

WE GIVE A FORK



THROUGH ACTIVE
STORYTELLING, WE
WANT TO RAISE
AWARENESS AND
DRIVE ACTION TO
BRING MUCH-NEEDED
CHANGE FOR OUR
INDUSTRY, FAST.

Fruit &
Vegetable
NEWS



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& VEGETABLE GROWERS

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welcome

Chief Executive Officer
Rachel Chambers

A year of brave advocacy and quality partnerships

As the old saying goes, when one door closes another door opens. And as we say goodbye to 2023 and the Year of Horticulture, we say hello to a year of strong, loud, and brave advocacy. Not only is 2024 the year we give a fork; it is also the year of partners who care, in fact the two go hand in hand.

At QFVG we are committed to being a force for positive change – advocating on behalf of the Queensland horticulture industry so that you are heard by government and industry on the issues that matter to you.

Announced at the end of last year, QFVG’s We Give A Fork campaign will draw on the real stories of growers and provide achievable actions to push for awareness and change around key issues our industry is currently facing such as:

1. Margin squeeze: We want growers to be paid fairly for their work and what they produce, but not at the expense of the consumer.
2. Policy pile-on: We want good policy making regardless of who is in government.
3. Reputation and brand of sector: We want our growers to be proud of what they do and Australians to value and respect the sector.

You can read more about this campaign on page four of this edition of the magazine.

This year we are also refreshing our partnership approach with the introduction of our Partners Who Care program.

We understand the burdens on our growers’ shoulders have never felt heavier. It was important to us to hand select strategic partners who not only share our desire to see horticulture thrive but those who are truly able to support our growers through this challenging period.

Westfarmers Insurance (WFI) and Ausmarket Consultants are the first of a limited number of Partners Who Care, and we look forward to announcing further partners as the year progresses.

It is through these partnerships that we are able to bring members more advocacy support and further value. The first piece of great news is thanks to WFI, QFVG Growers Members will soon be able to receive a rebate on their QFVG membership when they hold an insurance policy with WFI. Keep an eye on your inbox as we will be releasing further details soon.

It’s going to be another big year and we at QFVG are ready to support the industry we love, and need, in every way possible. In the words of Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Let's do this,

Rachel

inside

20.

SEEDING SUCCESS IN 2024

The new year is a great time to pause, reflect and plan for the year ahead. As we look ahead, it’s the perfect moment to harness the power of strategic planning to cultivate success.

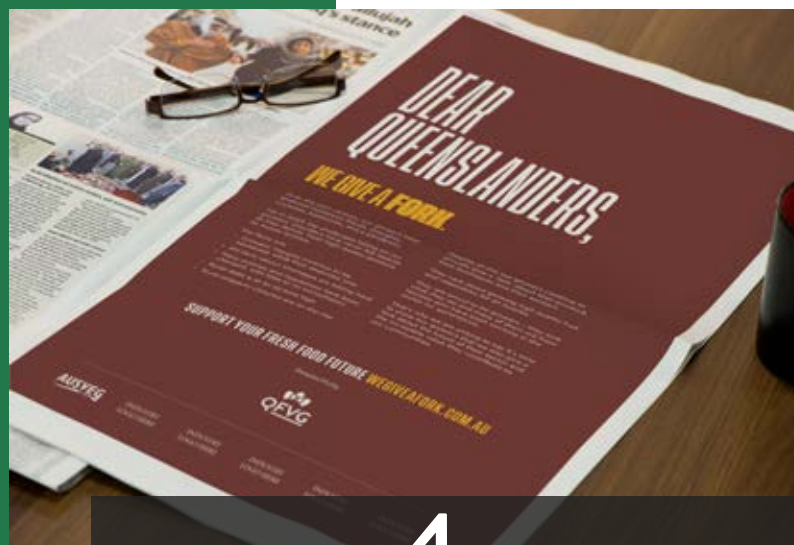
32.

SEED FUNDING PREPARES PROPERTY FOR NEXT GENERATION

South East Queensland pineapple grower Mark Harris is sprucing up his property with the assistance of Growcom’s SEQ Water Quality project ahead of handing over the reins to his nephew, Bert.

PRESS AD

Artwork: Rebecca



4.

ANNOUNCING QFVG’S 2024 CAMPAIGN: WE GIVE A FORK

In late November, Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers launched our new campaign ‘We Give A Fork’, which will run throughout 2024.

ANNOUNCING QFVG'S 2024 CAMPAIGN:

WE GIVE A



**IN LATE NOVEMBER,
QUEENSLAND FRUIT &
VEGETABLE GROWERS
LAUNCHED OUR NEW
CAMPAIGN WHICH WILL
RUN THROUGHOUT 2024.**

The We Give A Fork campaign will draw on the real stories of growers and provide achievable actions to push for awareness and change around key issues our industry is currently facing.

The campaign is a two-way conversation for the public to demonstrate they truly care about the future of fresh fruit, vegetable and nuts being grown locally and

growers to show how they truly care about the produce they grow, the people they employ, the businesses they operate and the communities they live and work in.

The We Give A Fork campaign will draw on traditional media, direct advertising, advocacy and social media to ensure the intrinsic value our industry provides is heard loud and clear.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

WE GIVE A FORK.

Three key issues

Through active storytelling, we want to raise awareness and drive action to bring much-needed change for our industry, fast.

1

MARGIN SQUEEZE

In what other sector would a 30-65 percent increase in production costs and a 3-5 percent margin seem like a viable business decision?

We want growers to be paid fairly for their work and what they produce, but not at the expense of the consumer.

2

POLICY PILE-ON

The policy pile-on in the past 18 months has dramatically changed how growers do business. There's been a raft of changes to IR and HR policies so rapid in succession that growers are struggling to keep up.

We want good policy making regardless of who is in government.

3

REPUTATION AND BRAND OF SECTOR

For too long we have sat back and watched our growers be dragged through the mud. Our growers care. It's time to spread the truth.

We want our growers to be proud of what they do and Australians to value and respect the sector.

WWW.WEGIVEAFORK.COM.AU

Real growers, real stories

We want to hear from you, our growers, to share your stories to get decision-makers and the wider public to understand the key issues facing our industry.

We can tell your story in a number of ways – via video, written stories and or social media tiles. We understand that fear of retribution is real, so we have come up with ways to keep you anonymous, but still ensure your message is heard far and wide.

Share



your story!

FARMING IS A PASSION THAT IF YOU DIDN'T LOVE DOING IT, YOU WOULDN'T DO IT.

ALL OF OUR INPUT COSTS HAVE GONE UP. A LOT OF STUFF IS 30 TO 40 PERCENT HIGHER. LABOUR IS RUNNING AT ABOUT 50 - 60 PERCENT OF OUR INCOME.



Trevor Cross

Judy Shepherd



GROWERS JUST WANT TO BE PAID FAIRLY FOR THEIR WORK AND WHAT THEY PRODUCE, BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CONSUMER.

WE WANT TO CONTINUE GROWING AUSTRALIAN FOOD, WE GROW THE BEST FOOD IN THE WORLD, THE SAFEST FOOD IN THE WORLD. THIS WILL ONLY HAPPEN IF IT'S A FAIR AND BALANCED MARKET TO OPERATE WITHIN.

THESE ARE RESOURCEFUL PEOPLE, THE MEN AND WOMEN OF HORTICULTURE. THEY TAKE ENORMOUS RISKS ALL THE TIME AND THEY ARE USED TO THAT. BUT THEY CANNOT OVERCOME THIS SITUATION WHERE THEY ARE OPERATING IN AN UNFAIR AND UNBALANCED MARKET. AND IT'S INCREDIBLY FRUSTRATING. AND ONE BY ONE THEY'RE GONNA GIVE UP.

Shane Fitzgerald



**Show you
give a fork
and spread
the message**

**Horticulture,
Australia
supports
you!**

1

PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT

Pledge your support to the campaign online

www.wegiveafork.com.au/pledge

2

SEND A LETTER OF SUPPORT

To your local councillor or Member of Parliament to help drive action

Download our template of support

3

TAG US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Use the power of social media!

