Weathering the storm: positive outlook for 2018

INSIDE STORIES:
- Table grape recovery strategies
- 2017 table grape export summary
- Open sheds facilitate learning
- Taste panel puts apricots to test
Cera Trap from Barmac: Effectively Reduce Fruit Fly Damage To Grapes

Cera Trap® attracts multiple fruit fly species including:
- Mediterranean Fruit Fly (Ceratitis capitata)
- Queensland Fruit Fly (Bactrocera tryoni)
- Jarvis Fruit Fly (Bactrocera jarvisi)
- Melon Fruit Fly (Bactrocera cucurbitae)
- Pumpkin Fruit Fly (Bactrocera decipiens)
- Oriental Fruit Fly (Bactrocera dorsalis)

✓ Internationally recognised
✓ Easy to install
✓ Easy to reuse and refill

Crimson Table Grape

In Crimson table grapes almost 90% of bunches were damaged by fruit fly in the untreated plot, while only 4% of bunches were affected in the Cera Trap treated plot.

Autumn Royal Table Grape

For Autumn Royal variety close to 65% of bunches were affected in the untreated plot, compared to 3% in the Cera Trap treated plots.

For more information on Cera Trap® refer to the Barmac website www.barmac.com.au or talk to your nearest Barmac Territory Manager.
Cover photo: Agriculture Victoria’s Michael Treeby led a study into the impact of last year’s hail storm on grapevines.

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The onset of spring is a glorious time in the vineyard as the fruits of all your hard work over winter come into being with the bursting of tiny buds.

The canes looked great this year and were a good colour and nice and flexible to pull down onto the wires.

Analysis of the buds will give you a good indication of the fruitfulness of your vines and potential yield ahead. But all could be lost if growers do not protect their investment from frost.

Growers should refer to the Dried Fruits Australia Best Practice Manual Part 2 From Spring to Pre-harvest to read up on the preparations required to minimise frost damage. This may include: cleaning up the vineyard floor, slashing any canes or weeds and applying fertiliser and a good irrigation to lower the freezing point. Remember, you may only have to raise the temperature a couple of degrees to prevent frost and save your crop.

DFA’s Annual General Meeting and Growers’ Forum is coming up at which time we will be inviting applications for the Innovation Grant for 2017. The grants are paid on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to a maximum of $3,000 per grant.

This is a great way for our industry to invest in our own future and help promote new technologies that will benefit us all. Interested growers must complete an application form and address the criteria listed. All applications are assessed by a small committee established by the DFA Board.

There has been a strong demand for Sunglo and Sunmuscat vines once again as these new varieties have proven performance benefits over the past few seasons.

One of the biggest issues we have is the inconsistent supply to our export markets. It is also really pleasing to see expansion of the industry with some strong interest from developers for large plantings up to 600 hectares. If this goes ahead as planned it will be a real bonus for the industry, providing a secure supply to meet the demand from exports markets.

The DFA Board has taken a positive approach to help in the export marketing area. Earlier this year we attended the Shanghai Bakery trade fair and were astounded by the strong interest for Australian product. It was very encouraging and as a result we will be attending trade shows in Beijing in 2017 and Singapore in April 2018 to help promote Australian product.

The outlook on the global market remains positive.

Turkey’s crop is expected to be around 310,000 tonnes in 2017 compared to around 300,000t in 2016. Frost and hail during the 2017 growing season has led to a slightly smaller crop. The Californian crop size is unknown, but is also expected to be down.

South Africa’s production will increase marginally by 1% to 62,500t in 17/18. Chinese production continues to increase with a prediction of 190,000t, an increase of nearly 3% from the previous year.

Last year when prices dropped in the United States, we defied the trend and Australian prices rose as they have continued to do so in the last few years. I believe this is because we have three processors who are all working to establish overseas markets for Aussie fruit, and they all require more fruit to meet their growing export demand. As a grower, it is a good place to be when demand is stronger than supply.
Get involved

There is still a lot of background activity occurring as the Australian Table Grape Association tries to increase access for more varieties into key export markets. Most growers have no idea of the high level of commitment required to stay on top of all the different issues affecting the industry. It is unfortunate that this is not recognised and we seem to be in a constant battle with the people who should be standing at our side.

Whilst there are a few growers who care enough about our industry to become involved in local, state and national grower groups, we constantly hear complaints from people who think differently or think more things should be done. My advice is get involved.

Very few of the larger growers represent their enterprises at industry level. I don’t really understand why. For a small grower like myself, time away from the farm is just as critical as for a larger grower who probably has the benefit of staff on hand to cover their absence.

There have been some enormous breakthroughs over the past few years with export access and this has been due to a small group of small to medium growers who unlocked options for the larger enterprises. Even on a domestic level, we have seen the major retailers put pressure on growers to improve quality. This has been evident by the increasing returns to growers during the last few seasons, particularly early in the season. And it is all thanks to a small Emerald grower who pushed for pre-season on-farm testing for maturity. While not the answer to everything, every little bit helps and we will roll out this same maturity testing program during the Sunraysia export season to improve fruit quality (and returns) in our international markets.

One of my reports wouldn’t be complete without a reference to table grape quality and our role as growers to ensure that what is presented to consumers is the best we can produce. Do we want to be classed as professional lost leader producers that the supermarkets use to draw customers, or do we want our product to be sought after and commanding a premium?

We saw the impact that under-par fruit has had on one of our best developing markets. Our export program to this destination was set back years by allowing average quality fruit to be packed and sent.

Our future is in our hands, and we need to remind our neighbours that their fruit can’t be ready to pick yet as ours isn’t!! As growers, we need to take responsibility for the fruit that is picked and packed this year.

It is surprising and worrying that there are so many levy paying members who feel the performance of Hort Innovation is way below par.

Avocado grower Daryl Boardman and I have been liaising with key people on the Hort Innovation Board in an effort to overcome some untenable situations that are developing. We are doing this as levy payers, not as members of our respective peak bodies. During a recent meeting with the Hort Innovation Chair and Deputy, we aired the issues that we have experienced and those of many other industries, including: cherries, strawberries, potatoes, potato processors, almonds, avocados and table grapes. This level of support for our meetings was huge, considering we didn’t really canvas widely. There are some obvious issues we hope to address with the Hort Innovation Board and are planning a larger meeting with levy payers in the near future.

A few untimely frosts have taken the shine off some crops in St George. Emerald is looking to be similar to last year and there are reports of low volumes of red seedless from that region. Mundubbera is looking ok, with crop levels similar to last year. Without some rain, the birds will be out in force in the vineyards this year. Sunraysia is awaiting budburst at time of writing and let’s hope WA growers have a ‘normal’ year for a change. There always seems to be something taking the shine off potential good years. We are a resilient and stubborn bunch and we will persevere and continue to do what we love.

Richard Lomman
Chairman
The Remembrance Day storm stripped the foliage from vines and left canes bare and broken.

The Remembrance Day storm cell that passed over north-west Victoria last year left a path of hail-damaged vineyards in its wake.

The storm entered Sunraysia out the back of South Merbein before making its way through Koorlong. It intensified as it approached Cardross and travelled along Twentieth Street, with the brunt of the hail tearing into fresh foliage and bunches, stripping canes bare and leaving replacement canes on cordons as battered stumps. The storm strip was between one and two streets wide to the north and south of Twentieth Street.

Having ripped through Cardross, the storm front progressed through the outskirts of Red Cliffs and then crossed the Calder Highway to move into the Stewart area, again wreaking havoc and causing major damage.

Michael Treeby, a senior research scientist in horticulture at Agriculture Victoria, said the damage to dried grape vineyards across the Cardross, Red Cliffs and Stewart areas ranged from a few bruised green shoots through to complete removal of every green shoot, leaf and bunch.

“For those dried grape producers whose blocks fell into the latter category of damage, the 2016–17 season was lost,” Dr Treeby said.

“The question was, could anything be done to bring those vines back into production for the 2017–18 season?”

“Experience tells us that grapevines that have been stripped bare will throw new shoots fairly quickly afterward. What wasn't known was whether the buds on those shoots would be fruitful.”

According to Dr Treeby, if all green shoots were removed there were only four vine-management options.

“One option was to do nothing, and prune normally the following winter,” he said.

“Another option was to remove the now-bare bearers. This option more-or-less was what would happen if those bearers were cut by a cutter bar – leaving about four nodes.

“A third option was to spur prune what was left of the shoots on the cordon back to one or two buds. These shoots would have developed into the replacement canes and borne the 2017–18 crops.

“A fourth option was to remove the bearers and spur prune the cordon.”

Researchers based at Agriculture Victoria in Irymple this year commenced a study to determine the fruitfulness of hail-damaged vines and help growers plan pruning strategies. State Government-funded trials were conducted at two blocks near Red Cliffs that were severely affected by hail.

A study was also conducted on the impact of hail on table grape vines. This can be found following this article on pages 6-7.

Dr Treeby said researchers imposed the four treatment options at Michael de Bois and Bill McClumpha's dried grape properties. One trial was conducted on Swingarm-trellised sultana vines and the other on hanging-cane Carina vines. The option to do nothing was the control treatment.

Four categories of shoots were sampled in June to assess bud fruitfulness:

- Shoots that arose from the basal buds of damaged shoots on the cordon (part of doing nothing) – these shoots would have hardened off and been the 2017–18 bearers in the normal course of events.
Shoots that arose from the basal buds of spurred sultana shoots on the cordon – as above, would have been the 2017–18 bearers.

Shoots that arose from latent buds on the cordon.

Shoots that arose from the non-pruned bearers (also part of doing nothing).

Dr Treeby said fruitfulness of the fifth, ninth and thirteenth buds was determined following dissection and examination under a microscope by Tim Brown from Bro-Kit Agronomy.

“This assessment method has been used by the industry as the standard for estimating sultana fruitfulness as a general guide for dried grape producers,” he said.

“Over the seasons, those assessments indicate that sultana bud fruitfulness is generally around 60%, but can be as low as 40% on some properties in some years, and as high as 70% on others. There are generally six to eight bunches per 10 nodes.”

Dr Treeby reported that the fruitfulness of shoots that arose from the basal buds of unspurred sultana shoots, which would have been the bearers for the 2017–18 season, was around 60% – a normal result according to the historical record. Shoots that arose from latent buds on non-spurred cordons were similarly fruitful (Table 1).

“Leaving the sultana vines to recover unaided resulted in new shoots from the cordon, and from the basal buds of damaged shoots on the cordon, that were as fruitful as the industry is used to seeing in the normal course of events,” he said.

“When damaged shoots on the cordon were spur pruned back to two buds, the fruitfulness of the new shoots that arose from the basal buds of those spurs was slightly less at 54%, but spurring was associated with lower bud fruitfulness of the shoots arising from the latent buds.

