

Fruit & Vegetable news

FAIR FARMS WELCOMES

Australian horticulture to inaugural conference

QHC HOLDS PRODUCTIVE MEETING WITH MINISTER FURNER | HORT360 LEADS TO MARKED IMPROVEMENTS IN EFFICIENCIES AND YIELD | LONG-RANGE FORECAST: RISK OF FLOODING, EARLY TROPICAL CYCLONE | GROWERS GET THE LOWDOWN ON HORTICULTURAL APPS AND TIME SLASHING HACKS

Merry Christmas

The team at Growcom would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It has been a great pleasure to work with you through the ups and downs of 2022.

Growcom will close its offices for a short period from COB Friday 23 December 2022 and reopen on Tuesday 3 January 2023.

Warm wishes,



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4. QHC holds productive meeting with Minister Furner

In September the Queensland Horticultural Council (QHC) had their quarterly catch up with Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner. These meetings provide the opportunity for the Minister and his staff to hear a region by region wrap up, ask questions, and seek to assist. They also provide an opportunity for the Minister to make regional grower groups aware of what actions and initiatives the State is working on regarding all things horticulture.

10. Hort360 leads to marked improvements in efficiencies and yield

Despite a concerted spray program, orchard hygiene and biosecurity practices in place, Keppel Orchards in Yeppoon saw significant losses of custard apples from insect pest Queensland Fruit-Fly. That was until they discovered a sensor technology providing real-time notification on the presence of Q-fly.

12. long-range forecast: risk of flooding, early tropical cyclone

The Bureau of Meteorology has released its long-range forecast for Australia's coming severe weather season including an increased risk of widespread flooding for eastern and northern Australia and an increased risk of an above average number of tropical cyclones and tropical lows.

33. Growers get the lowdown on horticultural apps and time slashing hacks

Horticulture growers in the Central Queensland, Wide Bay-Burnett and Mary regions took a break from the daily grind last month to attend one of four Hort Hacks & Apps workshops coordinated by Growcom in partnership with nbn Local.



welcome

Chief Executive Officer
Rachel Chambers

Horticulture is the most important industry in the world. I'm not just saying that because it's my job, I'm saying it because it's everyone else's job too.

Horticulture provides jobs which include scientists, bankers, managers, supervisors, machinery operators, machinery sales, pickers, packers, agronomists, food tech specialists, quality assurance, administration, mechanics and marketers to name just a few. The freight supply chain for horticulture alone employs 57,000 Australians and horticulture also serves as the foundation of the 57,000 restaurants and cafes we have across the country.

And for those naysayers who still may not be convinced. Can you name one industry, just one will do, that doesn't rely on a human, who needs to eat a range of fruit, vegetables, and nuts to stay alive and do their job too?

Horticulture is a big deal. Aside from farm gate value, the number of indirect jobs that support various economies throughout the country cannot be underestimated, but often is.

For too long horticulture has remained relatively quiet. Busy just feeding the world. For too long the complexities of multiple horticultural commodities, the inherent differences in growing regions, multiple industry disasters and an element of reputational damage has dimmed our voice instead of amplifying it.

2022 has brought growers repeated natural disasters, escalating input costs, unstable domestic and export markets, biosecurity concerns and a never-before-seen labour market. No wonder growers are exhausted! Yet, with all this uncertainty and negativity, they still got up each day to deal with whatever was thrown their way. Growers have grit.

Regardless of what 2023 brings, Growcom is on a mission. Next year we are going to celebrate horticulture loudly and proudly. Given it will be 100 years since Growcom (in all its iterations) has been involved with horticulture, we have staked the claim that 2023 is the year of Horticulture in Queensland. If 100 years isn't a good time for an industry to celebrate, when is it?

Imagine a time where growers are treated like heroes, revered for being the people who proudly grow the food humans rely on. A time where everyone in the supply chain is acknowledged and appreciated for how they support the work growers do. A time where consumers understand the work and costs that goes into one piece of fruit/nut or a kg of veg. A time where government further comprehends the essential and complex economy of growing. A time where your peak body strongly represents horticulture as undoubtedly the most important industry in the world. That time is 2023, Queensland's Year of Horticulture, we can't wait to celebrate you!

Wishing you a Christmas season full of love, laughter, good weather, great pack outs and fabulous returns.



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FAIR FARMS WELCOMES
*Australian horticulture to
inaugural conference*



Queensland Horticulture Council Chair
Joe Moro

QHC HOLDS PRODUCTIVE MEETING WITH MINISTER FURNER

Horticulture is a complex beast. Across Queensland, multiple commodities provide a long list of unique growing requirements, issues to be solved and untapped opportunities whilst, multiple growing regions provide a complicated landscape of varied local Government planning, a plethora of water issues and diverse climate conditions which seem to continually throw a spanner in the works somewhere across this vast state.

The complexity of the business of horticulture is the very reason it's so important to regularly catch up with State and Commonwealth governments. Unless governments have a deep understanding of the current issues, along with an awareness of potential issues, they are not best placed to support and assist industry.

In September the Queensland Horticulture Council (QHC) had their quarterly catch up with Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner. These meetings provide the opportunity for the Minister and his staff to hear a region by region wrap up, ask questions, and seek to assist. They also provide an opportunity for the Minister to make regional grower groups aware of what actions and initiatives the State is working on regarding all things horticulture.

Granite Belt growers shared their flood recovery efforts noting that the weather has been favourable in providing growers the opportunity to remove some water out of paddocks, particularly necessary for apples and stone fruit varieties. They are just coming into their strawberry season with their first pick being last week. Planting has begun with tomatoes and capsicum and vegetables are kicking off again. Accommodation was once again raised as a dominant issue for this region given all regular growing accommodation has been reverted to providing accommodation for residents. It was also noted that due to the changes in overtime, growers will need about 30% more staff in peak times.

The Lockyer Valley is wrapping up their winter crops and reported Serpentine leaf miner and Fall army worm amongst their concerns. Onion season is about to take off and as such demand for labour will be high. Ongoing input costs was raised as an ongoing issue with no relief in sight. QRIDA received an honourable mention for their assistance to growers in the region. The progress in flood recovery was noted as good for the mental health of the valley.

Bundaberg reported good news with their dams and weirs being full, but it came with a word of warning about the uncertainty brought about by further releases from Paradise planned for Q3 next year. They are coming to the end of capsicum, zucchini and pumpkins with a notable avoidance of corn due to Fall army worm. Bundaberg reported good numbers of PALM workers with a good amount of accommodation available. A mention was made about the lagging cultural support systems and the flow on community impacts.

The Bowen Region is wrapping up tomatoes and capsicum and is gearing up for a delayed start to the mango season. Trees are heavily in bloom, so it is hoped a good season lay ahead. Challenges for the region included a worker shortage of around 400 and corresponding accommodation shortages, with the next issue on the horizon being a lack of drivers in the supply chain.

Far North Queensland is expecting very large crops of mangoes, lychees and avocados this coming season, and supported the other regions concerns regarding labour, transport and rising input costs. Also noted was the council-by-council variations regarding on farm accommodation with a request to the state to assist growers to make it easier for them to take pressure of housing in town and communities in general. Rural valuations and corresponding rates were also noted as an issue.

The Minister told the group of the expanding opportunities into exports to Vietnam, made mention of the now concluded consultation on the low emissions road map and the Agtech Roadmap and committed to following up on a few points raised.

All in all, a productive meeting with much work to do on both sides going forward.

The Queensland Horticulture Council (QHC) is the preeminent forum for deliberating and determining horticulture policy in Queensland. It is comprised of representatives from Growcom and each of the major regionally-based grower groups and associations.



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One day new and refresher course

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BUNDEBERG - 23/11 **GYMPIE** - 24/11 **KINGAROY** - 25/11 **TOOWOOMBA** - 1/12
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If dates/location do no suit please advise of your requirements to enable future planning. Courses can be arranged elsewhere if required.
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CLIENT FEEDBACK:

ROB'S COURSE WAS WELL CONSTRUCTED AND CATERES FOR PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT SKILL LEVELS AND USES RELEVANT REAL CASE STORIES TO ACCENTUATE RELATIVE POINTS. ADRIAN S

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

GREAT INFORMATION AND EASY TO LISTEN TO INSTRUCTOR WHO WAS ABLE TO IMPART HIS KNOWLEDGE TO ME EASILY. VERY GOOD COURSE. I LEARNT A LOT. RODNEY W

1800 626 681
WWW.COUNTRYCO.COM.AU
ROB BARTLEY Countryco Ag Services Pty Ltd
admin@countryco.com.au



Welcome Angela!

As part of our mission to celebrate horticulture loudly and proudly in 2023 and beyond, we are surrounding our growers with people who also believe horticulture is the most important industry in the world.

We are excited to announce that one such person has now accepted the role of Head of Engagement and Advocacy. Welcome to the team Angela Seng-Williams!

Originally from the Lockyer Valley and more recently the Bundaberg region after a couple of stints up north, Angela has worked in several sectors across Queensland ranging from agriculture, natural resource management, small business to education and community services.

We looked for proven grower centric skills in this role and Angela certainly brings with her the experience and passion for supporting people, rural communities, and effective engagement to achieve real and most importantly useful results.

Angela trained in Agricultural Extension and has 30 years' cross-industry experience in grower engagement, advocacy, facilitation and project management across the Queensland sugar, grazing and cropping industries. Recently Angela had five years working as the Canegrowers Manager in the Bundaberg region during which time she led the state-wide codesign of the first formalised and evidence-based grower centric extension framework for agriculture with assistance from over 350 extension officers, advisors and farmers. This work is now building momentum and being embedded into a number of industries and now horticulture.

She has also worked for 10 years in both the community sector and private practice supporting organisations to effectively engage our most vulnerable and disengaged in our communities. Angela has been a strong advocate for mental health and wellbeing in the bush and this will continue to be on her radar. She recently led and co-authored the Walking the Wire e-resource which puts a spotlight on financial resilience, transitioning the family farm and succession planning.

Angela has built a career on her passion for agriculture and genuine relationships. Her true heart belongs in extension and working 'with' farmers not 'for' farmers. We are excited to have her join the team and we hope you are too!

We welcomed Angela on 31 October 2022.



Growcom Head of Engagement & Advocacy, Angela Seng-Williams.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers Ltd (trading as Growcom Australia) will be held at **4pm Thursday, 24 November 2022 at Parliament House, Dandiir Room, Cnr George and Alice Streets, Brisbane Qld 4000.**

Under the company's constitution, only Grower Members who are financial members may vote, either in person, by proxy, or by company representative. Eligibility to vote will be determined from the Growcom Register of Members. A member entitled

to attend and vote at the meeting may appoint a person to act as his, her or its proxy, if the member is unable to attend the meeting.

Where a member wishes to appoint a proxy to attend the meeting and vote on his, her or its behalf, the written form of appointment of proxy must be completed, signed, and returned (via post or email) to Growcom by no later than 5pm Friday, 18 November 2022.

