

Final Report

The Australian Onion Industry Communications

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VN15002

Project:

The Australian Onion Industry Communications VN15002

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Summary

The Australian onion industry is a significant contributor to Australian horticulture, with a farm gate value of \$174.2 million in 2016/17.

Around 250 onion growers produced more than 237,000 tonnes of onions in this same period, with onions grown in every state of Australia, and South Australia and Tasmania producing the lion's share. Production is relatively stable, and onions were the fourth largest vegetable commodity exported in 2016/17 with greater export remaining an area of opportunity and growth for the industry.

Cox Inall Communications (Cox Inall) was contracted by Hort Innovation in 2016 to deliver the communications program for the onion industry (VN15002). The program ensures growers and industry stakeholders are kept up-to-date with timely, relevant and comprehensive information on R&D outcomes, the latest news and marketing updates for adoption within the onion industry and to support decision-making in businesses.

The program was supported by Onions Australia to provide technical and strategic advice to Cox Inall through VN15003 Onions Australia's newsletter database and social media channels were also utilised to disseminate information to industry.

The target audience for the program was both levy payers and supply chain participants and allied industries.

The program included a number of key communication activities, which Cox Inall developed and implemented over the past three years. These included:

- An annual, full colour, 44-page printed magazine
- Three 4-page printed newsletters per annum., known as Layers
- One e-newsletter per month
- Weekly social media content plans for Onions Australia's Facebook and Twitter accounts
- An annual disease alert poster
- Twelve industry podcasts
- Fortnightly Work-In-Progress meetings with Onions Australia
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement and event attendance relating to the Australian onion industry.

The overarching purpose of this program was to supply stakeholders with timely, relevant and comprehensive information on levy funded R&D outcomes and opportunities for adoption to increase levy payers' understanding of the projects being undertaken by the industry and enable practice change. It is also set out to equip the onion industry with the latest best practice resources, and to identify emerging opportunities and risks for growers to increase productivity and profitability.

The implementation of the communications strategy guiding the roll out of VN15002 has successfully enabled levy payers to see clear linkages with the industry's strategic plan and evidence of return on their investment.

Keywords

Onions, Onion industry, Cox Inall Communications, Onions Australia, Communication, Research and Development, Marketing, Onion Production, Packing, Growing.

Introduction

The previous Australian Onions Industry Strategic Investment Plan (2012-2017) identified communications as one of the key areas of levy investment. In particular, it highlighted the importance of communications for levy payers:

- Objective 3: Ensure the Australian onion industry has the capacity to effectively manage industry development (39% of R&D)

Strategies to do this included:

- Develop leadership structures and resources to provide sound industry stewardship
- Improve industry communication and extension to facilitate improved outcomes for industry and industry investors
- Ensure industry has appropriate resources/risk management strategies to function effectively

According to the Onion Communication Mid-Term Review, conducted by Key-Link Solutions Pty Ltd in August 2015, the previous three-year communications strategy was well received by industry with an improvement in the frequency and quality of messages received in relation to R&D and industry issues. It identified the need to construct a better link between the program's activities and the Industry's Strategic Investment Plan and to enhance the extension/communications functions of the program.

In April 2016, Cox Inall was contracted by Hort Innovation to deliver communication services regarding R&D and marketing activities, to increase awareness and promote outcomes of onion levy investment and build capacity within the industry.

In consultation with the peak body, Onions Australia and Hort Innovation, Cox Inall developed a robust communications strategy that set out the approach and deliverables for the next three years. It aligned closely with the priority areas identified in the SIP with a long-term aim of increasing the linkages between communications outputs and key industry strategic outcomes.

Over the past three years, Cox Inall has developed three annual print magazines, nine Layers newsletters, 36 e-newsletters, three disease alert posters, 32 podcasts, two R&D videos, as well as weekly social media plans for the Onions Australia Facebook and Twitter pages.

The program has evolved into a pivotal channel to connect growers with the latest R&D and marketing updates. Using a diverse mix of communication outputs, from social media to printed hard copy magazines, Cox Inall has developed a significant amount of content covering the three key priority areas of supply, demand and industry development, and highlighting the progress of levy funded projects.

It has been responsible for driving awareness of, and building support for, onions levy programs, ranging from biosecurity preparedness, pests and disease, minor use to market analysis and best practice insights.

Over the past three years, Cox Inall has worked closely with Onions Australia, Hort Innovation, the research community and growers to build a strong working relationship and environment of familiarity whereby a high standard of communications outputs has been produced to help communicate the outcomes of levy funded R&D projects. Onions Australia has provided strategic and technical support, to drive communication activities, to meet the goals of the communication program and the onion SIP more broadly.

Methodology

The following methodology guided the delivery of the onion industry communications program.

Inception meeting

In April 2016, Cox Inall held an inception meeting with Hort Innovation and Onions Australia to agree on the project activities being undertaken to deliver the next generation of the *Australian onion industry communications program (VN15002)*. This program was targeted at levy payers, as well as extended supply chain participants and industry stakeholders.

Communications strategy

The Onion Communication Mid-Term Review guided the development of a communications strategy for VN15002. The strategy focused on better communicating R&D outcomes to levy payers using new and existing channels that ultimately lead to practice change for growers, boosting productivity and profitability and was based off the three key priority areas highlighted in the SIP; supply, demand and industry development.

Stakeholder engagement plan

A stakeholder engagement strategy was also developed identifying and outlining how key internal and external stakeholders are to be engaged through the roll out of the communications strategy. Both internal and external stakeholders were identified, their level of engagement highlighted and the tools and channels to be used to communicate key messages.

Work in Progress Meetings

Cox Inall and Onions Australia established fortnightly work in progress (WIP) meetings for the duration of the communications program. The WIPs were considered a valuable forum to discuss projects and upcoming outputs, ensuring they were relevant, timely and to a high standard.

Outside of these meetings, Cox Inall and Onions Australia regularly communicated by phone and email throughout the program duration.

Conferences

Cox Inall also attended industry conferences and meetings each year. Attending these conferences provided a valuable face to face connection with the research community, and, especially, growers.

R&D and Marketing Project Portfolio

Cox Inall built an excellent understanding of the levy funded R&D and marketing projects across the Hort Innovation onion fund. This included regular telephone calls and emails to key project providers and researchers, to communicate the latest levy news, information and industry events and insights. This resulted in a good working relationship with not only the research providers, but Onions Australia and Hort Innovation.

Communication outputs and channels

A number of outputs and channels were used to communicate with levy payers and related industries. These include, social media, e-newsletters, print newsletters, print magazines, video case studies, posters and podcasts.

These are detailed in the outputs section.

Outputs

During the course of the Onion Industry Communications Program, Cox Inall has produced the following outputs.

Inception workshop

Cox Inall's Lucy Broad and Suzanne Lewis attended a 'kick off' meeting with Lechelle Earl from Onions Australia and Bianca Cairns from Hort Innovation in April 2016. The meeting determined roles and responsibilities for the project and the project was then launched.

Communications strategy

Cox Inall Communications lead the development of a communications strategy (June 2016- March 2019) which guided the three-year communications program.

The communication strategy primarily focused on using new and existing channels to communicate the outcomes of R&D investments to levy payers and other industry stakeholders. The strategy outlines previous communications activities as well as the key issues, messages and priority areas for communications moving forward. It also provides details of the outputs being developed, channels being used, timing and evaluation process.

The strategy was presented finalised in June 2016.

Social media strategy

Cox Inall Communications also lead the development of a social media strategy which aimed to increase the onion industry's presence on social media over the three-year communications program.

The social media strategy included an evaluation of Onions Australia's existing social media channels, and revealed that there was potential for greater exchange and increased collaboration with industry partners and stakeholders. The strategy outlined content, target audience and reach, key messages, timing and an evaluation process.

The strategy was finalised in October 2016.

Stakeholder engagement plan

Cox Inall Communications lead the development of a stakeholder engagement strategy outlining how the key internal and external stakeholders identified within the onions industry are to be engaged through the roll out of the Onion industry communications strategy.

The stakeholder engagement plan identified a list of key internal and external stakeholders, including the level of engagement required and tools and channels to be used to communicate.

Onions Australia annual magazine

The Onions Australia Annual Magazine is a highly valuable and well-regarded resource within the industry.

Over the past three years, Cox Inall has met the programs requirements by planning, writing and delivering three, 44-page print magazines. Each magazine covered a wide range of topics including the latest R&D and investment updates, features articles highlighting timely industry news, such as marketing updates, market insights and analysis, and grower profiles.

Magazines were all printed with hard copies distributed to the Onions Australia database. The magazines are also housed on the Onions Australia website.

Onions Australia Annual Magazines:

2016: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2016-OA-Magazine.pdf>

2017: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/OA-Magazine-2017.pdf>

2018: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/OA-MAG-VOL-35.pdf>

Layers newsletter

Over the past three years, Cox Inall have met the program's requirements by planning writing and delivering nine Layers newsletters, distributed in January, April and August each year. The Layers newsletters were four to six-page printed publications covering a range of topics including R&D and biosecurity updates and the latest industry news.

These Layers newsletters can be categorised by the following milestones, all of which have been contracted under the programs requirements.

Milestone 102 (October 2016)

- April 2016 Layers

Milestone 103 (April 2017)

- August 2016 Layers
- January 2017 Layers

Milestone 104 (September 2017)

- April 2017 Layers
- August 2017 Layers

Milestone 105 (April 2018)

- January 2018 Layers
- April 2018 Layers

Milestone 106 (September 2018)

- August 2018 Layers
- January 2019 Layers

Milestone 190 (April 2019)

- April 2019 Layers

A contract variation was requested by Hort Innovation in January 2019 requesting Cox Inall to develop an additional Layers magazine which was distributed in April 2019. See Appendix 1 for a copy of all Layers publications.

Monthly e-newsletters

The Onions Australia e-newsletter is distributed on the first Friday of each month. Cox Inall develops the e-newsletter with an average of 5-10 stories focusing on the progress or outcomes of R&D levy funded projects as well as other industry news. Cox Inall was responsible for writing, designing layout and importing content into MailChimp and Onions Australia was responsible for distributing the e-newsletter to their database.

Thirty-six editions of the Onions Australia e-newsletter have been distributed to levy payers. The e-newsletter has been well received with an average open rate of 44.9%, which is higher than the agricultural industry standard of 17.5%. These can be categorised by the following milestones and respective e-newsletters, all of which have been completed under the contract's requirements.

Milestone 102 (6 October 2016)

June 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=8643160e9e>

July 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=bff228dbf0>

August 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=3f2e2f071c>

Additional August 2016: [https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=\[UNIQID\]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ab376e1c2a](https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ab376e1c2a)

September 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=f467aaf6c6>

Additional September 2016: [https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=\[UNIQID\]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ecc122e1d4](https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ecc122e1d4)

Milestone 103 (29 April 2017)

October 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=dd924fef9d>
November 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=47ebdabcbd>
December 2016: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=5a9bb2e9e4>
January 2017: [https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=\[UNIQID\]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=30d14375e5](https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=30d14375e5)
February 2017: [https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=\[UNIQID\]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ebff9a1917](https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ebff9a1917)
March 2017: [https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=\[UNIQID\]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=73c6285c0d](https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=73c6285c0d)
April 2017: [https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=\[UNIQID\]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=168157d7ff](https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?e=[UNIQID]&u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=168157d7ff)

Milestone 104 (29 September 2017)

May 2017: <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=5dba531b9d>
June 2017: <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=f5a288730d>
July 2017: <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=d118d9a73a>
August 2017: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=b35857edbd>
September 2017: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=9ee12030e5>

Milestone 105 (29 April 2018)

October 2017: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=0c64cafda4>
November 2017: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=0c64cafda4>
December 2017: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=6dc169238a>
January 2018: [https://mailchi.mp/12cf1cb65d36/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/12cf1cb65d36/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter?e=[UNIQID])
February 2018: [https://mailchi.mp/5b71f8fcb8cf/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1184017?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/5b71f8fcb8cf/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1184017?e=[UNIQID])
March 2018: [https://mailchi.mp/7990b3a00589/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1207197?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/7990b3a00589/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1207197?e=[UNIQID])
April 2018: [https://mailchi.mp/121e0735c21c/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1322873?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/121e0735c21c/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1322873?e=[UNIQID])

Milestone 106 (29 September 2018)

May 2018: [https://mailchi.mp/84512abcb606/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1396825?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/84512abcb606/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1396825?e=[UNIQID])
June 2018: [https://mailchi.mp/ad2efbb3a47a/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1496489?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/ad2efbb3a47a/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1496489?e=[UNIQID])
July 2018: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=6b1a3385c6>
August 2018: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=8a55758c87>
September 2018: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=9acd6273b4>

Milestone 190 (30 April 2019)

October 2018: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=ba5da72fc2>
November 2018: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=927bb9265f>
December 2018: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=9ecb013340>
January 2019: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=6135008762>

February 2019: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=6b1d125d5e>

March 2019: <http://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=c3fbf48665>

April 2019: <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=4297ebb3d8eacd39e1a40005a&id=a42cf32ba2>

Cox Inall also distributed the following e-newsletters:

2017 end of year e-newsletter: [https://mailchi.mp/f69ce07f42f6/onions-australia-december-e-newsletter-1123097?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/f69ce07f42f6/onions-australia-december-e-newsletter-1123097?e=[UNIQID])

2018 end of year e-newsletter: [https://mailchi.mp/605368020c5e/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1685401?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/605368020c5e/onions-australia-january-2018-e-newsletter-1685401?e=[UNIQID])

Weekly Social Media Plans

Cox Inall submitted weekly social media content plans to be rolled out across the Onions Australia Facebook and Twitter platforms, including sourcing and writing content, and retweeting. The content being developed by Cox Inall is a mix of industry information and more general topics of interest, including significant on-sharing of Secret Serve social media marketing content.

Please see Appendix 2 for an example social media plan provided to Onions Australia.

Annual disease alert poster

An effective resource for growers, the disease poster is created to be displayed in packing sheds and markets and utilised by many stakeholders along the supply chain.

Cox Inall developed three full colour, A3 disease alert posters that were included in the Onions Australia magazines. Cox Inall developed the poster and Onions Australia included the poster in the mail out of the magazine. The disease posters have also been uploaded to the Onions Australia website.

2016: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Onion-disease-poster.pdf>

2017: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Exotic-Pest-Poster-Nov-2017.pdf>

2018: http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/CIC_105784_Onions-A1_04.pdf

Podcasts

Podcasts were a mix of R&D outcomes, one on one interviews and voiceover versions of industry articles from the Annual Magazine and Layers. Cox Inall has met the project requirements through delivering a total of 36 podcasts, which can be aligned to the below three milestone reports.

Milestone 103 (29 April 2017)

1. Secret Serve – Campaign Components
2. Secret Serve – Get Involved!
3. Andrew Moon
4. Bee Pest Surveillance
5. Industry Biosecurity
6. Onion Rust
7. Hybrids
8. Disease Poster
9. State Round
10. Onion White Rot Model

11. Mike Rettke
12. Foodbank

Milestone 105 (29 April 2018)

1. Dr Paul Horne
2. David Gale
3. Dr Bill Dean
4. Jacob Wiskerke
5. Onions Strategic Investment Plan
6. SA exclusion zone lifted
7. R&D update – detection & management of bacterial diseases in Australian allium crops
8. R&D Update – Development of an onion white rot forecast model for Tasmania
9. Secret Serve Marketing Update 2017
10. Exotic Disease Poster 2018
11. Developing channels for exporting Aussie onions
12. Industry Biosecurity Manual released

Milestone 190 (30 April 2019)

1. Ian Locke
2. Chanel Day
3. Lewis Lydon
4. Peter Shadbolt
5. Tim Groom
6. Caroline Graham
7. Dr Fred Crowe
8. Sam Turner
9. OA Annual Conference delegates interviewed on annual magazine
10. Louis de Kock
11. Peter Sullivan
12. Jenny Van de Meeberg

R&D videos

A contract variation was approved by Hort Innovation in July 2017 for Cox Inall to develop 3 x social media / website videos running between 2 and 3 minutes long to showcase research adoption, best practice and new project outcomes. The videos were also promoted via social media channels and monthly e-newsletters.

