

| July/August - 2017 |

vegetables

australia



| ANTHONY STAATZ - GROWER OF THE YEAR | VEGGIE STATS - PUMPKIN FACTS AND FIGURES |
| LISA BRASSINGTON - A LEADING WOMAN IN HORTICULTURE |



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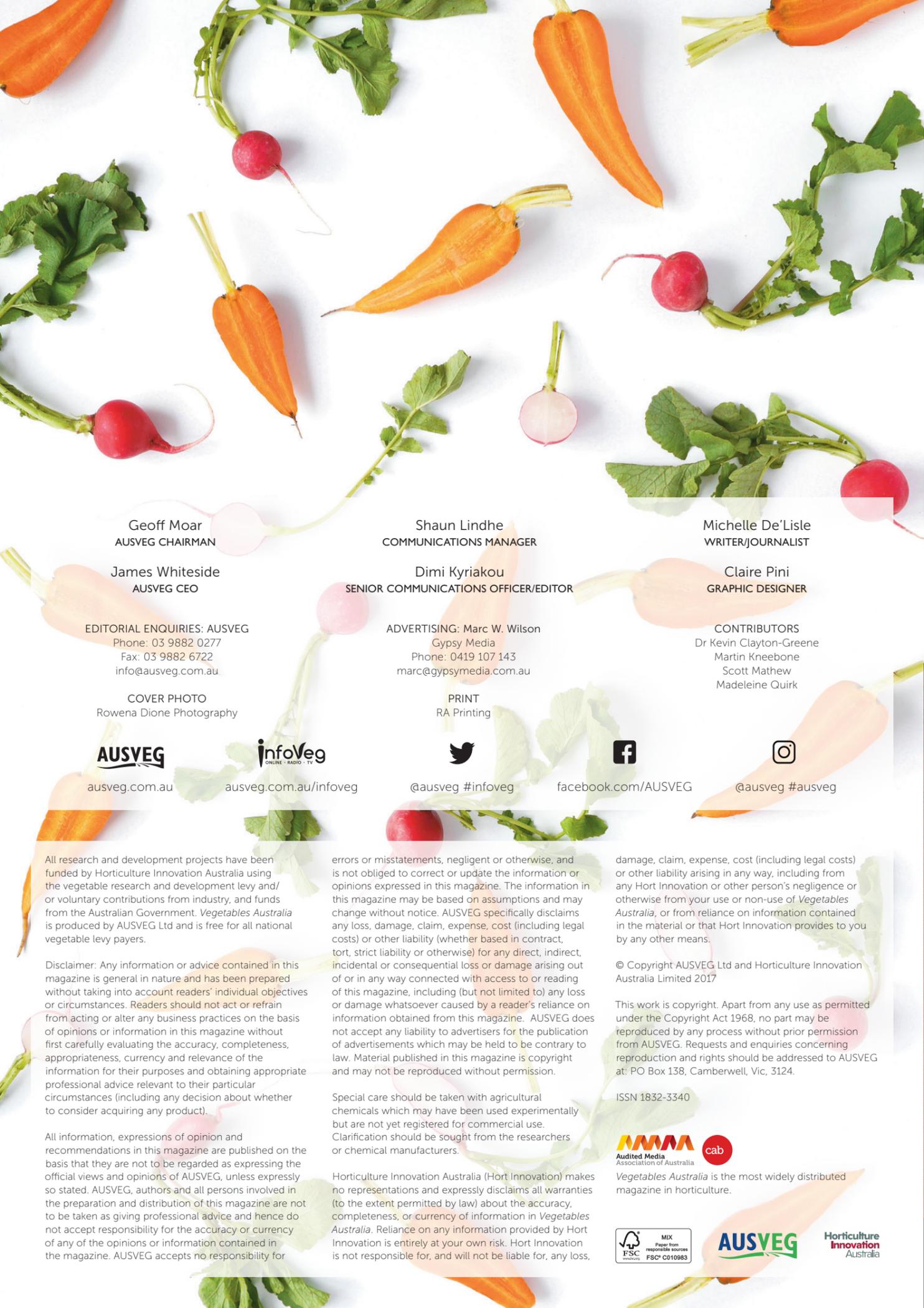
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EDITORIAL

It's amazing to see what a little bit of diversity can achieve in the horticulture industry. Whether it's diversity of thought, skills, knowledge or gender, each factor can bring a new perspective to a business and open up innovative ways of thinking that you never thought were possible.

It's no surprise that horticulture is traditionally a male-dominated sector, however women are responsible for many roles both on and off the farm that often go unrecognised. For those who attended Hort Connections 2017, the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the diverse role of women in the horticulture industry was once again brought to light during the annual Women in Horticulture event and Women's Fresh Perspectives Roaming Breakfast.

These gatherings highlight women's contributions to horticulture and provide an opportunity for attendees to network, celebrate and reflect on the important and varied role of women in the industry. Combined with the added bonus of delicious food and great company, these events left attendees feeling re-energised and thinking about new ways to grow their businesses.

It was great to see a few good men attend the Women in Horticulture event this year and support the achievements of their

partners, friends and colleagues. We hope to see the celebration of diversity continue in the future as we showcase the value of women in the industry.

Every year, the Women in Horticulture Award is also presented to an industry member who has demonstrated outstanding ability and success in their chosen field or has a reputation for mentoring women in horticulture. With 14 nominees in the running, all equally deserving of the award, it was Lisa Brassington of Peninsula Fresh Organics in Victoria who was crowned the winner for 2017.

Anyone who has come into contact with Lisa, whether in person or through social media, will know that her passion for horticulture and organic production is infectious and she is quite simply a force to be reckoned with. She is an energetic pocket of new ideas and creativity, and you can turn to page 32 for a more detailed profile on Lisa and the projects she is currently working on, as well as a wrap-up of the Women in Horticulture event.

We are looking forward to once again celebrating women in horticulture at Hort Connections 2018 and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions for next year's event. You can contribute feedback by contacting AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or communications@ausveg.com.au.

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TORO

Count on it.

Following the unprecedented success of Hort Connections 2017, which attracted around 2,500 delegates to the Adelaide Convention Centre from 15-17 May, I am very pleased to announce that the event will return from 18-20 June 2018 at the Brisbane Convention Centre.

AUSVEG will once again partner with the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ) to deliver the event and we hope to see many more industry co-hosts return to strengthen collaboration within horticulture. I would like to thank our eight industry co-hosts for their support of Hort Connections 2017, including Fresh Markets Australia, the Central Markets Association of Australia, Potatoes South Australia, Growcom, Irrigation Australia, Australian Organic, Onions Australia and Nursery and Garden Industry Australia.

This year, delegates were drawn to a number of engaging speaker sessions throughout the three-day event, and many seized the opportunity to attend the vegetable levy-funded seminars on global innovations in horticulture and exporting Australian vegetables.

The Global Innovations in Horticulture Seminar brought together a range of local and international speakers who captured the audience's interest with presentations on the up-and-coming technology that is making its mark on global horticulture. Meanwhile, the Australian Vegetables Export Seminar gave growers who are interested in exporting produce a practical insight into the process, and outlined the challenges that may be faced along the way.

With over 1,200 people in attendance, the Gala Dinner was the capstone event of Hort Connections. The industry honoured growers and other members of Australian horticulture for their outstanding achievements, and in this edition we feature two of our deserving winners – Grower of the Year Anthony Staatz from Queensland, and Women in Horticulture winner Lisa Brassington who was rewarded for her ongoing contribution to the organic sector in Victoria.

In other industry news, biosecurity in the Australian vegetable and potato industry has received a significant boost, with Horticulture Innovation Australia securing a Federal Government grant and co-investor funding of \$21 million.

This five-year plant biosecurity project includes a \$7.4 million grant from the Rural R&D for Profit program as well as more than \$14 million in investment across the seven plant research and development corporations and partners such as the CSIRO, universities and state government agencies to deliver a first-of-its-kind biosecurity-based program across various industries of plant agriculture under the title of *Improving Plant Pest Management Through Cross Industry Development of Smart Sensors, Diagnostics and Forecasting*. This valuable funding will ensure the horticulture industry has the capability to detect pests, manage future incursions and assist plant producers in making management decisions of key endemic pests.

It is a timely reminder that biosecurity plays an extremely important role in protecting Australia's borders from pests and diseases, and this funding ensures the future viability of our vegetable and potato industries.



Geoff Moar

Geoff Moar
Chairman
AUSVEG



James Whiteside

James Whiteside
CEO
AUSVEG

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to each and every delegate who attended Hort Connections 2017, as well as AUSVEG's event partner, the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ), our industry co-hosts, exhibitors and speakers for helping us to deliver a truly collaborative event in Australian horticulture.

The fusion of two of the industry's premier events – the National Horticulture Convention and PMA Fresh Connections – resulted in a record attendance of delegates and we are working hard to deliver another world-class event when Hort Connections 2018 returns from 18-20 June, this time to Brisbane.

Hort Connections 2017 produced many highlights, which included presentations from domestic and international thought leaders. In addition, the trade show proved extremely popular among delegates, with 148 local and global supply chain organisations showcasing the latest in industry technology and innovation. Many delegates also took advantage of the networking opportunities on offer, including the highly decorated Hort Connections Gala Dinner.

Collaboration in the vegetable industry was further highlighted at the regional level in early May, with the East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days taking place at Bulmer Farms in Lindenow, near Bairnsdale in Victoria.

I, along with AUSVEG Deputy Chair Belinda Adams and AUSVEG Director Bill Bulmer, had the pleasure of attending this event and it was fantastic to meet so many industry members from across the supply chain, from seed companies to processors and consumers, as well as the growers themselves.

The East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days provided the industry with a range of networking opportunities, including the extremely successful Networking Dinner. It gave the tiny town of Lindenow a significant boost and the entire community threw its support behind the two-day event that celebrated innovations in leafy veg.

The horticulture industry's community spirit was also on display in north Queensland, when the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association staged its Gala Dinner at the Grand View Hotel Bowen on 27 May. AUSVEG representatives attended this event and it was energising to see that morale was high among the growers despite the recent devastation caused by Cyclone Debbie.

It is always heartening when a tight-knit community bands together in tough times, particularly following extreme weather events, and this was evident at the Gala Dinner with generous attendees donating over \$4,500 to local organisations.

While the battle to rebuild continues in the Bowen Gumlu region, events such as the Gala Dinner provide an outlet for growers and industry members to get together and have a well-deserved break where they can celebrate their achievements and look forward to the future of their region.



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77 per cent

Project Harvest vegetable consumption in restaurants (VG12078) reported that 77 per cent of respondents to the 2014 study would like to see more prominent use of vegetables in their restaurant meals.



386 tonnes

For the year ending June 2016, 386 tonnes of globe artichokes were produced in Australia. The wholesale value of the fresh supply was worth \$1.1 million, as reported in the 2015/16 Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook.



25 per cent

Veggycation® states that one serve of beetroot provides 25 per cent of the Recommended Dietary Intake of folate, and recommends consumers enjoy the vegetable raw, juiced or grated into salads.

530,000 tonnes

Australians consume over 530,000 tonnes of vegetables per year, according to the Deloitte Access Economics 2016 report *The impact of increasing vegetable consumption on health expenditure*.

4 in 5 consumers

Project Harvest Wave 44 revealed that approximately four in five consumers (82 per cent) who purchased parsnips were aged 45 years and above. It recommended a greater focus on encouraging millennials into the category.

\$9.02 million

According to Global Trade Atlas data, Australian broccoli and cauliflower exports grew 36.4 per cent to \$9.02 million in 2016.



20 grams

This is the size of one serve of red chillies, which comprises 25 per cent of the Recommended Dietary Intake for vitamin C. Source: Veggycation®



4 nutrients

One serve of kale, or 75 grams, provides a good source of four nutrients: vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K and copper, making it a highly nutritious vegetable. Source: Veggycation®



2 metres

The Better Health Channel advises that fennel seeds grow best in warm, dry climates, with the plant able to grow up to two metres tall.



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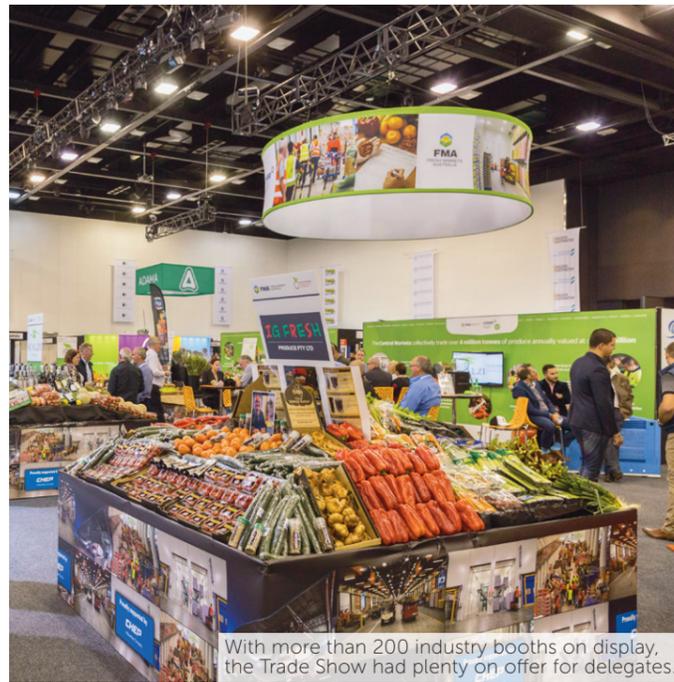
This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027

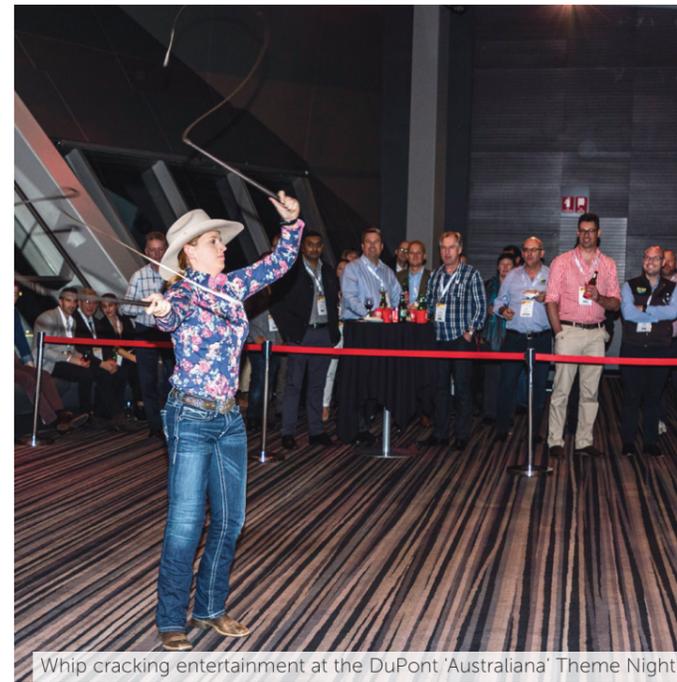




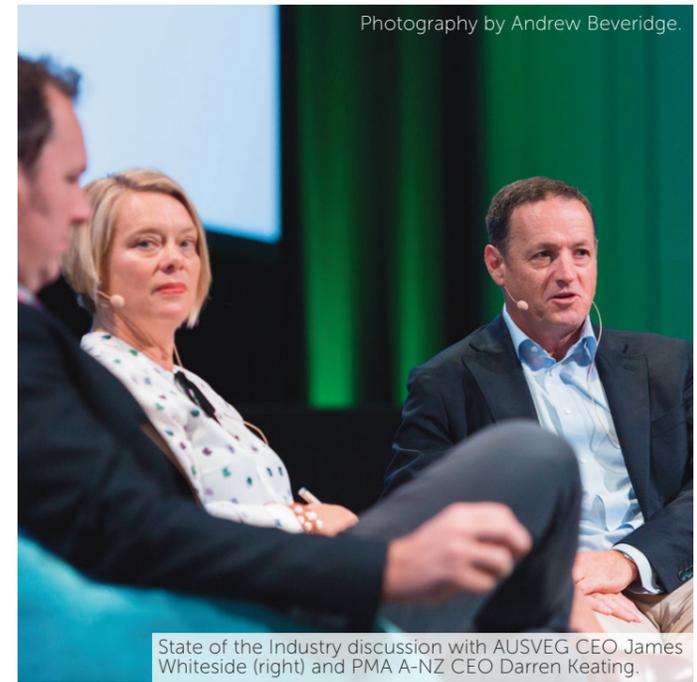
Customer relations expert Jaquie Scammell discussed the trends in Australia impacting the workplace.



With more than 200 industry booths on display, the Trade Show had plenty on offer for delegates.



Whip cracking entertainment at the DuPont 'Australiana' Theme Night.



State of the Industry discussion with AUSVEG CEO James Whiteside (right) and PMA A-NZ CEO Darren Keating.

HORT CONNECTIONS 2017: A TRULY COLLABORATIVE HORTICULTURE EVENT

The inaugural Hort Connections 2017, hosted by AUSVEG and the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand, attracted around 2,500 delegates who heard from a wide array of speakers, took part in a variety of networking opportunities and recognised the best and brightest in the horticulture industry over three eventful days.

The most eagerly anticipated event in Australian horticulture kicked off on Monday 15 May, with approximately 2,500 local and international delegates making their way to the Adelaide Convention Centre for the inaugural Hort Connections 2017.