“Shoots that arose from the non-pruned bearers – the bearers that would have borne the 2016–17 crop – was about 10%. Pruning the bearers back to four nodes reduced the fruitfulness of any shoots arising from the cordon to about 40%. If those bearers were cut back to four-node spurs, the fruitfulness of shoots thrown by those spurs was around 40%.”

Dr Treeby summarised that leaving the sultana vines alone resulted in new shoots on the cordon that were as fruitful as could be expected, but intervening in some way – spurring the cordon, pruning the bearers, or both – resulted in less fruitful shoots on the cordon.

He reached broadly similar conclusions for the Carinas on hanging cane. However, the fruitfulness was much higher in general (about 90%) compared to sultana, and the fruitfulness penalty associated with intervening following the hail storm was much less (about 10%).

“The overall conclusion was that dried grape producers would be better off leaving the vines alone following a similarly timed event, and simply pruning the vines the following winter, and resuming the normal cycle of production,” he said.

The trial results were presented at a field day hosted by Dried Fruits Australia in August. Dr Treeby spent time answering questions about what the research meant for dried grape growers’ individual situations.

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**Table 1. Effect of post-hailstorm management on average sultana bud fruitfulness.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>% fruitful nodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>59 - 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurring the replacement shoots on the cordon back to 1 or 2 nodes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pruning the bearers to 4 nodes</td>
<td>47 - 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurring the cordon shoots and pruning the bearers</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buds were examined for fruitfulness under a dissecting microscope.
Recovery strategy for hail-damaged table grape vines

The 11 November 2016 hail storm also severely affected table grape producers in the Cardross, Red Cliffs, Stewart and Paringi areas. As with the dried grape vineyards, damage ranged from a few bruised green shoots through to complete removal of every green shoot. For some table grape producers, the 2016-17 season’s crop was completely lost.

Dr Michael Treeby, a senior research scientist in horticulture at Agriculture Victoria, said previous hailstorms had taught that vines stripped of all green shoots will push out many new green shoots. “What wasn’t known was whether the buds on those new green shoots would be fruitful in the 2017-18 session,” he said.

As well as leading the research trial into the fruitfulness of hail affected dried grape vines, Dr Treeby also led a similar trial looking at Ralli Seedless and Red Globe table grape varieties, to help establish best practice methods for table grape growers after a hail storm has hit.

“This is particularly important because varieties used for table grape production are generally cane-pruned due to the basal buds tending to be less fruitful than buds further out the shoot. Hence crown canes and canes produced at the basal buds of bearers are preferred. There aren’t that many options when all those have been damaged and are now non-usable, non-viable.” Dr Treeby said.

According to Dr Treeby, one option was not to do nothing, and prune normally the following winter. “Basically, this option simply lets everything go, and is based on the hope that out of that the mass of shoots there will be sufficient good canes to use as bearers the following winter, and that the buds on those canes will be fruitful.”

“Given that there is a preference for replacement bearers arising from the crown because longer canes (with more buds) can be wrapped down, the most obvious intervention is to spur the remnants of every shoot in the crown. “This should force the basal buds on each spur to burst and potentially produce decent canes to be used as bearers. Again, the assumption is that the buds on the shoots produced will be fruitful,” Dr Treeby said.

Another option was to remove the damaged bearers. “This option is more-or-less what would happen in winter. The strategy behind this option is to force more shoots out of the crown without wasting energy on new shoots that arise on the now bare bearers, and which would be pruned off in winter in any case.

“A third option was to spur prune what was left of the shoots on the bearer to force shoots from the basal buds of those shoots, particularly back near the crown.”

This strategy was to determine whether operations could be switched from cane to spur for a season, and back to cane pruning in 2018-19 season. The latter two options were imposed in conjunction with the crown spurring treatment.

With Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Research’s support, Irymple-based researchers imposed those options as three treatments on the two table grape varieties, Red Globe and Ralli Seedless, on a severely hail-affected vineyard near Red Cliffs.

Shoots (i.e. canes) were sampled in June to see if they were suitable to be wrapped down as bearers for the 2017-18 season. Five categories of shoots were sampled to assess bud fruitfulness:

- A potential new bearer produced from a latent bud within the crown of the vine – this type of shoot would arise whether the damaged crown shoots were spurred or not;
- A potential new bearer produced from a two-bud spur within the crown of the vine;
- A damaged shoot spurred along a damaged bearer;
- A damaged shoot spurred along a damaged bearer;
- A damaged shoot spurred along a damaged bearer;

Table 1. Effect of post-hailstorm management on Ralli Seedless and Red Globe table grapes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Treatment averages across shoot types</th>
<th>Treatment averages across varieties &amp; shoot types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ralli Seedless</td>
<td>Red Globe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crown</td>
<td>Bearer</td>
<td>treatment averages across shoot types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent bud</td>
<td>2-bud spur</td>
<td>Damaged shoot</td>
<td>2-bud spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (Do nothing)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearers spurred*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearers removed*</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average across treatments for each shoot type</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Crown shoots spurred too
A shoot arising from a latent or the basal bud of a damaged spurred shoot along the damaged bearers, replicating a normal spur pruning operation; A post-hail spur and a new shoot arising from a bud on that spur

Dr Treeby said fruitfulness of the 5th, 9th and 13th buds on Red Globe, and the 7th, 11th and 15th buds on Ralli were determined (Table 1) following dissection and examination under a microscope.

“This assessment method has been used by table grape producers as the basis for deciding how many bearers to wrap down and how many buds on each bearer to leave,” he said.

“Other information that is recorded during this process is the number of bunches per node and the number of dead nodes.

Dr Treeby stated that historically, those assessments indicate that Red Globe bud fruitfulness is generally around 50%, but can be as low as 40% on some properties in some years and as high as 70% in other seasons and on other properties.

“Fewer data are available regarding Ralli bud fruitfulness, but it is generally accepted that Ralli is less fruitful compared to Red Globe, which is generally less fruitful in turn than Thompson Seedless. But, there will be exceptions depending on season and management,” Dr Treeby said.

The mass of shoots in the crown of the untouched vines following the hail did not result in any suitable replacement bearers being produced. Hence, there are no fruitfulness data for crown shoots that arose following the hail on untouched vines.

“So, leaving both varieties untouched after the hail storm resulted in many new shoots that were of little use, suggesting that possibly some thinning of the crown shoots may have been beneficial.

“Across the board, and consistent with industry experience, Red Globe buds were more fruitful than Ralli Seedless.”

Dr Treeby reported irrespective of whether the bearers were removed or the damaged shoots on the bearers spurred, spurring the crown shoots resulted in suitable shoots from the crown being produced, and the buds on those shoots on both varieties being fruitful.

However, spurring the damaged shoots on the bearers resulted in the crown shoots being less fruitful compared to the crown shoots on vines where the bearers were removed. This effect being more obvious for Ralli than for Red Globe.

The fruitfulness of damaged shoots on the bearers and new shoots originating from spurred shoots on the bearers or the basal buds of what would have been the replacement canes for 2017-18 season appeared to be as fruitful as those shoots arising from the crown. Dr Treeby summarised that leaving both varieties untouched after the severe hail damage, resulted in new shoots in the crown that were unsuitable as new bearers.

“Removing the bearers or spurring the bearers resulted in suitable bearers coming out of the crown that were as fruitful as industry experience would suggest is at least normal.

“Further, there was no difference - fruitfulness-wise - whether the new crown shoots originated from the spurred shoots or from latent buds. Thus, in contrast to the situation for dried grape producers, table grape producers would be better off intervening in the vine’s recovery.

Removing the bearers and spurring the shoots in the crown back to two buds probably allows the vines to put all the effort into pushing good quality new shoots out of the crown, and from a logistic viewpoint offers some advantages by simplifying in winter.” said Dr Treeby.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Domenic Sergi for providing access to the Ralli and Red Globe vines used for the trial. Thanks to the Victorian Government for the financial support that allowed these trials to be conducted, and to Tim Brown of Bro-Kit Agronomy for the bud fruitfulness determinations.

Help and support is only a phone call away

Rural Financial Counselling Service - 1300 769 489 or (03) 5022 0799

Community Recovery Executive Officer, Kerryne McClureland, Mildura Rural City Council - 0448 811 374

Health and Wellbeing- Sunraysia Community Health Service - (03) 5022 5444

Legal Advice - Mallee Family Care - (03) 5023 5966

Financial Ombudsman Service - 1800 367 287

Beyond Blue - 1300 224 636

Men’s Helpline - 1300 789 978

Healed hailstone impact injuries on wrapped down bearers. These canes developed from green shoots that had been hit by hailstones during the November 2016 storm. Such bearers are structurally weak, and may fracture as shoots and bunches develop.
Asia Fruit Logistica was deemed to be the best ever this year, and it was this event that the Australian Table Grape Association (ATGA) officially launched the much anticipated table grape industry Exporter Directory.

With an increasing demand for Australian table grapes from international importers and retailers, the ATGA is now able to provide a critical link between prospective buyers and local growers.

The production and release of the Australian table grape industry Exporter Directory was specifically timed to coincide with Asia’s largest fresh produce trade fair, Asia Fruit Logistica.

The directory was developed for the table grape industry and lists contact details of Australian exporters who supply table grapes. It will assist in opening communication channels by connecting international buyers and retailers in order to increase export trade opportunities and strengthen relationships between growers and buyers.

ATGA Chief Executive Officer Jeff Scott said some weeks, particularly in the lead up to the Sunraysia harvest, the ATGA would field hundreds of phone, email and web enquiries from international buyers looking to source premium Australian table grapes.

“We were in a position where we could not provide contact details to these individuals due to confidentiality, which potentially resulted in some missed opportunities for growers.”

Following an open call industry in February 2017, it was determined there was enough interest amongst growers, exporters and a limited number of supply chain organisations to proceed with the self-funded directory.

“It has been brilliant to receive support from growers and exporters in the production of the Directory. It has very much been a grower initiative, facilitated by the ATGA. Having the exporter directory available to prospective and existing table grape buyers is a valuable tool for the industry and the growers who have chosen to support the directory this year.”

Copies of the directory are available as a printable download via the Australian table grape website: W: australiangoat.com.au/
Tough new laws to crack down on labour hire exploitation

The Andrews Labor Government is cracking down on the abuse and exploitation of Victorian workers with a suite of new reforms to clean up the labour hire industry.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins joined workers to announce the details of a new scheme to hold all labour hire firms to tough new licensing standards.

The new scheme is in response to the Victorian Inquiry into the Labour Hire Industry and Insecure Work – a key election promise – which uncovered widespread abuse and exploitation of workers across Victoria. It found rogue operators were underpaying workers, not ensuring proper safety standards, abusing worker visas and undermining the minimum standards of employment.