#WeGiveAFork

**AUSSIE GROWERS ARE SOME OF THE BEST
IN THE WORLD! #WEGIVEAFORK - Kat**

**WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE FRESH AUSTRALIAN GROWN
FRUIT, VEG AND NUTS. WE NEED TO KEEP PUSHING FOR
CHANGES. - Ruby**

**THE BEDROCK OF
OUR COUNTRY
SHOULD NEVER BE
TAKEN FOR
GRANTED! - Gregory**

**WE ARE BACKING YOU GUYS. WE WANT TO SEE
YOU GET THE MARGINS YOU DESERVE. - Ben**

**WE GIVE A
FORK**



QFVG

GATHERS FOR AGM

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Members of Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) was held in Brisbane in late November.

In his address, Chair Joe Moro said the 2022/23 financial year was a busy yet exciting 12 months for the organisation.

“A key strategic moment for the organisation this year was the return to ‘Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers,’” Joe said.

“Growcom, our trading name of 20 years has been retained and positioned as our programs and project delivery arm.

“Feedback from our members was clear, you needed us to be a strong, loud, and brave advocacy body. You also indicated that we needed to improve our engagement with members as there was confusion around why we deliver the programs and projects that we do.

“The response we’ve received around this change has been overwhelmingly positive cementing ourselves as the leading state industry body for Queensland horticulture.”

Mr Moro also affirmed the Boards continued commitment to the operational efficiency of the business and QFVG’s ongoing financial effectiveness.

“QFVG’s interim results to date and our financial forecasts for this coming year are bright, and I am very optimistic of a profitable financial performance for the year ahead and into the future,” he said.

As part of the AGM, it was announced that long-term Director Judy Shepherd would be stepping down from the Board.

“On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend my thanks to Judy for her dedication and commitment to the company and wider-industry,” Mr Moro said.

With the retirement of Judy Shepherd from the Board, nominations were sought from financial grower members prior to the AGM resulting in one valid nomination received. Subsequently, Bevan Young from Noosa Lime Co on the Sunshine Coast was voted in as Director as part of the proceedings.

QFVG Board (L-R): Bevan Young, Stephen Pace, Joe Moro (Chair), Ben Martin & Andrew Moon (Deputy Chair).



MEET THE QFVG BOARD



JOE MORO (Chair)

Joe is a dedicated and experienced farmer and proprietor of the family farming business, A Moro & Sons. He has grown a wide variety of crops at his North Queensland property including pumpkins, zucchini, cucumbers, capsicums, tomatoes, papaws, watermelons, citrus, tobacco, and mangoes.

As Chairman of the FNQ Growers Association Joe has years of experience in horticulture and business, as well as wider community involvement across Queensland.



ANDREW MOON (Deputy Chair)

Andrew Moon from Moonrocks, farms alongside his brother David in the South-West Queensland town of St George. In the early 90s the brothers started growing rockmelons. Today they specialise in onions, garlic, and pumpkins.

Andrew's key role in the business is post-farm production, marketing, and logistics. Their key customer base is broad, specialising in fresh and process product for both domestic and international markets.



STACEY WATSON (Independent)

Growing up on a cane farm at Wallaville, Stacey understands the challenges of farming and is passionate about the continuing success of the horticulture industry.

Stacey has over 33 years' experience in the superannuation industry. Her current role is Energy Partnership Manager for Industry Super Fund, Brighter Super. Stacey is a Fellow of the Association of Super Funds of Australia (ASFA) and holds a Diploma of Financial Services (Financial Planning).



BEN MARTIN

Ben operates Marto's Mangoes in Bowen growing R2E2 mangoes for both the domestic and international markets. Ben purchased his first farm in 2007. Since then, Ben and his wife have expanded their operation a number of times and are continuing to grow their business.

Ben is the Chairman of The Australian Mango Industry Association which is the PIB for mangoes in Australia, Vice President of Bowen Gumlu Growers Association and sits on a number of other advisory committees and boards within the horticultural industry.



STEPHEN PACE

Stephen is a third-generation farmer based at Rollingstone, North Queensland. Stephen works alongside his brother, two uncles and two cousins in the family business – Pace Farming Pty Ltd – producing pineapples, sugarcane, watermelons, pumpkins, and beef cattle.

Stephen oversees the businesses pineapple, watermelon and pumpkin crops which are supplied domestically to fresh markets throughout Australia. His role within the business is managing day-to-day operations, harvest, distribution and marketing.



BEVAN YOUNG

Bevan is from Noosa Lime Co, a lime grower in the Pomona district on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. His role covers all growing, harvesting and marketing of the limes.

Bevan has a passion for marketing and helping growers increase their profit margins. He firmly believes that networking across industries is paramount to the survival of rural businesses and is keen to be involved across all sectors of agriculture.

Celebrating 100 Years

In late November Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) celebrated our 100th anniversary supporting the horticultural industry. An organisation which started out in 1923 as the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing (COD), borne out of a need to ensure grower returns in an unstable market.

We took a trip down memory lane at a low-key networking function attended by QFVG members, corporate partners, government, and supply chain members.

It was a challenge to wrap up 100 years in a short amount of time, so we enlisted the help of AI to summarise the century into a poem. We hope you enjoy the result...



In 1923, a vision took flight,
Queensland Fruit & Vegetable
Growers, shining bright. A
century unfolds, a tale to be
told, of horticulture's journey,
brave and bold.

**Soldiers returning from
war**, seeking a place, Land
settlement beckons, a new
embrace. Pineapples in
Beerburrum, deciduous in
Stanthorpe, Agriculture blooms,
a promising scope.

The roaring twenties, a
time of delight, Fruit prices
soared, everything felt right.
But a slump arrived, a harsh
twist of fate, Overproduction's
challenge, a bitter debate.

Underconsumption, a term so
wise, A call to action, a change
in guise. Marketing flaws,
distribution askew, Cooperative
dreams, a breakthrough anew.

1923, COD takes the stage,
A cooperative force, ready
to engage. Transport under
control, marketing in hand,
Pineapples, bananas, a strategic
stand.

Supreme court battles, a
rocky start, COD prevails, a
determined heart. 1924, a
Rockhampton floor, Expansion
begins, a dynamic lore.

Refrigerated transport, an
innovation spree, American
insights, a fruit industry decree.
The Fruit Growers' Gazette, a
voice so clear, Sharing policies, a
bond sincere.

1939, war's shadow cast, A time
of change, a resilience blast.
Post-war recovery, a fruitful
twist, COD's role expands,
vegetables enlist.

A cannery partnership,
a visionary pact, Marketing
tactics, pineapples attract.
Through decades of trials, a
research phase, COD adapts,
thriving in many ways.

Brisbane Markets open, a
vibrant space, Automation rises,
a banana-processing grace.
Troubles in the 80s, a storm
to weather, COD transforms,
endeavours together.

1990, financial concerns arise,
A challenging period, a market's
cries. Rebranding in '91, a new
identity, QFVG emerges, a shift
with tenacity.

Levies end in 2003, a pivotal
year, Commercial focus, a name
to revere. Board changes,
a dynamic cast, Growcom
evolves, a future vast.

2014 brings Hort Innovation's
glow, A national presence,
a seed to sow. In 2023, a
restructure, a name reclaimed,
QFVG stands tall, Growcom
remains.

The Year of Horticulture,
a joyous decree, Celebrating
growers, educating with glee.
A century's journey, echoes
so grand, In the heart of
horticulture, we firmly stand.





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engagement

Head of Engagement & Advocacy
Angela Seng-Williams

WE'RE Listening



FOODBANK & FARESHARE

When visiting the growing regions this past year another trend was observed.

Future donations and supply to Foodbank to manage food surpluses or produce rejected from supermarkets is in question.

Many growers are proud of their contribution to Foodbank however are saying that their contribution is becoming unaffordable, and it is just cheaper to plough in the crop. Together with the perceived retail market manipulation to ensure a steady supply of discounted fresh produce into Foodbank, supply is at risk into the future. Not sure how Foodbank would view this dynamic if the full extent was revealed.