A Notice of AGM, Proxy Form and copy of the 2021/22 Annual Report was emailed to financial members in late October. If you have not received your copy but believe you are entitled to vote, please contact Growcom on 07 3620 3844 as soon as possible.



Queensland Farmers' Federation President
Allan Dingle

Water – we need a plan

Water is the lifeblood of agriculture, regional communities, and the people of Queensland more broadly. Surface water dominates our water supply sources but groundwater also plays an important role, especially for inland parts of the state. Approximately 7.9 million megalitres of water in Queensland is allocated for use across the state. Access to this water relies heavily on rainfall which is highly seasonal and varies considerably year to year.

The Queensland Government has invested \$9 million to deliver Regional Water Assessments (RWA) in three of what are Queensland's most significant food bowls – the Southern and Darling Downs, the Bundaberg and Burnett, and the Tablelands regions – with the aim of identifying water supply solutions to drive future economic growth. Regional Water Assessments are to provide a region-level assessment of water needs and options to improve water security and maximise economic development opportunities in the project area.

QFF, its members, and other stakeholders are participating in the process, that is to build on previous studies with the view of making the best use of existing knowledge and ensure previous

work is not lost. The overall approach has been divided into three phases; phase one will establish the service need and a short list of options; phase two will focus on the detailed analysis of options and generating the overall strategy for the RWA, and phase three will be the creation of the final report.

The process is to consider both infrastructure and non-infrastructure options including improving the efficiency of existing water supply schemes and maximising the benefit from existing water resources and infrastructure. As a participant on the stakeholder advisory groups and working groups for all three RWA's, QFF is advocating for water security, economic growth, and long-term viability of the agricultural sector through effective policy development.

Queensland is long overdue for the development of a clear, strategic, and workable water plan that provides a blueprint, underpinned by investment, to securing affordable, reliable water for the future development of this state. We will be watching closely for outcomes from the Regional Water Assessments.



MEMBER SURVEY



Have you completed the 2022 Growcom Member Survey?

If 2022 had to be remembered by using just one word, 'lettuce' would have to be a front runner. On the back of ongoing labour shortages and rising input costs, multiple flooding events truly tested growers' passion for the industry. Throughout it all, Growcom has been there supporting the Queensland horticulture industry and our grower members.

2023 is set to be an especially exciting one as we celebrate 100 years of Growcom and its predecessor organisation. To ensure we continue to be an effective peak industry body for Queensland's horticulture industry, Growcom is asking all members to complete our annual Member Survey.

The survey will remain open until 31 January 2023.



Have your say at:
<https://bit.ly/2022GrowcomSurvey>

COMING SOON

Group 30
novel mode
of action

Targets
mites, thrips,
Lepidoptera

Reliable,
robust
efficacy

Strong
residual
activity

SIMODIS®. So much more.*

Growers are excited because it's a novel mode of action (Group 30), but SIMODIS® insecticide is so much more than that. It is a breakthrough that will let you plan ahead with confidence.

It is a powerful formulation specifically crafted to target key pests that hit your bottom line. It is a potent, novel insecticide with a wide label for hard-to-control pests across a range of horticultural crops, helping prevent insect damage quickly. It is strong, residual protection for growers seeking sustained solutions and robust efficacy.

It is SIMODIS®. And it is so much more. For further information talk to your local Syngenta representative or visit www.syngenta.com.au/simodis

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®

New DAF Engagement Hub: Varroa Mite

The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has established a new eHub page that provides information and resources to support beekeepers and the bee industry to keep Queensland hives safe. It is regularly updated, and you can also stay informed by subscribing to DAF's newsletters and alerts.

Visit the DAF eHub:

daf.engagementhub.com.au/varroa-mite

CURRENT SITUATION

Varroa mite (*varroa destructor*) was detected in honey bee hives at the Port of Newcastle on Wednesday 22 June 2022. The detection was the result of routine surveillance on sentinel hives by NSW Bee Biosecurity Officers.

On 26 June, a Biosecurity Emergency Order was enacted in New South Wales for a statewide standstill of all bees, hives, apiary equipment and untreated bee products.

Varroa destructor attacks European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) (EHB) and is considered the greatest threat to Australia's honey and honey bee pollination plant industries.

At the time of publishing, there were no detections of varroa mite in Queensland.

MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER

An updated movement control order came into effect on 8 August 2022 and replaces all previous movement control orders. You can view the latest movement control order via the DAF eHub.

A permit system has been established to move bees, hives, used beekeeping equipment and bee products (including honey) into Queensland from NSW under certain circumstances. You can apply for a biosecurity instrument permit online:

www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/biosecurity/policy-legislation-regulation/biosecurity-instrument-permit

BIOSECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING

If you own or keep at least one hive, you must register as a biosecurity entity. Registration is free for non-commercial beekeepers. Native bee hives do not need to be registered.

All beekeepers should monitor their hives and immediately report unexpected hive deaths, deformed bees, bees with parasites, poor brood patterns and dead brood to Biosecurity Queensland.

Register online:

www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/niche-industries/bees-beekeeping/beekeeping/hive-registration



NEW BEEGINNINGS?

By Growcom CEO Rachel Chambers

For anyone who hasn't listened to a seasoned beekeeper discuss the incredibly amazing world of bees, let me just say, put it on your bucket list. From the drones having all but one purpose in life, genetics which doesn't include a father and a body which boasts four wings, six legs and five eyes, the world of bees is fascinating. With their ability to produce honey, wax, nectar, royal jelly and of course pollinate they rightly deserve their title of "keystone species" as without them our ecosystem may not survive.

If the recent figures are anything to go from, it seems many more people have stumbled across the beauty of bees with great increases in registered hives (hives are compulsory to register).

It is also plainly obvious that beekeeping has been an integral part of Queensland's history given it is represented by a peak industry body dating back 136 years. So, it shouldn't come as any surprise to anyone in horticulture how valuable to our industry these beauties are. It may be their silent 'just getting on with the job' nature which has prevented the industry from taking the limelight. However, to shine a light on how industrious these girls are (the workers are all girls) on any one given night while many of us are asleep between 100—200 trucks are moving bees from farm to forest and forest to farm along the East Coast of Australia.

Given its history, you could imagine my surprise that with more than a century of knowledge and understanding of some of Queensland's smallest horticultural workers, it became apparent in a recent biosecurity meeting that 'we' (a collective of peak industry bodies and government) didn't have a pollination calendar for Queensland horticulture.

The need for this information only came about when trying to work out if the 90,000 hives registered in Queensland would be enough to pollinate all crops in the season they required it, within the time frame and location they needed it. We were working together to understand if we had enough hives within the state and the travel required to get the job done. Biosecurity planning without imminent threat is one thing but planning with varroa mite over your shoulder or indeed just over the border gives necessary clarity and purpose to conversations.

It has been in these conversations that the opportunity for both the bee and horticulture industry to work more collaboratively into the future has been identified. Growth in horticulture requires growth in pollination.

Let's not forget our bee friends in these planning conversations, because although we all need a Plan A, many of us also need a Plan Bee.

SUMMIT PEAKS IN PLATITUDE, REAL WORK STARTS NOW

The Jobs and Skills Summit held in early September was given an overall pass mark by agricultural attendees and observers.

From the Summit a tripartite agreement was signed between peak industry bodies, key unions, and the Albanese Government to implement a range of agreed improvements to skills and training, workplace safety, housing, and the PALM Scheme. All of which were welcomed.

However, while we heard again bleeding obvious acknowledgements from all sides that there was in fact a very serious shortfall in seasonal labour, Growcom CEO Rachel Chambers said no great ground was broken at the Summit in finding the immediate solution growers were seeking.

Ahead of the Summit, Growcom set the benchmark of what 'success' would look like for our industry including prioritizing the needs of the fresh produce sector and supply chain to access sufficient labour as a matter of food security.

"Beyond ensuring Australians have access to affordable, locally grown produce we also called on the Australian Government to prioritize the horticulture industry and fresh produce supply chain because of the unparalleled opportunities they present in terms of expanding secure, well-paid employment opportunities for all Australians, but particularly those in the regions," Ms Chambers said.

"Finding the right people at the right time will continue to be a challenge for horticulture, as a seasonal industry with great peaks and troughs of labour demand, and a growing need for skills to adopt the latest technology.

"We must do a better job creating a pathway for talent into our industry. There are many great careers to be had in horticulture. The industry must work more closely with schools and training organisations, to put our career pathways on the map for young people, and to ensure training is preparing workers for the farms of the future.

"And while it remains, as ever, our desire to first attract and retain Australians into every role within the horticulture industry, it must be recognised we have been traditionally, and likely into the foreseeable future, an industry dependent in large part on a migrant workforce.

"We need the Albanese Government to grapple earnestly with this challenge, and the union movement to engage with the challenge in good faith.

"And lastly, success for horticulture will be a separate stream of work focused on solving our current and worsening housing and accommodation shortage.

"Moving forward it will likely be that absence of appropriate accommodation that will prove the next bottleneck that prevents the fresh produce sector realising its potential."

It is expected that the themes and outcomes emerging from the Summit will inform the Employment White Paper, which will help to shape the future of Australia's labour market. Growcom will be making submissions and engaging further in this process on behalf of members and the wider industry over the next 12 months.

You can find a complete list of all the outcomes achieved at the Jobs and Skills Summit online here: treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Jobs-and-Skills-Summit-Outcomes-Document.pdf



DAMAGE MITIGATION PERMITS UNDER REVIEW

The Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES) is currently reviewing flying-fox management regulations for crop protection.

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting the commercial fruit growing industry and recognises the impact flying-foxes can have on fruit crops. The Government also recognises that there are conservation and animal welfare concerns with the current lethal take approach to flying-fox management for crop protection.

To ensure there are tools and resources available for effective and efficient crop protection, DES is seeking comments from growers and industry representatives on the future management of flying-foxes for crop protection.

In particular, comment is sought on:

- The mitigation practices (lethal and non-lethal) currently used by commercial growers for flying-foxes.
- The costs, benefits and potential barriers of different mitigation practices.
- Other potential options for protecting crops from flying-foxes (including use of emerging technologies and innovative solutions).

To provide feedback, ask questions or to be kept informed about this review, please email nc.act@des.qld.gov.au. Please indicate whether you would prefer your feedback to remain confidential.

Further information on the review is available online: www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/animals/living-with/bats/flying-foxes/managing-impacts-of-flying-foxes/review-of-dmp



HORT360 LEADS TO

marked improvements in efficiencies and yield

In April 2021, Ken Brown from Keppel Orchards in Yeppoon, attended a Hort360 pest management workshop, searching for best practice methods to manage the insect pest Queensland Fruit-Fly (Q-Fly) on custard apple crops.

Despite a concerted spray program, orchard hygiene and biosecurity practices in place, significant losses of custard apples continued to occur at Keppel Orchards from Q-Fly.