To stop this exploitation, the Labor Government will introduce a universal licensing scheme to protect workers across all sectors from labour hire providers that have been operating in the shadows of our workplace laws.

“Every worker has the right to be treated with fairness and respect. Under our tough new laws rogue operators will no longer be able to get away with exploitation or abuse,” Premier Andrews said.

Under the tough new scheme:

- A license can only be obtained through passing a “fit and proper person test” and by demonstrating compliance with workplace, labour hire industry and migration laws and minimum accommodation standards
- Licensed Providers will be listed on a public register and employers will be required to only use licensed labour hire providers
- A new independent, fit-for-purpose, statutory authority – headed by a Commissioner – will be established to oversee and enforce the scheme, and will be able to inspect and raid premises.

Rogue operators who do not comply, or attempt to flout the scheme by entering into avoidance arrangements will be liable for hefty civil and criminal penalties.

The government expects to introduce legislation into the Parliament later this year.
Global learning: DFA seeks knowledge from abroad

Dried Fruits Australia will be participating in some exciting events over the coming months.

DFA was fortunate to secure funding from Hort Innovation for our Californian Raisin Industry Study Tour, which departed Australia on Monday 18 September. Led by Consultant Field Officer Stuart Putland, the tour had a full week of exposure to the dried grape industry. The aim was to provide participants with greater insights into production efficiencies and new practices by observing and learning from leading researchers, horticulturists, biosecurity and water experts, and dried fruit packers.

It had been four years since the last study tour to the United States, and during that time, considerable changes were made to technology for on-farm management. California continues to be a world leader in dried grape production, and has achieved a range of research and development advancements into vine varieties, yield performance, vine health and production systems. California also has vast experience managing pest and disease issues, and participants benefited from visiting researchers with expertise in these fields. They also visited key packaging facilities to gain a firsthand understanding of the quality standards, branding and packaging needed to meet market demands.

A report on the tour will be presented at the Annual Growers Forum on Tuesday 3 October.

A group of DFA representatives will also visit the United States in October to attend the International Seedless Dried Grape Conference. The conference provides a wealth of information on the state of the industry worldwide, production forecasts and marketing opportunities, and enables attendees to learn about and from other major producing countries. Once again, this was made possible with support from Hort Innovation.

DFA has also been successful in obtaining a grant to expand export opportunities for premium Australian dried grape products. The Australian China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement Grant, facilitated through the Department of Agriculture, will enable representatives from the board to be involved in Australia’s display at the China Fruit and Vegetable Conference in November. It is one of the most important fruit and vegetable trade fairs in China and has been attended by several Australian horticultural industry associations for many years. This will be the first time DFA has attended, and we are working closely with processors to provide fruit and marketing material for the event which is coordinated by Hort Innovation.

We also welcome funding from Food Source Victoria, a Victorian Government initiative. The grant will enable DFA to investigate and analyse marketing, branding and packaging of dried grape products to help develop innovative packaging for new or existing markets.

Additionally, DFA has been working with Hort Innovation to develop a marketing strategy for domestic and export opportunities. Hort Innovation Marketing Manager Dianne Phan will attend the Annual Growers Forum to discuss these plans in more detail.

I encourage all dried grape producers to attend the Annual Growers’ Forum, which will be held at 2pm on Tuesday 3 October at Mildura Grand Hotel. The keynote speaker will be Darren Ray, a climatologist from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). The BOM is one of the most frequented websites in Australia, so hearing from Darren on climate and what to expect will be of great interest to all. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Dried fruit import statistics

Import statistics (tonnes) for period 1 March 2017 – 30 June 2017

- **Total dried grapes**: 8,044t which is an increase of 1,145t on the same period last year
- **Sultana**: 5,907t up only slightly by 58t from same period last year
- **Other dried grapes (TSRs)**: 1,550t up by 532.5t from same period last year
- **Dried apricot**: 1,582t up by 544t on same period last year
- **Prune**: 866t up by 117t on same period last year
Field days for dried fruit growers

Best-practice pruning, optimising irrigation, getting powdery and downy mildew management right, managing hail-damaged vines, and dealing with the water market were the focus of recent field days for dried grape growers.

The events, held since the last issue of The Vine, were all part of Dried Fruits Australia’s Hort Innovation funded extension program.

Timing is everything, so while these events all happened within a short time, our key aim is to get these discussions happening before the work in the vineyard begins. The workshops delivered many important take-home messages for growers:

- Jeremy Giddings from Agriculture Victoria spoke about balancing the vines’ significant demand for water between cutting and harvest, and applying that water without causing fruit to darken. He also pointed out that well-positioned and maintained real-time soil moisture probes were critical to understanding the changing irrigation needs of vines.

- Peter Morrish from Ruralco Water provided insight into the water market and the trading options available to individual irrigators. While it is common for dried fruit growers to own all the water they need, a number of options are available.

- Industry expert Ivan Shaw talked about pruning on Swingarm trellis systems. He made two main points – maintain the integrity of the cordon, and don’t create more work than necessary by being too neat with the positioning of canes.

- Recovering from the 2016 Remembrance Day hail storm was one of the key issues raised at the beginning of this program. While hail damage has been an issue many times in the past, for the first time this year, DFA was able to assist Agriculture Victoria in delivering some clear research on the impact of a hail event on bud fruitfulness. Field day participants heard the study results first-hand in August, and they’re also available in this edition of The Vine. See page 4.

These messages were just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what participants learned during these sessions. Having experts talking alongside growers at these events has been a really positive approach, with all participants giving the days a resounding tick of approval in terms of the quality and usefulness of the information presented.

Input from growers who hosted the events has been another critical part of making these events a success. Each of them gave an overview of their block, and sometimes a run through of the interesting stuff parked in the machinery shed. Thanks to all those growers.

More events are planned for the rest of the year. As you read this article, we should have just about completed a couple of sessions on how to deal with cordon bunch removal. We also have sessions on redevelopment options for vineyards and a tour of South Australian research facilities in the pipeline. So, if you think these sound interesting, get involved and come along.

All DFA members are notified directly though our weekly newsletter of coming events. Non-members are welcome as well – just keep an eye on our Facebook page and the local papers, and an ear to the radio.

BizMod for dried grape growers

BizMod for Dried Grapes is a business planning model available to existing and potential dried fruit growers to test management strategies, operational performance and financial feasibility of the dried grape enterprise consisting of sultanas, currants, Sunmuscat and/or raisins.

Anyone interested in investigating this model should contact DFA. The program is freely available to dried grape growers. It can be set up on most computers, but it will take some time to match the detail in the model to the operations on your block.
2017 export results a positive surprise

The table grape industry has once again surprised all within the horticulture industry with better than expected export results.

After a devastating hail event hit Sunraysia and destroyed vineyards, production was expected to be noticeably down on last year. Damage was widespread and varied in intensity from 20-80%, while some growers were unfortunate and lost their entire crop. The total damage was estimated to be 15-20% of national production.

This was compounded by a significant delay in harvest compared to previous years, coupled with major issues in the grapes reaching the desired maturity levels.

In such difficult circumstances, it was very encouraging to see the industry stage a strong comeback from a late start with three consecutive months exceeding 30,000 tonnes of exports. The table grape exports year on year ending June 2017 was 106,841 tonnes compared to the record year last year of nearly 110,000t, just 3% below last year.

The recorded unit value increased 5% indicating higher unit returns this year at A$3.49/kg (FOB).”

Over 300 growers and pest monitors attended the export registration workshop/ seminars held in the major growing regions throughout Australia. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) was in attendance and made it very clear that during the season they will be undertaking ‘on-the-spot’ un-announced audits on growers who have registered for protocol markets.

DAWR will be checking the packing shed of growers registered for China to ensure they meet work plan specifications and that they display good hygiene. The department will know if you have previously packed for China and may question your processes for shed packing.

It is extremely important that all growers maintain fortnightly pest monitoring until they finish their harvest. They must also be able to produce pest monitoring records when requested.

SIAP meeting

Hort Innovation recently conducted a Strategic Investment Advisory Panel (SIAP) meeting. The day and half workshop worked through the newly written Strategic Investment Plan and identified potential proposals for future research and development for the table grape industry.

The SIAP members endeavoured to identify the main concept ideas as high, medium or low priority, and then allocate an estimated expenditure amount.

In total, there were 19 concepts raised from the workshop, with the recommended action provided to Hort Innovation. Some of those concepts included: Cost and quality of labour; Health and nutrition; Young future leaders; Continuation of the Now! in Season domestic marketing program; Continuation of the retailer program; Possible extension of social media in Japan and China; Quality standards; Develop airfreight protocol treatments options, Create an image library; Investigate having a strategic engagement with China, Japan, India and Indonesia on end-point treatments; Open new markets for Now! in Season promotional campaign; Forecasting current and future plantings; and Quality testing of table grapes for domestic and export markets, to commence as of the 2018 season and run through to the 2020 season.

These proposals may be developed into concepts proposals which will be put forward to the SIAP committee for recommendations to the Hort Innovation Board for ultimate approval.

Maturity standards

On the domestic front, the ATGA is hoping to continue to work with the major retailers on maturity standards. Meetings will be planned with major retailers to advise them of the outcomes of the maturity testing on-farm and in selected DCs in the early harvest seasons.

This year the ATGA is hoping to extend the program to cover early season exports given the past season history. The aim of the project is to ensure that there are good eating quality grapes from the launch of the Australian grapes season to ensure all consumers get the best eating experience both domestically and internationally.
June 2017 table grape export summary

By the end of the 2016/17 season, Australian table grape exports totalled 106,841 tonnes, worth $373m. This result was 3% less than the previous season.

Exports in June were 9,821 tonnes, which was five times higher than June 2016.

Table 1: Table grape key measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>Chg LY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volume (tonnes)</td>
<td>106,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value (M AUD)</td>
<td>373.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ per kg</td>
<td>$3.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Trade Atlas; Fresh Intelligence analysis

China is still the leading destination with a 39% share of exports, an increase of 38% compared to the same period last year.

Vietnam has recorded 5,287 tonnes in the second year since the market was re-opened in July 2015.

Saudi Arabia was 44% lower.
Grower meeting

We recently held our postharvest grower meeting at Merbein Football Clubrooms to review the harvest. Most of our valued growers attended the night and we enjoyed catching up with everyone for a hearty ‘Alan Lay’ meal after the presentations.

The main message to growers is the importance of high yield production. We are still seeing a wide range of results from our grower base and it is quite clear that the growers who achieve consistent high yields, are generating a profitable and sustainable business.

