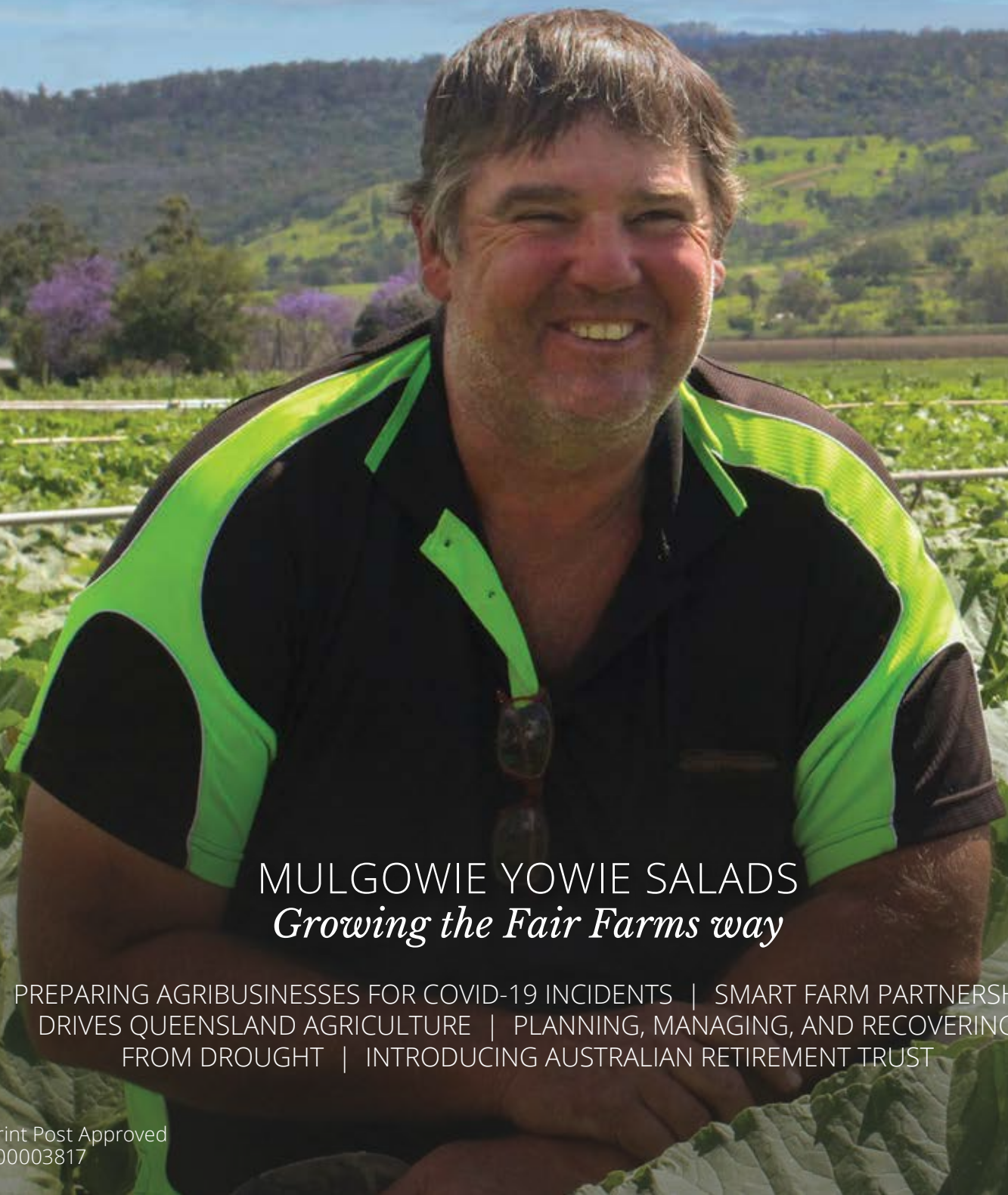


Fruit & Vegetable news



MULGOWIE YOWIE SALADS *Growing the Fair Farms way*

PREPARING AGRIBUSINESSES FOR COVID-19 INCIDENTS | SMART FARM PARTNERSHIP
DRIVES QUEENSLAND AGRICULTURE | PLANNING, MANAGING, AND RECOVERING
FROM DROUGHT | INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN RETIREMENT TRUST

#HortCon22



HORT CONNECTIONS



6-8 June 2022
Brisbane Convention Centre

EARLY BIRD GROWER REGISTRATIONS NOW ON SALE!

Welcome Reception!

We are bringing back the Welcome Reception on **Monday 6 June** to officially open the conference, grab a drink, and network with peers and your suppliers in the Trade Show.

We are giving the Trade Show a facelift – newly designed Floor Plan, brand-new booth designs, more networking lounges and resting areas, as well as a growing Trade Show speaker program on Tuesday.

Extended Trade Show hours:

Tuesday will be dedicated to the Trade Show – allowing attendees enough time to walk around and grow their connections.

EARLY BIRD
CLOSES
**21 MARCH
2022**

hortconnections.com.au/registration



contents

5. Preparing agribusinesses for COVID-19 incidents

It is expected that COVID-19 cases will appear throughout Queensland as its borders start to open up to domestic and international visitors. This presents an increased risk to agribusinesses and the supply of food and fibre, due to potential staff absences and lockdowns to manage cases. It is important that agribusinesses put in place measures now, including business continuity planning, to minimise the impacts on their operations.

18. Smart Farm partnership drives Queensland agriculture

A \$9 million partnership will transform the Gatton Research Facility into a world-leading "Smart Farm" to accelerate the adoption of AgTech in Queensland's horticulture sector.

25. Planning, managing, and recovering from drought

Drought is a fact of life in Australia and to boost the longevity and strength of Queensland horticulture, Growcom is working with government bodies, industry service providers and natural resource management groups to enhance farm business outcomes, through the Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP).

34. Introducing Australian Retirement Trust

QSuper and Sunsuper have announced that the \$230 billion fund resulting from their proposed merger will be called 'Australian Retirement Trust'. It plans to deliver a fee reduction for their more than two million members from 1 July 2022.

10 MULGOWIE YOWIE SALADS *Growing the Fair Farms way*



welcome

Growcom Chief Executive
Stephen Barnard

Shifting to the New Normal 2.0

The past two years have certainly been challenging on many levels. But despite those challenges one thing remains constant – the need for growers to feed the nation.

As we head into 2022, we find ourselves once again on the cusp of a pivotal time for not only the industry but the whole of Australia. Resilience will certainly be a key theme this year as we transition away from the elimination of COVID to living with it.

During times of uncertainty and disruption the role of peak industry bodies such as Growcom come into their own.

Already we've had a number of growers raise concerns with this next phase in our pandemic response, particularly about losing days running their packing facilities to deep cleaning which could make or break their season. Their concerns and the risk are real, but also within their power to manage.

Growcom will be working with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) to ensure the horticulture industry is best prepared to operate through this next phase. Over the coming months we will be raising awareness across the industry of the need to get ready, the resources available and of any important updates to government directives as the COVID situation evolves. In this task we'll be leveraging our industry reach through direct communications channels, social media, and through our network of extension staff around the state.

Growcom's workplace relations delivery partner Focus HR, has developed information kits which include appropriate policies and procedures around vaccinations in the workplace that are available for purchase from the Growcom Workplace Relations Shop (www.growcom.com.au/growcom-shop).

Growcom will also be providing support to our members as we adjust to new workforce landscapes. This will include a reduced reliance on backpackers and greater use of Pacific Islanders through the amalgamated Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. And at some point, further along in the year, the start of the much-anticipated AgVisa.

Another major workplace change that looms on the horizon is the introduction of a guaranteed minimum hourly rate for pieceworkers. At the time of writing, we were awaiting the final determination to be handed down. Piece rates are still a valuable tool for many and Growcom will through our workplace relations offering assist growers to adjust and continue using this system of remuneration according to the new laws. Growcom will keep members informed as more information is made available.

Towards the end of last year Growcom was on the road facilitating consultations across Queensland to help shape and guide the development of the Queensland fresh produce sector and supply chain 10-year roadmap – Future Fields. Thank you to everyone who provided input into the consultation process. Further consultations are planned for the Sunshine Coast and Lockyer Valley early this year.

In December we also released the names of those industry leaders appointed to the advisory committee. The calibre of the committee members, and the commitment to Future Fields from the highest levels of industry and government, mean the strategic plan would present a unique opportunity to successfully address long-standing challenges and future opportunities facing the sector.

Finally, late last year Growcom released our annual member survey. Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey to date. Your feedback is valued and will assist Growcom in ensuring we provide only the most relevant and valued services. If you haven't taken the opportunity to provide your feedback, the survey will remain open until the end of January. A link to the survey can be found on page 4 of this month's Fruit & Vegetable News magazine.



policy & advocacy

Growcom Manager, Policy & Advocacy
Richard Shannon



Because the future of fresh produce is in our hands



REGIONAL FORUMS SHINE LIGHT ON HORTICULTURES BRIGHT FUTURE

Over 80 growers and industry supply chain members joined Growcom in November for the first round of Future Fields consultations across regional Queensland, helping to shape the future of the fresh produce sector and supply chain over the coming decade.

Announced in late September, the Queensland Government is working collaboratively with the fresh produce sector to develop a shared vision for the future of the industry and supply chain for the next decade, and to agree on a strategy and program of work to turn that vision into reality.

Growcom is charged with bringing key stakeholders along the supply chain together and guiding the development of the new industry strategic plan, called Future Fields.

The regional consultations generated many robust and meaningful discussions around how we ensure Queensland has all the right conditions, resources, skills, and attitudes required to make us the preferred place to grow a horticultural business.

Some of the key challenges identified by industry to date are expanding export markets, the simplification of meeting multiple market requirements, and sharing a more positive story about our industry with consumers and the public.

Growers are also keen to make better use of both organic and inorganic waste, improving connectivity so new technology can be applied, and creating new products by better understanding changes in consumer preferences.

Also being identified are opportunities to collaborate for the purpose of pushing down the price of inputs and pushing up the price of produce through collective bargaining.

The margins in the industry right now, together with a renewed spirit of collectivism that responding to a global pandemic has created, means there is appetite across horticulture for working more closely together.

One of the aims of Future Fields is to create the space and conditions to allow this collaborative work, across the supply chain, to flourish.

Further regional consultations will be held in the Lockyer Valley and on Sunshine Coast in early 2022.

All consultations are aimed at first identifying, then shaping up those challenges and opportunities we as an industry will focus our energy and attention on over the next couple of years.

To find out more about Future Fields, visit:
www.futurefields.info



MEMBER SURVEY

Have you completed the Growcom 2021 Member Survey?

Our members represent some of the most advanced and productive growers from around the country. You tell us you invest in Growcom membership for peace of mind. As a member you don't need to worry about where to find the most up-to-date information, it is provided to you making compliance and best practice stress free.

A key focus for Growcom in 2022 will be to ensure that the needs of our members continue to be met. Effective grower engagement, and the delivery of valued and relevant products and services to members is our highest priority.

To help inform our decision making Growcom is asking all members to complete a quick 10-minute online survey.

The survey will remain open until 31 January 2022.



Have your say at:
bit.ly/3EV69pv

PREPARING AGRIBUSINESSES FOR COVID-19 INCIDENTS

It is expected that COVID-19 cases will appear throughout Queensland as its borders open up to domestic and international visitors. This presents an increased risk to agribusinesses and the supply of food and fibre, due to potential staff absences and lockdowns to manage cases. It is important that agribusinesses put in place measures now, including business continuity planning, to minimise the impacts on their operations.