The workshop Pest Aware; Pest Prepared featured presentations by experts in ag-tech monitoring innovation, beneficial insects, and efficiencies in spray technology including from Bugs for Bugs, RapidAIM, TP Engineering and Growcom.

Entomologist, ag-tech researcher and founder of RapidAIM, Dr Nancy Schellhorn presented on how their ag-technology product worked as a surveillance grid for the earliest possible indication of Q-fly activity in an orchard.

Dr Schellhorn explained how the RapidAIM technology was able to provide real-time Q-fly pressure data to a mobile device, enabling growers to make informed, timely decisions and adopt precision spray practices in their orchards.

"I knew as soon as Nancy started talking that this was something we needed to get on-board with," Ken said, whose family-run operation grows custard apples, avocados and mangos.

Stings from Q-fly damages fruit causing skin discolouration, rapid decomposition, early decay and fruit drop.

The situation was completely dire. Ken found hope however during Dr Schellhorn's presentation that looked at use of sensor technology providing real-time notification on the presence of Q-fly.

"We just couldn't get the jump on them [Q-fly] and the presentation helped me to understand why," he said.

Given the extent of the troubles they were having with Q-fly, Keppel Orchard chose to invest in ten RapidAIM sensors, to establish a network across their 15 hectares of custard apples.

The network of lured sensors detects the presence of male Q-fly, sending an alert to their mobiles and notifying them that Q-fly were active in a specific location.

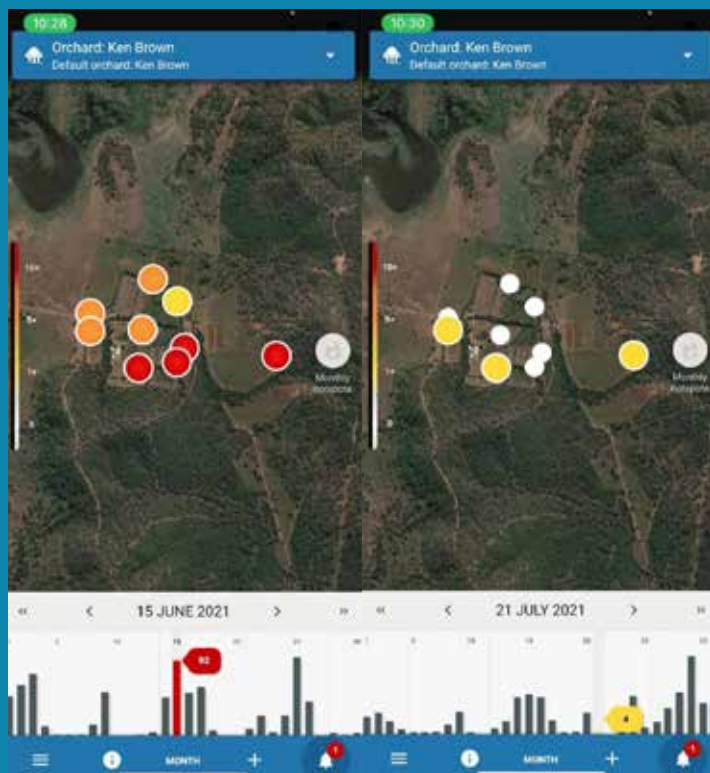
In addition to this, the software keeps a record of time, location, and number of every detection. This gave the Browns real-time indications of Q-fly populations and their whereabouts within the orchard.

The results and consequential overhaul of their approach to dealing with Q-fly resulted in a ten-fold increase in custard apple yield. Other benefits of adoption of the sensors included:

- more time – the sensors have freed up time previously spent setting and checking traps, and sitting on the tractor spraying during the night
- reduced use of pesticides and a consequential savings on pesticide
- incorporation of more beneficial bugs
- enables forecasting and planning spray programs for the next season using property data and trend records.

“Simply by modifying the time of spray application to early morning, say about 6am, within a month the number of fruit fly detections went from 92 down to four,” Ken said.

The Pest Aware; Pest Prepared workshop was coordinated by Growcom with support from regional NRM group Fitzroy Basin Association, national vegetable peak industry body AUSVEG, and the Queensland Government.



Screenshot of QFly detections June (left) and July (right) showing marked reductions in pest detections since use of RapidAIM and changes to spray programs.



For over a decade, Growcom has been working with growers living on the doorstep of the Great Barrier Reef to make changes to the way they farm to stop soil, pesticides, and nutrients impacting on Reef water quality.

RapidAIM technology has recently become commercially available, and has proven highly effective in the monitoring, early detection and record-keeping of specific pest insects such as Q-fly. It is in advanced trial stages for early detected of Fall Armyworm and Macadamia Leaf Minor – all detrimental pest species to horticultural crops.

For a limited time, RapidAIM is offering Hort360 Reef Certified growers an exclusive deal – purchase nine sensors and receive a 10th sensor FREE, saving \$360.

To access this exclusive deal, contact your local Hort360 Facilitator today.

To learn more about RapidAIM, visit: rapidaim.io

Michelle Haase
Southern Reef Catchments
0428 586 890
mhaase@growcom.com.au

Luke Hargreaves
Central Reef Catchments
0422 567 371
lhargreaves@growcom.com.au

Phil Laycock
Northern Reef Catchments
0439 252 828
phillaycock@growcom.com.au



Hort360 GBR is funded through the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by Growcom.



LONG-RANGE FORECAST: RISK OF FLOODING, EARLY TROPICAL CYCLONE

The Bureau of Meteorology has released its long-range forecast for Australia's coming severe weather season.

While severe weather can occur at any time of the year, October to April is the peak time for flooding, tropical cyclones, heatwaves, bushfires and severe thunderstorms.

The 2022/23 long-range forecast includes:

- An increased risk of an above average number of tropical cyclones and tropical lows.
- An increased risk of widespread flooding for eastern and northern Australia.
- Normal bushfire potential in eastern states, but an elevated risk of grass fire in southern Australia.
- Increased risk of prolonged heatwaves in southern areas with higher humidity.
- Normal risk of severe thunderstorms, but with possible increase in risk of thunderstorm asthma events if conditions are dry in late spring and early summer.

Tropical Cyclones

The Bureau issued Australia's Tropical Cyclone Season long-range forecast in advance of the 1 November to 30 April cyclone season.

This season we have a greater than 70 per cent chance of at least 11 tropical cyclones, which is the long-term average impacting the Australian region.

Communities are urged to prepare now as there is an increased chance that the first tropical cyclone in the Australian region is likely to be earlier in the season.

This reflects the impact of current climate influences including La Niña and a negative Indian Ocean Dipole.

Despite fewer tropical cyclones in recent years, Australia has never had a season without at least one tropical cyclone crossing the coast, since records began in the early 1970s.

Flooding

This season there is an increased risk of widespread and prolonged riverine flooding across northern and eastern Australia.

Rivers are high, dams are full, and catchments are wet across much of eastern Australia, meaning any rainfall has the potential to lead to widespread flooding.

Coastal flooding

The highest tides of the year are expected to be unusually high around 23 January 2023 on the New South Wales and southern Queensland coasts, and around 20 February 2023 on northern Queensland coasts, including in the Torres Strait.

Flooding is likely to occur in low-lying areas around these unusually high tides. More severe coastal flooding could occur if coastal or offshore storms are also around at these times.

Bushfire

Above-average rainfall over winter has led to good grass and vegetation growth in many areas, which can increase the risk of grass fires.

While long running large bushfires are less likely than during a drier season such as 2019/20, continuing wet conditions during spring may further increase grass growth. This could increase fire danger during any period of hot and dry weather over summer.

Areas on the urban fringe next to grasslands may have an increased risk from grass fires.

Heatwaves

This coming summer, more cloud and a wetter landscape can mean a reduced number of extreme heat days compared to recent years. However, given the long-term warming trend, even in a wet summer, some places will experience heatwaves.

While temperatures may not reach extreme levels, in southern areas heatwaves may last longer, be warmer overnight and be more humid – all of which can increase the risk to human health.

Increased risk of marine heatwaves off eastern Australia – with indications that sea temperatures will be warmer than normal for an extended timeframe. This can affect fisheries and other marine life.

Severe Storms and Thunderstorms

Severe thunderstorms can cause dangerous conditions such as flash flooding, large hail, damaging winds and even tornadoes.

They are more common during the warmer months, particularly in northern New South Wales, southern Queensland, inland Western Australia and across the tropical north.

Thunderstorm asthma can be triggered by thunderstorms after high grass growth in southern Australia from October to December when pollen levels are highest.



Scan the QR Code to watch the Bureau's Severe Weather Season Outlook for Queensland 2022-23 webinar.

NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR PRIMARY PRODUCERS

Queensland primary producers impacted by natural disaster events may be eligible for low interest loans and grants to help with ongoing recovery efforts. Disaster assistance is being administered through QRIDA: www.qrida.qld.gov.au/primary-producers

Southern Queensland Flooding (6 – 20 May 2022)

	CLOSING DATE
Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants (\$75,000)	6 January 2023
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2023
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2023

Northern and Central Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding event (21 April – 12 May 2022)

	CLOSING DATE
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2023
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2023

South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding (22 February - 5 April 2022)

	CLOSING DATE
Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants (\$75,000)	5 December 2022
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2023
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2023

Disaster Assistance: Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seth (7 - 10 January 2022)

	CLOSING DATE
Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants (\$50,000)	3 February 2023
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2023
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2023

Central, Southern and Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding (10 November – 3 December 2021)

	CLOSING DATE
Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants (\$50,000)	5 December 2022
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2023
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2023

Tropical Cyclone Niran and Associated Low Pressure System (25 Feb - 3 Mar 2021)

	CLOSING DATE
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2022
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2022

Southern Queensland Severe Weather (20 - 31 March 2021)

	CLOSING DATE
Disaster Assistance Loans	31 December 2022
Disaster Assistance (essential working capital) Loans	31 December 2022

NATURAL DISASTER SURVEY

As part of preparing for the disaster season, growers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' (DAF) Natural Disaster Impact Survey. The survey has been designed to support primary producers who have experienced losses or damage to their property during a disaster event. The information collected through the survey helps

the Queensland Government determine the appropriate level of disaster recovery assistance to provide under jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

You can access the survey via the QR Code below or DAF Natural Disaster eHub (daf.engagementhub.com.au/naturaldisasterecovery) during and after a natural disaster event. It's easy to use and takes less than five minutes to complete.



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

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Good people to know.



Country Kitchens Facilitator Spotlight Healthier support for women from Country Kitchens

"Becoming a member of the QCWA has been a dream of mine since the first time I attended an event where the ladies were serving the most incredible lemon curd I had ever tasted," said Erika La Budda.

"I was in love with the brand, the mission and the impact the women had on the community."

Having a small amount of time between work, university and beekeeping to spend volunteering, Erika joined the QCWA as a Supporter member, with the intention of participating in any events that resonated with her values.

