

Volume 94

#5

SEPTEMBER /  
OCTOBER 2023



# Fruit & Vegetable NEWS

Let's talk bushfire preparedness  
Dear growers, love from the Ekka  
Job ads under the microscope



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& VEGETABLE GROWERS



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## welcome

Chief Executive Officer  
Rachel Chambers

# Celebrate, Educate, Advocate

**Celebrate. Educate. Advocate. Three deeply actionable words which now define everything we do as an organisation. Not only has 2023 meant a name change (or rather a name swap as Growcom was just the trading name of Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) all this time!) but it signaled a new strategic direction for the organisation in its 100th year.**

As much as our name changes have been a bit confusing (we will get there in the end), the QFVG Board has been perfectly clear in its direction to redefine 'Growcom' from a predominantly service delivery focus and signal the return of QFVG as the State's loud, strong, and brave advocacy body.

For clarification, Growcom hasn't gone far, it still very much exists as our project delivery arm which aptly delivers programs and services growers require. We still have fabulous Growcom staff providing much needed services to growers right across Queensland and indeed the nation. It's just that we think Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers better describes what and who we stand for - our growers.

I was asked recently if QFVG would go into bat on behalf of any other link in our very complex supply chain or if we were only in it for growers. My

response was this: QFVG will support all links of the horticultural supply chain. All links are important to us to celebrate, educate and advocate for, as without any one of them our supply chain is broken. However, all we do, we do through the lens of a grower.

It is through this grower centric lens that we most recently approached the nine days of Ekka. As we hadn't attended the event in many years (no one can quite tell me when it was, but it seems decades) we weren't really sure what we were doing but we weren't going to let a little thing like a lack of experience stop us.

We decided we would celebrate our growers with a 'Dear Grower' message board - a place consumers could leave their messages which we would pass onto our growers. We didn't know what consumers were going to say, we thought there may be some climate related or worker related messages, however what eventuated

was a very large and lovely compilation of overwhelming support and appreciation.

Some of our growers also gave up their precious time to come to the Ekka to educate consumers and it was heart-warming to see the genuine interest shown by consumers in how their food is grown and makes its way into their homes.

And of course, we were there to advocate for and on behalf of our growers every chance we had.

Although we didn't engage with every Ekka attendee, our best guess is we interacted with around 100,000 consumers of fresh produce. Further to this, I am sure that the consumers we did engage with will think of growers each time they eat a fresh piece of fruit, veg or nut into the future - a win in our books!

## inside

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#### LET'S TALK BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS

As we head into another summer the time is now to make bushfire preparedness a priority.

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#### JOB ADS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

The Fair Work Ombudsman is actively watching online platforms such as Seek.com with inspectors making calls if they have concerns job adverts are advertising rates of pay that would contravene the Act or a Fair Work instrument.



### 10.

#### DEAR GROWERS, LOVE FROM THE EKKA

After a long hiatus away from the Ekka, QFVG decided it was time to go back and ensure horticulture - even more so our growers - are first and foremost in the minds of consumers.



**CLOSING  
THE LOOP**

*We listen.  
We act.  
We inform.*

# QFVG REPRESENTS QLD horticulture at Food Security Parliamentary Inquiry

**Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) Chief Executive Officer Rachel Chambers represented Queensland horticulture at the recent Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Security. Given just five minutes to tell the story of horticulture, QFVG used the time to highlight four key themes.**

### ***Profitability***

Our biggest risk to food security in Australia is grower viability. Profit, people, planet is the only order food sustainability works. In the past three years growers in Australia have been subjected to a huge range of supply chain impacts and policy changes. Growers are anecdotally reporting to us that on average their productivity has decreased by a third during this time, while their costs have increased by 35 – 60%. What industry can possibly survive these numbers?

### ***Seasonality***

It is the seasonality of horticulture which is the single most poorly accounted feature of growing fresh produce contributing to poor

government policy and decision making, leaving fresh produce at great risk into the future.

### ***Complexity***

Agriculture is a complex beast with interactions between bio-physical, ecological, climatic, social, economic, and political influences. Further complexity is added by horticulture not being a singular commodity industry. Horticulture does not have the luxury of clarity afforded to singular commodities such as cotton, beef, lamb, or sugar cane which are able to give quite specific information on their needs.

The same variety of strawberry is grown in the same region by two different growers. One grower chooses to grow in soil and the other hydroponically. We are still talking about the same variety of strawberry yet both growers have very different labour needs, inputs, and skill sets for their businesses.

Unfortunately, the complexity in the horticultural industry means that when we try to speak collectively about our issues, it often comes across

as quite disjointed and fragmented. QFVG implored the committee to see horticulture as immensely complex, rather than disjointed.

### ***Narrative***

Finally, all Australian agriculture needs a new narrative; however, horticulture needs its own. Our complexity is the exact reason why horticulture needs to build more robust data, separate from any other agricultural singular commodity. For too long a lack of real data and on occasion the presence of incorrect or incomplete data has not allowed for good decision making in our sector. Being grouped with non-similar commodities only serves to mask potential opportunities and solutions to industry specific challenges.

The question we finished on was: Does Australia want locally grown fresh produce into the future?

If the answer is yes, then the first question to answer is how are we going to ensure growers continue to want to do this job when job satisfaction is currently so low and viability at such risk?

## SNAPSHOT: JULY / AUGUST 2023

Meetings with  
Government

15

Meetings with  
industry organisations

42

Submissions

2

Media articles  
published

11

Media mentions

60+

Our Reach

25,749,000



Regional Migrant Forum, Bowen.

# Margins, workforce, and compliance TOP OF LIST FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND

**During July and August Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) spent time in the north of the State listening to the issues affecting growers.**

Fair margins were rightfully at the top of the list, as were compliance burdens and auditors. Disturbingly we also noted the significant impact to growers' mental health an audit can cause. Workforce issues including the new deed and guidelines with the PALM scheme were also front of mind.

As part of our visit, we attended the Regional Migration Forum hosted by the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association (BGGA) in collaboration with the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN).

Managing a workforce takes up a great deal of time and energy. Although the win-wins in migrant workforce have always made the work worth it for both parties, from all the conversation at the forum, it seems the rule changes have changed the goal posts midgame resulting

in this model of workers now being considered unworkable.

A grower who is navigating the humanitarian and policy challenges of the PALM scheme said, "We (growers) are humans too and deserve consideration and adequate consultation on any changes that are made."

He went on to explain that growers genuinely want all their workers to feel safe, supported, and connected to meet their goals of supporting their families back home yet are made to feel like criminals in the current scheme.

Worker protections are absolutely without question and growers want nothing more than the businesses not doing the right thing sent off. However, the answer can't lie in good growers being penalised.

This same grower's team gave an awe-inspiring account of their long-term experience with the PALM scheme and the families they have employed, invested in, and supported over the years. Whilst it was

rewarding to see and hear about the positives, the frustrations remained close to the surface with conversation around the government's lack of acknowledgement of the seasonality of horticulture, the need for flexibility and longer averaging periods and the time it takes to get workers 'in country'.

With many growers once again reevaluating their workforce options, we heard backpackers are back in the game, with the team looking a bit different to what it was pre-covid. Data is suggesting working holidays makers are back at pre-covid levels. However, due to PALM workers being put in place, they have now been met with a lack of work available and subject to our cost-of-living crisis. Unfortunately, there are already numerous stories of their return home narrative being a negative experience, with stories of no work and expensive living. For a workforce which has always been a part of horticulture, this is sad and concerning.

## AGM

### NOTICE OF

**BOARD DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS INVITED**

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) invites applications from financial grower members wishing to be considered for appointment as a non-executive director of the company.

Applications must be received no later than COB Friday, 29 September 2023. Should the number of applications outnumber the available positions, a ballot will be held.

To obtain an application form or for further information, please contact QFVG Company Secretary Andre Adins on [aadins@qfvg.com.au](mailto:aadins@qfvg.com.au)

QFVG gives notice that the 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers will be held on Thursday, 23 November in Brisbane. Further details will be provided closer to the event.



# Let's talk bushfire preparedness

**'Acts of God' as they are commonly known, including hailstorms, flooding, cyclones, earthquakes, and lightning are considered by every grower in their seasonal planning. 'Acts of men' however should be equally considered as we enter a new season.**

As we head into another summer, it's been worrying that several horticulture growers have already experienced and reported suspicious arson activity, an activity which records show is responsible for up to 50 percent of all bushfires across Australia. The message from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is clear – don't let arsonists win! It is up to all of us to be vigilant and to report any suspicious activity. It only takes one unlawful act to ruin many people's lives and livelihoods.