Business continuity planning involves developing a practical plan for how your business can prepare for and continue to operate after a COVID-19 incident. A business continuity plan will help you to:

- identify and prevent, or reduce, risks where possible
- prepare for risks that you can't control
- respond and recover if a COVID-19 incident occurs.

When developing your business continuity plan, consider the following:

- **cleaning and sanitation** - adopt hygiene practices in the workplace by providing sanitation products (eg. hand sanitiser/wipes), and maintain cleaning of onsite equipment and work spaces

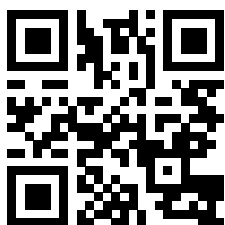
- **impact scenarios** - plan for how you will operate with a reduced workforce, upskill employees to address capability gaps, identify opportunities to source equipment and resources locally or from multiple providers should your normal arrangements be impacted
- **support staff** - plan how you will manage staff movements and interactions, provide interpreter and translation services for culturally and linguistically diverse workers, review sick leave and care arrangements for employees who test positive, or are a close contact of a case.

Webinar videos are available on the Queensland Government website to step you through each stage of developing a business continuity plan, including:

- business continuity planning and managing disruptions to the supply chain
- strategies to document your business continuity planning
- evaluating and refining your business continuity plan
- monitoring your business continuity response to COVID-19
- assisting with post COVID-19 recovery.

Key steps you can take to protect your business

- Use the COVID safe checklist
- Adopt a work health and safety plan for COVID-19
- Keep records that demonstrate adherence to your plan
- Use the Check In Qld app for contact tracing
- Get tested immediately if you have COVID-19 symptoms and isolate until you get a negative result.



The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) has developed a range of checklists, templates, and webinars that detail what measures you can adopt right now and when responding to an incident.

These resources are available online: daf.engagementhub.com.au/agcontinuity



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Queensland Farmers' Federation President
Allan Dingle

HEALTHY SOILS, HEALTHY AGRICULTURE

Soils are critical for all life on earth. They support plant growth and contribute to the maintenance of natural and planted vegetation including food, fibre, foliage, fodder, fuel and medicinal products in relation to the prevailing climate, landscape and soil type and according to societal needs. They play an important role in supporting animal biodiversity above ground, including wildlife and domesticated livestock; contribute to the quality and availability of our water supply; and pollution control through their absorption qualities. To celebrate their cruciality, World Soil Day was held in December focussing attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources, with this year's theme to halt soil salinisation and enhance soil production.

For Queensland farmers, soil is the basis of our nation's agroecosystems, not only underpinning sustainable productivity, but also improving resilience. This year, the Queensland Farmers' Federation is focussing its attention on our soil's role in agricultural production and for protecting natural environments. This includes a series of upcoming workshops looking at the beneficial use of organic composts and other organic materials to improve soil health.

Australia has ancient soils that are typically low in organic matter and nutrients. With the ongoing impacts of a changing climate, increased agricultural production and population growth, our soils are facing significant challenges and require greater attention and management. To chart a course forward, there are funding opportunities available for interested farmers and agribusinesses to improve their soil management. The state and federal governments announced funding last week for infrastructure grants under the Queensland Food Waste for Healthy Soils Program. While the federal government also announced funding under the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program, to improve management of natural capital can build drought resilience.

With the National Soils Strategy now available, achieving its aims will require novel soil management strategies that can only be accomplished through investment in, and co-ordination of, interdisciplinary research and development which is accessible to farmers. Noting that soils now provide farmers with natural capital market and agricultural stewardship opportunities. Farmers and agribusinesses are encouraged to apply for funding to improve their soils and play their part to ensure the health of our soils.



Growcom Chair Belinda Frentz addresses the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD

Growcom's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Brisbane on 25 November.

In her address to the meeting Growcom Chair Belinda Frentz said that while the 2020/21 financial year was yet another challenging one the sector should be proud of the resilience and ingenuity shown to continue delivering quality produce to Australian consumers.

"Ongoing labour supply shortages and both international and domestic border closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have made growers lives both stressful and financially difficult," Ms Frentz said.

"I am particularly proud that Growcom has been able to provide support to the sector generally and growers in particular during these times.

"Whilst there appears to be some light at the end of the tunnel, the year ahead will continue to be challenging but rest assured, Growcom and its team will be there to support our grower members."

Ms Frentz moved to thank all members for their continued support and confirmed the organisations ongoing commitment to working in their best interest in the year ahead.

Also at the meeting, Ms Frentz formally said goodbye to three of Growcom's long-serving board members – Tim Carnell, Les Williams, and Colin Jeacocke.

Tim Carnell tendered his resignation from the Board in the second half of 2021. Ms Frentz extended her thanks to Tim on behalf of the Board and staff for his dedication and commitment to the company and wished him all the best.

Les Williams and Colin Jeacocke having both served their maximum terms of eight years were required to retire at the 2021 AGM.

"Les and Colin have both worked hard for the industry helping to guide Growcom through some very challenging times," Ms Frentz said.

"I would also like to extend a special thanks to Les for his leadership during his time as Chairman of the Board."

Finally, with three positions left vacant on the Growcom Board nominations were sought from financial members prior to the AGM. As the number of nominations received did not outnumber the number of vacant positions a ballot was not required and the appointment of Andrew Moon from Moonrocks in St George to the Growcom Board was accepted.

MEET YOUR GROWCOM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Growcom Board of Directors is made up of commercial production horticultural growers who are financial grower members of the organisation. They come from diverse backgrounds and are located in major horticultural growing regions in Queensland.



BELINDA FRENTZ – CHAIR

Director since 11 November 2015
Chair since 22 November 2019

Belinda Frentz was a primary school teacher for 10 years before joining the family farming business, Coastal Hydroponics, on the Gold Coast. The business supplies herbs and packaged leafy salads to Coles. Belinda entered the business to take over the Quality Assurance program and was then promoted to the Production Manager's role.

Belinda has been the Queensland representative on the board of EnviroVeg, a program dedicated to creating a profitable vegetable industry based on environmentally sustainable production available through AUSVEG. Belinda is the current Deputy Chair of AUSVEG.

She participated in Growcom's young growers' leadership program 'Next Gen' in 2011 and has also taken part in professional development training programs for Quality Assurance. She has been keenly involved in Growcom's Women in Horticulture program and was awarded a bursary for professional development within the industry in 2012.

Belinda was awarded AUSVEG Horticultural Woman of the Year in 2013 and Grower of the Year in 2014.



JOE MORO – DEPUTY CHAIR

Director since 23 November 2016

Joe Moro is Chairman of the FNQ Growers Association (formerly the Mareeba District Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association) and a mango grower. Joe has many years of experience in business and the horticulture industry, as well as wider community involvement across North Queensland.

He has been Chairman of the FNQ Growers since 1995 and in 1997 he was appointed by the Queensland Government to the Queensland Horticultural Institute Board in the Department of Primary Industries. He was a Mareeba Shire Councillor from 2000 until 2008 and is a Director of the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF).

Joe is the Chairman of the Queensland Horticulture Council, a member of the QFF Policy Council and the Water and Energy committee.

Joe also helped in the formation of the Australian Mango Industry Association and went on to serve as Chairman. He is a dedicated and experienced farmer and proprietor of the family farming business, A Moro & Son. He has grown a wide variety of crops over the years including pumpkins, zucchini, cucumbers, capsicums, tomatoes, papaws, watermelons, citrus and tobacco, but now solely grows mangoes.

In 2020, Joe was named Mareeba Shire Council's Citizen of the Year.



JUDY SHEPHERD

Director since 24 November 2016

Judy Shepherd is a citrus orchardist in Gayndah. She operates three mandarin orchards with her husband and son for the Australian domestic markets and export markets throughout the world.

Judy's focus is on the strategic operational direction of the enterprise with an emphasis on emerging Asian markets and establishing strong relationships with export customers. Through her role as Secretary of the Gayndah Fruitgrowers Association, she has worked locally in the industry for many years to ensure growers have access to best practice models and support in WHS, HR and IR processes and compliance.

Judy holds a Bachelor of IT, Computer Software Engineering, and a Diploma of Agribusiness. She was an enthusiastic participant in the Growcom Women in Horticulture Program and received a bursary in 2012 to pursue further professional development.

Judy is a member of the Queensland Horticulture Council and the Finance and Audit sub-committee. She is also the Manager of a successful Regional Disability Employment site and works in this role as an advocate for people with a disability in their employment and training goals throughout the North Burnett region.



SHARRON WINDOLF

Director since 11 November 2015

Sharron Windolf is based in the Lockyer Valley and plays an integral role in the management of Windolf Farms along with her husband Paul, and other family members. Windolf Farms produces vegetables and fruit for local, interstate and export markets.

Sharron had a background in banking and retail before becoming involved in the horticulture industry. Sharron holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Southern Queensland, is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has contributed to various community groups over the years.

Sharron is a Director of AustSafe Super. She is a member of the Sunsuper Rural and Regional Advisory Committee, a committee member of the Lockyer Valley Growers Association and a member of the Pre Farm Gate Hort Innovation Advisory Panel.

In 2016 Sharron was awarded the AUSVEG Woman in Horticulture Award and is a member of the Finance and Audit sub-committee.



ANDREW MOON

Director since 25 November 2021

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.

Being involved with industry groups has always been important to Andrew. He served as Chair of Onions Australia from 2013 – 2016. Prior to that he was on the Onions Industry Advisory Committee for five years. He is now in an advisory role on the Hort Innovation Post-Farmgate Vegetable SIAP.



MICHAEL KENT

Independent Director since 23 April 2019

Michael Kent is an experienced corporate governance professional and in-house commercial lawyer. Michael holds qualification as a solicitor and Chartered Secretary.

He is General Counsel for Transit Systems Pty Ltd, an Australian-based international multi-disciplinary transport solutions provider which operates 3000 buses and employs over 6700 employees in Australia, the United Kingdom, Singapore, New Zealand and the USA.

Michael has previously held board or governance roles in the not-for-profit, aged care and maritime pilotage industries.

A photograph showing the lower half of a person wearing blue denim jeans and brown leather boots. They are standing in a metal pen or stall. Several sheep are visible in the pen, some with their heads and legs visible. The floor is dirt and there are some dark spots, possibly manure, scattered around. The lighting is warm and natural.

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Good people to know.





MULGOWIE YOWIE SALADS

Growing the Fair Farms way

As you drive into Mulgowie Yowie Salads located in the Lockyer Valley you're greeted at the farm gates with a sign depicting a Yowie and a driveway lined with rosemary.

Mulgowie Yowie, which is in the process of obtaining Fair Farms Certification, took some time with Growcom's Fruit and Vegetable News magazine to talk about the farm and how they've been dealing with the effects of the pandemic.

Farm owner and Growcom member Shannon Moss made the decision to move his Stanthorpe farm after the Queensland floods in 2011 and relocate to Mulgowie where he and his young children aptly named the new farm 'Mulgowie Yowie Salads'.

"We started moving out of Stanthorpe in probably February in 2013," Shannon said.

"The kids actually named it Mulgowie Yowie – I was just going to call it Mulgowie Fresh Salads."

A second-generation farmer Shannon grows a variety of salad leaves including rosemary which grows in abundance on the farm and all originating from one plant, as well as a variety of other fresh produce.

"We do a lot of woody herbs, perennial herbs: coriander, dill, parsley, we also do spinach- baby spinach.

"We also do a lot of rocket and four-leaf mix salads for domestic markets."

While Shannon is known for his fresh, vibrant herbs and salad mixes he is passionate about also growing pumpkins.

"Pumpkin sales went through the roof when COVID first hit, the same way toilet paper sales went through the roof," Shannon said jokingly.