Late last year the QFVG team visited FareShare who, for 50 years, have been taking donations of produce and turning them into nutritious meals for those struggling to put food on the table. At present this system is under immense pressure from both ends. They value your produce, a lot, and can't do their work without it. They wanted us to say a big thank you on their behalf. We recognised some grower cartons whilst we were there.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By now you will have no doubt seen QFVG's new advocacy campaign 'We Give A Fork'.

What you may not know is the reason for being and where it's landed is because of you! Growers have shaped and grounded the campaign along with being our crucial market research arm. Thank you, we hope we got it right. Engagement is a two-way process of listening and responding, and this is what we heard:

- You care about your family, your community, your farm, and your fresh produce.
- The cost of doing business is high and you cannot pass these increased costs on.
- Margins could be shared so the supply chain may remain viable.
- The burden of compliance and regulation is too great.
- You have limited power to make a difference.
- You have a right to farm.
- You need us (QFVG) to act fast and speak up before any more growers go out of business.

We want to continue hearing your stories and shining a spotlight on them throughout 2024 so please join the campaign in any way you feel comfortable and keep an eye out for our regional advocacy discussions planned for this year.

EXTENSION AND ENGAGEMENT

Extension and engagement practitioners know they are often the ‘frontline social workers of the paddock’, the bridge between research, government and industry policy; politics and the grower who is trying to farm, support the family and make a living.

With the practice of rural extension and engagement taking much of the bad rap and a brunt of unwarranted criticism over the past five years for ‘not meeting government policy driven targets’, it was pleasing to see early career and senior extension practitioners being supported in their professional development at the APEN Conference in Tasmania late last year.

New and innovative participatory approaches to communicate more effectively with farmers, grower groups and other stakeholders were showcased through hands-on masterclasses, field excursions, workshops and presentations.

“With 93 percent of our domestic food supply being grown on farms, there’s never been a more exciting or challenging time to work with growers in agriculture. It’s important we get it right,” said QFVG’s Michelle Haase who works with horticulture growers in the Burnett-Mary and Fitzroy region.

Our staff will use the skills, knowledge and new friends from the conference to support our work with horticultural growers to support their business goals and priorities, inform advocacy efforts, develop farm business resilience plans, benchmark management practices for water quality improvements in the Great Barrier Reef, and support growers in their management practices in South East Queensland.



AGTECH – MY TWO BOBS WORTH

From a self-proclaimed Gen X digital migrant, there was a lot of talk about about AgTech this past year.

Growers have been very direct when they talk about technology on-farm, what they need to achieve from it and how much they are willing to spend on a solution. So, what did growers tell me they are wanting to achieve from their technology in Ag?

1. It must be practical and not be tech for tech’s sake.
2. It must have decent mobile service and on-farm connectivity to enable their preferred solution to actually work.

Before investing in anything new, there is a need to squeeze full extraction, utilisation, protection and understanding of the data they already collect. This already comes from existing machinery and farm apps to contribute to quality assurance, efficiency and profitability. You want to maximise return on investment in more ways than one.

In a nutshell, unless it saves grower’s money or makes money to maximise return on investment then it is a hard sell. At what point does overcapitalization start to hurt?

It was also interesting to observe and meet the growing number of digital ‘translators’ being engaged in the sector to provide a valuable bridge to grow digital literacy, usability and of course sales.

Do such tech innovations save money, increase efficiency or promise something else? With AgTech the beauty is definitely in the eye of the beholder.





Rachel Chambers QFVG CEO, Jo Sheppard QFF CEO, and Wendy Agar from Engaged Outcomes.

GROW YOU GOOD THING

Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) celebrated, educated, and advocated all things horticulture as part of National Ag Day.

Held on the third Friday of November each year, National Ag Day encourages the public to get involved and celebrate Australian farmers with a range of events being hosted throughout the nation.

QFVG CEO Rachel Chambers joined a

panel of speakers at the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) National Agriculture Day breakfast to discuss all thing AgTech.

Technological innovations have played a key role in shaping agriculture throughout history. From the creation of the fundamental plow, the development of disease resistant plant varieties through to global positioning system (GPS) driven precision farming equipment, and water efficient technologies, agricultural industries

are continually finding new ways to make farming more efficient.

QFVG then joined other agricultural industry associations in Brisbane's CBD for an agricultural showcase - showing off the abundant food and fibre grown in Queensland.

Finally, the Fair Farms program was joined by Certified Fair Farmers to climb Brisbane's Story Bridge in fruit shirts, taking horticulture and our growers to new height.

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QUEENSLAND FRUIT
& VEGETABLE GROWERS

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Employer Assistance Program (EAP Assist)

For members

Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers has activated mental health support for Grower Members providing confidential phone counselling throughout Queensland.

Do you experience...

Stress, anxiety,
and/or depression?

Workplace conflict?

Family, relationship,
or succession
challenges?

Alcohol and
substance abuse,
gambling, or domestic
violence?

Counselling is a conversation, a time to talk freely to help resolve both workplace and personal issues before they impact on overall mental health, wellbeing, safety, and productivity at work.

To Book

Scan the QR Code



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BRISBANE MONTHLY SUMMARY

November

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Fruits

Brisbane Monthly Special 6 - 10 Crop Summary

Page No 1

Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	
BANANAS,Cavendish	788.01	10KgCtn	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	information expressed in this message/document are not given or endorsed by the firm or employer unless otherwise indicated by an authorised representative independent of this message. We use virus scanning software but exclude all liability for viruses or similar in any attachment.							
Cavendish		15KgCtn	18.00	48.00	50.00	31.97								
Lady Finger		8KgCtn	24.00	50.00	50.00	36.50								
Cavendish		Carton	13.00	54.00	54.00	32.32								
Lady Finger		Carton	12.00	54.00	72.00	30.08								
Sugar		Carton	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00								
CARAMBOLAS	1.35	SLTray	30.00	36.00	36.00	33.00								
CUMQUATS,Oval	0.38	Kg	8.00	12.00	12.00	11.00								
GRAPEFRUIT,Star Ruby	182.72	13KgCtn	15.00	25.00	25.00	20.00								
Star Ruby		CP	12.00	30.00	45.00	19.25								
LIMES,Tahitian	588.66	18LCtn	10.00	80.00	85.00	41.82								
Tahitian		9LCtn	5.00	45.00	45.00	24.82								
Kafir		Kg	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00								
MANGOES,Calypto	1094.36	10LTray	27.00	35.00	35.00	30.36								
Calypto		18LCtn	24.00	40.00	40.00	31.17								
Kensington Pride		18LCtn	10.00	50.00	60.00	27.09								
Nam Dok Mai		18LCtn	40.00	60.00	70.00	50.00								
R2E2		18LCtn	10.00	45.00	45.00	24.94								
Calypto		9KgTray	40.00	65.00	65.00	54.59								
Culinary,Elephant		Kg	6.00	7.00	7.00	6.50								
Culinary,Falan		Kg	4.50	7.00	7.00	5.06								
Culinary,Kensington Pride		Kg	5.00	7.00	7.00	6.00								
Culinary,Keow Savoy		Kg	3.00	9.00	9.00	4.69								
Culinary,R2E2		Kg	6.00	7.00	7.00	6.50								
Asian Queen		SLTray	40.00	75.00	75.00	55.00								
Calypto		SLTray	20.00	36.00	36.00	28.86								
Honey Gold		SLTray	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00								
Kensington Pride		SLTray	5.00	60.00	60.00	31.54								
Maha		SLTray	45.00	90.00	90.00	65.47								
R2E2		SLTray	15.00	40.00	40.00	28.03								
NUTS,Peanuts	33.12	20KgBag	110.00	120.00	120.00	115.00								
Peanuts		3KgBag	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00								
Peanuts		500g	4.65	5.40	5.40	5.02								
Peanuts		5KgBag	25.40	25.40	25.40	25.40								
Macadamia		Kg	4.50	5.00	5.00	4.75								
OLIVES,Black	0.98	9LCtn	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00								
PAPAWS,Culinary	651.28	18LCtn	24.00	30.00	30.00	27.00								
Red Flesh		18LCtn	16.00	24.00	24.00	20.82								
Red Flesh		22LCtn	12.00	28.00	28.00	19.32								
Yellow Flesh		22LCtn	18.00	24.00	24.00	21.64								
Culinary		30LCtn	30.00	36.00	36.00	33.00								
Yellow Flesh		30LCtn	10.00	30.00	30.00	18.82								
Red Flesh		36LCtn	24.00	32.00	32.00	28.82								
Yellow Flesh		36LCtn	28.00	36.00	36.00	32.45								
WATERMELONS,Minimelons	3215.99	32LCtn	16.00	24.00	24.00	20.25								
Champagne S'less		Kg	1.00	1.20	1.20	1.10								
Long Varieties		Kg	0.60	0.90	1.00	0.75								
Minimelons		Kg	0.70	1.20	1.20	0.92								
Seedless		Kg	0.50	1.20	1.20	0.79								