On the back of a wet couple of years and a hotter than average August in Queensland, this does not bode well for the upcoming bushfire season. The Bureau of Meteorology has released their bushfire outlook which has much of Queensland covered by a warning of an increased risk of fire.

A lot has happened since the 2019/20 catastrophic bushfire season which destroyed over 9,000 buildings, 5.3 million hectares, and sadly saw 34 people lose their lives as a direct

result. Although it may now seem like a lifetime ago, the key learnings from our conversations with fire impacted growers are still relevant today:

- Make bushfire preparedness an annual priority. The time is now.
- Consider investing in a small (1,000L) firefighting trailer or "slip on" unit on-farm ready at all times.
- Join the local rural fire brigade and learn some basic firefighting skills.
- Talk to your neighbours about hazard reduction to protect life and livelihood.
- Equip orchards with an emergency power source that could operate when mains power may be down. This will be essential to operate irrigation during a bushfire emergency and potentially several days or weeks afterwards reducing potential for post-bushfire crop losses.

QFVG encourages our members to put some time aside to go through your Bushfire Survival Plan.

*Now is the best time to prepare*

QFVG has developed a glovebox guide to bushfire preparedness based on grower experiences, observations and lessons learnt. Scan the QR Code to access this resource and be prepared whatever the weather.

BE PREPARED

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# WE ARE *Listening*



## engagement

Head of Engagement & Advocacy  
**Angela Seng-Williams**



**I love my job! It's been nearly 10 months jampacked with farm and regional grower visits, advocacy, membership support, and all things Year of Horticulture. I am really enjoying meeting growers and industry right across the state and attending the many events in regional growing communities.**

Each engagement opportunity allows us to further understand issues as they are experienced on the ground and feeds vital information into our grassroots advocacy, campaigns, and project efforts.

We are focused on a practical 'grower centric' approach in all we do and as such have been listening intently to growers who share both the love of what they do along with the many challenges they face.

Regardless of where I am across the state, we are hearing consistent stories of:

- Unworkable and impractical government policy;
- Retailers not sharing their increasing margins when horticulture has always understood the usual game of supply and demand;
- Fear of retribution for speaking up about what is happening;
- Unions being overzealous and using intimidatory tactics;
- Increasing costs of production with no ability to 'pass these through' impacting on viability; and the
- Ever increasing compliance burden and the stress/ extra costs this incurs.

This feedback from getting out and about has led us to believe we need to work hard, be brave and strong in our advocacy efforts to even up the power imbalance, get some sense into the system and protect our growers, their business viability, and the communities within which they live, work and play.

Wow, what an amazing, humbling learning and growing experience... and it has only just started. Thank you for having me - please reach out anytime - 0427 217 077.

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Produced at Felton, QLD





L-R: The Honourable Mark Furner; Canegrowers CEO Dan Galligan; Cotton Australia GM Michael Murray; QFVG CEO Rachel Chambers; Senator The Honourable Murray Watt; QFF CEO Jo Sheppard; and QFVG Chair Joe Moro.



Networking at the Celebrating Queensland Agriculture event hosted by the Queensland Farmers' Federation.

# Celebrating Queensland Agriculture

**Representing Queensland horticulture at the recent Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) Celebrate of Queensland Agriculture event was QFVG CEO Rachel Chambers and Head of Engagement & Advocacy Angela Seng-Williams.**

Retuning for its second year, the event was held during the Ekka to showcase the depth and breadth of the Queensland agricultural sector. Guest speakers on the night included Senator the Honourable Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for Emergency Management, and the Honourable Mark Furner, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities.

**QFVG**  
QUEENSLAND FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS

# Gala Event

SAVE THE DATE  
**NOVEMBER 17**

*Details to follow*

100 YEARS



# Dear Growers, love from the Ekka



The Ekka was an enormous undertaking, and we could not have done it without the support of Boomaroo Nurseries, Benyenda Citrus, Sweetee Citrus, Blue Cow Citrus, Abbotsleigh Citrus, Crossroad Citrus, L & R Collins, Zone Fresh Produce Windsor, Gibb Brothers, Ross n Co, Viva Produce, Ireland53, A E Chaves, Shamrock Marketing, A E Heather & Co, Murray Bros, Don Alroe & Sons, Romeo's, Carter & Spencer, Harvest Moon, Limit Farms Produce, Sutton Farms, Rugby Farms, Vanstone Produce, LuvaBerry, Smart Berries, Tastensee, Smart Berries, Tropical Pines, Polsoni Pines, Pinata Farms, Golden Circle, Kamlowe Pines, Nicoletti Orchards, Eastern Colour, Nutworks, Gondwana Macadamias, Windhum Farms, Austchilli Group, The Avolution, Rehberger Family Farms, Simpson Farms, Bluegum Creek Produce, Mackays Group, Skybury Farms, Divine Vanilla, Wild Vanilla, Golden Drop Mango Winery, The Australian Chocolate Farm, Marto's Mangoes, Burratronics, Exodas Transport, FNQ Food Incubator, Citrus Australia, Australian Banana Growers' Council, Lockyer Valley Growers Association, Berries Australia, Queensland Berries, Granite Belt Growers Association, Australian Macadamia Society, Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers, FNQ Growers, Bowen Gumlu Growers Association, Avocados Australia, and Apple & Grape Festival.



**After a long hiatus away from the Ekka, QFVG decided it was time to go back and ensure horticulture, and even more so our growers, are first and foremost in the minds of consumers. After all, how can Queensland's biggest agricultural event not include horticulture?**

Every day we celebrated a different commodity and growing region with growers generously giving their time to talk 'shop'. Citrus, bananas, vegetables, berries, pineapples, apples, macadamias, avocados, and tropical fruits each had a day to engage the public. In person they answered thousands of questions, sharing their knowledge and passion for what they do. Consumers were curious, engaged and overwhelmingly supportive of growers.

Taste testing was also extremely popular with 10,000 mandarins, samples of new varieties of citrus, 150kg of apples, 3,000 samples of avocado, countless

snacking carrots, hundreds of bananas and thousands of macadamia nuts being given to consumers to try.

Our Dear Grower message board was set up with the intent of gathering consumer insights to share with our members.

Our sector is under immense pressure from multiple angles, and we need to understand how that is impacting the people we feed. What eventuated was thousands of messages of overwhelming support, understanding of the challenges, and appreciation of the hard work that goes into every piece of fruit, vegetable or nut grown. These inspirational messages of support, encouragement and understanding brought an overwhelming awareness that our growers don't have to do this alone. Growers have an army of supporters; we just need to mobilise them.



# Dear Growers...



Thousands of messages over 9 Ekka days

Thank-you  
for providing  
AUS with fresh  
food  
- Adair

The best  
fruit in  
the world is  
grown in  
AUSTRALIA  


From the bottom of  
our hearts - thank  
you for keeping  
us nourished with  
such beautiful, fresh  
produce!

♥ Jesse

Thank you  
for your  
hard work  
😊

I appreciate  
all of your  
hard work ♥  
xoxo  
Marley...

Good work to  
some of the  
hardest working  
and yet least  
recognised people  
on the planet.  
I appreciate you all

We are  
very  
grateful!  
😊

We need  
You!  
Thank -you for  
your hard work.

THANK YOU FOR  
ALL THE HARD  
WORK + HEARTACHE  
YOU GO THROUGH  
TO FEED US! ♥

Why do we  
pay so much  
in the shops  
when the growers  
get nothing.  
Thanks for the bananas

When I grow up, I want to be a farmer too!! So cool what u do!!  
A.C. ♥

You guys are our inspiration & the reason we love what we do. DAF Market Access team

There's so many people who love & care about you

I love that you put in lots of effort to give us fruit and vegetables that we love.  
James. ♥

Thank you so much for your hardwork to keep my tummy full. Special thanks to potato growers. No potato = No fries/chips

Thank you for your Produce!  
😊

Thank you for all the hard work you put in for everyone else to be healthy

You are the hero's of society!  
TYVM  
♥

Thank-you for giving us food for to put on the table  
P.S I love the Summer fruits  
Great work thx

I love that you put in lots of effort to give us fruit and vegetables that we love.  
James. ♥

Your bananas are awesome  
Thank-You  
♥ Maddison





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# Special offers are now available to QFF peak industry members



QUEENSLAND  
FARMERS'  
FEDERATION

**A number of offers are available to Queensland Farmers' Federation peak industry members and their members. If you're a member of one of the organisations listed below, you may be eligible:**

Canegrowers  
Cotton Australia  
Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers  
eastAUSmilk

Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland  
Turf Queensland  
Australian Cane Farmers Association  
Queensland United Egg Producers

Queensland Chicken Meat Council  
Pork Queensland Inc.  
Queensland Oyster Growers Association  
Irrigator groups across QLD



**Member offer:** National Fleet pricing with Mitsubishi Diamond Advantage (10/10) is offered to Queensland Farmers' Federation peak body members for all eligible new Mitsubishi Motors vehicles. Available from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 not in conjunction with any other offer.