All three videos can be found on the R&D Videos page on the Onions Australia website:

<http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/news-updates/rd-videos/>

December 2017: Positive early results in integrated pest management trials

April 2018: How to get the most out of the Onion Growers' Biosecurity Manual

August 2018: Forecasting onion white rot in Tasmania

Outcomes

Cox Inall believes that it has achieved the key objective of VN15002, which is to increase industry awareness of onion levy funded R&D and marketing. This is evident in a number of ways, including the high quality and quantity of outputs generated over the past three years.

Throughout the project, Cox Inall has developed a comprehensive portfolio of materials, sharing the latest information about the onion levy fund, the wider Hort Frontiers Initiative and profiling levy payers whilst highlighting the role of key stakeholders such as Hort Innovation and Onions Australia.

The communications, program logic and social media strategies, as well as the stakeholder engagement plan provided a solid foundation for VN15002. An annual levy payer survey conducted at conferences was used to guide the strategy and inform future direction. This yearly evaluation ensured communications were timely, relevant to levy payers and delivered to a high standard.

Throughout the program, Cox Inall worked with Onions Australia to grow their online communities on Twitter and Facebook significantly. The Onions Australia social media channels were also effective in enhancing exchange and increased collaboration with industry stakeholders. Engagement from social media was strong throughout the program, and the monthly e-newsletter received well above industry average open and click rates. The growth in both the Twitter and Facebook pages and the effectiveness of e-newsletters are detailed in Monitoring and Evaluation.

Cox Inall ensured that every onion levy funded project was communicated and promoted and that industry stakeholders had every opportunity to read the latest findings, apply for an initiative or attend a workshop or event. The regular communicational outputs assisted onion growers step up to the challenge and apply new R&D and marketing outcomes to their businesses.

Communication empowered growers to uptake new practices, for example looking to include export opportunities in their business, use new resources such as the Harvest to Home platform and increased knowledge and skills through collateral such as the industry biosecurity manual and practical resources like the disease alert posters.

Cox Inall worked closely with Onions Australia to identify growers whose businesses have utilised R&D to boost productivity through including feature stories in written outputs.

Project management and stakeholder engagement was a critical part of VN15002. Cox Inall and Onions Australia held fortnightly WIP meetings to discuss projects, outputs and implementation. Event attendance at the annual Onions Australia conference provided Cox Inall with the opportunity to meet with growers and to increase industry awareness about the communications programs.

Cox Inall was in regular contact with researchers and project providers, to ensure growers had access to the latest news and resources regarding R&D and marketing. This high-level engagement resulted in a very dynamic and high-quality communications program to inspire practice change in businesses.

Monitoring and evaluation

The success of the communications program is measured through strong engagement and awareness within the onion industry of R&D and marketing projects, as well as the outputs.

E-newsletter rates

During VN15002, the Onions Australia monthly e-newsletter received an average 44.5% open rate and 4.7% click rate, which is well above the industry average of 17.6% and 2.0% respectively. As a snapshot, the past five e-newsletters have received the following engagement from industry:

Date sent	Open rate (%)	Click rate (%)
April 2019:	45.7	9.4
March 2019:	45.3	9.7
February 2019:	42.4	4.3
January 2019:	44.8	2.9
December 2019:	42.9	5.8

Social media analytics

During VN15002, organic advertising was used to boost Facebook and Twitter follower numbers as per below:

- On 29 June 2016, the Onions Australia Facebook account had 515 likes. This has significantly grown throughout the duration of the project and on 30 April it has 844 likes. These figures represent a 63% increase during this reporting period.
- On 29 June 2016, the Onions Australia Twitter account had 334 followers. This has significantly grown throughout the duration of the project, and today (30 April) the account has 1023 followers. These figures represent a 206% increase during this reporting period.

Twitter analytics

Twitter has been a good channel to disseminate information about onion levy updates. The best performing tweets are timely, referring to industry issues or projects, and they tag in key industry stakeholders such as Hort Innovation, as well as researchers and project leads.

The top tweets for the past six months include a link to the Hort Innovation stats handbook, a link to the national awards for excellence, a link to register your harvest labour needs; a link to Nielsen's Harvest to Home dashboard; latest recipe from the Australian Onions marketing website. April was a unique month for Onions Australia social media, with LNP Senator Matthew Canavan eating an onion at the Brisbane Markets and tagging Onions Australia in his Twitter post.

Month	Tweets	New followers	Impressions	Profile visits	Mentions
April 2019	28	40	31,800	1,425	435
March 2019	24	12	8,825	173	10
February 2019	4	5	6,642	9	1
January 2019	31	9	8,793	207	18
December 2018	24	2	15,100	164	9

R&D videos

December 2017: Positive early results in integrated pest management trials

- *NB: Website metrics show that page views on the Onions Australia website spiked to 333, and 57 sessions, the day this video was posted.*

April 2018: How to get the most out of the Onion Growers' Biosecurity Manual

- *NB: Website metrics show that the page views on the Onions Australia website spiked to approx. 250, and sessions 35, three days after the video was posted.*

August 2018: Forecasting onion white rot in Tasmania

- *NB: Website metrics show that page views on the Onions Australia website spiked to 591, up from 232 the previous week and sessions spiked to 111, up from 92, the day the video was posted.*

Recommendations

The onion industry communications program provided a comprehensive approach to communicating the progress and outcomes of levy funded R&D and marketing activities to the primary audience of levy payers.

Take up of information communicated via social media channels has been encouraging and Cox Inall recommends that placing a small advertising spend behind Facebook will help to expose the content to more interested parties across the supply chain as well attract more growers as followers for a minimal cost.

The annual Onions Australia magazine is highly anticipated and regarded and should remain in the stable of outputs, benefitting perhaps from a refresh of the look and feel to revitalize the publication.

Ensuring there is a practical element to the content being released under the communications project will also further the ability of growers to adopt R&D outcomes for the benefit of their own businesses, fostering economic and environmental sustainability for the industry.

There is an opportunity to increase the level of engagement of those in the broader supply chain to give a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities in this part of the industry sector as well as linking these issues through to what the customer wants.

Export is a key area of focus for the industry that has really developed in the last year of the communications program and this focus should continue in future communications activities

Acknowledgements

Cox Inall would like to acknowledge Onions Australia for their ongoing support and collaboration on VN15002. The two organisations have developed a strong working relationship throughout the delivery of the project.

Cox Inall would like to acknowledge Hort Innovation as a key enabler of R&D and marketing for Australia's horticultural sector. Cox Inall found it very beneficial to work closely with project providers, to equip levy payers with the latest R&D and marketing outcomes.

Importantly, Cox Inall would like to thank onion industry members who have contributed to the success of the program. It has been a privilege to share the stories of the Australian onion industry.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Layers hard copy publications (10 editions)

Appendix 2: Social media plan from April 2019

CALENDAR

29-30 SEPTEMBER, 2016

OA Conference

Brisbane, QLD

ONIONS AUSTRALIA
STRATEGIC PARTNERS



Peter Shadbolt - Scotties Point Farms

The following article appeared in Horticulture Innovation Australia's Hortlink and provides a great profile of Onion's Australia's new Deputy Chair Peter Shadbolt.

Farming onions is a family affair for Peter Shadbolt. The son of an onion seed grower, Peter went out on his own as a 21-year-old and has since passed his passion on to his children.

Ryan, 19 and Jake, 21 work alongside their father on the farm in Beverford, Victoria. Through distance education, Jake is studying a bachelor of agricultural science and Ryan recently completed his apprenticeship under Peter's guidance.

"We have our sons home on the farm and when we go to agricultural events, this seems to be very rare. Our daughter Hope is in year 12 and very capable on the farm too; she does all the fork-lifting and tractor work during harvest time. Having the family working together has been a blessing for my wife Tracy and I. Rather than just having a staff mentality; everyone has one heart for the farm. It's not just a job – it is actually more than that."

Peter said the best thing about his job was the variety it offered, with every day and season being different.

"I like the fact there are so many different jobs to do throughout the day, rather than being stuck on one job at a time. The year is the same, it goes from planting through to growing and then harvest, so I like that variation."

Scotties Point Farms is situated on 1200 acres, with 500 acres under permanent sprinklers, including 80 acres of short-day onions, which are harvested between November and January. The Shadbolts also grow 100 acres of broccoli in the winter months and began developing a beetroot crop this year.

Peter is the deputy chair of Onions Australia. He likes to stay on top of industry research and is keen to incorporate new approaches into day-to-day running of the farm.

"I've implemented a few little strategies along the way to improve yield and management of different things. I might be reading about a chemical trial or storage trial and if I think it will improve what we do, I'll adapt the way we do things."

Continued on next page...



► Peter with Moses, who he met in Uganda and is teaching how to farm



Peter Shadbolt - Scotties Point Farms cont.

From page one...

As well as sharing his knowledge with his sons, Peter has spent three seasons mentoring a farmer in Uganda, assisting him with growing onions, cabbages and Irish potatoes.

"We went to Africa on a mission trip. Our driver, Moses, had some land and was really looking for someone to teach him how to farm. He's only got a few acres but I said let's try some things and as time has gone on we've bought a tractor and the machinery, and I go over a couple times a year. I got back just last Wednesday after a couple of weeks there helping him to prepare land and we've just set up some irrigation.

"The thing over there is that they can grow beautiful crops and they'll have a creek or a river a 100 metres from their crops and no way of getting the water to them. When the hot weather comes, the crops will die."

Peter and Moses began with a five-year-plan to test viability.

"We're assuming we'll turn a profit this year, even if it is only small and that will give us some encouragement to keep continuing."

Moses stayed in Peter's family home and trained on the farm throughout November and December last year. His association with Australia has made him somewhat of a celebrity in his home district.

"The whole community, kilometres from his farm, knows that Moses came to Australia to be trained. He is very well respected and is one man who can potentially bring a lot of change to his area."



From the Office

► *Lechelle Earl, CEO - Onions Australia*

Big changes are afoot in the world of onions.

Following a decision by Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA), the communications project for the Australian onion industry is now being overseen by private public relations company Cox Inall Communications – rather than by Onions Australia.

As you would all know, Onions Australia has run the communications program for your industry for the past eight years – coordinating the annual magazine, website, "Layers" newsletters, Regional Levy Payer Meetings, grower walks and social media.

Obviously Onions Australia was disappointed not to continue this role, however we hope that this new arrangement will build on the hard work done by the onions office, and continue to improve the communication network for your industry.

Onions Australia will continue to oversee the publication of the newsletters and annual magazines, as well as the management of our website and social media feeds. We will also be coordinating four grower walks a year – with plans for the first one to be held in conjunction with Enza Zaden in Mannum, SA, on May 26.

The May grower walk will coincide with a meeting of the Onions Australia Executive Committee the next day in Adelaide, which will be followed by the national launch of the Australian onion industry's marketing campaign.

The campaign's aim is to boost the consumption of onions within Australia – rather than to grow more onions. If we can get more people to eat more onions then obviously demand will increase – ensuring your premium Australian, clean and green produce will have ready homes to go to.

The Australian onion industry is the first stand alone industry to implement a marketing levy – with others now following.

The campaign is being managed by HIA, who have engaged industry experts to coordinate the message.

The office will continue to be the first point of contact for chemical queries, export information and pest and disease contacts, as well as the ongoing reference point for all levy payer requests.

We are also in the midst of organising our annual conference, to be held in Brisbane on September 29 and 30 – with more details to come in the August newsletter.

Rest assured that my door (phone, email, social media) always remains open to you. Please don't hesitate to contact me to discuss your views or problems, and absolutely send me your feedback – I'm keen to hear your views.

New trade agreement prove positive for onion growers

The positive effects of the Coalition Government's aggressive trade agenda are making themselves felt in Australia's agricultural sector.

Improving market access underpins profits for producers across the country, and the government is continuing to pursue new and better opportunities overseas.

Following on from the ground-breaking free trade agreements with China, Japan and Korea, Australia signed the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement in February there have been many positive results across the agricultural sectors, including for our onion farmers.

Under the new trade agreements, growers can look forward to a significant reduction in tariffs which inevitably assists in getting better returns at the farm gate for producers. Specifically;

- The tariffs on onions has gone from 13 per cent prior to the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, to a current 7.8 per cent, and will be completely eliminated on 1 January 2019.
- Under the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement the tariffs on products under 73.70 yen/kg in value will be eliminated on 1 April 2019. For product over 73.70 yen/kg in value for customs duty remains at zero per cent.

Senator Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources said the results of the negotiations are pleasing, and provide options for producers to develop better supply chains and increase their farmgate returns.

"I come from a region and a state synonymous with horticultural production—the South Australian Riverland—so I understand the important contribution our horticulture producers make to the nation.

"The onion industry, and indeed the wider vegetable and horticulture industries, have an important role. Not only do they generate wealth for the economy, you also feed people across the country and beyond our shores."



▶ Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources says there are positive time ahead for onion growers thanks to the governments trade agenda

"The onion industry, and indeed the wider vegetable and horticulture industries, have an important role. Not only do they generate wealth for the economy, you also feed people across the country and beyond our shores."

"While it has been a challenging period for vegetable producers, it is pleasing to see the industry work hard to maintain quality produce—and particularly in ensuring reliable supply year-round."

The Assistant Minister said export growth is the key to the future prosperity and sustainability of Australia's agricultural sector.

"This government's commitment has, and always will be, to improve farmgate returns, and our trade efforts are delivering for Australian farmers and the Australian economy," said Minister Ruston.



Onion Strategic Investment Advisory Panel appointed



Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) has appointed the Onion Strategic Investment Advisory Panel.

The Panel is tasked with overseeing the industry's strategic investment plan, and providing advice to HIA.

The members are:

NAME	ORGANISATION	LOCATION
Peter Shadbolt	Scotties Point Farms	VIC
Dr Richard Jones	Rathlyn Associates	NSW
Julian Shaw	Agronico Pty Ltd	TAS
Tony Higgs	Terranova Seeds Pty Ltd	NSW
Yvonne Smith	Bowhill Produce Pty Ltd	SA
Kees Versteeg	Qualipac Pty Ltd	QLD

The Panel met in April to review the existing Strategic Investment Plan and begin to develop the industry's research and marketing investment priorities for the next five years.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive Officer John Lloyd said the Panel's appointment marks the next phase in the Corporation's strategy to bolster industry output and returns.

"These panels will provide strategic advice to Hort Innovation on its investments in research and development, trade and marketing to increase productivity, farm gate profitability and the global competitiveness of Australian horticulture industries," he said.

"With a strong mix of skills and experience, the panellists are well positioned to help ensure industry has access to the tools it needs to ensure the health of some of the nation's key horticultural sectors for generations to come."

"With a strong mix of skills and experience, the panellists are well positioned to help ensure industry has access to the tools it needs to ensure the health of some of the nation's key horticultural sectors for generations to come."

Horticulture
Innovation
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CALENDAR

29-30 SEPTEMBER, 2016

OA Conference

Brisbane, QLD

ONIONS AUSTRALIA
STRATEGIC PARTNERS



Growers gather to celebrate onion industry

Onion growers from across Australia gathered in Mannum recently to celebrate their industry.