For the first time, the event was hosted by AUSVEG and the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ), bringing together the largest number of growers, supply chain members, government stakeholders and industry service providers in the Australian horticulture industry.

Hort Connections 2017 was co-hosted by a range of horticulture industry bodies including Nursery and Garden Industry Australia, Australian Organic, Onions Australia, Irrigation Australia, Growcom and Potatoes South Australia. Fresh Markets Australia and the Central Markets Association of Australia were official trade show sponsors as well as co-hosts.

The three-day event presented the nation's vegetable and potato growers with the opportunity to discuss industry issues and learn from each other and their overseas counterparts. It was also a great way for members of the wider horticulture industry to connect and discuss areas of mutual concern.

MONDAY 15 MAY

During the first day of Hort Connections, the Australian Vegetables Export Seminar took place, where growers were given a practical overview of the export process, including

the tricks of the trade to take advantage of booming export markets (see page 16).

Meanwhile, the Horticulture Field Day allowed over 50 growers and industry members to tour a range of facilities focusing on the supply chain, research and innovation, and on-farm development (see page 22).

Additionally, Potatoes South Australia hosted a luncheon before the Potato Industry Extension Forum, which was well-attended by members of the potato industry.

In the evening, delegates gathered for the Welcome Reception, where Master of Ceremonies Toby Travanner introduced the Hon. Tung Ngo, the first Vietnamese-born Member of Parliament in South Australia. The welcome ribbon was cut by Mr Ngo, AUSVEG Chairman Geoff Moar and PMA A-NZ Chairman Andrew Francey, marking the official opening of Hort Connections 2017. With more than 200 industry booths on display, the Trade Show certainly offered plenty of thought-provoking discussion over the following couple of days.

TUESDAY 16 MAY

At the Perfection Fresh Breakfast on Tuesday morning, Tom O'Toole from Beechworth Bakery entertained the crowd and spoke about how attitudes in the workplace are fundamental to a great organisational culture, and why customer service matters.

The first plenary session welcomed Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, who provided the opening address and urged the industry to take ownership of its levy funds.

Sean Sands from Monash University spoke about the changing consumer decision journey and outlined seven key themes that impact consumer purchasing behaviour, known as SCAMPER (simplify, convenience, activist, membership, personal, editorial and responsibility). He was followed by Jaquie Scammell, a customer relations expert who discussed the trends in Australia impacting the workplace and the three personas taken on by those in business – explorers, teachers and makers.

Bega Cheese Executive Chairman Barry Irvin addressed the crowd about encouraging growth and developing new intellect within business, while Cultivate Principal Lone Jespersen discussed the importance of cultivating a food safety culture in the horticulture industry.

After lunch, delegates could visit the Trade Show, join the Adelaide Retail Tour, or attend the concurrent speaker sessions dedicated to Fresh Marketing Insights, Fresh Business Perspectives, Irrigation Australia, Onions Australia and Global Innovations in Horticulture (see page 20).

During the speaker sessions, a group of export-ready Australian growers took hold of the opportunity to show off their high quality produce to over 30 leading international fresh produce buyers during the Produce Display, with many developing new leads to export their produce to key markets in Asia and the Middle East (see page 34).

After a busy day of speaker sessions and networking, delegates attended the DuPont 'Australiana' Theme Night, which gave them the opportunity to relax with friends and colleagues while being entertained by an acoustic band and, in keeping with the theme, two Australian whip crackers.

WEDNESDAY 17 MAY

It was an early start for some, with delegates getting up before sunrise to tour the South Australian Produce Market. Delegates also met with the Australian Produce Collective and learnt

about export opportunities with 'Fresh Please', as well as networking with industry representatives.

Two breakfasts took place on Wednesday morning – the Convention breakfast sponsored by Syngenta, and the Women's Fresh Perspectives Roaming Breakfast, which is a supportive platform built to connect, inform and cultivate women's potential within the fresh produce and floral industry.

Mental health issues and their impact on individuals and communities in regional Australia were also highlighted at Hort Connections. Former beyondblue Chairman and previous Victorian premier Jeff Kennett opened the discussion to a captivated audience, where he outlined the prevalence of depression in rural areas of Australia, and looked at tactics to help those who are struggling.

A Mental Health Panel comprising Mal Coutts from Talk to a Mate, Linda Bertram from the South Australian Country Women's Association and Victorian potato grower Stu Jennings also encouraged growers to speak up when they're feeling down.

The panel was followed by a State of the Industry discussion facilitated by former ABC radio broadcaster Tonya Roberts. AUSVEG CEO James Whiteside and PMA A-NZ CEO Darren Keating spoke about the issues facing their respective industries and discussed the value of industry collaboration.

After morning tea, delegates again broke off into concurrent speaker sessions that targeted issues in their respective industries. This included Fresh Business Perspectives, Fresh Marketing Insights, Australian Organic, Irrigation Australia, Horticulture Innovation Australia and the launch of Growcom's Fair Farms Initiative, which aims to ensure that growers are supported with tools and information to implement good employment practices that comply with workplace relations laws and industry standards (see page 48 for more on the Fair Farms Initiative).

VEGETABLE PRESENTATIONS

In the dedicated Vegetable and Potato Stream on Wednesday afternoon, Freshlogic Managing Director Martin Kneebone discussed the top 20 Australian vegetables as ranked by their



Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston with Tonya Roberts at the Women in Horticulture event.



Around 1,200 delegates attended the Gala Dinner to celebrate the best and brightest in the horticulture industry.

HORT CONNECTIONS

15-17 May 2017
Adelaide Convention Centre



2017 NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Hort Connections 2017 Gala Dinner celebrated the outstanding achievements and contributions made to the Australian horticulture industry by growers, researchers and supply chain members.

domestic wholesale volume and value. Visy's Simon Gray then spoke about trends and innovations in smart packaging, while Watermark Advisory Services Russell Gooch and Trainee Patent and Trade Marks Attorney Renee White looked at building a brand for the Asian market and its traceability.

Nicholas Bennett from Syngenta focused on innovation through collaboration and the importance of choosing value chain partners, while Len Tesoriero, a Senior Plant Pathologist with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, spoke about managing fungicide resistance in vegetable crops.

The tomato-potato psyllid (TPP) was also brought to the audience's attention by Plant & Food Research New Zealand Research Associate Dr Rebekah Frampton, who spoke about the history of TPP and zebra chip spread across New Zealand.

There was a detailed discussion on TPP diagnostics (both laboratory and field-based) and the diversity of host plants. Nursery and Garden Industry Australia National Biosecurity Manager John McDonald also discussed the ways to reduce the biosecurity risk in planting material, including on-farm biosecurity, industry biosecurity preparedness and awareness, plus the minor use program.

Davin Phillips from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) rounded out the presentation and provided advice about the Horticulture Code of Conduct, and how it can be used to assist growers and traders in the horticulture industry.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the speaker sessions, the annual Women in Horticulture networking event also took place on Wednesday afternoon. Around 100 delegates gathered to recognise and celebrate the pivotal role that women play in the industry and highlight the ways that they can get involved and add value to their businesses.

Held at the InterContinental Adelaide, the event was hosted by Tonya Roberts and opened by Senator Ruston, who spoke about her rise in politics and her passion for the agriculture portfolio.

Susie White from Eat.Drink.Innovate sparked plenty of interest with her presentation 'Creativity hacks for innovative product

creation', which again looked at the idea of SCAMPER.

Horticulture Innovation Australia's Christian Patterson followed with a presentation about the organisation and his role as Relationship Manager in the industry.

Delegates were also treated to an entertaining cooking demonstration from celebrity chef Geoff Jansz, before the Women in Horticulture award winner was announced. Lisa Brassington of Peninsula Fresh Organics in Victoria received the award in recognition of her passion for promoting the diverse role of women in the industry and her ongoing contribution to the organic sector (see page 32).

In addition, the NextGen Young Grower event got participants' adrenaline pumping after completing an Adelaide Oval roof climb. It was also a chance for younger industry members to get to know each other and establish vital networking connections.

HONOURING THE BEST

As the ground-breaking Hort Connections 2017 came to a close, delegates turned out to the Adelaide Convention Centre in their finest evening wear for the Hort Connections Gala Dinner. This was the night for AUSVEG and PMA A-NZ to celebrate the best and brightest in the horticulture industry.

Honoured for his outstanding work across all aspects of vegetable production was Queensland vegetable grower Anthony Staatz, who picked up the AUSVEG Grower of the Year award (see page 18).

Third generation Brussels spout grower, Victorian Daniel Adams was named Young Grower of the Year for his on-farm innovation, as well as demonstrating a high level of commitment to the wider industry. The full list of award winners can be found on page 13.

AUSVEG would like to thank PMA A-NZ for its partnership in hosting Hort Connections 2017, as well as the support from industry co-hosts, strategic partners, delegates, speakers and exhibitors. Without this ongoing collaboration and support, the event would not have been such a success.

AUSVEG looks forward to Hort Connections 2018, which will be held in Brisbane from 18-20 June.

GROWER OF THE YEAR



L-R: Diane Staatz, Anthony Staatz (winner) and Syngenta Corporate Affairs Manager Rob Cairns.

YOUNG GROWER OF THE YEAR



L-R: Daniel Adams (winner) and Dow AgroSciences Horticulture Business Manager John Gilmour.

MARKETER OF THE YEAR



L-R: PMA A-NZ Head of Marketing and Member Engagement Renee Harrison, Matt Stillwell (winner) and Produce Plus journalist Gabrielle Easter.

WOMEN IN HORTICULTURE



Peninsula Fresh Organics Quality and Land Management Manager Lisa Brassington.

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP



DuPont New Zealand Country Business Manager Mark Christie, on behalf of Michael Tran.

RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR



L-R: Matthew Stein (winner) and Ben DeWitt from A-GAS Rural and Bayer Marketing Manager Peter Sullivan.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE



L-R: Trish Skinner (winner) and Fresh Markets Australia Chairman Shane Schnitzler.

FMA COL JOHNSON YOUNG ACHIEVER'S AWARD



L-R: Peter Koukos (winner) and Fresh Markets Australia Chairman Shane Schnitzler.

INNOVATION PARTNER



L-R: Boomaroo National Sales Manager Steve Winter, Steve Natsias, Steven Roberts, James Bertram and Frances Tolson from Rijk Zwaan (winner).

INDUSTRY IMPACT AWARD



L-R: Sundrop Farms (winner) Managing Director Steve Marafiotte and Visy State Sales Manager Kym Ziersch.

TRADE DISPLAY OF THE YEAR: SINGLE BOOTH



L-R: Lenswood Apples (winner) Julian Carbone and Sam Clayfield from AUSVEG.

TRADE DISPLAY OF THE YEAR: MULTI BOOTH



L-R: Mitolo Group (winner) Frank Mitolo, Sam Clayfield from AUSVEG and Callum Cormack.

EXPORTER OF THE YEAR



L-R: Sumich (winner) owner Vincent Tana and NAB Agribusiness Head of Asia Desk Roger Gaudion.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD



L-R: Toby Travanner and Butler Market Gardens CEO Rick Butler, on behalf of Hills Transplants.

CALENDAR

7-9 AUGUST: FRESHCARE FORUM AND FRESH PRODUCE SAFETY CENTRE CONFERENCE

Where: Sydney, New South Wales

What: The Freshcare Forum will deliver technical and program updates on food safety, quality and environmental assurance, with social and networking opportunities. The Fresh Produce Safety Centre provides an event for a wider fresh produce food safety audience, reporting on research outcomes, innovation and industry opportunities. The theme for the fourth annual conference is *Science + Culture = Safe Food*.

Further information: freshproducesafety-anz.com.

18-20 JUNE 2018: HORT CONNECTIONS 2018

Where: Brisbane Convention Centre, Queensland

What: A joint initiative between AUSVEG and the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ), Hort Connections is returning in 2018. A combination of the National Horticulture Convention and PMA Fresh Connections, this premier event of two of horticulture's leading organisations is set to deliver another world-class program and trade show to growers and whole-of-supply-chain companies alike.

Stay tuned for more information at hortconnections.com.au.



Freshlogic Managing Director Martin Kneebone.

VEGETABLE GROWERS INSPIRED TO BREAK INTO EXPORT MARKETS

The Australian Vegetables Export Seminar provided vegetable growers with a valuable overview of the Australian export industry at Hort Connections 2017 in May. Participants heard from a number of speakers who covered topics including brand development and understanding consumer needs, while a grower panel outlined the benefits and challenges of exporting.

Australian vegetable growers were given a practical overview of the export process, including the tricks of the trade to take advantage of booming export markets, at the Australian Vegetables Export Seminar 2017.

The seminar, held on Monday 15 May at the Adelaide Convention Centre, was organised by AUSVEG and funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation). It ran in conjunction with Hort Connections 2017 and featured a range of speakers who provided invaluable insights into the procedures, considerations and opportunities to export Australian vegetables.

These informative presentations meant growers were able to gain a deeper understanding of the practical aspects of exporting vegetables, and better inform the industry on the benefits of breaking into export markets for their businesses.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Headlining the list of speakers at the seminar was agribusiness expert Dr David McKinna, who discussed the recently published *Vegetable Industry Export Strategy* (a levy-funded project delivered by Hort Innovation and developed in conjunction with AUSVEG). Dr McKinna spoke about the extensive industry engagement that was involved in the development of the strategy, and how his 30 years of experience within the vegetable industry have helped him develop a solid understanding of the export market.

Following Dr McKinna was Chris Mercer, a Western Australian olive producer and Chairman of Australian Authentic. Mr Mercer spoke about the development of the Australian Authentic brand and explained how the company has grown over the past 12 months and what it has learnt about branding. He outlined the requirements and qualifications needed to join a certification brand such as Australian Authentic, and specified other indicators such as geographical requirements.

EXPORT JOURNEY

The path to exporting was then outlined by Swisse Wellness Government Relations Manager Australia and New Zealand Simon Woolmer. He spoke about the Swisse business and its export journey (particularly to China), as well as the different types of partnerships that the company has in place to make sure that the process was as smooth as possible.

Mr Woolmer addressed what Swisse looks for in a business partner and the challenges that have developed from those relationships, as well as the future partnership opportunities available to horticulture and the broader agribusiness sector.

University of Southern Queensland Professor Alice Woodhead also discussed a study being undertaken into the agribusiness side of the value chain. She outlined her role at the Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development (Administration) and why she decided to take on this role, which helped her to gain a deeper understanding of why Australia wasn't more successful in exporting products. Professor Woodhead wanted to understand why agriculture was still a commodity-focused industry when there was a lot of talk about export opportunities, particularly to Asian countries.

CONSUMER FOCUS

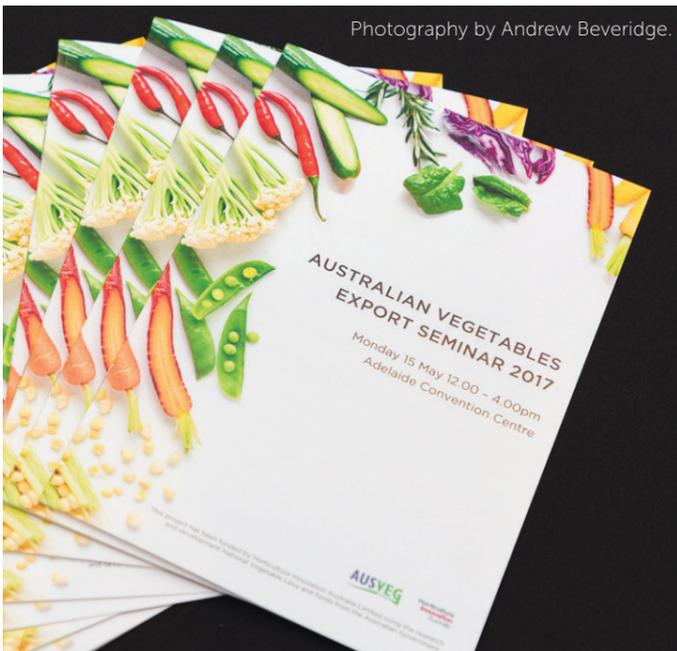
Freshlogic Managing Director Martin Kneebone touched on the definition of adding value, the importance of businesses targeting their efforts towards attracting customer attention and understanding the differences between customers and consumers. Mr Kneebone reinforced the need for businesses to get informed and stay informed, and profiled several added-value initiatives such as packaging options that are driven by the target market and portion-size packaging to meet consumers' need for convenience.

Monash University's Food Innovation Centre CEO Angeline Achariya spoke about product differentiation and how the industry can go from 'fork to farm', rather than 'farm to fork'. She shared her experience in fast-moving consumer goods including packaged products and quick-service restaurants, and questioned how often industry thinks of the consumer when looking at domestic and export markets. Ms Achariya asked the audience to reflect on how they position their product in the place of reality, either in the supermarket or in the e-commerce channel, to ensure that it has the most impact.

A GROWER'S PERSPECTIVE

The final presentation of the day brought together a grower panel, which included Schreurs & Sons Co-Owner Chris Schreurs, Qualipac Sales and Marketing Manager Kees Versteeg and DSA Fresh Managing Director Michael Vorrasi. Each panellist has different levels of experience in exporting, and this forum allowed the audience to ask any questions they had on their mind and learn from their peers, who have overcome many hurdles when entering the export market.

At the conclusion of the seminar, the Exporter of the Year award was presented to Western Australian-based vegetable growing operation Sumich, with owner Vincent Tana accepting the award on the company's behalf.