While the news of pumpkin sales may have been a saving grace during the pandemic Shannon said the economic effects of the pandemic were still very harsh.

"Sales this year were good, sales were terrible last year – shocking even," he said.

"We were probably down over a quarter in wholesale market worth."

Like many farmers dealing with the harsh reality of inter-state and international border closures and COVID restrictions Shannon said the hardest thing to reconcile due to the pandemic beside the economic problems was staffing.

In addition to ensuring he had enough staff for harvest Shannon said he knew he needed to ensure compliance with any requirements to do with payroll and workplace health and safety.

"Staffing is my number one problem," Shannon said.

"From a business point of view as an owner I get nervous when there's staffing issues.

"We don't have a real population of workers to pull on."

Mulgowie Yowie Salads will usually have a good mix of overseas and local workers but in recent times has had to rely heavily on local workers.

"Now that schools over I'll get a few of the local boys when they finish school to work here – even my son works here now – he's on a gap year from school," Shannon said.

"I'll end up with enough staff and I work really hard at that."

While staffing has been hard Shannon said he has been able to get through by focussing on staff retention and by engaging with Growcom's Fair Farms program to ensure he was doing everything he possibly could to ensure his employees and business were safe.

"This year we did a lot of work on workplace, health and safety," Shannon said.

"Fair Farms where it works in, is having real set procedures on training, the induction process, the VEVO checks (identity checks), and we've already done that without Fair Farms, but Fair Farms gives us a better checklist.

"I think that's where Fair Farms comes into it – it's a checklist, what you need to do to get through an audit.

"Fair Farms is a local form of Sedex."

Shannon acknowledged it was incredibly important to look after his staff for business continuity and their own wellbeing and credited his decision to register for certification with Growcom's Fair Farms program as just good business sense.

"I know it's important to have all these things to make sure the business is protected, for work cover, for our insurance, and I don't want to work in a business where it isn't a happy working environment too," Shannon said.

"At the end of the day, I've got to put my business hat on and I'm in the business of selling product. It's all about dollars and sense."

Mulgowie Yowie Salads has completed the first initial steps towards receiving Fair Farms Certification which includes completing an online self-assessment to identify training needs.

Shannon said he and his team are ready for audit and are excited to receive their Certification, with plans to go through audit as soon as his farm manager is back in early 2022.

Growcom's Fair Farms is an industry-led, national training and certification initiative that is cultivating fair and responsible employment practices in Australian horticulture. The program provides support and training to farm employers and a pathway to independent third-party audit and certification.

To find out more about Growcom's Fair Farms program and any special offers Fair Farms may be running head to fairfarms.com.au





Irrigation Pricing Discounts 2021–24

Reminder – Apply for your rebate through the Horticulture Irrigation Pricing Rebate Scheme

Claim a 35% discount for any charges related to the production of horticulture. Go to www.qrida.qld.gov.au/grants-rebates or call 1800 623 946.

Irrigation prices for water supply schemes owned by Sunwater and Seqwater have the following discounts applied for the three-year period from 2021-22 to 2023-24:

- ◆ 50 per cent discount for irrigation of horticultural crops
- ◆ 15 per cent discount for all other irrigation.

All irrigators automatically receive a 15 per cent discount through the prices used to calculate their bills.

You can now apply for the balance of the 50 per cent discount through a 35 per cent rebate on charges related to horticulture through the Horticulture Irrigation Pricing Rebate Scheme.

How do I apply for the additional 35 per cent rebate?

Visit www.qrida.qld.gov.au/grants-rebates

The rebate is administered and assessed by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority

(QRIDA). It has already paid out a number of rebate claims and is ready to take your application.

No internet? Call QRIDA on freecall number 1800 623 946.

Is there a time limit on applications?

Applications can be made any time up until 31 December 2024.

Do I have to apply every time I get a bill?

No. You can apply quarterly, half yearly or annually – whatever is most convenient for you.

What information will I need for my application?

Full information requirements are set out on the QRIDA application form and include:

1. evidence that you have fully paid the relevant invoice from Sunwater, Seqwater or Pioneer Valley Water¹
2. at least two types of evidence to demonstrate horticultural production, including items such as:
 - ◆ profit and loss, or management accounts showing the income received from the sale of horticultural crops

¹ Pioneer Valley Water customers do not receive a bill directly from Sunwater but will be eligible for the rebate in relation to the Sunwater charges related to horticulture included in their Pioneer Valley Water bill.

- ◆ sale dockets relating to the sale of horticultural crops
- ◆ your federal government Horticulture Levy statement obtainable from Levies Online
- ◆ farm plans or maps outlining the area under production of horticultural crops
- ◆ aerial, satellite or drone photography outlining the area under production of horticultural crops
- ◆ on the ground photographic evidence (e.g., with mobile phone) showing the production and/or processing of horticultural crops
- ◆ any additional evidence on how your metered water take has been used.

Do I need re-submit the same required documents for every application?

No. After your first application you will only need to provide information relevant to each new application.

What charges on my invoice are eligible for the rebate?

The rebate applies to the following charges:

- ◆ allocation charges (Part A and Part C)
- ◆ usage charges (Part B and Part D)
- ◆ access charges.

What are the horticultural crops eligible for the additional 35 per cent rebate?

The definition of horticultural crops is based on the following Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) codes:

- ◆ 011 – Nursery and Floriculture Production
- ◆ 012 – Mushroom and Vegetable Growing
- ◆ 013 – Fruit and Tree Nut Growing.

A full list of eligible crops is available on QRIDA's website – www.qrida.qld.gov.au/grants-rebates

I grow a mix of horticultural and non-horticultural crops. Can I still access the rebate?

Yes. The rebate will be applicable to the proportion of relevant charges related to horticulture. You will need to demonstrate to QRIDA the volume of water usage related to horticulture. If you can't do this, you will need to provide details of the land area under horticultural and non horticultural production. QRIDA will use this information to calculate your rebate amount using relevant Australian Bureau of Statistics irrigation water application rates.

I usually grow horticultural crops, but my announced allocation was not high enough to do so. Can I still access the rebate?

Yes. You will need to demonstrate to QRIDA that you usually grow horticulture where announced allocations are sufficient to do so.

I have a water allocation and grow horticultural crops, but I was able to rely on other water sources (i.e. rain or bore water) for the applicable billing period. Can I still access the rebate?

Yes. QRIDA's application form will guide you on how to do this.

How can I find out more information?

QRIDA have additional documents available to help you make a rebate application. Please visit www.qrida.qld.gov.au/grants-rebates for guidelines, frequently asked questions and other supplementary information, including rebate formulas and all eligible horticultural crops.

For more information about irrigation pricing in general please visit www.rdmw.qld.gov.au



Five ways to improve organisational wellbeing

Article developed in collaboration with SuperFriend

It's important to pause and reflect on our own mental health and the wellbeing of those around us. We asked SuperFriend, our wellbeing partner to share with us five tips on how we can improve our mental health and wellbeing both at work and at home.

Five ways to wellbeing

If you're looking to improve the mental health and wellbeing of your organisation, here are five simple activities which can be promoted within the workplace.

#1 – Connect

Creating connections with others is a fundamental human need. This includes relationships with family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours and acquaintances in all areas of life.

Taking time out to both broaden and strengthen relationships every day is the key to harnessing this important aspect of wellbeing. Whether it's done spontaneously or by putting dedicated time aside to connect with workmates can make a big difference to positivity.

#2 – Get active

Physical activity is vital for positive wellbeing, whether it's walking, running, cycling, playing sports, gardening or any other activity that gets you moving.

Most importantly, find the things you enjoy – and do those activities regularly. Think about how you can include activity at your workplace – maybe explore the idea of having a 'walking meeting' once or twice a week.

#3 – Be aware

Mindfulness is about being in the moment, noticing things around you, being aware of your emotions – whether they are positive or negative, and reflecting on your experiences. Focusing on mindfulness enables you to savour the things you enjoy and become more acutely aware of your priorities, and such self-awareness impacts positively on wellbeing.

#4 – Keep learning

They say we learn something new every day, and science is telling us that this is important for our wellbeing. Whether it's signing up for a new activity or taking a development opportunity at work, learning new things boosts your confidence and this is great for your wellbeing.

#5 – Help others

Considering and acting positively towards others links you to your community and rewards you with a stronger sense of wellbeing. You can do this formally, though a volunteering opportunity, or informally through daily interactions with others.

Keen to explore other resources?

SuperFriend offer a range of services beyond training to support you with your broader mental health and wellbeing strategy and policy needs. For example, Workplace Mental Health Essentials for All Staff is an online course and well-suited to those working remotely. Find out more about this course by visiting superfriend.com.au and see below additional health and wellbeing resources for inside and outside the workplace.

Resources – found at superfriend.com.au

- 'Looking after you' booklet
- 'Peer Support' booklet
- Free, 15-minute online wellbeing check-in module
- MySuperFriend online learning platform
- Webinar library
- Workplace Mental Health Essentials Training – includes courses for staff and people leaders

Mental health and wellbeing support services

- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- MensLine Australia 1300 789 978
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

About SuperFriend




Sunsuper's wellbeing partner SuperFriend is a national mental health organisation influencing positive change in workplace mental health and wellbeing. To find out more, visit superfriend.com.au or email info@superfriend.com.au

About Sunsuper

Sunsuper is one of Australia's largest superannuation funds with 1.4 million members* and more than \$93 billion* in funds under management. As a profit-for-members fund, we return our profits to our members as better services and lower fees, so our members truly sit at the heart of everything we do. We also support more than 160,000 participating employer clients* across a diverse range of industries.

If you're not already with Sunsuper and you want to start making a real difference to you and your employee's retirement today – it's easy to join. Call our Contact Centre on 13 11 84 between 8.00am to 6.30pm (AEST) Monday to Friday for assistance.

Disclaimer: *As at September 2021. This article has been prepared and issued by Sunsuper Pty Ltd, (ABN 88 010 720 840, AFSL No. 228975) the trustee and issuer of the Sunsuper Superannuation Fund (ABN 98 503 137 921, USI 98 503 137 921 001). Consider the Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) before deciding and Target Market Determinations (TMDs). Visit sunsuper.com.au or call 13 11 84 for a copy of the PDS and TMDs. Sunsuper is not a mental health service or employee wellbeing consultant and does not provide clinical advice or professional services. We've put this information together as general information only and as such it doesn't take into account your organisation's objectives, situation or needs, or those of your employees. You should get professional advice before relying on this information.



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what dreams are made of





Local knowledge supporting local producers

Producers across Queensland are known as some of the most resilient and dedicated in the country. Every farmer knows that whether it's in good times or bad, being surrounded by people you can trust is one of the true pillars to success.

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) has a dedicated network of Regional Area Managers servicing every inch of Queensland – many having lived in their area for decades. They bring not only support to producers thinking about accessing QRIDA's programs and services, but invaluable local knowledge.

Sam Spina, QRIDA's Regional Area Manager for the Far North, has been serving his region for 20 years. One of his clients, Tony Camuglia from Camuglia farms, says that Sam's role helping growers in his area is a great asset for the community.

"I can only talk highly of Sam. I've known Sam for a long time, he's a straight shooter and he'll always help you. I think there's no-one up here better for QRIDA than Sam Spina."

Sam says his passion for helping rural and regional Queenslanders

with their primary production enterprises is something that comes naturally.

"As a third-generation cane grower myself, I understand what farmers need. Whether it be helping clients through their QRIDA applications, or lending an ear, I wouldn't want to be doing anything else," Sam explains.