The onion harvest dinner, co-hosted by Onions Australia and Enza Zaden, attracted 60 growers from most states of Australia.

The highlight of the night was a keynote address by Enza Zaden's head seed breeder Lewis Lydon, who outlined the global onion industry.

The gala dinner was held at Mannum's Rivapak facility and Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl said the evening was a fantastic way to celebrate the Australian onion season.

Enza Zaden Area Manager Australia New Zealand Herman van der Gulik said the onion harvest dinner in a packing shed was a novel idea and an enjoyable night.

"I hope all attendees will remember it for a long time to come and I hope our varieties are as memorable to the growers as the evening," he said.

"While the evening was cold, the discussion was lively and the musician gave his all to serenade the networking onion growers. The night was enjoyable and without any over-networking.

► *Yvonne Smith, Herman van der Gulik, Andrew Moon, Aneil Hari, Kees Versteeg at the onion harvest dinner*

"It was a beautiful dream come true for me as a dusty packing shed transformed into a stunning restaurant for just one night.

"It really was a dream to unite growers for a night, in an unlikely place, where they could enjoy catching up with friends. The atmosphere was tinted green by the dramatic lighting and the shed decorated to make a cosy dinner. The usual market rivalries stayed at home and camaraderie prevailed around the tables and amongst the necessary heaters.

"I thank the onion growing community for supporting us at the dinner, buying our varieties and for supporting our research in Australia. I was very proud of our onion display, especially the mid to late season brown varieties, Olivine and Samantha.

"Enza Zaden is a multi local organisation and I am honoured that our global head of onion breeding, Lewis Lydon, could join us, talk about the global onion market and the opportunities to export Enza Zaden varieties to strong markets in SE Asia. The dinner was a joyful celebration of onions, onioneers, good food and animated discussion. "

Another highlight of the evening was a presentation to onion grower Steve Rathjen, who recently retired from the Onions Australia Executive Committee after almost two decades of involvement.





Onions support 2016 National Horticulture Convention

Onions Australia was proud to support the 2016 National Horticulture Convention by co-hosting the event which was held at the end of June on the Gold Coast.

The National Horticulture Convention is Australia's largest horticulture event which this year saw more than 1500 people attend. More than 100 trade booths allowed exhibitors to demonstrate their wares and it was estimated the event injected more than \$2 million into the local economy.

Other organisations to support the Convention were AUSVEG, Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL), the Central Markets Association of Australia, in partnership with Fresh Markets Australia (CMAA-FMA), Growcom, Persimmons Australia Inc and Australian Organic.

Onions Australia Chairman Kees Versteeg said that many onion growers attended the Convention in the past and benefited from

the ability to network with a wide range of conventional and organic horticultural growers, wholesalers and marketers.

"It made sense for Onions Australia to get involved this year in a more formal capacity, hence our co-hosting the event, which will provide excellent value for Australia's onion industry.

"A number of onion growers and executive attended the Convention this year which was a great success, including showcasing our new marketing campaign, the "Secret Serve", Mr Versteeg said.

At the Convention, Hort Innovation Marketing Manager Craig Perring told delegates the "Secret Serve" campaign aimed for a three to five percent increase in onion consumption by encouraging parents to include onions in family meals.

"The idea around the campaign is that onions are a versatile, delicious, nutritious 'secret serving' of vegetable that you can add to any meal, and children won't even know it!

"Onions are a staple, routine purchase, not an emotional, seasonal purchase like mangoes or cherries. Our research shows that the target buying market, and their children, prefer alternate vegetables to onions such as carrots, potatoes, and tomatoes, which makes this a challenging campaign.

"We also know that the onion industry in Australia is considered 'mature', and neither the value nor volume of production has increased during the last 10 years, further compounding the challenges ahead," Mr Perring said.

The "Secret Serve" marketing campaign is utilising a number of marketing channels to engage with mums and other main meal preparers, including a new website, www.secretserve.com.au, new branding and logos for use by growers and packers, and in-store demonstrations in supermarkets around Australia.



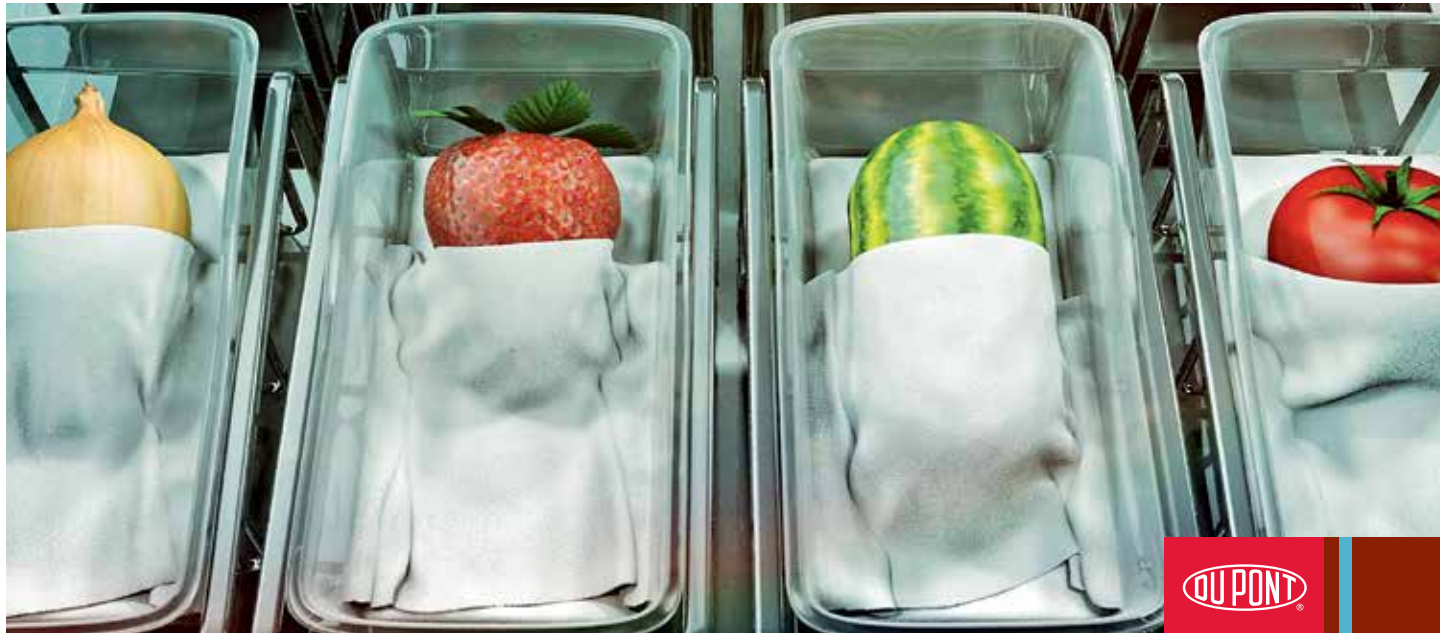
▶ Craig Perring presents at the 2016 Hort Convention - courtesy GFV

▶ Views from the convention – courtesy AUSVEG



For the 470 in-store demonstrations, Onions Australia is working with the Australian Mushroom Growers Association providing shoppers with samples of the recipes developed to work both onions and mushrooms into everyday meals.

Make sure you check out the full story on the "Secret Serve" campaign in the annual Onions Australia magazine, due out next month.



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OA heading to Brisbane for annual conference

Onions Australia is heading north for its annual conference this year – with Brisbane booked for September 29 and 30.

The Onions Australia Executive Committee will meet on September 29, with the Bejo Reg Miller Awards dinner to be held that evening at the Diana Plaza Hotel.

The conference will be held the next day, Friday, September 30, with a bus leaving the Hotel at 6.45am for a tour of the Brisbane Markets.

The Rocklea market complex incorporates a number of precincts, including the Brisbane Produce Market, Brisbane Flower Market, Brisbane MarketPlace retail markets, and is spread over 77ha.

Up to 4000 people work or do business at the markets on a daily basis, while the retail markets attract more than 12,000 people each weekend.

Following a tour of the market, Onions Australia will host its Annual General Meeting and a Regional Levy Payers' Meeting in the market's meeting facilities. Guest speakers for the event include key industry representatives and researchers investigating latest advancements for onions within Australia and internationally. There will also be industry updates from major sponsors Dobmac Machinery, AgNova Technologies, Terranova Seeds and Monsanto Seminis.

Those attending will be able to visit Gatton DPI for a tour of a new trial being undertaken by DuPont.

The trial is made up of small plots which are replicated and treated differently, to allow DuPont to gather data on the effectiveness of Downy mildew control under different spray programs. In this trial, DuPont is investigating a 5 spray program over five to seven weeks which compares different timings of Zorvec® Enicade® fungicide in combination with existing commercial products. It is aimed at showing the advantages of including Zorvec® Enicade® early in an onion Downy mildew control program compared to a standard commercial type program. The trial is on a red variety of onions called Rio Red Rocks.

To register interest for the conference please contact Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl via email at Lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au, or call 0458 11 11 26.





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Thrips control in stored onions

Cucumeris predatory mites applied to bins of red onions at harvest increased first grade packout by 30–50%. SARDI trials 2007 & 2008.

Orders must be placed at least 4 weeks prior to intended use.

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Early bird gets the worm!

The first ever Hort Connections event, combining the National Horticulture Convention and PMA Fresh Connections, will be held from 15 – 17 of May in Adelaide this year, and for the second year running Onions Australia is an official co-host to the event.

With world-class speakers, an expansive trade-show, uncapped networking opportunities and collaboration across the industry, Hort Connections 2017 is also supported by AUSVEG, PMA Australia-New Zealand, Irrigation Australia and Australian Organic.

Early bird registration is now open and AUSVEG Assistant National Marketing Manager, Sam Clayfield, has encouraged OA members to make the most of the specials.

“The early bird deals close on the 28th of February and offer some great savings,” Mr Clayfield said.

“Onions Australia members are also applicable for further discounts, so we’d encourage all OA members to register promptly and make the most of the early bird savings,” he said.

The three-day event will feature over 250 exhibitors showcasing the latest sector innovations and service offerings; a record number of delegates from across many areas of horticulture including vegetables, potatoes, onions, fresh fruit, cut flowers, certified organic growers and the irrigation industry; and an exciting array of networking events, field days, the Women in Horticulture event, the ‘NextGen’ young grower event, and of course culminating with the Hort Connections Gala Dinner.

Hort Connections 2017 speakers are due to be announced in the coming weeks.

To register or for more information visit: www.hortconnections.com.au

CALENDAR

15-17 MAY, 2017

National Horticulture Convention
Adelaide, SA

ONIONS AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PARTNERS



Secret to Success: Secret Serve Marketing Campaign

The ‘Secret Serve’ marketing campaign for the national onion industry has successfully increased sales of onions to its target demographic - small scale Australian families - since its launch in May 2016, and doesn’t look to slow in 2017.

The core focus of the campaign is to encourage families with young children to include onions in more meals.

According to recent statistics from Nielson, small scale families have increased their average annual expenditure on onions as a result of higher purchase frequency, which means they spent the same amount of onions per shop, but bought them more often.

Marketing Lead Graeme Yardy said while onions sales in Australia have plateaued over the past decade, it’s been encouraging to see the target demographic respond so well to the ‘Secret Serve’ movement.

“It shows that despite being in its infancy, the Secret Serve campaign is working, which is great,” Mr Yardy said.

“To date the campaign has engaged with all consumers in stores across Australia, particularly targeting families. The campaign provides plenty of family-friendly recipe ideas, including a new batch of summer recipes, plus health tips and information about using onions.

“The website www.secretserve.com.au has been populated with recipes from Aussie food personalities such as Lindsey Milan and Darren Robertson, both of who are founding members of the Secret Serve Society.”

The campaign has also launched a Facebook page and an Instagram account with the view to increase exposure for the campaign and align with other activities that are happening such as the instore cooking demonstrations, which were launched in May 2016, in conjunction with the Australian mushroom industry.

There have been more than 800 instore demonstrations since the start of the campaign across Coles, Woolworths and independent stores, directly targeting consumers whilst they are shopping.

2017 will see more investment in this area, with a focus on the Secret Serve’s new summer recipes which we launched in December.

“The Secret Serve is an incredibly important campaign for the onion industry and we’re thrilled to have seen it be embraced by Australian consumers and industry alike,” Mr Yardy said.

“It’s an exciting time to be in the onion industry. We’d like to see continued growth in the target demographic, which we foresee resulting in more long term onion eaters, helping to future proof the industry for generations to come.”

Recognition for long-serving OA Executive Member

As Australia Day and the prestigious Australian of the Year Awards approach, Onions Australia would like to acknowledge long time executive member Dr Dean Metcalf for being named as a Tasmanian state finalist.

Dr Metcalf is regarded as one of Australia’s leading crop microbiologists after discovering a killer fungus that could be used to control crop disease.

The biological control was first trialed on onion white rot in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Dr Metcalf has been a member of the OA Executive since 2004 and in 2015 was recognized by Onions Australia for his service to the industry, and awarded the prestigious Reg Miller Award.

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Weather watch

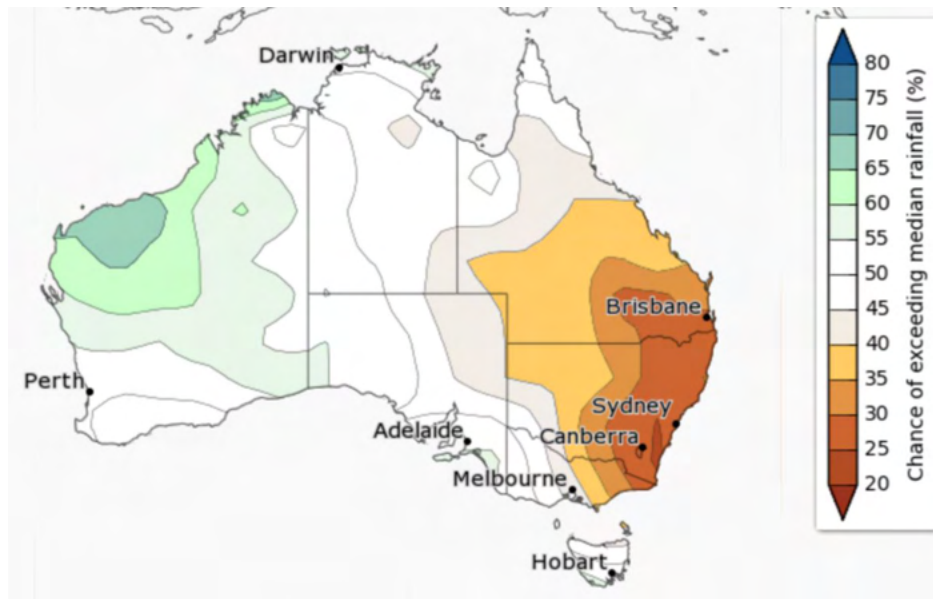
The spring of 2016 delivered some dramatic weather events with well above average seasonal rainfall across most of Eastern Australia and some serious storm damage in parts of South Australia and Victoria.

Very strong rainfall across south-eastern Australia meant some Tasmanian and Victorian onion growers couldn't get machinery onto sodden paddocks, but thankfully conditions eased into late-spring.

OA didn't receive any reports of significant damage from onion growers after the South Australia Riverland storms in November, but our hearts go out to the many citrus, stone fruit and almond growers who were affected.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) three month rainfall outlook for the 2016/17 summer points to hot and dry conditions into January and February in the east, while the west may see average to above average rainfall later in the summer.