Photography by Andrew Beveridge.



Monash University's Food Innovation Centre CEO Angeline Achariya.

R&D Market & Value Chain Development

INFO

Presentations at the Australian Vegetables Export Seminar 2017 are available to watch at youtube.com/user/AUSVEG/playlists.

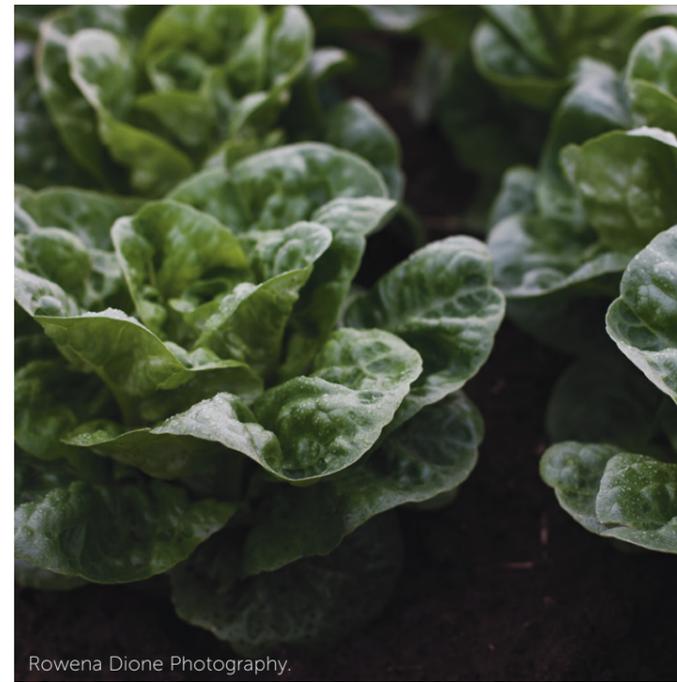
The Australian Vegetables Export Seminar 2017 has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15014



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Rowena Dione Photography.



USING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY

Queensland-based Koala Farms has grown significantly over the past 15 years, which led owner and 2017 Grower of the Year Anthony Staatz to adopt new, innovative ways to empower his staff and make the business the success it is today. Anthony spoke to Michelle De'Lisle about Koala Farms' journey, the changes implemented and why he is passionate about working in the vegetable industry.

Anthony Staatz's enthusiasm for adopting innovative growing practices and providing valuable training to all staff members at Koala Farms was recognised in May, with the Lockyer-based father of four taking home the 2017 Grower of the Year award at Hort Connections 2017.

Established by Anthony in 1995, Koala Farms grows lettuce (including twin-pack cos), along with broccoli, cauliflower and, most recently, baby leaf spinach. With 450 acres in the Lockyer Valley and another 600 acres on the Darling Downs, the growing operation has the capability to produce vegetables throughout the year.

Back in 1995, Koala Farms had just two permanent staff. Fast forward to 2017 and the growing operation employs 60 permanent staff in a range of divisions including the seedling nursery, production, harvesting, logistics, packing and administration, while upwards of 100 backpackers arrive each day to assist these teams.

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

It is well-known that collaboration is a strong key to success in the vegetable industry, and a great example of this is the relationship between Koala Farms and Victorian-based lettuce and brassica growing operation, Fresh Select.

Back in the mid-1990s, Anthony met Fresh Select Managing

Director John Said and the pair forged a strong partnership by exporting cauliflowers to Singapore and Malaysia.

"Getting involved with John and starting to export cauliflowers into Singapore and Malaysia really gave us the growth in the style that we needed – it really kicked us off," Anthony explains.

"We work very closely together. We've travelled the world with John, looking at different businesses overseas and how they manage to produce at the scale that they do. John's strength in our supply chain is in the relationships that he has, and the people that he knows within the industry – we've been able to visit the world's best businesses in agriculture, and learn a lot of tricks of the trade."

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Following the move onto the Darling Downs in 2002, business was booming – and Anthony quickly recognised the need to implement a management structure.

"One of the guys that worked for us was promoted to a farm manager. It was a really challenging time for our business because his expectations around our workers and within our teams were different to my expectations," he says.

"About 10 years ago, we put a focus on trying to align expectations for our employees and our leadership team so that we all had the same expectations, no matter where they worked in our business."

This resulted in the development of an introductory leadership program where staff in a leadership position complete a four-day course that focuses on different expectations of how they might perform as managers, and discusses leadership and communication.

"After that process, we do appraisals and performance reviews. We've aligned the structure within our business so that people understand who they report to. We've got behavioural procedures, so if people are not behaving in a certain way, we're consistent in the way that we expect them to behave across our leadership team," Anthony says.

"It's not an easy thing to do, and it takes a lot of time and resources but it has been significant for our business."

GROWER CHALLENGES

Growers face a lot of issues both on- and off-farm and Anthony says it's those that cannot be controlled which are the hardest, including the weather and the availability of resources such as water or labour.

"Another challenge, particularly for our business, is being able to manage the growth and still be able to keep your fundamentals as competitive as they were when you were a smaller business. It's hard to scale up and have the same results as you did when you were smaller," he says.

Anthony explained that technology is being developed to assist with decision-making in the business, including timeclocks that measure the number of plants produced as well as soil moisture meters.

"To grow a crop, you can't get away from the fact that you're making thousands of decisions all the time about how to grow things properly, making people and your teams more capable and making the right decisions – which we think are fundamental to success."

RELISHING CHANGE

Anthony enjoys the variety of his work, particularly the constant challenge of everyday adjustments made in the business.

"Change is the biggest thing in our business, so I think you've got to enjoy that change and learn to enjoy the risk and challenge," he says.

"For a farming business to be successful, it needs to be pretty fluid and be able to react quickly to things – so change is always the most challenging one and probably the most enjoyable one. It makes you work the hardest."

Anthony highlighted the importance of R&D in the vegetable industry, particularly in the market development space.

"If we can expand the pie and make the markets bigger, it makes for a lot more opportunity for a lot more people," he says.

"I think there's more need in our industry for corporate businesses. Our customers are getting bigger and the markets that we're serving are getting bigger, so it's only logical that the suppliers need to get bigger.

"There needs to be more work around understanding the critical needs around scalability, whether that is HR or getting a better understanding around finance and equity ratios and being sustainable on a big scale, or in a corporate-type business."

MOVING FORWARD

While Anthony says it is nice to be acknowledged for the innovation and contribution to the vegetable industry, the 2017 Grower of the Year admits there is still work to be done.

"We've always had a goal of developing a sustainable business in horticulture," he says.

"You never really know if you've got that because every year is so different. We're always working hard to ensure that we've got viability within our business."

However, Anthony is full of praise for his team and what it has achieved to date.

"I'm proud of the team that we've developed, and of the relationships that we've got within the industry. I think it's quite rare in our industry to have the depth of relationship that we have with our customers and the people that we work with. If anyone was to do a review on us, I'd like to think that we would get a tick there."



Photography by Andrew Beveridge.

L-R: Panellists Lone Jespersen, Roei Yakoobi, Gottfried Pessl and Janneke de Kramer respond to questions at the 2017 Global Innovations in Horticulture Seminar.



Association for Vertical Farming Co-founder Henry Gordon-Smith.

VEGETABLE GROWERS REAP GLOBAL REWARDS

Returning in May was the Global Innovations in Horticulture Seminar, an event held at Hort Connections 2017 that demonstrated the very latest in innovative research and technology from around the world. The seminar showed a range of ways for industry to take advantage of new and emerging technologies to help address the key challenges facing the vegetable industry.

Members from all sectors of the horticulture industry were left inspired and excited by the 2017 Global Innovations in Horticulture Seminar, which took place at the Adelaide Convention Centre on Tuesday 16 May. Over 130 attendees tuned in to nine presentations from international innovation experts, who presented on new and emerging research and technologies taking place in horticulture around the world.

Opening the vegetable levy-funded seminar was Michael Dean from AgFunder, an equity crowdfunding company, who spoke about trends in agricultural investment. With extensive experience, including sitting on the advisory board of the World Agri-Tech Investment Summit, Mr Dean offered attendees a valuable perspective on the future of agricultural technology.

Joining Mr Dean on stage was Wageningen University's Frans Kampers, who presented on the use of technology to meet challenges in the agricultural and food sectors. Mr Kampers commented that technology solutions were needed to maintain nutrition security, sustainability, and consumer health and well-being. He outlined the importance of speeding up the use of robotics and drones to inspect fields, in a bid to increase sustainability.

INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION

Attendees also heard the Association for Vertical Farming's Henry Gordon-Smith discuss the benefits of vertical farming, including a range of real-world case studies on the implementation of vertical farms. Mr Gordon-Smith spoke about finding a solution

to global farming challenges, and stressed the need to think about the next generation of farmers, and ways we can keep them excited about the industry.

Next up was Ben van Delden from KPMG, who discussed commercialisation and adoption of research, and the tools required to empower Australia's food industry. He touched on the need for science to help Australia push boundaries, and reiterated the importance of co-investment in the agricultural sector.

Growers were then introduced to Apunga by Australian vegetable grower Hugh Reardon. Apunga is the only Australian developed and dedicated horticultural farm management application, and is a joint venture between Dicky Bill Farming (where Mr Reardon is a Director) and The Tehnika Group, an engineering and software consultancy. Mr Reardon spoke about how the app was developed, and discussed its aim to reduce waste and gain full traceability of produce.

INNOVATION IN FOCUS

Dr Eric Jang, Principal of Fruit Fly Systems Applied Technologies in the US, was joined on stage by Dan Ryan from Horticulture Innovation Australia, with the pair presenting on fruit flies, innovation and global trade. Dr Jang began by outlining the global initiatives on fruit flies, while Mr Ryan discussed his role as the Program Director of the Sterile Insect Technique (SITPlus) consortium, a research group facilitated by Hort Innovation, and the new developments being made in area-wide management into fruit flies in Australia.

Wageningen Food and Biobased Research's Janneke de Kramer, R&D Manager of its Postharvest Technology team, gave the audience an insight into its research to date. Ms de Kramer also spoke about the science behind postharvest innovation, the impact it has on the fresh food chain, and what new research her department is currently undertaking.

Sharing the stage was Tie Up Ventures Chief Executive Officer Roei Yakoobi and Pessl Instruments CEO Gottfried Pessl, with a joint focus on gaining efficiency today in farming. Mr Yakoobi described the work undertaken by his company Tie Up Ventures, an organisation that provides growers with innovative solutions and technologies to deal with everyday farming problems, while Mr Pessl spoke about the ag-tech revolution, and collating data to create a smart, connected product.

The final speaker of the afternoon was Canadian native Lone Jespersen from Cultivate Food Safety. She urged the audience to be aware of the risks in fresh food production, and recalled her time at Maple Leaf Foods when a tragic event involving contaminated product caused the loss of 23 Canadian lives in 2008. Ms Jespersen also spoke about the need to be creative when measuring food safety within organisations.

At the conclusion of the seminar, two Hort Connections 2017 National Awards for Excellence winners were announced, with Rijk Zwaan receiving the Innovation Partner award and Hills Transplants taking home the Environmental Award.

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R&D	INFO
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Soil scientist Dr Doris Blaesing with Samwell and Sons Managing Director Scott Samwell at the Horticulture Field Day.

FIRST-HAND INSIGHT INTO VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE VEG INDUSTRY

The annual Horticulture Field Day returned in 2017, with more than 50 delegates attending the one-day event on 15 May in Adelaide. This year's theme focused on innovations taking place in the supply chain and showcased the work of local researchers in pest and disease detection and management, as well as the benefits of on-farm development.

Preceding Hort Connections 2017 was the ever-popular annual Horticulture Field Day, with over 50 delegates taking advantage of the chance to visit a local farm and listen to each other's ideas and advice. They also gained an insight into what's currently happening within the vegetable industry on-farm, in the biosecurity space and along the supply chain.

The first stop focused on the supply chain with a visit to the headquarters of Toro Australia, a supplier of irrigation products to the landscape, agriculture, turf care and domestic garden markets.

After a light breakfast in the courtyard, participants split into three small groups. They heard from Senior Marketing Manager – Garden and Irrigation Ben Hall, who provided an introduction to the company while Territory Manager Chris Simpson spoke about the latest in Toro products and answered growers' questions. The growers were then guided around the factory, and were impressed by the extensive scale of the irrigation manufacturing operation.

BEHIND THE SCIENCE

Next on the agenda was a focus on research and innovation, with the group visiting the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (PB CRC).

A member of the SARDI molecular diagnostics team, Dr Alan McKay, introduced the group to the research institute and explained the work that it undertakes before taking participants into the laboratory for a closer look.

Dr Rohan Kimber guided participants through the SARDI field trial site and pest detection systems, where he discussed next generation pest trapping and showed participants the latest in plant pest surveillance.

After the conclusion of the tours, the group heard from Danièle Giblot-Ducray, Senior Research Officer at SARDI's Molecular Diagnostics Centre, who spoke about on-farm DNA surveillance for grape growers, which could have cross-over benefits for vegetable growers.

SPOTLIGHT ON SOIL

After lunch, the group travelled to Mount Barker where Samwell and Sons is located.

Managing Director and third-generation vegetable grower Scott Samwell introduced participants to his farm, which is currently hosting a Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection field trial site. The group was fortunate to taste kalettes, a cross between kale and Brussels sprouts, and see them growing in the field. Samwells is the only grower of kalettes in Australia.

Dr Doris Blaesing spoke to the group about soil health and the cover crop trials, which are taking place on Samwell and Sons' farm. She discussed how they differ at individual farms and reiterated the importance of growers working with their agronomist or using information from projects to assist them on-farm.

This sparked a robust discussion among growers about various ways of managing soil. Afterwards, E.E. Muir and Sons agronomist Nigel Dolenac (who is assisting the team at the demo site) discussed the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) work occurring at Samwell's farm. He mentioned that there are many challenges associated with implementing an IPM program for Brussels sprouts because they take longer to grow than crops such as broccoli.

At the end of the tour, participants returned to the Adelaide Convention Centre with new ideas and knowledge about different sections of the vegetable industry. It is hoped that they can implement these ideas in their own growing operation, share their experiences with others, and encourage them to get involved in a research project to further the development of the industry and be at the cutting edge of industry innovation.

AUSVEG would like to thank all participants for attending this successful day, along with Toro Australia, SARDI, PB CRC, Samwell and Sons and the team running the Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection projects.

R&D ■ Farm Productivity, Resource Use & Management

INFO

The Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection projects are funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Numbers: VG13076 and VG13078



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Adult tomato-potato psyllid. Image courtesy of Plant & Food Research New Zealand.

TOMATO-POTATO PSYLLID MARKET ACCESS INFORMATION

In late March, New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory introduced emergency interstate movement controls for tomato-potato psyllid host fruit, vegetables and plant material, and used machinery and equipment from Western Australia. The Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia is working as a priority with local and national industry and other states to facilitate interstate trade.

These additional requirements apply to numerous other families, including but not limited to Rosaceae (e.g. strawberries, apples, pears); Brassicaceae (e.g. broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower); Lamiaceae (herbs such as mint); and Fabaceae (e.g. beans).

These restrictions have made trading with the east coast difficult for most Western Australian growers, with the current postharvest treatment option of methyl bromide fumigation being difficult for growers to apply to, for example, highly perishable products such as lettuce.

However, it is worth noting that there is national agreement that host fruits such as tomatoes, capsicum, chilli and eggplants can be exported into the other states and territories as long as they have been fumigated with methyl bromide and have been inspected as required.

RESUMING INTERSTATE TRADE

As a result of these new restrictions, the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA) has created a specific market access team and is negotiating protocols for the resumption of interstate trade.

Negotiations have focused on protocols to facilitate trade in the short-term and longer-term and align to international standards. These include treatments, systems approaches (a combination of risk mitigation measures) and pest-free

places of production. vegetablesWA and AUSVEG have been active in working with DAFWA and other state jurisdictions to provide relevant information to assist in these negotiations.

Growers looking to export/import produce interstate from Western Australia are encouraged to check each state's import protocols for both tomato-potato psyllid host and non-host plants and produce prior to exporting/importing fresh produce.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

There are no international trade restrictions or changes to import conditions at the time of writing. The Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources manages overseas trade matters.

R&D  Drive Train

INFO

For further information, please contact vegetablesWA Market Development Manager Claire McClelland at claire.mcclelland@vegetableswa.com.au.

This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027



TOMATO-POTATO PSYLLID – WHAT DO I LOOK FOR?

The tomato-potato psyllid (TPP) has three life stages – egg, nymph and adult. Eggs are yellow, oval-shaped and approximately 0.5mm in length. Young nymphs appear yellow, while older nymphs are green. Nymphs may reach 2mm, however, adults may reach up to 3mm. When disturbed, an adult psyllid will jump from the plant.

TPP deposit crystals of honeydew called 'psyllid sugars' and can lead to plants wilting, which results in curled leaves, stunted growth and psyllid yellows.

MyPestGuide, developed by the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA), is a useful tool for identifying suspected TPP. 'MyPestGuide – Crops' and 'MyPestGuide – Diseases' are both databases that provide high resolution photographs of pests and diseases. Growers can

upload photos of suspected TPP to the MyPestGuide Reporter app, which will be confirmed by DAFWA's entomology team.

