

Improving business skills and value chain awareness for young Queensland vegetable growers Phase 1

Clinton McGrath
The Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry, QLD

Project Number: VG09081

VG09081

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young Queensland vegetable growers Phase 1**

**Clinton McGrath
Agri-Science Queensland a service of
the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation**

HAL VG09081

Improving business skills and value chain awareness for young Queensland vegetable growers
Phase 1

March, 2012

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Purpose of the report: This report details extension undertaken by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation in improving business skills and value chain awareness for young Queensland vegetable growers.

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1. Summary

The premise of the project VG09081, Improving business skills and value chain awareness for young Queensland vegetable growers Phase 1, surrounded the facilitation of two young vegetable grower groups in important vegetable production regions of Queensland. One group in the Lockyer Valley and west Moreton regions centred on Gatton, and the second group on the Darling Downs centred on Stanthorpe.

The project delivered a series of information seminars, business skills training and value chain events and a number of study tours.

These outputs provided the younger generation of the vegetable industry training and awareness of relevant business skills, an improved understanding of the value chains their businesses participate in and exposed them to future challenges and opportunities that may exist for their business.

Strong evidence exists to suggest this project also helped participants form relevant working networks, increase communication, expand production and collaborate more effectively across the whole vegetable supply chain.

Project events were extremely well supported and this could be attributed to the key success factors of strong facilitation of the groups and the custom design, development, relevance and delivery of the events.

Evaluation identified strong support to continue the events into the future and it is recommended that this occurs..

2. Introduction

The need for this project arose from proponents of the Australian vegetable industry strategic plan, Vegvision 2020 (2006), the Australian Vegetable Industry People Development Training Needs Analysis (2007) and recommendations from previous industry projects HG07024 and HG08022.

The project was targeted to the future generation of vegetable growers, primarily vegetable growers under the age of 45. This audience included established or new young vegetable growers who wished to expand their business and examine other business opportunities. These participants also had the desire to create a new business plan which would incorporate a greater understanding of their business finances, develop marketing opportunities and establish networks.

The Australian vegetable industry strategic plan Vegvision 2020 outlined the strategic importance of developing skills and knowledge in the vegetable industry and the need for a long term commitment to developing the industry's people resources. The resulting Australian Vegetable Industry People Development Training Needs Analysis (Needs Analysis) identified a need within the industry for business management skills.

With this background knowledge and strong evidence from the local industry, the project leader commenced development of the VG09081 project which is believed to be the first of its types in the region.

The project aimed to deliver outputs in line with needs identified in the Needs Analysis of learning opportunities through small group workshops, grower study tours to other farms and visits to other businesses in the supply chain.

Another aim was to ensure growers willingness to participate in project outputs by developing materials and delivery methods that were suitable for growers such as convenience of training, location and timing of events, developing materials that were emphatic relevant, and at a level suitable for the growers.

The Needs Analysis also identified the lack of grower networks and facilitated groups. Facilitated groups were identified as encouraging members of a group to take up training and industry service providers stated that one of the largest barriers to training is the lack of facilitators for regional groups.

The project would coordinate grower groups and provide a facilitator for all group events.

Southern Downs or Stanthorpe Group

Stanthorpe is a vegetable producing area in the Southern Downs Regional Council of Queensland. Traditionally the area is focussed on the production of summer vegetables including lettuce, brassicas, capsicums, eggplants and various other leafy vegetables. A young grower group had been informally meeting for approximately two years prior to the commencement of this project and also participated in two previous study tours.

Lockyer Valley or Gatton Group

Gatton, located in the Lockyer Valley Regional Council, is the main centre for vegetable production in the region. The main production occurs in the winter months with major crops being lettuce, brassicas, potatoes and pumpkins. This project was the first time a young growers group had been facilitated in the region.

3. Method and activities

This project used three main activities or event processes to achieve its outputs. These were grower information sessions, grower study tours and stand alone business skills and value chain awareness workshops. The activities were all integrated so as to allow group reflection on learning's from each activity and follow up of information requests.

After a short period and initial evaluations, it was decided to further integrate the value chain awareness and business skills activities into the grower seminars to expose the training to a larger audience, allow targeted delivery of needed skills at relevant times for the growers, and it was the preferred method of delivery for the majority of participants. This was documented in Milestone 1 of the project (Appendix 1).

Further, by integrating the events it would also allow the facilitator to develop the experiential learning concept with growers thus facilitating the theoretical learning process with real business situations.

3.1 Grower Information seminars

By far the most popular activities of the project were the regular grower information seminars.

During the course of the project a total of 17 young vegetable grower's seminars were conducted. Six seminars were in the Gatton region and eleven in the Stanthorpe region.

The project leader in conjunction with others planned, developed, delivered, and facilitated the seminars with the aim of combining current relevant information for young vegetable growers along with succinct business skill and value chain awareness activities.

Young growers had a large guidance on the timing and topics for seminars.

Participation for the seminars and workshops was above expected by the project leader and continued for the length of the project. The average attendance was 36 participants in Gatton and 27 in Stanthorpe. There was regular participation at the seminars from other young growers from other regions within southern Queensland including the Fassifern Valley and the eastern Darling Downs regions.

A high rate of repeat participants was indicative to the project leader that the seminars were positively beneficial to the groups.

Seminars were conducted at various times across the grower's seasons and also included shed meetings, farm tours and field walks as part of the seminar. Seminars also engaged modern technology such as the use of webinars and video conferencing. Generally the seminars were asked to be pre season, mid season and post season and topics adjusted accordingly. Some examples of the range of topics included:

- Consumer insights on vegetables,
- Trends in overseas vegetable production,
- Opportunities and threats for local vegetable industry; dealing with banks and off farm investing,
- And various presentations on locally relevant topics, such as pest and disease control and plan nutrition issues.