The wet spring across much of Australia means root-zone soil moisture is above average, however the BoM is forecasting below average soil moisture and continued hot conditions for Queensland.



Source: Bureau of Meteorology

High fuel loads across much of Victoria, New South Wales, south-east South Australia and Tasmania also raises the prospect of a bad fire season.

An onion you can count on

It is summer time and the Aussie corn on the cob has invited his relatives to a beach BBQ, and there sitting amongst the cobs is an onion in its red speedos taking in the sun.

If you're surprised, you shouldn't be, because genetically speaking, corn and onion share more similarities than differences. It is this similarity that led plant breeders to take techniques used to develop hybrid corn and develop a hybrid onion that's vigorous, robust and has all the quality characteristics that consumers demand.

In a hybrid system, the plant breeder selects plants from unrelated genetic sources that can compliment each other in terms of disease resistance, environmental and quality characteristics, and creates a male and a female parent which are then crossed. The seed produced from this pairing tend to be more vigorous, more uniform and higher yielding than either parent or than an OP. It is this outcome that will see a grower get a higher return on their investment when planting a hybrid over an OP crop.

While it is still possible to develop open pollination (OP) onions with these qualities, they generally do not perform as well or as consistently as hybrid onions. For a start, the qualities must present in the parent plant, and a breeder cannot control pollination as well as in a hybrid system. The result is a seed that is less consistent, lower yielding, often susceptible to disease, and often not suited to modern production methods.

Since the development of hybrid onions is costly, in order to maximize the genetic potential of hybrids, Seminis uses the highest standards for our commercial seed production. This ensures that the seed we supply will result in rapid stand establishment, which is a key component for success in onion production. Plant populations of onions are high, and high seed quality is necessary for a uniform, high yielding, high quality bulb crop.

For this reason Seminis has invested significant research to give Australian growers hybrid onion varieties that will meet the needs of market, as well as resist disease and thrive in local growing conditions.

Growers who are deciding whether to plant an OP variety or a hybrid variety, will want to consider is the variety suited to their growing region, does it have superior yield and quality characteristics and how much it costs to produce. A hybrid variety can deliver on these characteristics in a far more consistent way than an OP variety. So while the OP may be cheaper the number of seeds that germinate,



► Seminis onion breeder Dr Rick Jones

its robustness, disease resistance and yield are less certain than a hybrid.

If you'd like to learn more about hybrid onions, or to discuss your growing options you can speak to a Seminis representative by calling 1800 364 846.

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Email: info@biologicalservices.com.au WEB: www.biologicalservices.com.au

New hybrid commercial varieties performing well in South Australia

The global head of Monsanto's onion program, Rick Jones, recently visited South Australia to inspect the performance of two new Seminis commercial varieties, Ranguru and Shrike.

The following update was supplied by Mr Jones following his time in the trial regions.

Monsanto's seven year process from seed development to commercial release is considered one of the most intensive in the industry. Its end goal is to make hybrids that will stand up to disease, require less inputs, appeal to the consumer, and be efficient to grow and harvest available to Australian growers.

The two new Seminis commercial varieties, Ranguru and Shrike, are in the final stages of this process. The area where the hybrids were trialled had, almost extensively, been planted with open pollinated onions that had become susceptible to Pink Root Rot.

I found the Ranguru variety was sparking the interest of growers, in part due to its appealing dark brown colour and its Pink Root Rot resistance. Similarly, the variety Shrike also received good comments in terms of its Pink Root Rot resistance and the expectation the bulbs will have an appealing colour at harvest.

The hybrids were outperforming open pollinated varieties produced by other plant breeders with rigorous growth, stronger disease resistance and waxy leaves that made them less susceptible to powdery mildew.

In South Australia, Pink Root Rot is a concern for growers because the region doesn't allow for long crop rotation periods and the heavy use of open pollinated varieties has meant the disease is well established in the soil.

The hybrids turned out to be perfect for South Australian growers' unique practice of planting hybrids with small grains to protect the seedling from becoming wind damaged by the region's sandy soil.

While Monsanto supports the trials, the Seminis team doesn't have a fixed mind on how the hybrids should perform, and as a rule prefer to get grower feedback and learn something new or come across a benefit that we hadn't expected.

Ranguru and Shrike are particularly well suited to South Australia as both were developed using Australian Brown and PLK genetics. These were chosen because of their strong characteristics and suitability to the Australian market.

In addition to Ranguru and Shrike, three pre-commercial hybrids will shortly be trialled in Tasmania following development and trials at Monsanto's research centre in New Zealand.

The hybrids at the research centre have displayed great qualities that will suit growing conditions in Tasmania and New Zealand.

The hybrids have qualities that stand up to cool and wet growing conditions. They have a consistent globe shape with a dark brown colour, they'll out-perform other breeders' varieties for pink root rot resistance, have a long planting window, and will stand up to long transit times.

In Tasmania where there can be heavy rain falling at any time in the year, planting can be delayed, which makes the hybrids' planting window a real benefit to the grower.

This window is possible due to the hybrids bolt resistance and the vigorous growth of the plant. This is also a useful trait that can be used by South Australian growers with large operations who want to stagger planting to have a consistent bulb quality at harvest.

As with Ranguru and Shrike, the new hybrids will undergo three years of grower trials so Monsanto can gain important insight into how they perform on a commercial operation.



Horticulture
Innovation
Australia

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CALENDAR

15-17 MAY, 2017

Hort Connections
Adelaide, SA

17 MAY, 2017

7am
Monsanto Seminis
Growers Breakfast
Adelaide, SA

17 MAY, 2017

9am-12pm
Onion Levy Payers' Meeting
Adelaide, SA

12-13 OCTOBER, 2017

Onions Australia
Annual Conference
Dubbo, NSW

ONIONS AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PARTNERS



LAYERS | APRIL 2017

Detection and management of bacterial diseases in Australian allium crops

A research project focused on increasing the capacity of the onion industry to manage bacterial diseases has trialled three different options to manage disease. This includes the use of copper bactericides, essential oils and host resistance in onion varieties.

Funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia, the *Detection and management of bacterial diseases in Australian allium crops* project started in 2014 in response to an outbreak of bacterial blight of leek (*Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *porri*, or Psp) on onion and shallot crops in Queensland's Lockyer Valley growing region during the 2010 to 2012 seasons.

Lead researcher Dr Cherie Gambley from Queensland's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries said initially the disease was thought to be downy mildew caused by the fungus *Peronospora destructor*, as the symptoms can be superficially similar to that caused by Psp.

"Bacterial blight of leek is a well-known disease of leek around the world and was previously reported affecting leek crops in southern states and WA," Dr Gambley said.

"But the detection from the Lockyer Valley was the first report of this disease affecting onion and shallot for Australia and only the second report affecting onion worldwide."

Volatile gases from four oils – clove, lavender, oregano and thyme – were tested in laboratory experiments to evaluate their ability to reduce bacterial growth.

Dr Gambley said experiments showed that all four oils limited the growth of a Psp isolate obtained from onion.

"By contrast, a Psp isolate from a disease outbreak in leek in the early 2000s in southern Australia was only affected by volatiles of clove and lavender," she said.

"Two related bacterial species *P. syringae* pv. *tomato* (Pst) and *P. syringae* pv. *syringae* (Pss) were included for comparison. Interestingly, Pss was affected by most of the oils except lavender and Pst was not affected by any of the oils."

"Further work is needed to confirm these results and to develop application technology."

Dr Gambley said the research also concluded that further work should be carried out to develop copper spray regimes to control the bacterium and to extend label use of currently registered copper products.

"Experiments show that Australian isolates of Psp had not developed a tolerance to copper and copper based bactericides could be useful to manage the disease, however, there are currently no registered products available for this use," she said.

A pot trial experiment was also conducted around possible resistance to Psp in a selection of currently available commercial onion varieties.

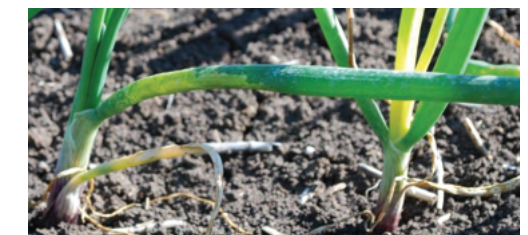
Dr Gambley said the trial included a range of white, brown and red varieties with varying day-length maturity.

"None of the varieties were resistant to Psp and most reacted similarly to the known susceptible variety," she said.

"All varieties reacted more severely to the leek isolate of Psp, indicating variability in strain severity within this bacterium."

"Overall, the use of resistant or tolerant onion varieties to manage the disease is unlikely to be feasible with currently available lines."

The full report and findings will be published later this year by Hort Innovation.



► Red onion plants affected with downy mildew on the left and Bacterial blight of leek on the right. In both cases there is a yellowing of leaf tissue but with the bacterial infection it is often the whole leaf and always the new leaf, whereas, that caused by the downy mildew fungi is more localised and can occur on any leaf.



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When it comes to protecting your vegetables, it's the pick of the crop.

INFINITO works fast and lasts longer, providing excellent protection against downy mildew across a range of bulb vegetables. Containing two new modes of action for foliar application, INFINITO is a user-friendly resistance management alternative for growers.

Speak to your agent today, or for more information, visit crop.bayer.com.au/infinito

	INFINITO	ACROBAT [†]	RIDOMIL [†] GOLD MZ	ZORVEC [†]
Modes of action	2	1	2	1
No reported cases of resistance	✓	✓	✗	✓
No additional protectant required	✓	✗	✓	✗
Adjuvant not required	✓*	✗	✗	✓
Liquid formulation	✓	✓	✗	✓
Rainfastness	When dry	n/a	6hrs	20 mins from drying

Factory of the future

The pursuit of greater agricultural efficiency is endless, but the onion processing sector is taking giant steps forward as optical grading technology becomes operational.

OA's strategic partner DOBMAC Agricultural Machinery is the dealer and support agent in Australia and NZ for Dutch company Ecraft – formed after a merger of ERC Machinery, Qreenno, and Propak.

Ecraft describes itself as a “total solution supplier” and is one of the leading businesses world-wide in the development of optical sorting technology.

Ecraft's optical grader sorts onions internally and externally, based on size, colour, shape, weight and both internal and external quality, thereby offering a guarantee in the quality of the sorted onions.

During the process, the onions travel on a conveyor belt before being separated and placed one-by-one on cups. After a blower beam removes loose skin and dirt, the onion moves through an infrared scan so the internal quality can be examined.

DOBMAC's General Manager, Mark Dobson, says the major benefit of optical grading is it allows processors to know exactly what's going into each bag.

“The technology permits businesses to guarantee a top quality product, which isn't possible through weight and diameter grading and external inspection,” he said.

“Ecraft's optical grader has been built from the ground up specifically for onion sorting. A modified fruit grader won't work as well because fruit grading is a very clean environment, whereas with onions there are husks, dust, and dirt flying everywhere.”

Ecraft delivered their first machine in Holland last year and Mr Dobson says there's already been significant interest in Australia.

“The optical sorting hardware can be anything from a two to 12-tracked machine so it's not only the really big players in the industry who are interested.

“We've had discussions with businesses as small as 5,000 tonnes per year of production that see the long-term benefits of electronic grading.

“The technology is growing at a huge rate at the moment with frequent updates to both machinery and software. Our relationship with Ecraft is a close one, and involves design, implementation, training, and visits after the installation.

“Ecraft's vision is for the packing shed to be one project, with intake, cleaning, topping, grading and sizing through to weighing and packing all one integrated process.”

DOBMAC will have a large stand at the Hort Connections trade show in Adelaide and a representative from Ecraft will be present.



Hort Connections - next month!

For those attending Hort Connections in Adelaide next month (15th - 17th May) there are some key events OA would love you to put in your diary!

On Wednesday 17th of May, Seminis will partner with Onions Australia to present a breakfast seminar during Hort Connections to discuss the future of onion breeding in Australia and the trial performance of new Seminis onion varieties.

The breakfast offers members an opportunity to hear expert advice on onion breeding in Australia and ways to improve growing potential against pink root resistance.

The event also gives growers and industry representatives a chance to speak with Seminis Technology Development

Representative Julio Ducatti, alongside the Seminis team, about the new varieties.

An onion levy payers meeting will be held directly after the Seminis breakfast, from 9am until noon. The meeting will include a Secret Serve marketing update from Craig Perring, Marketing Manager at Hort Innovation.

It's hoped that two of the most preeminent businessmen in the global onion industry – Jacob Wiskerke from Wiskerke Onions in Holland, and Dr Bill Dean from River Point Farms in America – will be able to attend Hort Connections also.

For those yet to register for the event, please visit: www.hortconnections.com.au



Two centuries of innovation. A lifetime of success.



Tilbury F1

Bred specifically for Australia & New Zealand

- + **Type : Mid Intermediate Day**
- + Late maturity PLK hybrid type
- + High production, high packout, reliable
- + High number of skins, very attractive dark golden finish
- + Top quality onion, firm, high, round
- + Longest storage on the market



Rhinestone F1

Bred specifically for Australia & New Zealand

- + **Type : Mid-late Intermediate Day**
- + Maincrop PLK hybrid (earlier than Tilbury)
- + High yielding variety, high packout
- + Healthy, waxy & vigorous foilage
- + Very uniform in shape, good skin retention & a good firmness
- + High number of skins, very attractive dark brown finish



Neptune F1

Firm, Great Dark Red Colour

- + **Type : Mid Short Day**
- + Well-skinned, uniform, flattened globe shaped bulbs
- + Slow bolting & intermediate resistance to pink root
- + Vigorous, waxy & healthy foilage
- + High yield & high pack out

Important: The descriptions, illustrations, photographs, advice, suggestions and vegetation cycles that may be presented herein are aimed at experienced professionals and are derived from observations made in defined conditions on various trials. They are offered in all good faith, for purely informational purposes, and shall not therefore, under any circumstances, be held to be exhaustive, be taken as any form of guarantee of harvest or performance, prejudice specific factors or circumstances (either current or future), and more generally, form any kind of contractual undertaking whatsoever. The user must first and foremost ensure that his exploitation conditions, local geographical conditions, his planned growing period, his soil, the means at his disposal (such as technical knowledge and experience and cultural techniques and operations), his resources (such as tests and control methods) and his equipment, and more generally his agronomical, climatic, sanitary, environmental and economic context are suitable for the crops, techniques and varieties that are presented herein. All the varieties illustrated in this publication were photographed in favourable conditions and no guarantee can be provided that results will be identical under different conditions. All reproductions, whether in part or in whole, of this publication (of the medium and/or the contents), in any form whatsoever, are strictly forbidden, unless specific prior permission is granted. Non contractual photographs - All rights reserved - © 2017 HM.CLAUSE

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At Seminis®, we are constantly thinking of the next generation. Not just the next generation of seeds with outstanding growing potential, but the next generation of our customers and their families all over the world.

Improve your growing potential with these Pink Root resistant varieties from Seminis.



Ranguru
(SV7077NG)

Ranguru has been developed with the Australia market in mind. With its dark brown skin, a uniform bulb shape this variety stores and transports easily, resulting in a highly marketable crop.

FEATURES

- Resistance to bolting
- Excellent bulb shape and size uniformity
- Intermediate resistance to Pink Root
- Main planting slot



Shrike
(SV9463NH)

Shrike is harvested from January to March and holds up well in the heat of summer. Shrike grows vigorously with a high tolerance to bolting with intermediate resistance to Pink Root.

FEATURES

- Smooth brown skin and attractive globe shape
- Stands up against heat
- Stores well
- Intermediate resistance to Pink Root
- Late planting slot

For more information visit www.seminis.com.au or locate your local representative by contacting 1800 069 569.





