

VG16061: Vegetable Industry Export Program

Facilitators

Project VG16061 was led by AUSVEG.

Guided by industry strategy

The Vegetable Industry Export Program (VG16061) was guided by an industry strategy developed by agribusiness experts McKINNA et al., which encompassed seven target areas for investment to assist the industry in developing fresh vegetable exports.

The AUSVEG export program incorporated a number of these target areas for development and was tasked with the role of managing the implementation of the strategy.

The vegetable industry's export growth target was a 40 per cent increase in value to AUD\$315 million by 2020 – the industry was well on track to exceed this target until the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 reduced the industry's capacity to export produce.

A big part of this success can be linked to the program delivered by AUSVEG, with its most recent independent review attributing \$29.8 million in revenue benefits to growers as a direct result of the program in 2019, resulting in a net benefit of \$27.5 million and a return on investment of 1,196 per cent.

Major outcomes

The Vegetable Industry Export Program delivered significant benefits to

Australian vegetable growers, with the latest independent reviews calculating the return on investment to be around \$12 for every dollar.

Over the course of the project, AUSVEG has delivered the following:

- 11 Export training workshops and two new online e-training programs.
- Five Reverse Trade Missions that brought international buyers to connect directly with growers and showcase local production capabilities. Buyers visited Australia from 10 countries: Malaysia, Japan, The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan, and The Philippines.
- Participation in 15 international trade exhibitions showcasing Australian produce to the world, with more than 154 growers involved.
- Developed 10 market access applications to increase the number of available markets for Australian vegetables exports.

Online offerings

In addition to the project requirements, AUSVEG has worked with the broader industry to provide more resources and training opportunities for vegetable exporting growers to lift the export capabilities and improve understanding of the export landscape.

AUSVEG, in partnership with the Export Council of Australia (ECA), launched Export Fundamentals for Australian Fruit & Vegetable Growers: From Farmgate to International Markets in September 2020.

This course is customised to the Australian vegetable industry to provide foundational training for growers to understand a broad range of topics relating to international trade for fresh produce.

There are 11 modules in the training course, covering topics such as:

- Export Readiness;
- Market Access and Market Research;
- International Market Entry;
- Export Documentation; and
- Freight and Logistics.

For more information on how to access this online course, please visit the AUSVEG's website at ausveg.com.au/export.

Conducting business overseas – cultural business etiquette

During the program, AUSVEG partnered with Bisnis Asia to create the Build Your Business Overseas – Like A Local cultural business etiquette online training course.

This course aims to improve vegetable grower-exporters export capability by developing engagement skills that will make a difference with existing and potential customers in Asia and the Middle East.

The course is suitable for existing vegetable grower-exporters who already have experience in international markets and want to optimise growth opportunities through stronger engagement with customers.



VG16061: Vegetable Industry Export Program

Overcoming COVID-19

The forced grounding of most domestic and international air travel early in COVID-19 resulted in immediate challenges to exporters, particularly those who ship high-value, perishable vegetable products as belly cargo in aeroplanes.

To address this, the Federal Government announced the International Freight Assistance Mechanism (IFAM), which commenced on 1 April 2020 and concluded in mid-2021.

Horticulture was the largest user of the IFAM program, with over 135,000 tonnes valued at AUD\$1.2 billion of fresh fruit and vegetables sent to international markets. Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Auckland and Dubai were destinations for IFAM flights carrying fresh produce.

AUSVEG provided detailed data to the IFAM coordination team on the footprint of fresh vegetable airfreight exports – by city of origin, export market destination, crop/product and volume by month – to ensure vegetable exporters could use the mechanism to continuing exporting.

AUSVEG regularly engaged with federal department and government advisors to ensure that the interests of vegetable growers were considered by the IFAM team.

What's next?

The next phase of export development will benefit from the combined efforts of the vegetable, melon and onion industries to develop export markets, maintain viable export pathways, develop industry capability and achieve sustained export growth.

This cross-industry collaboration is a first for the horticulture sector and will leverage the progress made under VG16061.

The program focuses on building export capability and capacity in the vegetable, onion and melon industries, collating international market information for decision making, as well as business development functions to uplift the ability of exporting growers to service a wider range of markets and channels and expand international trade opportunities in the future.

The export program comprises the following activities:

- Export skills and capability development
- Market planning and market entry
- Market engagement and trade facilitation
- Market intelligence and trade expansion
- Trade policy, protocol and risk management
- Communication and industry engagement
- Assistance, advice and resource development
- Export strategy implementation

With differing export maturity of businesses across and within the vegetable, onion and melon industries, tailored approaches and pathways will be implemented.

Background

The Vegetable Industry Export Program was a four-year strategic levy investment under the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund, that completed in 2021. Delivered by AUSVEG under the guidance of a project steering committee, the program aimed to improve the capabilities and capacity of the Australian vegetable industry so that it can increase vegetable exports.

The program involved a range of activities, including:

- Export readiness training for growers looking to commence exporting and those looking to improve exporting performance.
- Market development activities including a combination of inbound and outbound trade missions to build growers' understanding of export market supply chains and facilitate connections with international fresh produce buyers.
- Working with industry, Hort Innovation and government to prioritise market access for vegetable products.

The program was targeted at growers from across the export spectrum – from those who are taking their first steps into the export market to well-established exporters looking for more technical and targeted information and support.

Acknowledgements

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the vegetable research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government.

Further information

More information relating to vegetable export can be found on the AUSVEG website: ausveg.com.au.

The final report for this project is available on InfoVeg. Readers can search 'VG16061' on the InfoVeg database: ausveg.com.au/infoveg/infoveg-database.