The new varieties of Sunmuscot, Carina currants and more recently Sunglo, are proving to be much better yielding varieties than sultanas. We are seeing growers with the new varieties achieve well above 3 tonnes per acre (7.4t per hectare) and even consistently above 4t/acre (9.9t/ha) in many circumstances.

Scalzo Foods Managing Director, Michael Scalzo attended the evening and discussed some exciting developments for the APDF business. He announced advanced plans for the purchase of additional vineyards to increase the production of APDF and the industry as a whole. The development will be positive for growers as the extra volume of fruit helps the Australian industry to gain back some of the critical mass lost in the last two decades and in doing so become a more important player in the global market.

The next grower meeting will be held in December as a Pre-harvest information session, where we look forward to sharing Christmas cheer with the attendees.

Important changes to fungicide usage – No more Captan

There has been a major change to the maximum residue level (MRL) and residue definition for the use of Captan in the European Union. As a consequence, Australian grape growers must reconsider their fungicide options for the 2017/18 growing season.

"Dried Fruits Australia has amended the Chemicals Registered for Dried Grapes list in the DFA Spray Diary and Captan has been removed as an option for use on dried grapes."

One of the flow-on effects to the APDF business is that fruit which exceeds the EU-regulated MRL cannot be sold as part of our European export program. It is with this in mind that processors approached Dried Fruits Australia to amend the Chemicals Registered for Dried Grapes list in the DFA Spray Diary. This has been done and Captan has been removed as an option for use on dried grapes.

Although Captan is a proven option in fungicide spray programs, it’s ban means that growers will have to look for alternatives. The following list of alternatives may be acceptable choices for growers:

Chlorothalonil (Cavalry Weatherguard or Bravo Weather Stik), Cavalry Weatherguard is registered for the control of downy mildew, Botrytis and black spot and can be used in export dried grapes until the E-L 29 growth stage (berries pepper-corn sized).

Pyrimethanil products such as Predict 600 and Scala 400 remain effective options from Group 9 for Botrytis Bunch Rot control up until 80% capfall.

Another practical option is Custodia fungicide, particularly in situations where there is a requirement for downy mildew, Botrytis and powdery mildew cover. Custodia is registered to control all three of these key diseases and is endorsed for use from pre-flowering through to E-L 29. Importantly, Custodia has no re-entry interval, meaning field activities can recommence when the spray is dry.

Solaris Fungicide is a unique formulation of Cyprodinil that is also highly active against Botrytis bunch rot in grapes and has been widely accepted by growers across the key grape growing markets.

Lastly, growers are likely to be reluctant to use Iprodione (Chief/ Rovral) earlier than they have to as it still plays a key role later in the season where it is often the only option for control of Botrytis bunch rot immediately prior to harvest.

Pre-bunch closure is a critical growth stage for the timing of sprays targeting Botrytis as it is the last window of opportunity for growers to achieve good spray coverage inside the bunch to help protect against Botrytis infections that can develop as the fruit ripens.

If you haven’t included Cavalry Weatherguard, Custodia, Predict or Solans into your vine management program for 2017/18 yet and would like more information, contact your local chemical supplier.

For all grower enquiries, please contact:
Grower Liaison Officer, Larry Dichiera
M: 0488 199 221
E: larry@apdf.com.au
Focus on 2018

Dried grape

The 2018 season is just around the corner, pruning has been completed and the attention turns to vine health and irrigation to get the best result possible from the upcoming crop. Everyone will be looking towards a yield improvement from the sultana crop that was significantly down last year. Sunmuscat and Sunglo are showing consistently good yields, making for greater profitability for the growers. These two varieties are showing a great alternative to our traditional sultana plantings.

Sunbeam All Australian 18 Quality Awards

Since the inception of the Sunbeam All Australian 18 Quality Awards in 2010, we have recognised over 80 suppliers who have received membership to the All Australian Quality team. The awards put the focus on quality and recognise our contracted suppliers who have delivered high grade, contaminant-free, free-flowing fruit that is easily processed and meets the needs of our customers.

This year CG & AM Piscioneri; R, A, V, L, N & C Mammone; AD & CF Dichiera; MR & BL King; and AK & KM Webley were our Best on Ground performers and received an all-expenses paid trip to Melbourne. The other recipients to be congratulated on making the 2017 team are: BCM Growers; P Coppola; Coruk; DeAngelis Trust; LW & DF Eagle; KR & KM Finnemore; JR & RA Gebert; PF Jenner; Lucet Giselle Pty Ltd; RK & KJ McLaren; P Middleton; Nicholls Mildura Trust; and N & L Tassone. All winners received $1,000 in prize money and will be presented with a trophy at our next grower function.

Along with the All Australian Awards, Sunbeam also recognise the best parcel of export quality fruit for the season. This award carries a cash prize of $5,000 and this year was presented to CG & AM Piscioneri. Cos and Anna have won this award three times and have been members of the All Australian team on six occasions. Sadly for us at Sunbeam, the Piscioneris have decided to retire from the dried fruit industry. We congratulate and thank them for their loyalty and the production of the best quality fruit possible over a long period of time.

6 Packs

Our iconic 6x40g packs have been updated with fresh graphics that depict a number of Australian native animals. This new packaging is already on the supermarket shelves and comes in a range of sultanas and fruit blends to offer an assorted snacking experience.

Prunes

The Australian production of prunes for 2017 will be around 4,500 tonnes, a significant increase on 2016, but the size profile has trended towards the medium to small fruit. Angas Park retail packs have been selling well and sales to date are up on 2016 for pitted product. The requirement to place small prunes, smaller than 90 per pound, has been a task as the only real destination for any quantity has been into China. Australian prunes move in this market, but as it is dominated by the Chilean product, there is little scope for the price improvement required to get to a level where the grower cost of production is covered.

Dried tree fruit

After a forgettable 2016/17 harvest, the attention turns to this year’s crop. The chill units have been favourable to establish a good crop. Our Angas Park orchard is looking to bounce back after the crop loss in 2016. The trees are looking in good shape and the production off this property and grower supply will bolster our stocks of Australian apricots for the 2018 marketing year.

Reports from Turkey indicates there is a large apricot crop and the quality will be average to poor. This will put downward pressure on their pricing as they look to move the increased tonnage on the export market.

Wishing all our dried grape, prune and dried tree fruit suppliers a successful harvest.

Sultana 8 Pack Mini’s Launch

October sees the launch of the Sunbeam Mini Sultana 8x15g pack in Woolworths to provide even smaller snack packs for little hands and appetites. These Mini packs have also been transformed with the indigenous animal graphics. A little joey in the pouch of kanga mum defines the mini pack.

Sunbeam/Angas Park Dried Fruit Contacts:

Dried Fruit Contacts:
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Group Procurement Manager:
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David Swain, Supply Manager Dried Fruit:
M: 0407 834 044

Alan Lister, Field Officer:
M: 0409 437 801

Gary Simpson, Field Officer:
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Barry Bottams, Field Officer:
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Looking to the future and greater marketing choice

Darryl Trease was born to live on the land. His great grandparents were among the original settlers at Pemberton in the southwest of Western Australia, and his parents, originally dairy farmers from Manjimup.

“In 1975 mum and dad moved to the Swan Valley looking for better opportunities,” Darryl said.

“I was just a kid when they brought the vineyard at Herne Hill and began producing currants for drying, I recall it was a tough life working long hours and even at 5, my brothers and I pitched in before and after school.”

At the time most of the valley was small family holdings growing a mix of melons and grapes for wine and dried fruit as well as the fresh market.

“There was money in growing table grapes, but the region was at its infancy in this market, being more known for wine and dried fruit. Besides, mum and dad had been told their property on the river flats was unsuitable for the fresh market,” Darryl said.

In the late 1980s Darryl purchased the 10-acre (4.05 hectares) property neighbouring his parents. At the time, it had a few old currant vines, but its gentle slopes down to the Swan River were picturesque and offered potential.

Darryl was studying Business at Curtin University and working for AMP in the city where he met wife Ann.

He grew melons to generate some farm income and in 1990 planted his first table grapes - Red Globe.

“I always knew I wanted to come back to the land,” he said.

Darryl and Ann have expanded their landholdings and currently lease a further 60 acres (24.3ha) spread over four different properties nearby.

“Most properties in the area are between 5 and 25 acres (2-10ha), so we are among the largest growers.

Preparing for the future

Darryl would like to increase his holdings to 100 acres (40.5ha) in the next couple of seasons as a means of securing his family’s future.

“For the past few years there’s been a push from the Victorian Government to allow access for eastern states table grapes, especially now we accept grapes from California.

“I think it’s inevitable that they will be allowed in. It’s just a matter of determining the appropriate protocol for biosecurity to ensure our WA vineyards are protected, and ironing out any legislative problems regarding minimum maturity standards.

“I believe the West Australian industry must get economies of scale to be able to compete with eastern states grapes, and we need to look for export opportunities.

“It’s one of the driving factors behind us aligning ourselves with Australian licensee for the Arra varieties, Romeo’s Best, to market our fruit,” he said. “We need someone with national power and distribution networks and Romeo’s will enable us to contemplate supplying direct to Coles and Woolworths supermarkets as well as export opportunities in Asia.”

Darryl and Ann are slowly transitioning their properties to Arra varieties bred...
by Giumarra Vineyards’ subsidiary, Agricultural Research & Development (ARD LLC).

“We find the Arra varieties are not only higher yielding, but they’re easier to grow and have superior eating and storage qualities,” he said.

“We currently have 8 acres (3.2ha) planted to Early Sweet and 14 acres (5.6ha) to Arra 15 and 19.

“In addition, we grow the Sunworld varieties - Sable Seedless, Scarlotta Seedless and Adora Seedless. And our few remaining acres of the older varieties Dawn Seedless and Red Globe will soon disappear to make way for new Arra plantings. My intention is to eventually only grow Arra varieties.”

As part of his agreement with Romeo’s Best and GRAPA, Darryl is preparing to plant his own nursery stock of 40,000 vines.

“There are only two nurseries in WA, and one of those is up north in Carnarvon, which has made reliable supply of grafted vines difficult,” Darryl said. “Whilst it’s my intention to initially only grow vines for my own requirements, if the market demands, I could move into commercial production in future years.”

To mark the new era Darryl and Ann have rebranded their fruit ‘Swan Valley Sweet’. It takes into consideration their location and capitalises on the fact that fruit is kept on the vine until fully mature with a sweet flavour.

Get involved

Darryl is a strong believer in getting involved. He is the President of the Grape Growers Association of WA, a representative on the Table Grapes WA Board and the WA delegate on the Australian Table Grape Association Board.

“Being involved in the decision making through representation on these bodies ensures both myself and the WA industry is kept up to date with latest technologies and changes,” he said. “I like to be involved as a lot of growers don’t know how to get the information they need; I have that experience through other roles, so feel obliged to help if I can.”