LAYERS | AUGUST 2017

CALENDAR

17-18 AUGUST 2017

Onion Biosecurity Plan Meetings, Adelaide SA

12-13 OCTOBER 2017

OA Annual Conference, Sydney NSW

ONIONS AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PARTNERS



Onion Biosecurity Plan Meetings Scheduled for August

As part of a process of continual biosecurity improvement in the onion industry the onion biosecurity plan is being reviewed and version 3 is scheduled for release mid-2018 along with the first version of the onion biosecurity manual.

The project Review of the National Biosecurity Plan for the onion industry and development of a biosecurity manual for onion producers (VN15001) is a strategic levy investment being funded by Hort Innovation, using the onion research and development levy, and contributions from the Australian Government. The project is being carried out by Plant Health Australia (PHA), with work having begun in October 2016.

As part of the project, a group of expert plant pathologists and entomologists have assessed potential pests of onions in Australia and produced risk ratings for each. David Gale, Project Officer from PHA said that revising the biosecurity plan is important. "Pest threats and possible pathways into Australia are changing all the time, so it's important to revisit the assessment and update the plan regularly."

The next step is to assess any gaps in the industry preparedness for the top-rated risks. Industry representatives, entomologists,

expert pathologists and other scientific professionals will be brought together in Adelaide on 17th August 2017 to make this assessment. "As part of the biosecurity plan development process, industry also identify the steps they want to take in responding to pest and disease risks with suitable on the ground actions. Plans are signed off by both industry and government as the agreed way forward, ensuring that everyone is working on the same priority pests."

Following this meeting, growers and key industry representatives – including Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl, Executive Committee Chairman Peter Shadbolt and executive members Andrew Moon and Dean Metcalf – will meet to discuss how the findings from the risk analysis process will inform the structure and content of a manual for onion growers. The manual will assist growers to identify the main risks and the procedures that they can take to protect their enterprises. "The first action which the onion industry has identified they want to take is to create a manual which will help growers develop farm biosecurity plans to prevent entry and spread of the pests and diseases identified in the risk assessment process."

PHA's new framework for biosecurity plans, which was finalised less than 12 months ago and aims to improve uptake of the implementation activities, will be applied to the development of version 3 of the onion biosecurity plan.

VISITORS

PLEASE RESPECT FARM BIOSECURITY

Please contact the manager before entering.



Do not enter property without prior approval. Keep to roadways and laneways.



If you have any issues or information you would like tabled at the meetings, please contact OA CEO Lechelle Earl before August 17 via email: lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au



Annual Conference 2017

The 2017 Onions Australia Annual Conference will be held in Sydney on October 12th and 13th.

The conference will begin with a meeting of the OA Executive Committee on the afternoon of Thursday October 12th, with all conference attendees then invited to a Delegates' Dinner at Rydges Sydney Central in Surry Hill at 6pm.

The evening's keynote speaker will be Secret Serve ambassador Scott Gooding.

Scott is an Australian chef and thought leader, encouraging and inspiring people to cook real food at home for them and their loved ones. Scott breaks down the barriers to cooking healthy food with his simple, affordable, nourishing recipes – some of which will be featured in the upcoming Secret Serve 'e-book' of recipes.

The next morning delegates will tour the Sydney Markets before heading back to Rydges for the OA AGM, followed by a Levy Payers' Meeting.

Please ensure to return your registration forms included in the newsletter ASAP to confirm your attendance.



► *Michael Sippel and Rohan Shadbolt catch-up at the 2016 Annual Conference*

Update: Strategic Investment Plan

Hort Innovation's new Onion Strategic Investment Plan is here!

The Onion Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) will help guide Hort Innovation's management of investment programs for the onion industry for the next five years. It lays the foundation for decision making in strategic levy investments and represents the balanced interest of the industry. The very important function of the SIP is to ensure levy investment decisions align with industry priorities.

The SIP has been developed in close partnership with growers and other industry stakeholders, and Hort Innovation thanks all those who have contributed their valuable time and ideas.

Access the handy 'At a Glance' document outlining the key areas of the SIP, or download the full document on Hort Innovation's Onion Fund page at: www.horticulture.com.au/grower-focus/onion.



ADVERTORIAL

Microstar

Microstar has helped take the bulk handling out of the field at drilling time.

Since changing over our onion drilling operations to the use of Microstar, we have removed much of the fertiliser bulk handling that we had, with bulk bags and trucks auguring fertiliser along with their potential hazards.

At 30 kg per Ha, we have been able to reduce the labour needed down from 2 to 3 people to arrange the whole drilling/ fertiliser operation to 1 operator with 10 kgs bag on the back of a ute.

In the past we used a combination of triple super/ single super at drilling which was dusty and hard to handle. As we are now using Microstar, a non dusty micro granule, we have reduced one more health hazard from the operation. We drill approx 120Ha of onions over our operation with our precision drill. So having less fertiliser to handle which is non dusty for our drill operators is a good thing.

We have not had any declines in yield but picked up a lot of advantages with having Microstar as part of our onion nutrition program, including no bulk handling, reduced labour costs, reduced worker health risks, with solid germination and emergent results.



► James Addison, Farm Manager, Charlton Farm Produce- Tasmania

The Greater Hamilton Region peels back the layers for you to grow onions

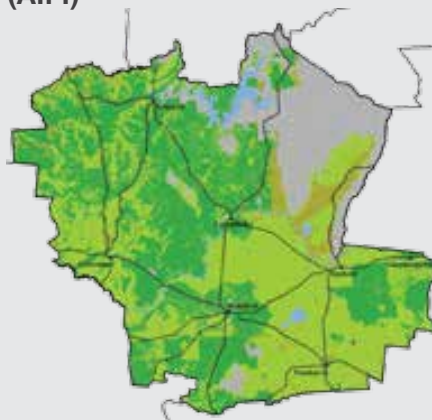
The Greater Hamilton region is ripe for further agricultural diversification and investment, thanks to high rainfall, fertile soils, above average returns and future water availability.

Our Land Capability modelling demonstrates that onions are well suited to our region, now and into the future.

We invite you to dig in and grow in Greater Hamilton!



Onion Land Suitability in Southern Grampians - 2050 (AIFI)



Not suitable	Suitable
■ Permanently NS	■ 60% - Moderate
■ Public Land	■ 70%
	■ 80%
	■ 90% - High
	■ 100%

We welcome you to our region to experience for yourself the onion growing opportunities. Please contact:

Hugh Koch

Manager Economic Development and Tourism

T 03 5573 0238

M 0409 797 446

E hkoch@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

growinggreaterhamilton.com.au



Onions front & centre at Tasmania Industry Forum

Almost 100 people filled Pier 1 in Ulverstone, Tasmania last month to attend the Roberts Onion and Carrot Industry forum – with onions well and truly front and centre.

It was the second time agricultural business, Roberts, has organised the event for growers and industry representatives, led by Senior Agronomist Tim Walker. A trade show was held in conjunction with the event, with numerous businesses showcasing their onion and carrot products.

Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl opened the speaker sessions on the day, outlining the Australian onion industry.

“It was a brilliant opportunity for Onions Australia to be involved with such a high quality event,” Ms Earl said. “It was a very informative day, filled with the latest updates about industry.

“Tim Walker and the Roberts crew should be commended for coordinating such a successful day.”

“It was great to see so many growers in the one room exchanging information and just generally catching up, highlighting the depth and strength of the Australian onion industry.”

Ms Earl’s address had a specific focus on export, given the high level of onion exports generated within Tasmania.

“It was a great chance to discuss the recent formalisation of the industry’s Strategic Investment Plan and the key components around export prospects in the future,” she said.

“Onions Australia will be focussing on developing export strategies and connections during the coming months to ensure Australian growers can nurture and build international connections.”



► Forum Attendees

Other presentations on the day included:

Bayer’s Graeme Nichol on Infinito, a new active for Downy Mildew and Serenade Prime; Carlos Ramirez, Anthony Julian and Julio Ducatti from Monsanto Seminis speaking about new seed variety trials, pink rot resistance and the upcoming opening of the new Pukekohe breeding station; David Rann outlining calcium nitrate’s role in



► Tim Walker and Lechelle Earl

intensive cropping and AgNova’s Microstar in direct seeded crop; Botanical Resources Australia’s Tim Groom showcasing a new seed treatment facility and Folicure Microstar; Tania Jago presenting a Chef’s Toolbox cooking demonstration featuring onions and carrots; Andy Doran from Terranova speaking about new onion seed varieties and trials; AGF Seeds’ Chris Walsh explaining the benefits of growing pre and post-harvest using tillage radish; Greg Bennett from DuPont presenting about Zorvec Enicade and Fontelis; Impact Fertiliser’s Scott Evans speaking about Zincstar and crop nutrition; Scott Matthews outlining Syngenta’s Amistar Top as a fungicide in carrots and application technologies; and RuralCo Tasmania Operations General Manager John Tuskin giving an overview of operations.



► Seminis Display



Better with every generation.

Every day for 150 years, Seminis has worked to empower growers by improving the vegetables they grow and providing solutions to their toughest challenges.

For onion growers, we're delivering new varieties bred for Australian conditions with the qualities required for profitable crops. With in-built disease resistance and uniform bulbs which can be transported or stored, our new generation of hybrid onions are a smart addition to cropping programs across Australia.

At Seminis, we're constantly thinking of the next generation. Not just the next generation of seeds, but the next generation of growers and families all over the world.

Call us on 1800 364 846 or visit www.seminis.com.au to find out more.

Horticulture Code of Conduct

Fresh Markets Australia has released a new information sheet to highlight the responsibilities which all growers have under the new Horticulture Code of Conduct.

The market wholesaling sector is progressing ongoing training for market based traders (wholesalers) in relation to the requirements of the Code, with numerous workshops to educate traders (wholesalers) having been held around Australia.

Fresh Markets Australia said it has received feedback from traders (Wholesalers) who are concerned about the number of growers who remain unaware of their obligations and requirements under the new Code. Traders (wholesalers) are concerned that they are going to have ongoing difficulty in obtaining grower cooperation to negotiate and agree compliant Horticulture Produce Agreements (HPA's) as is required by the Code.

Growers and traders (wholesalers) who breach the Code could face penalties of up to \$63,000 may apply.

To download the information sheet 'Code Requirements for Growers' visit <https://www.freshmarkets.com.au/fresh-specs/code-requirements-growers/>



BIOLOGICAL SERVICES



Thrips control in stored onions

Cucumeris predatory mites applied to bins of red onions at harvest increased first grade packout by 30–50%. SARDI trials 2007 & 2008.

Orders must be placed at least 4 weeks prior to intended use.

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New (and returning!) faces to OA Exec

General Manager of Dobmac Agricultural Machinery, Mark Dobson, has returned to the OA Executive after break away in 2016.

Born and bred on the north west of Tasmania, Mark has taken over management of Dobmac in past five years.

"In that role, my focus is continuing to supply growers with world class harvest, grading and packing solutions to improve efficiencies across their operations," Mark said.

"The main thing I'd like to see achieved for Australian onion growers is more access to export markets to allow for growth in the onion industry."

A new face to the Executive is Jason Daniell from Burdett in the the Murraylands, South Australia

Jason is the Owner/Manager of the Daniell Family Trust.

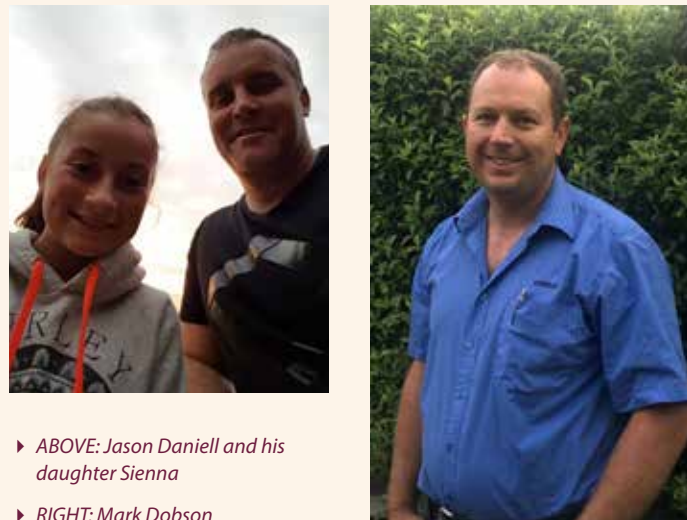
"I grew up in Murray Bridge where my family originally grew broiler chickens for Ingham's," Jason said.

"My parents and I made the decision in the mid 1990's to have a go at horticulture and started off leasing a small block of 15 hectares," he said.

"From pretty humble beginnings we have been able to expand the business to the 900 hectares we operate now. My wife, who is a teacher, and our two kids help me to keep work and home life as separate as possible!

"The main thing I'd like to see achieved in the Australian onion industry is continued improvement with labelling of Australia and imported product.

"There has been a slight improvement over the last few years but I feel we can do lot better so consumers know exactly what they are purchasing."



▶ ABOVE: Jason Daniell and his daughter Sienna

▶ RIGHT: Mark Dobson

ADVERTORIAL

Making the most of your soil



Waterhold Pty Ltd is a small company that specialises in turning farm by-products into compost for use back on a farmers' own paddocks in an effort to improve the water holding capacity of soil.

Managing Director Ross O'Halloran said he's been working on-farm with some of Australia's largest farmers since 2010, turning a variety of leftover fruit and vegetables in to compost.

"We bring our machinery and knowledge on to site and turn any product that can't be sold in to a high quality compost for the farmer to use again," Mr O'Halloran said.

"We turn a lot of onions into compost year on year with great results."

The method used to develop the compost is set out by Soil Foodweb International (SFI).

"Every batch made gets tested by SFI for the biological values and the nutrient values get tested by Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL)," Mr O'Halloran said.

"This ensures that farmers get a full and comprehensive test to ensure peace of mind they're getting what they pay for.

"As a result, we believe we're making a low cost, high quality product which delivers a great return."

One of the company's main clients is Parilla Premium Potatoes in South Australia.

"We first came to Parilla six year ago and made more than 300 tonnes as part of the first year trial," Mr O'Halloran said.

"It's proved incredibly successful; this year we've produced 7,000 tonnes of compost with two machines running full time and a third delivered shortly."

Mr O'Halloran said any onion farmer in Australia could apply the process on farm.

"I'd encourage any farmer with bulk excess non-saleable product to consider this process and get in touch."

A free quote can be provided anywhere in Australia. For more information call Ross O'Halloran on 0427 220 798.



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LAYERS | JANUARY 2018

CALENDAR

17 JUNE, 2018

Executive Committee Meeting
Rydges - Brisbane, QLD

18 JUNE, 2018

OA Levy Payers Meeting
Rydges - Brisbane, QLD

18-20 JUNE, 2018

Hort Connections
Brisbane Exhibition Centre, QLD

18-19 OCTOBER, 2018

Ulverstone, Tasmania

ONIONS AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PARTNERS



Your Exotic Pest Identification Shed Poster inside this edition of 'Layers'!



Positive early results in integrated pest management trials

Like so many onion farmers throughout South Australia and beyond, controlling thrips numbers is a time-consuming exercise at Dolling Produce.

Based at Padthaway, near Naracoorte, Dolling Produce has been in the region for 50 years and today grows more than 200 hectares of red and brown onions.

Third generation farm manager Jarryd Dolling said trying to stay on top of thrips was becoming an uphill battle.

"The chemicals we're using these days are becoming less effective," Mr Dolling said.

"There have been a lot of chemicals taken off the register in the last few years that were pretty effective against thrips, and a lot of the chemicals we can apply are getting limited to zero results."