Seminars also included an activity, quiz or challenge that was used to reinforce the growers learning from the seminar or workshop and also to provide an element of fun and gamesmanship. Challenges ranged from simple vegetable trivia to complex value chain scenarios.

Details of seminars, topics and speakers can be seen in Appendix 2.



Farm walks were a well attended format for information delivery, Spring Creek Seedlings, 2011.



Facilitated information seminars enabled relevant information delivery, Gatton, March 2011.

3.2 Business Skills Training

At the commencement of the project (August 2009), a survey was conducted targeting potential project participants to determine what type of business skills training needs they required or obvious skills gaps. The key areas requested were general business planning, succession planning, identifying costs of production, gross margins, benchmarking and risk management. Training activities were designed, developed and delivered to meet these needs and included two dedicated stand alone workshops along with short, simple case studies on topical business decisions that members of the group were currently experiencing or likely to experience in the near future.

At the completion of the project the participants were also given a range of simple business decision software developed specifically for this project.

Understanding your costs of production workshop Stanthorpe August 2010

This workshop was developed and delivered by an experienced farm consultant from the Queensland Department of Economic Development and Innovation, Mr Paul Stewart.

The workshop involved modifying an existing farm management software package to make it suitable for young vegetable growers and let them use this software to determine their costs of production and benchmark against other growers.

The growers were facilitated through the process and used real figures from their farm. Growers were appreciative of their results obtained and happy to benchmark with other growers to identify areas of improvement.

The consultant followed up with further one on one training on the added features of the software package that was provided to all participants. A total of 11 young growers attended this workshop.

Risk Management Workshop Gatton February 2011

One day workshop to manage workplace, health & safety issues in the workforce, aimed at workers and their team leaders. Topics included:

- Risk management
- Legislation
- Systems
- Risk control
- Control options

This workshop was conducted by Response Learning and involved 11 participants.

Further Business Skills Training

It was determined that a better adoption and understanding of business skills could be delivered by providing shorter, more specific training parcels.

Training delivered under this model included:

- buying versus leasing for land, tractors and other machinery,
- decision support for purchase of new machinery,
- business expansion ,and
- comparison of cropping and marketing systems.

This model of training delivery was up taken extremely well by the groups and often involved robust discussion, detailed follow up and participants bringing current decisions facing their own business for analysis by the whole group.



Young vegetable growers discuss land purchase v lease options, Stanthorpe November 2011

3.3 Value Chain Awareness Workshop

In July 2011 a stand alone value chain workshop was held at the Queensland College of Wine Tourism in Stanthorpe. A total of 27 participants attended the event.

The workshop consisted of a series of value chain activities linked around industry presentations. These activities were developed specifically for young vegetable growers and developed from the 'Forming and Managing Supply Chains' workbook (available at http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/183163/agribiz_handbook.pdf) and highlights from the online video 'Value chains versus supply chains' (available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu9TWlCjNKk>.)

Presenters at the workshop were:

Ged Sippel, Seeds Specialist Northern Region, Syngenta

Matt Hood, Director, Rugby Farm

Katrina Gething, Consumer Scientist, DEEDI

Julie Petty, Program Manager, Avocados Australia

Ray Palmer, Symara Farms, and

Andrew Simpson, Executive Chef, Queensland College of Wine Tourism

This level and range of presenters was a credit for this event and all were able to demonstrate successful methods of co –operation and collaboration that created and maintained value across supply chains for their business.

The simple workshop activities developed for the project are documented in Appendix 5.

The work shop was well received and appreciated by participants as documented in the evaluation (Appendix 4).



Young growers work through value chain awareness activities and network with value chain participants August 2011.

3.4 Grower Study Tours

At the completion of the project three study tours were conducted. These study tours were designed to allow participants to visit other vegetable farms, different agricultural industries, and various vegetable businesses along the supply chain in different regions. The facilitator encouraged participants to reflect on each visit and document and discuss any relevant learning's with the group.

Detailed study tour itineraries can be seen in Appendix 3.

The tours were well attended with more than 50 attendees over the three tours. Participants appreciated the opportunities to be exposed to new industries and regions.

Study Tour 1 - August 2009 Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley

This tour was conducted over two days in August 2009. Seven participants attended day 1 and 13 on day 2.

Day 1 focussed on different agricultural industries other than vegetables, and included a large intensive feedlot, irrigated cotton and grain farm and a bio ethanol plant on the Eastern darling downs region of Queensland. This event also included an information exchange and social event with young darling downs grain and cotton farmers.

Reflections from the group included the sheer size, turnovers and resource use of the enterprises. For example the cotton grower only had available 100 ML of water storage and at that stage of the season was unlikely to grow cotton that year. This compared to some of the vegetable growers that run businesses on less than 100ML of water in total.

It was also noted that all businesses could accurately identify and knew in real time their costs of production and input costs.

Of major interest was that grain, cotton and cattle businesses all had forward sold their production before planting or in the case of feedlot purchasing cattle to grow out. This was discussed in more detail during the information exchange with the young grain and cotton farmers who found it quite amusing that most of the vegetable producers were unaware of their potential sale price even at harvest.

Day 2 of the study trip focussed on vegetable production and marketing businesses in the Lockyer Valley and also included a presentation on basic economics from a Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation economist.

Highlight of day 2 was the tour of the Barden Produce packing shed at Gatton which processes and supplies to the ALDI retail chain. Growers were extremely interested in the development of a hydroponic leafy vegetable production system at the enterprise and the value adding through packaging that was occurring inside the packing shed.