Each of QRIDA's Regional Area Managers are available to meet you on-farm to discuss how QRIDA can help you, from starting your own primary production business with a First Start Loan, to improving the productivity of your enterprise with a Sustainability Loan. They're also one of the first with boots on the ground after a natural disaster, ready to help producers rebuild and recover through financial assistance administered by QRIDA.

With 2022 bringing so much promise, there's never been a better time to plan for the years ahead.

Find your nearest Regional Area Manager at qrda.qld.gov.au or contact us on 1800 623 946 to find out more about how they can help you and your primary production enterprise.

Advertisement



Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority

+ Our team in regional QLD, helping yours

QRIDA has been a proud supporter of rural and regional Queensland for more than 25 years. With a network of **Regional Area Managers** located throughout the state, our team is ready to guide you through our range of low interest loans and grants, including*:

- **Sustainability Loans** to help you tap into new and emerging on-farm technologies, improve irrigation systems or purchase or upgrade plant and machinery
- **First Start Loans** to help you establish your first primary production enterprise.

Our team is ready to talk when you are. Contact us on **1800 623 946** to speak with your local Regional Area Manager or visit qrda.qld.gov.au for more information.

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1800 623 946
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Authorised by the Queensland Government, Turbot St, Brisbane

Pineapple takes the crown for 2022 product of the year

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

Each year the Country Kitchens team develops a suite of resources to promote the QCWA Product of the Year through the lens of the Country Kitchens 5 key messages. The 2022 Product of the Year, pineapple, was an exciting project for the team, with pineapples lending themselves to both sweet and savoury dishes, as well as being grown locally in Queensland.

There are approximately 75 commercial pineapple enterprises in Australia, with all but one based in Queensland, little wonder this fruit is a Queensland favourite. Although Australia produces less than one percent of the world's fresh pineapple, local growers supply almost the entire domestic market.

It can take around 16 months for flowers to appear after planting, and up to two years for a pineapple to be ready for harvesting.

Pineapple is a great source of many vitamins and minerals, including dietary fibre and vitamin C. It is versatile and can be used in sweet or savoury dishes. Try this easy, delicious and healthy recipe.

Fish Tacos with Pineapple Salsa

SERVES 6 PREP TIME 30 MINUTES COOK TIME: 1 HOUR FRUIT & VEG 1 ½ SERVES PER PORTION

1	bulb of garlic
½	a small red cabbage, grated or shredded
1 tablespoon	red wine vinegar
½ cup	natural yogurt
Pinch	of salt and pepper
1 tablespoon	extra virgin olive oil
400 grams	cod OR other white fish
12	small flour OR corn tortillas

Pineapple Salsa

1	small pineapple, trimmed, peeled, and cored
1	red onion, finely diced
½	bunch coriander, chopped
2 tablespoons	pickled jalapenos, chopped (optional)
½ cup	cotija OR feta cheese, crumbled
1	lime, juiced
1 tablespoon	extra virgin olive oil



Recipe courtesy of Lindsey Thynne, Country Kitchens team

METHOD

PREHEAT oven to 180°C and place whole garlic bulb to bake for hour or until softened.

CUT pineapple into wedges and fry in large pan over medium heat until lightly charred. Finely dice the pineapple.

PUT pineapple pieces and any juices left in the pan into a small bowl. Add the red onion, coriander and pickled jalapeno and mix well.

CRUMBLE cotija or feta cheese into the pineapple mix and squeeze in the juice of one lime. Drizzle with olive oil, mix well and set aside.

ADD cabbage and red wine vinegar to a large bowl. Mix well and set aside.

SQUEEZE the roasted garlic out of the bulb and stir into the yoghurt. Mix well and set aside.

SEASON fish with a pinch of salt and pepper. You can also roll the fillets in flour for a nice crust.

HEAT a frying pan on medium heat and add olive oil. When hot, fry the fish fillets for a couple minutes each side, or until just opaque.

WARM tortillas in a frying pan or the oven until soft.

LOAD tortillas with the cabbage mixture, flake over the fish and top with salsa and garlic yoghurt.

WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT IT?

This colourful taco recipe is sure to be a hit with the family. The salsa can be made in advance and enjoyed on its own with lightly toasted pita bread. If you are in a time pinch, you can also chop the garlic and fry in a pan, rather than roasting in the oven. Both fresh or frozen fish work well for this one.



(L-R): Lockyer Valley Growers President Michael Sippel, Hort Innovation Head of Extension Jane Wightman, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities Mark Furner MP, Growcom Chair and AUSVEG Deputy Chair Belinda Frentz and QDAF Director Vegetables, Systems and Supply Chains Ian Layden.

Smart Farm partnership drives Queensland agriculture

A \$9 million partnership will transform the Gatton Research Facility into a world-leading “Smart Farm” to accelerate the adoption of AgTech in Queensland’s horticulture sector.

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities Mark Furner said the Smart Farm would be a centre of innovation where government, industry, commercial providers and researchers would partner to develop, test and adapt innovations to drive the development of high value products, export supply chains and automation.

“Queensland has a global reputation for high quality, safe horticulture products,” Mr Furner said.

“New technology is critical to further expanding markets and solving the challenges of labour management, product quality, climate variability and supply chain wastage.

“The Palaszczuk Government has partnered with Hort Innovation with combined funding of more than \$9 million to drive the adoption of new ag technology.

“Together with industry and commercial partners we’ll create an environment that fosters innovation and problem solving.

“With agriculture an essential industry and such an important part of Queensland’s COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, we need to lay the foundations of the future of the industry.”

Mr Furner said new infrastructure on the site will include climate-controlled glasshouses, a retractable-roof protected cropping structure and cold rooms with the latest controlled-atmosphere technology.

“This new infrastructure will also boost existing R&D by equipping research staff with the latest tools and technology to manage pests such as Serpentine Leafminer, Fall Armyworm and vegetable diseases,” Mr Furner said.

“All of this is supported by the appointment of additional senior research specialists, a network of industry demonstration trials, and a comprehensive extension and communication program.”

AUSVEG Deputy Chair and Growcom Chair Belinda Frentz said that the centre’s location in the heart of Queensland’s major vegetable producing region ensured its relevance and accessibility to growers.

“The Gatton Smart Farm will be one of Australia’s leading vegetable research centres,” Ms Frentz said.

“It will accelerate the adoption of AgTech and automation, develop climate-resilient, cost-effective protected cropping systems, and harness new post-harvest technologies to develop both domestic and export-ready supply chain systems.

“The work at Gatton will align with a number of flagship industry initiatives, including the revamped VegNET extension program and the industry’s updated export strategy, which recommends working with growers to optimise vegetable quality and to further develop export-ready products, and to consolidate existing export markets while investigating new opportunities for industry.

“Queensland vegetable growers are vital contributors to the national \$4.8 billion vegetable industry that supplies high-quality fresh vegetables to families around Australia and across the world.

“It is important that government and industry continue to invest in projects such as this to build the skills and capacity of vegetable growing businesses to encourage adoption of new technologies and innovations.”

All research outcomes will be shared nationally through Hort innovation’s regional extension team and VegNet.



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Need finance for your farming business? Use the 3C's approach for your finance application

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Rohan Dunsdon, Partner



Access to finance is essential for any business. For agribusinesses, a successful finance application relies on demonstrating that you 'Know your Business' for your financier.

Not sure where to start? Below we provide an overview of the lending landscape in Australia, and a straightforward 3C's approach to help you prepare your finance application.

THE LENDING LANDSCAPE IN AUSTRALIA – WHO LENDS TO FARMING BUSINESSES?

Traditionally, when we talk about lenders working with agri businesses, we are referring to the major banks. More than 90% of lending for this sector comes from these institutions, and they often have specialist departments who have a solid understanding of the complexities of farming businesses, including the seasonality of cashflow.

Finance – also referred to as debt – is the most common tool that farming businesses use to fund major items, such as operations, equipment needs and land acquisitions.

There are also some emerging non-bank lenders in this space – many of these provide asset finance, working capital (trade) finance, foreign exchange, and supply chain finance.

Whichever financier you choose to work with, the key priority is to ensure that they have expertise and understanding of your sector.

WHAT DO LENDERS LOOK FOR IN AN APPLICATION?

Generally, the key things that a lender will look for in a finance application are:

Your ability to meet your debt obligations, even when conditions change. For farming businesses, finance is typically used to fund the major items of operation, and also to fund things like day-to-day cashflow. A financier's appetite for offering credit is generally heavily influenced by market conditions, seasonal conditions, commodity prices and offtake agreements. When assessing a credit application, financiers look for indicators that you can manage your debt, not just in the 'good times' (such as we are experiencing now with low interest rates, high commodity prices and increasing land values) – but also conditions when these factors may be heading in the opposite direction.

What is your track record? The two key questions that a financier will consider are:

- What is your history of repayment?
- Do your operations illustrate ongoing viability for the lender to recoup their finance or debt?

Answering these questions and providing your financier with the confidence they need to approve your application can be achieved by taking a relatively straightforward approach: The 3C's.

THE 3C'S APPROACH

Your finance application needs to show your financier that you can manage the level of debt you are asking for, and that you're not a risk to them. By applying the 3C's approach – Character, Capacity and Collateral – you can paint a picture of yourself and your business and illustrate your technical and financial skillset.

C Number 1: Character

Financiers, first and foremost, are interested to find out about you as a business owner - your history, your financial track record, and your vision for your business. Their key objective is to determine if your character is someone they can trust in a business relationship during the good times and the bad.

Building this rapport and trust with your financier is best achieved by letting them get to know you one-on-one. Being transparent and forthcoming with information will help them to evaluate you and your business. Make sure you introduce the key team members within your business and be open to meeting the team (including senior figures) within their organisation.

C Number 2: Capacity

Equally as important to getting to know your character, financiers also want to know about your credit history, and your capacity to manage debt in your business. In particular – demonstrating where you have successfully managed risks brought about by factors that are out of your control (such as seasonality, commodity prices and market disruption outside of your control) add strength to your application.

To do this, it is important to illustrate your financial skillset. You can do this by presenting all the documents and financial information that they are looking for. You can provide a 3-way financial projection (Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet and Cashflow) to demonstrate your ability to manage your operations and current and future debt obligations. If you are going to your lender regarding a new product line, make sure you show that you have prepared trustworthy future cash flows based on assumptions, which may include revenue streams, forward contracts, costs, synergies (both revenue and cost) and any seasonality.

C Number 3: Collateral

Last, but by no means least, your financier is looking for security. They need to know the collateral you put forward to support your application. Their assessment will be guided by whether the collateral put forward is suitable to them.

Traditionally, the number one security that a financier looks at is the value of your land, but there are also a range of alternative forms of security - such as supply agreements, inventory water stocks and invoices.

As a borrower, you need to carefully consider the collateral that a financier has security over. Think through the security over assets such as your family home when you are preparing your application.

Need help with finance for your farming business? Rohan Dunsdon, Hamish McIntosh and the team at Bentleys have an impressive track record working with businesses across the farming sector.

In addition to our business advisory expertise, we offer award-winning finance and lending services that will help you to get to where you want to be.

Contact Rohan today for a no-obligation discussion

rdunsdon@bris.bentleys.com.au or 07 3222 9726

Scan here to see Hamish McIntosh's presentation on Managing Debt at the Growcom Workplace Essentials Seminar held in November.