The Swan Valley is only 16 kilometres east of the Perth CBD, which makes it a challenging location for growers. Darryl said the proximity to the city and markets was a bonus, but at the same time growers were cursed by having to pay metropolitan prices for rates and water, and all the things which are generally cheaper in traditional agricultural areas.

Furthermore, the City of Swan is experiencing unprecedented urban growth, yet the Swan Valley is one of WA’s premier tourist destinations. Darryl is passionate about preserving the rural element in the valley and was elected councillor for the City of Swan’s Swan Valley/Gidgegannup Ward in 2009. He will finish his second 4-year term in October 2017, but has been asked by the community to run for a third term.

“Council is very demanding and takes up most of my time,” he said. “It makes it difficult to get things done on the farm as well, as there simply aren’t enough hours in the day.”

“We’re lucky to have Danny, who has worked with me for the past 8 years. He takes care of things while I am busy with Council and oversees the Tongan crew he hires to help with harvest.

“I get out there when I can. I keep control of the spraying and our son Nicholas is responsible for putting the fertiliser through the irrigation system. Ann and our daughter Jennifer chip in to help with the irrigation and maintenance, as we are forever checking sprinklers and manually changing over new sections.”

2017 flood

Other challenges in the valley are the risk of flood from the Swan River. The Trease family has been hit by flood in 2001/02 and more recently in 2017.

“We had minor flooding in early February, but the water was quick to subside,” he said.

“The real flood hit on 11 February. The river rose up over the top of the trellis, and took two weeks to recede.

“The timing couldn’t have been worse. We had just invested in a lot of new properties and were eagerly awaiting harvest. But the river stayed high and the fruit rotted beneath the water.

“The clean-up was enormous. There’s still a bit of damage to the trellis and strainer posts and we are constantly dealing with the weeds that have subsequently germinated.

“We lost a few vines close to the river and bud burst has been very uneven this year, so we are still waiting to see the full impact.

“But you have to smile and get on with life,” he said. “It had better be a good season this year though,” he joked.
The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have turned a blind eye to the impact of rising insurance premiums on Sunraysia’s horticulturists following last November’s devastating hail storm, according to Sunraysia table grape growers.

Sam and Domenic Sergi own approximately 200 acres (80.8 hectares) of table grapes in Red Cliffs, with the majority of their 2016/17 crop, approximately 140 acres (56.6ha), lost to November’s freak storm.

Their insurance premiums for the upcoming season have risen an incredible 164.5% after receiving an insurance payout last year.

“I’ve taken out hail insurance every year for the past 30 years, and I’ve never seen a (price) rise like this – no one who I have spoken with who has been wiped out by hail before has,” Mr Sergi said.

“Hail insurance last year cost us $25,000, this year it’s going to cost $75,000. We all need to pay insurance this year, because at the end of the day if another natural disaster similar to last November’s storms happens, and we’re not insured, we may as well pack up and leave.”

Cardross table grape grower Sam Romeo, whose 2016/17 crop was similarly wiped out thanks to the storm and who also received an insurance payout, is also facing an increase of 150% to insure his property this season.

Mr Romeo said he would love to see the State or Federal Government introduce a rebate system to help growers cope with the rise in insurance premiums.

Mr Sergi said that other horticulturists he had spoken to across the district, including those based in storm-affected areas like Paringi in New South Wales, Irymple and Merbein, had encountered similar increases.

He said that growers who had only been partly impacted by the Remembrance Day storm, or not impacted at all, had been advised their hail insurance premiums would increase between 20 and 40%.

Mr Sergi’s son, Domenic, added that the potential impact of rising insurance premiums on Sunraysia growers was made clear to both Federal Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and his State counterpart Jaala Pulford following last year’s storm, with both Ministers visiting the region at the time to assess the damage.

“Minister Pulford met with myself and other impacted growers, and one concern raised was the risk of growers being completely pushed out of the hail insurance market due to a massive hike in premiums,” Domenic said.

“We flagged this in November last year, and unfortunately those concerns have proven to be well-founded. In my opinion, this is completely absurd and predatory pricing.”

The Sergi’s properties have been insured against hail for the past three decades, with last November marking the first time the pair have made a major claim.

“Which we had to do to survive,” Mr Sergi said. “Prior to that storm hitting, I had already laid out a substantial amount in expenses.

“After the storm hit, I still had to pay my water bill, Council rates, power, not to mention find a way to put food on the table.

“Now, after spending even more money to ensure my properties recover enough to hopefully produce a good crop this year, we’re hit with this.”

Domenic said that while the family business had made “a large insurance claim last year,” he didn’t believe the
steep spike in insurance premium costs reflected that his family had been policyholders for 30 years.

“In that time we have only made minor claims on perhaps two occasions,” he said. “Despite the fact that a storm did occur last year, the risk of another similar storm happening again cannot have increased by such an enormous amount so quickly.”

Domenic said that other factors working against local horticulturists was the fact that hail insurance was considered ‘a specialist market’, with growers only having one or two options to choose from.

“It just doesn’t make sense to me, especially when you consider that our insurance premium for our house and vehicles increased by a far more reasonable 25%,” he said. “This is despite the fact that we made a very large claim last year on this policy for all the iron roofing damage caused by hail.”

Domenic plans to write to Minister Pulford, urging her to do more to protect impacted growers and the wider horticulture industry following natural disasters.

“If these sort of price increases are being applied to all impacted growers in the district, I believe that the issue is of great enough significance to warrant the Minister’s attention,” he said.

“If there was a forum where our concerns could be raised, I think it would go a long way towards helping growers place pressure on insurance companies, and allow at least the majority of growers to remain insured.”

More than $467million was paid out by insurance companies across North West Victoria, eastern South Australia and western New South Wales following last November’s hail storm.

Government-funded storm assistance grants of $25,000 were also made available to impacted growers, however there was a requirement that those funds be used for recovery and restoration.

“Maybe the government would have better giving that money to the insurance companies to offset these price rises,” Mr Sergi said.

An Insurance Council Australia spokesperson said that insurers price the risk of an event occurring to each property, not to a district, which explained why the level of price rises seen across Sunraysia in the wake of last year’s storm was so inconsistent.

The spokesperson said that any risk assessment then forms the base premium for a policyholder, starting that a decision to change premiums is a commercial matter for each insurer.

For those not aware, a premium is the amount a person pays an insurer for insurance cover. It reflects what the insurer believes is the likelihood a claim will be made, and also includes an insurer’s business costs, and may also reflect the benefits of any discounts or bonuses the insurer may offer.

This article appeared in the Mildura Weekly on 7 September, 2017 and has been reprinted with their permission.
Open sheds facilitate shared learning

Dehydrating is the single biggest expense in the production of prunes. To help improve efficiency in this area and reduce costs, four Australian prune dehydrators opened their sheds to inspection by their peers.

Industry Development Officer Ann Furner said the Australian prune industry was relatively small with limited funds available for research so it was important for growers and dehydrators to share information and work together to increase their knowledge base.

"Visiting other dehydrating sheds can be a valuable experience for those involved, but is difficult during harvest when everyone is busy," she said.

"The ‘Open Shed’ field day was designed to maximise participation, to show how four different sheds operated, and to discuss the innovations and practices that have worked well, and just as importantly, those that have not.

"The idea was to share experiences so that as an industry we can learn from others’ mistakes and be inspired to integrate new ideas that will help efficiency and quality."

On Friday 18 August, 30 growers and industry representatives braved the icy winds and intermittent rain.

The tour began in Yenda at Peter Cremasco’s shed where the group saw the industry’s only continuous dryer. It has the capacity to dry 24 bins per day, with a single bin of fresh fruit fed into the dryer every hour. Mr Cremasco said the French technology was very efficient and used less gas than traditional dryers; however, it was quite costly to import or build a new machine.

Paul Carver has improved the efficiency of his LPG-operated dryer by investing in renewable energy over time. He has installed a 30 kilowatt solar energy array to offset his power requirements; catches the rain water from his shed roof for reuse in the drying shed; and has a heat exchanger to capture the heat from the gas-fired tunnels and reuses this to dry more fruit.

Ms Furner said the weather turned for the worse and a hot beverage and cakes were welcomed by all as they arrived at Frank and Lucy De Rossi’s shed near Bilbul.

Unlike most other sheds, the in-fed area, where the fruit is placed on trays before it enters the tunnels, has been made from stainless steel in the De Rossi shed. They have an advantage in that their son works with stainless steel all the time so it was a logical choice to convert to stainless steel overtime.

Mr De Rossi told of the trouble he was having with one of his tunnels drawing moist air from the tunnels either side of it. He explained how he was going to fix this problem and that it would increase his drying capacity a little in the process.

The weather improved slightly by the time the group made it to Grant Delves’ property in Hanwood. Participants were invited to look around the shed and to ask questions. Mr Delves’ dryer runs on natural gas, but he is considering changing to LPG to reduce energy costs.

With fuel the single biggest cost of dehydration, the group was keen to hear from Griffith SupaGas Branch Manager John Scanu. Mr Scanu told the group what was involved with converting...
dryers from natural gas to LPG and encouraged dehydrators to come on board to receive a better price for gas.

Mr Scanu said that if dehydrators were interested in converting to LPG he would organise a Formula Based Pricing system for them. This type of system works best when a number of users band together to order their gas in bulk. The more gas a company can move (in terms of gas tonnes) in a single load, the cheaper it becomes for the end user, he said.

Last year APIA introduced the Dry Right quality assurance system for dehydrators. A discussion followed on how the system had been implemented and suggested changes put forward.

“With fuel the single biggest cost of dehydration, the group was keen to hear what was involved with converting dryers from natural gas to LPG.”

Ms Furner said the industry had been open to the introduction of the program, and after putting it into practice dehydrators had suggested a few changes to reduce the amount of paperwork required. These changes will be implemented by harvest 2018.

Dehydrators were also keen to explore the potential of a system to manage dehydrating space and excess fruit during harvest and is something that will be considered at a later date.

Mr Delves explained a little about the recent promotional activates APIA has been doing and said more information will be shared at the upcoming AGM and Conference on 12 September at Griffith.

“One of the really positive outcomes of the day was the presence of several next generation prune farmers,” Ms Furner said. “These are the future of our industry and it was great to see them involved. I’d particularly like to thank, Amy and Bethany Carver and Matthew Zalunardo for cooking the BBQ in horrible conditions.