Since the outbreak of TPP in Western Australia, DAFWA has installed thousands of traps in both commercial and non-commercial properties to test for TPP. Growers are encouraged to send suspected TPP samples to DAFWA for testing. To do so, please call the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881** and you will be guided through the process.

Otherwise, email photos with your name, address and mobile number to info@agric.wa.gov.au. Please do not spray or destroy the suspected pest.

Commercial growers are reminded to maintain good on-farm biosecurity practices to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests and diseases.



TOMATO-POTATO PSYLLID UPDATE

As this issue reaches readers of *Vegetables Australia*, the tomato-potato psyllid incursion in Western Australia will be in its fifth month. As noted in the previous *Biosecurity Brief*, eradication was not regarded as technically feasible and we are now at the end of the second month of a Transition to Management program. AUSVEG Biosecurity Adviser Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene explains what this means.

Transition to Management (T2M) was agreed and approved by all parties in 2016 and is "the undertaking of activities for transitioning the management of an EPP (Emergency Plant Pest) from seeking to achieve eradication of the EPP during an Emergency Response Phase to management of the EPP outside the EPPRD (Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed)".

In other words, it is a program that can be cost-shared by all parties to the incursion (government and industry) to help these parties manage the pest going into the future.

This can include a range of activities such as addressing market access issues, ongoing control to minimise further spread, developing on-farm strategies to reduce impact at the farm level and also preparing other areas in the country, outside of the current incursion, should the pest spread further. Typically activities included under a T2M plan would be:

- Potential control options including new chemical registration.
- Building capacity in the industry and community around pest management.
- Developing an understanding of the pest's behaviour.
- New government regulations or legislation.
- Codes of practice review and development.
- Communication, training and engagement.

In the present situation, the purpose of the plan is/has been to achieve the above and also perform further surveillance to determine whether or not the tomato-potato psyllid (TPP) is carrying *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* (CLso), which is the bacterium responsible for zebra chip in potatoes.

It will also be important to prepare other parts of Australia for the arrival of TPP, should it spread outside of Western Australia.

A NEW APPROACH

This is a relatively new addition to the Plant Health Deed and is a result of a working group set up by Plant Health Australia to investigate how T2M could be prosecuted under the existing Deed. It had been recognised for some time that there was a significant gap in the Plant Health Deed: once a pest was deemed beyond eradication, there was no formal mechanism to cover the question of 'what happens now?'

The TPP incursion is one of the initial incursions that is using this new provision of the Deed. A T2M plan can have a maximum

timeframe of 12 months under the Deed, after which all parties are then expected to manage the pest themselves.

As with an eradication response, a T2M Response Plan has to be prepared and the budget approved by all parties. Preparation of the plan is the responsibility of the host state and in the case of TPP, this is Western Australia.

ZEBRA CHIP TESTING

Of particular interest in the TPP incident is whether or not the psyllids are also carriers of CLso, which is fatal to many solanaceous plants. Thus a key part of the T2M plan will be ongoing testing of psyllids to determine if there is any CLso present.

It has been agreed that this should extend over two seasons and if no CLso has been detected after such a comprehensive testing regime, then Western Australia and perforce Australia can make a claim for area and country freedom. The current surveillance for CLso is by sampling TPP, as the technical advice at present is that this is the most reliable method.

In plant parts and potato tubers, it can take some time (up to three weeks) for CLso to be distributed and sampling of plant parts may yield a false negative. Potato tubers are problematic as the bacteria is not uniformly distributed in the tuber even when present.

The current plan is to recommence with TPP testing once numbers 'increase' in summer when obtaining sufficient numbers is not too problematic.

It will be important for the industry in Western Australia to get behind the CLso surveillance program, otherwise it will fail to achieve its objectives.

R&D  Farm Productivity, Resource Use & Management

INFO

For more information, contact AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or email info@ausveg.com.au.

This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15023





PLANT-PARASITIC NEMATODES: THE DEMON HIDDEN BENEATH THE SURFACE

Plant-parasitic nematodes are one of the most challenging pests to manage in vegetable crops, due to their microscopic size and ability to cause substantial damage. Syngenta Technical Services Lead Scott Mathew provides *Vegetables Australia* readers with advice on how to best control this pest.

They're tiny, microscopic and hidden in the soil. Despite their size, plant-parasitic nematodes can cause significant yield damage and loss in quality.

The first step in managing these pests is to establish if you have a significant infestation of one or more of the types of nematodes that can cause damage.

Often the effects can be quite discrete, such as plants lacking vigour from their root system being impeded by the nematode feeding sites. Plant-parasitic nematodes are parasites, which means they rely on keeping the plant alive to a sufficient state, whereby it continues to provide an ongoing source of food for them to multiply. Their speed of multiplication can be staggering when they are provided with a good host.

One of the key nematode species that damages many vegetable crops are root-knot nematodes, such as *Meloidogyne javanica* and *Meloidogyne incognita*. Key host crops in vegetables are beans, carrot, celery, capsicum, cucurbits, ginger, lettuce, potatoes, pumpkin and tomatoes as well as over 2,000 weed species.

PREVENTION METHODS

Crop rotation will not eliminate root-knot nematodes. It will, however, significantly reduce crop losses when a susceptible crop is planted again. Winter cereals are useful because they are generally poor hosts – root-knot nematode reproduction is also slower during the cooler winter months. Summer crop options include sorghum-sudangrass hybrids (particularly cv. Jumbo).

When it comes to cultivation and fallow, ensure you remove plants as soon as the crop is harvested to prevent further multiplication (if possible, remove the roots as well). Repeated cultivation kills plant-parasitic nematodes in the upper soil layers by exposing them to mechanical abrasion, and the heating and drying action of the sun.

Eggs can last up to a year and populations will persist on a range of weeds (therefore it is important to control the weeds). If the area is maintained as weed-free, plant-parasitic nematodes will die of starvation. A 4-6 month fallow may reduce plant-parasitic nematode populations by up to 95 per cent.

CROP PROTECTION OPTIONS

If there is good market acceptance for root-knot nematode resistant varieties, they can provide a very good level of protection. For susceptible varieties, chemical control options are fewer in number than in recent years, with regulation causing this decline of registered products. Certain options for fumigation of the soil do still exist but application can be very expensive and relies on moisture, application technique and soil type.

Syngenta has recently registered TERVIGO® for controlling root-knot nematodes with application through trickle irrigation in fruiting vegetables and cucurbit crops. Other products are available, however some can be restricted to certain states only. Always check for acceptance of the nematicides you are considering.

R&D ■ Drive Train

INFO

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

The R&D content for this article has been provided to *Vegetables Australia* to educate Australian vegetable growers about the most relevant and practical information on crop protection technologies and their on-farm applications. This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027



VEGGIE STATS: PUMPKIN

To enable deeper insights into the production and trade performance of key Australian vegetable products, we have developed a series of crop-specific Veggie Stats profiles. The next instalment of this series provides an update on pumpkin production.

The following Veggie Stats article has been developed specifically to give readers a detailed snapshot of the key facts and figures on pumpkin. Veggie Stats utilises data from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

It is important to note the data itself provides a broad indication of the performance of pumpkin growers and should be interpreted carefully. The data is presented at the national level and therefore does not account for differences among jurisdictions.

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

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KEY STATISTICS

- Australia produced around 115,000 tonnes of pumpkin in 2015-16, a decrease of over 2,500 tonnes from the previous year.
- Exports of pumpkins, squash and gourds earned over \$2.9 million in 2015-16.
- There were around 285 pumpkin producers in Australia in 2013-14, and around 3,400 hectares sown to pumpkin in the same year.

FRESH PUMPKIN PRODUCTION



Source: Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook - Vegetables, Hort Innovation, various years.



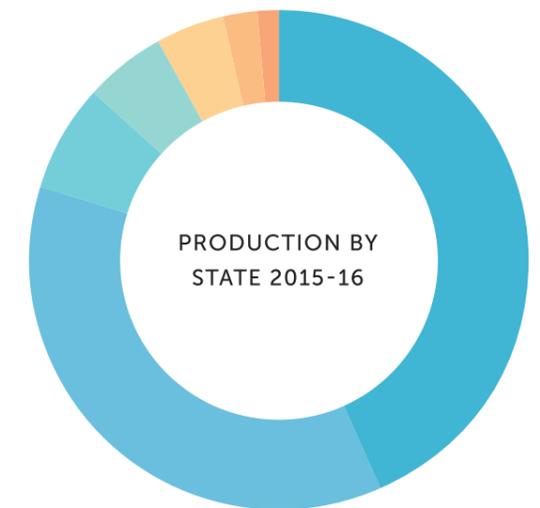
FACT: The heaviest pumpkin ever recorded was grown by Mathias Willemijns in Belgium in 2016, and weighed 1,190kg.

STATE PRODUCTION

- Australia produced around \$68.2 million worth of pumpkin in 2015-16, up from around \$58 million in 2014-15.
- Queensland produced around 40 per cent of all pumpkins grown in Australia in 2015-16, followed by New South Wales, which produced over 35 per cent.
- Western Australia increased its pumpkin production to over 13,000 tonnes, an increase of around 60 per cent on 2014-15.

QLD NSW WA VIC SA NT TAS

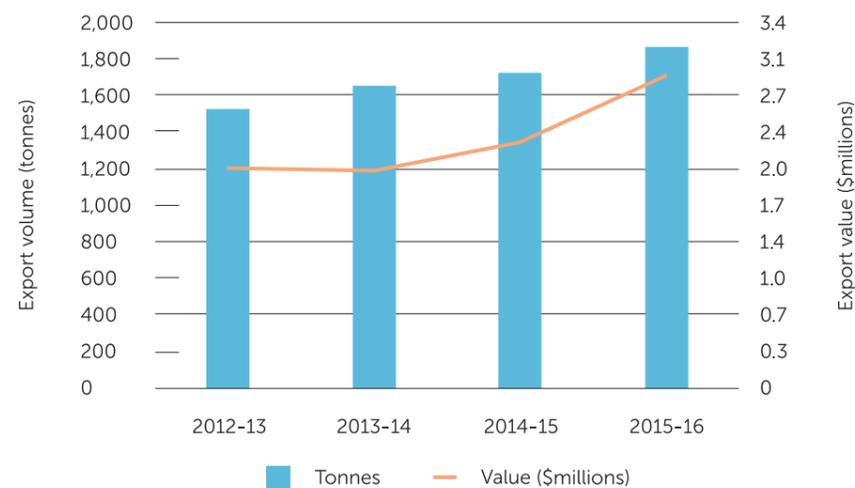
Source: Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook - Vegetables (2015/16), Hort Innovation, 2017.



TOTAL EXPORTS

- The export value of pumpkins, squash and gourds has grown by nearly 50 per cent since 2013-14, while the overall volume exported has increased at a slower rate, reflecting a much higher price per kilogram in emerging markets looking for premium produce.

TOTAL EXPORTS FOR PUMPKIN, SQUASH AND GOURDS



Source: ABARES based on ABS unpublished data.



KEY EXPORT MARKETS

- Singapore continues to be by far the biggest export market for Australian pumpkin, squash and gourd, importing over \$1.8 million in 2015-16 (around 64 per cent of Australia's total exports by value).
- United Arab Emirates and Malaysia, while being relatively small markets, have shown significant growth in recent years.

Singapore UAE Malaysia
Other Hong Kong Indonesia

Source: Global Trade Atlas.

R&D

Drive Train

INFO

The Economist Sub-Program is a component of the Vegetable Industry Communication Program and has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027

Horticulture
Innovation
Australia



L-R: Shayne Hyman, Stuart Grigg, Daniel Hammond, Andrew Bulmer, Samantha Strano, Lachlan Dumaresq, Noel Jansz and Rob Philip at the East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days.

TWO-DAY EVENT SHOWCASES INNOVATION IN LEAFY VEG, BRASSICA AND HERB PRODUCTION

One of Australia's rising vegetable production regions provided the backdrop for a highly successful event: the East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days. Attracting over 600 delegates to Bulmer Farms in Lindenow, situated 20 kilometres west of Bairnsdale in Victoria, this event catered for growers as well as the wider industry.

The tiny town of Lindenow sprung to life in early May, with more than 600 growers and vegetable industry representatives converging in the heart of East Gippsland for a wide-ranging field day and networking event.

Held from 3-4 May, the East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days (EGVID 2017) were hosted by agronomist Stuart Grigg and Bulmer Farms' Managing Director Andrew Bulmer. It was a major event for the East Gippsland Food Cluster as part of the National Vegetable Extension Network, a program funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

One of the highlights for delegates of the two-day event was the Industry Networking Dinner, which was held at Lindenow Hall on 3 May.

CELEBRATING INNOVATION

EGVID 2017 was officially opened on Wednesday lunchtime by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport the Hon. Darren Chester MP, in conjunction with Mr Grigg, Andrew and Bill Bulmer from Bulmer Farms, and Gazzola Farms' Director and industry champion Luis Gazzola. There was a 'cutting of the lettuce' to mark the occasion and Mr Chester noted that promoting Gippsland's success in the agricultural sector was critical to the region's growth.

Once the formalities were over, delegates took the time to view the leafy vegetable demonstration sites, which were hosted by the top 10 seed companies in Australia. There were also around 50 other exhibitors from all sections of the vegetable supply chain, from fertiliser companies to irrigation and machinery, ready to showcase the latest in products and innovation.

The vegetable levy-funded Robot for Intelligent Perception and Precision Application (RIPPA) was also on-site, with the development team from the University of Sydney showing delegates the progress to date. This generated a lot of interest from delegates, and EGVID 2017 co-host Bill Bulmer was pleased to have RIPPA visit his farm again.

"The RIPPA robot is an exciting extension of where I think our businesses and the vegetable community are going forward – this technology is something that's going to set the standard for the next decade," he said.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

There was plenty of talk among growers and industry members out in the field over the two-day event, however they had a chance to socialise in a more relaxed setting with the Industry Networking Dinner taking place on Wednesday night.

It was standing room only in the Lindenow Hall, with 330 people attending the dinner. Former AFL footballer Sam

Kekovich entertained the crowd, drawing plenty of laughs as he recalled his time growing up on a vegetable farm in Manjimup, Western Australia.

This was followed by the Boomaroo Nurseries awards, which recognised Rijk Zwaan for its productivity and innovation while Fairbank Seeds was awarded Best Field Plot.

SPEAKER SESSIONS

There were a range of thought-provoking speaker sessions throughout the two-day event and this was headlined by a masterclass that focused on the challenges of growing baby spinach.

Len Tesoriero, a Senior Plant Pathologist with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) was joined by Rijk Zwaan's international spinach specialist Wim in't Groen and Lefroy Valley CEO Nick Laminski. The trio addressed diseases in spinach crops, the seed production process and the source and spread of pathogens. Mr Groen outlined spinach breeding for the world market and the selection method used to develop lines for making a hybrid variety. The discussion was chaired by Stuart Grigg.

The following day, delegates heard a range of presentations within the Fresh Select Event Hub from E. E. Muir & Sons, DuPont, Elders Bairnsdale, South Pacific Seeds, Rijk Zwaan, Nufarm Australia and GroLink Nursery. The presentations covered a range of topics including the latest products targeting disease in lettuce and spinach crops as well as new developments in lettuce breeding from around the world.

Lunch commenced with 'grazers' prepared by The Long Paddock cafe and provided by major sponsor, Boomaroo

Nurseries, and a barbecue with salads made from local fresh produce provided by One Harvest.

A GREAT SUCCESS

EGVID 2017 proved to be a valuable experience for growers and the wider vegetable community.

Vegetable Industry Development Officer for Gippsland Shayne Hyman said organisers could not have asked for a better result, and reinforced the benefits that growers gained from the event.

"This is all about growers coming together, learning from what's currently available and the latest in research and development – and that doesn't necessarily have to be done in a university setting; it might very well be done in a product development setting," Ms Hyman said.

"From that, growers can go back to their farms and hopefully apply what it is that they've learned, increase their yield and productivity and improve their profitability."

R&D ■ Drive Train ■ Farm Productivity, Resource Use & Management

INFO

Regional capacity building to grow vegetable businesses – Victoria Gippsland (East Gippsland Food Cluster) has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15047

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Lisa Brassington (front) with Peninsula Fresh Organics owners Wayne and Tash Shields.



A selection of 2017 Women in Horticulture award nominees: Brei Montgomery, Suzie Delroy, Zurriyet Braham, Kate Rehbein, Lisa Brassington, Monika Fiebig, Susan Finger and Marie-Astrid Ottenhof.

Photo by ASB Creative.

GOING BACK TO HER ROOTS: THE PATH TO LISA'S SUCCESS

A love and passion for the land has opened up many doors for this column's subject, Lisa Brassington. The 2017 Women in Horticulture award winner is Quality and Land Management Manager at Peninsula Fresh Organics, a certified organic market garden in Victoria, and she has a strong social media presence. *Vegetables Australia* spoke to Lisa about her achievements, the opportunities she has received and the importance of recognising women in the horticulture industry.

Coming from multiple generations of farmers in the King Valley region, and having grown up in the north eastern Victorian town of Wangaratta, Lisa Brassington was destined to work with the land.

However she fell in love with a city boy, her now-husband Nathan, which meant that city living became part of her current circumstances and her future life.

After a career in strategic town planning and stints at local Victorian councils, Lisa joined Wayne and Tash Shields and their certified organic farming business Peninsula Fresh Organics – and hasn't looked back.