Brisbane monthly summary for November 2021

Compiled by Market Information Services. Ph (07) 3379 4576. Fax (07) 3379 4103.
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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	1650.42	15KgCtn	5.00	26.00	26.00	14.51							
Lady Finger		8KgCtn	12.00	40.00	48.00	25.27							
Cavendish		Carton	5.00	50.00	50.00	24.75							
Ducasse		Carton	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00							
Lady Finger		Carton	10.00	60.00	72.00	30.68							
BEETROOT	402.52	10KgBag	4.00	16.00	16.00	9.23							
		Bunch	1.20	2.40	2.40	1.85							
Baby		Bunch	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.91							
CABBAGES,Red	1883.98	Carton	10.00	45.00	45.00	24.79							
Sugarloaf		Carton	10.00	24.00	24.00	13.77							
Ballhead		Each	0.80	3.50	3.50	1.98							
Red		Each	1.80	4.00	4.00	2.78							
Savoy		Each	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.27							
FINGER LIMES	0.17	Kg	35.00	50.00	50.00	41.59							
GINGER	184.84	Kg	6.00	16.00	16.00	10.44							
HONEYDEW MELONS,Gold	1063.70	30LTray	10.00	12.00	12.00	11.00							
Gold,Orange Candy		30LTray	8.00	16.00	16.00	11.84							
White		30LTray	12.00	20.00	24.00	16.76							
Dark Skin,Piel De Sapo		32Lctn	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00							
NECTARINES,White Flesh	353.63	18Lctn	20.00	60.00	60.00	33.48							
Yellow Flesh		18Lctn	20.00	50.00	50.00	32.66							
White Flesh		5KgTray	25.00	60.00	60.00	37.61							
Yellow Flesh		5KgTray	25.00	60.00	60.00	36.02							
PINEAPPLES,Hybrid,Unspecified	1501.70	Carton	18.00	26.00	26.00	22.14							
Smoothleaf		Carton	16.00	24.00	26.00	20.14							
Hybrid Topless,Unspecified		SLTray	5.00	24.00	24.00	17.47							
Smoothleaf		SLTray	14.00	20.00	20.00	16.56							
SHALLOTS,Eschallots	410.11	Bunch	0.80	1.40	1.60	1.12							
SWEET CORN,Baby	365.22	125g	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.28							
		18Lctn	16.00	60.00	60.00	32.18							
Bi-colour		18Lctn	15.00	30.00	30.00	20.28							
Pre-pack		18Lctn	24.00	50.00	50.00	36.70							

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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE WHOLESALE MARKET PRICE REPORTING

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.

Our primary business activity is the supply of Australian fruit and vegetable market price data.

- Daily, weekly and/or monthly ongoing fruit and vegetable price data.
- Daily, weekly, monthly, and annual historic fruit and vegetable price data for 20+ years.
- Industry and grower organisation projects, programs, and market activity reporting.
- Grower subsidised wholesale fruit and vegetable market price reports.
- Price data from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide markets.

In addition to the data and information services, Ausmarket offer a wide range of quality assessment and quality mentoring services which include fruit maturity testing, loss assessments, independent outturn and arrival assessments, retail monitoring and pre-shipment compliance inspections.

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All roads lead back to ethical employment practices

Traceability may be synonymous with food safety and animal welfare, yet in the wake of stories surrounding poor worker wellbeing standards, there's growing consumer sentiment to shed light on ethical employment practices.

While the Harvest Trail Inquiry reports that only 2.65 percent of survey respondents factored ethical production into what products they bought at greengrocers and supermarkets, the value proposition changed dramatically when they became knowledgeable of worker wellbeing issues.

More than 80 percent of survey respondents said they would not buy fruit and vegetables if they knew workers were either paid unfairly or operating with poor working conditions.

Additionally, around three quarters of Harvest Trail Inquiry survey respondents believe farmers should ensure their workers receive fair pay and conditions.

Enter Fair Farms.

Geelong Citrus, originally Sedex-certified, transferred to Fair Farms in 2021, said Graeme Ison, the company's previous quality assurance manager.

"Fair Farms is Australian-based, set up by Australia for Australian conditions and Australian primary production," Mr Ison said, when asked why Geelong Citrus made the transition away from Sedex.

"We are so close to our supply base and our farm base.

"We don't directly own a farm but we operate under the horticulture award. It suited our business model reasonably well."

Mr Ison said he thinks the Fair Work Ombudsman should be properly resourced to identify and deal with poor and illegal work practices but social auditing processes like Fair Farms will become more recognisable into the future.

"I've seen the evolution of food safety over the last thirty years," Mr Ison said.

"I think that over the next five, 10 or 15 years, integrated supply chain management and traceability of staff and everything including food safety will continue to evolve and become more and more legitimate and probably more important in the eyes of the consumer."

The Australian Government's National Traceability Framework, released in 2019, reports that a majority of Australian

agribusiness and food producers realise the commercial benefits of enhancing traceability to meet consumer needs and increase the sustainability of their business.

According to Fair Farms market research, 74 percent of consumers demand that more of their fresh produce is sourced ethically.

For Sweet Potatoes Australia (SPA) – the Bundaberg-based company behind preparing and packing 60 percent of sweet potatoes for the Australian market – attaining Fair Farms accreditation has meant they're able to focus on worker wellbeing while growing the business, general manager Claire Maslen said.

"Fair Farms allows my team to ask questions when they aren't sure," Ms Maslen said.

"For our partners and customers it's key that they know [Fair Farms] is a key part of Sweet Potatoes Australia."

SPA became Fair Farms certified in June 2021 and sees huge potential through the program to ensure customer needs are met.

"I think it would be nice for our business, for our markets, for our consumers to know we are a fair farmer," Ms Maslen said.

"It [Fair Farms certification] would be viable and worthwhile if it becomes something shared to the consumer," Ms Maslen said.

For SPA's quality assurance manager Leisa Nash, there's satisfaction in knowing the business is delivering a quality product 52 weeks a year - with worker wellbeing in mind.

"For me as a quality assurance manager it's about getting the Fair Farms questions right and understanding them," Ms Nash said.

"Fair Farms is fully transparent and easy to understand."

SPA sees Fair Farms certification as a method to retain staff, support their needs and build a platform of trust. That is evident in SPA's goals to produce enough product for a manufacturer to make sweet potato chips.

"From my perspective, it's key for me that my staff that work here any day come to work happy, safe and that they feel listened to," Ms Maslen said.

"With Fair Farms we can go through this ethical piece and as a general manager that staff can see the ethics and policies we work by."

Trust and transparency underpin traceability.

Fair Farms' ethical employment standards can be used as a system to meet trust and transparency needs in the supply chain; to meet growing consumer demand around the wellbeing of workers who support fresh produce businesses and help build a prosperous and sustainable future for Australian agribusinesses.

Fair Farms – developed and delivered by Growcom – is an industry-led, national training and certification initiative that is cultivating fair and responsible employment practices in Australian horticulture. The program provides support and training to farm employers and a pathway to independent third-party audit and certification. Visit the Fair Farms website to learn more about the program: www.fairfarms.com.au

FAIR FARMS APPOINTS NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER

After an extensive search and selection process, Growcom is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Sachin Ayachit as the new National Program Manager for the Fair Farms program.

Mr Ayachit joins Growcom with extensive knowledge and experience, and a background in the delivery of certification programs, accreditations, regulatory compliance, training, and implementation of quality systems for certification schemes in the agriculture sector.

Most recently at ACO Certification (previously Australian Certified Organics) as the General Manager of Certification, Mr Ayachit also holds multiple qualifications including a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, Master of Agribusiness Management, an MBA, as well as being a lead auditor for Integrated Management Systems and Internal Auditing.

Over the past 16 years he has worked with more than 4500 certified farmers to deliver certification of 10,000 products in more than 15 countries. His experience will continue to help develop and expand the Fair Farms program.

"I am excited to be starting with Growcom at this very important time for the Fair farms program," Mr Ayachit said.

"Fair Farms is a great initiative that I think many growers will find invaluable as part of their farm management practices.

"It's an Australian based ethical employment standard, industry-led, and it aligns with my desire to work with all members of the supply chain - especially growers."

Growcom Chief Executive Officer Stephen Barnard said that Mr Ayachit's credentials and experience as an agricultural industry

expert in training and certification made him the perfect fit for the Fair Farms program.

"Fair Farms aims to recognise growers who are ethical and responsible employers through training and awareness and offers growers a pathway to independent third-party audit through an APSCA registered auditor - so it's great we have Sachin for this lead role," Mr Barnard said.

"Sachin's experience, and focused approach to customers and all stakeholders is ideal for Fair Farms as we look to reinforce and expand the program."

Mr Ayachit commenced with Growcom in mid-December 2021.



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workplace relations

Focus HR Founding Director
Naomi Wilson

COVID vaccination policies

The mandating or encouragement of vaccinations in the workplace is a hot topic at the moment with the Queensland restrictions easing.

In this environment, it is important for businesses to think carefully about whether they need a COVID vaccination policy and if so, what it should look like. A business's ability to mandate vaccination is dependent on whether:

- a specific law requires you to be vaccinated (such as a State or Territory public health order for a particular industry)
- an enterprise agreement, award or employment contract provides that it is permitted; and/or
- any such direction from an employer is lawful and reasonable.

Where there is no specific legislation requiring vaccination (and at the time of publishing, there isn't in the horticulture industry), the reasonableness of a mandated vaccination direction needs to be carefully assessed by the business depending on their circumstances. We recommend that businesses considering mandating vaccination undertake a risk assessment and consider a range of factors including:

- What are the risks of infection based on your operation?
- How else might you mitigate that risk?
- What would happen to your business if a proportion of the workforce became ill or was forced to quarantine or self-isolate
- How much public contact do your employees have in the course of their duties?
- Would a mandated vaccination policy give rise to issues of discrimination?

- Would it be more effective to provide incentives for voluntary vaccination instead of mandating?

If necessary, we recommend seeking independent legal advice before deciding on mandating vaccinations.

The alternative is encouraging vaccinations and there are various means with which to achieve this.

For the right process, policy and tools for encouraging vaccinations, please visit the Growcom Workplace Relations Shop (www.growcom.com.au/growcom-shop) to purchase your COVID-vaccination implementation kit. There are two version available:

The COVID Vaccination Encouragement Kit (\$435 + GST) includes:

- COVID Vaccination Encouragement Policy
- Disclosure of Vaccination Status Form
- Implementation Guidelines

The COVID Vaccination Mandatory Kit (\$698.50 + GST) includes:

- COVID Vaccination Mandatory Policy
- Disclosure of Vaccination Status Form
- Implementation Guidelines
- Consultation Script
- Vaccination Requirement Letter Template
- Non-Vaccination Cessation Letter Template

If you would like to discuss this or another workplace relations matter, please don't hesitate to contact Growcom's Workplace Relations Team on 07 3620 3844 or wrtteam@growcom.com.au

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WORKSHOP SHOWCASES DIVERSE RANGE OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

In November Growcom hosted a workshop for migrants in the Toowoomba region to see first-hand the opportunities available to them through our newly funded Diverse Queensland Workforce Project.

Participants at the workshop hailed from a diverse range of countries including Colombia, Bangladesh, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Nepal.

Their backgrounds were just as diverse ranging from former truck drivers, to integrated pest management specialists, agricultural engineers, and researchers.

Through the project 80 employment pathways will be made available to enrich the lives of skilled migrants and build diversity

for the agribusiness labour workforce.

Growcom has partnered with The Mulberry Project, a non-profit organisation that works with migrants and refugees to gain employment, to administer training, work experience and placements for participants.

Funding for this project is made available through the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

For more information, please contact Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) Southern Queensland Officer Kym Wessling on 0499 833 868 or email kwessling@growcom.com.au

PLANNING, MANAGING, AND RECOVERING FROM DROUGHT

Drought is a fact of life in Australia and to boost the longevity and strength of Queensland horticulture, Growcom is working with government bodies, industry service providers and natural resource management groups to enhance farm business outcomes, through the Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP).