**How to access:** For more information and how to access the offer, please contact Nathan Finch via email: [nfinch@mmal.com.au](mailto:nfinch@mmal.com.au)



**Member offer:**

- \$50 off the Telstra Mobile Smart Antenna (TMSA)
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- \$50 off the Telstra Go Repeater

**How to access:** Call 1800 305 307 and advise you are eligible for the QFF Telstra Partner Discount and quote QFF1.



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Visit [www.qff.org.au/our-corporate-partners/rcs-australia/](http://www.qff.org.au/our-corporate-partners/rcs-australia/) to learn more about RCS.



**Member offer:** Save on Mobil fuels available through a growing network of Mobil branded and 7-Eleven service stations. With zero card fees and great savings, add a Mobil Card to your wallet today and start saving! Full details are at [www.qff.org.au/our-corporate-partners/mobil/](http://www.qff.org.au/our-corporate-partners/mobil/)

**How to access:** Contact Lisa Hurford on 0416 543 884 or email [lisa.hurford@sales.mobil.com.au](mailto:lisa.hurford@sales.mobil.com.au)



**Member offer:** BDO is a trusted adviser to clients seeking audit, tax and advisory services. They are offering the choice of a free, dedicated 60-minute initial consultation (either in-person or virtually).

**How to access:** Visit [www.qff.org.au/our-corporate-partners/bdo/](http://www.qff.org.au/our-corporate-partners/bdo/) to learn more about BDO's areas of expertise and to book.



Sparke Helmore is pleased to offer QFF members, and members of those members, the opportunity to briefly discuss legal issues over the phone (for up to 15 minutes) at no cost before giving us formal instructions.

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**Member offer:** Ag Jobs Queensland allows agriculture and farming businesses to promote their available positions to people looking to work in the agriculture sector. Members receive 50% off Bronze and Silver and 25% Gold Employer Subscriptions. Visit [www.agjobsqueensland.com.au](http://www.agjobsqueensland.com.au) for more information.

**How to access:** Contact your peak body for more information and how to access or email [partnerships@qff.org.au](mailto:partnerships@qff.org.au)



# TROPICAL PINES 2023 PINEAPPLE FIELD DAYS

YEPPOON | 27 – 28 JULY





# ANNUAL INDUSTRY EVENT

**Yeppoon in Central Queensland hosted Australia's pineapple industry in late July for the industry's annual Pineapple Field Days.**

Organised by Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) on behalf of Australian Pineapples, the two-day event brought together growers,

government, researchers, and supply chain members to showcase the latest research and development occurring within the industry.

On display at this year's event were biological crop enhancers; regenerative farming practices utilising crop mulch and composts; screen trials using new and innovative pesticide products for Redmite; improved nitrogen-based

fertiliser products; and industry breeding trials.

Many of the trials were an extension on work currently being delivered through Growcom's South East Queensland Water Quality Project. The project collaborates extensively with resellers and suppliers to improve farm productivity and sustainability.





# PINEAPPLE INDUSTRY ON ROAD TO RECOVERY

Following the natural flowering event that occurred earlier this year Australian Pineapples Chair Sam Pike said the industry had fared reasonably well.

"In 2022 we saw unseasonably warm weather combined with double the average monthly rainfall. This combination triggered a mass natural flowering event," Mr Pike said.

"Industry was forecasting 60% – 80% of the crop flowering too early. This number has since been revised and while production numbers will be down over the next 12 – 24 months while industry recovers, many remain optimistic."

The South-East Queensland region was the hardest hit with a 40% loss in production for the 2022/23 financial year and an anticipated further 40% loss in the 2023/24 financial year.

Other regions impacted include the Wide Bay and Central Queensland regions with an average loss of 20% and 10% respectively for the 2022/23 financial year and an anticipated further loss of 15% and 10% for the 2023/24 financial year.

North Queensland growers were not impacted by the natural flowering event.



The 2023 Pineapple Field Days were proudly sponsored by: Tropical Pines, TriCal Australia, RDO Equipment, Harvest Trail Information Service, Agrichem, Imtrade, Golden Circle, Draslovka Services, Opal, EE Muir & Sons, Express Fruit, Favco Qld, UPL Australia, Swancorp, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Elders, Connected Farms, Multikraft, Lindsay Rural, Farmgard, Pinata Farms, Label Press, Hort Innovation, and the Livingstone Shire Council.

# GALA DINNER & AWARDS NIGHT

At the industry dinner held on Thursday night, Maryborough pineapple growers Scott and Katherine Maxwell (Scocan Holdings Pty Ltd) were presented with the Rudy Wassman Award recognising the next generation of industry professional who is pro-active, a future leader, and demonstrates a high level of commitment to the Australian pineapple industry.

Scott and Katherine took over the business independently in 2019 upon retirement of their parents. Together the two of them are both hands on in the business. Employee safety is a priority for the Maxwells and in early 2020 they began working with professional work health and safety representatives from 'Safe Ag Systems' in South Australia. In doing so the app now features pineapple equipment and pineapple work procedure templates which are available for any pineapple farmer to use.

Also receiving recognition at the dinner was QFVG CEO Rachel Chambers and SEQ Water Quality Project Manager Tim Wolens. Stephanie Cooper, Leigh Bennett and Jim Fewings from the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science (DES) were also recognised for their ongoing support of the industry.

Finally, Bundaberg grower John Steemson (Littabella Pines) was awarded the Col Scott Award for outstanding contribution to the Australian pineapple industry.

John has farmed pineapples for over 20 years. During that time, he has been actively involved in advancing the Australian pineapple industry and supporting high level stakeholder engagement. John is highly committed to sharing knowledge and understanding about the industry, giving up many hours to mentor and support others. He is also committed to R&D and advancing industry best practice often lending large portions of production area to trial work.



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# BRISBANE MONTHLY SUMMARY

## August

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

### Brisbane Monthly Special 6 - 10 Crop Summary

Page No 1

Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg
BANANAS,Cavendish	1014.03	10KgCtn	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	by the firm or employer unless otherwise indicated by an authorised representative independent of this message. We use virus scanning software but exclude all liability for viruses or similar in any attachment.						
Cavendish		15KgCtn	15.00	46.00	46.00	31.05							
Lady Finger		8KgCtn	32.00	60.00	60.00	44.73							
Blue Java		Carton	50.00	60.00	60.00	55.00							
Cavendish		Carton	15.00	52.00	52.00	32.28							
Ducasse		Carton	35.00	45.00	45.00	41.05							
Lady Finger		Carton	24.00	72.00	84.00	38.85							
Red Dacca		Carton	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00							
Sugar		Carton	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00							
Ducasse		Kg	3.50	4.00	4.00	3.75							
CARAMBOLAS	15.42	SLTray	20.00	40.00	40.00	32.23							
CUMQUATS,Oval	5.50	Kg	10.00	12.00	12.00	11.55							
GRAPEFRUIT,Star Ruby	290.73	13KgCtn	15.00	50.00	60.00	43.86							
Marsh		BulkCP	10.00	25.00	25.00	17.50							
Star Ruby		CP	12.00	60.00	60.00	38.09							
LIMES,Tahitian	275.37	18LCtn	10.00	60.00	70.00	35.00							
Aus.Native,Blood		1Kg	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00							
Tahitian		9LCtn	5.00	36.00	40.00	18.33							
Kafir		Kg	8.00	10.00	10.00	9.00							
MANGOES,Tommy Atkins	77.06	10LTray	45.00	46.00	46.00	45.50							
Kensington Pride		18LCtn	55.00	60.00	65.00	57.50							
Nam Dok Mai		18LCtn	50.00	120.00	130.00	77.95							
Culinary,Asian Queen		Kg	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.50							
Culinary,Elephant		Kg	14.00	60.00	60.00	35.18							
Culinary,Falan		Kg	3.50	14.00	14.00	6.69							
Culinary,Kensington Pride		Kg	7.00	9.00	9.00	8.00							
Culinary,Keow Savoy		Kg	12.00	17.00	17.00	13.54							
Kensington Pride		SLTray	50.00	80.00	80.00	67.24							
NUTS,Walnuts	158.30	10KgBag	70.00	75.00	75.00	72.50							
Peanuts		20KgBag	130.00	130.00	130.00	130.00							
Peanuts		3KgBag	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00							
Peanuts		500g	4.65	5.40	5.40	5.02							
Peanuts		5KgBag	25.40	25.40	25.40	25.40							
Chestnuts		Kg	5.00	12.00	12.00	8.38							
Macadamia		Kg	4.50	5.50	5.50	5.00							
OLIVES,Black	13.61	9LCtn	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00							
PAPAWS,Culinary	463.61	18LCtn	24.00	30.00	30.00	27.00							
Red Flesh		18LCtn	20.00	24.00	24.00	22.18							
Red Flesh		22LCtn	12.00	30.00	30.00	19.82							
Yellow Flesh		22LCtn	20.00	30.00	30.00	22.68							
Culinary		30LCtn	30.00	36.00	36.00	33.00							
Yellow Flesh		30LCtn	10.00	36.00	36.00	19.41							
Red Flesh		36LCtn	26.00	36.00	36.00	31.09							
Yellow Flesh		36LCtn	30.00	40.00	40.00	33.68							
WATERMELONS,Champagne S'less	1719.91	Kg	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60							
Long Varieties		Kg	0.60	1.00	1.20	0.73							
Minimelons		Kg	1.00	1.20	1.20	1.10							
Seedless		Kg	0.80	1.60	1.60	1.10							