STATE: A=ACT, N=NSW, Q=QLD, S=SA, T=TAS, V=VIC, W=WA, Y=NT, I=IMPORTED

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Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg
BEETROOT	269.78	10KgBag	6.00	20.00	20.00	13.72							
Golden		10KgBag	20.00	40.00	40.00	30.36							
		Bunch	1.80	3.00	3.00	2.23							
Baby		Bunch	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.70							
Target		Bunch	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.25							
CARROTS,Purple	1501.46	10KgCtn	25.00	35.00	35.00	30.00							
		15KgCtn	14.00	24.00	24.00	19.00							
Baby		250gLP	1.80	2.20	2.20	2.00							
		Bag	12.00	22.00	24.00	18.00							
Dutch		Bunch	1.00	2.40	2.60	1.57							
		Carton	12.00	24.00	25.00	18.50							
CAULIFLOWERS,Caulini	653.65	2KgCtn	20.00	24.00	24.00	22.00							
		Carton	12.00	36.00	40.00	23.67							
		Each	1.00	1.40	1.40	1.20							
CHINESE VEG.,Bukchoy	229.17	Bunch	1.00	1.60	1.80	1.43							
Choisum		Bunch	1.20	1.80	2.00	1.30							
Kailan		Bunch	1.40	2.00	2.00	1.70							
Pakchoy		Bunch	1.00	1.60	1.80	1.43							
EDIBLE FLOWERS	3.08	20g	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00							
Mixed		20g	4.00	6.00	6.00	5.50							
Zucchini		Each	6.00	8.00	8.00	7.00							
Zucchini		SLTray	18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00							
EGG PLANT,Thai Apple	139.11	6KgCtn	22.00	30.00	30.00	25.86							
Continental		7KgCtn	14.00	26.00	30.00	22.00							
Thai Apple		7KgTray	25.00	35.00	40.00	30.00							
Purple		7KgTray	10.00	26.00	26.00	17.61							
Purple		8KgCtn	10.00	18.00	22.00	14.27							
GINGER	141.15	Kg	2.50	8.00	8.00	4.47							
LEEKS	80.29	10KgCtn	14.00	36.00	40.00	26.00							
		5KgCtn	20.00	24.00	24.00	22.00							
		8KgCtn	20.00	54.00	54.00	37.50							
		Bunch	1.60	2.00	2.50	1.90							
SILVERBEET	55.75	Bunch	1.40	3.00	3.00	2.30							
SWEET POTATOES,Gold	1220.02	15KgCtn	8.00	26.00	30.00	16.66							
Hawaiian		15KgCtn	30.00	60.00	65.00	45.91							
Red		15KgCtn	28.00	45.00	55.00	42.50							
Gold		32LCtn	8.00	30.00	30.00	19.90							
Hawaiian		32LCtn	36.00	65.00	70.00	48.43							
Red		32LCtn	22.00	45.00	50.00	39.59							
Gold		Kg	0.40	1.00	1.00	0.63							

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Ausmarket Consultants is an independently owned and operated business located in the Brisbane Produce Markets, Queensland. Ausmarket has been servicing the Horticulture Industry since 1996.

Ausmarket has been supplying price data to all sectors of the Horticulture Industry for 20+ Years. Clients include State and Federal Government, Grower Organisations, Financial Institutions, Business Consultants, Educational Facilities, Industry Organisations, Restaurants/Hotels, Independent and Major Retailers, Primary and Secondary Wholesalers, Transport Companies, and Individual Growers.

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- Price Data from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Markets

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SEEDING SUCCESS IN 2024



workplace relations

Focus HR Founding Director
Naomi Wilson

Start your year off with this simple planning exercise

The new year is a great time to pause, reflect and plan for the year ahead. 2023 has been a year of rolling with (or perhaps more accurately, flailing under) the punches – PALM scheme changes, numerous legislation changes, zombie agreements, and of course, the seasons. We have seen our share of challenges and triumphs.

Amongst all this, it is easy to feel like we are at the whim of external forces, so is there a point to planning anything?

Let's bust that myth first. A strategic plan does not get derailed by external forces. In fact, it takes external forces into account and provides the foresight, confidence and strategic thinking that enables a business to respond swiftly and effectively when those external forces come to bear.

Now, as we look ahead to 2024, it's the perfect moment to harness the power of strategic planning to cultivate success.

The importance of strategic planning

In the horticulture and agriculture sectors, strategic planning is not just a luxury; it's a necessity. Strategic planning helps owners and managers make better, more informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and ultimately achieve their goals and objectives.

Effective strategic planning delivers the following outcomes:

- 1. Clarifies Goals:** Strategic planning allows small businesses to clearly define their vision, mission, and goals. It provides a roadmap for decision making and helps ensure that everyone is working towards a common purpose.
- 2. Increases Efficiency:** By identifying key objectives and determining the steps necessary to achieve them, small businesses can allocate resources more effectively and operate more efficiently.

3. Improves Performance: Regular strategic planning enables small businesses to continuously evaluate their performance and make adjustments as necessary. This leads to improved financial and operational results.

4. Identifies Risks: Strategic planning helps small businesses identify potential risks and develop contingency plans. This can help minimise the impact of unforeseen events on their operations and bottom line.

5. Increases Flexibility: With a solid plan in place, small businesses can be more flexible and adapt to changes in the market or industry more easily.

Setting your vision for 2024 – The 'Destination Postcard' Exercise

One engaging way to start your strategic planning is the "Destination Postcard" exercise. This simple but effective exercise has been adopted from Dan and Chip Heath's book, *Switch: How to Change things when Change is hard*. Here's how it works:

- 1. Visualise the future:** Imagine your business at the end of 2024 and describe what success looks like. What achievements stand out? What does your thriving farm or enterprise look like? Get specific and capture the detail you are picturing.
- 2. Write a postcard:** Write a postcard-length description from the future, describing these successes. For instance, "Dear Jan '24 Me, I'm writing from December '24. What a year! We successfully introduced two new vegetable varieties and expanded our market reach..."
- 3. Identify key steps:** Reflect on the steps that led to these achievements. These are the building blocks of your strategic plan. Did you invest in new technology? Did you explore new markets? Highlight the 3-5 most important steps to achieve your desired year.



- 4. Reflection:** Consider what needs to change or improve to turn this vision into reality. Do you need more resources, training, or perhaps a shift in farming practices?
- 5. Share, discuss, commit:** Have other key leaders in your organisation complete the exercise. Share your postcard narratives and compare notes on the key elements and steps required to achieve success.
- 6. Document:** In order to bring these steps to life, you'll need to present the plan to the team and keep both the goals and the steps front of mind. We recommend a version of the One Page Strategic Plan by Verne Harnish from his book: *Mastering the Rockefeller Habits*. At Focus HR, we have been using an adopted version of Verne's plan and your free copy can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/415E76v>

Implementing your strategy

Turning your strategic plan into action involves setting clear milestones and committing to a regular review and reset process. Engage your team in this vision by presenting

the plan at your next town-hall meeting; get buy-in and engagement by assigning project leaders to the agreed action steps; keep it front of mind by making it visual – printed copies in the offices on A3 sheets at a minimum; and conduct review and reset sessions each quarter to keep the team on track. Remember, flexibility is key – be prepared to adapt your strategy as circumstances change. See <https://bit.ly/3N31lo4> for more information and inspiration of Focus HR's strategy journey.