Growcom's Farm Business Resilience Program will support farmers to prepare for, manage and recover from drought.

The program, to be rolled out across Queensland, is supported and funded by the Federal Department of Agriculture Water and Environment, through the Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, with a \$2.25 million investment in the program.

Growcom Chief Executive Officer Stephen Barnard said that considering over 120 different fruit, vegetable and nut crops are grown across Queensland, developing tools to combat the ill-effects of drought in a changing climate need to be addressed now.

"Farmers know best how to grow food that Australians enjoy year-round, and they do a top-notch job," Mr Barnard said.

"We are excited to get the ball rolling and will utilise our Best Management Practice program, Hort360, to assist growers to identify gaps in their management systems.

"We will engage growers to overcome limitations brought on by drought and build capacity through the Farm Business Resilience Program.

"This process will enable businesses to target issues and major risks and enhance the business's ability to plan and grow in the face of drought – including from production, financial and personal perspectives.

"Growcom stands firmly on its mission to support fresh produce growers to be sustainable and profitable and this program will provide a process to assist growers through thick and thin."

Growcom will engage with fresh produce growers on key topics such as business, people, climate, and environment through this program.

The Farm Business Resilience Program will be open to all primary producers – a drought declaration isn't required to access planning.



The importance of local knowledge and fire training cannot be understated for Cobraball bushfire victims

The Central Queensland bushfires in 2019 destroyed 22 homes and over 12,000 hectares of bushland. The direct impact on the horticulture industry alone was valued at over \$10 million.

Jack, Rae and their son Eddie Cowie, who operate Daly Creek Orchards in Bungundarra near Yeppoon were directly affected by the bushfires and through Growcom's Bushfire Recovery and Resilience in Horticulture Industry - Central Queensland Pilot Project had the opportunity to share their experiences and lessons learnt.

The Cowies had lived in Bungundarra for over 45 years and were gearing up for retirement when the 2019 Cobraball bushfire destroyed one entire orchard and 80 per cent of a second. They also lost 15 km of irrigation and mains powerlines and four hectares of overhead netting and frames to the fire.

As the fire approached the Cowies said all pumps were switched on to ensure the water tanks were full. Rae packed two vehicles to evacuate, with Jack and Eddie, an SES Controller, deciding to stay and fight the fire - an action that undoubtedly saved their house, four sheds, adjacent tropical fruit orchard and some other properties in the nearby area.

Directly following the fire, the number one priority for the Cowies following the fire was to restore irrigation. However, this proved impossible with mains power cut to the property and access limited for many weeks. The fire had even burnt the solar pump on the dam.

The netting wire was removed and rolled up to avoid future issues when the site was ready for replanting.

The Rockhampton North Rotarians - of which Jack is a member - and some local SES members helped cut down the damaged trees with chainsaws. The trees were high stumped two-to-three feet above the ground, with diluted water-based paint applied to the stumps to prevent sunburn. A chipper was on-site for two months.

Sadly, the trees phloem, cambium and heartwood had been destroyed because the fire was so hot, but protecting them against sunburn, should the trees have been able to recover, was a sensible precaution.

The Cowies made the most of their devastating situation by planting marcots between the stumped trees and improving the property by adopting better producing fruit varieties. Fitzroy Nursery donated 250 Erdon Lee marcots, and other lychee varieties planted included Baitangying and Kaimana; excellent fruiting plants, less susceptible to wind or other damage. Seven hundred trees have been replanted, with 200 marcots prepared for next season in late 2021.

Eventually, 50 - 60 percent of the damaged trees sent up root suckers. The best suckers were selected and trained as new trees, demonstrating exceptional growth of between 1.8 - 2.4 meters. Early signs have been promising, with some already flowering. Jack will monitor these to see if they will provide an interim crop until the new marcots start fruiting.

Looking back, Jack doesn't believe he would do anything differently.

"We learnt that trees with thicker bark, like mangoes and jackfruit, did better post-fire. The longans have re-shot and are flowering again this year, while the sapodillas and soursops have done less well," he said.

The Cowies' 2019 lychee crop was expected to bring in an income of \$250,000, and it will be 2023 before the new trees are mature enough to start fruiting again. Jack feels that the fire provided them with an opportunity to improve the property from a financial perspective.

"Instead of looking at the fire and saying woe betide me, the fire forced us to change, improving the farm. In another two-to-three years, we'll be back on top," he said.

KEY TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- The importance of local knowledge and fire training cannot be understated.
- Networks are essential for resilience and recovery.
- Re-establish power and irrigation as soon as you can.
- Work with what you have - save what you can, and quickly remove barriers like damaged wire, fences, netting and contaminants.
- If possible, use the opportunity as a re-set.



To download your Horticulture Bushfire Toolkit and other helpful resources, visit the Growcom website: bit.ly/HorticultureBushfireToolkit



Australian Government



Queensland Government

The project funding the development of these resources is jointly funded under the Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018. Growcom acknowledges the funding contributions of both the Australian and Queensland Governments, and the valuable contributions made to the project by the following stakeholders; Livingstone Shire Council, Central Queensland University, Capricorn Catchments, Maryvale Rural Fire Brigade and volunteers, Queensland Farmers' Federation, and horticulture growers Groves Grown, Daly Creek Orchard, and Tropic Fields.

PRESERVING THE REEF FOR A MORE PRISTINE FUTURE

Sustainable farming practices, growers and the environment are all winners from the State Government's decision to hit pause on new Great Barrier Reef (GBR) regulatory minimum standards in the horticulture industry.

Fresh produce growers have proactively utilised tools available through Growcom's Best Management Practice program, Hort360, to curb fertiliser and sediment runoff into the GBR with the goal of helping preserve the catchments and water quality of the GBR.

Growcom Chief Executive Officer Stephen Barnard said growers achieving Hort360 Reef Certification help to boost the resilience of the Reef and the State Government's decision to postpone regulated standards from 1 December 2022 through to 1 December 2024 is testament to this.

"The real take away from the State's decision to postpone new regulatory standards for two years is that the Hort360 Reef Certification is a valuable tool for growers to shape improved business practices, that value-add to their bottom line while helping the Reef become more resilient," Mr Barnard said.

"Growcom encourages all growers to use this opportunity to take up Hort360 Reef Certification and continue to show the stewardship that has led to regulated minimum standards being postponed."

The result – a cleaner, healthier GBR and more sustainable farming businesses - co-existing together.

"The Reef is important to growers and their communities too – it's part of their backyard – and they don't want to harm it," Mr Barnard said.

"That's why I'm glad that growers continue to recognise the benefits of Hort360 in not just getting ahead of new regulations but as a proactive way to improve the profitability and sustainability of their businesses and the environment.

"The Great Barrier Reef is iconic around the world and the Growcom Hort360 Reef Certification process is kicking goals for sustainable business practices and the preservation of this natural wonder."



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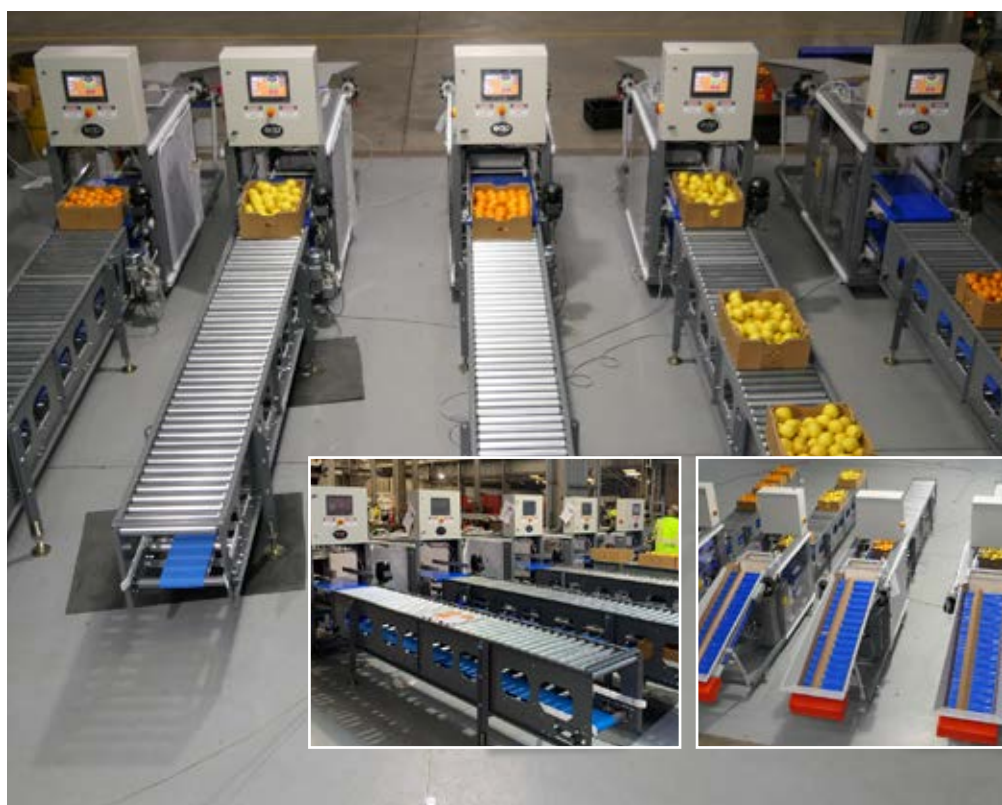
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Pineapple industry comes together to showcase R&D

The Australian pineapple industry continues to take a proactive approach to improving environmental outcomes and enterprise sustainability.

In late December the industry came together in South-East Queensland to view the progress and results of several R&D trials currently underway.

The farm trials on show were a result of deliberation by the Pineapple Environmental Sustainability Team, otherwise known as PEST. A model example of collaboration between growers, private enterprise, Growcom and key government agencies including the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Environment, PEST ensures the finite funds available for R&D are invested to maximise gains for growers and avoid duplication.

Endorsed by Australian Pineapples, the team have been meeting regularly since 2019 to coordinate and deliver progress for these field trials aimed at improving pineapple farm practices that are not only sustainable for growers but more importantly economically viable.

Thirty-seven trials are currently underway across Queensland focusing on improving soil management, reducing fertiliser and pesticides use, and pre- and post-nutrition management.

It is expected that once these trials have been completed, analysed and approved, the Australian pineapple industry will be strongly positioned to show the broader community and regulators that the industry is doing everything it can to be environmentally accountable by leading the way to finding new and sustainable farming practices.



L-R: Adam Kennedy (Carter and Spencer Group), Lene Knudsen (Growcom), Simon Douglas (Mineral Mulch) and Nathan Hui (Lyro Robotics) discuss new developments in the horticulture industry.



Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' principal horticulturalist Garth Sanewuski made a presentation on growing pineapples with specific soil health to enhance crop health, through better uptake of nutrient.



Australian Pineapples chairman Sam Pike, of Sandy Creek Pineapple Company, discusses how he is selecting and producing pineapples with better characteristics. Mr Pike selects best individual fruit (top 1%) from previous harvests and isolates these plants. He then value-adds with various fruit characteristics that are mass propagated through tissue culture. Mr Pike's long-term goal is to have all crops in the future featuring these top qualities.



Pineapple growers from the Wide Bay region came down to the Glass House Mountains for the day.



Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' Julie O'Halloran and Trical's Liliana Hidalgo were at the farm tour, discussing benefits of the different trials.



Growcom's Tim Wolens demonstrates the difference in pineapple root establishment using fumigants. The plant (right) is growing under standard practice, without fumigants, and has fewer roots. The plant (left) is growing with the support of fumigation and has a denser root establishment.