"I was monumentally delighted to learn as a Supporter member I would be able to begin the Country Kitchens facilitator training."

The QCWA's Country Kitchens program is a health promotion program supporting communities across Queensland to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviours.

It is a partnership between the QCWA and Health and Wellbeing Queensland and the flagship program of the Association.

The Country Kitchens program assists QCWA volunteer Branch and Supporter members, like Erika, who already have a wealth of cooking knowledge and skills, with training and support to help improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, particularly those living in rural, regional and remote locations.

Believing nutrition literacy is fundamental in maintaining a sustainable life, Erika recently helped to facilitate a four-week Back to Basics Literacy series of workshops with the Red Rose Foundation. The Red Rose Foundation is a national not for profit charity who works to address the damaging impact of domestic violence across our communities.

"I had a chance to share the importance of nutrition, assisting with the understanding of food labels and marketing strategies, enabling smarter and healthier choices," said Erika.

The workshop participants engaged in the cooking classes and activities, shared common values and ideas and built support networks. Erika hopes to build on this activity and develop partnerships with other organisations.

Reducing the risk of chronic diseases and increasing fruit and vegetable intake is a small aspect of the message the Country Kitchens program delivers.

"I am certain, those who join, will discover a delightful bounty of knowledge and make connections with individuals who can impact lives in a very meaningful way," Erika said.

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



Erika having completed Level 4 of the Country Kitchens PATHway training.

Erika tending the hives.

Erika the beekeeper

After completing a beekeeping course in Melbourne with the famous Lyndon Fenlon in 2013, Erika la Budda became a hobbyist beekeeper.

"I assist with my family's five Langstroth hives on a 23 acre property in Samford, and have been trialling the Flow Hive for two and a half years now, in my backyard," Erika said.

The flow hive was created by a father and son team in Byron Bay about 10 years ago now.

"I intend to move towards the Kenyan Top Bar hive as soon as I am able. This type of beekeeping is the least stressful on the colony. I don't really do it for honey production. All honey harvested is given away."

"We know bees contribute to one third of our fresh fruit and vegetable produce," Erika said.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, bees are responsible for pollinating seventy-five percent of our leading global crops. Significantly, those crops that depend on pollination primarily from bees, are five times more valuable to society than those that are not bee pollinated.

"The worker bees achieve all this nutrition production between only five to seven weeks of life span. The magnificent Queen's life span is between one to two years laying 800,000 eggs in this time," Erika said.

The hive consists of worker bees, all female, guard bees, also all female, (stationed at the entrance ready to sacrifice their lives to protect the colony), and the Queen. The male bee, known as the drone, has one job only: to mate with the Queen. This stingless bee has a life span of around 24 days.

"By planting flowering plants in our backyards, or in pots, we can contribute, even on a small scale to the protection of bees, helping them to flourish in cities due to the diversity of flowers growing."



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workplace relations

Focus HR Founding Director
Naomi Wilson

Removing employee access during performance management/investigations

Be careful when deleting an employee's roster or application before a proper investigation – it could land you in hot water.

In an important reminder for employers, in *Renee Royall v Aussie Kids Pty Ltd* [2022] FWC 2301 (31 August 2022), an employee was awarded six months wages (the maximum penalty for unfair dismissal) after their dismissal was found to have been harsh, unjust, and unreasonable after their employer deleted the employee's roster and removed them from their rostering app without a valid reason or fair process.

What happened?

- A Director of the Aussie Kids Pty Ltd childcare centre in Mildura sent an email to all employees expressing her disappointment at the high rate of staff absences on a particular day.
- A casual early childhood educator (who had regular and systematic employment) sent a reply on the rostering app Tanda that could be viewed by other employees. In her reply, she pointed out that certain workers had valid reasons for their absences and said that they should be praised for their efforts, not criticised. The educator also sent a similar email to the Director directly and attached a copy of the email to the Tanda post.
- The Director sent the educator home for the day and cancelled her rostered shifts for the rest of the week.
- Two days later the Director deactivated the employee's Tanda account without notifying her.

The considerations

When the matter went to hearing, Fair Work Commission Deputy President Ian Masson found the Director's attempts to explain the treatment of the educator "wholly unconvincing".

The Director denied that she had dismissed the educator and said that she had only cancelled her shifts because the centre had an excess of employees rostered that week. Under cross-examination though, she later admitted that the educator was the only employee, out of 17 other casual employees, whose shifts were cancelled. It was clear in the eyes of the Deputy President that the Director had dismissed the educator by deleting her shifts and removing her access to the rostering app.

Deputy President Masson further found that the educator's dismissal unfair on the ground that it failed to:

- have a valid reason;
- notify the employee of the dismissal and the reason for it; or
- provide the employee with the requisite opportunity to respond.

The outcome

As it was held that the employee would have likely remained employed for a further six months had the Director not unfairly dismissed her, Deputy President Masson awarded the employee the maximum compensation of six months wages.

Lessons for employers

This case, in our view, is a textbook example of why an employer should not jump to remove an employee's shifts or access to particular applications or systems prior to following a clear process. While we of course support employers taking steps to restrict access to important systems while an investigation is ongoing, we do not recommend this be done without first clearly communicating to the employee to ensure that such conduct is not deemed to be a dismissal.

When we don't communicate well, we leave a gap for others to fill in the blanks. In this case, the lesson was an expensive one!

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FAIR FARMS NEWS



program update

Fair Farms National Program Manager
Sachin Ayachit

There is no shortage of positive adjectives I could use to describe my joy at the success of the Inaugural Fair Farms National Conference & Awards last month. However, before I proceed to gush about how great the conference day was, I want to first and foremost thank all the delegates that attended.

I never would have imagined that what started out as a small concept idea for celebrating the Fair Farms Program with just our growers, would grow into something involving the greater horticulture industry. Several months of planning and engaging with industry led to a stunning roster of 13 speakers, delegates from all around Australia and a conference program that delivered on getting vital information to members of the horticulture industry.

From the moment our wonderful MC Richard Shannon started off the conference, to our first lot of speakers which included The Honourable David Littleproud MP, Executive Director of Enforcement - Fair Work Ombudsman Steve Ronson, Dr James Cockayne NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Rachel Mackenzie of Berries Australia – the conference room was abuzz with excitement at what was to be an informative and fun event. Special thanks to our incomparable keynote speaker Steven Bradbury for bringing energy and enthusiasm to a room full of delegates who were simultaneously amused with your humour and inspired by your story.

While I could go on and on about the amazing topics spoken at the conference, and the scintillating conversation that was had during

lunch and dinner, the main take away from the conference was the fact we were able to get a room of growers, industry experts, government body representatives, politicians, and HR experts together to discuss one thing – horticulture workplace relations.

Congratulations to our inaugural award winners. Shane Stirling and Rachel Mackenzie both received the first ever Fair Farms Recognition Awards and Fair Farms Certified Growers Sunripe took out the Fair Farmer of the Year Award. All our winners had contributed to the betterment of the program and industries approach to horticulture workplace relations and were therefore, more than deserving of their respective awards

I would like to thank our sponsors for supporting the Fair Farms vision. Thank you to our Gold Sponsors AUSVEG and TĀTOU, our silver sponsors Holding Redlich and Agri Talent, and our Bronze Sponsors Southern Cross Certified, Integrity Compliance Solutions, Berries Australia, and Driscoll's. I would like to thank the Fair Farms staff who have worked tirelessly to create an event worth attending. I would like to thank our speakers – all of whom have taken time out of their day to deliver exceptional presentations. Thank you to the Growcom Board for their support and for making the journey from sunny Queensland to the picturesque city of Coffs Harbour. And once again, thank you to our delegates for purchasing a ticket to the event.

With your support, I hope to see you at a location somewhere in Australia for another Fair Farms Conference. Keep your eyes peeled.





engagement

Fair Farms Grower Engagement Officer
Donna Mogg

Fair Farms welcomes me back

Hello again dear growers - it seems I cannot stay away. After almost 15 years, it's a true love story with horticulture... it is the industry that sustains life and health and happiness.

Our growers are some of the most hard-working, resilient, and genuine people I've met. The challenges they face every day boggle the mind and yet all 12,000 of them, employing 72,000+ people, deliver 6.2 million tonnes of fruit and vegetables - that's \$15.4b in wholesale produce - each year.

They are our health heroes. So I am delighted to be back as the Fair Farms Grower Engagement Officer.

In 2021, Hort Innovation delivered its Horticulture Sustainability Framework. In it they identified four key pillars of sustainable enterprises and industries:

- Nourish and Nurture
- People and Enterprise
- Planet and Resources
- Less Waste

In a globalised supply chain, there are many interests - markets, shareholders, investors, consumers - who all want evidence of high standards of product safety, workplace ethics, and environmental care. Our producers are well known for clean, green, and safe product and they understand their need to care for their environment.

While it seems surprising, even unlikely, in Australia, one of the emerging sustainability issues is 'modern slavery', and there is evidence to show it exists in our industry. Not on a large scale, but it's there and it is unacceptable.

So, sustainability on every pillar is the goal. For the pillar of *People and Enterprise*, I believe that Fair Farms is the path. And that's because it was designed by our industry for our industry.

The Fair Farms Standards reflect both international ETI guidelines and meet Australia's Fair Work and WHS laws and regulations. The process involves a simple self-assessment and provides tailored training to fill in any gaps. Third party auditing provides legitimacy to the outcomes, and certification delivers benefits in terms of market access, business planning, employee relations and reputation. There are other programs, but none designed and developed with Australian horticulture employers as the focal point.

My plan is to work with growers, Peak Industry Bodies, and commodity bodies around the *People and Enterprise* pillar. Employing people isn't easy, so I am keen to talk with growers about the employment/WHS matters affecting them, and how Fair Farms might assist them to implement and streamline practices that help avoid the pitfalls. Fair Farms certification is recognised by all major retailers and is an excellent way to demonstrate to your customers, workers, and the public that you are serious about ethics and safety.

UPCOMING:

We will be delivering monthly webinars of around 20-30 minutes succinctly covering topical issues relating to your workplace. I'd love to hear about the topics that you'd like covered. I will also be presenting workshops and attending grower meetings, so keep an eye out for me in your region. Please call me on 0472 922 811 or email dmogg@growcom.com.au with your brilliant ideas. Hope to see you out and about.



FAIR FARMS

UPCOMING WEBINAR

Join Fair Farms Engagement Officer, Donna Mogg on Wednesday
30 November for the first in a series of Fair Farms webinars.

This webinar will cover:

- Too much seasoning? How to run a safe Christmas/End-of-year party.
- An outline of the Modern Slavery Act.

Scan the QR code
to register today





HR / IR Compliance

Fair Farms Workplace Relations Specialist
Amanda Higgins

Top 5 things to know for hot weather this Summer

As the hot weather fast approaches and the mercury rises, employers need to be mindful of their Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) obligations regarding extreme heat and its dangers. Extreme temps can cause burns, heat stroke, injury due to fatigue and heat related illness.