Conclusion

The start of a new year is not just a calendar change; it's a beacon of new possibilities. Let's use this time to lay down a strategic plan that propels us towards a prosperous and fulfilling year. As the saying goes, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now." Let this be the year you plant the seeds of success for your business.



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program update

Fair Farms National Program Manager
Sachin Ayachit

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

The beginning of any new year is a wonderful time to pause, reflect and learn. 2023 was an eventful, challenging, and significantly positive year for the Fair Farms program. In the span of 12 months, the ethical sourcing framework has changed worldwide and in Australia. With the entangled web slowly disappearing we are moving towards clearer understanding to define the scope of ethical sourcing.

Fair Farms started with a clear objective of 'improving workplace practices' in horticulture, to encompass Fair Work and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) and has since expanded into a holistic training and certification program that includes the concepts of social compliance, ESG, modern slavery, mental health of farmers and workers, diversity and inclusion, and labour hire certification.

The 2023/2024 Australian-grown Horticulture Sustainability Framework now covers Fair Farms as an integral part with 'People and Enterprise' one of the four pillars. The strong links between people, enterprise, communities, and economic value is also highlighted in the framework. What does this mean for the Fair Farms program and Fair Farmers? As the Sustainability Frameworks focusses on the 'people' aspect, Fair Farms has a bigger role to play in Australian horticulture. When it comes to the 'people and enterprise' aspect of a farms sustainability, Fair Farms is a bespoke solution for the industry and the industry needs to obtain the benefits of the program that is designed for them. When you think of your sustainability framework, think Fair Farms!

The last 12 months have been instrumental in shaping the program framework. An improved robust

governance and decision-making system was one of the highlights of last year. With a new Technical Committee and External Stakeholder Reference Group, the program has completed the annual program review (including the review of Standards, Rules, and Audit Guide) under the new decision-making system that involved public comments. Version 3 of the Fair Farms Standard, Rules, and Audit Guide is a result of the comprehensive program review process that started 12 months ago. I am sure the horticulture industry will welcome the two new additions to the Standard:

1. Non-audit pathway for Fair Farms.
2. Inclusion of labour hire businesses for certification.

The program review process does not stop there. As part of our continuous improvement process, we welcome your feedback to improve the program on an ongoing basis.



We achieved another milestone in the Fair Farms program by launching the Fair Farms Manual. The tailor-made workplace quality policies and procedures pack for horticulture was received positively. To-date, almost 60 businesses have benefited from the Fair Farms Manual. It is a comprehensive resource that will improve your workplace quality systems and processes. We encourage more growers to obtain a copy from your Fair Farms Member Portal.

2023 was also an important year to improve our systems and portals, to make it easy for growers, retailers, and auditors to access relevant information. The new audit checklist is being trialled as we speak. Portals include more relevant information for growers and easy access to the Fair Farms Manual through the member portal.

Our periodic newsletters for Fair Farms participants and auditors include a lot

of information and updates, and we are working on our website too. A new position of Program Support Officer was created to provide additional systems and process support for each of our participants. Our monthly Wednesday webinars have been extremely popular. We covered 11 diverse topics from piece rates to industrial manslaughter. The recording of these webinars are available on the Fair Farms website.

We are thankful for the support we have received in the last 12 months. We have seen a 20 percent increase in the registered sites; two businesses on an average obtaining training per week; almost two businesses (with multiple sites) are undertaking audits every week; and more than 100 Certifications have been issued in the last 12 months. This reflects the industry's support for the program and the importance of the role Fair Farms plays in improving the workplace practices, along with

assisting businesses systemise their processes.

The outlook for 2024 is bright and positive for the Fair Farms Program. We will keep working on multiple projects to improve our systems, processes, training modules, and offerings to provide a meaningful support to our growers and supply chain.

Fair Farms is designed help you navigate and work through that complex landscape of workplace relations, workplace health & safety, and social/ethical compliance. We can guide and assist you through the Fair Farms process, so you get the most out of it.





HR / IR compliance

Fair Farms Workplace Relations Specialist
Amanda Higgins

MANAGING PERFORMANCE

From time to time, we are called upon to manage performance – or more specifically - manage poor employee performance.

Some actions, such as gross misconduct, severe breaches of WHS provisions, alcohol and drug abuse can attract instant dismissal, but it's wise to understand the circumstances under which this might be an appropriate response, and the consequences if you get the process wrong. Instant dismissal doesn't mean you don't need to investigate an allegation, especially if you were not witness to the alleged behaviour or conduct.

According to the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO):

Underperformance is when an employee isn't doing their job properly or is behaving in an unacceptable way at work. It includes:

- Not carrying out their work to the required standard or not doing their job at all.
- Not following workplace policies, rules or procedures.
- Unacceptable behaviour at work (for example, telling inappropriate jokes).
- Disruptive or negative behaviour at work (for example, constantly speaking negatively about the company).
- There is a difference between underperformance and serious misconduct although there may be some overlap. The important thing is to know which approach you are going to take.

Serious misconduct is when an employee:

- Causes serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of another person or to the reputation or profits of their employer's business.
- Deliberately behaves in a way that's inconsistent with continuing their employment.

Serious misconduct includes theft, fraud, assault, sexual harassment, intoxication at work and the refusal to carry out lawful and reasonable instructions consistent with the employment contract.

A clear Performance Management process can deliver:

1. **Clarity for Workers:** Employees can underestimate their contributions, lose motivation, or work without a sense of intention. Crucially, performance management is a collaborative process that ensures supervisors and workers are on the same page when it comes to tasks and goals.
2. **Enhanced efficiency:** Ensure your business's workforce and resources are properly aligned with your strategic plan and goals. This can also help to identify processes which may be creating inefficiencies.
3. **Engaged employees:** Goal setting can give employees a sense of purpose, which keeps them motivated, leads to better job satisfaction, and can reduce employee turnover.

4. **Improved decision-making:**

A performance management framework can provide clear data about what an employee has and hasn't achieved. This enables managers to make objective, evidence-based decisions on how to improve their team and outcomes.

Plan for training

Training can be tailored to meet the needs of all employees, but especially underperformers. But ensure you plan sufficiently to get the important information across and check or test for competency/understanding.

Declare performance expectations from the beginning of employment

Use your induction processes to establish performance expectation with your employees. Your position descriptions can set these out generally, and on-the-job training should provide sufficient detail to ensure the employee understands their role and responsibilities. This should include establishing performance indicators.

Clear expectations, not allowing bad performance or practices to continue once identified, and regular monitoring will all help to smooth the way for any formal approach. Establishing a Policy and Procedures to provide a framework for you to manage underperformance should it require something more formal, is also highly recommended. A mutual understanding of your expectations and approaches is vital.



Policy and procedures

Management of poor performance calls for tact and a calm head, and you should be direct and upfront. Here are some simple practical steps to follow:

1. The best way to manage underperformance is **head-on**. Don't dance around the issue or delay, since the employee may not recognise there is an issue, let alone a serious issue.
2. Be **specific** about where their performance is lacking. Provide examples of when they have not met your expectations and what you require in the future.
3. **Document** all conversations about an employee's performance discussions. This may begin with the employee receiving a record of your concerns, highlighting what they need to do and a deadline (often called a verbal warning, but notes may prove invaluable down the track).
4. **Follow up** after an initial conversation. Check on the employee's performance over the next several days and weeks and provide feedback and coaching to help them meet their goals.
5. Employers can consider **formal** performance management processes if the underperformance continues. These might include written warnings and/or a performance improvement plan (a document outlining the issues, what is required and by when, as well as how they will be measured).

Conducting investigations into serious misconduct

A formal allegation of serious misconduct may require a formal investigation to establish the facts. The following sets out the key steps.