Highlight of day 2 was the tour of the Barden Produce packing shed at Gatton which processes and supplies to the ALDI retail chain. Growers were extremely interested in the development of a hydroponic leafy vegetable production system at the enterprise and the value adding through packaging that was occurring inside the packing shed.



Young growers visit Barden Produce August 2010

Study Tour 2 - August 2011 Fassifern, Brisbane and Lockyer Valleys.

This tour was conducted over two days in August 2011. There were twenty six participants on day 1 and twenty three participants on day two. This tour also allowed the opportunity for a combined information session for both the Stanthorpe and Gatton young grower groups.

Day 1 the group travelled from Stanthorpe to the Fassifern Valley and visited the large vegetable production and marketing company Kalfresh and also the farming operation of Kengoon Farming company operated by fellow young grower Ed Windley and his wife Gen.

Richard Gorman spoke to the group about how the Kalfresh enterprise evolved over the years from a grower to a vertically integrated production and marketing company. Growers were impressed with the level of automation and mechanisation in the carrot packing shed and noted the size of the operation that was needed to deal with chain stores.

Kengoon farming company impressed the group by the amount of vegetables that could be grown by Ed and one permanent staff member. This was discussed on the bus and his key strengths were determined to be that the crops he grew, corn, beans and carrots, were all mechanically harvested and marketed by other companies. This allowed Ed to concentrate on growing and was able to incorporate improvement in his growing practices to increase profitability. An example of this was his recognition amongst locals of his expertise in controlled traffic farming.

The combined grower's night was well attended and highlights included the Question and answers session between members of the different groups on the issues and opportunities they faced in their businesses.

Day 2 of the trip included a tour of the large vegetable producer, Qualipac and Polhmans nursery, a large supplier of ornamental plants.

Kees Verstag, marketing manager spoke of how marketing of vegetable crops was changing and under tight margins how important it was to understand your costs of production. Troy Qualischefski showed the group a new irrigation system that was installed and how it was economically a simple decision based on its energy and labour savings. The group also got to see some of the damage caused by the 2011 floods.

At Polhmans nursery growers were extremely impressed with the number of different lines of ornamentals produced and the detailed management required to meet consumer demands.



Young growers discuss vegetables with fellow young grower, Ed Windley, at Kalbar August 2011.

Study Tour 3 - March 2012 Brisbane Markets and Woolworths distribution centre.

This tour was conducted on March 8th 2012 and involved a single day visit to the Brisbane Fruit and Vegetable Markets and the Woolworths Produce Distribution Centre in Brisbane. Eleven young growers participated in this event.

A guided tour of the Brisbane markets involved discussions with market wholesalers, retail store buyers and vegetable sales people. These discussions reflected industry trends and potential opportunities for the group.

The group was impressed with the range, volume and diversity of produce being offered for sale at the markets.

At the Woolworths distribution centre the group was given an outline on Woolworths produce division, in particular vegetables by the Queensland produce operations manager, Mr Chris Dawson. This presentation was followed by a tour of the distribution centre and an overview of the quality inspection process.

The group was overwhelmed at the size and volume that flows through the centre and the detail that Woolworths go to ensure product quality.



Young vegetable growers at Brisbane Markets, Rocklea, March 2012

3.5 Other Events

Additional outputs for this project were also delivered as a result of networks, collaboration and confidence gained by participants during the project timeframe.

These events were derived from topics delivered at the seminars when further information was required and it would be suggested these events were extremely relevant to the group's immediate needs.

Events included multiple spray application demonstrations at both Stanthorpe and Gatton, various pesticide and fertiliser trials on growers own properties and subsequent farm visits amongst interested growers.

A further understanding of climate change and its relevance was requested at Stanthorpe with a presentation and follow up vulnerability assessment for some of the producers also facilitated. Participants in the Stanthorpe group also organised a Farm Ready funded soils and nutrition workshop that was fully subscribed in August 2010.



Demonstration trials and spray application training were additional events organised by the young growers groups, Stanthorpe, November 2011 (left) and Gatton, May 2012 (right).