Lisa's innovative ideas, passion and tireless work in the peri-urban farming space were honoured at Hort Connections 2017 in Adelaide, with the Quality and Land Management Manager taking home the prestigious Women in Horticulture award.

She is also completing a Master in Horticultural Business, a scholarship she received from Horticulture Innovation Australia and AUSVEG, to study with the University of Tasmania. Prior to this, she participated in the National Rural Women's Coalition E-Leader Course.

THE BEGINNING

Lisa was a self-described "happy local veggie shopper" at Peninsula Fresh Organics when the opportunity came up to work in the business and meet the increasing demands of day-to-day duties.

The passionate industry leader was employed by Wayne and Tash to oversee quality assurance and land management as well as environmental balance for the business, which grows around 43 seasonal varieties of fresh produce, from leeks to heritage carrots and leafy green Asian vegetables.

"Being a sounding board when Wayne talks about soil health is great – he's very clever with soil and we like to have a bit of a banter about soil health. If you have healthy soil, you have healthy veggies," she explains.

"With that came the quality assurance paperwork, not only from a certified organic farming perspective but also for being a vegetable supplier to wholesale and retail markets."

A HIGH ACHIEVER

The 2017 Women in Horticulture award left Lisa overwhelmed with gratitude and a sense of needing to be a continual positive role model for women in the industry. She was also full of praise for the other nominees.

"It was amazing to be among those women. I was listening to their stories and their business and industry achievements and then my name was called out. The gratitude and honour was overwhelming," Lisa says.

The accolades have kept on coming – Lisa was a Victorian finalist for the 2017 Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award. This was achieved as a result of her project entitled *Ducks: Stirred not Shredded*, which aims to develop a national real time predictive bird and bat strike program. The outcome of this would be to deter the pests from feasting on horticultural produce and divert them back into their natural wetland habitats.

Being nominated for the RIRDC Rural Women's Award was a turning point for Lisa.

"As much as I'm comfortable with public speaking, I've often been a shadow player in other ideas, innovation or being invited around the regional table to discuss solutions," she says.

"Getting shortlisted to be interviewed for the award meant

my idea was actually valuable, it was innovative and worth recognising. It's given me the encouragement to follow this commercially and get it on the market."

STAYING SOCIAL

A prominent user of social media, Lisa has plans to develop a women in horticulture discussion group, similar to the current AgChatOZ online community which discusses topical issues once a week in an open forum.

"I've seen how well AgChatOZ runs for wide-ranging agriculture, but it doesn't have a core-vegetable or core-horticultural focus, that I think hort would benefit from. I'd like to test the idea and perhaps see how that would run because I think a forum like that works quite well for seasonal hort and busy ag women," Lisa says.

Adding to Lisa's already busy schedule is the Women on Farms Gathering 2018 which will be hosted on the Mornington Peninsula. In its 29th year, the Gathering aims to nourish women's agribusiness skills, their personal wellbeing and also provide a friendly forum to air any concerns or provide general agricultural advice.

THE FINAL WORD

Lisa's passion for farming and horticulture is there for everyone to see – on social media, in her achievements and through her work at Peninsula Fresh Organics.

Lisa's advice for women in horticulture is simple: Don't shy away from hard work – and it's something she sees daily, with the commitment, from Tash and Sue Shields.

"I am a female where my family's farming went down the line to males – women were never excluded, but were never up at the table. I think young women need to be able to put their hand up and say 'I absolutely love this, I want to do it, I am part of this team – who else can I speak to who's been down my path?'

"Don't shy away from hard work. Hard work is for anyone who loves what they're doing, no matter what industry you're in. If you want to learn how to drive a tractor, do it. If you want to learn to get a forklift licence, do it. If you want to put a pair of muddy boots in the back of the car, just have some newspaper to put them on. Enjoy ag, just get out there and do it."

WOMEN IN HORTICULTURE CELEBRATED AT HORT CONNECTIONS 2017

More than 100 delegates gathered at the annual Women in Horticulture networking event at Hort Connections 2017, which aimed to recognise and celebrate the pivotal role that women play in the industry. Held at the InterContinental Adelaide, the event also highlighted the ways that women can get involved and add value to their businesses.

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston gave the audience an insight into her experience as a regionally-based senator with a passion for agriculture and the challenges she has faced along the way.

Eat.Drink.Innovate Pty Ltd founder Susie White spoke about creativity hacks for innovative product creation, and inspired attendees with how they could incorporate these abstract ideas into their businesses.

FRESH COOKING IDEAS

The audience was also treated to an entertaining and informative cooking demonstration from celebrity chef Geoff Jansz, who used local produce (gathered earlier that morning from the Adelaide Produce Market) to explain the

easy ways to bring professional cooking into the home.

Horticulture Innovation Australia Relationship Manager Christian Patterson also provided an update on levy-funded projects that are underway to benefit the industry, and he reiterated the important role that women play in horticulture.

Capping off the event was the presentation of the Women in Horticulture award, which was presented by Queensland vegetable grower Sharron Windolf.

AUSVEG would like to thank Steritech for its sponsorship of this important event in Australian horticulture as well as all of the speakers and attendees.

2017 WOMEN IN HORTICULTURE AWARD NOMINEES

Lam Phan	(SA)	Kristena Le	(NSW)
Tania Chapman	(VIC)	Kate Rehbein	(QLD)
Brei Montgomery	(NSW)	Lisa Brassington	(VIC)
Lis Blandamer	(VIC)	Monika Fiebig	(SA)
Anna McCowan	(QLD)	Suzie Delroy	(WA)
Sonja Cameron	(NSW)	Zurriyet Braham	(SA)
Susan Finger	(VIC)	Dr Marie-Astrid Ottenhof	(VIC)



Reverse Trade Mission delegates in Western Australia.

REVERSE TRADE MISSION CONNECTS AUSTRALIAN GROWERS WITH INTERNATIONAL BUYERS

Australian vegetables were once again under the international spotlight, with the Reverse Trade Mission and Produce Display events taking place in conjunction with Hort Connections 2017. These events provided opportunities for exporting growers to connect with international fresh produce buyers from Asia and the Middle East.

The annual Australian vegetable industry Reverse Trade Mission returned for another year, with 30 international delegates visiting Australian vegetable farms and participating at the Produce Display event, which coincided with Hort Connections 2017 at the Adelaide Convention Centre in May.

The delegates represented international supermarket chains and large fresh produce importers from a broad selection of key export markets including Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, along with international buyers from markets including Japan, Thailand, Taiwan and the Middle East.

Delegates on the trade mission also spent time in Western Australia visiting a range of vegetable production regions, vegetable farms, wholesale markets and vegetable distribution centres before attending Hort Connections from 15-17 May.

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Held at the InterContinental Adelaide, the Produce Display event showcased the finest fresh vegetables from a range of Australian growing operations and presented growers from across the country with the opportunity to engage directly with international buyers.

According to Haiko-Michael Schäfer from Emirates Flight Catering, who helps to produce 165,000 meals on a daily basis, the Reverse Trade Mission was very valuable for his business.

"The reason I came down here was just to see the products, see where it comes from and meet people from the source," he said.

"I gained quite a bit of knowledge on how things grow. I've seen decent product, fresh produce and had a lot of talk with the farmers and distributors which gives us (Emirates Catering) a really good experience and a good opportunity in bringing things straight from Australia to us, without the wholesale market in Dubai."

Mr Schäfer was impressed by how quickly Australian produce is harvested, packed and shipped out.

"The turnover and just how quick it is, is amazing," he said.

MEETING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

This was the second year that Oasis Foods International Dubai General Manager Paul George attended the Reverse Trade Mission.

"I've been able to get the right produce that I wanted (by attending the Mission). Six months ago, we started in the fresh produce category and we have expanded our facilities in Dubai," he explained.

"This is the right platform for us to get to know the growers directly, and it has guided us along the right path to meet the right people."

Mr George said Australian produce is highly sought-after in Dubai.

"With any product out of Australia, people have the notion it is chemical-free. That is the biggest advantage we have from importing Australian produce. People look forward to this produce – that's a reason why our company had to look to meeting the growers directly and to import products out of Australia."

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Australian vegetable industry will once again be exhibiting at Asia Fruit Logistica, the premier trade show for fresh produce in the Asia Pacific region, which will be held in Hong Kong from 6-8 September as part of the Hort Innovation-coordinated *Australia Fresh* exhibit.

This annual event is expected to attract significant involvement from Australian horticulture. The industry's representation at the 2017 Asia Fruit Logistica also includes funded positions for vegetable growers to display products and establish new business contacts.

R&D ■ Market & Value Chain Development

INFO

For more information on the Reverse Trade Mission or to submit an expression of interest to attend Asia Fruit Logistica, please contact the AUSVEG Export Department on 03 9882 0277 or export@ausveg.com.au.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG16061

Horticulture
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GALA DINNER PROVIDES A BOOST FOR BOWEN AND GUMLU GROWERS

More than 130 growers, horticulture industry members and dignitaries attended the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association Gala Dinner on 27 May. The rebuild of the Bowen and Gumlu region following Cyclone Debbie is well underway and the mood was positive. Attendees also showed their generous side, with over \$4,500 raised for local organisations.

It has been a tough three months for growers in the Bowen Gumlu region, however this did not dampen their spirits when they attended the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association (BGGA) Gala Dinner last month.

It was a glamorous and memorable occasion at the Grand View Hotel Bowen, with Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, Member for Dawson George Christensen MP and Member for Burdekin Dale Last MP attending as special guests.

The Gala Dinner was attended by over 130 growers and industry members from the Bowen and Gumlu regions, as well as industry members from around Australia, including AUSVEG representatives.

BGGA President Carl Walker told the audience that it had been a rough time for the region, which was devastated by Cyclone Debbie in late March, but highlighted the spirit and resilience shown by the community.

Premier Palaszczuk also spoke about her gratitude towards those who were on the ground during the cyclone and the subsequent recovery effort, and touched on Queenslanders' willingness to assist during times of difficulty.

GENEROUS DONATIONS

A highlight of the night was the auction of NRL player-signed guernseys and corporate box tickets to select rugby league matches. This proved popular with crowd, with \$2,900 raised to assist in the purchase of a school bus for Gumlu State School, while \$700 went to the Whitsunday Regional Council Pensioners Cyclone Cleanup Fund, which enables council workers to assist the elderly where required in the clean-up of their yards.

The Gumlu School also benefited from a bucket whip-around which raised almost \$1,000 for the bus fund. David Pershouse from Perhouse Produce in Brisbane kindly offered to donate additional funds required for the purchase of the bus.

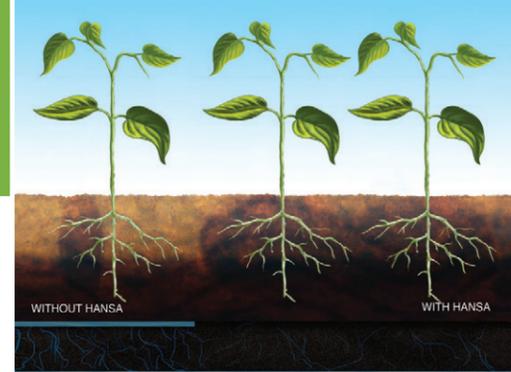
There were also certificates of appreciation presented to BGGA sponsors and Mr Walker thanked these organisations for their support during 2016/17.

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AUSVEG National Marketing Manager Nathan McIntyre, Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs Henk Kamp, Rijk Zwaan Export Director Jan Omvlee, Their Majesties King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, Rijk Zwaan Australia Managing Director Steven Roberts and AUSVEG Chair Geoff Moar.

COLLABORATING TO OVERCOME INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

Following the historic signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AUSVEG and Dutch seed company Rijk Zwaan, *Vegetables Australia* spoke to the company about the significance of this new partnership for Australian horticulture and the benefits it will continue to bring to vegetable growers. Rijk Zwaan received the Innovation Partner award at Hort Connections 2017.

When a single event attracts the attention of royalty, you can be confident that it is of significant importance to an industry.

This was reflected in November 2016 when a ground-breaking partnership between Australian and Dutch horticulture companies was witnessed by Their Majesties King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands at Cockatoo Island, off the coast of Sydney. Alongside the creation of a Masterclass in Horticultural Business between Horticulture Innovation Australia, the University of Tasmania, New Zealand-based Lincoln University and Wageningen University of the Netherlands, AUSVEG announced its own Memorandum of Understanding with Dutch seed company Rijk Zwaan.

Eight months on, Rijk Zwaan Australia Managing Director Steven Roberts said the presence of the Dutch King and Queen at the event signified the importance of the partnership between Australian and Dutch horticulture.

"The Dutch are regarded as pioneers and they are keen to forge more relationships and strategic investment in Australian horticulture," Mr Roberts said.

"They can bring some big benefits such as sharing their knowledge and education to improve efficiencies in high-tech greenhouse production. They can help us in technology, improving processes in the supply chain and introducing new varieties."

WORKING TOGETHER

Rijk Zwaan is one of the world's leading developers of vegetable varieties, with its head office located in the Netherlands. Its seeds are sold in more than 100 countries through 30 locally operating sales subsidiaries and many distributors.

Mr Roberts said the most important aspect of the strategic partnership between AUSVEG and Rijk Zwaan was to work together to overcome a range of challenges in the industry.

"Our combined challenge is to help increase the intrinsic value that society places on vegetables. We need to stimulate the consumer into eating more vegetables, not because they have to eat them but because they want to. It's the reason behind why

we initiated 'Love My Salad' as a platform to share knowledge and inspiration about vegetables. We've got to help them overcome some of the barriers to consumption, and we can address a lot of that through good breeding," he said.

"Rijk Zwaan always has an ambition of bringing people together. Our company slogan is 'Sharing a healthy future', and we mean that by working together with everyone in the supply chain. We also see working with AUSVEG as something really positive and I think we can do more in the area of education. For example, working with growers on good cultural management practices to help extend the life of resistant varieties and with chain partners to realise added value such as taste and convenience for the consumer."

While new snacking lines such as mini tomatoes and baby cucumbers are hitting the mark with consumers, Mr Roberts added that the company focuses on constantly improving variety choice to give growers, the supply chain and consumers access to better quality, longer shelf-life, better taste and innovation in vegetables. Through resistance breeding techniques, Rijk Zwaan has already had success through the creation of Knox salad leaf varieties.

"Knox addresses a couple of very powerful things in the industry, and one is consumer confidence due to fresher lettuce and less wastage. It's actually conventional breeding, using the tools of nature to make a range of varieties that have delayed oxidation or 'pinking'," Mr Roberts said.

"We're really fortunate to work with motivated growers who can see the bigger picture and embrace this innovation.

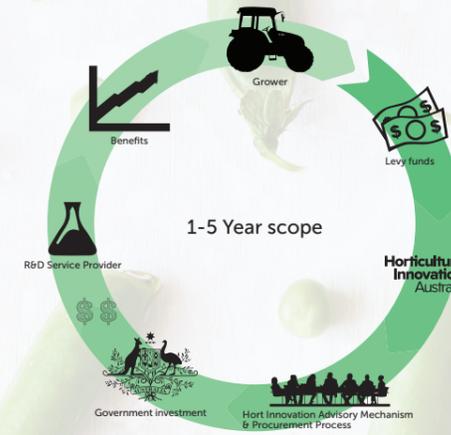
"Nature still provides us with an amazing opportunity to continue to create new varieties and solve these problems, but it does help if industry works together. In the end, it's about people eating more vegetables and addressing the opportunities lost is our greatest challenge."

INFO

For more information, please visit rijkszwaan.com.au.

THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE R&D LEVY AT WORK

POOL 1



WHO PAYS THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE LEVY?

The levy is paid by growers who produce vegetables in Australia.

- The charge is set at half of one per cent at the first point of sale.

The Federal Government also provides funding in addition to grower levy payments. Once paid, these funds are managed by Horticulture Innovation Australia.

HOW IS LEVY MONEY INVESTED?

There are now two pools with different funding priorities. Pool 1 is funded by grower levies with contributions from the Federal Government. This pool has a one to five year scope and will invest in applied R&D designed to directly benefit growers. This includes pest and disease management and biosecurity matters, with findings communicated through a variety of channels including *Vegetables Australia*.

POOL 2



Pool 2 has a one to 15 year scope and matches strategic co-investment funds with at least \$20 million, at the Pool's maturity, of government seed funds annually. This pool aims to address multi- and cross-industry challenges and opportunities of strategic and long-term importance to Australia's horticulture industries.

Six 'Foundation Funds' have so far been established in Pool 2 and will work with an expert panel to direct strategic projects.

They are:

- The Leadership and People Development Fund
- The Fruit Fly Fund
- The Asian Markets Fund
- The Green Cities Fund
- The Health, Nutrition and Food Safety Fund
- Pollination Fund

HOW CAN GROWERS GET INVOLVED?

Vegetable growers play a fundamental role in advising on the allocation of both levy and co-investment funds, and will be engaged in extensive consultation with Hort Innovation in regional grower meetings, industry-specific consultation programs and individual grower and grower group consultation. Growers can also submit ideas for R&D projects via Hort Innovation's Concept Portal at horticulture.com.au/concept-proposal-form.

For more information about the vegetable research and development levy, visit ausveg.com.au/resources/the-levy-system/vegetable-levy.

This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. Project Number: VG15027





HOW AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS BUY THEIR VEGETABLES

Many factors influence consumer decisions when purchasing fresh produce, including shelf life, price and convenience. Freshlogic Managing Director Martin Kneebone provides an insight into the driving factors behind vegetable purchases.