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Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg	Species/Group/Variety	Tonnes	Pack	Low	High	Best	Avg
BEETROOT	155.41	10KgBag	8.00	18.00	20.00	12.75							
Golden		10KgBag	15.00	40.00	40.00	35.00							
Baby		Bunch	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.50							
Target		Bunch	2.50	3.20	3.20	2.85							
		Bunch	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.50							
CARROTS,Purple	1718.00	10KgCtn	24.00	30.00	30.00	25.00							
		15KgCtn	14.00	24.00	24.00	20.00							
Baby		250gLP	1.80	2.20	2.20	2.00							
		Bag	12.00	24.00	24.00	18.00							
Dutch		Bunch	1.40	2.60	2.60	2.05							
		Carton	12.00	22.00	25.00	18.50							
CAULIFLOWERS,Caulini	658.25	2KgCtn	16.00	20.00	20.00	18.00							
		Carton	4.00	24.00	24.00	13.57							
CHINESE VEG.,Bukchoy	186.05	Bunch	0.80	2.00	2.50	1.39							
Choisum		Bunch	1.20	2.00	2.50	1.30							
Kailan		Bunch	1.40	2.00	2.50	1.68							
Pakchoy		Bunch	1.00	2.00	2.50	1.35							
EDIBLE FLOWERS	6.22	20g	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00							
Mixed		20g	4.00	6.00	6.00	5.50							
Zucchini		Each	6.00	8.00	8.00	7.00							
Zucchini		SLTray	18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00							
EGG PLANT,Thai Apple	190.69	6KgCtn	24.00	30.00	36.00	26.50							
Continental		7KgCtn	18.00	30.00	36.00	22.91							
Thai Apple		7KgTray	26.00	30.00	30.00	27.50							
Purple		7KgTray	10.00	36.00	36.00	22.49							
Purple		8KgCtn	10.00	20.00	20.00	14.32							
GINGER	151.58	Kg	3.00	16.00	16.00	5.95							
LEEKS	119.92	10KgCtn	20.00	36.00	40.00	29.39							
		5KgCtn	20.00	24.00	24.00	22.00							
		8KgCtn	26.00	54.00	54.00	40.00							
		Bunch	1.60	2.00	2.50	1.85							
SILVERBEET	49.54	Bunch	1.50	2.80	3.00	2.03							
SWEET POTATOES,Gold	1643.36	15KgCtn	4.00	26.00	30.00	14.24							
Hawaiian		15KgCtn	20.00	50.00	60.00	45.00							
Red		15KgCtn	20.00	50.00	50.00	42.50							
Gold		32LCtn	4.00	26.00	30.00	14.84							
Hawaiian		32LCtn	30.00	60.00	60.00	50.64							
Red		32LCtn	25.00	60.00	60.00	43.18							
Gold		Kg	0.40	0.90	0.90	0.60							

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.

Our primary business activity is the supply of Australian Fruit and Vegetable Market Price Data.

- Daily, Weekly, Monthly and Annual Historic Fruit and Vegetable Price Data for 20+ Years
- Industry and Grower Organisation Projects, Programs and Market Activity Reporting
- Grower Subsidised Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Price Reports
- Price Data from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Markets

### AUSMARKET CONSULTANTS CAN BE CONTACTED BY:

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W: www.ausmarket.com.au  
P: (07) 3379 4576  
M: 0400 719 941

# Are you looking to increase the use of technology in your agribusiness?

**We're looking for 20 Queensland-based agribusinesses working in AgTech or agronomy-related fields to host an AgTech Officer.**

As a host, you will have an AgTech Officer placed in your agribusiness for a 12-month work placement. The AgTech Officer will work with a mentor within your business to support your organisation to increase the use of technology to enhance your operations.

**To find out more, contact Tim Bradley at QFF via 07 3837 4703 or email [AgTech@qff.org.au](mailto:AgTech@qff.org.au)**

*This project is proudly funded by the Queensland Government through its VET Emerging Industries initiative.*



**Queensland  
Government**





  
**QFVG**



# Can your farm ‘talk’?

## THEN... LET’S GET CONNECTED

### If the future of farming is digital, how does your farm stack up?

Do you have good, reliable connectivity on-farm or are you struggling to automate or adopt digital tools and systems simply because you can’t get a signal?

Modern, digital tools can increase on-farm productivity by up to 20 percent, save time, and help you make more informed decisions.

Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers has teamed up with the crew

from the NBN to assist horticultural growers across the state to develop a customised connectivity plan for your enterprise.

To participate and get the most from this opportunity growers need to:

- Complete a pre-session form used to compile your farm connectivity report.
- Attend a Get Connected session to meet with a NBN Community Ambassador to discuss your specific results and meet other like-minded growers.

At your nominated Get Connected session you will be provided with tailored connectivity report together with one-on-one assistance to work through the results, answer any questions and identify opportunities. You will also be able to see and experience a connected farm/ packing shed and access available resources.

Get Connected sessions are free for all commercial horticulture growers and being held throughout Queensland from mid-October.

## START

### GET CONNECTED

Get started today by:

## STEP 1

Completing your pre-session form to enable your tailored report to be compiled.

SCAN HERE



## STEP 2

RSVP to secure your spot at your closest Get Connected session.

SCAN HERE





## program update

Fair Farms National Program Manager  
**Sachin Ayachit**

# PERSPECTIVES AND SOLUTIONS for Australian horticulture

**I truly believe in the power of cultivating connections, fostering collaborations, and facilitating communication among individuals. This serves to not only provide a multitude of perspectives but also to engage in constructive discussions about potential solutions. The horticulture industry in Australia stands as a testament to its complexity and diversity, which extends to the array of challenges it faces. In response, our solutions must equally embody diversity and complexity.**

Rather than viewing the industry's diversity and complexity as obstacles, I perceive them as opportunities waiting to be harnessed. In particular, when we delve into the relatively novel concept of ethical sourcing and social compliance, it becomes evident that our industry necessitates the establishment of fresh connections, the nurturing of collaborative efforts, and the enhancement of communication channels.

All of these facets converge with a singular aim – the enhancement of workplace practices on farms.

Over the past year, the Fair Farms program has diligently curated an annual conference, strategically positioned as a platform to propel us towards this shared objective. This conference acts as a nexus, uniting

individuals from varied backgrounds and roles, driving them to collectively improve workplace conditions and practices within our industry.

Following the resounding success of our inaugural conference in Coffs Harbour last year, we are thrilled to extend a warm invitation to you for our second conference, scheduled for Friday, 20 October in the vibrant city of Melbourne. The day promises to be brimming with captivating speaker sessions and engaging panel discussions, all designed to provoke insightful thoughts and meaningful conversations.