4. Communication of project outputs

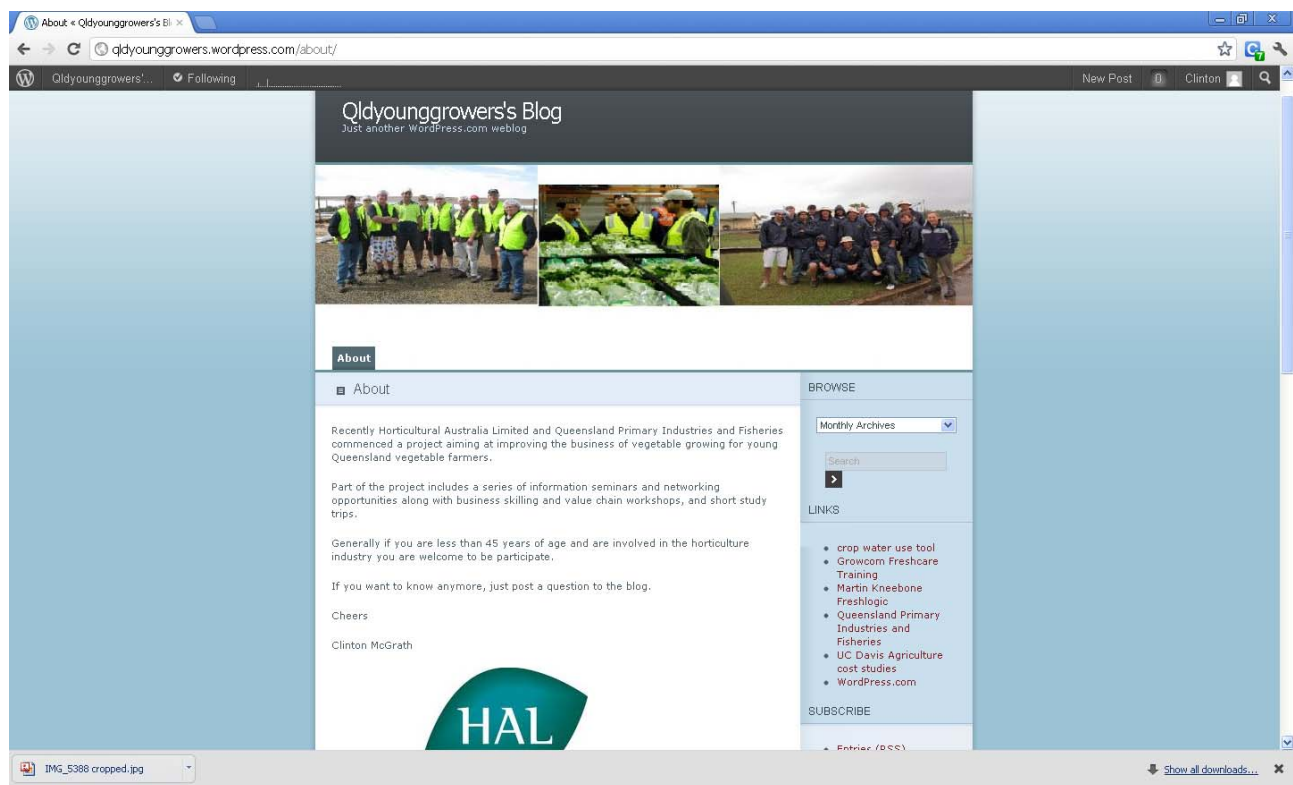
Early in the life of the project various media was used to promote the project. These included articles in national magazines, including Good Fruit and Vegetables, Vegetables Australia and Produce Plus. A strong presence was also obtained in local print media and continued for the length of the project. Various interviews were undertaken with the participants and the facilitator on local ABC radio.

Initial promotion and existing networks resulted in the creation of a significant email and telephone database which then became the standard method to promote events by email and SMS technology. Networking and word of mouth was also a significant method of increasing participation.

Also developed as part of the project was the Queensland young grower blog, <http://qldyounggrowers.wordpress.com>.

This online collaboration was built by the project leader and resulted in some interesting comments and suggestions for future events. It has also become a recognised tool for promoting vegetable grower events for the participating regions.

As of February 28th, 2012 there were a total of 63 posts published with 2597 visits to the site.



Screen shot of the qldyounggrowers blog used as communication tool as part of this project

5. Evaluation

Evaluation was conducted using various forms during the project. These included;

- grower surveys,
- one on one grower follow up and consultation,
- formal seminar, tour and workshop evaluations.

This regular evaluation and consultation with participants was key to the project success. The vegetable industry is dynamic and needs and information for the group are constantly changing. Participants continually provided input to the project facilitator ensuring topics were relevant and delivered accordingly to their needs.

The continued involvement of participants for the duration of the project with consistent high numbers at the Gatton and Stanthorpe events was indicative of the success of the evaluation process.

Evaluation and consultation with participants resulted in a slight change of direction for the project, as documented in Milestone 1 (Appendix1). This was the inclusion of business skills and value chain awareness activities as part of the regular information seminars. This no doubt resulted in an increased participation rate for these activities.

Consultation with participants from the Lockyer Valley group also resulted in the staging of a third study tour to the Brisbane markets and Woolworths distribution centre in March 2012.

Final Online Survey Evaluation

A total of 31 participants responded to a survey in December 2011 evaluating the over arching drivers of the project. These results can be seen in Appendix 4.

It was clear from this evaluation that the project met its aims and goals.

Eight seven percent of respondents indicated that the project resulted in increased networks and increased their awareness of the value chains they were part of.

Overall rating of the project on a scale of 1 – 9 (1 being extremely poor and 9 being extremely worthwhile) was 8.4 with all respondents indicating the project was worthwhile (8) or extremely worthwhile (9) to their vegetable business..

Some of the comments provided to the survey were very encouraging of the projects success and included;

- ‘Brilliant for making new contacts, keeping up to date with industry standards and any changes that we need to be aware of in our industry. Heaps of fun!’
- ‘Of all the events etc that are organised for us by resellers, chemical companies and other things by dpi hal etc, this one is the best by far and if it does not continue I will be very disappointed.’
- ‘This is an excellent forum and a credit to the organisers and the wider community. Well done and it should continue for the long term’

- I have a greater understanding from the agribusiness aspect of this industry that is difficult to spend time analysing but discussions in these events have improved my understanding in this crucial area.
- Always have great speakers and information while making the whole experience relaxing, engaging and fun
- Meeting with other local young growers on a semi-regular basis - gives you a chance to see whats happening further from our neck of the woods and gives a wider area view.
- staying in the industry - 100% due to the young growers group!

6. Implications

Key findings and implications from this project have relevance across Australian horticulture.

The delivery of business skills and value chain awareness by facilitated group events is a successful delivery method for young vegetable growers in the current working environment.

Strong successful outcomes was demonstrated by good participant attendance, adoption of ideas presented and was measured through evaluation of events. Participants identified strong improvements to their business skills and value chain awareness as a result of participation in this project.

A facilitator is essential to ensure success, not only by making sure events happen in a timely manner, but to ensure the information delivered is relevant and at an level acceptable by the young vegetable growers. The information delivery must also be relevant, targeted and at a level applicable to the audience. Strong uptake and understanding of information delivery occurs when this happens

Strong evidence shows that this project also provided additional benefits to the Australian vegetable industry that were not anticipated during project planning. These included the increased networking, communication and collaboration amongst participants as the project progressed.