Below are some top tips to help you get through the summer season. This list is by no means exhaustive; however, it will address some of the more common issues faced in the horticulture industry.

Remember, as an employer you have an obligation for the safety of your workers, and that includes your duty to provide a safe working environment, prevent injury and provide first-aid for sick or injured workers. You also need to provide access to trained first aid officers and have in-date first aid equipment.

Appropriate PPE for outdoors

In hot weather ensure that your workers are equipped with adequate PPE including when working outside:

- sun protective loose fitting light weight work clothing
- sun protective hats
- sunglasses
- sunscreen

Keep your workers hydrated

Ensure that your workers have access to cool clean drinking water so that they remain hydrated. Signs and symptoms of dehydration you should watch out for are:

- Mild to severe thirst
- Dry lips and tongue
- Slowed mental function and lowered performance
- Reduced or dark coloured urine

Insist that rest and lunch breaks are taken

In hot weather it is critically important to ensure adequate rest and meal breaks are taken to reduce heat induced fatigue, and that workers are provided with adequate areas to be able to rest and take their meal break. Some things you can do are; if possible:

- Where possible, provide air-conditioned rest areas
- Provide fans for air-circulation in rest areas
- Take breaks in the shade of large trees
- Provide pop-up shade tents or structure where workers can rest out of direct sun exposure
- Schedule breaks so that workers are not in-field in the hottest part of the day

Split the working day or reschedule hours

If operationally possible, a solution could be to split a working day into two shifts, to create a morning and an afternoon shift, or re-schedule working hours with the aim of limiting hours worked in the hottest part of the day. Remember there may be a requirement to consult with your workers to obtain agreement for this, so ensure you understand your consultation obligations before making any changes.

Award or Enterprise Agreement

Check your registered Agreement for specific details about weather conditions and if, as an employer you have an obligation to meet in your Enterprise Agreement.

Important to note, you must **remember that** Employers are obligated to conduct risk assessments on workplaces (this includes outdoor workplaces) to ensure a safe working environment.

These and other important topics are covered in the Fair Farms Standards, which sets out the accepted principles of fair and ethical employment in Australian Horticulture.

Links to relevant Codes of Practice and Fact Sheets are below:

Managing risks of working in heat: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-and-publications/fact-sheets/managing-risks-working-heat-fact-sheet

Basic heat stress calculator: fswgap.worksafe.qld.gov.au/etools/

Heat related first aid: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/hazards/working-heat/first-aid-heat-related-illness

Heat related illness fact sheet: www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/713416/dm-heat-illnesses.pdf



ACCC UPDATES GUIDANCE MATERIAL FOR HORTICULTURE CODE

The ACCC has updated its Horticulture Code guidance to help growers and traders understand their rights and fulfill their responsibilities under the code.

The code seeks to protect horticulture growers by requiring all trading with agents and merchants (traders) to happen under a written agreement. The agreement must include certain things, such as how prices are calculated and when the grower gets paid.

The update provides further detail on the code's key elements, including the requirements for traders to publish their terms of trade, and for merchants to report the gross sales price when paying a grower an amount calculated by a method or formula.

"Our guidance update is aimed at providing greater price

transparency for growers about what traders pay for their produce," ACCC Deputy Chair Mick Keogh said.

"The ACCC's recent compliance checks found that some horticulture traders are not making their terms of trade publicly available and are incorrectly reporting prices in grower statements, and that puts growers at a disadvantage."

"We are committed to helping growers and traders fully understand their rights and responsibilities under the code," Mr Keogh said.

For more information, visit:

www.accc.gov.au/business/industry-codes/horticulture-code-of-conduct



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Get your farm drought-ready with grants of up to \$50k

Growers can have more confidence preparing their property for dry conditions with the Drought Preparedness Grants available from the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA).

QRIDA Natural Disasters and Drought Manager Sheree Finney said the co-contribution grant of up to \$50,000 helps primary producers undertake drought-resilient improvements on their farms.

“We know drought is part of Queensland’s changing climate, so this financial assistance has been designed to help growers continue to harvest fresh, delicious produce during difficult conditions,” Ms Finney said.

“I’m encouraging all fruit, vegetable, and nut growers who are committed to protecting their property against drought to apply.”

Ms Finney said to be considered for the grant, growers need a Farm Business Resilience Plan that identifies activities to improve drought resilience on their property.

“Every plan looks different because it factors in the risks and opportunities unique to each producer,” she said.

“For past successful applicants in the horticulture industry, this Farm Business Resilience Plan has identified a range of improvements such as installing irrigation systems, dam liners, and greenhouses.”

Ms Finney said QRIDA also has three drought loan options ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 available to primary producers.



Sheree Finney QRIDA

“Our comprehensive Drought Assistance Programs cater to the needs of different growers, making it easier for them to prepare for dry conditions,” she said.

“With a network of friendly staff across regional Queensland, we’re here to guide you through each of our programs and make the application process as seamless as possible.”

For more information, visit qrda.qld.gov.au or contact your local QRIDA Regional Area Manager on 1800 623 946.

Advertisement



Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority

+ Drought loans and grants for QLD producers

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Talk to us about the range of grants and concessional loans now available to help primary producers prepare, manage, recover and mitigate the impacts of drought, including*:

- **Drought Preparedness Grants** of up to \$50,000
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- **Drought Carry-on Finance Loans** of up to \$250,000
- **Emergency Drought Assistance Loans** of up to \$50,000

For more information contact QRIDA on **1800 623 946** or visit qrda.qld.gov.au

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

1800 623 946
qrda.qld.gov.au

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Authorised by the Queensland Government, Turbot St, Brisbane

Farm Business Resilience Program

FAILING TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL

If there is one certainty in life, it's that change is inevitable. Having a plan is the best way to remain resilient when unchosen change finds us.

Through the Farm Business Resilience Program for horticulture, Growcom is supporting growers to analyze all aspects of their current farm management, reviewing what's working and what needs changing to be resilient and profitable for the longer-term.

The objective of the Program is to support growers to develop or update existing Farm Business Resilience Plans. To do this Growcom has incorporated a checklist of questions within our best management practice program, Hort360.

The 'Farm Business Resilience Module' was designed in accordance with the Australian and Queensland Government's and prompts growers to consider all areas that should be included in your Plan.

Upon completion of the Farm Business Resilience Module, the system will generate a Risk Report with identified risks and associated actions that can be directly applied into your Plan.

The key advantage of using Hort360 is your Plan is automatically populated with all the required information needed to access drought grants and loans currently available through QRIDA.

Drought assistance in Queensland has been broadened and is now open to eligible primary producers across all agricultural sectors, to better manage future droughts without needing a drought declaration.

Associated grants and loans available through QRIDA support capital infrastructure developments to foster greater preparedness and business resilience.

For more information about current grants and loans available through QRIDA visit: www.qrida.qld.gov.au/drought-support

The Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program and is available until June 2024.

For more information about the Farm Business Resilience Program please contact your local Resilience Facilitator.



Scan the QR Code to watch Growcom's recent Introduction to Farm Business Resilience Planning for Horticulture webinar.



Karen George
Manager, Resilience
0408 135 003
kgeorge@growcom.com.au



Shireen Pisters
North Queensland Facilitator
0417 060 344
spisters@growcom.com.au



John Targett
Central Queensland
0418 803 997
jtargett@growcom.com.au



Brock McDonald
Southern Queensland
0418 893 442
wmcdonald@growcom.com.au



Brisbane monthly summary for October 2022

Compiled by Market Information Services. Ph (07) 3379 4576. Fax (07) 3379 4103.

E: adminmis@marketinfo.com.au W: marketinfo.com.au

Growcom and Ausmarket Consultants have entered into a partnership providing Growcom members with access to monthly fruit and vegetable market price information and data. Through this partnership, members also have the opportunity to access daily market reports at a discounted rate.

Visit Growcom's website to download your monthly market data report: growcom.com.au/news-information/ausmarket

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Fruits

Brisbane Monthly Special 6 - 10 Crop Summary

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Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg
AVOCADOS,Hass	1445.61	18LCtn	5.00	45.00	45.00	25.60	STATE: A=ACT, N=NSW, Q=QLD, S=SA, T=TAS, V=VIC, W=WA,						
Reed		18LCtn	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	Y=NT, I=IMPORTED						
Reed		7KgTray	10.00	16.00	16.00	13.00	IMPORTANT NOTICE: Reproducing, publishing, emailing or						
Hass		SLTray	5.00	36.00	36.00	21.82	re-FAXing this report is prohibited as is the creation of						
Lamb Hass		SLTray	24.00	26.00	26.00	25.00	a derivative work eg. database.						
Reed		SLTray	24.00	26.00	26.00	25.00							
Sharwill		SLTray	20.00	24.00	24.00	22.00							
Wurtz		SLTray	14.00	18.00	18.00	16.00							
BERRIES,Blackberries	335.63	125g	5.00	8.00	8.00	6.30							
Blueberries		125g	1.00	5.00	5.00	2.68							
Raspberries		125g	1.50	5.00	5.00	3.38							
Blackberries		250g	4.50	5.00	5.00	4.83							
GRAPEFRUIT,Red Ruby	279.12	3KgBag	2.80	3.00	3.00	2.90							
Marsh		CP	20.00	30.00	30.00	25.00							
Red Ruby		CP	24.00	40.00	40.00	29.63							
Ruby Blush		CP	10.00	20.00	20.00	15.00							
GRAPES,Dark Seeded,Black America	608.58	18LCtn	40.00	45.00	45.00	42.50							
White Seedless,Arra Sweetee		18LCtn	60.00	120.00	120.00	84.50							
White Seedless,Sweet Globe		18LCtn	100.00	130.00	130.00	119.23							
Dark Seedless,Midnight Beauty		9KgCtn	70.00	80.00	80.00	78.50							
Dark Seedless,Sapphire		9KgCtn	65.00	80.00	80.00	78.13							
Dark Seedless,Scarlett Royal		9KgCtn	70.00	80.00	80.00	78.50							
Dark Seedless,Unspecified		9KgCtn	100.00	120.00	120.00	104.00							
White Seedless,Autumn Crisp		9KgCtn	140.00	140.00	140.00	140.00							
White Seedless,Timpson Green		9KgCtn	75.00	90.00	90.00	82.50							
White Seedless,Unspecified		9KgCtn	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00							
HONEYDEW MELONS,Dark Skin													
Piel De Sapo	719.24	30LTray	12.00	24.00	24.00	16.31							
Gold		30LTray	20.00	30.00	30.00	24.00							
Gold,Orange Candy		30LTray	8.00	24.00	24.00	16.40							
White		30LTray	8.00	30.00	30.00	18.57							
Gold		32LCtn	16.00	28.00	28.00	21.25							
White		32LCtn	6.00	24.00	24.00	14.70							
ORANGES,Valencia	2520.99	1/2Bin	240.00	340.00	340.00	290.00							
Navel,Washington		1/2Bin	160.00	250.00	250.00	205.00							
Blood		1/2CP	16.00	36.00	36.00	23.00							
Navel,Easy Peel		16KgCtn	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00							
Navel,Washington		3KgBag	2.50	4.00	4.00	3.25							
Blood		6KgCtn	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00							
Navel,Cara Cara		BulkCP	20.00	40.00	40.00	25.83							
Navel,Unspecified		BulkCP	12.00	30.00	30.00	23.50							
Navel,Washington		BulkCP	18.00	35.00	35.00	26.50							
Seedless Valencia,Midnight		BulkCP	12.00	28.00	28.00	18.09							
Valencia		CP	30.00	40.00	40.00	35.00							
Navel,Cara Cara		CP	10.00	25.00	25.00	16.75							
Navel,Late Lane		CP	16.00	24.00	24.00	20.70							
Navel,Ruby Red		CP	40.00	50.00	50.00	45.00							
Navel,Unspecified		CP	5.00	50.00	50.00	19.42							
PITAYA,Red Flesh	36.39	5KgCtn	55.00	60.00	60.00	57.50							
White Flesh		5KgCtn	55.00	60.00	60.00	57.50							
White Flesh		5KgTray	35.00	45.00	45.00	39.23							
ROCKMELONS	897.30	30LTray	6.00	30.00	30.00	15.10							
		32LCtn	2.00	12.00	12.00	7.00							
		Kg	1.00	1.20	1.20	1.10							
SAPOTES,Black	2.82	SLTray	30.00	36.00	36.00	36.00							
WATERMELONS,Champagne S'less	1962.50	Kg	1.80	2.00	2.00	1.90							
Long Varieties		Kg	0.30	0.80	0.80	0.57							
Seedless		Kg	0.40	1.20	1.40	0.70							