Consumer shopping patterns are dictated by the perishable attributes of vegetables, lifestyle factors such as a demand for convenience and an increasing adversity to waste. These settings affect how Australian households buy vegetables and frame how vegetable producers can generate further growth by best accommodating these buying needs.

Our understanding of vegetable shopping patterns is informed by Freshlogic's unique research tools, including the Mealpulse™ food consumer panel and DocketData™ systems and then assessed in our THRUChain™ analysis capacity.

HOUSEHOLD PENETRATION

All Australian households buy fresh vegetables, an indication of their mainstream appeal and also their diversity of use.

The vegetables with the highest household penetration are carrots (91 per cent), potatoes (88 per cent), tomatoes (86 per cent) and onions (75 per cent). These vegetables tend to store well, often without refrigeration, and they are also extremely versatile.

Vegetables with low household penetration (27-42 per cent) include Asian vegetables, beetroot, peas and sweet corn. The consumption occasion for these vegetables are comparatively limited, while processed vegetable forms are readily available and have a longer shelf life. Over 80,000 tonnes of frozen vegetables are sold in Australia generating annual retail sales of over \$580 million, while beetroot, sweet corn and tomatoes combined account for over 65 per cent of all canned vegetable volume.

However, the consumer demand is clearly for fresh vegetables, given the retail sales of the frozen and shelf stable forms of vegetables is 13.3 per cent of the combined fresh and processed retail market value of \$8.16 billion.

HOW OFTEN ARE VEGETABLES PURCHASED?

The purchase frequency for different vegetables varies widely from weekly to every six weeks, with annual shopping trips providing a means to compare.

The vegetables with the highest average number of annual shopping trips per year are tomatoes, cut leaf salad, onions and potatoes. Purchase frequency can be affected by seasonal factors, production methods, locations and retail range depth. Clearly year-round availability is invaluable as it allows a product to be regularly included in household menus.

Purchase frequency is also skewed towards vegetables that are purchased in smaller quantities. Australian households, on average, purchase 595 grams per vegetable per shopping trip, with a wide range from cabbage (1.18kg) to peas (0.174kg).

Another driver of purchase frequency is home storage life. Products tend to be purchased more frequently when its texture deteriorates quickly. For example, the crispness of cut leaf

salad is an important attribute, and so consumers tend to only purchase what they need, aiming for no leftovers. It should be remembered that over 20 per cent of Australian households are only occupied by one person and these buyers are clearly seeking smaller portions.

HOUSEHOLD SPEND ON VEGETABLES

Typically, households spend an average of \$16-18 on fresh vegetables per week, but this can range between \$11-24. Analysis of DocketData™ suggests that the average spend per trip is highest for potatoes, cut leaf salad, tomatoes and mushrooms. The average spend per trip is typically lowest for broccoli, carrots and onions.

Supermarkets enjoy a combined retail market share of fresh vegetables, estimated at 72 per cent in a very competitive market. Indications are that consumers are more comfortable buying more robust vegetables from supermarkets and tend to look to specialist greengrocers when quality variables are greater. Mealpulse™ panellists list handy location (54 per cent), better quality (52 per cent) and better range (44 per cent) as the top reasons for shopping at a greengrocer.

WHAT DRIVES PURCHASES?

Smaller pack size is a key driver of increased purchases and capturing additional value. There is generally a strong correlation between pack size and price per kilogram, with smaller packs generating price premiums. The trend towards 'top-up' shopping using a basket supports the increased usage of smaller packs as they are easier to carry, store and transport. Many consumers find it easier to understand the

'per each' pricing of prepack rather than 'per kilogram'.

Retailers are also welcoming of smaller prepacks as they deliver supply chain and shelf space efficiencies, generating higher sales per metre and helping to reduce in-store loss. There is also growing mainstream concern regarding excess packaging, and this will increasingly need to be considered as the expansion of smaller prepacks continues to bring packaging into fresh vegetable retail sales.

Packaging is an important vehicle of communication with the consumer as it enables further differentiation including varietal names and provenance. The additional value captured by fruit categories, and more recently in potatoes and tomatoes, indicates that these distinctions are welcomed.

Minimal processing, such as peeling, slicing and dicing, is also a key driver of purchase. Consumers appear to be increasingly willing to trade the time they save from preparing fresh vegetables with a higher price per kilogram. Combined with effective packaging, it could also be an opportunity to educate consumers on different consumption occasions or flavour profiles and encourage further household penetration.

R&D ■ Drive Train ■ Consumer Alignment

INFO

For more information, please contact AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277 or info@ausveg.com.au.

The Economist Sub-Program has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027

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SOIL TESTING AND MANAGING INPUTS BELOW AND ABOVE GROUND

The Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection projects work with growers nationally to put soil and plant health research into practice. In this edition, we provide practical guidance on interpreting soil test results, managing cover crop residues and compost in commercial vegetable production systems, as well as an integrated pest management case study from the Tasmanian demonstration site.

SOIL TESTING AND INTERPRETATION FOR VEG CROPS: A GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to help growers and agronomists interpret conventional 'chemical' soil tests and identify soil chemical constraints for commercial vegetable production in Australia.

This resource can be used to guide site-specific decisions on nutrition management. It does NOT provide prescriptive information on how much of a certain nutrient or fertiliser to apply to various vegetable crops. A recipe approach is not recommended because results in crop performance would be unreliable.

MANAGING COVER CROP RESIDUES IN VEG PRODUCTION

Cover crops are great tools for soil management. Their benefits can include improving soil structure and health, reducing erosion and weeds, adding nitrogen and contributing to weed and disease control.

Managing the transition from cover crop to cash crop is a key factor in determining the successful integration of cover crops into your farm. With cover crops able to produce more than 100 tonnes of fresh plant material per hectare, the transition needs to be well managed to prevent problems in the following cash crop.

The aim of this fact sheet is to outline key factors and the management options for the successful transition from cover to cash crop.

COMPOST USE IN VEG PRODUCTION: A GROWER'S PERSPECTIVE

Hear from Rob Hinrichsen of Kalfresh in Queensland in a video about using compost in commercial vegetable production systems. The video captures his experiences in soil biology, short- and long-term compost, the financial implications of using compost and advice for starting out. Visit soilwealth.com.au to find out more.

IMPLEMENTING IPM: HOUSTON'S FARM, TASMANIA

Houston's Farm, in southern Tasmania, grows a range of ready-to-eat leafy salad products including lettuce, brassica leafy vegetables, beets and spinach.

Despite a positive experience with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the control of lettuce aphid, Houston's Farm was reluctant to adopt IPM based on only one experience. One of the biggest challenges to adopting IPM was regular monitoring, including looking for beneficial species. Now, Houston's Farm has developed its own IPM manual to train new staff, including photos of pest and beneficial species, and other information such as appropriate pesticides.

Houstons' Cambridge site is a Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection demonstration site in conjunction with the soil borne disease project. For further information on the activities at the demonstration site, visit soilwealth.com.au/demo-sites/cambridge-tas.

All the aforementioned resources can be accessed via the Soil Wealth and ICP website under the 'Resources' tab.

R&D ■ Drive Train ■ Farm Productivity, Resource Use & Management

INFO

For more information, please contact project leaders Dr Gordon Rogers on 02 8627 1040 or gordon@ahr.com.au and Dr Anne-Maree Boland on 03 9882 2670 or anne-mareeb@rmcg.com.au.

More information and resources are also available from the Soil Wealth/ICP website at soilwealth.com.au or integratedcropprotection.com.au.

The Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection projects are funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Numbers:
VG13076 and VG13078







Boomaroo Nurseries Managing Director Eric Jacometti.

EXPANSION PAVING THE WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH

Boomaroo Nurseries has purchased a new site in Queensland's Toowoomba region, which will enable it to reach a greater number of growers and provide the latest innovations and technologies in seedling growth. *Vegetables Australia* spoke with co-owner and Managing Director Eric Jacometti about what this means for the future of the business, which supplies an estimated 200 varieties of product every week.

Five years ago, Eric Jacometti and the Boomaroo Nurseries team took their first step into Queensland by establishing what is known as a "finishing pad".

This is where a seedling begins its growing process in another location (in this case, at the nursery in Lara, Victoria) before being transported north to Drayton, near Toowoomba in south-east Queensland. This process gives the product the opportunity to acclimatise to the surrounding conditions.

Now, Boomaroo Nurseries is producing 50 million plants in Queensland annually and, after six months of searching, the business has purchased a production facility site in Toowoomba.

CUSTOMER COMMITMENT

With Boomaroo's Lara facility operating for the past 30 years, Mr Jacometti said that expansion into Queensland was a logical step for the business to take, with many of their customers now owning growing operations in both Victoria and Queensland and vice versa.

"It's about commitment to the growers, and being able to provide the very best service around the very best product into the area, and that's pretty much what our philosophy is as a business – not just selling a product to the customer, but also making sure that it is supported by service," he said.

Mr Jacometti said south east Queensland is a "salad bowl", particularly for the different types of product it grows, as is Victoria.

"In vegetable and leafy crops, it is at least the same size as Victoria – they are definitely the two major areas for leafy product. We see it as absolutely essential to the sustainability of our business to be able to service our customers up and down the eastern seaboard," he said.

EXPANSION BENEFITS

Innovation will be an integral part of the new site, with the planned implementation of technology aimed to increase productivity at the grower level.

"The expansion is going to include another nursery which is high-tech. We believe in making sure what we do is going to take us into the next 10-15 years. Instead of just building a low-tech

nursery with a few greenhouses, we'll be looking to bring in new technology as we've had here in Lara; where it has served us well for nearly the last two decades and is still recognised as world's best practice," Mr Jacometti said.

"We monitor things like cost of labour per tray – they're key performance indicators that we work on – and in Queensland it will be exactly the same; automated and working at a very high level to produce a very high quality product.

"The advantage to our customer is uniformity in the crop. If we can produce it uniformly and we can produce it to a day, which is our aim, then our customers will get the continuity they require out in the field."

GOING GREEN

Boomaroo Nurseries has also established itself in greenlife – an offshoot to the business developed nearly 10 years ago in Lara, with plans to develop and grow this entity interstate as well.

"Greenlife utilises the space in the vegetable business that is not full all year round," Mr Jacometti explained.

"You need to have the extra space for your winter production when you've got longer grow times but then in the summer, that space sits idle. We looked for alternative crops to go into those spaces – it means that you can be a low-cost producer in both your vegetables and your greenlife businesses."

In the meantime, Mr Jacometti is upbeat about the state of the vegetable industry, saying that it had a fantastic future thanks to growers moving with the times to ensure a sustainable future.

"I see this industry as innovative. The growers are looking to automate what they can in the field and we're looking to supply things that can be automated into the field. We're both working together to try and find a common outcome, which is a product that can produce high quantities to a high quality at the lowest possible price – and that's what the consumer wants."

INFO

For more information, please visit boomaroo.com.



A FRESH APPROACH



NAME: Earl Yandall
AGE: 23
LOCATION: Peats Ridge, New South Wales
WORKS: Wavertree Farms
GROWS: Spinach, chives, mint, dill, coriander and radish

HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED IN THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY?

Through horticulture studies at the University of Sydney. At university, we visited the Sydney Markets and experienced different aspects of the horticultural industry, which involved packing and marketing. At the end of my third year at uni, I was involved in a two-week trip to the North Island of New Zealand where we saw the growing aspect of the industry which sparked my interest in the vegetable industry. Starting work at Wavertree Farms as an assistant grower was the first time I'd been involved in the vegetable growing industry in a professional working sense (it's my first full time job since graduating uni).

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE IN THE BUSINESS INVOLVE, AND WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

I am mainly responsible for overseeing the growth of the spinach, chives and mint, which are grown in protective systems. My daily duties include checking the crops for pests, diseases and any deficiencies as well as ensuring they are well irrigated and fertilised. If any problems are found in the crops such as pests or diseases, then amendments are applied.

I am also responsible for the upkeep of the greenhouses and maintenance of the irrigation systems – this includes ensuring that all pH and EC probes are calibrated, filters are clean and pumps are operating efficiently. The biggest responsibility would be crop maintenance, ensuring optimal growth by ridding it of pests and weeds.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY AND HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN YOUR ENTHUSIASM?

I enjoy that there are always changes happening in the industry. Every crop grows and behaves differently throughout the year with the changes in seasons. There are always challenges to deal with. You're always learning on the go, especially about the effects of different climatic conditions and the introduction of new pests and diseases. Not only is the weather changing but so is technology, which is exciting! Always learning new things maintains my enthusiasm.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU FACE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY, AND HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Having only just been introduced to the industry and growing short season crops that reach maturity in as little as six weeks, having little to no fallow period with an intensive system makes weed

and disease reduction hard. But this is eased by working with an experienced mentor and implementing strict cultural practices. I am still learning the effects of different climates and weather patterns as I'm yet to experience a full 12 months. Although it's difficult, coming into winter and growing cool weather crops alleviates some of the water and pest stresses on the plant.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT AREAS OF RESEARCH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY AND YOUR BUSINESS?

Research in managing pests and diseases is essential as they are evolving and building resistances. Pests and diseases can be a big problem in the vegetable industry and can decimate an entire business. Wavertree has a high diversity and year-round crop production, which is a way of protecting your business against being crippled by a pest or disease. Another big area of research that is worth focusing on is technology, from harvesting to planting and postharvest storage. Technology is always evolving and with a higher emphasis on reducing labour cost, it is an important area. Also, plant breeding research is important to produce hardier and more robust varieties that can meet changing consumer preferences.

WHERE DO YOU SEE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THE AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE INDUSTRY?

As planting, growing and harvesting technology evolves, there is an opportunity to move to a more automated system to reduce labour, which is one of the biggest on-farm costs. There is an opportunity to go into more intensive systems with greenhouses getting cheaper.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?

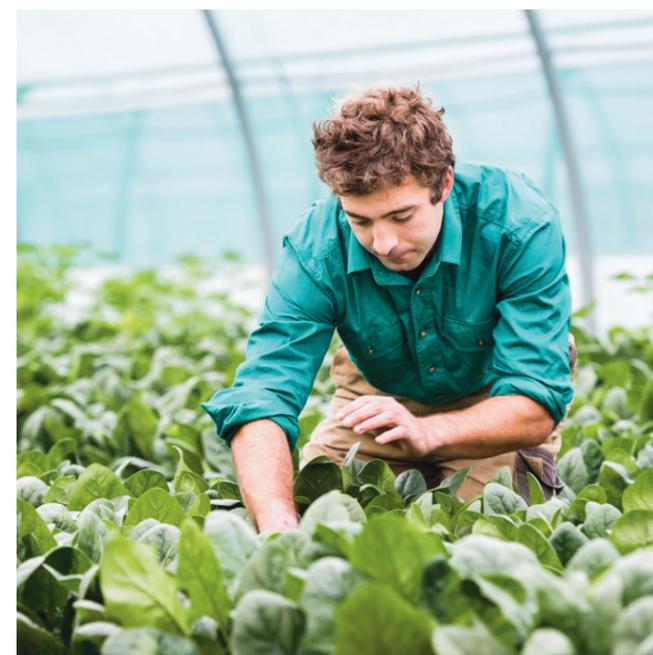
Working in a managerial role as a grower in the horticulture industry. Through working in the vegetable industry, I am starting to build up a skill set and increase my knowledge in the field by learning the cause and effect of different problems. I am also building manager and leadership skills through working at a big company which wasn't really possible at uni.

YOU HAVE A DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE. WHAT DID YOU STUDY, AND HOW BENEFICIAL WAS IT FOR YOU?

I completed a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, majoring in agronomy and horticulture. The things I learned over four years at uni were extremely beneficial. They have helped me with my job in the vegetable industry by giving me a basic rounded knowledge of agriculture, and what is involved in growing. I have learned more through working at Wavertree at an exponential rate from the past few months of practical industry and hands-on experience. This wouldn't have been possible without the knowledge I had gained from completing my degree.

HOW DO YOU THINK MORE YOUNG PEOPLE COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO STUDY AND TAKE UP JOBS IN THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY?

I think practical and hands-on experiences at a young age would get them interested, so extension programs that are run through schools would be advantageous in getting young people interested in the vegetable industry. It would be useful to make it more accessible to them and show them that there are numerous opportunities over a number of aspects of the industry.



Atelier Photography.



VEGETABLE EXTENSION UPDATES FROM AROUND THE NATION

Now in its second year, the National Vegetable Extension Network (VegNET) continues to provide growers with workshops and networking opportunities around the country. This update focuses on Lockyer Valley's new industry development officer, Pat Salter, while Sydney's Local Land Services hosted a successful protected cropping workshop.

NEW LOCKYER VALLEY IDO STRENGTHENS INDUSTRY TIES WITH NEXT GENERATION OF GROWERS

The VegNET project in south-east Queensland has a new Industry Development Officer.

Pat Salter has hit the ground running, quickly acquainting himself with many of the growers and industry partners in the region.

"His enthusiasm for the role is infectious and that rubs off on those around him," Lockyer Valley Growers Group President Michael Sippel said.

"I thank him for his efforts so far and would encourage growers to get to know Pat and utilise his role within your business."

Pat said his focus at present is helping to secure the future workforce for the region's vegetable industry by fostering closer ties between growers and industry partners, Lockyer Valley Council's economic development team, the University of Queensland's campus at Gatton and several local high schools.