“On behalf of the industry I’d also like to thank Peter and Liz Cremasco, Paul Carver, Frank and Lucy De Rossi and Grant Delves for opening their sheds and sharing their insights into dehydrating efficiencies. Also a thank you to Grant and Robyn Delves for allowing us to hold a bonfire and bbq in their back yard.”
La Trobe University has partnered with Chances for Children, Wakefield’s Transport, Nangiloc-Colignan Farms and Mildura Fruit Company to offer students an exciting agribusiness scholarship and work placement program.

In 2015, Deloitte predicted agribusiness would become the sector with the strongest competitive advantages for Australia’s economic outlook. Sunraysia is a major food producer and home to some of the country’s largest agribusiness organisations. They are passionate about supporting local people to study agribusiness and begin their careers in this exciting and evolving industry.

Two that have caught our attention are Wakefield’s Transport, Nangiloc-Colignan Farms and Mildura Fruit Company have donated $75,000 towards scholarships for students studying the Bachelor of Business (Agribusiness) at La Trobe’s Mildura Campus.

The Chances for Children and Mallee Family Care Scholarships are worth $5,000 per year for the duration of a student’s three-year agribusiness degree.

To further enhance the student’s learning experience, there is a guaranteed work placement within a local agribusiness organisation in the second or third year of the degree. This work placement allows students to put theory into practice, be mentored by experienced agribusiness professionals and boost their employability in preparation for entering the job market.

The Chances for Children and Mallee Family Care Scholarships are available to students who are Australian citizens and are from a regional area.

To apply students must complete an application form and provide a 500-word statement outlining their personal goals and ambitions, while demonstrating financial need. To find out more visit the La Trobe University website W: latrobe.edu.au/Mildura

### Industry sponsors Agribusiness scholarships

#### Support to …

Do you have children or grandchildren that are considering attending university or TAFE next year? If so, then now is the perfect time for them to see what scholarships are on offer, if they’re eligible and what they need to do to apply.

For those interested in agriculture and undertaking further study when they finish school, there are scholarships available.

The scholarships are one way of developing the future of the agricultural industry.

Two that have caught our attention are the Rural Bank Agribusiness Scholarship and the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Scholarship for rural and regional students.

#### Rural Bank Agribusiness Scholarship or the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Scholarship for rural and regional students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value and length of scholarship</th>
<th>This scholarship is valued at $5,000 per year and covers one year of study. However, depending on your academic performance, the scholarship may be renewed for a second year.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Things you need to know</td>
<td>You must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident. Only first time university students wishing to study full-time in 2018 can apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the scholarship cover?</td>
<td>The scholarship can cover costs of accommodation, book and computers. Deferring? Scholarship funds cannot be put on lay-by so if you’re planning a gap year you’ll have to wait to apply. Mature age? Only secondary school leavers graduated in 2017 or 2016 (taken a gap year) can apply for this scholarship. Started another course? This scholarship is for first time tertiary students only. Work part-time? The study and work life balance can be quite a juggle and we know that in reality part-time work is essential to get by, so as long as you’re studying full-time this scholarship is for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can I do to prepare?</td>
<td>Your story – start thinking about, and recording, the challenges you have faced as well as your hopes for your future education and career. References – speak with your teachers and others about providing you with a reference. Quotes/estimates – obtain quotes / estimates or research study related costs you will face during your first year of university. e.g. quotes on accommodation costs (university provided or private), estimates of study related expenses such as textbooks, supplies, equipment (computers, printers etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>More information</td>
<td>You can find out more information about these scholarships at <a href="https://www.bendigobank.com.au/public/community/scholarships/2018-scholarships">https://www.bendigobank.com.au/public/community/scholarships/2018-scholarships</a></td>
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<td>1 December 2017</td>
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<td>Closing Date</td>
<td>29 January 2018</td>
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How all generations can make farming a career of choice

By Sam Marwood

Farming sits towards the bottom of the careers list for a lot of young Australians. This doesn’t mean that young people don’t want to be farmers; it’s just too expensive. Why would anyone attempt a dream career that is nearly impossible to realise?

One solution is to aide the transition of land, across generations, allowing farming to become a career choice for young Australians once again. And if the cards are played right, it’s also possible for retiring farmers to continue to earn from their years of hard work, while supporting young farmers and bolstering their local community.

We know aspiring farmers are up against it. Unless you inherit a farm or are wealthy, you won’t have much of a chance of owning a farm. One solution, however, is to treat your farm dream like it’s a start-up and be a farm entrepreneur.

Write your plan down, tell everyone your farm dreams, hustle, hassle retiring farmers you know who are looking to step back and seek investors. There are farmers of retiring age out there waiting for you to ask them: “will you sell me half your farm?”

There are also plenty of people out there seeking opportunities to investment in farming. The current options for retiring farmers looking to step back are binary (sell it all or stay until you die) and often don’t provide positive outcomes for the community.

If you sell it, you get all the cash, but lose your connection with the soil you’ve spent your life cultivating. Dying on your property might sound romantic, but you’ll have completely worn yourself out and the farm won’t be operating at its full potential when you do go.

Imagine if there was an option that allowed you to get the cash needed to retire, have an ongoing income, support a new family and ensure your community thrives. This is a possibility if you looked at those binary options a little differently.

What if you sold half the farm to a new farming family bursting to get farming? It frees up cash for you to retire and your farm gets a new lease on life. You can remain the equity owner of the farm and arrange to stay on the farm for as long as you want. While there, offer your wealth of knowledge to the new family, become the chairperson rather than the CEO and help see the farm succeed.

The only thing left to do now is to make it easy for aspiring farmers to find retiring farmers: a type of match-making service. Where both parties have the space and time to ensure everyone wins and are satisfied with the outcome.

With hundreds of dating websites and new disruptive businesses changing how we buy and sell, matching aspiring and retiring farmers will be the normal way of transitioning land in the future and farming will be the boom industry everyone is talking it up to be.

Sam Marwood is co-founder of Cultivate Farms – a social enterprise aiming to rejuvenate regional communities by bringing young families back to regional communities. They connect young families with retiring farmers and investors to own and operate a farm together.

This article appeared on the W: theaustralianfarmer.com/ website on 24/08/2017 and has been reprinted with their permission.
Adaptive AWM of Qfly using SIT

How does Qfly survive winter?
Implications for management in temperate regions

Now that Qfly is established in regions that were previously thought too cold for Qfly, asking questions about winter survival mechanisms seems reasonable. To effectively answer these questions there is a need to revisit the biology of the fly to get to the bottom of it all.

Does Qfly behave in the same way in colder regions as other flies?

Understanding overwintering behaviour is important for treating the Qfly population entering the winter period, for being on top of spring emergence and spring fly condition.

So let’s go back to basics and look at what we know already. Insects in cooler temperate areas generally survive the cold winter months through a mechanism of diapause - where the insect shuts down in response to cold temperatures and/or changing day-length. In temperate fruit flies, this ‘shut-down’ usually occurs in the pupal stage. But Qfly is a tropical insect and doesn’t have a true ‘shut-down’ mechanism.

However, colder temperatures can slow development as insect aging is related to the temperature. This means that as the weather cools, the larval and pupal stages can be prolonged - but if development is too lengthy the insect (be it egg, larvae or pupae) will eventually die.

Is this what happens in Qfly? In a word – no. Based on significant research, Qfly is considered to survive winter as an adult insect.

So what has Qfly research told us about overwintering over the years?

Research in Stanthorpe, a cooler part of Queensland, in the 1920s showed that some pupae could survive the winter months, but this was literally a few individuals out of thousands tested and it was concluded that the flies survive primarily as adults. This was subsequently confirmed in the 1960s/70s in central New South Wales by CSIRO/University of Sydney, and then by Victorian Government entomologists in the early 1980s. But one study from NSW in 1939 found evidence of very prolonged larval development in late season apples and citrus, so this was suggested as another possible over-wintering mechanism.

Entomologists from Victoria looked extensively at overwintering behaviour in the 1980’s. Using an outdoor screen-house in Melbourne, it was shown that there was no emergence of flies in June, July or August and pupae died during winter, but that flies emerging in April and May could survive as adults through to the spring.

- 10% of adults from populations started in April were still alive by mid-August, with the last fly dying in mid-November; and
- 10% of flies from a population started in May were still alive at the end of September, with the last dying in mid-December.

Now the question becomes – what are the conditions Qfly encounter in Victoria and NSW, and are these research findings applicable to real world conditions?

After April, in both NSW and Victoria, it has been observed that the cool temperatures do not allow the development of eggs and larvae, and young adults will remain sexually immature until warm weather returns, as was described in trials. Any mature females will, however, continue to lay eggs into late autumn/early winter (but eggs will not hatch).

Adults aggregate and spend the winter sheltering in protected sites with heavy canopy. In one series of studies in NSW, the flies were observed going back to the same overwintering site each year. In very cold weather the flies can simply rest under leaves, but on occasional warm days they might fly around to feed and drink.

In early September Professor Tony Clarke and Dr Penny Measham visited the Goulburn Valley, the Riverland and Sunraysia regions, as a part of a Fruit Fly Roadshow. At the roadshow panel sessions, there was strong agreement from the presenting researchers, that Area Wide Management leads to pest suspension. You’ll be hearing more about Area Wide Management in future editions.

If you are seeking further advice on fruit fly control, contact your local state or territory department of agriculture or primary industries on T: 1800 084 881 or visit http://preventfruitfly.com.au/

Pictured Left to Right: - Project lead, Senior Research Scientists at CSIRO Dr Hazel Parry; CSIRO Land and Water, Group Leader - Economics and Future Pathways, Senior Environmental and Institutional Economist Dr Stuart Whitten; CSIRO Land and Water Social Scientist, Dr Barton Loechel; and Regional Qfly Co-ordinator, Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Committee, Deidre Jaensch. Absent was Chair of Fruit Fly Biology and Management Science and Engineering, Faculty of Earth, Environment, Biological Sciences, Bioscience at Queensland University of Technology, Professor Anthony Clarke.
Flies exposed to decreasing temperature conditions over time can survive cold conditions better than flies moved directly from warm to cold conditions (i.e. they acclimatise to increasing cold), making flies from southern Australia more cold-hardy than flies from subtropical and tropical Australia.

The Victorian work is now over 30 years old and with increasing temperatures and fewer really cold winters, the flies may successfully develop much longer into the winter, and start again earlier in the spring.

New overwintering behaviour trials are being undertaken in Victoria by Katarina Merkel and Dave Williams through the ‘Adaptive area wide management of Qfly using SIT’ project. This came about after working with growers in the Cobram region in Victoria, who highlighted the lack of knowledge of overwintering in cooler climates was a major impediment to management.

New results will show if fly behaviour has changed over 30 years so we can better target management options in cooler regions. It may even be possible that the temperatures are now warm enough that breeding can occur all year round.