There are strong examples of growers collaborating by sharing equipment, working together to supply new or existing markets, and also obtaining new business opportunities due to network association created during project events. This was extremely relevant and beneficial considering the natural disasters (Queensland floods - Jan 2011) and general economic trends affecting growers during this project.

The leadership capacity of the industry was also enhanced by the high attendance of other industry events after participating in these groups. This is particularly evident in the strong attendance at the annual AUSVEG convention and study tours and other industry functions by participants of these groups.

The project also enabled an increased adaption of and extension to outputs of other research and development projects applicable to the vegetable industry. A large number of presentations were of project results funded by Horticulture Australia, the Vegetable Industry Development program and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

7. Recommendations

Considering the key outputs and activities from this project and feedback from young vegetable growers and other industry stakeholders in the regions of this project, the following recommendations have been made.

Facilitated group events for young vegetable growers continue across southern Queensland in the future. There is clear overwhelming support from participants to continue with the events.

The model of short, timely, relevant and topical subjects suits vegetable growers and fits in with their often seasonal routine.

Future skills delivery is adapted similarly to outputs from this project for example, offering short, simple and relevant training or information products, which can be related to a real business from the vegetable industry.

Study trips and short tours expose growers to new innovations and business models and participation should be encouraged in future years.

The grower group model also makes it possible for increased extension and adoption of other funded vegetable industry projects. It is recommended that future industry research projects incorporate some type of participation in grower group events as part of their extension and development strategy.

8. Acknowledgements

The project leader would like to acknowledge all people and organisations that contributed to the outputs and outcomes of this project. The level of speaker involvement and presentations was above expectations and very much appreciated by project participants.

Michael Sippel from Terranova Seeds was integral for the success in the Gatton region as was Peter Biddulph, Stanthorpe Rural and the whole Harslett Farm team in Stanthorpe.

Acknowledgments for Debby Maxfield and Nick Macleod for editing skills, and Peter Nimmo for his outstanding culinary barbequing skills.

Most importantly the young growers who participated, it's a pleasure to work with people who want to learn.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Milestone Report

QLD DPIF - HAL Project Milestone Report

Please use basic text only. Do not use bullet points, tables, graphics, or bold or italic fonts. Please include all other inclusions in the "OTHER INCLUSIONS" section only. Thank you.

Project Number: VG09081

Project Title: Improving the business skills and value chain awareness for young Queensland vegetable growers Stage 1

Milestone Number: 1

Author: Clinton McGrath

Organisation: QLD DPIF

Date Due: 30/06/2010

Description:

Criteria:

SUMMARY

It has been a busy 12 months as part of the project VG09081 the project continues to gain momentum with excellent attendances and feedback to events to date.

The project is well on the way to achieving desired outcomes of improving business skills, value chain awareness and networking for young Queensland vegetable growers.

Collaborative groups of young vegetable growers have been formed in both the Southern Downs and Lockyer Valley regions of southern Queensland.

Highlights of the project include:

- A total of six young growers information seminars (3 in Stanthorpe and 3 in Gatton),
- A innovation study tour
- Commencement of business skilling and value chain workshops.

The model of providing business skills development and value chain awareness by targeted presentations in an environment to suit the participants appears to be a successful industry development process. This is evident with a major uptake of knowledge presented and networking by participants.

Information seminars

Seminars have been held in August and November 2009. and March 2010. Average attendance at the Stanthorpe seminars has been 26 and at Gatton 30.

Generally the information seminars involve a social barbeque followed by 3 – 4 presentations on topics relevant to the group. A business or value chain topic is always included on the agenda. Feedback from the groups has been very positive about this format.

Evaluation of seminars for information provided has been excellent and all participants indicating the desire to attend more seminars.

The seminars have also introduced the groups to the Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP). Martin Kneebone presented via webinar on the Consumers and Markets sub program and Dianne Fullelove presented on the People Development sub program.

Innovation Study tour

In August 2009 a total of 13 young industry people participated in an innovation study tour.

The tour was of 2 days and involved travelling to Dalby and Gatton in Queensland.

The first day of the tour exposed the group to non horticultural agriculture businesses of cattle feed lotting, cotton farming and a bio-refinery. The opportunity to witness different growing and marketing systems by tour participants received an average feedback score of 9 out of 9 or extremely useful for benefits to their business.

The second day of the tour involved visiting innovative vegetable businesses in the Lockyer valley and exposed the group to potential production and marketing collaborations.

Business skilling and value chain workshops

Information seminars have provided a background to business skills and value chain awareness. The first business skills workshop was held at Stanthorpe in June, 2009. Eleven young vegetable growers attended.

This workshop focussed on determining true costs of production for each individual business and also introduced the concept of creating 'value' for their produce. Growers were able to benchmark their costs of productions with other crops, other regions and other growers.

Each business was also provided with some farm management software that will be used in future workshops and skills sessions.

Future workshops will be aligned to requested needs of the group and include;

Negotiation and sales skills, cash flows, cost management, and more benchmarking.

Value chain awareness has increased and the participants require further information on;

Marketing methods, and visits to innovative vegetable businesses.

Additional events

The project has also practiced what it preaches by adding value to participants via facilitating additional activities.

Extra events facilitated included a understanding carbon webinar and a series of farm walks. Extra events planned for 2010/11 include a soils and nutrition workshop and a climate change vulnerability assessment.

NEXT STEPS

Next steps

The project will continue as proposed with some slight changes to adapt to the needs of the group.

In the next 12 months:

- Quarterly Information seminars will continue,
- Business skills development workshops at both Gatton and Stanthorpe to continue,
- Another value chain innovation tour (planned for February 2011) focussing on the Gatton group,
- Continuation of value chain awareness development at both Gatton and Stanthorpe,
- Exposure to VIDP sub program economics,
- Additional activities including a soil and nutrition workshop and climate change vulnerability assessment.