1. Consider **suspension** of the employee (on full pay) if the alleged conduct amounts to serious misconduct, or there might be a reasonable threat to persons, property, or the business. This will allow you time to conduct your investigation.
2. Write to the employee setting out the allegations clearly, the possible ramifications if the misconduct is proven, and the date and time for the disciplinary meeting. Remember, the employee has a right to bring a support person to any disciplinary meeting.
3. The employee should be provided with a reasonable opportunity to prepare for the meeting, with at least 24-48 hours' notice of the meeting.
4. The disciplinary meeting is the employee's opportunity to present extenuating circumstances for the conduct (if any).
5. The employer should close the meeting to take time to consider or further investigate the employee's responses **before** deciding, on the balance of probabilities*, if the allegations are substantiated and consider an appropriate outcome in the circumstances.

6. Outcomes include a written warning, a letter of concern, reprimand, no action, final written warning, verbal warning, or termination.

**In terms of the language, balance of probabilities means that a court is satisfied that an event occurred if the court considers that the evidence indicates that the event more likely occurred, than not.*

Disciplinary consequences

There are a variety of possible outcomes from a formal performance management process:

1. The employee has met the agreed performance outcomes and continues with monitoring as necessary.
2. Verbal or Written Warning.
3. A Performance Improvement Plan – a written agreed plan which outlines the steps required to improve the performance, including timeframes and review actions.
4. Termination of Employment (either with notice, or without notice if serious misconduct is the reason for termination).

Celebrate wins and goals met

As much as the Performance Management Policy and Procedures can be used to recognise poor performance, don't forget to celebrate wins and goals with the employee. Positive reinforcement and recognition is one of the most vital elements of managing performance in the employee experience.



Gabriella Field

COUNTRY KITCHENS DIVISION CONVENOR, GYMPIE-SOUTH BURNETT DIVISION

Gabriella became a Country Kitchens Facilitator in April 2022. In 2023 she took on the role of the Gympie-South Burnett Division Country Kitchens Convenor.

"I come from an Italian background, and I thoroughly enjoy cooking, eating and talking; what a great fit!"

Gabriella says the main reason for becoming a Country Kitchens Facilitator is based in her concern that unhealthy meals and drinks, are causing a negative impact on the mental and physical health of adults and children alike.

"The QCWA's Country Kitchens Program is not solely focused on a 'diet', but the promotion of healthier lifestyle choices which is important to me as a mother, grandmother, and community member."

Every Country Kitchens activity promotes one or more of the program's five key messages: get more fruit and vegetables into your meals, cook at home, check your portion size, be aware of sugar in your drinks and sit less, move more.

Progressing through the programs Training PATHway learning gave Gabriella more confidence, saying "As I progressed through the training, I found my public speaking skills and confidence improving dramatically. I am currently presenting Hands-on Nutrition Workshops and Back to Basics 5 key Messages Series workshops."

Forming partnerships at a grass roots level is an important element to the success of the Country Kitchens program. This is where Branch Facilitators and Division Convenors can affect real change.

"With the support of our Branch President and fellow facilitator Wendy Richie, I have formed partnerships with the Tin Can Bay P-10 State School, the Tin Can Bay RSL Sub-Branch and the Rainbow Beach Learning Community, the Cooloola Waters Retirement Village and the South Burnett Council (on behalf of QCWA's Wooroolin Branch)."

"As facilitators, we are the boots on the ground, and by encouraging our members to become involved in the program, we pass on the importance of a well-balanced lifestyle."

Keen to work with the QCWA Country Kitchens program? We're always looking to increase our volunteer workforce. To learn more, please get in touch with the team on **0417 539 663**, or: qcwacountrykitchens.com.au



Pumpkin Tomato & Prawn Risotto

Recipe courtesy the Country Kitchens Team.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups kent/butternut pumpkin, cubed
- 2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 garlic clove, finely diced or crushed
- 1 cup arborio rice
- 2 cups vegetable stock, salt reduced
- 2 cups baby roma tomato/cocktail tomatoes OR 400gm can of tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 16-20 green prawns, shelled/deveined.
- ¼ cup chopped fresh – parsley or dill.
- Pepper to taste

METHOD

HEAT a heavy based pan with 2 tbs of oil - medium heat.

Add onion & cook until tender.

ADD garlic & reduce heat.

STIR in arborio rice & cook for 1-2 mins.

HEAT the stock in a separate saucepan.

SLOWLY add heated vegetable stock, ½ a cup at a time, stirring frequently & allowing the liquid to be absorbed before adding more stock.

ADD pumpkin, tomatoes & tomato paste - stir well. Continue adding stock (until all used), stir frequently until rice is tender & pumpkin soft.

WASH & pat dry the prawns using paper towel.

ADD prawns - stir gently until opaque.

SEASON well with pepper to taste.

SPOON risotto onto serving plates and add chopped parsley or dill.



20 min



50 min



4



Empowering women through education and health is a priority for the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA). The QCWA Country Kitchens program, funded by the Queensland Government through Health and Wellbeing Queensland, supports Queenslanders to adopt healthier lifestyles.

STREAMLINING COMPLIANCE

Record-keeping is a vital part of agribusiness, underpinning not only internal quality assurance (QA), but also the routine compliance audits growers undertake so their produce can go to market.

An experienced grower of sugarcane, Agribusinesses that pursue certification through multiple schemes - like Freshcare, HARPS, and Fair Farms - on top of the cost of the audit itself, also incur the cost of labour and time associated with in-field record-keeping, data entry, and documentation preparation for each certification.

The question is: how can this process be streamlined and lessen the burden and cost to growers?

Jennifer McKee of Spades, in collaboration with Taylor Family Produce, are tackling this challenge with their Future Fields project, Coordinated Compliance.

The team received \$13,000 through QFVG's 'Grow Your Field' seed funding grant opportunity to develop a digital solution that consolidates data entry and enables agribusinesses to

efficiently engage with multiple auditing schemes.

Rosy Chapman, Quality Officer at Taylor Family Produce described the many factors at play in developing a more efficient approach to compliance.

"We have people who speak many languages, are of ages ranging from 15 to 70+, and who are trying to enter data out in the field where there is limited connectivity," she said.

"Our goal is to provide a system that anyone in our team can use so we can document our crop from nursery to field, harvesting, washing, chilling, and transport—in real time."

Connie Taylor, Business Manager at Taylor Family Produce emphasised how important gathering this data is, especially to her husband and lifelong farmer, Ray.

"Ray is passionate about everything farming: planting, growing, earthmoving, soil, nutrition, biologicals, always hungry for more knowledge," she said.

Refining their approach to record-keeping is a one-percenter Ray believes will make a big difference.

Founder of the Spades App, Jennifer McKee, specialises in AgTech that helps growers with compliance audits.

"There are no half-baked solutions. We're looking to develop a complete, and well-supported approach," Jennifer said.



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RELEVANT TO OUR INDUSTRY, PRACTICAL INFORMATION THAT WE WILL USE WITHIN OUR BUSINESS. GREAT INFO. JESS M

GREAT INFORMATION AND EASY TO LISTEN TO INSTRUCTOR WHO WAS ABLE TO IMPART HIS KNOWLEDGE TO ME EASILY.

VERY GOOD COURSE. I LEARNT A LOT. RODNEY W

Coordinated Compliance is the second of five 'Grow Your Field' seed funding projects we are following over the next 12 months.

Grow Your Field seed funding grants are administered by QFVG through support from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Ray & Connie Taylor, Taylor Family Produce.



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ROB BARTLEY Countryco Ag Services Pty Ltd
 admin@countryco.com.au

NOTHING WILL GROW WITHOUT WATER

WATER FOR FUTURE DROUGHTS SECURED WITH QRIDA GRANT



Lilydale hay producer Steve Neuendorf used a QRIDA Drought Preparedness Grant to help fund new water infrastructure.

After producing hay and chaff for almost 40 years, Steve Neuendorf knows the importance of securing water for his enterprise now and for the future.

So when his accountant said that QRIDA were administering drought support grants and loans to help prepare producers for future droughts, he applied straight away.

"I used the Drought Preparedness Grant for purchasing a boom irrigator and also putting down another bore so if there were any droughts, I'd have plenty of water," he said.

Not only has investing in water infrastructure mitigated the impacts of future droughts for Steve, but it's also helped him improve his hay and chaff business.