So, wherever you are – keep a good look out for this pesky pest and adopt an area wide management approach; consider all habitats (non-crops included) in the landscape, think year-round, and don’t make it easy for them to overwinter (clean up any postharvest or fallen fruit).

The Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Industry Development Committee is overseeing the pest control efforts in Sunraysia on behalf of citrus, stone fruit and table grape growers. The committee is looking for a table grape representative. To be eligible you need to be a member of the Sunraysia Table Grape Growers Association or the Robinvale Table Grape Growers Association.

For further information contact: Deidre Jaensch, Regional Co-ordinator of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Committee
E: deidrej@greatersunraysiapfa.com.au
T: 0429 007 200

The ‘Adaptive Area wide management of Qfly using SIT’ project is being delivered by Hort Innovation – with support from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as part of its Rural R&D for Profit program, and CSIRO.
Further phylloxera detections: What this means for growers

Vineyard owners must improve their farm-gate hygiene to help prevent a significant pest or disease incursion such as phylloxera. This is the advice of Vinehealth Australia following further detections of phylloxera in vineyards in Victoria.

Agriculture Victoria has announced further extensions to the Maroondah Phylloxera Infested Zone (PIZ) to the east, south and west of the existing zone. While the new detections were found within the existing PIZ boundary, the Maroondah PIZ was extended to maintain a 5km buffer zone between an infested property’s boundary and the PIZ boundary.

This is the seventh extension to the Maroondah PIZ since phylloxera was first detected in the area in 2006, and follows the notification in March 2017 of an extension to the northern boundary of the zone.

“We know phylloxera doesn’t respect state borders. It’s time for vineyard owners to get serious about farm-gate hygiene to prevent an incursion of phylloxera,” Vinehealth Australia CEO Inca Pearce said.

What can growers do?

There are simple farm-gate hygiene practices that all vineyard owners/managers can implement to minimise the risk of an incursion of a pest or disease on their property.

Know where grape phylloxera is and is not located in Australia. Know your business links within interstate phylloxera zones. Follow all state quarantine regulations surrounding movement of phylloxera risk vectors, such as machinery, grape bins, equipment and grapes.

Use fences and gates to restrict people and vehicles accessing your vineyards. Use signs at entrances to advise visitors of reasons for this restriction. Keep a record of all visitors to your vineyard, detailing which wine regions they have visited in the eight days prior.

Train your staff, contractors and casual labour in best-practice farm-gate hygiene. This includes looking out for and reporting any unusual pests, diseases or vine growth symptoms to Vinehealth Australia on (08) 8273 0550 or the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

FOOTWEAR AND SMALL HAND TOOL DISINFESTATION PROTOCOL

Anyone who has visited another vineyard before yours could carry phylloxera, weed seeds and other pests and diseases. An important step to protect your vines is to ensure that everyone coming onto your vineyard is wearing clean clothes and that their footwear is clean and disinfested. The footwea...
inside the quarantine zone will be directly impacted when selling their grapes, due to where the grapes can and cannot be processed. Movement of other grapevine material, machinery and equipment onto and off of these vineyards will also be limited.

These restrictions impose extra logistics costs on both infested and non-infested growers inside the quarantine zone. These costs are in addition to any loss of production caused by the pest. In the year that it is detected, impact will be significant, especially if detection is in the vintage period when movement of grapes, harvesters, bins, trucks and vintage staff is high.

Once a block is infested with phylloxera, growers will notice a gradual reduction in yield and vigour as symptoms worsen and the infection spreads from vine to vine. The reduction in vigour alters grape sugar-acid balance, compromises grape flavour and intensity and impacts grape integrity. Consistency of wine quality over time suffers as a result.

Once vines are symptomatic, phylloxera is likely to have been present for several years. This contributes to the difficulty in limiting phylloxera spread, both between vineyard blocks on the same property and between properties.

A lack of available chemical or biological control for phylloxera means there is no treatment for a phylloxera-infested vineyard. The only option is to pull out the vineyard and replant with new vines that have been grafted onto phylloxera tolerant or resistant rootstock. The vine material comes at a cost – at least three times that of own-rooted material.

Pulling out vines and replanting comes at an approximate cost of $60,000 per hectare, including vine removal, new grafted vine material and new block infrastructure.

Once a vineyard is infested, growers will have to consider factors such as:

- Setting up heightened farm-gate hygiene systems, including the cleaning and disinfection of machinery, equipment, footwear and clothing for all persons leaving the property to avoid transferring phylloxera off-site.
- Purchasing additional machinery and equipment to segregate use to phylloxera infested or non-infested properties
- Purchasing additional clothing and footwear for employees (and potentially contractors), to ensure the same sets are not worn in infested and non-infested properties.
- Erecting a heat shed to sterilise machinery and equipment coming onto and leaving the infested property or determining access to heat sheds owned by others.
- Erecting washdown facilities to ensure all machinery and equipment leaving the property is cleaned of soil and plant material prior to disinfection.
- Ensuring you know every person and vehicle coming onto your property, where they have been and where they are going next. Having a farm vehicle available for authorised visitors who visit your property.

- Where grapes are processed. Grapes from a phylloxera infested vineyard cannot be moved to a Phylloxera Risk Zone or Phylloxera Exclusion Zone for processing.
- If you have a cellar door, you will need to consider tourism factors, such as preventing visitors from entering vineyards and providing ways of ‘bringing the outside in’ to encourage responsible visitation.

Sixty seconds for safe shoes

Recent studies have shown that a 60 second disinfestation treatment is required to demonstrate 100% mortality across six key endemic strains of phylloxera. The findings underline the importance of carrying out footwear and small hand tool disinfection at the correct concentration and duration, without a rinse after, to ensure effectiveness of treatment (http://www.vinehealth.com.au/media/Vinehealth-Footwear-and-Small-Hand-Tools-Disinfestation-Protocol-White-A3.pdf).

Phylloxera is a reportable pest. Anyone who suspects a phylloxera infestation must report it promptly to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.
Record numbers for Asia Fruit Logistica

Asia Fruit Logistica was a hive of business activity, with more than 13,000 trade visitors from 76 different countries pouring through the doors of AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong on 6-8 September.

Visitor numbers were up by 16% on last year’s event, setting a new attendance record.

Some 70% of visitors came from Asia, with 20 different markets across the Asia-Pacific region represented. The main origins in terms of visitors were China, Hong Kong, India, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, New Zealand, Japan and Australia.

“We’re delighted with the dynamic business activity on the show-floor during Asia Fruit Logistica this year,” said Wilfried Wollbold, commercial director of organiser Global Produce Events. “The results underline Asia Fruit Logistica’s role as the leading continental trade exhibition for the fresh produce business in Asia.”

Visitors to Asia Fruit Logistica found a show that had expanded by almost a third compared with last year’s event in terms of exhibition space. Exhibitor numbers increased by more than 150 on the 2016 edition. A total of 813 exhibitors from 43 different countries took part, while 24 national pavilions featured at the event.

China remained the single-largest exhibiting country at Asia Fruit Logistica, with bookings and company participation expanding by more than 50% compared with last year’s event. The other leading exhibiting countries were Italy, Egypt and Australia, which ranked second, third and fourth respectively in terms of exhibitor bookings.

The new ‘Taste Australia’ pavilion was 30% larger than last year at close to 500sqms.

Taste Australia was launched domestically in Sydney as part of Australian horticulture’s biggest trade push in history and officially opened at Asia Fruit Logistica. The new initiative led by Hort Innovation comprises trade expo activities in Asia and the Middle East, plus in-market retail campaigns using the Taste Australia signage.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive John Lloyd said through ‘Taste Australia’, the nation’s produce would be positioned as a high-end, high-quality offering that is supported by technology, science and innovation.

“We are taking a loud and clear message to importers throughout Asia and the Middle East: Australia has plenty of premium, high-quality produce, and we are open for business.”

Australian Table Grape Association Chief Executive Officer Jeff Scott said this year at Asia Fruit Logistica was probably the best that he had seen.

“Everyone commented on the Taste Australia stand which was helpful in attracting new importer enquiries,” he said. “It was also really pleasing to see such a high number of table grape growers attend this year. It shows the industry’s strong commitment to the Asian region and their desire to learn more about their trading partners.”

Helping to connect international buyers/retailers and Aussie growers and exporters was the Australian Table Grape Industry Exporter Directory, launched at the event for this purpose. Mr Scott said the directory had been very well received and was a great tool for opening the channels of communication for further trade in the region.

Asiafruit Congress

The Asiafruit Congress, took place on Tuesday 5 September, the day before Asia Fruit Logistica opened its doors. More than 400 high-level industry professionals from around 40 different countries attended the conference, which was addressed by expert speakers covering a range of hot topics.

The opening session explored the rapidly changing food retail landscape in Asia. Shirley Zhu, who leads the South East Asia research program for global food and grocery analyst IGD, provided a macro-view of the key trends in Asia’s food retail market. The session then focused on the merging of online and offline (O2O) retail channels. Congress moderator Chris White interviewed Paul Sheh of Alibaba-backed O2O retailer Hema Supermarket, followed by Walmart China’s Winstone Chee and Sam’s Club China’s Yoep Man, about their respective strategies.

In the other general sessions, Zespri’s global marketing manager Jiunn Shih delivered a dynamic insight into consumer-centric fresh produce marketing, while Rabobank’s chief Asia-Pacific strategist Michael Every offered a thought-provoking perspective on the changing global trade landscape.

The next edition of Asia Fruit Logistica takes place on 5-7 September 2018 at AsiaWorld-Expo Center in Hong Kong. Asiafruit Congress takes place on 4 September at the same venue.

Growers, exporters and horticulture industry representatives keen to get involved in Hort Innovation trade activities can email Julie Willis E: julie.willis@horticulture.com.au or T: 0404 392 311.
High priority exotic pest threats of stone fruit

Plum curculio

This series from Plant Health Australia features exotic pests that would survive, spread and establish in Australian orchards should they get through border quarantine controls. Growers should be familiar with their appearance and symptoms so that they can distinguish them from the pests that they normally encounter.

Report any unusual or suspect plant pest symptoms immediately via the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881, to give the best chance of eradicating any new pests.

Plum curculio (Conotrachelus nenuphar) is an economically damaging pest that is regarded as the most serious pest of stone fruit after codling moth in eastern North America.

What does it look like?

Adult weevils are about 5 millimetres long and brown/grey in colour with four pairs of ridges on the forewings (elytra). The weevils’ snouts are small, rough and speckled black, grey and brown. Larvae are curved, legless and 6-9mm long and are typically white with brown heads. The minute eggs (0.4 x 0.6mm) are elliptical and white, but aren’t visible externally as they are laid in the fruit.

What can it be confused with?

The appearance of the plum curculio is similar to the apple weevils, Anthonomus quadririgibbus and A. pomorum, both of which are exotic to Australia.