"I met with the head of school at the University of Queensland, Neal Menzies, and that led to the uni's Agricultural Science students being invited to attend a Lockyer Valley Growers barbecue dinner at the campus in May," Pat said.

Fifty-five people came along to the event, which was held in the foundation building. Joining growers from Fassifern and the Kalbar region were their Stanthorpe counterparts, who travelled more than two hours to attend the function.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

At the high school level, Pat has been working on an industry engagement program.

"We held an event at a local high school's trade and agricultural unit, which was attended by industry leaders and also growers. The aim was to showcase the school's activities and syllabus for senior students. It was pleasing to see the growers conversing with the students," Pat said.

"We are now developing a 30-minute classroom presentation for agriculture students to help them engage with growers and industry specialists. From this base, we will work towards taking students to visit leading vegetable producers in the Valley, to enthuse them about the latest innovations in the horticulture industry. This program will also involve the University of Queensland offering advice about careers in the industry and tertiary study options.

"If successful, we will roll out the program to other high schools in the region."

In his industry development role, Pat has also been helping link young local growers with training providers to assist with identified issues, in particular on-farm occupational health and safety.

To find out more about VegNET activities and events in South East Queensland, please contact Pat Salter on 0456 956 340 or email ido@lockyervalleygrowers.com.au.

CROWDS FLOCK TO VEGNET PROTECTED CROPPING WORKSHOP IN SYDNEY

More than 100 growers and industry representatives turned out to the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Protected Cropping Workshop and farm walk on 31 May at Rossmore in Sydney.

Held on local grower Joe Boustani's farm, the event involved presentations from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), Protected Cropping Australia and industry experts covering topics including Fusarium-resistant rootstocks for cucumbers, mite control and new technologies.

The workshop was one in a packed schedule of field days and farm walks being rolled out across the Greater Sydney, Central Tablelands, North Coast and Riverina regions as part of the NSW VegNET initiative.

A PRIMARY FOCUS

Industry Development Officer Matthew Plunkett said protected cropping was clearly a priority R&D area for the New South Wales horticultural industry.

"The great response we received to the Rossmore workshop gave us insight and direction into the areas we should prioritise as part of our project; it is excellent that the level of engagement from growers and industry ramps up as we roll out more events," he said.

Mr Plunkett said priority focus areas for the NSW VegNET team over the next few months would include effective management options for pests and diseases, spray application efficiency, cover crops and low cost protected covers.

"We are also working towards a major vegetable innovation field

day in the Riverina region, which will showcase the use of drone and solar power technologies in irrigated vegetable production as well as demonstrations from the Robot for Intelligent Perception and Precision Application (RIPPA)," he said.

To find out more about the NSW VegNET project and details on upcoming events, visit the Greater Sydney Local Land Services website at greatersydney.lis.nsw.gov.au or contact Matthew Plunkett on 0428 978 390 or email matthew.plunkett@lis.nsw.gov.au.

R&D ■ Drive Train

INFO

For more information on the National Vegetable Extension Network and upcoming events, please contact Adam Goldwater on 02 8627 1040 or adam.goldwater@ahr.com.au.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15049



THE INSTALLATION OF SUBSURFACE DRAINAGE

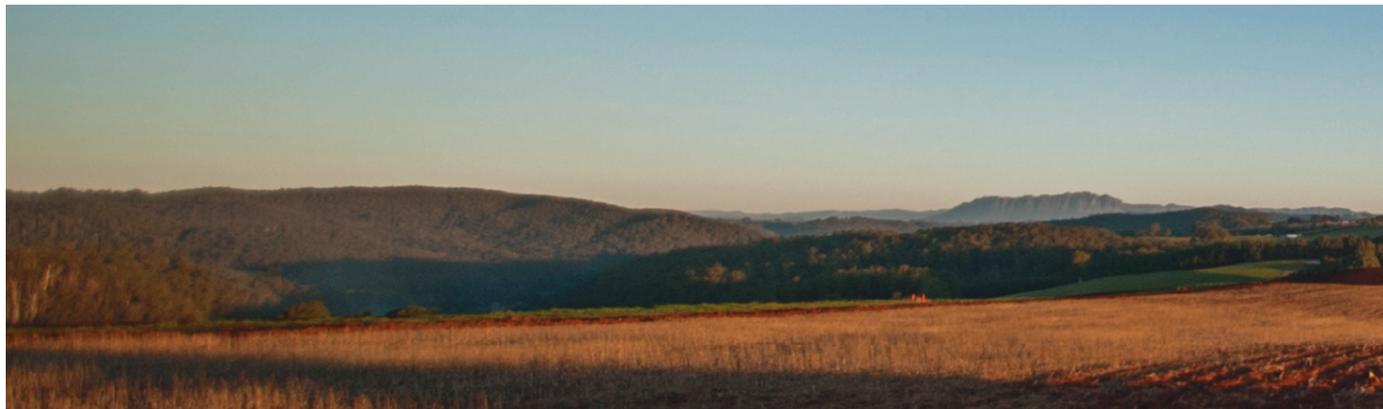
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AUSTRALIAN PLANT PEST SURVEILLANCE GETS SMARTER IN 2017

Plant pests are a major concern for Australian vegetable growers, and as a result, improving decision-making for their management is crucial for the ongoing success of the industry. In this edition of *The Front Line*, Biosecurity Officer Madeleine Quirk provides an overview of a new biosecurity project that aims to improve plant pest management and explains the subsequent benefits to Australian vegetable growers.

Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) has secured \$6.8 million to deliver a first-of-its-kind biosecurity based program across various industries of plant agriculture. The new project, *Improving Plant Pest Management Through Cross Industry Development of Smart Sensors, Diagnostics and Forecasting*, will provide benefits to producers involved in the production of grains, horticultural products, wine, cotton, sugar and forestry products.

Federal Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP announced the funding on 20 May 2017. This federal government funding is matched by funding and in-kind support from domestic and international project partners. Overall, the project will be worth \$21 million. This project is supported by funding from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as part of its Rural R&D for Profit program.

With the funds, partners will develop a mobile cross-industry plant pest surveillance network, which will provide information on various pests including established, trade sensitive and exotic pests to primary producers and government. The project will create the foundations for a nation-wide surveillance network.

WHAT WILL THE PROJECT INVOLVE?

Innovation through 'flexi hub' construction and diagnostics

The project will run for five years. During the first years of the project, mobile pest monitoring hubs (flexi hubs) will be constructed. The hubs will include an array of smart surveillance traps that capture insects and airborne fungal spores.

In the event of an exotic pest incursion such as tomato-potato psyllid, the hubs will be positioned on the edge of incursion zones to delimit the pest. The funding will also allow for technological advancements through advanced molecular diagnostics, including Next Generation Sequencing (NGS), which identifies and quantifies organisms.

Putting things into practice: flexi hub roll-out and collection of endemic and exotic pest data

After the hubs are constructed, they will be rolled out across the country to collect both endemic and exotic pest data. The flexi hubs are novel and innovative, enabling fast and cost-effective pest detection in regions of pest concern. The project will reduce the current knowledge gaps in diagnostics for endemic and exotic pests and expand the capacity of airborne pest and disease surveillance networks.

AUSPestCheck – Data collection and reports

Exotic and endemic plant pest information will be collected and stored in *AUSPestCheck*, a virtual platform designed to link existing surveillance databases and systems. *AUSPestCheck* collects, tracks and analyses plant pest surveillance data. Data will be fed into the secure cloud-based system in real-time, which will provide a current national picture of plant pest status. Furthermore, data can be entered into *AUSPestCheck* using a mobile device, which is beneficial for those working in the field.

Over the lifetime of the project, regional extension will encourage growers to use the information available and educate producers on effective use. Information gathered from *AUSPestCheck* will be compiled into reports, which will be distributed to producers. Similarly, in-built alerts will notify users of pest movement or pest increases above set thresholds. These notifications can be tailored to suit the needs of the user.

Improved decision-making for endemic pests and better incursion management

This project will improve decision-making processes for endemic pests as well as strengthen management processes during exotic pest incursions. It is intended that the project will offer growers access to high quality endemic pest information in the form of reports and alerts. Through the distribution of this information, endemic pest monitoring will inform decision-making processes. The network will benefit the vegetable industry by contributing



to pest incursion response, which will aid in faster decision-making and better management. Similarly, exotic pest data that is collated by *AUSPestCheck* will be distributed to help inform management. This aims to provide industry with a better understanding of current pest distribution, early detection strategies and information for eradication activities. The platform will also support market access because it has the potential to provide evidence for proof of freedom claims at interstate and international levels.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Project partners include the seven plant Research & Development Corporations (RDCs): Wine Australia; Forest Wood Products Australia; Cotton Research and Development Corporation; Grains Research and Development Corporation; Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation; Sugar Research Australia; and Horticulture Innovation Australia.

Industry partners include Nursery & Garden Industry Australia, Plant Health Australia, AUSVEG, the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS), the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), Agriculture Victoria, the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

There are also three international partners: Rothamsted Research (UK), Burkard Manufacturing (UK) and Better Border Biosecurity (B3) from New Zealand.

BENEFITS TO AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS

According to 2013-2015 ABARES figures, average costs per vegetable farm for chemical application can reach up to \$30,000 per year. In recent times, vegetable growers have indicated that more research into plant pest management is required.

Improving pest surveillance, diagnosis and forecasting will reduce expenditure on chemical applications and subsequent management. *AUSPestCheck* will also provide Australian vegetable growers with access to accurate and up-to-date plant pest information.

The project is expected to commence in the second half of 2017.

R&D ■ Farm Productivity, Resource Use & Management

INFO

Any unusual plant pest should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881).

For further information, contact AUSVEG National Manager – Science and Extension Dr Jessica Lye or AUSVEG Biosecurity Officer Madeleine Quirk on 03 9882 0277 or jessica.lye@ausveg.com.au or madeleine.quirk@ausveg.com.au. The Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Program is funded by the Plant Health Levy.

This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project number: VG15027

Horticulture
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NEW BIOSECURITY PROGRAM FOR CONTROL, ERADICATION AND PREPAREDNESS FOR VEGETABLE LEAFMINER

In 2015, the vegetable leafminer (*Liriomyza sativae*, VLM) was detected for the first time on the Australian mainland. As a highly polyphagous insect capable of infesting a broad range of vegetable and flower crops, VLM represents a significant threat to the viability of the vegetable and nursery industries.

MT16004 is funded by the Australian nursery and vegetable industries and is a collaboration between cesar, the University of Melbourne, the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS), Plant Health Australia and AUSVEG.

PROJECT AIMS

The project will increase industry preparedness in relation to the potential spread of VLM throughout Australian production regions. Specifically, this project sets out to:

- Review historical knowledge of VLM control;

- Develop scientifically robust information for industry regarding monitoring, eradication and management;
- Ensure that chemical control and biocontrol options for VLM eradication and management are understood and accessible when necessary; and
- Increase understanding and awareness of VLM throughout the vegetable and nursery industries.

This project will run from June 2017 until June 2020. Growers can expect notifications of workshops relating to VLM in the coming months and outcomes will be communicated to the Australian production nurseries as well as the Australian vegetable industry.

This project will be funded using the nursery and vegetable research and development levies and funds from the Australian Government.



MOVING TOWARDS MARKET RECOGNITION FOR FAIR FARMS EMPLOYERS

Australian fruit and vegetable industries generally enjoy a clean, green, fresh and healthy reputation among consumers. Media stories about young workers – often overseas visitors – being mistreated, underpaid or exploited on Australian farms are highly damaging. Growcom’s Fair Farms Initiative aims to improve the reputation of the horticulture industry in relation to workers.

The Fair Farms Initiative, launched in May at Hort Connections 2017, provides a timely opportunity to coordinate industry efforts around the issue of worker mistreatment.

Fair Farms aims to foster good employment practices within the Australian horticulture industry. It is coordinated by Growcom and funded by the Fair Work Ombudsman. Through the initiative, grower-employers have the opportunity to work through Growcom’s Hort360 Workplace Relations module. This steps growers through all relevant aspects of the Fair Work Act and the award wages system and highlights the practices and procedures necessary to ensure full compliance with Australian employment laws.

To provide an effective verification mechanism, Growcom is working with Freshcare to translate the Hort360 module into an auditable national industry standard.

“Freshcare is well established in the Australian marketplace as an effective food safety and quality assurance certification for thousands of fresh produce businesses,” Freshcare’s Clare Hamilton-Bate said.

“Now we are working to develop an additional standard that will enable growers to achieve third-party certification of their fair employment practices.”

The new employment standard, along with the audit and certification process, will be piloted with at least four production horticulture businesses later in 2017. The new certification will be available to Freshcare members late this year or early in 2018. The training requirement for the new certification can be achieved by growers working through the Hort360 workplace relations module.

HOW WILL THIS WORK IN EXPORT MARKETS?

Freshcare is currently being benchmarked against the GLOBALG.A.P. farm assurance standard which, with the addition of an export addendum, will enable growers to build on their existing Freshcare certifications to be recognised in international markets.

WHAT ABOUT LABOUR HIRE COMPANIES?

The Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA) is close to finalising an auditable industry standard for labour hire companies – which is good news for growers who use these services. While voluntary, the standard will allow labour hire companies to demonstrate a commitment to good and proper practice, providing growers with reasonable assurances that they are using a reputable firm. The certification process will, among other things, assess if the firm is run by fit and proper persons,

has systems for work safety and that workers are employed in accordance with immigration laws and are paid correctly. Ms Hamilton-Bate participates in the advisory group for the new certification, which will help to ensure consistency and alignment across the certification systems.

Queensland growers should also be aware that the Queensland government is developing a labour hire license scheme. Strict penalties will apply for any host employer who does not use a licensed labour hire provider.

A FAIRER FRESH PRODUCE SUPPLY CHAIN

Some Australian retailers have adopted the SEDEX system and associated SMETA audits for their suppliers. This framework, however, covers a broader set of issues that are not all relevant in the Australian context. The emerging certification process through Freshcare and RCSA will offer a sound alternative to SEDEX that provides a strong focus on the issues relevant in Australia around fair work practices. Together, the certifications being developed for farm employers and labour hire companies have the potential to drive real improvements across the fresh produce supply chain.

“Up until now, growers committed to employing workers fairly and paying award wages have been significantly disadvantaged by less scrupulous operators who could undercut them on price,” Growcom Chief Advocate Rachel Mackenzie said.

“We are calling on all major Australian retailers and food services companies to strongly support industry’s efforts in this area. Once these certifications are up and running, no-one should be buying cheaper product from a supplier who cannot verify their fair employment practices – and growers should only use labour providers who are certified to the RCSA standard.”

R&D ■ Drive Train

INFO

To find out more about the assistance available to growers under the Fair Farms Initiative, please contact Annabel Hutch at Growcom on 07 3620 3844 or email ahutch@growcom.com.au.

The Fair Farms Initiative is delivered by Growcom in partnership with Freshcare and other industry groups. It is supported with funds from the Fair Work Ombudsman community engagement grants program.

This communication has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15028



NEW TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS

Following months of extensive planning, VegPRO has introduced new training courses to the vegetable industry. These courses aim to empower individuals and businesses, with an emphasis on developing valued, visible vegetable products as well as enhancing negotiation skills.

VegPRO is the vegetable industry’s own education and training initiative, and it is offering several training opportunities to effectively upskill people at all levels in the industry, from seasonal staff to experienced growers.

These opportunities include a workshop aimed at developing valued, visible vegetable products, as well as a course dedicated to negotiation training and consulting.

FOOD INNOVATION

The Australian vegetable industry is invited to the upcoming event *How to stand out from the crowd: Developing valued, visible vegetable products*, to be held on Friday 4 August from 8:30am-4:30pm at the Food Innovation Centre at Monash University’s Clayton campus in Victoria.

This one-day national workshop will provide insight, tools, resources and contacts for vegetable producers, processors and marketers to de-risk the opportunity around developing new value-added vegetable products for relevant markets.

Speakers at the workshop include Dr Hazel MacTavish-West from consultancy service MacTavish-West and the Food Innovation Centre’s Dr Angeline Acharya. They will be joined by Susie White from Eat.Drink.Innovate and other industry experts. Attendees will also have the opportunity to view the Food Innovation Centre, including the Virtual Supermarket Theatre and the 3D Prototyping Packaging Design Centre.

This workshop is free to Australian vegetable levy payers, but others may attend for a fee. To register, please visit veginnovations.eventbrite.com or vegpro.com.au.

For more event details, please contact VegPRO Program Coordinator Sophie Lapsley at sophiel@rmcg.com.au or Dr MacTavish-West at hazel@mactavishwest.com.au.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Whether it is dealing with staff, transport companies, buying products or trying to seal an export deal, negotiation skills are a necessity in the vegetable industry.

VegPRO recognised this need and called for expressions of interest for an enlightened negotiation training and consulting course at Hort Connections 2017. The negotiations and influencing course was carried out a number of years ago, and due to positive feedback and requests, VegPRO has scheduled two two-day training sessions.

The first session will take place from 25-26 July in Melbourne, where participants will be able to gain personalised awareness, insights and abilities, with the training challenging and enhancing their practical negotiating and influencing capabilities.

The second session is being held in Brisbane from 13-14 September, with locations and times to be announced closer to the date.

R&D ■ Drive Train

INFO

If anyone is interested in these upcoming training opportunities, please contact VegPRO Program Coordinator Sophie Lapsley on 0426 200 996 or sophiel@rmcg.com.au or visit the VegPRO website at vegpro.com.au. Any training ideas or feedback can be submitted via the VegPRO website under the ‘Call for Ideas’ tab. You can also follow the project on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn.