Changes to original proposal

In the original project proposal the business skills workshops and value chain workshops were proposed to be separate stand alone events over a number of days. Participants have indicated that this does not suit their business and day to day operations. Therefore the project leader envisages spreading these events to a number of shorter workshops during 2010/2011 in conjunction with extending the information seminars.

Therefore the number of information seminars will also increase from the proposed number of four in each region.

COMMUNICATION / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

(List any

communications/extension activities you have prepared/carried out since your last milestone report)

The project has received large media exposure particularly in the print and radio media in the target regions.

The project was also featured in the national Ausveg and Good Fruit and Vegetables magazines.

The project is also heavily communicated on the blog <http://qldyounggrowers.wordpress.com>

COMMERCIALISATION & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES

(Provide details of

any **additional Commercialisation and/or Intellectual Property issues** that have developed since your last milestone report)

Nil

OTHER ISSUES

(Are there any **other**

issues that HAL should be aware of (include any changes to details for contact person(s)))

Nil

OTHER INCLUSIONS

(Please include any

tables, minutes, and graphics in this section only)

Nil

Appendix 2: Seminar topics and agendas

Date	Location	Seminar topics and agenda	Presenters	Attendance
04/08/2009	Stanthorpe	Controlling caterpillars in 2009 USA Vegetable Industry Trends	Geoff Messer Dow Agrosiences Michael Sippel Terranova seeds	23
20/09/2009	Gatton	Spilling the beans: Consumer insights and sensory preferences for fruit and veg What is it that consumers want and expect from their fruit and veg? Trends in USA Vegetable Production Nuffield Scholarship and vegetable mechanisation South East Queensland Irrigation Futures- The next round	Dr Heaster Smyth and Katrina Gething – DEEDI Michael Sippel (Terranova Seeds) Tim Harslett Veg Industry Nuffield scholar and young Stanthorpe vegetable farmer Justin Clark - Growcom	50
25/11/2009	Gatton	Opportunities and threats for the local vegetable industry European Study Trip Some economics of controlled traffic farming in the local area	Clinton McGrath – DEEDI Ed Windley – Kalbar young	28

		<p>, New chemistry for controlling sucking insects</p> <p>, A new free cropwater use tool</p>	<p>vegetable grower</p> <p>Julie O'Halloran, QPIF</p> <p>Carmen Quigley, Bayercropscience</p> <p>Sarah Limpus, QPIF</p>	
03/12/2009	Stanthorpe	<p>Vegetable consumers and markets</p> <p>New chemistry for sucking insect control</p> <p>Free Web based crop water use tool</p>	<p>Martin Kneebone (Freshlogic) by webinar Carmen Quigley Bayercropscience</p> <p>Sarah Limpus DEEDI</p>	25
23/03/2010	Stanthorpe	<p>Dealing with banks and economic trends affecting the vegetable industry</p> <p>Importance of soil testing</p> <p>Investing off farm</p>	<p>Richard Brown Rabobank</p> <p>Dr Chris Dowling Backpaddock</p> <p>Justin Still and David Andreatta RBS Morgans</p>	24
24/03/2010	Gatton	The difference between wetters, stickers and surfactants and when to	Matt Moyle –	29

		<p>use them.</p> <p>Pre season strategies for controlling insect pests</p> <p>Demonstration of some irrigation and nutrient management tools.</p> <p>Webinar presentation on a camera guided hoe and cultivator, the Garford Robocrop http://www.garford.com/</p> <p>Upcoming Ausveg convention</p>	<p>Nufarm</p> <p>Lara Senior – DEEDI</p> <p>Adrian Hunt – DEEDI</p> <p>Len Dixon – Field Capacity Australia</p> <p>Michael Sippel - Terranova</p>	
02/06/2010	Stanthorpe	<p>Understanding Carbon Webinar VG09152 Australian Vegetable Industry Carbon Footprint Tool</p> <p>Climate Change A Granite Belt Vegetable Industry perspective’</p> <p>:</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Jim Kelly ARRIS</p> <p>Peter Deuter DEEDI</p>	33
7/09/2010	Broadwater (Shed meeting Spring Creek Seedlings)	<p>Physical and biological water qualities</p> <p>Reducing Spray Drift</p> <p>Understanding chemical labels</p>	<p>Lex Mullen QNIA</p> <p>Matt Moyle Nufarm</p>	23

			Clinton McGrath	
26/10/2010	Amiens (Shed meeting Harslett Farm)	Farm tour Field walk – on trial demonstration site, reducing greenhouse gases Understanding carbon and a carbon economy on your farm	Clinton McGrath, Mary Firrell, Peter Deuter DEEDI David Putland Growcom	34
27/10/2010	Gatton	Controlling Downy Mildew in vegetable crops Dealing with banks and economic trends affecting the vegetable industry Value Chain Challenge	Eleanor Nolan and Gavin Kerr, Nufarm Richard Brown - Rabobank Clinton McGrath - DEEDI	34
2/03/2011	Gatton	After the floods now what? Soils and crop nutrition Introducing new chemistry for white root rot in onions European Vegetable Production Trends (Webinar)	Dr Chris Dowling – Backpaddock Leith Plevey Syngenta Hugh Tobin Ausveg	34
24/03/2011	Stanthorpe	European Vegetable Industry Trends Future Granite Belt Irrigation water sources?	Hugh Tobin – Ausveg via webinar	27