Pinata Farms Managing Director Gavin Scurr receives the Food and Agribusiness Award from Councillor Tony Latter of Moreton Bay Regional Council. Image: MBRIT.

PIÑATA FARMS WINS MORETON BAY FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD

Congratulations to Growcom member Pinata Farms who has won the inaugural Food and Agribusiness Excellence Award at the Moreton Bay Regional Business Excellence and Innovation Awards 2021.

Pinata Farms was among five finalists for the new category award. Included in the line-up were Growcom members LuvaBerry and My Berries.

Managing Director Gavin Scurr said the business established as a single pineapple farm by his grandfather in the 1960s was proudly part of the Moreton Bay business community. The nationally focussed fresh fruit business is headquartered at Wamuran, near Caboolture. Today, it is Australia's largest pineapple grower, a leading multi-fruit producer and grows four fresh lines over more than 1000 hectares around Australia, employing more than 70 people and a seasonal workforce of up to 500 each year.

Mr Scurr said the award had now put farming on the region's map.

"There are some 480,000 residents in our fast-growing region but many would be unaware of the significance of farming in the area," he said.

"As a family we've seen the growth and development of the region and are proud to play a part in it. It's a privilege to grow premium fruit so close to a major center."

Mr Scurr paid tribute to all Piñata Farms' employees - based on farms from Darwin to Hobart - who worked tirelessly to deliver quality Piñata pineapples, strawberries, Honey Gold mangoes and raspberries to market throughout the year.

"Our people are committed to excellence throughout the supply chain. In the past 24 months during the global pandemic, our greatest achievement has been to retain all full-time employees, keep staff safe and well, maintain morale and continue producing food. This is testament to the resilience and attitude of our entire team," he said.

Mr Scurr congratulated all winners and finalists and particularly those in the Food and Agribusiness category.

"It's an honour to be recognised among such great company," he said.

The fourth annual awards program was delivered by Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism (MBRIT).

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Research partnership to champion water security for Northern Australia

Three universities with headquarters in the north are partnering with the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) to develop a comprehensive program of research focused on water security in Northern Australia.

Charles Darwin University (CDU), CQUniversity Australia (CQU) and James Cook University (JCU) will partner with the CRCNA to jointly deliver flagship research activities which address water infrastructure and security knowledge gaps required to inform key decision-making.

CRCNA CEO Anne Stünzner said the investment partnership will deliver a program of works across several transformative research initiatives across the north.

“We are seeing enormous interest from the private and corporate sector in underpinning water investment for agricultural production. This partnership acknowledges the full potential of Northern Australia, and this co-investment is a vital opportunity to demonstrate that agricultural growth and environmentally healthy and sustainable eco-systems can coexist in a water context.”

Some of the areas the CRCNA are interested in addressing through this co-investment include improving governance models around water resource allocations, including First Nations’ interests, addressing water security to better support agricultural diversification and water trading opportunities and improving water service delivery to remote and regional areas, including First Nations’ communities.

Ms Stünzner said the objective of the program of research activities is to de-risk the Northern Australia investment and development landscape by improving water sustainability across the region and providing a pathway for the future development of key sectors as well as improving the health and wellbeing of the north’s communities.

JCU Vice-Chancellor Professor Sandra Harding said the new research partnership will harness the collective knowledge of all three universities and maximise water security into the future.

“Our aspiration is to grow and deploy our collective strengths, expertise and presence in research areas that matter to develop and retain the skills and capabilities of industry and community across Northern Australia,” Professor Harding said.

“Being based in the north, all three universities share both the context and operating challenges that are unique to Northern Australia to push the boundaries of water research to help secure water supply and security to Northern Australia for years to come.”

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New videos explore the opportunities and benefits of high-density orchard systems

A range of informative videos are now available to assist growers to understand the benefits of high-density plantings and the opportunities available to de-risk the horticultural industry in cyclone prone areas of northern Australia.

The videos have been produced under a recently launched project being led by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and supported by the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA).

CRCNA CEO Anne Stünzner said enabling producers to better manage risk and diversify was important to ensuring their long-term viability and economic prosperity.

"Similarly, de-risking investment decisions by demonstrating what is possible gives producers and investors greater confidence to look to the north when business planning," she said.

Principal Horticulturist with the DAF Yan Diczbalis said current growing techniques had their disadvantages and high-density orchards were the key to driving sectorial growth.

"Traditionally horticultural trees have been grown at relatively low densities," Mr Diczbalis said.

"The disadvantage to low-density planting is that you end up with fewer, very large trees so to get the production you need per hectare you have to let the tree grow.

"Trees then become inefficient to pick and present problems when it comes time to netting them to protect against birds and bats."

Mr Diczbalis said new growing techniques were required and there were many benefits to high-density plantings.

"They are certainly more efficient to pick and pack because of the way the trees are managed," he said.

"Their canopies are thinner and pesticide sprays can be more uniformly applied so fruit quality is often improved.

"As growers we also like to keep most of our picking staff low on the ground, not on ladders so there is less risk of accidents with smaller trees.

"The challenge is how do we maintain the productivity of high-density situations. We're still learning how to do that, and this project is all about testing that system."

North Queensland exotic tropical fruit grower Josh Maunder from Aus-Ex Fruit said low-density plantings take a lot of capital and investment to manage year-on-year.

"It's definitely harder from a production perspective and to get your crop off," Mr Maunder said.

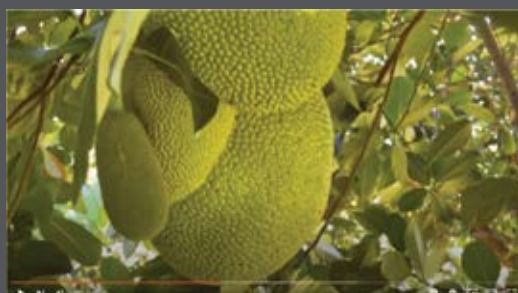
"By comparison moving to high-density has a whole range of economic benefits to the grower in terms of diminished need for machinery, smaller machinery, less intense activity and with that comes a better return on production."

Josh explained that the new high-density and trellised systems being investigated through the project are all about resilience and managing the crop from the outset.

"In the event of a cyclone, the tree may get battered around a little bit, but it stays in the ground and that's how we can recover quickly," he said.

"The project is a good opportunity to show growers, both current and potential, that there is a way to de-risk this industry and at the end of the day if I can facilitate investment from other growers or other research bodies into the industry, then that's the goal achieved for me," he said.

The Demonstrating Next-Generation Resilient Orchard Production Systems for Tropical Crops project is funded through the CRCNA as part of the Australian Government's CRC Program, and being undertaken in collaboration with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), Northern Territory Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT DITT), Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and regional development (DPIRD), Manbulloo Limited, Aus-Ex Fruit, Northern Territory Farmers Association (NT Farmers) and Growcom.



Growcom has developed a range of videos which are now available online: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCscl-mnGBkYNQZag4J_YzOw



You can also keep up to date with the latest project developments via the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/nextgenresilientorchards





Scientists probe bee recovery after fires

The aftermath of the Black Summer Bushfires will give researchers a rare standpoint to study the recovery of wild honey bees and other pollinators, providing important insight for growers facing future catastrophic events.

More than 15 million hectares of native forest were destroyed nationwide after the 2019-20 bushfires, with New South Wales losing 68 per cent of its national parks and other floral resources. These resources are critical for maintaining healthy honey bees that support pollination in 65 per cent of agricultural crops.

Hort Innovation is funding a new research project based in the major apple growing region of Bilpin, NSW, looking at how the recent bushfires affected crop pollination and how long these effects will be felt.

Hort Innovation Research and Development Manager Ashley Zamek said that while the devastating bushfires are gone, they will not be forgotten, and growers remain under threat of an increasing number of extreme weather events.

"The project we're launching will provide a detailed case study of the impact left by a major bushfire on wild pollinator communities by looking at the services they provide to the apple crops of Bilpin," Zamek said.

"This project provides a rare opportunity for scientists, who had already been studying the pollinator populations and floral resources in Bilpin for three years prior to the bushfires. That piece

of research provides excellent pre-fire data to launch this project.

"Over the next few years, the new study will help growers better understand how pollinators and the landscape recover after a disaster, and hopefully lead to recommendations and mitigation measures that will help protect crops and pollinators from future fires."

Project lead Professor James Cook, from Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, said the project will look into how fires impact wild pollinators and the flora they rely upon, and how these change or recover after fires.

It will also study the relative contributions of managed honey bees, wild honey bees, and wild native insects in crop pollination, and how changes in non-crop floral resources affects pollination services.

Findings from this study will also be useful for the horticulture industry's understanding of the potential impact of Varroa Mite on honey bee pollination of crops, and what may happen if the pest takes hold in Australia and the free pollination received from wild honey bees is dramatically reduced.

While this project focusses on apple crops in Bilpin, the case study is expected to benefit growers of many pollination-dependent, horticultural crops such as almonds, avocados, lychees, and others.



PINEAPPLE CROPS PERFORMING GREAT IN HEALTHIER SOILS

The most common soil pest in Queensland, which limits potential growth of pineapple crops, is the root-knot nematode, followed by the root-lesion nematode.

Damage from the root-lesion nematode is difficult to detect in the field. It is very important that growers recognise the lesion caused by this pest as it goes on to facilitate further infection of soil pathogens like Phytophthora, which then magnifies the problem on some farms.

TriCal helps growers to detect pests and disease and **STRIKE** Telone improves yields when heavy nematode counts have been detected. **STRIKE 35** and **STRIKE 60** have proven to be excellent fumigants in other soil types where fungal diseases are prevalent and where Phytophthora is present.

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Beware of label changes

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) publishes variations to labels in their fortnightly Gazette. Keeping abreast of all the changes that occur to labels is challenging. For example, herbicides have come under review with respect to changing modes of action, and in terms of buffer zones and spray drift prevention. The assessments are taking place in increments and may not always be apparent to users.

One such example is Titan Atrazine 600 SC herbicide (91025_130773) noted in Gazette No. 22, 2 November 2021.

It was noted that changes were made to precaution and mixing "DO NOT" statements / restrictions. The previous restriction referring to use around streams stated:

DO NOT mix, load or apply within 20m of any well, sink hole or intermittent stream or river.

DO NOT apply this product within 60m of natural or impounded lakes or dams.

The new changes approved read:

DO NOT mix, load or apply this product within 20m of any well, sink hole, intermittent or **perennial** stream.

Plus, a new 'Mandatory Downwind Buffer Zones' table to 'Natural Aquatic Areas' and, there are no direct references to dams on the label.

Growcom has always advocated that everyone should read the label first. Changes of this nature demonstrate why this is important. Resellers may tell purchasers of atrazine that products of the same active and concentration are the same in their uses, however this may not be the case. The Titan product has recently been approved. Other 600 SC Atrazine products with older APVMA approval numbers still have reference to dams and the wording for perennial streams is intermittent in use amongst them and do not have the buffer zone table. These changes are subtle but important to the protection of water bodies and natural aquatic areas as listed and they will become more prevalent as the APVMA reviews more labels for this purpose.

Growcom encourages readers to be alert to changes in labels. If offered a substitute product to one you are currently using and familiar with, take the time to thoroughly read the label and note any of these subtle differences.

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PHA REVAMPS ONLINE COURSE OFFERING

Plant Health Australia (PHA) has recently revamped three online courses that now offer greater interactivity and designs to enhance the online learning experience.

The three online courses, Plant Biosecurity in Australia, Pest Reporting and Responses (for Growers and Researchers) now have improved graphics and interactive elements such as pop-up text boxes and flip text boxes.

PHA's Biosecurity Online Training (BOLT) platform provides e-learning courses related to emergency plant pest and disease preparedness, arrangements and biosecurity.