Seeking new ways to control thrips, Dolling Produce joint farm manager Shane Ebert attended a workshop on integrated pest management in mid-2017 and reported back to the team that it seemed an option worth trying.

The workshop was one of a series held in South Australia as part a five-year Hort Innovation project, 'IPM Extension Program for the Potato and Onion Industries'.

It's funded with R&D levies from the Onion and Potato Levy, and funds from the Australian Government.

The project is being carried out by entomologists from IPM Technologies, Dr Paul Horne, Angelica Cameron and Jessica Page.

"The workshop series in South Australia was an opportunity to speak to farmers about their pest issues and see who would be interested in having integrated pest management (IPM) demonstration trials set up on their property," Ms Cameron said.

"When we met the guys from Dolling Produce at our workshop in Mt Gambier back in May 2017, they were keen to talk about how their insecticide approach to pest management had not been delivering adequate results."



▶ Jarryd Dolling, Dolling Produce SA

The IPM Technologies team met on site at Dolling Produce just prior to planting for the 2017/18 season to start implementing alternative management practices.

"They're trying to build up populations of insects that feed on thrips and manage insecticides so that they don't affect the insects they want to support," Ms Cameron said.

Dr Paul Horne said the main difference between IPM and the standard pesticide approach is that "integrated" means using all available options in a compatible way.

"So what it means in this case is that instead of relying on the application of usually broad spectrum insecticides, we try to minimise insecticide use and increase the efficiency of naturally occurring biological control agents," Dr Horne said.

Early results at Dolling Produce are in, and they're looking promising.

"We are regularly going out and looking at the trial site to see if predatory bugs are increasing and if the thrips are reacting to it," Mr Dolling said.

"It's early days but looking at the trial compared to the rest of the patch, we are finding the thrips numbers are decreasing significantly, and it's really looking pretty positive at the moment."

IPM workshops will begin in Tasmania in early 2018.

Anyone who is interested in being part of the project should contact IPM Technologies lead entomologist Dr Paul Horne: paul@ipmtechnologies.com.au

Want to see more? Watch the video! Now live at: www.onionsaustralia.org.au



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Your levy is hard at work - let HORTLINK show you how!

Don't miss the latest edition of Hort Innovation's Hortlink, which provides an update on all new, current and recently completed levy-funded activity in each levy industry. Check out the onion section at www.horticulture.com.au/hortlink-2017-edition-4/onion.

Hortlink includes easy-to-read project updates, results and resources you can use in your business, plus case studies, industry contacts and more. You can choose to browse the whole onion snapshot or use the interactive project list to jump straight to the information you want. Also look out for the 'ACT NOW' tags to easily identify project resources and information you can make use of straight away.

Stay in the loop with your levy by becoming a member of Hort Innovation, the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture. Paying a levy doesn't automatically make you a member, but signing up is free at www.horticulture.com.au/membership.



Hort Innovation
Strategic levy investment

ONION FUND

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the onion research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

In focus: Exotic Disease Identification

In this edition of 'Layers' you will find your own copy of the Onions Australia Exotic Disease Identification Poster.

The poster features 11 pests regarded as having a high combined risk of entering, establishing, spreading, and causing economic impact in Australia.

OA CEO Lechelle Earl said latest poster follows the great response received to the domestic pest identification poster that was developed with Seminis in 2016.

"There are very few onion packing sheds or farm office walls that don't house that poster, which is testament to the importance industry places on biosecurity," Ms Earl said.

"In light of the industry's third Biosecurity Plan, which was recently endorsed by the Onions Australia executive, and first Manual currently being developed by Plant Health Australia, we thought it was a great opportunity to involve PHA in the creation of the 2018 poster also."

David Gale from Plant Health Australia said the poster is an important tool for all onion growers to add to their biosecurity awareness toolkit.

"We are working closely with Onions Australia to finalise the Onions Biosecurity Plan and Manual in the coming weeks, and on behalf of Plant Health Australia I would like to thank all growers, researchers and other stakeholders who have assisted us in developing practical and helpful documents," he said.



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CALENDAR

17 JUNE, 2018

OA Dinner and
Executive Meeting
Rydges Southbank, QLD

18 JUNE, 2018

OA AGM and
Levy Payers Meeting
(including biosecurity workshop)
Rydges Southbank, QLD

18-20 JUNE, 2018

Hort Connections
Brisbane Exhibition Centre, QLD

18 OCTOBER, 2018

Reg Miller Awards Evening
Ulverstone Tasmania

19 OCTOBER, 2018

Onion Industry Grower Day
Ulverstone Tasmania

Your
Biosecurity
Manual
inside this
edition of
Layers



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Industry First Biosecurity Manual Released

Australian onion growers now have access to a Biosecurity Manual.

The guide was developed by Plant Health Australia (PHA) as part of a Hort Innovation R&D project (Review of the national biosecurity plan for the onion industry and development of a biosecurity manual for onion producers VN15001).

General Manager Risk Mitigation from PHA, Rod Turner, said the manual is an easy to use document designed to offer straight forward advice on how best to minimise biosecurity risks on farm.

"It's important that growers engage with this new resource because as the industry is well aware – while Australia has strict biosecurity measures in place, no system is 100% effective," Mr Turner said.

"In addition there are some exotic diseases that are in limited areas across the country and the new manual sets out how growers can best protect their properties from these diseases."

The new manual shows pictures and illustrations of some of the exotic pests that onion farmers need to be mindful of.

► *Rod Turner, Plant Health Australia*



"This is a great tool for farmers to be able to refresh their recognition of varied pests in the case that they should appear on their farm," Rod Turner said.

"If a suspect pest or disease is found on farm, growers should call the Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 so it can be investigated."

The manual also includes a People, Vehicles and Equipment Checklist that allows growers to self-assess where there may be gaps in current biosecurity activities.

"Farm biosecurity may take a bit of time to plan and prepare but prevention is better than cure," Mr Turner said.

Chairman of the Onions Australia Executive, and Victorian based farmer, Pete Shadbolt, urged all sectors of the onion industry to take the time to review the manual.

"A document such as this has been a long time coming for our industry and it's something that should be utilised to its full extent," Mr Shadbolt said.

"After a long battle with diseases such as smut, our industry has a lot to proud of in the way it has continued to be a biosecurity leader in the horticulture sector.

"But we can never be complacent and all measures suggested in the manual are easily achievable."

Want to see more? Watch the video!
The 'Getting the most out of the new onion industry biosecurity manual' video is now live at: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/news-updates/rd-videos/>





Meet the new Australian Onion Industry Marketing Manager

Samantha Ferguson has been appointed to the role of Marketing Manager for the Australian onion industry by Hort Innovation.

Samantha joined Hort Innovation in October 2017, where she was looking after the domestic marketing programs for summerfruit, cherries and table grapes, as well as supporting industry export marketing campaigns.

"I'm really excited to be working on the onions program," Samantha said.

"Not only are onions beautiful to look at and delicious to eat, but there are lots of opportunities and exciting ways for us to have Australians engage with and consume onions."

"I'm looking forward to defining our next three-year marketing strategy with advice from the SIAP and continuing to build on the success of the last three-year plan. The final report for the current campaign is being worked on, more detailed planning for the next phase of Australian Onion marketing will commence following this."

Samantha is also the Marketing Manager for Australian Mushrooms.



► *New Industry Marketing Manager, Samantha Ferguson*

She replaces outgoing Marketing Manager, Craig Perring.

For any questions relating to the Australian onion marketing activities, contact Hort Innovation Marketing Manager Samantha Ferguson at Samantha.ferguson@horticulture.com.au.

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See how your levy's at work with the latest HORTLINK!

Get an update on all new, current and recently completed levy-funded activity with the new edition of Hort Innovation's Hortlink. Just released, you can check out the onion section at www.horticulture.com.au/hortlink-2018-edition-1/onion

As well as easy-to-read project updates, results and resources you can use in your business, Hortlink includes case studies, industry contacts and more. Don't miss the Faces of Horticulture section, which includes an overview of the Hort Frontiers Pollination Fund, scholarship opportunities and more!

Stay in the loop with your levy by becoming a member of Hort Innovation, the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture. Paying a levy doesn't automatically make you a member, but signing up is free at www.horticulture.com.au/membership.



Developing channels for exporting Australian onions

A working group will be established in the coming months to advance recommendations for investments in regards to designing an onion export market development plan for the industry.

Onion Industry Relationship Manager, Brad Mills, said Hort Innovation is looking at the development of an onion export market development plan for key markets including Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Qatar and Bahrain.

"These key market opportunities are either 'unregulated' or 'phytosanitary certificate' markets where market access is already available for Australian onions," Mr Mills said.

"Increased exports into higher value markets for Australian onions will develop opportunities for industry profitability and growth, and we would also expect to see a reduction in domestic oversupply and price and profitability issues."

The development of the plan is in line with the 2017-22 Onion Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) strategy that identifies a need to develop a five-year holistic and diversified export market development plan with a focus on Asian and Middle Eastern markets.

CEO of Onions Australia, Lechelle Earl, said the export plan would be an industry first.

"With the oversupply issues that the industry has faced in recent times, specifically the current season, the development of an export plan is whole-heartedly welcomed by Onions Australia," Ms Earl said.

"Getting the formula right is critical to the future prosperity and profitability of the onion industry in Australia."

For more information about the onion export market development plan, contact Onion Industry Relationship Manager Brad Mills via email bradley.mills@horticulture.com.au

**Hort
Innovation**
Strategic levy investment

**ONION
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the onion research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

Norwegian Onion and Shallot Growers tour Tasmania & South Australia

In February, Magnus Kahl Seeds (MKS) welcomed the arrival of a group of their Norwegian customers to Australia. More than 20 onion and shallot growers from various parts of Norway, along with six MKS staff spent the week with local growers and packers in Tasmania and South Australia.

The tour consisted of visits to key onion and shallot growers and packers in Tasmania and South Australia which included Harvest Moon, Sumich, Freshline Marketing, Rowett Onions, Delta Produce, Comit Farms and Rivapak.

Throughout the week the group was able to see a wide range of production areas and techniques used by the local growers.

The Norwegian growers were particularly interested in:

- The long seed sowing period of May to September which is available to growers in Tasmania and South Australia. This is in stark contrast to the two week sowing window in April that the Norwegian growers have.
- The curing of freshly harvested onions in bins in South Australia. Due to weather and temperature restrictions, the Norwegian growers have to cure on the ground, then cure and store the onions and shallots in ducted, fan forced wooden bins. The bins are attached to drying units that have gas fired burners which are used to bring the humidity down and maintain the product in a dry state. This heating is also used to avoid the product freezing during the winter months.
- The large scale of onion production by individual growers in Australia. On average the Norwegian growers grow five to 15 hectares of onions and shallots. Their total farm area averages 25-35 hectares.

During this tour, MKS also took the opportunity to hold its first Tasmanian field day to showcase the company's new range of onion, shallot and speciality allium varieties.

The field day was held at Ghost Rock winery where the group enjoyed an onion themed barbeque whilst viewing and discussing the new MKS varieties. The event was well attended by the local Tasmanian onion growers and packers.

The Australian bred hybrid varieties on display consisted of F1 Monique and F1 Bonita shallots along with F1 Conquest, F1 Corinthian, F1 Endeavour, F1 Mustang, F1 Red Orb and F1 Red Knight onion varieties.

MKS also showcased new OP (open-pollinated) varieties which have been developed specifically for the Tasmanian and South Australian markets. MKS would like to thank all growers and packers that assisted in showing the Norwegian visitors their fields and packing facilities.



► Norwegian delegates on tour with Magnus Kahl Seeds.



Positive outcomes of Starane Advanced trials for control of weed in Tasmanian onion crops

A project evaluating the herbicide Starane Advanced for control of problem weeds in onions has recently finished with good outcomes for Tasmanian growers.

Two field trials incorporating different soil types and onion varieties were recently carried out in conjunction with the Tasmanian Onion Agronomy Group, to test Starane Advanced in terms of safety to the crop and control of weeds.

The results of this project identified Starane Advanced, when applied as mixtures or sequential sprays with other registered herbicides, as a safe method of control of common weeds including volunteer potatoes, blackberry nightshade and amaranthus.

Fluroxypyr – the active ingredient in Starane Advanced – is registered for use in onions in other countries such as New Zealand and America. The positive data and information generated as part of this project will help support the ongoing use of Starane Advanced in Tasmanian onion crops through minor use permit (PER85484).

The project was conducted by Peracto Pty Ltd on behalf of Onions Australia.

A Peracto spokesperson said outcomes from the Starane Advanced trial gives growers the confidence to go ahead and use a new mode of action (group I) to control a range of problem weeds, providing a potential replacement for other products that have been taken off the market.



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CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2018:
JOIN US IN ULVERSTONE, TASMANIA!

18 OCTOBER, 2018

Dobmac Tour
Growers Walk
Reg Miller Awards Dinner

19 OCTOBER, 2018

OA AGM
OA Levy Payers Day

Key findings from onion white rot research released

A research project conducted on a serious fungal disease, onion white rot, has uncovered important findings to help Tasmanian onion growers better manage the disease risk.

'Development of an onion white rot forecast model for Tasmania' (VN14001) was managed by Dr Suzie Jones at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. As part of the project data were collected from commercial fields and outdoor planter bag trials over the past two years.

"Because onions are grown over a relatively long period in Tasmania, from May until February, we collected data from three planting windows that will represent the whole season; May as an early crop, July as an intermediate and September as a late crop," Dr Jones said.

Data were collected for the key factors that influence onion white rot development and subsequent bulb infection; namely, time of planting, soil temperature, soil moisture, root biomass and timing of infection. These data should enable the development of separate onion white rot forecast models for each of the three representative planting windows; May, July and September.

"The key findings were that root biomass in the field crops was highest in the top 100 mm of the soil. In the planter bag trials, we found that disease incidence was highest for the early plantings and that disease incidence was higher when inoculum was in the top 100 mm of soil."

"What we can recommend to growers from those key findings is that if a field is likely to be affected by white rot then it's better to plant late, and that the top 100 mm of soil should be targeted with fungicide control.



► Onion grower George Griffin and researcher Dr Suzie Jones, UTAS

"That might mean that growers apply the fungicide and water it in so the fungicide reaches that depth in the soil."

The results and recommendations will be presented as a fact sheet detailing the conditions and crop growth stage that signal the likelihood of infection periods for each planting window.

Dr Jones said while the disease control recommendations won't necessarily mean the pathogen will be eliminated altogether, they will provide growers with management strategies to help them control onion white rot and minimise the risk of bulb infections.

Tasmanian onion grower George Griffin, from the north-west coast of the state, said the findings and support resources are welcome benefits to industry.

"We need a lot of research to be done on this problem mainly because it's such a big industry for Tassie growers especially on the north-west coast and other districts in Tassie; and to try and get a handle on it (onion white rot) and some sort of control so we can be profitable in the long term," Mr Griffin said.

Find out more about the Dr Jones' research and George Griffin's experience with white rot via the latest R&D Video available now at the Onions Australia website: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/news-updates/rd-videos/>



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Hort Innovation
Strategic levy investment

ONION FUND

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the onion research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

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New process for formal nomination and voting

Onions Australia is heralding in a new era, following the review of the constitution in 2017.

In previous years nominations have been accepted from the floor of the OA AGM.

However, after recent governance training completed by senior members of the OA Executive, it has been decided that a formal nomination and voting process will be undertaken.

This year, nominations will open from August 10 and will be accepted until August 24.

Nominations must be submitted in writing by financial OA members, for financial OA members, using the nomination form below, or similar.

Email, snail-mail or picture text message of completed nomination forms will be accepted as valid forms of receipt.

