cucumber numbers are picking up now as some confidence returns to the industry.

The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries' *Field Guide to Pests, Beneficials, Diseases and Disorders of Vegetables in northern Australia* is proving to be a big hit with the industry and domestic vegetable growers as well. Released in April this year and supported by AUSVEG and Territory Natural Resource Management, with a full Vietnamese version, it has been eagerly snapped up by all

those who peruse this excellent publication. You can download a pdf version at www.nt.gov.au/d/Primary_Industry/index.cfm?header=Vegetable%20Field%20Guide.

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Western Australia



vegetablesWA

The Gascoyne region suffered recently when severe category three Cyclone Olwyn struck Carnarvon with destructive winds of 150 kilometres an hour and wind gusts of up to 205 kilometres per hour on 13 March. This was then followed by a flood for residents on North River Road.

The initial clean-up was undertaken by the growers quickly so they could get back into planting. Most growers had seedlings in the ground within three weeks of the cyclone and produce started appearing at the Perth market by late May. This is a great achievement from the growers who had no

news of the funding they would receive until 30 April. There is still a long road ahead as it has set most growers back by at least two years, due to the structural damage. The cost to fix this damage is substantial and the contractors are not available until later this year.

The Gascoyne region is now running a marketing campaign through the Gascoyne Food Council to highlight the work of growers in the region. There was also a launch by BWEB, Farmer Jacks and the Gascoyne Food Council on 27 June. Creating a festival of local produce, the Farmer Jacks store was full of WA food for

tasting and purchasing, with a focus on Buy West Eat Best branded product and new season Gascoyne produce.

As an industry association it is our task to provide services to members and in light of this, we are going to be running a Leadership Summit at the Crown, Burswood on 30 July. This event will be a Q&A to discuss the following topic: *Where will the industry be in five years' time – Focusing on emerging end user trends*. This event is the perfect opportunity for growers to connect with panellists and discuss the future of the vegetable industry.

vegetablesWA is here and can help our growers with many avenues. Please contact us with any queries or ideas you may have.

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Queensland



Growcom has produced a series of new webinars to encourage production horticulture growers to become better prepared for the next extreme weather event.

The webinars are part of Growcom's *Whatever the Weather* natural disaster preparedness program, which is funded by the Federal Government through the Department of Industry and Science (Business program).

The state has experienced a decade of disasters, ranging from severe floods to major cyclones that have affected the majority of horticultural regions.

Some growers have faced damage to their farms and businesses for several years in a row.

Authorities say that people should continue to expect

extreme weather events as a regular feature of the Queensland climate in years to come. Growers have learnt a lot from what they have already been through and this can help to prepare for future events.

Growcom's *Whatever the Weather* program is designed to encourage growers to be more proactive in their risk management, to take stock and look at the options for reducing the exposure of their farms and businesses to extreme weather events and to get into a better position to recover more quickly afterwards.

Project Manager Jane Muller has been talking to and gathering information from growers, financial councillors, industry recovery officers and local and state government

officers over the past year to put together practical resources and information for growers via the webinars and a dedicated *Whatever the Weather* page on the Growcom website.

Each webinar uses the practical framework – Prevent, Prepare, Respond, Recover (PPRR) – which is used by emergency services in Australia and throughout the world to crystallise thinking and planning for dealing with disasters.

The webinars cover all the essential information growers need to:

- Prevent or reduce impacts from extreme weather events.
- Prepare the property and farm business for extreme weather.

- Be ready to respond immediately and effectively if a weather event is imminent.
- Recover from a natural disaster event.

The webinars are supported by links to resources, templates, seasonal forecasts and available assistance on the Growcom website (www.growcom.com.au/projects/disaster-risk-mgmt).

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New South Wales



The horticulture and broader agriculture industry is experiencing a ramp of reviews and consultations, with the announcement of the review into the Horticulture Code of Conduct and further consultation on Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL).

NSW Farmers is pleased to support the announcement into the Horticulture Code of Conduct. For too long, industry has been calling for a review into the Code due to certain flaws in some sections. Growers have previously noted concern on whether a wholesaler is a merchant or a trader, as well as first point-of-sale transactions prior to the commencement of the Code and the current

mediation model of the Code.

While the draft issues paper is set to be released shortly, NSW Farmers is encouraging all of its horticulture members to participate in the review to ensure industry concerns are properly addressed.

NSW Farmers has also been pleased to see the Federal Government ramp up its consultation into CoOL, with the release of a consumer survey into labelling and logos and the release of potential safe harbour defence reforms. NSW Farmers has been working closely with a number of industry groups, including AUSVEG, to ensure that this issue is properly addressed and assessed by the government.

Safe harbour defences have created confusion among consumers and growers alike, and it is time for these laws to be reformed for better clarity and understanding. Any reform to the laws will need to ensure that the main characterising ingredients of a product are stated, along with the percentage of Australian produce in that product. NSW Farmers believes this will not only give power to the consumer to make informed purchasing decisions, but will also highlight the quality of Australian produce.

NSW Farmers also supports increasing the visibility of a country of origin statements on a product through the

implementation of a standardised logo. The government has been seeking feedback into new logos that provide a consumer with the information required for informed purchasing. NSW Farmers believes that the feedback from this process will be vital in helping industry create real and important change.

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