The conference transitions seamlessly into an evening of recognition through an awards ceremony and an elegant dinner. These awards serve as a tribute to the extraordinary contributions of our Fair Farmers, supporters, and auditors.

This conference stands as an invaluable opportunity for all participants within the ethical sourcing space – from diligent growers to discerning retailers, auditors to quality managers. With over 15 distinguished speakers in attendance, the conference will traverse a multitude of critical subjects including ESG trends, Modern Slavery, Social Compliance, Fair Work updates, WHS considerations, auditing insights, and Human Rights imperatives. We are equally enthused to showcase the journeys of two of our Fair Farms certified growers, sharing their

invaluable experiences in navigating the realm of social compliance.

I extend an invitation to the entire horticulture industry, encouraging all to converge on this platform. Let us collaboratively start discussions about burgeoning trends with potential impacts, confront the challenges encountered by growers and the intricacies of supply chains, and collectively devise effective solutions. Recognizing that ethical sourcing is poised to become an integral cornerstone of production systems, this conference holds the potential to shape the future trajectory of our industry.

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



# FAIR & ETHICAL SOURCING CONFERENCE

*'Perspectives & solutions for Australian horticulture'*

## PRESENTING OUR SPEAKER LINE UP



KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
**BERNARD SALT**

Bernard Salt is one of Australia's most renowned demographers, a social commentator and an author known for his insightful analysis of demographic and social trends.



**EMMA GERMANO**  
President  
Victorian Farmers  
Federation



**STEVE RONSON**  
Executive Director of  
Enforcement  
Fair Work  
Ombudsman



**BRENDAN HAAR**  
General Manager  
Haars Nursery



**STEVE BURDETTE**  
Executive Officer  
Approved Employers  
of Australia



**JAMES COCKAYNE**  
Anti-Slavery  
Commissioner New  
South Wales



**BLAKE HILLIER**  
Stakeholder  
Engagement Officer  
Farmsafe Australia



**KELLI MCDUGALL**  
Managing Director  
Agri Talent



**ERIN CRANWELL**  
Production Manager  
AE Cranwell & Sons



**STEPHEN BROWN**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Vegetables WA



**JOHNATHON DAVEY**  
Executive Officer  
Melons Australia



**LUCY GREG**  
National Manager -  
Public Affairs AUSVEG



**JOLYON BURNETT**  
Chair  
NFF Hort Council



**RACHEL MACKENZIE**  
Executive Director  
Berries Australia



**KESTRA BOWSKILL**  
Human Rights  
Manager  
Endeavour Group



**TERRY O'BRIEN**  
General Manager -  
Corporate Services  
AUS-MEAT AUS-QUAL



**RICHARD SHANNON**  
NFF Hort Council  
Conference MC

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW**  
20 October 2023  
The Cargo Hall, Melbourne



Scan to  
register!





## engagement

Fair Farms Grower Engagement Officer  
Donna Mogg

# NATIONAL LABOUR HIRE SCHEME and 'same job, same pay'

**There's been a fair bit of noise around the Government's proposed Fair Work Amendment (Same Job, Same Pay) Act 2021 – mostly related to complexities such as recognition of experience and organisational knowledge as employers start to grapple with what skill sets may or may not mean one employee is paid higher than another.**

The Bill was introduced by One Nations' Senator Malcom Roberts with the aim of bridging the pay gap between full-time coal miners and labour hire employees who do the same job.

The 'Same Job, Same Pay' legislation is proposed in alignment with stronger protections for casual employees, and the government plan to introduce either a national or a harmonised State legislative framework for labour hire licensing. Regulating the gig-economy is a different, but related issue.

The first thing of note is that the proposed legislation applies to both national system employers, and constitutional corporations with enterprise agreements in place.

The Bill proposes to have all entitlements and conditions that apply to direct hire employees also apply to labour hire employees who do the same job. This includes wages and conditions, access to all amenities and facilities, training, and access to direct employment.

There is an exemption for small business and there is also an exemption for situations in which the workforce needs to be supplemented for a period of three months or less.

Where a longer engagement is required, such as a longer harvest period, the proposed Bill is silent. In the absence of a mention, it is logical to expect that the same provisions will apply to growers who use LHP workers for longer than three months.

One unintended consequence may be that a Bill designed to promote and even deliver more secure employment, and despite the additional provisions for the Host Employer to offer direct employment to LHP workers, it could in fact lead to increased churn of Labour Hire workers.

The Fair Farms Standards support the further development of the horticulture industry through more secure and regular employment where it is available and further supports the ongoing development and training of workers in our industry to help lift standards. An important element of the Horticulture Award, the Classification Standards set the skills, training, and qualifications to five levels, each level identifying an additional level of skill, experience, or expertise to justify the wage level.

We urge all employers to use these as their baseline when employing new staff. You can pay above the minimum rate set for that standard – to

recognise years of service or on the job, experience, certain experience, organisational/site knowledge and the like. Record keeping is important and equity of access to any incremental or performance-based wage increases equally so. If you plan to introduce such a scheme, establish a clear Policy around it.

Remember, it is the position that is classified, not the person, and so when a person leaves that position, you should review the position and the PD, but you can employ the new person into that position as it is classified.

Employers should use the Award Classification structures to classify positions and, when setting wages, identify the reasons that higher wages might be paid to one staff member over another, sometimes because of years of service, staff supervision, training or management responsibilities, special expertise, organisational knowledge etc). Always include the Classification Level and relevant wage level in contracts of employment.

As always, Fair Farms is available to members to assist with all their questions around Classifications and any element of the Award as it relates to our Standard.





## HR / IR compliance

Fair Farms Workplace Relations Specialist  
**Amanda Higgins**

# PREPARATION AND PLANNING

**One key to taking the pain out of an audit is to make it as efficient as possible. By taking the time to thoroughly prepare, this will enable you to feel 'as ready as possible' come audit day, so you can get back to the important work of running your business.**

If you are dreading your upcoming audit or are nervous about your first-ever initial audit, we have some suggestions that can help reduce the angst and pain.

Preparing in advance before audit day and working with your auditors before and during the audit not only minimises the disruption to your day-to-day operations, but also can help keep your audit fees down.

### **Obtain a document checklist and complete it as quickly as possible.**

During the planning stage of any audit, some auditors will provide you with a list of items that they will want to review. They might refer to it as the 'pre-audit checklist' or 'audit document list'. Ideally, this list will be given to you at least a month or two before your audit date so that you can carry out your preparation in a timely manner.

One recommended step is to conduct an internal audit two months prior to your audit date to help you identify any improvements or amendments and rectify these before your auditor arrives. Fair Farms can provide you with an internal checklist, so you can carry out an internal audit.

### **Maintain and review your records regularly.**

Most of the items on the checklist are contracts, schedules and registers that should be reviewed when completed, and on a regular ongoing basis, along with being reviewed prior to audit as part of your internal control processes. When documents are completed and verified on a regular basis, you're more likely to catch any problems and address them before your audit.

### **Keep information flowing.**

By the time the auditor leaves your site, you both should be very clear about what items are outstanding. Sometimes, unresolved non-conformances can stretch the audit timeline for weeks or even months. To avoid this scenario, make sure that at the closing meeting with the auditor you know and understand exactly what the non-conformances are, so that you can commence identifying the root cause, to then start taking the required steps for implementing corrective actions.

### **Provide timely confirmations.**

It is quite acceptable to provide your corrective actions to the auditing body as they are completed. You don't need to wait until the last one is closed out. Ensure that you have taken all the necessary steps to close out any non-conformances, and reviewed and amended your procedures so that you don't.

# SLAYING THE ZOMBIE



## workplace relations

Focus HR Founding Director  
**Naomi Wilson**

**If you have a Zombie Agreement, the 6 December 2023 deadline is looming for having your next plan in place on how you engage your employees.**

As a refresher, your three options are:

1. Negotiate a new Enterprise Agreement
2. Apply for an extension on the existing Enterprise Agreement (Fair Work will consider whether there are reasonable grounds and extending it is in the best interest of all parties)
3. Let the Zombie Agreement lapse and revert to Award conditions.

So, what happens if you go with option 3 - that is, you allow the Zombie to be slain.

If you do nothing before 6 December 2023, this is exactly what will happen. The Agreement will automatically cease, and your employees will revert to being covered by the applicable Modern Award as well as the Fair Work Act.

While this path does not require you to take any action per se, as a business you need to ensure that you manage the process effectively to protect the business and keep employees informed.