Voting will open on September 7 and all voting papers must be returned to OA CEO Lechelle Earl by close of business on September 24.

The five nominees who receive the most votes will be elected to the OA Executive Committee for a two-year period, while the next five will serve a one-year term and be eligible for renomination in 2019.

OA CEO Lechelle Earl (pictured) encouraged all members to support the changes.

“There’s no doubt this is a new way of doing business for our organisation, but it’s a move that ensures that OA can serve its members professionally, efficiently and transparently in to the future,” she said.



▶ Lechelle Earl, OA CEO

Pursuant to the Constitution, as adopted at the 2017 AGM, please note the following:

- Nominations for the election to the Executive of Onions Australia are now called for.
- Only financial full members of Onions Australia may nominate and/or be nominated.
- All current Executive Members may indicate if they want to be considered for election to the new OA Committee.
- Nominations for the Committee must be received, in writing, no later than 4pm on August 24, 2018, sent to: **Onions Australia, PO BOX 9420, Mount Gambier West, SA 5291 or lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au or mobile 0458 11 11 26.**

A nomination form is included to the right.

Nominations must include the names and signatures of both the nominator and the nominee.

Ballot papers will be sent to all members by September 17, 2018, and must be returned no later than 4pm on September 24, 2018.

Onions Australia’s CEO will act as the Returning Officer, with oversight from an approved Executive Member.

The election result will be announced at the AGM in Tasmania on 19 October, 2018.

ONIONS AUSTRALIA NOMINATION FOR ELECTION TO EXECUTIVE

I, _____
being a financial full member of Onions Australia,
hereby nominate

Signature _____

Nominator _____

Nominee _____

Date _____

Aussie biosecurity measures impress international expert

One of the most renowned and innovative onion growers in the world has praised Australia’s biosecurity measures, and warned Aussie onion growers to be complacent at their own peril.

Attending the Onions Australia Levy Payer Day in Brisbane in June, Louis de Kock of Wildeklawer Farms in South Africa sat in on Plant Health Australia’s Biosecurity Grower Workshop ahead of his keynote speech presentation.

Mr de Kock – who produces between 75 and 100 tonnes per hectare of onions on his 3750 hectare property in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa – said biosecurity was something not acknowledged 15 years ago like it is now.

In fact it’s a breach of biosecurity that forced Wildeklawer to start growing onions at a larger scale.

“More than 15 years ago our paprika, potato and groundnut crops were infected with tomato spotted wilt virus that came in to the property via paprika seedlings,” Mr de Kock said.

“It had a huge impact on us and we were nearly wiped out.”

Mr de Kock said after the contamination, the only crop that wasn’t affected was maize and onions.

“For six years after the incursion we couldn’t plant anything but maize and onions.

“At that point, onions was a small crop for us, but because we couldn’t grow other crops for so long we increased our onion production substantially.

“It was the biggest and most severe impact we ever had due to that contamination on the paprika seedlings, and I say to Australian farmers – pay attention!

“My wife Cora and I took notes (throughout the Plant Health Australia biosecurity workshop) and we acknowledge that we need to increase our biosecurity back home, that’s for sure.”

As well as onions, Wildeklawer also grows beetroot, carrots, potatoes, maize and wheat.

To hear more from Louis de Kock, access the industry podcast page via the Onions Australia website: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/news-updates/podcasts/>



▶ Mr de Kock (pictured) presented at the Onions Australia Levy Payer Day as part of Hort Innovation supported project VN17001 ‘International onion researcher delegation’.
Photo credit: Good Fruit and Vegetables



This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the onion research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

Evaluation of nematicides as alternatives to fenamiphos for control of nematodes in onions underway in South Australia

Trials have begun in South Australia recently as a part of a two-year project to identify and evaluate possible alternatives to fenamiphos for control of nematodes in onions.

The project, being conducted by Peracto Pty Ltd on behalf of Onions Australia, commenced following a review conducted by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

(APVMA) published in July 2015 which concluded that the registration of fenamiphos for onions would be cancelled due to a number of issues around environmental safety.

The project aims to generate data to make new a nematicide available for use in onions through either a minor use permit or product registration and first year outcomes are expected to be generated around March/April following harvest time.

CALENDAR

23 JUNE, 2019

Executive Committee Meeting
& OA Levy Payers Day
Melbourne Convention Centre,
VIC

24 - 26 JUNE, 2019

Hort Connections
Melbourne Convention Centre,
VIC

18 - 19 OCTOBER, 2019

AGM and Conference
Swan Hill, VIC

Hort Innovation onion industry leaders visit Mannum operations

Late last year Onions Australia CEO, Lechelle Earl met with Sam Turner, the onion industry's Relationship Manager and Samantha Ferguson, Hort Innovation Marketing Manager at Rivapak Onion Packing Facility in Mannum, South Australia, to discuss onion industry R&D priorities going forward.

The meeting proved very positive, with the following key industry points discussed:

- Grower attendance at upcoming international trade shows.
- Crisis management plan development and what this is going to look like.
- New export facilitator roles which will hopefully start in the new year, and how these will benefit growers looking to export through providing a mentoring role going forward.
- Progress of the current communications project which is due for completion in the middle of 2019.
- And the work that needs to be done on identifying frontier markets.

Lechelle said it was great to have the two Sams visit South Australia.

"It was an honour to have our Hort Innovation representatives tour a premium onion farm and packing shed, demonstrating the process of onions from paddock to packaging," Lechelle said.

"It's always fascinating to introduce industry people to the world of onion production and both Sams had a wonderful time on farm where they also got a tour of the packing shed.

"Genuine thanks go to Steve Rathjen and his family for hosting us and leading such an informative tour, complete with outstanding country hospitality."

Steve Rathjen, co-owner of Rivapak, said it was great to have Sam and Sam visit him on-farm in Mannum just before the beginning of harvest in November 2018.



► *Onion industry Relationship Manager Sam Turner and Hort Innovation's Marketing Manager Samantha Ferguson with Steve Rathjen at his Rivapak Onion Packing Facility in Mannum, South Australia.*

"We walked some crops and showed them a range of varieties and plantings, from onions that were virtually ready to harvest through to small onions, as well as the water monitoring technologies we are currently using on farm," Steve said.

"It was also great for Sam and Sam to tour the packing shed and see it in action. During their visit we were only pre-packing for major supermarkets, however it still gave them a good understanding of the packaging process."

According to Steve, onion crops were a little down last season compared to previous years in South Australia due to heavy winds and the extended dry period they experienced. Although they experienced no issues with disease, with little mildew pressure in the Mannum region.

With a lot of different short, intermediate and long day varieties in the ground this season, Steve is predicting his harvest will finish at the end of March.



► *Rivapak Onion Packing Facility in Mannum, South Australia.*



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Study finds that soil temperature is key to understanding disease risk

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) has released additional results from its 'Development of an onion white rot forecast model for Tasmania' project (VN14001), finding that soil temperature appears to be an important factor in disease development.

Onion white rot (OWR), caused by *Sclerotium cepivorum*, is a widespread and destructive fungal disease of commercial onion crops. This disease is influenced by a combination of factors. White rot inoculum (sclerotia) and onion roots in the soil interact with environmental factors such as temperature and moisture. When combined with the time of planting, environmental factors can influence disease development. Improving our knowledge in these areas enables development of better integrated disease management options.

The two-year study included multiple commercial onion crop trials from Hagley to Rocky Cape in north-west Tasmania and planter bag studies in both outdoor and controlled environments. The research included the effect of planting date, environmental conditions, inoculum depth and root growth patterns to provide further insight into OWR disease development and management.

Onions are grown over a relatively long period in Tasmania (from May until late February). To reflect this, information was collected for three planting periods: early, intermediate and late crops (May, July and September). The incidence of infected bulbs in the bag trials was highest when onions were planted from May until early August and lowest when onions were planted in September. This relates to soil temperatures during the life of the crop and how this influences survival and growth of the fungus, which prefers cool temperatures.

In controlled environment studies, temperatures between 15 to 20 °C were optimum for fungal activity and onion infection. The number of infections was reduced with sustained temperatures above 22 °C. Soil temperatures recorded at commercial field sites during the project showed that soil temperatures in the top 100 mm of soil can be above 22 °C periodically from October; and more so from November to February.

Root growth was fastest for the onions planted in September and yet they



► Dr Suzie Jones working on planter bag trials in the laboratory at the TIA Vegetable Research Facility at Forth in Tasmania.

had the lowest incidence of infected bulbs compared to onions planted from May to August. The higher temperatures experienced in the top 100 mm of soil from November to February are likely to have reduced the ability of the fungus to reach the base of the onion bulbs planted in September.

Fields with a history of OWR and considered to be at risk of infection would be best planted late in the season. However, the fungus appears able to survive in lower cooler soil depths and progress up towards bulbs if soil temperatures decrease towards the end of the season and before harvest. Fungicide management is still recommended with adjustments to timing and compliance with regulation guidelines.

This research provides growers with new data and recommendations but there is still work to be done to optimise management of this disease. Further work is required to define the soil temperature ranges for onion white rot sclerotia germination and fungal activity, including under commercial field conditions.

One promising future management option is to reduce the residual sclerotia, that can remain dormant in the soil for decades between onion crops, by applying natural garlic or onion extracts to stimulate sclerotia germination in the absence of onion crops. This strategy needs further research and testing to establish the quantity of active ingredient required and the optimum

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timing and conditions to apply this treatment. Increasing the effectiveness of fungicide applications, by targeting the root zone where the fungus is most active, is another management option that needs further testing under field conditions.

In addition to the research findings themselves the study also resulted in the establishment of a relationship with Dr Fred Crowe, one of the worlds most esteemed experts on onion white rot disease. Dr Crowe provided information and technical advice throughout this study and the Tasmanian onion industry hopes that collaboration with Dr Crowe and his fellow researchers in the USA continues and develops over time.



▶ Onion bulbs infected with white rot showing symptoms of rotted roots and white mycelia.

Dr Fred Crowe was the guest speaker at this year's Onions Australia Conference in Ulverstone Tasmania and he also spoke at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's Open Day. Find out more about Dr Crowe's insights into Allium White Rot research activities in the US via a podcast with Dr Crowe which is now available on the Onions Australia website: <http://www.onionsaustralia.org.au/news-updates/podcasts/>

Find out more about Dr Jones' research by accessing the project's final report on the Hort Innovation website here: <https://horticulture.com.au/resources/final-report-order-form/>

The 2017/18 Onion Fund Annual Report now available

As onion levy payers, make sure you know how your levy was invested during the most recent financial year!

All the key investment and project information from 2017/18 is available in Hort Innovation's most recent Onion Fund Annual Report.

The Report can be downloaded from the Hort Innovation Onion Fund Annual Report Portal at <https://horticulture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Hort-Innovation-Onion-Fund-2017-18.pdf>

If you prefer to read a hard copy of the annual report, simply use the form available through the portal here (<https://horticulture.com.au/fund-annual-report-portal/>) to place an order and have your report mailed to you.

And if you'd like to get closer to what the onion levy is achieving throughout the year, remember to sign up to Hort Innovation's free membership program at www.horticulture.com.au/membership.



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Recent Onion Biosecurity Plan meeting keeps industry prepared

As part of the process of continual biosecurity improvement in the onion industry, the 2018 onion industry biosecurity panel recently met to review the implementation of the preparedness activities proposed in the onion biosecurity plan.

Onions Australia has been a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed since 2008. As part of this, the industry is working towards implementing a number of preparedness activities included in the onion biosecurity plan in preparation for exotic pests. One of these preparedness activities was this year's launch of the Biosecurity Manual.

During the recent biosecurity panel meeting, key industry representatives including Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl, Penny Measham and Rebekah Pierce, met to review the activities that were to be completed during the last 12 months.

The group reflected on the exotic pests that have changed status over the last 12 months, mainly viruses, as well as thrips and nematodes. They also looked to the future and discussed plans for the next year.

To ensure the industry stays as prepared as possible, the Onions Australia executive committee will be carrying out training on the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed works in April



► The onion industry disease poster is keeping biosecurity top of mind.

2019. Consultation with growers to review key aspects of the implementation table from the biosecurity plan has also been scheduled for June 2019.

If you have any issues or information you would like tabled at the meetings, please contact OA CEO Lechelle Earl via email: Lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au.

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CALENDAR

23 JUNE, 2019

Executive Committee Meeting
& OA Levy Payers Day
Melbourne Convention Centre,
VIC

24 - 26 JUNE, 2019

Hort Connections
Melbourne Convention Centre,
VIC

18 - 19 OCTOBER, 2019

AGM and Conference
Swan Hill, VIC

Export focus renews onion industry's commercial business opportunities

Project lead Manus Stockdale gives some insights into the exciting new opportunity for onion growers to join the existing Export Facilitators Project - VG16085.

vegetablesWA, in partnership with Growcom, the Tasmanian Fruit and Vegetable Export Facilitation Group and AUSVEG SA have commenced a Hort Innovation funded project designed to help upskill Australian vegetable growers to become export ready.

The vegetable program has been operational and supporting vegetables growers for around 12 months and for the first time, onion growers are about to be eligible to join the program. Hort Innovation is currently finalising an extension to this successful vegetable program, which will allow onion growers to access these services.

The project aims to increase Australian vegetable exports by supporting growers to capitalise on commercial business opportunities. The 'on the ground' export facilitators in WA, QLD, TAS and SA have formed a facilitator network across Australia. This network promotes the collaboration within the industry and provides linkages across the supply chain that will assist in achieving the overarching objective of the Vegetable Industry Export Market Development Strategy of growing the value of vegetable exports by 40 per cent by 2020.

With key export markets in Asia and the Middle East driving demand for fresh produce, there is more opportunity than ever for Australian vegetable growers to become involved with export. Australia has a number of competitive advantages in the international marketplace including geographical proximity to key markets, counter seasonality and the perception of Australia as a premium quality producer.

There is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' model for export. The support offered through this project is tailored to individual businesses at different stages of export readiness. The reality is, many new exporters may be smaller

businesses, with limited product range and seasonality so the state-based facilitator and the national network aims to connect growers and resources to create collaborative partnerships to increase the likelihood of export success.

The Export Facilitators project provides resources and extension support to help growers begin to successfully export. Export has the potential to play an important role in improving business profitability by providing an alternative channel to domestic retail markets, thereby increasing negotiating power and spreading risk.

About Manus Stockdale

Manus Stockdale is the Export Development Project Lead at vegetablesWA. Manus works on the Hort Innovation funded Export Facilitators project (VG16085).



Manus joined vegetablesWA after previously working for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). His previous roles within DPIRD have focused around beef exports and supply chain development predominantly in South East Asia.

His previous experience has provided him a wealth of relevant skills that have been transferred to the vegetable industry, including experience in export development from the perspective of a different agricultural sector.

Over the past year working with vegetablesWA Manus has assisted a number of growers to commence exporting their produce or to export their produce to new markets. Manus is able to provide advice to growers on market access requirements and tariffs as well as helping growers to identify service providers such as freight forwarders who can assist with the export of produce. Manus also has a strong network of contacts in both Australian and in overseas markets that can assist growers to understand and capitalise on export market opportunities.

For more on export opportunities please contact Onions Australia CEO Lechelle Earl via email at lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au, or call 0458 111 126.



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DISCLAIMER: All cultural and descriptive information is given in good faith and is to be used as a general guide only. Significant variations may occur subject to geographic location, climate, soil type, soil conditions, cultural practices and other growth and development factors. No liability will be accepted by the Australian Onion Industry Association Incorporated (Onions Australia), or its affiliations, as to the accuracy of information. © All material Copyright Australian Onion Industry Association 2018



From the Office - onion industry communications

Over the past three years the onion industry communication program VN15002 has rolled out with tremendous success.