VegPRO has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15028



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Mission members are given a tour of Top Flavor Farms in Yuma, Arizona by Steve Alameda.



Organic produce on display in a Salinas Valley supermarket in California.



Chris Dyker inspects fresh produce at Bolthouse Farms in Bakersfield, California.



Group members at the John Deere factory in Waterloo, Iowa.

US STATE OF MIND: GROWERS EXPLORE AMERICAN VEGETABLE INDUSTRY

The 2017 USA Industry Leadership and Development Mission was an eye-opening experience for eight Australian vegetable growers, who gained valuable knowledge and expanded their international and domestic networks during a two-week tour of America's vegetable industry.

Earlier this year, eight Australian vegetable growers attended the 2017 USA Industry Leadership and Development Mission, held from 2-14 February.

The mission provided Australian vegetable growers with the opportunity to visit the World Ag Expo in California, leading industry agribusinesses and vegetable farms in America and to speak with local vegetable growers. It successfully introduced growers to new and innovative production, technical, marketing and supply chain systems across the United States as well as strengthen and expand their industry relationships and business networks.

VALUABLE LEARNING

After landing in Los Angeles, the participants were eager to explore America and gain as much information about the local vegetable industry as they could.

The group's first stop was Toro Irrigation at Riverside, California, where they received a behind-the-scenes tour of the plant's extensive research facilities. After lunch, an irrigation workshop was conducted with growers working through the issues of their own irrigation set-ups.

Visits to growing operations in Yuma, Arizona and just over the border in Imperial Valley, California, took place the following day.

The operations visited in this region are the major source of vegetables for America from November to April, and the operations were functioning at peak capacity when the group arrived. Owner of Vessey Farms, Jack Vessey, spoke openly about the state of vegetable production in California and

Arizona. The group toured the farm, which operates on over 12,000 acres, and witnessed lettuce harvesting, which involved a lot of manual labour. Growers were able to speak directly with Mr Vessey about his production methods prior to a tour of the farm's workshop and machinery.

After lunch the group visited Top Flavor Farms, where owner Steve Alameda gave a tour of his workshop and farm. Top Flavor Farms produces more than 25 crop varieties over 3,000 acres and was described as a medium-sized farm for the region.

The group then flew to Indianapolis, Illinois to tour the facilities at Dow AgroSciences. Participants were intrigued by the R&D taking place, with many using a number of products researched at these facilities, and they were interested to learn about the processes behind the development of crop protection products.

Next, the mission visited the John Deere factory, where the Tractor Cab Assembly builds all series tractors for customers across the globe. The group also visited the historic Tractor and Engine Museum and learnt about the history of John Deere. The sheer scale and high level of attention to detail with each product was an eye-opening experience and impressed participants.

SHARING INNOVATION

Participants then visited the Long Island Horticulture Research Centre (LIHRC), farms on Long Island and met with a representative from aeroponic pioneer AeroFarms.

AeroFarms is a start-up company that recently set out to change the sustainability of lettuce production methods in America and grow its produce in a vertically integrated aeroponic facility in New Jersey. This controlled environment allows AeroFarms to avoid using chemicals or pesticides and reduces the transportation costs for produce that would otherwise be grown in California.

Three growers from the region also spoke to the group and shared a number of innovative practices employed by their counterparts. Jeff Rottkamp, Phil Schmitt and Song Lee gave presentations on their business operations and how they compared with others in different regions.

AMERICAN SALAD BOWL

The group hit the road again and returned to the west coast to travel through the Salinas Valley, dubbed 'the salad bowl of the world' as it is known for producing the majority of America's fresh produce. The group stopped at Rio Farms, where delegates were greeted by Heath Latasa and Laurie Foletta, who gave a tour of the onion processing facilities, cold storage areas, crops and machinery used in this large scale operation.

The group also visited local supermarkets Safeway and Walmart to compare produce quality, display methods and packaging ideas to those found in the Australian market. Growers noted that the quality of some produce was less than that expected of Australian supermarket suppliers.

The next day, participants made their way from Salinas to Bakersfield where they visited local open access growing operations. A small farmers' market in Monterey highlighted this avenue to market, with a number of smaller growers from the region displaying different varieties of produce, including purple and green cauliflowers.

Carrots were on the menu when the group visited Bolthouse Farms, one of two major operations based in the Bakersfield region, which together supply over 85 per cent of all carrots within the US.

The group toured one of three carrot processing plants, where the product is sorted by size and quality, then cut, polished and packaged for distribution. The processing plants cover the three major company production lines; large carrots, pre-cut carrots ('baby carrots') and juicing/concentrate.

After covering thousands of miles visiting farms, the group eventually made its way to the World Ag Expo in Tulare, California. With over 1,500 exhibitors showcasing a broad range of innovative farm equipment, technology and on-farm resources, group members were able to visit the exhibits and presentations of relevance to them, make contacts and discuss areas of importance to their businesses.

The scale of the event, vast networks on offer and the innovative machinery on display left delegates with many ideas about how they can increase automation, technology and other innovations back on their farms in Australia.

MISSION OUTCOMES

After two weeks of witnessing the grand scale of American vegetable production, the group returned home with fresh knowledge, greater insights and international contacts which will be important for the growth of their business as well as the wider Australian vegetable industry.

The valuable information gathered through this mission also has the potential to be disseminated through the broader Australian horticulture industry, with participants encouraged to share their knowledge with their peers to ensure that their experiences benefit the industry as a whole.

R&D Drive Train

INFO

The final report for this project will be made available on the InfoVeg database at ausveg.com.au/infoveg.

The 2017 USA Industry Leadership and Development Mission was funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia using the vegetable research and development levy, contributions from Australian vegetable growing businesses and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15702

Horticulture
Innovation
Australia

INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

AUSVEG reached a cumulative national audience of 2,333,991 in May, with 529 media reports mentioning AUSVEG across print and broadcast outlets.

HORT CONNECTIONS 2017

Hort Connections 2017 dominated the media landscape in late May, with AUSVEG CEO James Whiteside appearing in print media congratulating Queensland grower Anthony Staatz on receiving the Grower of the Year Award. Mr Whiteside also featured in reports of the State of the Industry panel where he stressed the need to make sure consumers can easily incorporate fruit and vegetables into their lives by making them more accessible.

AUSVEG National Manager – Communications Shaun Lindhe appeared on radio discussing the Mental Health Panel, which aimed to break the stigma of mental health issues and encourage members of regional communities to speak up when they're feeling down.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

Following the announcement of a \$21 million investment in biosecurity secured by Horticulture Innovation Australia, AUSVEG

National Manager – Science and Extension Dr Jessica Lye appeared on radio and noted that the investment will ensure the industry has the technology, surveillance and expertise to deal with future biosecurity issues. She also reinforced the importance of growers developing a thorough on-farm biosecurity plan.

AUSVEG National Manager – Public Affairs Jordan Brooke-Barnett also appeared on radio discussing the proposed reforms to Australia's skilled migration system, noting that growers are currently dealing with worker shortages.

Finally, Mr Lindhe appeared on breakfast television in May discussing fresh and frozen vegetables. Mr Lindhe noted that in many cases frozen vegetables are a viable alternative to fresh vegetables for consumers, and using frozen produce more often may help to reduce food wastage.

R&D  Drive Train

INFO

Communication of R&D projects in the Australian vegetable industry has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

Project Number: VG15027

 Horticulture Innovation Australia

AROUND THE STATES



Pat Hannan

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If the AUSVEG Grower of the Year award was a State of Origin competition, Queensland would be the clear front runner, with our growers winning four times over the last five years.

This year's winner, announced at Hort Connections 2017, was Lockyer Valley grower Anthony Staatz from Koala Farms. Anthony, along with his wife Diane, are well-known for their industry-leading innovation and high quality employment practices.

Growcom was extremely proud to co-host this year's historic Hort Connections conference held in Adelaide. This was the first time AUSVEG and PMA Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ) delivered a joint industry conference and trade show. The conference was by all reports a success with around 2,500 local and international delegates attending and more than 200 trade show stalls.

Growcom used the event to launch the Fair Farm's Initiative and conduct a workplace relations workshop. Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Senator the

Hon. Anne Ruston, who formally launched Fair Farms, held it up as an example of industry taking the initiative to solve its own problems.

As CEO of Growcom, I could not have been more proud of our Queensland horticulture industry and the Growcom team that supports it. It is for this reason I would like to see a greater acknowledgement and emphasis within Queensland of horticulture leading the way.

Horticulture (production and nursery) is collectively Queensland's second largest agricultural farm gate commodity after beef, but it often feels like we are the poor cousin when it comes to media attention and government engagement.

As a sector, horticulture is a fascinating and diverse industry with incredibly innovative growers and businesses. While we don't have the geographic footprint of other industries, we contribute more than \$2 billion annually to the economy and continue to be a major employer throughout rural and regional Queensland.

MINOR USE PERMITS

PERMIT NUMBER	CROP	PESTICIDE GROUP	ACTIVE	PEST/ PLANT DISEASE/ TARGET WEED	DATE ISSUED	EXPIRY DATE	PERMIT HOLDER	STATES
PER14430 VERSION 2	Lettuce	Fungicide	Azoxystrobin	Bottom rot (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i>)	21-Mar-14	30-Jun-22	Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited	All states except Vic
PER14431 VERSION 2	Lettuce (field grown)	Fungicide	Tolclofos-Methyl	Bottom rot (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i>)	21-Mar-14	30-Jun-22	Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited	All states except Vic
PER14474 VERSION 2	Sweet corn	Insecticide	Methoxyfenozide	Lepidopteran pests (Larvae stages), including <i>Helicoverpa</i> spp.	25-Nov-14	31-Mar-19	Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited	All states
PER84249	Potato and sweetpotato	Insecticide/ Miticide	Abamectin, Bifenthrin, Lambda-Cyhalothrin and Methomyl	Tomato-potato psyllid (<i>Bactericera cockerelli</i>)	16-Jun-17	31-Jul-20	NSW Department of Primary Industries	All states except Vic

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



Brett Guthrey

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NSW Farmers has contributed to a parliamentary inquiry into modern slavery. Slavery and slave-like practices in our industry are unacceptable to our members. With debate swirling about the need for more legislation to be introduced guarding against modern slavery, NSW Farmers has called for the federal government to better resource existing compliance regimes under current legislation. Those who are engaging in practices which resemble slavery, or slave-like practices in which the liberty and freedom of movement of workers is curtailed, must be called out and referred to authorities. They are giving the industry a reputation which it does not deserve.

In late June, the inaugural meeting for the Combined Sydney Horticulture Branch was held at the Richmond Local Land Services (LLS) demonstration farm. This new branch combines five peri-urban horticulture branches into one, focusing on the shared concerns of peri-urban farmers in the Sydney basin.

In July, NSW Farmers Horticulture sections' annual general meeting (AGM) will host panel sessions on trade and market access, industrial relations and the new Horticulture Code of Conduct. Our trade and market access panel

features speakers from the federal and state agriculture departments, as well as industry groups such as AUSVEG and Steritech.

Our principal partners for the forum, Holding Redlich, will conduct the industrial relations session and this will give growers advice on how to ensure compliance with the Fair Work Act. Preventing prosecution for minor offences is an important concern for our members and this session will give growers the most up-to-date advice on maintaining compliance. Finally, Mick Keogh from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) will brief growers about the new Horticulture Code of Conduct and the obligations facing growers and traders alike.

Finally, the new Biosecurity Act commenced on 1 July 2017. NSW Farmers has been concerned about the strategy to communicate what the new Act means – the concept of 'general biosecurity duty' and the 'tenure neutral' approach to weeds, in particular. We hope that over coming weeks and months, the NSW Government will ramp-up communication into urban and peri-urban areas to ensure our horticulture and wider agricultural industries are not put at risk.



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At a special Council meeting, held on the evening of Tuesday 14 June 2017, the Playford Council unanimously voted against pursuing a controversial proposal that would have seen rate hikes of up to 200 per cent for primary producers. Elected members agreed not to pursue the proposal and maintain the current rate system for the coming year, with the Council to consult more broadly with the local community to develop a longer-term strategy to address inequities in the commercial rate sector.

Achieving this result required significant work and time from community leaders from across the region, as well as growers who contributed submissions. For this campaign, AUSVEG SA joined with Hortex Alliance and Potatoes South Australia to work together and voice industry opposition towards the proposal. This work included coordinating a significant joint media campaign, letters to members of parliament and assisting industry to coordinate submissions. As such, we are happy that the Playford Council has backed down from this proposal for the near future and has agreed to pursue consultation about a longer-term strategy for rates in the region.

AUSVEG SA would also like to thank the following people and organisations outside of our industry who contributed to the highly effective campaign in opposition to the proposal:

- Councillors Peter Rentoulis and Dino Musolino for their consistent opposition to the proposal and their leadership in pushing for additional options, including maintaining the status quo, to be included in the public consultation process.
- Adrian Marschall and the Virginia and Angle Vale Residents Association for coordinating petitions and community meetings in opposition to the proposal.
- The countless growers and residents who joined together to prepare over 1,000 public submissions in opposition to the proposal as well as the 500 and 400 people respectively who made time to attend the last two Playford Council meetings.

AUSVEG SA would like to thank the growers and the community of Virginia for getting behind this campaign, which is proof of what a community can achieve when people work together.



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It continues to be a very tough place in parts of the vegetable industry given the ongoing impacts of the tomato-potato psyllid. However, prices on other lines have stayed strong and there are some great opportunities for our industry into the future.

We are very pleased to welcome Ms Sam Grubisa to the team as our new Field Extension Officer. Sam has worked in the family vegetable growing business at Wanneroo for the last decade, so many will already know her or her family. Before taking on the role, Sam had been on the vegetablesWA Committee of Management for a couple of years and had participated in other activities such as the vegetablesWA Young Growers' Tour and the Industry Summit.

vegetablesWA is collaborating with the Queensland Department of Agriculture to deliver a precision agriculture demonstration project, funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia, with sites at Capel and Woodridge. I think that these sorts of precision and digital technologies will become increasingly important for growers into the future. Bryn Edwards at vegetablesWA is still progressing a vegetable industry benchmarking

concept, which should provide growers with another vital tool in the kit.

On a policy note, the new Western Australian government is settling in. It has been pleasing to see our new Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan take a strong position in assisting our industry in responding to the tomato-potato psyllid. Things will become more challenging into the future as government confronts the scale of the budgetary challenge. I fear that there will be significant increases in the price of electricity in the coming months for business, for example.

At a federal level, I encourage everyone to make themselves aware of the new Horticulture Code of Conduct provisions that seek to improve the trading relationships between growers and wholesalers.

WA growers who don't receive our free weekly e-news should also get in touch so we can update your contact details. The crisis response has shown that it's the best way to stay updated when the situation can change much more quickly than in a less frequent, hard copy magazine. vegetablesWA can be contacted on 08 9481 0834.



Wayne Johnston
 Tasmanian Farmers and
 Graziers Association
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There was a great turn out to the annual Water for Profit state-wide event last month.

The Water for Profit Program is focused on delivering activities that help farmers to get the most out of their irrigation systems.

The annual event aimed to provide practical and relevant information to producers and growers.

"The Water for Profit Program is focused on finding solutions to help farmers increase their productivity and optimise their irrigated farming systems," Program Leader Sue Hinton said.

"As part of the program, we have formed grower groups across the state and this ongoing engagement with the growers helped to inform the program for the event.

"This participatory approach is an essential part of the program, and ensures we are helping farmers get the right skills and information to maximise their investment in irrigation."

Participants at the event heard about the latest research from national experts on autonomous irrigation systems, how precision technology can help save farmers' valuable time and money, and best practice tips for using drones in irrigation.

The program featured concurrent sessions focusing on water and soil management, a drone demonstration, tech tools for farm management and a centre pivot workshop.

Water for Profit is a collaborative program between the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE), the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA).

For more information on the program, visit utas.edu.au/tia/water-for-profit.



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AUSVEG VIC Executive Officer Kurt Hermann has resigned from the organisation following a successful tenure that saw him lead the transition of the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria rebranding to AUSVEG VIC in November 2015.

On behalf of AUSVEG VIC President David Wallace, I would like to thank Kurt for his time at AUSVEG VIC and wish him all the best for his future endeavours. In the meantime, queries relating to AUSVEG VIC can be addressed to me as Acting State Manager until a full-time replacement is appointed.

In other news, AUSVEG VIC, in partnership with Australia's leading environmental and engineering consulting company KMH Environmental, has secured a grant from Sustainability Victoria to build the capabilities of the state's vegetable growers in environmentally sustainable practices.

The grant will fund the Victorian Vegetable Growers Energy Efficiency Program, and

will ensure that AUSVEG VIC and KMH Environmental will be able to build the knowledge and skills capacity of Victorian vegetable growers to deliver energy efficiency improvements to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) in the Victorian vegetable industry.

There is an opportunity for eligible growers to participate in the program to minimise energy use and become more sustainable with on-farm practices. If you are interested in participating, please contact me.

It was pleasing to see so many members of the Victorian vegetable and potato industries attend Hort Connections 2017 in Adelaide from 15-17 May. The conference and trade show, run by AUSVEG and the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ), was a landmark event for our industry that highlighted the importance of collaboration, and it was great to see so many Victorian growers and industry members attend.



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