We believe that there are four key elements to consider. To help you get this right, these elements are outlined below with some helpful tools to support your journey to being Award covered.

### *Zombie vs Award Comparison*

It is essential that your business understands how the Modern Award which is about to come into effect differs from the terms that were in your Zombie Agreement. You've been operating under the Agreement for over 13 years now, so it is likely that the terms of the Agreement have become second nature to you, and you may not be aware of how it differs to the applicable Modern Award. So, it is crucial that you:

- Research/check which Modern Award(s) apply to your business and the types of roles that you employ.
- Compare your Agreement to the terms of the Award(s).
- Consider how any differences will be treated:
  - Where your Agreement is more generous than the Award(s), how you will treat this? Will you continue to provide the more generous terms to your employees? (If you are considering removing/reducing elements that employees currently receive, we recommend seeking advice)
  - Where your agreement is less generous than the Award(s), consider the impact of this and plan for managing this.
  - Consider implications for things such as payroll, rostering/time recording systems, leave approval etc.

### *Communication*

You should have already given your employees formal communication that they are covered by a Zombie Agreement. The legislation required that this happened before 6 June 2023 (so if you have not yet done this, please make sure you action ASAP).





You should now be focusing your messaging with your people on:

- Reassuring them that the cessation of the Zombie Agreement does not mean their role ceases. It just means that their employment is now covered by a different document (ie. the Award and a Contract of Employment - more on that below).
- What may change with the cessation of the Zombie Agreement.
- What is coming next. Letting your people know to expect Contracts of Employment and what else they may need to be ready for (changes in what shows up on their payslips, changes to time recording, any changes in processes etc).

#### **Contracts of Employment**

Thorough Contracts of Employment are crucial for clarifying and documenting the agreement reached with your employees on the terms of their employment. They set expectations with the employee and provide safeguards for the employer.

Getting your Contracts right is just so important - it underpins the engagement moving forward. If you already have Contracts drafted, please check to ensure they protect your business and provide the right information to your people. To assist with this, you can access our free Contract of Employment Self-Assessment too via the QFVG Online WR Shop: [www.growcom.com.au/growcom-shop/](http://www.growcom.com.au/growcom-shop/)

If you need to set up Contract templates, you can find multiple options in the online shop. If you are unsure of which to use, please reach out to the member support line to discuss.

#### **Policies**

From reading numerous old Agreements, we know that many contain elements that are better described as 'policies'. This might be things like sun protection, mobile phone usage, drug and alcohol testing, sexual harassment, and discrimination prevention just to name a few.

Policies play two crucial roles in any business by: 1) ensuring compliance that protects your business; and 2) clearly stating what is expected of your people and what they can expect in return. Your policies form the foundation for proactive, effective positive guidance of your people's performance and behaviours.

So now is a good time to review the policies which exist outside of the Zombie Agreement to identify whether these are sufficiently robust.

To assist you in considering which policies may suit your business, please access our free Policy Explanation checklist also available in the QFVG Online WR Shop: [www.growcom.com.au/growcom-shop/](http://www.growcom.com.au/growcom-shop/). We certainly don't suggest that every business needs all these policies, we recommend only having as many as are needed to ensure clarity for your people.

#### **FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

Please contact the QFVG Workplace Relations line on 07 3620 3844 or email [wrtteam@qfvg.com.au](mailto:wrtteam@qfvg.com.au)



# JOB'S UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

**The wave of reforms under the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022 introduced new laws that prohibit employers from advertising employment opportunities at a rate of pay that would contravene the Act or a Fair Work instrument (eg. an Award or Enterprise Agreement).**

There are also special provisions that apply for piecework. The Act requires advertisements of piecework to include any periodic rate of pay which the pieceworker would be entitled to receive.

There is a defence for employers if they had a "reasonable excuse" for non-compliance, however what constitutes a 'reasonable excuse' is not defined in the Act and therefore it will ultimately depend on the individual circumstances at hand. As an example, the explanatory memorandum for the Act says that a reasonable excuse may include where an employer exercised due diligence to ensure they advertised compliant rates of pay, but incorrect advice about the applicable rates was given and reasonably relied on by the employer.

Employers now face fines under these new provisions, with the maximum fine being 60 penalty units which equates to \$18,780 for an individual and \$93,900 for a company.

### **What does this mean for employers?**

Employers need to be very mindful when including rates of pay in job advertisements and ensure that they do not advertise a role that is at a rate below the applicable Award or Enterprise Agreement.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is now tasked with enforcing these new laws and so employers may get a call from an inspector of the Fair Work Ombudsman regarding a job advertisement if they have concerns that it might breach these new provisions.

In fact, we've already received calls from growers who have been contacted by Fair Work for this exact reason. So please beware of the pay rates written into adverts and the rates you enter when indicating pay brackets in platforms like Seek.com.



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

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

### NEED HELP?

For advice and support regarding rates of pay and complying with these new provisions, please contact the QFVG Workplace Relations line on 07 3620 3844 or email [wrtteam@qfvg.com.au](mailto:wrtteam@qfvg.com.au)

SECURE JOBS, BETTER PAY CHANGES TO AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE LAWS. SCAN HERE



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# EQUIPMENT UPGRADES, FARM DIVERSIFICATION AND **QRIDA** SUSTAINABILITY LOAN PERFECT RECIPE FOR GROWERS' SUCCESS



A QRIDA Sustainability Loan was the key ingredient to success for fruit and vegetable growers Greg and CC Petersen who used the concessional finance to build a commercial kitchen and purchase new farm equipment.

**At their property in Woolooga, 45 kilometers north-west of Gympie, fruit and vegetable growers Greg and CC Petersen operate a paddock-to-plate model enterprise, with Greg growing produce and CC featuring it as the main ingredient in the food products they sell together.**

The Petersens recently used a Sustainability Loan from the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to build a commercial kitchen on additional property and upgrade their tractor. Now, with more efficient land-preparation and a range of more than 100 fruit and vegetable condiments, the couple's only limit is their imagination.

"The build of our new kitchen has been life-changing for us because we are able to create more products more efficiently and open up more avenues to value-add into our farming business," CC said.

QRIDA Regional Area Manager for Burnett, Cindy Godden, explained the expansion of the Petersens' farm business also means there's enough work for them to employ people all-year-round rather than just seasonally.

"It gives the Petersens the benefit of cross training their employees, so they may be starting out the day early on the farm with Greg and then transitioning to the kitchen with CC through the heat of the day," Cindy said.

CC said Cindy's agricultural knowledge and engagement throughout the process made all the difference.

"Cindy really helped give us the best chance possible to apply for the Sustainability Loan with QRIDA so that's a lot of trust there both ways," CC said.

QRIDA's Sustainability Loans of up to \$1.3 million can help primary production businesses expand and add value to their enterprise.

How a Sustainability Loan could help develop your primary production business - [qrda.qld.gov.au/program/sustainability-loan](http://qrda.qld.gov.au/program/sustainability-loan)  
Watch the Petersens' full story under the 'News, Stories and Events' tab on [www.qrda.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrda.qld.gov.au)

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Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority



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**Talk to your local Regional Area Manager on 1800 623 946 or scan to find out how QRIDA could help grow your farming business\*.**



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

[qrda.qld.gov.au](http://qrda.qld.gov.au) 1800 623 946 [contact\\_us@qrda.qld.gov.au](mailto:contact_us@qrda.qld.gov.au)



Authorised by the Queensland Government, Turbot St, Brisbane

# Farm Business Resilience Program

## FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED

GROWCOM PROJECT

MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

### KEERAH STEELE

Technical Adoptions Officer

GULF SAVANNAH NRM, TNQ DROUGHT HUB

### TOM GOLLAND

Stakeholder Engagement, Climate Services for Agriculture

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

### LYNETTE MCGUFFLE

Rural Financial Counsellor

RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE NORTH QUEENSLAND

### KAREN GEORGE

Resilience Manager

GROWCOM

### SAM SPINA

Regional Area Manager

QRIDA

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- Protect your business, crops and family with more confident decision-making and action using farm business resilience planning.
- Improve your understanding of how to interpret forecasts and probability and use them for decision-making.
- Make strategic decisions using My Climate View with tailored insights into your changing climate.
- Get a hands-on understanding of climate tools, farm business resilience planning resources and funding support available.