Vegetables

Brisbane Monthly Special 6 - 10 Crop Summary

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Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg
BEANS,Borlotti	309.87	Kg	4.00	8.00	8.00	6.00							
Broad		Kg	4.00	8.00	8.00	6.15							
Butter		Kg	3.00	6.00	7.00	4.55							
Round S'less		Kg	0.80	8.00	8.00	3.55							
Snake		Kg	10.00	12.00	14.00	11.13							
BROCCOLI,Baby	355.27	2.4Kg	16.00	22.00	22.00	19.40							
		8KglPk	8.00	32.00	32.00	19.50							
BROCCOLINI	80.64	2.4Kg	20.00	24.00	24.00	22.45							
CAPSICUMS,Gold	338.28	10KgCtn	30.00	65.00	65.00	40.28							
Green		10KgCtn	22.00	36.00	40.00	28.93							
Mixed Colour		10KgCtn	20.00	26.00	30.00	24.50							
Red		10KgCtn	24.00	45.00	50.00	31.17							
Gold		27LCtn	18.00	56.00	56.00	32.70							
Green		27LCtn	8.00	30.00	32.00	20.36							
Mixed Colour		27LCtn	16.00	24.00	24.00	21.50							
Red		27LCtn	10.00	40.00	40.00	24.23							
CELERY	359.85	15KgCtn	10.00	30.00	30.00	20.60							
FENNEL	68.06	Carton	20.00	36.00	36.00	27.20							
GINGER	166.84	Kg	3.50	6.00	6.00	5.20							
KALE,Green	29.25	250g	1.00	3.00	3.00	2.24							
Green		Carton	25.00	35.00	35.00	29.45							
ONIONS,Brown	1162.55	10KgBag	12.00	22.00	22.00	13.50							
Salad Red		10KgBag	12.00	38.00	38.00	25.72							
Brown		10KgCtn	15.00	24.00	24.00	19.50							
Salad Red		10KgCtn	32.00	38.00	38.00	36.45							
White		10KgCtn	30.00	40.00	40.00	36.30							
Brown		15KgCtn	24.00	36.00	40.00	32.00							
Brown		1KgBag	1.20	2.20	2.20	1.77							
Salad Red		1KgBag	2.30	3.50	3.50	2.70							
Brown		20KgBag	18.00	46.00	46.00	30.95							
Brown		5KgBag	10.00	12.00	12.00	11.00							
RHUBARB	7.62	Bunch	3.80	6.00	6.00	5.18							
		Carton	30.00	70.00	70.00	63.88							

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

Y=NT, I=IMPORTED

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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.

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- 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

AUSMARKET CONSULTANTS CAN BE CONTACTED BY:

E: admin@ausmarket.com.au

E: ausinspect@outlook.com

W: www.ausmarket.com.au

P: (07) 3379 4576

M: 0400 719 941

AUSTRALIAN MACADAMIA GROWERS TAKE THE LEAD IN REEF STEWARDSHIP

The macadamia industry is well and truly leading the way and punching above their weight in the stewardship stakes with a significant number of macadamia growers becoming Reef Certified in the past 18 months.

Reef Certification is a voluntary program and initiative of Growcom, supporting the horticulture industry in demonstrating best management practices (BMP) and stewardship towards improving Reef water quality.

Currently there are eighty-one individual horticulture farms Reef Certified in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR), with more than 50 per cent of certified farms growing macadamias; collectively this is nearly 6,000 hectares.

Being Reef Certified means that the grower has adopted on-farm practices that contribute to improving Reef water quality, and that these have been assessed by an independent, third-party auditor.

Best practices for water quality outcomes are contingent on minimising loss of sediment, nutrient, irrigation run-off, and pesticide, without impacting production. Horticulture growers can use Growcom's Hort360 program to benchmark their on-farm management practices, to understand if their practices are considered to be at 'best practice'. Growers receive a comprehensive report after benchmarking, and a snapshot of how they compare to other horticulture growers.

Reef Certified macadamia growers can demonstrate the following:

- grassy inter-rows with at least 80 per cent ground cover to increase infiltration and slow run-off
- mulch or other cover in tree line to minimise loss of topsoil
- functioning, well maintained headlands, contours and sediment traps to prevent sediment loss and erosion
- frequent scouting and monitoring for pests, disease and viruses to assist in decisions on chemical use

- precision pesticide and nutrient application to minimise losses and inefficiencies
- soil/leaf and/or sap analysis to inform nutrient budgeting, and
- use of objective and subjective tools to determine irrigation scheduling.

Farm Manager of Alloway Macadamias, Johan Oosthuizen, recently Certified 285 hectares of macadamias. "We strive to make a positive difference to the environment through best practices in our orchard, Reef Certification helps us maintain focus," Johan said.



Michelle Haase
Southern Reef Catchments
0428 586 890
mhaase@growcom.com.au

Luke Hargreaves
Central Reef Catchments
0422 567 371
lhargreaves@growcom.com.au

Phil Laycock
Northern Reef Catchments
0439 252 828
phillaycock@growcom.com.au



Hort360 GBR is funded through the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by Growcom.



WATCH THIS SPACE: WATER QUALITY HACKS!

It is an exciting time for the Hort360 South East Queensland water quality project, who will soon be launching their own version of a grants process – seed funding for farmers on the Pumicestone Passage to innovate with the goal to boost water quality in the catchment.

In anticipation of this process, in the next edition of Fruit and Vegetable News, we will look at how one pineapple farm utilises a biofilter to cleanse water runoff from its crops. Yes, that's right, we're looking at innovation at Pine Co, Glass House Mountains.

The Hort360 SEQ water quality project works collaboratively with farmers to enhance outcomes for the Pumicestone Passage and we will take a look at how farmers in the Pumicestone Passage can use funding to improve benchmarks on farm. Stay tuned for the next edition of Fruit and Vegetable News for all the details.



Tim Wolens
Hort360 SEQ Project Manager
0409 848 076
twolens@growcom.com.au

Lene Knudsen
Hort360 SEQ Officer
0429 000 179
lknudsen@growcom.com.au



Hort360 SEQ is funded by the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science.

EYEING NEW TECH TO INCREASE VARROA MITE ARMOURY

Lasers, artificial intelligence and gas sensors are among the potential solutions being considered in the fight against Varroa mite as part of new research delivered through Hort Innovation to enhance and protect pollination security in Australia.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive Brett Fifield said a new research project has been released to market that seeks the best international examples of emerging technologies to detect and control Varroa mite.

“Around the world there are emerging technologies in the fight against Varroa mite that could be deployed in Australia at scale,” Mr Fifield said.

“In the European Union for instance, there is research underway on the use of micro-targeted lasers for the eradication of Varroa mite on honey bees. The solution uses vision technology to track the bees to find potential infestations, as well as artificial intelligence to target the mites and direct a laser to burn them.

“There is also encouraging research in the application of semiconductor gas sensors to recognise Varroa mite in hives. The use of multi-sensor systems can act as ‘noses,’ and this technology has been used successfully in the past to detect diseases in humans, animals and plants.

“Managing Varroa into the future will require a mix of approaches. This project will ensure the industry is looking at the best of international innovation to understand what we should progress in Australia.”

The project will prioritise the following areas of inquiry:

- Review the status and availability of biological and cultural control agents for Varroa mite globally
- Understand innovations in Varroa detection technology
- Review previous failures in technology uptake
- Develop shortlisted candidates to be studied further.

NEW NUFFIELD SCHOLARS SET TO GROW, STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE

Nineteen emerging leaders from Australian agriculture have been awarded prestigious 2023 Nuffield Scholarships to study topics as diverse as productivity, farmer mental health and rural education.

The scholars will travel in Australia and overseas to study innovative ideas, techniques and systems that will benefit their businesses and the broader agricultural industry.

Thanks to the generous investors, each 2023 scholar receives a \$30,000 bursary to invest in travel and research. They will visit, learn from, and collaborate with some of the world's leading agricultural businesses and research institutions.

Nuffield Australia CEO and 2013 Scholar, Jodie Redcliffe, says the scholarships enable producers to learn about farming systems and innovations that can be game-changers for Australian agriculture.

"Nuffield Australia opens the world up for people in agriculture who are brave enough to be out of their comfort zone," Jodie said.

"A global perspective enables them to learn, be competitive and grow.

"We're so excited by this cohort of Nuffield Scholars. They're from a wide range of industries – cropping, fishing, livestock and tree nuts – and we've got every state and territory represented."

Jodie said the group would tackle a range of issues that are impacting Australian agriculture. Some of those topics are sector-specific and others affect the whole industry.

Queensland scientist Miriam Villen King with the support of the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP Investments) will explore sustainable walnut farming in Australia.

Miriam is Chief Scientist at Stahmann Webster, one of Australia's most well-established tree nut producers. In this role, she spearheads efforts to optimise walnut orchard production and commercial returns. She uses data to inform cultural farming practices, such as pruning and nutrient composition and application. These aim to increase yields, while maintaining high-quality products that are healthy for customers and the environment.