New pests and diseases can devastate farm productivity and native ecosystems and affect access of Australian goods to overseas markets.

"By reporting an exotic pest or disease early, there is a greater chance it will be successfully contained and eradicated. For this reason it is vital to report any suspected new pests, pathogens or new hosts," said Dr Susanna Driessen, PHA's General Manager, Emergency Response.

The Plant Biosecurity in Australia course provides a summary of the Australian biosecurity system and how emergency responses to plant pests are managed under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). This course replaces the PHA Foundation course.

"This course is aimed at anyone interested in plant biosecurity in Australia and is a prerequisite course for biosecurity training

delivered by TOCAL College as part of the Biosecurity Response Training Australia (BERTA) program," Susanna said.

The short course, Growers – Pest Reporting and Responses, is aimed at growers, farm workers and agronomists, and provides a better understanding of reporting and responding to plant pests.

"This course focusses on the role of growers in reporting and responding to plant pests in Australia. Growers, farm workers, and agronomists will get a better understanding of how to report pests and what happens after they do," she said.

"Reporting increases the chance of effective control and eradication, which reduces the impact on agriculture. This is what will keep our industries competitive, healthy and in-demand for years to come."

Researchers have an obligation to report plant pests that are potentially exotic to Australia or new to a specific region. The Researchers – Pest Reporting and Responses course highlights the benefits of biosecurity, how to implement biosecurity practices and how to report a new or unusual pest or disease.

Access to BOLT courses is free and available to anyone with an interest in biosecurity. Courses undergo regular reviews to ensure they remain current and relevant.

Information on how to register is available on the PHA website: www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/resources/training/biosecurity-online-training/

INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN RETIREMENT TRUST

QSuper and Sunsuper have announced that the \$230 billion fund resulting from their proposed merger will be called 'Australian Retirement Trust'. It plans to deliver a fee reduction for their more than two million members from 1 July 2022.

Australian Retirement Trust Chief Executive Officer Bernard Reilly said the announcement of the merged fund's name was an important step forward in the merger process since the signing of a Heads of Agreement in March 2021.

"Australian Retirement Trust will be a force for good, to make the world for our two million members better, guiding them to and through retirement," said Mr Reilly.

"Australian Retirement Trust captures the key elements of our proposed organisation: our fund is for all Australians, no matter where they live or what industry they work in. We will guide our members to and through retirement, and as a fund that works for members, not shareholders, we will be trusted to work in their best interests.

"Australian Retirement Trust will continue both Sunsuper's

and QSuper's focus on working for members, aiming to deliver strong, long-term investment returns and low fees and providing the tools and advice to help members feel on top of their super."

Australian Retirement Trust's future trustees have flagged that they intend to deliver a post-merger fee reduction to apply from the start of the next financial year, with final details to be communicated to members prior to 30 June 2022.

The current 1.4 million Sunsuper members will become members of Australian Retirement Trust's public offering as will all new members not connected to the Queensland Government. The QSuper brand will continue as a part of Australian Retirement Trust, dedicated to providing superannuation products and services to Queensland Government employees and their families.

Australian Retirement Trust will be headquartered in Queensland, with offices around Australia. The planned merger is on track to proceed on 28 February 2022 pending final Board, regulatory and legislative approvals.

SETTING THE COURSE FOR PROTECTED CROPPING

A strategy to provide direction and support for crops grown under shelter in Australia has been launched.

Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia David Littleproud said the Australian Protected Cropping Strategy 2021-2030 was a pathway for the industry to develop.

“The strategy will look to increase knowledge and the capacity of industry to adopt and take advantage of protected cropping systems. With these systems we can look at developing new markets, both domestically and internationally,” Minister Littleproud said.

“There is huge potential for protected cropping, and I’m really excited for what the next decade could bring.”

Implementation of the Strategy is being led by Protected Cropping Australia with support from Hort Innovation.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive Officer Matt Brand said protected cropping-based horticultural production is tipped to grow considerably.

“Because protected cropping provides control over growing conditions, a dedicated strategy is vital,” Mr Brand said.

“From high-tech glass houses to basic covers and nets, protected cropping is becoming a popular choice for Australian horticulture.

“With input from industry, this strategy provides an important roadmap to drive

innovation and competitiveness in the horticulture sector.”

The strategy is based on extensive consultation with industry stakeholders, as well as an analysis of global trends in the use of protected cropping within horticulture.

Almost 50 organisations and more than 100 individuals were engaged as part of its development, including State and Territory agricultural departments, industry associations, universities and educational centres, growers, marketing groups, consultants, and suppliers.

Protected Cropping Australia Chief Executive Officer Greg Fraser said the Strategy will prove a useful tool for industry.

“Australia’s horticulture industry has a great capacity and capability to harness the potential of protected cropping systems across a diversity of crops, regions, climates, business models and markets,” he said.

“This Strategy outlines opportunities for research, development and extension in the context of global megatrends, local challenges and opportunities and other factors.”

The Australian Protected Cropping Strategy 2021-2030 was funded through Hort Innovation’s Hort Frontiers Advanced Production Systems Fund, the Australian Government and the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries with input from Food Innovation Australia.



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FNQ FARMER OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

Dimbulah producer and Growcom member Raymond Courtice has been named the 2021 Charlie Nastasi Horticultural Farmer of the Year.

Presented at the FNQ Growers Gala Dinner in Mareeba late last year, the award recognises growers for the industry-leading work they do on their own operations or as part of an industry or community organisation.

Mr Courtice overcame the strong competition of fellow nominees Mark Taylor, Irresistible Orchard, and Shaun and Debbie Jackson, Daintree Fresh.

In just a few years Mr Courtice has established a state-of-the-art packhouse, managed a quarantine facility, and became the first Queensland mango grower to send fruit to Western Australia.

He said it had been an honour to be nominated, let alone take out the overall award.

Mr Courtice farms alongside his father on their 700-hectare farm at Dimbulah, west of Mareeba after migrating north from Bundaberg.

"We're originally avocado and mango growers in Bundaberg but we sold out back in 2007 and headed north," he said.

"We purchased a mango orchard here in Dimbulah and since then have developed and almost tripled our size of production in the last seven years.

"We are mainly mango growers but have just diversified into mandarin and lemons to spread the season."

Mr Courtice has achieved quite a few things over the past few years.

"We've been exporting fruit to places like China and the US for four years and we had protocols and procedures in place already," he said.

"The pests and diseases that Western Australia are concerned of are actually the pests that our export markets are concerned of as well.

"So we've now developed a protocol on the back of the export protocol that's now open to all growers if they want to follow the procedures to get into WA."

Mr Courtice said this will be their third year sending fruit to Western Australia and that there was a lot of work involved initially, but it was a market they needed to crack.

FNQ Growers president Joe Moro said each of the three nominees were worthy of the award, and all were shining examples of the future of the horticulture industry in Far North Queensland.

"Choosing a winner is always difficult and this year was no different, with a fair amount of deliberation by the judges," Mr Moro said.

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TARGETED SUPPLY CHAIN ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE TO BENEFIT GROWERS

Australia's peak industry body for mangoes, the Australian Mango Industry Association (AMIA), will collaborate with Hort Innovation to drive a major win for growers, after successfully securing the Supply Chain Engagement Project.

AMIA Chief Executive Officer Brett Kelly said that having the peak industry body for mangoes lead the Hort Innovation project will benefit industry stakeholders, and in particular growers, as there will be synergy between the key projects that AMIA manage, that all focus on ensuring a sustainable and profitable industry.

"This project will tie-in with all the other work we are doing for Australia's Mango Industry that all aim to build and secure the industry's future," Mr Kelly said.

The objective of the Supply Chain Engagement Project is to develop and organise activities involving key supply chain stakeholders to build interest, excitement, and an understanding of the mango industry; ultimately to increase the demand and consumption of fresh Australian mangoes.

The project supports the broader mango marketing programs managed by Hort Innovation, and ties in with AMIA managed projects; National Mango Industry Communication Program (MG17004) and Building Best Management Practice Capacity for the Australian Mango Industry (MG17000). These projects are funded by Hort Innovation, using the mango research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government.

Leading the project will be Andrew Burns AMIA's Supply Chain Engagement Manager.

Andrew has held roles such as General Manager, Sales and Marketing Manager, and Integration Manager for Norco Foods/ Norco Co-operative Limited, and National Sales Operations Manager for Arnott's.

"I am excited to have Andrew join our team and have no doubt that he will deliver great outcomes for the mango industry stakeholders and will be an asset to our team. He has a wealth of experience in marketing and sales roles," Mr Kelly said.

"Andrew will be able to build on the fantastic work that Hort Innovation has been doing to get the project up and running this season, and that AMIA's former Marketing Manager, Treena Welch, executed over previous seasons with retailers and other industry stakeholders throughout the supply chain.

The project will run until September 2022.



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\$150 million mission to boost Australian agriculture and food sectors

Australia's national science agency CSIRO has announced three new missions that will grow Australia's agriculture and food sectors targeting \$20 billion by 2030.

The \$150 million investment from CSIRO, government and industry will tackle drought, the food export market and growing the protein market.

CSIRO Chief Executive Dr Larry Marshall said the three missions together aim to capture a \$20 billion opportunity for Australian agriculture to extend its position as a world leader.

"For over a century, CSIRO has been working with farmers and governments to improve life on this great land – but today we're bringing all of our newest science and technology, from Artificial Intelligence to genetics and smart materials, to bear on overcoming our oldest national challenge – drought," Dr Marshall said.

"Overcoming the impacts of drought, protecting the authenticity of Australian products, and inventing whole new markets will grow one of our most important national industries.

"Australia has a natural competitive advantage in 'ag-tech', the way Silicon Valley does in 'tech' – these missions leverage that advantage to grow those local companies and grow the quality of life for Australians working in them."

These are part of CSIRO's program of missions to support Australia's future where we use science to amplify Australia's global advantages and strengths. The research missions aim to:

- Reduce the impacts of drought by 30 per cent
- Increase the value of Australian agrifood exports by \$10 billion, and
- Produce an additional \$10 billion of high-quality protein products by 2030.

"Overcoming challenges of this size takes a Team Australia approach, which is why we're proud to have so many collaborators on board to help Australian agriculture become more resilient, more profitable, and to produce food that is more plentiful and healthier for Australians and our customers around the world," Dr Marshall said.

Mission 1: Drought Resilience.

With droughts in Australia projected to increase in frequency and severity, the Mission aims to reduce the impacts of droughts by 30 percent by 2030. Researchers will investigate new farming systems that use water more efficiently, technologies to secure regional water supplies and new tools based on localised climate data that will make farming into the future easier. The Mission is vital to protect agricultural profitability, strengthen the economic resilience and water security of regional communities, and improve environmental outcomes.

READ MORE: www.csiro.au/en/about/challenges-missions/Drought-Resilience

Mission 2: Trusted Agrifood Exports. Australia can increase the value of its agrifood exports such as our horticulture and beef products by \$10 billion by 2030. The mission will improve access to high-value markets through new isotopic fingerprinting tools that can support proof of origin for food and verify its clean and green credentials. The mission will also reduce the cost of meeting export requirements through new automated systems that use sensors and other remote technologies.

READ MORE: www.csiro.au/en/about/challenges-missions/Trusted-Agrifood-Exports

Mission 3: Future Protein.

There is a \$10 billion opportunity for Australia's growers and producers to create the future protein for the world's growing population. The mission will protect and grow existing livestock and aquaculture industries, develop new plant-based products and use new technologies, such as biomanufacturing to create new proteins or even transform waste products into high value food products.

READ MORE: www.csiro.au/en/about/challenges-missions/Future-protein-mission

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