## WORKSHOP DETAILS

### MAREEBA

Tuesday, 3 October 2023  
9:00am - 2:30pm

Mareeba International Club  
10 Vaughan Street,  
Mareeba QLD 4880

RSVP

SCAN HERE



### COST

Free, lunch included.

### MORE INFORMATION

Karen George, Growcom 0408 135 003 | [kgeorge@qfvg.com.au](mailto:kgeorge@qfvg.com.au)

Growcom's Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP) is assisting horticultural growers to identify gaps in their current farm management systems and develop plans that support growth and aid in mitigating the impacts of future droughts.

Using Growcom's best management practice platform, Hort360 growers can easily undertake a gap-analysis and develop their Resilient Plan using the inbuilt template. Financial assistance is also available and can be accessed through QRIDA.



Forewarned is Forearmed resources were funded from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as part of its Rural R&D for Profit program and developed in conjunction with the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub as part of the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Program, which received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program.



## COMMITMENT TO STEWARDSHIP

As the largest fresh produce company in Australia, Costa has a significant role to play in driving the sustainability of fresh food production as well as the protection of the environment in which it is grown.

Avocados and bananas are two major crops grown by Costa in locations across northern and central Queensland that can impact the sensitive marine environment within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP).

With funding from the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program, Growcom has now worked alongside many horticultural farms in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchment, to benchmark specific land management practices and to enable the businesses to become Reef Certified; a third-party audit process designed specifically for the horticulture industry to demonstrate voluntary stewardship toward the GBR.

Costa has chosen to adopt a global 'sustainable commercial farming' strategy, to progressively improve the yield and quality of their produce whilst simultaneously reducing their environmental impact.

"The nutritious fresh food we grow contributes directly to global health and wellbeing. We recognise that

with this comes a responsibility and expectation that our food is grown in a way that places an emphasis on environmental stewardship and sustainability," explains the Sustainable Commercial Farming commitment statement from Costa.

So, whilst the business already had a range of environmental practices in place, achieving Hort360 Reef Certification provided an extra level of focus to ensure they continued to implement best practice at their Walkamin, Tolga, Tully and Childers avocado orchards and banana plantations.

Using the Hort360 program highlighted additional areas that required more attention whilst also providing validation for all the positive changes the company had already implemented. Additionally, as the Hort360 Reef Certification aligns and leverages off current systems like Freshcare Environmental, there is reduced effort for the grower with combined audits available to save time and administration resources.

In the avocado and banana farming operation, Costa has a dedicated National Food Safety, Quality and Environmental Manager. This key position ensures the business maintains a strong focus on how they interact with the environment and identifies areas for continuous improvement.

With the high annual rainfall that occurs within their farming footprint in North Queensland, both soil erosion and run-off are two major areas of concern for Costa. To mitigate both environmental and operational damage caused by such rainfalls, Costa has implemented a range of good practices, including contouring and levee banks to prevent or manage run-off, while they also utilise grassed spoon drains and vegetated buffers to protect waterways.

For Costa, the process of becoming Reef Certified has been highly beneficial. The structured approach provided an opportunity for the business to astutely review their operations and identify ways in which they could not only improve environmental outcomes, but also their own farm efficiency and productivity.

The Hort360 Great Barrier Reef program is funded through to June 2026 and supports growers to understand how their farming practices may impact the Reef and thereby be able to improve these practices voluntarily without the need for government regulation.

These workshops were supported by the Queensland Governments Reef Water Quality Program.



# MIRAVIS®

## PRIME FUNGICIDE DEVELOPS TRUST WITHIN BLUEBERRY COMMUNITY

**Aaron and Harmeet Singh, blueberry growers-turned-rural merchandisers on the NSW north coast, have steadily built a clientele based upon the trusted recommendation of quality products with proven results.**

Harmeet, known as Harry to many in the Woolgoolga area, established HSB Rural in 2019 with son Aaron being the merchandise manager.

Both members of the OZ Group, a marketing co-operative with over 200 members, Aaron said he and his father understand the importance of maintaining the highest standards in blueberry production.

"In our area there's no telling what the weather will do. It could be sunny for two weeks and then rain for a week straight – even our heavy dews of a morning can be a challenge with botrytis [grey mould]," Aaron said.

"Having a quality protectant fungicide in place is a necessity, that's why having MIRAVIS® Prime [fungicide] available to us is so important."

MIRAVIS® Prime fungicide from Syngenta combines proven fludioxonil (Group 12) and the new pydiflumetofen (Group 7), attacking fungi at four development stages, in different parts of the plant.

Fludioxonil works as a protectant on the surface of the leaf, while pydiflumetofen moves very quickly into the waxy cuticle binding strongly to the plant, with slow absorption into the tissues giving long lasting protection.

*Registered for both field and protected cropping in berries, MIRAVIS® Prime halts spore germination and kills fungus by entering the mitochondria – disrupting the pathogen's energy source.*

MIRAVIS® Prime is registered for all berry crops, unlike other fungicides only registered for strawberries.

Withholding periods and sound application practices are points Aaron said he works carefully on with his community of customers, many sharing their Indian heritage.

"About 85 to 90% of growers in this region are from this same background, so speaking the dialect and being able

to explain how to use products like MIRAVIS® Prime, and the results we achieved on our farm, there's a lot of trust," he said.

Aaron said there had been 6 or 7 fungicides, which growers had typically been using, with increasing frequency.

"The way the seasons were going and the pressure we were seeing, growers had to decrease the interval to seven days," he said.

The label for MIRAVIS® Prime allows for up to two applications in a growing season, and a rate range for the control of grey mould in berries (*Botrytis cinerea*) and powdery mildew (strawberries only). The protectant fungicide can be applied at 750mL/ha, up to 1000mL/ha under during high pressure periods or for longer residual control.

Aaron said he and his customers had seen excellent residual control when applied at flowering but noted MIRAVIS® Prime fungicide also had an excellent fit near to harvest; the one-day withholding period being particularly helpful for his customers.

The use of all Group 7s is subject to a CropLife Australia Fungicide Resistance Management strategy, with no more than three applications of a Group 7 to be used per crop. Visit [croplife.org.au](http://croplife.org.au) for the full strategy including use patterns.

For more information about MIRAVIS® Prime speak to your local Syngenta representative.



# SUSTAINABLE AUSTRALIAN PACKAGING INNOVATION HITS THE SHELVES

**Potato and onion category leader Mitolo Family Farms has partnered with Coles as well as global innovators in sustainable packaging solutions Detpak to create what is believed to be Australia's first kerbside recyclable paper bag for fresh potatoes.**

The packaging innovation will see Mitolo Family Farms' premium Gourmandine potatoes sold in new paper bags – delivering a 64 per cent reduction in plastic, with 8.2 tonnes less plastic being used each year when compared to the previous packaging for this product.

The packaging innovation is the result of more than three years of rigorous development, and it's hoped it may lead to other fresh produce items being packed in a way that makes it easy for consumers to support recycling efforts.

"This bag may sound like a simple solution, but it has taken immense work to ensure there is absolutely no compromise to the quality of the potatoes while allowing us to achieve the sustainability outcome we were seeking," Mitolo Family Farms Managing Director Frank Mitolo said.


"We had to consider everything from lux lighting levels in the supermarket through to breathing holes that don't tear, new sealing solutions, bag strength and more.

"We know Australian consumers are increasingly looking for sustainable supply chains for the products they purchase, and we're proud to be leading the way and partnering with Coles for a product that so many families love to cook and share."

Detmold Group General Manager of Innovation and Sustainability Tom Lunn said Detpak applied proprietary technology to deliver on both sustainability and efficiency outcomes for Mitolo Family Farms, Coles and the end-consumer.


"Consumers are becoming more and more conscious of making responsible choices when it comes to choosing which brands to buy from, and packaging plays a significant part in those decision," he said.

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# NEW RENEWABLE ENERGY Landholder Toolkit

**Have you been considering hosting a renewable energy project on your property? If the answer is 'yes', then make sure you check out the Queensland Renewable Energy Landholder Toolkit.**

Developed by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) in partnership with the Queensland Government, the Toolkit provides detailed considerations for landholders to think through during the various stages of a renewable energy infrastructure development.

QFF CEO Jo Sheppard said that as the state prepares for growth in the renewable energy sector, an increasing number of landholders are being approached to host projects on their land, and it is essential that they are fully informed of the potential benefits as well as potential risks.

"The Toolkit is an important resource for landholders as they work through their decision-making process. It will guide them through the initial stages of being approached by developers right through to the next steps should they decide to proceed with a development on their property," said Ms Sheppard.