"The boom irrigator is very efficient because it is low pressure, so you don't need as high electricity to make it run and it is also water efficient because it's spread out and it doesn't go up high and get blown away by the wind," he said.

After purchasing the block across the road 12 months ago,

the boom irrigator was the next investment in Steve's plan to help with securing water and QRIDA's Drought Preparedness Grant helped him achieve this sooner.

Steve encourages other producers to act now and use the funding available through QRIDA to set their property up for the future.

"With the new bore and boom irrigator, it has made my business more efficient and productive," he said.

"Apply for the grants, it's a necessity. The dry times will come and go but they will always be back."

Horticultural operations could use a Drought Preparedness Grant of up to \$50,000 to help fund a range of eligible on-farm activities including:

- Bores
- Pumps
- Ring tanks
- Dam liners
- Irrigators
- Tail drainage

For more information about the Drought Preparedness Grants visit qrda.qld.gov.au or contact QRIDA on 1800 623 946. Eligibility criteria applies.

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Prepare for drought with grants of up to \$50k

Drought Preparedness Grants assist primary producers with on-farm capital improvements to improve their property's drought preparedness*.

- Install on farm water infrastructure including pipes, water tanks, new dam construction and water pumps
- Implement storage and equipment
- Purchase storage and mixing equipment
- Pay for contractor costs, freight and consumables including fuel related to drought preparedness project

- ✓ Co-contribution grants up to \$50,000
- ✓ Carry out drought preparedness activities identified in your Farm Business Resilience Plan

Talk to us on 1800 623 946 or scan to find out more about the assistance best suited to your drought preparedness, recovery or mitigation needs*.



*Eligibility criteria applies. The information contained herein is for general information purposes only. You should not rely upon this information as a basis for making any business, legal or any other decisions.

qrda.qld.gov.au 1800 623 946 contact_us@qrda.qld.gov.au



Authorised by the Queensland Government, Turbot St, Brisbane

Farm Business Resilience Program

SUCCESSION KEY ELEMENT OF FARM BUSINESS PLAN

When thinking about the benefits of planning for your agribusiness's future, it's natural to think in financial terms. But in speaking with Mick and John Cranny from Valley Syndicate in Bungundarra, good planning also buys you time.



Mick Cranny, having started Valley Syndicate with 'a brother and a mate' in 1977, was already having discussions about succession as early as the 1980s and '90s.

It wasn't until mate and business partner Tom decided it was time to slow down in the late 2000s however, that Mick asked his kids if any were interested in continuing the business.

"As a parent, I wanted the kids to figure out what they wanted. It was their decision about whether they wanted to farm," he said.

Mick's son John came on board, buying out Tom's share in partnership with his cousin, Ben.

Since then, John has assumed a bigger role in the business that now sees him finalising finances to acquire Ben's stake.

To assist him with securing the required finances, John engaged the help of Growcom's Farm Business Resilience Program.

Delivered by Growcom, the project delivery arm of the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG), the Farm Business Resilience Program supports business planning. Through its holistic systems approach, the program works to improve the economic, environmental, and social resilience of agribusinesses.



As part of this facilitated process, Growcom has supported John Cranny to assess risks to his farm business and apply for a QRIDA Sustainability Loan.

Securing the farm's future isn't just about numbers, at its heart of course, is family.

To ease the emotional load of the process, the Crannys consulted with a number of parties including their accountant, solicitor, and trusted advisor Derek Lightfoot.

The family found that the most difficult part of the succession process was deciding on how to arrive at a fair value for the property.

John Cranny gave very practical advice when asked how to decide the value of your property, while protecting relationships:

1. Work out how to assess the value of your property before contemplating selling.
2. Have your valuation plan set.
3. Based on your valuation plan, recalculate your property's value annually.

MOO BAA MUNCHING IN TOOWOOMBA

Over 800 primary school students in the Toowoomba area got hands-on with fruit and vegetables as part of the Moo Baa Munch event held at Downslands College.

Hosted by the AgForce School to Industry Partnership Program (SIPP), the event is designed to showcase the importance agriculture and fresh produce production to our everyday lives.

Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN)

Officer for Southern Queensland, Liz Ford gave attendees the opportunity to craft these creative, colourful portraits made from fruit and vegetables.

What a great way to learn about fresh produce!



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BENARABY GROWERS STRIKE HONEY GOLD FOR A SECOND TIME



Taking home Piñata's coveted Honey Gold Grower of the Year award for a second time wasn't about luck for Benaraby mango growers Ian, Gloria, and Scott Pershouse. It was a case of old-fashioned hard work and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The Pershouses have been part of the Honey Gold story since the beginning, harvesting their first crop in 2000. With a network of more than 30 growers across five states, the Honey Gold growing business is a highly competitive field. They received their first Honey Gold Grower of the Year award in 2020.

Whilst the business of growing great mangos hasn't changed a lot, the environmental landscape has, and being a primary producer within a Great Barrier Reef Catchment is not without its challenges.

The Pershouse family knew that their proximity to the Reef meant sustainable farming practices were critical to the viability of their business. They have made changes to their production system throughout the last 10 years to mitigate any losses of nutrient, pesticide, run-off, or sediment while improving their production yield and maintaining high quality produce.

In the early 2010s, the Pershouses made some major adjustments to their pesticide and nutrient management practices with assistance from former Land and Water Field Officer Robert Doyle. These changes to infrastructure and practice were supported by incentive funding assistance from the Reef Rescue and Reef Trust programs.

"It was important to have someone talk us through what these changes meant for our farm and assist us in writing the funding applications which were successful and meant we could actually put some changes into practice," Ian said.

They were able to reduce the amount of chemical and fertiliser used on their property.

"We try to do our bit for the Reef through mulching, for example, to keep

the weeds down and reduce spray use," Ian said.

"Adoption of fertigation has brought about efficiencies to how we're delivering nutrient to the orchard, and it means we're less reliant on granular fertiliser which can get washed away."

As a result of these changes, the Pershouses were eligible to be accredited with Hort360 Reef Certification, a voluntary, third-party audit process which demonstrates stewardship towards Reef water quality.

Delivered by Growcom, the project delivery arm of the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers, participation in the Hort360 Great Barrier Reef project to become Reef Certified is 100 percent free for commercial horticulture growers within a Reef catchment. Growers are not obligated to proceed to Certification and can participate simply through meeting with a facilitator, benchmarking their practices, and attending events coordinated by Growcom. However, there is a well-supported pathway available for those wanting to pursue Certification.

Growcom's Hort360 GBR Facilitator for the Boyne catchment area where the Pershouses are based, Michelle Haase, said the Pershouse family manage their orchard to a very high standard and are proactive in adopting practices that ensure minimal losses of nutrient, pesticide, run-off, and sediment.

"Receiving this prestigious award is validation that adoption of practices known to contribute to Reef water quality improvements do not come at the cost of producing perfect, award-winning produce," Ms Haase said.



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Hort360 GBR is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program.



SEED FUNDING PREPARES PROPERTY FOR NEXT GENERATION

Growing pineapples has taken Mark Harris all over South East Queensland, but on his current property on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, he's sprucing things up ahead of handing over the reins to his nephew, Bert.

Originally, Mark's father was farming in the Moggill and Pullenvale area before residential development forced him north to Kallangur.

Again, progress came knocking, taking the Harris family to their current 88-hectare property at Wamuran, where they've been for the last 30 years.

Mark and his brother Colin grow pineapples, while another brother, Robert, grows dragon fruit.

Mark has enjoyed the 'challenge' of growing pineapples, acknowledging that you can never get it 100 percent right.

"You ask any farmer, it's always challenging. Someone gets it right one year, but not the next. The weather dictates how they grow," he said.

One of the last major projects Mark is undertaking before Bert takes over, is the construction of a 500-metre bioreactor wall and remediation of a deep gully that leads into Six Mile Creek.

These works have been made possible through the South East Queensland Water Quality Project.

Delivered by Growcom, the project delivery arm of the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG), in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES), a seed-funding trial is currently being rolled out to South East Queensland pineapple growers.

Mark had previously dug silt traps and redistributed what was collected, but unlike the bioreactors, it didn't solve the issue of excess nitrogen entering the creek that runs through his property.