		<p>The ecology, biology and control of Aphids</p> <p>Corporate cowboy - motivation</p>	<p>Sarah Reeves SDRC Economic Development Unit Carmen Brown – Bayer Cropscience</p> <p>Timothy McGrath</p>	
11/04/2011	Stanthorpe	<p>Succession Management in Horticulture</p> <p>Local pest and disease issues and solutions. New Innovations in the industry</p> <p>Your share of the supply chain pie</p>	<p>Ian Macleod Peracto</p> <p>Simon Organ Orchard Services</p> <p>Clinton McGrath DEEDI</p>	26
17/08/2011	Gatton	<p>Using fungicides to make more money from the farm</p> <p>Latest vegetable market insights</p> <p>Q & A with Michael Sippel Interviewees - Young vegetable farmers Troy Qualischefski and Tim Carnell</p> <p>Stanthorpe v Gatton Vegetable Industry Challenge</p> <p>Panel Session - the real issues</p>	<p>Eleanor Nolan – Nufarm</p> <p>Margie Milgate Growcom</p>	41

			Panel	
12/10/2011	Stanthorpe	Talking business > Purchasing new machinery Early season insect pests of vegetables How to get the best results for plant protection products Emu Swamp Dam update	Clinton McGrath DEEDI Peter Nimmo DEEDI Leith Plevey Syngenta Vic Pennisi SDRC	24
14/11/2011	Stanthorpe	European and USA Study trip Season progress review and forecasting the future How to get the best use of SPIROTETRAMAT (Movento) Panel Session – Current Disease and pest issues of the region (Bring some samples) Q & A Thrips Talking Business> Land buy v lease	Dino Radin Clinton McGrath DEEDI Carmen Brown Bayer CropScience Panel Peter Nimmo DEEDI Clinton McGrath DEEDI	32
08/03/2012	Stanthorpe	Asutralian vegetable production overview- Observations from recent national tour	Nick Macleod – DEEDI	22

		Understanding the real issues Training opportunities for yoiung vegetable growers	Clinton McGrath – DEEDI Grant Sweet – Young vegetable grower	
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Appendix 3: Study Tour Itineraries

Tour 1 Western Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley

Dates 11/09/2009 – 12/09/2009

Itinerary

Depart Stanthorpe 6:00 am

Pickup Toowoomba participants 8:00 am

10:00 am Arrive Grassdale Feedlot – 65 Grassdale Road, Dalby 4405

12:00 Lunch Dalby

1:30 pm – Haylor Cotton and Grain Farm

3:00 pm Dalby Biorefinery Limited

Day 2

6:00 Depart Dalby

7:30 Toowoomba Participant pickup

8:00 Moffat Farms Tent Hill

10:00 Barden Produce – Lawes

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Maharagee Produce – Lake Clarendon

3:00 Return to Stanthorpe

Tour 2 Fassifern, Lockyer and Brisbane Valleys

Wednesday the 17th of August 2011

Itinerary

7:30 Depart DPI Applethorpe

10:00 Kalfresh

www.kalfresh.com.au

12:00 Lunch Royal Hotel Kalbar

After lunch Kengoon Farming Ed & Gen Windley

Travel to Gatton

6:00 Gatton /Stanthorpe Young Growers seminar, includes BBQ

DEEDI Gatton Research Station

Accommodation University of Queensland and Gatton View Hotel

Day 2 Thursday 18th of August

Breakfast Plainlands travel Centre – Kentucky, Hungry Jacks, Coffee Club or Subway

Qualipak

Insect and disease control update DPI Gatton Lunch TBA

1:15 pm Pohlman's Nursery

Travel Home

Tour 3 Brisbane Markets and Woolworths Distribution Centre

Thursday March 2012-03-27

Itinerary

5:15 am Depart Toowoomba

7:15 Arrive Brisbane Markets Induction

7:30 – 8:30 Tour of Brisbane Market Floor and discussions with wholesalers

8:30 Breakfast and various presentations from industry representatives

8:15 Depart for Woolworths Larapinta

9:45 Arrive Woolworths for Induction

10: - 11:30 Tour of Woolworths distribution Centre, then return home

Appendix 4: Evaluation summaries

VG09081 Young vegetable growers project evaluation final January 2012

1. Overall do you think the young growers events have been worthwhile?

	Response percent	Response count
Yes	100%	31
No		
I am not sure		

2. Have you learnt or seen anything that has helped your business during the events?

	Response percent	Response count
Yes	100	31
No		
I am not sure		

3. Has the project allowed you to create new networks or contacts?

	Response percent	Response count
Yes		27
No		
I am not sure		4

4. Has the project made you more aware of value chains, the people you do business with and alternative ways of doing business?

	Response percent	Response count
Yes	87	27
No	3	1
I am not sure	10	3

5. Would you like the young grower events to continue?

	Response percent	Response count
Yes		31
No		
I am not sure		

Comments

Definitely would appreciate it

Most definitely. It gives me a chance to interact with other young growers and to see the latest innovations in our industry.

good to catch up with other young growers & discuss the season. Learning more about new products & more about pests & diseases

It would be great to have more farmer to attend.

This has been a great initiative which I have benefited from greatly

Brilliant for making new contacts, keeping up to date with industry standards and any changes that we need to be aware of in our industry. Heaps of fun!

Of all the events etc that are organised for us by resellers, chemical companies and other things by dpi hal etc, this one is the best by far and if it does not continue I will be very disappointed.

This is an excellent forum and a credit to the organisers and the wider community. Well done and it should continue for the long term

6.Overall rating of events

	Rotten 1	Poor 2	3	Can't decide 4	5	6	Worthwhile 7	8	Extremely worthwhile 9	Rating Average
Overall how would you rate the young grower events	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	9.6% (3)	38.7 % (12)	51.7% (16)	8.4

7. Is there anything that you now do as part of your vegetable business that could be attributed directly to a young growers event?

I am looking into trialling some different chemicals.

staying in the industry - 100% due to the young growers group!