"In Australia, 85 per cent of walnut production is in growing regions with a semi-arid climate," Miriam said.

"The production of orchards in these growing regions is limited by non-pollination drop, known as NPD, which is when fruit drops prematurely because of an unsuccessful pollination process."

According to Miriam, environmental conditions, including high temperatures, are a key factor in NPD, but there may be further factors around soil health, biome and fertility at play. Previous research has been based on chemical usage to manipulate dormancy and control pests and diseases. But Miriam says to continue to grow the best quality nuts, with best-practice environmental, social and governance outcomes, the industry needs to identify, define, and transition to more sustainable and holistic growing methods.

Miriam plans to explore new varieties of walnuts that suit Australian climate conditions, and ways of growing them with less chemicals.

This study aligns with a number of industry strategic plans including the Australian Nut Industry Council's Strategic Blueprint 2030 and the National Farmers' Federation's 2030 Roadmap.

You can see the full list of 2023 Nuffield Scholars online at: www.nuffield.com.au/scholars



Nuffield Australia 2023 scholar Miriam Villen King



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workforce

Growcom Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network Officer
Kym Wessling

Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network

Building skills for tomorrow's job in agriculture

Attraction and retention of labour across horticulture is a major challenge and to guide today's youth to take up jobs in the industry, the career-based workshop – the AgTech Elite School Holiday Program – was created.

Thirteen students from Lockyer Valley and Darling Downs schools spent three days (September 28-30) learning all about application of agricultural technology, which was led by UQ Skills at Gatton.

From learning how to apply algorithms, artificial intelligence, designing irrigation systems, the use of drones and machine vision for real world applications on farms, students got a taste of how technology and horticulture come together to form job specialisations.

Additionally, participants discussed past and present technology used on-farm, important for understanding the future trends of AgTech and where they might be able to harness skills into a job and career.

All participants had some interest already in the agriculture industry, so it was an opportunity for them to explore that further, make connections and learn more about where they might want to specialise in – from working on a station to agronomy.

Students also visited the UQ plant and entomology lab, learning about pests and plant diseases.

To finish off students took part in an employability skills workshop using the Farm Ready Program and left with a Certificate of Attendance and a Statement of Attendance in the FarmReady Card training session.

There was a great mix of student interests including beef, equine, horticulture, biology, and science at the workshop.

Students finished the workshop with crucial hands-on experience and skills to continue to develop within the expanding agricultural business and technology industry.



Get in contact with your local QAWN Officer today:

www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/business/workforce



The Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) is an industry-led rural jobs initiative funded by the Queensland Government.

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Job seekers invited to #PickParadise in north Queensland

Bowen Gumlu Growers Association (BGGGA) has launched a new workforce attraction campaign encouraging job seekers to 'Pick Paradise' when searching for jobs.

Designed to attract and retain a workforce within the agriculture and aquaculture industries, the #PickParadise campaign focuses on the beauty of the region and the superior work life balance on offer.

At its core, #PickParadise is a digital platform – www.pickparadise.com.au – featuring a bespoke job noticeboard for the free advertising of roles in horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture workplaces.

Connecting to dedicated social media pages and profiles, the platform targets specific demographics within Australia to promote diverse occupations within the sector.

BGGGA Chief Executive Officer, Ry Collins said it was a perfect time to reignite interest in working in our region.

"With the horticulture industry at peak production, and the mango season beginning in November, workers in the region could be guaranteed ongoing positions in a variety of roles," he said.

"Pick Paradise also presents a new opportunity for growers to advertise upcoming positions for free on the website and then use the hashtag #pickparadise to remain connected across social media."

#PickParadise is a joint initiative between the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association and the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network with funding from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.



David Shorten (BGGGA), Adelaide Belyea (BGGGA), Gillian Russell (The Third House), Jenn Honnery (Green Turtle Creative)



Dale Williams (Euri Gold Farms), Colette Williams (BGGGA), Ben Martin (Marto's Mangoes)



Belinda Williams (Stackelroth Farms), Ry Collins (BGGGA), Colette Williams (BGGGA)



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GROWERS GET THE LOWDOWN ON HORTICULTURAL APPS AND TIME SLASHING HACKS

Horticulture growers in the Central Queensland, Wide Bay-Burnett and Mary regions took a break from the daily grind last month to attend one of four Hort Hacks & Apps workshops coordinated by Growcom in partnership with nbn Local.

Workshops featured presentations by entrepreneurs, bookkeepers, industry stakeholders, and growers who have discovered a game-changing app or hack that saves them time

and reduces administration which leaves so many growers on the computer late at night keeping their heads above water.

The final session was specifically to assist growers to use Growcom's best management practice program, Hort360 to analyse their business, create a farm business resilience plan and discuss opportunities to apply for funding for capital improvements to prepare and plan for drought along with other changes.

This workshop series is proudly brought to you by Growcom with the support of nbn Local and funding through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program.



Berto Srhoj from Julum Citrus in North Queensland spoke about his experience with Farm in ONE and the efficiencies he's been able to achieve on farm.



Jennifer McKee presented on her product Spades Online a record keeping and compliance management application.



Deborah Mead from NBN Local spoke about the NBN network and some exciting improvements on their way.



Joanne Hall from CANEGROWERS spoke about how local growers were using Jotform for record keeping purposes.



Hannah Clarke from Safe Ag Systems gave the group a fantastic run down of the products capabilities and support offered.



Growcom Resilience Facilitator John Targett finished up the day with a presentation on Farm Business Resilience Planning and how growers can incorporate their newfound knowledge into their Plan.



This workshop series is proudly brought to you by Growcom with the support of NBN and funding through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program.



APPEALING NEW GOLDFINGER BANANA VARIETIES

Ground-breaking research is bearing fruit in the quest to develop tasty bananas resistant to Panama TR4 disease helping to protect Queensland's nation-leading banana industry.

Recent consumer research has identified four new varieties of the Goldfinger banana with the potential to satisfy both consumer and grower needs.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) Consumer & Sensory Scientist Simoné Moller said more than 1000 bananas were tasted during the trial at DAF's specialised sensory facility in Coopers Plains.

"Tasters liked the balance of sweet and sour taste in the Goldfinger bananas with one noting that the fruit had a complex flavour with notes of citrus, confectionary, and tropical fruit," Ms Moller said.

"Other comments from the tasters included that the Goldfingers had just the right amount of sweetness, the texture and flesh colour of the banana was very exciting, and that they would be fantastic in a fruit salad.

"My favourite comment came from a taster who said they were reminded of banana lollies and thought they could be marketed as 'sweet confectionary without the naughty numbers'.

"Feedback from the tastings will help DAF's plant breeders continue their trials to produce commercially successful Goldfinger banana varieties."

With 96 percent of Australia's bananas grown in Far North Queensland, finding viable alternatives to traditional banana varieties is essential to future-proofing this \$600 million industry.

The next phase of research will include demonstrating that the selections have retained their Panama disease resistance and implementing large trials on commercial farms under commercial production practices.

Although commercialisation of any new varieties is still some years away, the signs are promising and these Goldfinger varieties shape as a win-win for growers and consumers.



eHub keeping track of Fall Armyworm

Growers dealing with fall armyworm (FAW) can now access the latest online resources using the new FAW engagement eHub, which features information on pest management, moth activities and research results.

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner said as part of providing better services to industry, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) is leading research and extension through Queensland Government and Hort Innovation-funded projects to co-develop an integrated FAW management strategy.

"This involves field surveys and monitoring, control strategies, new techniques, compiling a literature review, and an economic risk analysis for horticultural crops in Australia," Mr Furner said.

"We have developed the eHub to share the outcomes of this work, including regular video and results updates from demonstration sites, event information, moth activities, insecticide resistance results, and to allow growers to engage in discussion."

To keep track of the latest Fall Armyworm research, development and extension, visit: daf.engagementhub.com.au/fallarmyworm

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FUMIGATION PARTNERSHIPS INNOVATION

NOVEL MODE OF ACTION INSECTICIDE FOR TOUGH VEGETABLE CROP PESTS

SIMODIS® insecticide (Group 30) from Syngenta with PLINAZOLIN® technology marks the next evolution in insecticide technology for protecting plant health.

“PLINAZOLIN® technology is an innovation from Syngenta and is a novel mode of action that offers reliable, robust and extended efficacy against hard-to-control pests in our key horticultural crops,” Syngenta Technical Services Lead, Dr Shaun Hood said.

“We’re anticipating registration of SIMODIS® insecticide before the end of this year.”

SIMODIS® insecticide will help growers tackle resistant and traditionally hard-to-control pests, with the registration including diamondback moth, two-spotted mite and western flower thrips.

“We’ve put SIMODIS® through its paces using commercial application equipment on a range of crops across Australia,” Dr Hood said.

“What impresses people is both its level of control and its residual activity.”

Diamondback moth – redefining control

“Around Australia, diamondback moth has become increasingly difficult to manage, with resistance reducing the efficacy of some well-known chemistries,” Dr Hood said.

In Gatton, Queensland in 2018, SIMODIS® insecticide (plus AGRAL® spray adjuvant) was compared to industry standards for the control of diamondback moth (DBM) in a cauliflower crop.

Seven days after the application, all insecticides effectively controlled the DBM population. At 14 days after application, SIMODIS® insecticide recorded significantly better DBM control than Success Neo (Group 5), Coragen (Group 28) and PROCLAIM® Opti (Group 6). The residual activity of SIMODIS® insecticide was evident at this application timing when the vegetative growth had slowed. By 20 days after application, larvae and pupae numbers increased nearly threefold in the untreated control, suggesting a recent egg lay had occurred. SIMODIS® was the only treatment that continued to control the DBM population.

“This is a product that is going to redefine DBM control. It’s a highly efficacious insecticide but it’s also going to enable brassica growers to regain control of resistant populations,” Dr Hood said.

“Monitoring is the key to effective DBM management. Apply SIMODIS® insecticide as soon as the local thresholds are reached, either at egg hatch or very soon after egg hatch to target young larvae.

“Growers should avoid applying SIMODIS® to established populations dominated by large, later instar DBM larvae.”



Two-spotted mites – resistance management resource

In Bowen, Queensland in 2019, SIMODIS® insecticide (plus AGRAL® spray adjuvant) was applied on a cucumber crop and compared to industry standards for control of two-spotted mites (TSM).

In the untreated control, the TSM continued to increase throughout the trial, with more than 60 motiles per 20 mm leaf disk recorded 22 days after application. SIMODIS® insecticide effectively reduced the density of eggs, nymphs and adult mites to very low levels. SIMODIS® insecticide continued to record strong residual activity out to 22 days after application.

As a contact insecticide, residual activity of SIMODIS® insecticide will be influenced by crop growth stage and spray coverage.

“SIMODIS® insecticide is an exceptional miticide. With mites, monitoring is key to effective management. For best results, apply SIMODIS® insecticide as soon as local thresholds are reached, targeting the mite population before it becomes established,” Dr Hood said.