For more details, please contact AUSVEG International Trade Specialist Andrea Lin on 03 9882 0277 or email andrea.lin@ausveg.com.au.



VG18000: National Vegetable Industry Communications Program

Facilitators

Project VG18000 was led by AUSVEG.

Background

VG18000 is a comprehensive program that communicates the findings of research outcomes funded by the vegetable research and development (R&D) levy and other relevant industry news to growers. This project increases awareness of project outcomes to encourage their increased adoption by growers on-farm.

The program uses a variety of traditional and online communications to ensure that the industry has a wide range of opportunities to increase their awareness of levy-funded R&D.

These activities include:

- A variety of widely read industry publications including *Vegetables Australia* and *Vegenotes*.
- The management, maintenance and promotion of the InfoVeg national R&D database and associated products, such as InfoVeg TV.
- The AUSVEG Weekly Update e-newsletter.
- Media and social media relations to promote industry-funded research to growers and the wider industry.

Major outcomes

At the time of writing, a total of 1,761 industry-funded projects featured in vegetable industry communications across all of its different communications platforms during the life of the project.

- 12 editions of *Vegetables Australia* published 533.61 pages dedicated to industry research (an average of 44.57 pages per edition).
- 12 editions of *Vegenotes*, which published 24 case studies that covered 23 separate levy-funded projects.
- 150 Weekly Update editions published over 1,300 vegetable industry-related articles covering 168 R&D projects funded by the vegetable levy and other Hort Innovation-funded sources, as well as a re-design of the newsletter to modernise its look, increase readability and more clearly promote industry research.
- 35 Final Reports from industry-funded projects were uploaded to the InfoVeg R&D database.
- 1,163 Final Reports collated on the InfoVeg R&D database.
- Media releases and direct media engagement that resulted in 1,365 media mentions on a total of 38 separate vegetable industry-related research (an average of 38 per month).
- Social media promotion of 137 levy-

funded and industry-related research across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

- Videos and podcasts highlighting 15 levy-funded projects – an additional series of videos and podcasts are currently in production and will be published in due course.

New additions to industry communications program

R&D Adoption Profiles

15 growers were featured in dedicated R&D Adoption profiles across 12 editions of the magazine. Each of these grower profiles have been uploaded to the AUSVEG website, along with its other grower profiles that it publishes each edition.

- Spring 2022 – Peak freshness in broccoli (Brad Ipsen)
- Winter 2022 – Soil Health (Jeremy Trembath)
- Autumn 2022 – Soil Health (Dave Roberts-Thompson, Robin Tait and Michael Hayes)
- Summer 2021/2022 – Alternatives to plastic packaging (Natasha Shields)
- Spring 2021 – Protected Cropping (Mamta Khadka Basnet, Claudio Cortellazzi and Elliott Akintola)



VG18000: National Vegetable Industry Communications Program

- Winter 2021 – Soil Wealth / Integrated Crop Protection (Gary, Tracey and Jake Ryan)
- Autumn 2021 – Export Development (Ryan McLeod, Steve Moffatt and Renee Pye)
- Summer 2020/2021 – Soil Health (Joel Davis-Ward and Bhargav Rayeni)
- Spring 2020 – Export Facilitators (Tassie Pride Glasshouse and Fox Farms)
- Winter 2020 – Precision Agriculture (Stuart Grigg and Kaushal Gunasekara)
- Autumn 2020 – Cover Cropping (Darren Long)
- Summer 2019/2020 – Export Development (David De Paoli), Cover Cropping and Export Development (Andrew Johanson)
- Spring 2019 – Soil Health and Integrated Crop Protection (Ed Fagan)

Regional Media and Social Media Plan

AUSVEG enacted a targeted email for dissemination to regional, rural and industry journalists to include relevant R&D and industry stories and potential interview subjects. This has resulted in the successful publication of industry R&D articles in regional print and online publications, which has increased the reach of R&D outcomes to more people.

This is part of a broader push by AUSVEG to increase its engagement with the media on a range of issues, including R&D topics, events and updates as an important focus in its overall engagement with media.

The project has generated a total of 1,365 media mentions across print, radio, TV and online media, as well as social media promotion that has promoted over 135 different levy-funded projects.

VegNET alignment

Over the life of the program, AUSVEG has strongly aligned the National Vegetable Industry Communications Program with each iteration of the vegetable industry's extension program VegNET.

This support includes incorporating an article from each VegNET RDO and region in each edition of the *Vegetables Australia* magazine over the last two years, which equates to over 90 articles published in hardcopy and online dedicated to the program and the activities undertaken by the RDOs in their regions.

AUSVEG has also prioritised topics highlighted by VegNET RDOs to inform the other content that is published in the magazine and throughout its online and social media channels. These topics include:

- Biosecurity
- Pest and disease management
- Water
- Production systems
- Soils and nutrition
- Markets

What's next?

AUSVEG is in discussions with Hort Innovation to finalise the next iteration of the industry's communications program. It is anticipated that the new program will continue to develop the core communications platforms built through VG18000 and previous communications programs, including:

- *Vegetables Australia*.
- Weekly Update e-newsletter.
- InfoVeg R&D database, videos and podcasts.
- Grower profiles.
- Media and social media promotion of R&D.
- Industry website.

The new program will also likely include new communications activities to increase the awareness of R&D in the vegetable industry, including:

- Translation of materials for LOTE growers.
- Online 'one-stop-shop' hub for all communications materials.
- Integrated media and social media influencer plan to expand the communication of targeted R&D content through social and online media.

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Further information

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