"There is much for a landholder to consider before entering into an agreement. It is also important for landholders to understand that they can say no to hosting a wind or solar farm development. However, in doing so, it is important to understand what impacts may still present should developments take place in their local community."

The information within the Toolkit is also relevant to communities where projects are being proposed, highlighting the opportunities and potential impacts for neighbouring farms.

"There is a focus throughout the Toolkit on community engagement, social license to operate and benefit sharing arrangements that both landholders and developers should consider. It's important to ensure landholders and rural communities are able to have a say and benefit from the renewable energy rollout," Ms Sheppard said.

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Access Landholders Toolkit online



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# Christine Stokan

## COUNTRY KITCHENS CONVENOR, BURNETT DIVISION

Christine joined the Country Kitchens program as a facilitator twelve months ago. She has recently been elected the Country Kitchens convenor for Burnett Division.

Christine was inspired to join the program after attending a Country Kitchens Hands on Nutrition Workshop, in Maryborough.

Country Kitchens facilitators, like Christine deliver health promotion activities in their local communities and partner with organisations such as schools, local councils, events and a wide range of community groups.

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

Christine is a key advocate for Country Kitchens in her community. She shares the program messages at her branch, markets, and field days, promoting recipes and running activities.

"At markets and field days I provide taste testers, recipes, information and have run the Guess the Fruit in the jar, which was very popular," she said. "At each branch meeting I showcase a recipe, share information or run a sit less move more activity."

Events like these are how the Country Kitchens program is improving food and nutrition literacy, and importantly, influencing behaviour change at a local community level.

Since becoming the Convenor for her division, Christine has been working hard on bringing facilitators together across the division through regular communication, liaising and reporting of

upcoming or completed activities. The increase in communication and activity across the division has also increased community awareness and engagement.

Christine believes that others should get involved in Country Kitchens. She loves that the recipes are healthy and easy to follow and that the program brings people together and encourages the sharing of ideas.

"The program has a lot to offer people with a range of cooking experience and knowledge," Christine said.

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

## Vegetable Pasta Bake

Recipe courtesy of Suzie van Laarhoven, Country Kitchens team

This easy and versatile dish is packed with vegetables and nutrients. Substitute the vegetables for whatever you have!

### INGREDIENTS

6 cups assorted vegetables, 1-2cm dice (eg. pumpkin, carrot, eggplant, zucchini, capsicum and mushroom)  
1 brown onion, chopped into crescents  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon vegetable stock powder  
Black pepper, to taste  
300g wholemeal pasta (penne or spirals)  
500g ricotta  
150mL light evaporated milk  
500mL tomato passata  
3 cups cheddar cheese, reduced fat, grated

### PREHEAT oven to 200°C.

**ADD** vegetables, onion and garlic to a large baking tray and toss with olive oil, stock powder and pepper.

**BAKE** vegetables for 20- 30 minutes, until tender. Remove from oven and set aside.

**COOK** pasta according to packet directions.

**WHISK** ricotta and evaporated milk together in a bowl.

**TRANSFER** vegetables to a baking dish and mix in the passata.

**POUR** the ricotta mixture over vegetables and top with grated cheese.

**BAKE** in oven until top is browned and bubbling, up to 20 minutes.

**REST** for 10-15 minutes. Serve with salad.

### METHOD

 15 min  30-40 min  6





# HOLISTIC HARVEST MARKET Garden

The Queensland Country Women's Association Country Kitchens team recently met with Nigel and Zeke Burt as part of their Meet the Farmer initiative. Based in Gundiah in the Fraser Coast hinterland, the father and son duo run Holistic Harvest market garden.

Nigel grew up with parents who always had a home garden. Zeke has grown up similarly. Believing home grown is best the pair decided to try their hand at farming. They are passionate about working out how to take the farm further.

Although having a background in mining, both men love the farming lifestyle. They enjoy taking their produce to markets and being able to educate people, encouraging customers to try new and different varieties of vegetables. They also urge customers to only buy in quantities they will use.

Education is at the heart of the Country Kitchens program which provides QCWA members and the public with training and resources aimed at supporting Queenslanders to adopt healthier lifestyles.

The team of nutritionists and dietitians have developed hundreds of recipes showcasing vegetables and encouraging people to try increasing their vegetable consumption.

The program focuses on five key messages:

1. Get more fruit and vegetables into your meals.
2. Cook at home.
3. Check your portion size.
4. Be aware of sugar in your drinks.
5. Sit less, move more.

Every Country Kitchens activity promotes one or more of these five key messages.

For Nigel and Zeke, their goal is to feed their families and feed the community but still make a living from the activity.

*“Originally the property was all pasture land, which we have progressively converted to plots,”*

Nigel said.

Initially chickens were kept for eggs but realised the chickens could be utilised as a “chicken tractor” eating the grass down, providing manure and helping to reduce weeds.

This was followed by a deep ripper plough, a second plough to form plots of 75 centre meters wide and up to 20 meters long.

Nigel and Zeke save some seeds and purchase others to plant in their own soil blocks until roots appear and multiply. Seedlings are then moved outside to mature and sun harden before being planted in the plots which are prepared with manure and seaweed fertiliser.

“Using open pollinated vegetable varieties gave us an opportunity to keep bees for pollination with a byproduct of honey,” Zeke said.

Growing a variety of vegetables means different products are maturing and harvested at different rates. Produce includes silver beat, kale, capsicum, zucchini, squash, cucumber, corn, tomatoes, turmeric, carrot, beetroot, and rosemary.

In terms of labour, the duo like to farm mostly by hand. Generally, work is done by Nigel and Zeke, but sometimes family and friends chip in with the more intense processes such as planting.

Constantly looking for new and better ways to farm, information about small farming is garnered from the internet and books mostly from Europe or the Northern Hemisphere.

Using solar power where possible and promoting the business via social media is part of their practices. Recently they visited the local school to give each student a take home bag of the farm's turmeric, with an accompanying recipe.

The farmers aim for zero waste, selling produce with any surplus going to the family, then to the compost, worm farms or chickens.

To learn more about the QCWA Country Kitchens program, or the Meet a Farmer initiative, head to our website: [qcwacountrykitchens.com.au/meet-a-farmer/](http://qcwacountrykitchens.com.au/meet-a-farmer/)

SCAN HERE  
LEARN MORE



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.

Dr Mobashwer Alam at Arbour Grove Nursery, Woombye. IMAGE: Megan Pope



## PASSION PROJECT REVITALISING FLAGGING FRUIT INDUSTRY

**A new breeding strategy to reboot Australia's passionfruit industry aims to create at least two new high-quality varieties of the fruit in the next few years with more to follow.**

"Passionfruit farm yield is declining, and we currently have only a few varieties available to the local industry," project lead Dr Mobashwer Alam from QAAFI said.

"These varieties are also increasingly susceptible to pest and disease, so the new varieties we develop will be resilient and suited to the Australian consumer.

"The aim is to create new opportunities and boost profitability for growers.

*"Most of the passionfruit grown in Australia is for domestic consumption, so there is scope to start exporting the fruit as well."*

The Australian passionfruit industry is worth around \$24 million each year with about 130 commercial growers producing more than 5,000 tonnes of fruit.

Dr Alam is working with industry groups and growers to establish trials of new variety candidates in Queensland and New South Wales.

"We don't have a diverse range of germplasm in Australia, so my main purpose is to explore the potential of global germplasm," he said.

"We are working with Murdoch University through another project funded through the Hort Innovation Frontiers initiative to investigate passionfruit genetic resources."

Megan Crowhurst from Arbour Grove Nursery at Woombye on Queensland's Sunshine Coast is working with Dr Alam to propagate root stock and graft trial vines, as well as assisting with cross breeding and vine production.

She said she was happy to use her lifelong passion for the fruit to boost the industry.

"This program is really important because the passionfruit industry hasn't had a new variety that ticks all the boxes for a long time and to make it profitable, we need something new," Mrs Crowhurst said.

"My family has been trying to produce new varieties for many years and it's not an easy process, so it's exciting to have the breeding program up and going again."

# Fruit & Vegetable NEWS

**Vol 94, No 5**  
**September / October 2023**

Fruit & Vegetable News is the official journal of the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers Ltd (QFVG), the state industry body representing Queensland fruit, vegetable and nut growers. It is Queensland's premier horticultural magazine, read by commercial horticultural growers and their families.

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

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QUEENSLAND FRUIT  
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