“Up to two applications of SIMODIS® insecticide per crop will be permitted, but to manage resistance, growers will need to rotate to a miticide from a different mode of action group before applying a second SIMODIS® insecticide application.

“These trials are a snapshot of what we’ve observed at numerous trial sites across Australia. SIMODIS® insecticide has consistently delivered reliable and robust efficacy and exceptional crop safety against a range of pests and in a range of crops.”

SIMODIS® insecticide has excellent sunlight stability and rain-resistant properties, allowing for long spray intervals.



Bejo Seeds Rep, Ashlea Schott and Lead Research Dr Nigel Swarts

Call for industry to participate in a climate adaptability research project

Scientists are giving Aussie horticulture growers in cooler climates the opportunity to participate in a \$6.4M research trial program to help industry adapt to climate change.

Being delivered through Hort Innovation and led and co-funded by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), with support from national and international industry partners, the five-year project aims to grow cool climate horticulture production by 20 percent.

Trial sites are being set up in Tasmania, and the research team will design experiments to be relevant across cool climate regions such as south-west Western Australia, the Adelaide Hills, South-East Victoria and high-altitude areas of New South Wales and South-East Queensland.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive Officer Brett Fifield said the aim is to investigate what operational adjustments need to be made to farms in various regions to achieve maximum productivity in the face of unpredictable weather patterns.

“This project is all about getting growers the best possible production outcomes,” he said.

“Researchers will look at fragile soil management, nutrient and water use. High-yield plants that can be picked early to maximise returns, and establishing protected cropping environments that offer stable, pest and disease-controlled growing environments are further priorities.”

The program will span various sectors, including peas, potato, pyrethrum, vegetable seed, cherry and berry production. Co-investing industry partners are Bejo, Potatoes NZ, Simplot, Premium Fresh, Scottish Society for Crop Research, Botanical Resources Australia, Reid Fruits, Hansen Orchards, Costa Group, Driscoll’s Australia, South Pacific Seeds and Fruit Growers Tasmania and contributions from the Australian Government.

TIA Horticulture Centre Leader, Dr Nigel Swarts said primary producers across the horticultural sector are partnering to address the critical issues and risks associated with climatic variability and extremes in temperature and rainfall.

“With climate change, we can expect heat stress causing irregular yields for peas and potatoes. For fruit crops like cherries, there is the threat of premature ripening and projected increases in pest populations. Nutritional quality in terms of sugars, acids, or antioxidant capacity will also shift, impacting fruit quality outcomes,” he said.

“It is vital that we undertake this research now to give growers the knowledge, tools, and confidence to invest and sustainably expand into the future.

“Our industry partners are integral members of the team who will help us to define the research questions and develop the on-the-ground program design to ensure it is highly relevant for industry.”

Through industry field demonstration days and workshops, trial sites will be accessible to growers. All project findings will be made available to the industry through resources such as fact sheets, webinars and case studies.

Growers in cool climate regions are encouraged to get involved by contacting Dr Nigel Swarts at TIA on Nigel.Swarts@utas.edu.au

SHIFTING THE DIAL ON VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION

The Fruit & Vegetable Consortium (FVC) last month launched a landmark new report that explores what is needed to lift Australia’s declining vegetable consumption, against a backdrop of COVID-19 and ongoing disruption from rising costs of living and other external factors.

Entitled, *Shifting the dial on vegetable consumption — Rebuilding healthy families in a COVID-19 affected and disrupted Australia*, the report was developed by KPMG and co-sponsored by Medibank Private, Perfection Fresh, Stop Food Waste Australia and

Health & Wellbeing Queensland.

The report recommends:

- a national strategy to increase vegetable consumption
- industry integration
- programs focus on the issue of ‘affordability’
- a strategy that enables sustained national behaviour change

You can read the report online: www.thefvc.org.au



STRAWBERRY FIELDS OF FLAVOUR

A \$7-million joint research project harnessing scientific advances could result in a range of new, elite strawberry varieties to target premium markets.

The five-year project led by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) with the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI) and Griffith University, funded by Hort Innovation will build an advanced knowledge base of the genetics behind the strawberry flavour and qualities consumers prefer.

Associate Professor Heather Smyth, a sensory science and flavour chemist from QAAFI's Centre for Nutrition and Food Sciences, said the aim was to create diversity for strawberries, similar to apples.

"There are many different apple varieties which offer subtly different tastes, textures and end-uses – Granny Smith, Red Delicious for example," Dr Smyth said.

"We potentially could have the same for strawberries – different varieties with different sensory properties and therefore different applications and markets.

"For example, home consumers might prefer small, sweet strawberries, while chefs might prefer the visual appeal of larger fruit for particular culinary uses and may not be too concerned about sweetness because they can add it themselves."

DAF Principal Plant Breeder Dr Jodi Neal said the research would draw on an extensive collection of parental lines developed through DAF's Australian Strawberry Breeding Program at the Maroochy Research Station in Nambour.

"The consumer and sensory testing will involve evaluating niche lines of white, pink and dark burgundy strawberries," Dr Neal said.

"We'll be exploring texture, taste and aroma volatiles and consumer acceptance.

"What does the mouth feel when you bite into it, for example?"

"We hope this phase will help us link the flavour to the genetics to develop genetic markers to predict flavour in future varieties."

Dr Smyth said once sensory profiles are established for existing and new characteristics, new varieties can eventually be made available to growers and consumers.

"What the consumer wants does vary," she said.



"There are different market segments with different expectations for taste, colour, size, post-harvest handling and other characteristics.

"The question we are starting with is, what are the genetics behind all of these?"

Professor Smyth added developing new varieties of an already popular fruit would be a balancing act.

"We are going to really advance where we are with each of these crops and give plant breeders the tools, they need to deliver varieties that will allow producers to give consumers what they love about these fruits."



Growing the Australian vegetable industry

Growth in the Australian vegetable industry has significantly outpaced the overall agricultural sector over the past five decades through a shift toward higher value products and improvements in the quality and convenience of what is provided.

According to the recently released report, Growing the Australian vegetable industry, over the period from 1969/70 to 2020/21, the nominal value of vegetable production increased by \$4.7 billion.

Improvements in product mix and quality contributed nearly 60 percent of that growth while general vegetable price inflation contributed 35 percent and increased volumes 5 percent.

Rising incomes and changing tastes have shifted

consumer demand towards higher quality, wider variety, and improved convenience, with only a moderate increase in volumes.

We are not eating greater quantities of vegetables, rather we are eating a wider range of higher quality vegetables.

The improvement in quality has come from a variety of sources, including improved packaging, greater consistency, more ready to eat products and greater year-round availability.

You can read the Growing the Australian vegetable industry report online:

www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/productivity/related-research/growing-the-Australian-vegetable-industry



Making jackfruit jump off the supermarket shelves

Australian jackfruit is a tropical treasure: a fruit rich in vitamins, minerals and many phytochemicals that are known to have positive health benefits, and it is incredibly versatile in its culinary uses.

When ripe, its sweet fruit segments are akin to the tropical tastes of banana, mango, and pineapple and when unripe, its stringy texture is known to be a healthy meat substitute increasingly popular in western cuisine.

And yet, jackfruit remains an underutilised food source in Australia.

With transportation and labour costs high in Australia, jackfruit production which is predominantly located in the Northern Territory and Far North Queensland, has plateaued in recent years. However, new research has indicated that the industry has the potential to grow significantly with forecasts of production of \$5 - \$10 million by 2025.

In a project funded by AgriFutures Australia as part of its Emerging Industries Program and in conjunction with the Northern Territory Government's Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Monash Food Innovation were commissioned to pull jackfruit apart and explore how the industry can drive more consumer demand for the versatile but largely unfamiliar fruit - to find ways to process jackfruit into ready-to-eat products and ingredients and make jackfruit jump off the supermarket shelves.

Lead researcher, Dr Leonie van 't Hag from the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering at Monash University said results suggested that Australians are interested in consuming more jackfruit products, due to its high nutritional value and flavour, but a big barrier is the availability of products outside growing regions in northern Australia.

"There are many opportunities for the Australian jackfruit market to capitalise on the development of new products and to help grow the emerging industry," Dr van 't Hag said.

The multidisciplinary project team from

Monash Food Innovation, the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering and the Monash Business School used innovation methodologies to develop and evaluate new jackfruit products.

Their findings have now been released in a report Processing jackfruit into ready-to-eat products and ingredients published by AgriFutures Australia which outlines the market opportunities for the industry to grow in Australia.

Over one thousand consumers were engaged in testing and evaluating jackfruit to determine new consumer applications, the potential to utilise greener fruit with the skin and seeds as by-product, and diverse processing applications for different stages of the fruit's maturity. This included sensory evaluations, based on sense of taste, smell, texture/feel and sight.

Further research has also helped understand how crop genetics and market capitalisation can grow the jackfruit industry and overcome the current supply chain challenges.

The results showed that processed jackfruit could be introduced to consumers through familiar formats and new ideas including snacking, treats, meat alternatives, home cooking and restaurants, as well as quick and easy meals.

"Jackfruit is a nutritious fruit, and it is evident that novel processing techniques could appeal to consumers and ensure the industry can maximise its value for production," Dr Olivia Reynolds from AgriFutures said.

The estimated gross value of production of the Australian jackfruit industry is currently \$2.6 million. The research has found that if a quarter of this supply was diverted to processing, an estimated \$3.3 million of value would be added each year from existing production.

Read the full report online:
www.agrifutures.com.au/product/processing-jackfruit-into-ready-to-eat-products-and-ingredients/

Fruit & Vegetable news

Vol 93, No 6 November / December 2022

Fruit & Vegetable News is Queensland's premier horticultural magazine, read by Queensland's commercial fruit and vegetable growers and their families.

It is the official journal of Growcom, the voice of the horticulture industry. Fruit & Vegetable News is published using Growcom membership funds.

Published bi-monthly by Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers Ltd, trading as Growcom Australia.

Level 2, 231 George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
ACN 090 816 827
Phone: 07 3620 3844
Email: growcom@growcom.com.au
Website: www.growcom.com.au
Postal address: PO Box 12101,
George Street QLD 4003

Fruit & Vegetable News is researched, written and designed by Growcom Communications with support from staff.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Natalie Brady (Managing Editor)
Martin Volz (Journalist)
Lachlan Mitcherson (Graphic Design)

ADVERTISING BOOKINGS

Pulse - Media Sales
Steve Luxford
steve.luxford@pulsehub.com.au
0429 699 553
66-68 Sackville St, Collingwood, VIC 3066
www.pulsehub.com.au

SUBSCRIPTION COST

Annual subscription within Australia for 6 issues (postage included)
\$220

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Rachel Chambers, Angela Seng-Williams,
Michelle Haase and Naomi Wilson.

COVER PHOTO

Growcom

COVER STORY

Martin Volz

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