It's been great to share the exciting developments in the industry, the new marketing initiatives and follow the progress and analyse the outcomes of the R&D projects funded by the onion levy along with Australian Government contributions.

Feedback from industry and the SIAP, and the need to more strategically match communications outputs with funding availability means growers will see some changes to the communications activities for the onions industry moving forward.

In the next phase of the onion industry communications program, Layers will move to become a quarterly electronic publication emailed to growers, with the first edition hitting inboxes in June. Editions will follow in September, December and March. The monthly newsletter will cease.

The annual Onions Australia magazine will remain the flagship, hard copy publication released each year in line with the Onions Australia annual conference

and you'll still see plenty of activity on the Onions Australia Facebook and Twitter pages.

In addition, videos, podcasts and the annual disease poster will still be produced. The Onions Australia website www.onionsaustralia.org.au remains a great source of industry information and will be updated regularly.

Hort Innovation has also recently launched a new website which is your go-to site for all things related to the investment of your onion levy. Visit your grower page at www.horticulture.com/onions for key information on your current and past projects, resources, final reports, news, events, contact details and more.

If you have any feedback on these changes please let the Onions Australia office know and make sure you look out for the upcoming communications survey to have your say.

As always, the Onions Australia office is your first port of call for any issues or concerns you may have.

Please contact Lechelle in the office on 08 8725 8862; mobile 0458 11 11 26 or lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au.

OA Levy Payer Day

The OA Levy Payer Day will be held the day before Hort Connections on Sunday 23 June at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. For those attending Hort Connections in June, we'd love for you to add this key OA event to your diary.

Onions Australia is excited to announce James Kuperus, Chief Executive Officer of Onions New Zealand Inc. as the guest speaker for the day.

James joined Onions New Zealand in 2014 and took up the role of CEO in 2018. Onions New Zealand is an industry good organisation representing 90 commercial onion growers and 18 voluntary exporter members. New Zealand grows 5,227 hectares of onions and exports 85% overseas. The vision for New Zealand onions is a world class industry delivering sustainable growth and profitability for onion growers and exporters. To achieve this vision Onions New Zealand is focussed on opening and retaining markets, biosecurity, food safety, industry leadership and investing in research for current and future production issues.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday 23 June, please RSVP to Lechelle Earl on lechelle@onionsaustralia.org.au

For those yet to register for Hort Connections, please visit: www.hortconnections.com.au

OA LEVY PAYER DAY AGENDA:

- 1.00pm Opening and welcome by OA Chair Pete Shadbolt
- 1.10pm Apologies
- 1.15pm State Roundups
- 1.30pm Corteva
- 1.40pm Dobmac
- 1.50pm Monsanto Seminis
- 2.00pm AgNova
- 2.10pm EE Muir
- 2.20pm Terranova
- 2.30pm Afternoon tea
- 3.00pm HIA – Taste Australia
- 3.30pm Woolworths
- 4.00pm Onions NZ
- 4.30pm Any other business
- 4.45pm Close



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First time look at new onion varieties grown in Australia

A recent Onion Trial Day held by WalkerAg Consultancy and Seminis in Kindred, Tasmania gave growers the opportunity to view the performance of new onion varieties grown for the first time in Australia.

Growers who attended the Onions Australia conference in Ulverstone in October last year will recall they also looked at one of the trial sites in its early stages and it's exciting to know the trials have come to fruition.

The day featured several site tours with Seminis breeders, Rick Jones and Franco Asoro who visited from the United States to explain the new varieties and the Seminis pipeline.

Tim Walker from WalkerAg Consultancy said following a trip to Pukekohe, New Zealand where he attended an Onions Variety Trial Day showcasing many different onion varieties planted in different time slots, he suggested it would be worthwhile replicating a similar variety trial site in North West Tasmania.

"In April 2018 Seminis accepted our proposal to set up, monitor and run a similar variety trials site," Mr Walker said.

"Each planting consisted of 17 beds, each 25 metres in length with different onion varieties including a control which is currently the industry standard in this area – in total, there were 24 different onion varieties trialled.

"Once the onions were ready, they were hand pulled and laid out in the beds on display. Each variety had a label with a planting date, the variety name and the lifting date.

Julio Ducatti, ANZ Technology Development Specialist at Bayer, said results from the trials were promising.

"The best performing variety in the May sowing trial was Currawong, with fantastic uniformity and shape, perfect curing and colouring, good bolting



► *The best variety in the May sowing trial, Currawong at the Kindred trial site, Tasmania.*



► *WalkerAg Consultancy and Seminis onion trial site in Kindred, Tasmania.*

resistance, and perfect timing (sowing in late May for a Christmas harvest)," Julio said.

"Nomad was the second best performing variety in the May trial with good sized bulbs and tops, short-day blood and good colour and resistance pack.

"Furthermore, the Korimako variety proved best in the June sowing trial results. It had a slower maturity than Currawong, but very good bulbs overall in terms of shape, uniformity and vigour; very firm bulbs of a large size and incredible storage."

Previously tested as 1752, Harrier had the strongest bolting tolerance on the portfolio, good size, colour and skins and a flexible sowing window with its best being June.

"Finally, variety SV8265NH was the best variety in the recent July sowing slot – bulbs were very round with nice foliage and very dark skin and this variety will be available for large scale trials in 2019."

Further analysis on the future of these new varieties being grown in Tasmania will be provided in due course.

Onions Foodservice project

A market research project focused on delivering key insights around the foodservice industry for onions is currently underway.

The foodservice industry is typically characterised by two key channels:

1. Commercial - including full service restaurants, hotels, cafes, caterers and pubs
2. Institutional – hospitals, aged care, schools and long daycare centres

Funded by Hort Innovation as part of the recently developed Hort Frontiers strategic partnership, the Foodservice custom research reports (MT18002) project has two main objectives - to determine the total foodservice market size for avocados, mushrooms and onions, and to deliver key insights including market and cuisine trends, distribution channels, sources of supply and foodservice operators' opinions on buying onions.

Managing Director Sissel Rosengren from Food Industry Foresight said market size insights will be gathered in multiple ways, including volume and value, product type, by commercial and institutional foodservice channel and by product consumption index.

"We'll be covering all product types include peeled, not peeled and sliced/diced red, brown and white onions," Mrs Rosengren said.

"The project will identify foodservice market and cuisine trends and developments, including dining out trends and their impact on the use of onions as well as the role of onions on the foodservice plate."

The information generated through the project will be available for use in any future levy-funded project and programs targeting the foodservice sector, with the full report published at the end of May by Hort Innovation.

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- + Late maturity PLK hybrid type
- + High production, high packout, reliable
- + High number of skins, very attractive dark golden finish
- + Top quality onion, firm, high, round
- + Longest storage on the market



Rhinestone F1

Bred specifically for Australia & New Zealand

- + **Type : Mid-late Intermediate Day**
- + Maincrop PLK hybrid (earlier than Tilbury)
- + High yielding variety, high packout
- + Healthy, waxy & vigorous foilage
- + Very uniform in shape, good skin retention & a good firmness
- + High number of skins, very attractive dark brown finish



Neptune F1

Firm, Great Dark Red Colour

- + **Type : Mid Short Day**
- + Well-skinned, uniform, flattened globe shaped bulbs
- + Slow bolting & intermediate resistance to pink root
- + Vigorous, waxy & healthy foilage
- + High yield & high pack out

Important: The descriptions, illustrations, photographs, advice, suggestions and vegetation cycles that may be presented herein are aimed at experienced professionals and are derived from observations made in defined conditions on various trials. They are offered in all good faith, for purely informational purposes, and shall not therefore, under any circumstances, be held to be exhaustive, be taken as any form of guarantee of harvest or performance, prejudge specific factors or circumstances (either current or future), and more generally, form any kind of contractual undertaking whatsoever. The user must first and foremost ensure that his exploitation conditions, local geographical conditions, his planned growing period, his soil, the means at his disposal (such as technical knowledge and experience and cultural techniques and operations), his resources (such as tests and control methods) and his equipment, and more generally his agronomical, climatic, sanitary, environmental and economic context are suitable for the crops, techniques and varieties that are presented herein. All the varieties illustrated in this publication were photographed in favourable conditions and no guarantee can be provided that results will be identical under different conditions. All reproductions, whether in part or in whole, of this publication (of the medium and/or the contents), in any form whatsoever, are strictly forbidden, unless specific prior permission is granted. Non contractual photographs - All rights reserved - © 2017 HM.CLAUSE




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As well as its own branches in Emmeloord (NL) and Kiev (UA), AgroVent works closely with local and expert partners who know the language, culture and customs of their regions and countries in order to serve AgroVent's clients worldwide as well as possible.

We have chosen to work closely with Dobmac Ag. Machinery to represent AgroVent across Australia and New Zealand due to their expertise and knowledge of the Onion Industry.

Innovation in Onion Storage Systems

European Onion Packer Ajuin opts for non weather dependent condensing dryer system in new Onion Storage

Over the last year onion sorting and packaging station Ajuin from Moerkapelle has expanded its location with a new 1.250 m² warehouse, with a capacity to store 2,000 tonnes of onions in boxes. The company, belonging to the brothers Johan, Paul and Jan van der Spek, opted for the installation of three VaccTeks by AgroVent, after having seen this storage technique in action in Denmark. The VaccTeks have been built into the back wall of the box storage. Jan van der Spek is enthusiastic about the technique. "Our onions have never been this dry in this period."

Only four people work full time at Ajuin and the company is adapted to it. "We couldn't do this if we were to export ourselves, as this means that someone always has to be in the office. We focus on storing, sorting and packaging and foresee exporters of yellow, red and organic onions in packaging, varying from 1 kilo to big bags," says Jan. He believes working with a few staff in a family company is a big advantage. "It makes us flexible. If we can't make any money, we keep calm and when it's busy we work harder."



The VaccTek technique allows the onions to dry independently from the weather. Condensation drying isn't a new technique, but Agrovent was the first to succeed in making it widely applicable in the storage of potatoes and onions. "The importance of being able to dry onions well is becoming increasingly clear each season. A wetter and warmer climate and the reduction of chemicals is making it more and more difficult to store onions with as little rot and loss as possible. Essential to this is heating the air used to dry the product, which is currently mainly done with gas heaters," says Huub Kasius of AgroVent.

"But using gas to heat has some downsides. First of all it's expensive. For good suppression of fungus and bacteria you ideally want to dry at temperature of 30 degrees or more. Due to the costs, a lot of people work with a maximum of 20 degrees, which isn't high enough for red onions, for instance. Burning gas adds moisture to the warehouse. Every kilogram of gas burned produces 1.6 kg of water. The warm, slightly moist air can cause extra condensation or moisture spots in the boxes. Almost 10% of the gas usage is needed to remove the water created by burning. It is also inefficient, as a lot of the valuable heat leaves through the shutters. The drying result is also strongly influenced by outside air conditions," continues Huub.

The VaccTek technique has found a solution to this, which created a completely new manner of drying and storing. Independent from the outside air and without using gas drying times are achieved that are 50% shorter and use up to 80% less energy. "It makes your company more secure and results in maintaining quality. In the harvest season in particular we can now dry the onions much more quickly. In past years the onions occasionally came from the land at a temperature of 20-25 degrees and with an air humidity of 90%. Now we can dry it at full speed without gas," says Jan van der Spek.

The result of the VaccTeks also also very directly visible, as the water flows away under wet conditions. "With VaccTek up to 160 litres of water per hour can be drained away," says Jan. He sees it as a big advantage that it is a completely integrated system. "We don't use many refrigerants. Storage is still controlled and regulated with the storage computer, which allows for maximal control. We also fully use the heat of the condensation. All energy that is released is used to heat the onions."

"We also store an increasing volume of organic onions. Storage is even tighter for organic onions and we are already seeing it limit our drop out. We can dry out the rotten onions, for instance. In other years it was difficult to dry properly after a dry October and wet November. Now the door closes and it dries rapidly. It has a price tag, but I believe it's the future," concludes Jan.

Dobmac Ag. Machinery is pleased to partner with AgroVent to offer new technology for Onion Storage Systems in Australia.



If you have any questions or would like some further information please contact us to discuss.

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Date	Facebook	Twitter
<p>Monday 1 April</p>	<p>Don't miss your chance to join the @hortconnectionsconference 2019 field day tours to check out some of Victoria's leading #horticulture operations and network along the way! More info: https://hortconnections.com.au/tours/</p>	<p>Don't miss your chance to join the @HortCon_ 2019 field day tours to check out some of Vic's leading #horticulture operations & network along the way! More info: https://hortconnections.com.au/tours/</p> <p>RT @AUSVEG Nominations for the 2019 National Awards for Excellence are now open! Don't forget to nominate your peers, neighbour or someone else you admire in the industry to recognise their hard work and dedication. For more information, head to http://hortconnections.com.au/awards #HortCon19 @HortCon_</p> 
<p>Tuesday 2 April</p>	<p>A recent case study carried out by Soil Wealth and Protecting Crops at it demonstrating site in north-west Tasmania shows how Harvest Moon uses the ripper mulcher to control erosion.</p> <p>Fact sheet: https://bit.ly/2Wsozan Podcast: https://bit.ly/2WsmQSA</p> <p>Ripper mulchers are free for Tassie growers to borrow and use, including a mulcher currently based at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's Forthside Vegetable Research Facility.</p> <p>For more information, contact RMCG's Theresa Chapman at theresac@rmcg.com.au.</p>	<p>Check out this case study by @SoilWealth & @ProtectingCrops showing how Harvest Moon manages the risk of soil erosion with ripper mulcher. Fact sheet: https://bit.ly/2Wsozan</p> <p>RT @DeptAgNews "Landscape repair and rehydration through slowing the flow of water can help boost crops and build drought resilience in the future" @D_LittleproudMP MEDIA RELEASE: Mulloon Institute receives \$3.8 million to continue research http://bit.ly/2HKH2Me</p> 
<p>Wednesday 3 April</p>	<p>New health, cooking and nutrition consumer trends and data has been released by @Nielsen. Download the report through the Harvest to Home dashboard here: https://bit.ly/2WmxudA @HortInnovation</p>	<p>New health, cooking and nutrition consumer trends and data has been released by @Nielsen. Download the report through the Harvest to Home dashboard here: https://bit.ly/2WmxudA @Hort_Au</p> <p>Applications for @Hort_Au funded Churchill Fellowships close at the end of this month! For</p>

		<p>more details on the Fellowship and how to apply visit: https://bit.ly/1RMbuEQ</p>
<p>Thursday 4 April</p>	<p>Are you an onion lover? Once you try this recipe, you'll never stop making it! https://bit.ly/2FzuJPn</p>  <p>- FLAVOURFUL - SLOW ROASTED ONIONS WITH CHEESY BACON CRUMBLE</p>	<p>Are you an onion lover? Once you try this recipe, you'll never stop making it! https://bit.ly/2FzuJPn</p>  <p>- FLAVOURFUL - SLOW ROASTED ONIONS WITH CHEESY BACON CRUMBLE</p> <p>.@HortCon 2019 is just around the corner – don't forget to register! More info on OA Levy Payer Day to be held in parallel with #HortCon2019 in our April e-newsletter: https://hortconnections.com.au/ #horticulture</p>
<p>Friday 5 April</p>	<p>For the latest onion industry news and event updates, check out our April e-newsletter: (insert MailChimp link once available).</p>	<p>For the latest onion industry news and event updates, check out our April e-newsletter: (insert MailChimp link once available).</p> <p>Retweet developed through monitoring Twitter</p>