Growcom's SEQ Water Quality Project Manager Tim Wolens has supported Mark through the seed funding trial, connecting him with Sean Kerr from Boss Earthmoving Group who has undertaken the bioreactor construction and gully remediation works.

Growcom and DES will continue to partner with growers to deliver seed-funding and on-ground support to drive a sustainable future for horticulture and waterways across the South East Queensland region.





“This funding helps ensure the long-term viability of the farm from an environmental perspective.”



BEFORE



AFTER



Tim Wolens
SEQ Water Quality Program Manager
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Lene Knudsen
SEQ Water Quality Facilitator
0429 000 179
lknudsen@qfvg.com.au

The SEQ Water Quality Project is proudly funded by the Department of Environment and Science.



FLOOD MANAGEMENT GRANTS

now available

The Primary Producer Flood Management Grant Scheme offers rebates to eligible primary producers of up to \$7,500 towards the costs of professional advice to improve resilience to flooding and high rainfall.

The rebate aims to help eligible Primary Producers offset all or part of the cost of eligible professional advice to improve the resilience of their primary production enterprise to flooding and high rainfall and develop a flood management plan.

With guidance from an Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer (IRRO), applicants will engage suitably qualified professionals to provide advice which will contribute to a flood management plan.

The flood management plan must be endorsed by an IRRO, ensuring that the advice received will improve resilience to flooding and high rainfall when implemented by the primary production enterprise.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for assistance your property must be located in one of the defined disaster areas:

Natural Disasters:

- Central Southern and Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event (10 November – 3 December 2021)
- Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seth (29 December 2021 – 10 January 2022)
- Southeast Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event (22 February – 5 April 2022)
- Southern Queensland Flooding event (6 May – 20 May 2022)

Activated Local Government Areas

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Balonne Shire | • Moreton Bay Regional |
| • Banana Shire | • Noosa Shire |
| • Brisbane City | • North Burnett Region |
| • Bundaberg Region | • South Burnett Region |
| • Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire | • Redland Bay City |
| • Fraser Coast Regional | • Scenic Rim Regional |
| • Gold Coast | • Somerset Region |
| • Goondiwindi Region | • Southern Downs Region |
| • Gympie Region | • Sunshine Coast Region |
| • Ipswich City | • Toowoomba Region |
| • Lockyer Valley Regional | • Western Downs Region |
| • Logan City | |

What is the deadline for applications?

Applications close 31 March 2024 or when available funds have been allocated.

Who should I contact?

Lene Knudsen

Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer

0429 000 179

lknudsen@qfvg.com.au

For more information:

Eligibility criteria:

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DATA FOR SUCCESS

If you're not engaging an advisory professional, you're not finding the one-percenters that can drive your business forward. Enter Level Up Hort – a free whole-business advisory service, which culminates in a highly sophisticated benchmarking analysis for Australian vegetable and onion growers thanks to Hort Innovation funding.

Want to position your business for optimum success? Business analysis advisory services and resulting benchmarking are two of the best tools in your toolkit. This measurement, then analysis, of a business' production and financial figures creates a three-dimensional view of an operation so a manager/owner can make the best decisions possible for their business.

Think of an Olympic coach. The best athletes in the world have coaches to oversee their training, technique, food, and recovery. These external eyes are necessary for the Olympian to find areas that can be tweaked for success. So too Level Up Hort for horticulture businesses. Finely tuned, well-run operations to those that are operating hand-to-mouth will benefit from this specialist service. It's the small things, collectively, that make the difference in business performance.

"Anyone can collect data. It's what we do with the data that makes this program so valuable to growers," explains Level Up Hort project lead Steff Carstairs of Planfarm.

"It's the parallels that are drawn between what happens in the field (production) and what happens on the profit summary and balance sheet (cashflow and profit). It comes down to interpretation of data and the analysis of that data from the big picture to the fine detail. Anyone can do a gross margin or a cost of production analysis, whereas Level Up Hort will bring it all together to make data meaningful, so owners and managers can make informed strategic decisions."

Business analysis and benchmarking are not new. They have been the catalyst for great change and success across most high-performing industries throughout the world for

more than 50 years. In Australian agriculture, broadacre, meat and livestock and viticulture have all benefitted from this level of analysis and measurement.

Australian vegetable and onion companies have traditionally not been part of the business advisory and benchmarking culture. However, Hort Innovation funding has engaged experienced farm advisory and benchmarking firm Planfarm to bring this service to Australia's vegetable and onion industries. Planfarm has partnered with agriculture advisory firm RMCG to bring this project to life. This comes on the heels of a six-year pilot project (the Building Horticulture Business Capacity Program/BHBC Program) in Western Australia, which proved the service's worth for a national project roll-out.

Intake for the first year of the zero-cost five-year project is available now. Limited spaces are available for vegetable and onion FFS growers in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. Participants receive around \$10,000 worth of advisory service per year, equating to \$50,000 worth of service over the five-year period.

"While a business accountant provides a two-dimensional view of a business, the program's business advisory service is dedicated to getting behind that two-dimensional image and morphing it into a three-dimensional view. We match up production, cash flow, profit, and wealth to find the health of a business. We find where its strengths and weaknesses are, and where managers can pull some levers to get a bit more out of their business," says Steff.

So how does the Level Up Hort project work? An advisor meets with a farm owner/manager face-to-face; that advisor works with the owner/manager and/or chief financial officer/business accountant to gather all figures required; and once all the data is in, advisors carry out the analysis and measure business performance. The advisor and owner/manager meet again face-to-face to go over these figures and what they mean. This data collection creates benchmarks for each individual business, and this data will inform a national vegetable and onion benchmark report.

"The accountant and the advisor complement each other," says Steff. "The accountant brings the business figures together, the advisor measures and analyses those figures, then the manager can make fully informed decisions."

The information provided to Planfarm and RMCG is kept completely confidential. Resulting documents are coded only, so only the dedicated advisor and support staff for your business know the source of the data. The resulting analysis is a health check as much as a data-based platform from which a manager can see opportunities or issues and make sound business decisions.

"We look at how every dollar you spend in growing the product converts to profit. We look at how you can then make the best margin for the best amount of profit, plus have more in the bucket to reinvest in your business, invest off farm or prepare for succession," says Steff.

"It ensures your business is in a strong position to weather any challenges, price and cost volatilities and seasonal weather pressures."

Q&A WA GROWER



Want to know how the program works from a grower's perspective? Scan the QR code to hear how David Ellement, of Ellement Produce in WA, found the program.



SCAN HERE

VISIT

www.leveluphort.com.au or contact project lead Steff Carstairs on 0428 712 852, steff@planfarm.com.au

IMAGE: Photography Frances Andrijich



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Articles appearing in Fruit & Vegetable News do not necessarily represent the policies or views of QFVG.

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DRIVING QLD TO FOREFRONT OF AGTECH REVOLUTION

The Queensland Government with input from the agricultural industry has finalised the AgTech Roadmap that will help keep Queensland on the path to being a high-tech agricultural powerhouse.

The roadmap – a collaborative effort between the Queensland Government and key AgTech and industry leaders – will help point the way for early adoption of technologies that could drive even higher value for Queensland produce.

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities Mark Furner said Queensland already has a global reputation for quality, clean, green sustainable and great-tasting produce, and this roadmap will help industry put us at the forefront of agricultural technologies as well.

“Our food, fibre and foliage industries are at a historic peak when it comes to the value of what they produce, but we also know there are ongoing challenges such as climate change, labour supply, high input costs and increasing expectations from consumers around the globe,” Mr Furner said.

“Agtech is a critical piece of the puzzle to ensure we have a sustainable, trusted, and productive food and agribusiness sector.

“Consumers in Australia and around the world want to know their food and clothing is coming from sustainable and traceable sources and they want to shop with confidence in how these items are produced.

“We want our growers and producers to be global leaders as early adopters of revolutionary technologies and the first to bring new products and services to market.

“Queensland’s primary producers are world leading, and adopting the right technologies to enhance what they do is going to make sure they continue to be world leaders into the future.”

READ MORE

ROADMAP ONLINE HERE

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