Better knowledge of my spray application. I now run a budget for my farming business which I did not do prior to the sessions

No

use of certain sprays more wisely to work better 4 u

nothing major

I now know a lot more people in the industry and am planning on changing the way our family does business.

I now work weekly with contacts I have made at these events

The way I connect with people and give information

as far as value chains and marketing of produce realise that there are better alternatives to central markets. Also as different speakers are used, learning different things regarding chemical usage, fertiliser etc. The trips are also great seeing different enterprises lets you see the bigger picture and how others operate.

8. Any other comments, suggestions or things that you found were worthwhile from the events

Just the ability to meet with growers plus the information learnt from guest speakers

always good to find out about new products from chem reps. like to hear info about how vege lines are grown and packed overseas good way to talk to other growers in region where usually u would have no contact.

Really enjoyed it, thanks again

networking and social interaction should be placed very highly in this evaluation. for many people on the land it is vital to get off farm and talk to people not associated with the business.

couple of farm tours per season getting out on different farms to see different growing methods

Very helpful seminars ... A great initiative by DEEDI

Best events I have been too during my career

I have a greater understanding from the agribusiness aspect of this industry that is difficult to spend time analysing but discussions in these events have improved my understanding in this crucial area.

Always have great speakers and information while making the whole experience relaxing, engaging and fun

Meeting with other local young growers on a semi-regular basis - gives you a chance to see whats happening further from our neck of the woods and gives a wider area view.

8. Is there anything that you now do as part of your vegetable business that could be attributed directly to a young growers event?

I am looking into trialling some different chemicals.

staying in the industry - 100% due to the young growers group!

Better knowledge of my spray application. I now run a budget for my farming business which I did not do prior to the sessions

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use of certain sprays more wisely to work better 4 u

nothing major

I now know a lot more people in the industry and am planning on changing the way our family does business.

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Value Chain Awareness Workshop Evaluation

Stanthorpe Young Grower Value chain Awareness  SurveyMonkey Workshop

1. Were the presentations informative?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	9
No	0.0%	0
answered question		9
skipped question		0

2. Did the workshop raise your awareness of the value chain concept as a method of doing business?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	9
No	0.0%	0
Maybe	0.0%	0
answered question		9
skipped question		0

3. Rate the following

	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High	Rating Average
Quality of presentations	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)	7.44
Usefulness of value chain activities	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	55.6% (5)	7.58
Catering	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (3)	8.33
Venue	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	66.7% (6)	8.33
Overall opinion of the workshop	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	44.4% (4)	7.89
answered question						
skipped question						

4. Would you attend another similar event in the future?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	9
No	0.0%	0
answered question		9
skipped question		0

5. Any comments or suggestions

	Response Count
	3
answered question	3
skipped question	6

Q5. Any comments or suggestions

1	job well done, consumer research presentation showed some valuable information	Jul 22, 2011 3:04 PM
2	Very well run and informative workshop. congrats to all speakers and organisers	Jul 22, 2011 1:12 PM
3	thank you	Jul 22, 2011 9:50 AM

Appendix 5: Value chain awareness activity workbook

VG09081 Value Chain Awareness Workshop



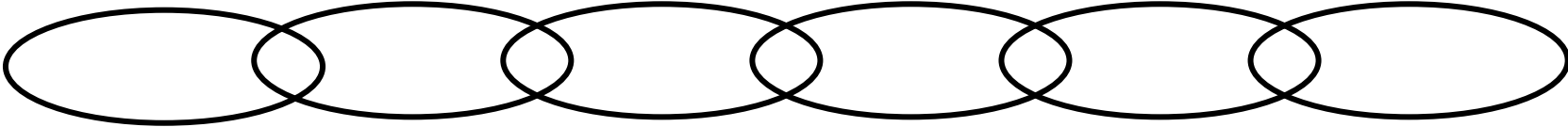
QCWT 21/07/2011

The project was supported by the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and Horticulture Australia Limited.



Activity 1

Input Suppliers Growers/Producers Wholesalers Distributors Retailers Consumers



List the Key Firms	List the Key Firms	List the Key Firms	List the Key Firms	List the Key Firms	List the Key Firms

Activity 2 Do you understand your suppliers and customers?

Look at the major suppliers and customers with whom you deal regularly (they should be named on your supply chain map from activity 1). How well do you understand their needs, and is there something you should do to improve your knowledge about one or more of them?

Suppliers Name	I understand their needs			
	Very Well	Quite Well	Just OK	Not Well

I could do the following to improve my knowledge of suppliers

Customers Name	I understand their needs			
	Very Well	Quite Well	Just OK	Not Well

I need to do the following to improve my knowledge of customers

Activity 3 How is value shared in your supply chain?

Consider the value created by the sale of your product to a consumer. Starting with the value of a typical ‘consumer sized’ transaction for your product, can you identify how much of it is shared by each chain member back down the chain

Consumer pays \$_____

	\$	%
Producer		
Wholesaler		
Retailer		

If you cannot do this calculation because you do not know the amounts involved, consider to what extent this represents a deficiency in your supply chain knowledge, ie. how could you benefit from a better knowledge of the way that value is created and shared in your supply chain? Write your answer below.

Activity 4 s your product right for your customer?

Imagine for a moment that you are the customer for your product. How well could you write a specification for your product from the customer’s point of view? Eg colour, shape, size, weight, taste

Write a short specification now?

Circle how you think you went 1. Very well, 2. OK , 3. Not well at all

If you answered 2. or 3. above, consider how well you understand the needs of your customer, and therefore how ‘right’ your product is in terms of meeting these needs. List two actions you can take to improve your knowledge so that your product is as ‘right’ as it can be from the customer’s point of view?

1. _____

2. _____