Therefore, the detection of any weevil laying eggs in fruit should be reported.

What should I look for?

Adult weevils cause scarring and oviposition wounds on the fruit, but damage is highly variable. Larval feeding causes internal damage, so the most recognisable symptom of plum curculio is rotted fruit on trees with possible fruit drop.

How does it spread?

Larvae can be spread in infested fruit, though a more likely means of spread is through contamination of packing material by adult weevils.

Where is it now?

Plum curculio is currently restricted to North America.

How can I protect my orchard from plum curculio?

Ensure all staff and visitors adhere to on-farm biosecurity and hygiene practices.

Source plant material only from ‘clean’, accredited suppliers.

Check your farm frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms.

Make sure you are familiar with common stonefruit insect pests so you can tell if you see something different.

Report any unusual or suspect plant pest symptoms to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

Biosecurity manuals for the summerfruit and viticulture industries give specific information on what to do in orchards and vineyards to boost on-farm biosecurity. These manuals are available for free from the Farm Biosecurity website farmbiosecurity.com.au along with a range of other resources.

Photos are courtesy of Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org
It’s all in good taste  
By Darren Graetz

After more than 30 years of hard work the SARDI apricot breeding program has produced a range of exceptional new apricots for both the fresh market and drying industries.

The quality of these new varieties has been put to the test in recent scientific taste panels, and the results tell a compelling story of success.

Plant breeding is very much about process, numbers and addressing key ideals. In the case of apricots, that means making sure a new line meets the minimum fruit standards and be: large, firm, blemish-free and of good appearance. It must also have a high total soluble solids (TSS) content and produce good, regular crops.

These characteristics are measured over time and determine if a particular line progresses through the program. This combination of characteristics meets most of the expectations of growers and marketers. However, the missing link is often measurement of taste and consumer eating experience; after all apricots are a food purchased to be eaten and enjoyed.

Opinions are like backsides, everybody has one. They come with flavored by the perspectives of the deliverer making them neither entirely fact nor fiction. Yet it’s the power of opinion now being harnessed (in a scientific way) to finally validate the results with the very best lines being subjected to sensory taste panels to gauge consumer acceptance of both fresh and dried fruit. Too often this final critical step is overlooked and all that is relied upon to sell the product to growers is opinion.

SARDI is now actively closing this gap, aiming to put hard evidence behind its new varieties rather than subjective opinion. Improvements in meeting consumer expectations over current varieties are evident and the numbers are looking very good. It also makes sense to put some hard numbers behind the taste and overall eating experience of your product as a promotional tool.

Taste panels are run on six different fresh fruit varieties at a time, using randomised coded samples for which TSS and firmness have been recorded with consumers in the panel asked to answer a range of questions on a scale (0-150). Dried fruit is tested, washed and rehydrated in a similar manner.

‘Overall eating experience’ was recorded for each variety on a ‘degree of liking scale’ from Dislike (0) to Like (150) the results for which closely mirrored those for flavour. Last season Loxton Research Centre grown sound fruit of common early fresh market varieties such as Poppicot scored an average of 63 at an average brix level of 12.3° and Earlicot, 64 at 13.5° brix average.

Many lines scored in the 90's at close to 20° brix average and comparable firmness. A further 8 lines scored over 100 with 119 being the equal highest average individual score recorded.

The results highlighted the substantial improvement in consumer quality these new SARDI lines offer.
The taste and overall eating experience of new apricot varieties is measured in scientific taste panels using randomised coded samples of fresh and dried fruit.

The differences in dried quality have not been as pronounced with eating experience as the fresh fruit. However nearly all SARDI varieties tested score better than Moorpark in ‘Overall Appearance’, and most are rated as good or better for ‘Overall Eating Experience’. When the production advantages of size, firmness, cropping and dry ratio are factored in with the increase in visual and eating quality of the product, the new varieties shine. It is clear they have the ability to improve industry cost structures whilst raising overall quality in the end product.

SARDI varieties are very strong in the early maturity segment of the season, particularly for drying varieties, with most being ahead of industry mainstay Story variety. A few varieties mature very early and some later in the season. Many will have multiple uses, being capable of fresh marketing and also being fully tree-ripened for drying.

While a few heavily blushed fresh market lines exist, many lines have some attractive moderate blush, but most are pastel and blush-free as large amounts of block blush can stain a dried product.

What sets these varieties apart is their ability to accumulate fruit sugars (TSS) early, a critical component of taste. Apricots are non-climacteric fruit, which means once picked they do not ripen and release more sugars in the way a climacteric fruit such as a peach does, instead they continue to respire, soften and convert fruit acids appearing to become less acidic to taste. It is a huge advantage for taste to be able to pick firm fruit that will handle well at high brix levels.

SARDI varieties are often picked at 17-18° Brix for fresh market, whereas international fresh varieties may be 14-15° Brix or lower. When ripened on tree, SARDI lines will continue to accumulate TSS into the mid 20's° Brix, some higher. These high sugar accumulations mean the resulting dry ratios for dried fruit is often around 4.5:1 or lower, whereas industry mainstay Moorpark is typically around 6:1. This produces a significant production advantage and a stunning glossy plump dried product of exceptional quality.

Most lines are self-fertile, strong growing vigorous upright trees. Many varieties exhibit grower friendly heavy spurring habit on main leaders and benefit from the addition of extra leaders to more effectively fill space if grown in a vase format.

Growers interested in these lines should contact SARDI Tree Crop Breeding Researcher Darren Graetz for more information

E: darren.graetz@sa.gov.au.
The Vine

Global grape goss

Below are some headlines from across the globe which recently caught our attention! We have provided the source of each article should you decide to locate the full story. Note: these are amended versions of the published article.

WUWM Congress heads to Australia this October

Source: zsupplychain.com
The World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM) Congress is heading to Australia this October. The biennial event is rarely held outside Europe, with co-host Melbourne Market Authority expecting more than 300 international and local delegates to attend the event, running from 23-27 October.

“The 2017 WUWM Congress will focus on the impact technology will have on the market’s role in the supply chain and the customer experience, under the banner of market modernisation. An exciting mix of international and Australian speakers have been secured that will hopefully inspire and challenge our WUWM members,” the organisation said. “These events provide excellent networking opportunities, alongside up-to-date information and reviews of topical issues and the latest market trends.”

After early morning tours of the Melbourne Market and Queen Victoria Market, the congress will take place at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre on Tuesday 24 October and Wednesday 25 October. Delegates will get a taste of speakers from both Australia and further abroad, with real time translation in Mandarin and Spanish.

Mexico sends first shipment of grapes to Australia

Source: eleconomista.com.mx
Published: 8/8/2017
According to the agency, the shipment, which was made up of 2,040 plastic boxes with 8.2 kilograms of table grapes each, left Sonora and was exported through the port of Manzanillo, Colima, and arrived in Melbourne, Australia, in July.

The National Health, Safety and Agricultural Food Quality Service (Senasica), which is part of the Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA), also stated that four vineyards in Sonoran, which have more than 300 hectares devoted to the producing grapes, had participated in this shipment of table grape.

The shipment consists of 3,345 kilograms of the Summer Royal variety, packed in 408 boxes; 11,709kg of Flame grapes in 428 boxes, and 1,672.8kg of the Superior variety in 204 boxes.

Last May, the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) officially announced the publication of the phytosanitary requirements for the importation of table grapes from Sonora, Mexico, to Australia. This was the result of the efforts initiated by the Mexican organization in June 2014, when the phytosanitary and biosecurity requirements started to be reviewed.

In November 2016, the DAWR announced the publication of the Final Report of the Pest Risk Analysis to begin the export of Mexican table grapes to that country in Oceania.

As a result, in June of this year, Senasica sent a list of vineyards and packaging facilities that comply with the phytosanitary requirements demanded by Australia to the DAWR, so Mexico could start exporting its table grapes to that country without any setbacks.

South Korea to expand grape exports to Australia

Source: koreaherald.com
Published: 8/9/2017
South Korea reached an agreement with Australia that will allow its commercially grown grapes to be exported to the Oceania country, the government said.

The Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency said Canberra has agreed to ease quarantine inspections of the Campbell Early type of grapes, which effectively translates into the easing of restrictions on all outbound shipments of the fruit.

Under existing rules only nine cities and counties in South Korea were allowed to export grapes to Australia.

After beginning to ship grapes in 2014, total shipments peaked at 51 tons (46 tonnes) in the following year, before dropping to 24 tons (21.7 tonnes) in 2016.

“With the lifting of restrictions and more grape growing regions eligible to export goods, the country should see a rebound in exports moving forward,” a quarantine official said.

Fruit and veggie bouquets a hit in AU

Source: abc.net.au
Published: 8/9/2017
Choosing a dozen capsicums over roses may seem strange to some, but it is the creative idea one SA resident hopes can satisfy the heart — and a hungry stomach.

Adelaide Hills resident Vlada Kazimirchuk is the founder of Lunch Bunch, creating edible arrangements using local fruit and vegetables.

Having found a number of edible arrangements from Russia, she has since turned the idea into a viable business.

Ms Kazimirchuk is a creative person by nature having worked as an interior designer in Sydney for 16 years. She said creating edible arrangements offered another level of creativity and personal control often lacking in her previous profession.
Frost damage

A report about a late-September frost that wiped out thousands of acres of vines was published in the October 1927 edition of Australian Dried Fruits News. Read on to find out more about the devastation it caused across Sunraysia, Nyah and South Australia.

It's also a timely reminder to be prepared for late frosts.

You can find more industry news, information and research in the Dried Fruits Australia Online Library.

Knowledge accumulated over almost a century has been preserved in the library, which can be accessed through the member’s section of the DFA website.

We also encourage you to browse through the hundreds of resources available – you never know what you might find to help increase productivity and profitability on the farm.

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Frost Damage

Sunday, September 25, will be a day long remembered by growers of Dried Vine Fruits. The preceding day closed with the vines looking green and healthy, and a crop showing that promised to exceed even last year’s abundant harvest. The sun rose on Sunday morning showing vineyards black and disfigured, as if a fire had been through them during the night.

Investigations on the Sunday showed that thousands of acres had been wiped out by a black frost, or, as the “Renmark Pioneer” describes it, “an icy blast from the Antarctic.”

It is very hard to estimate the damage that has been done, in the districts under review, as some blocks have escaped, while others have lost every shoot that was showing, so that the damage varies from nil up to the full 100 per cent.

Dealing with each district separately, close inspections point to the following losses:

**Irymple District**—This seemed to catch the main blunt of the frost; it is apparent that 90 per cent. of the crop has been affected.

**Mildura, Nichols Point and the Billabong**—The damage was not nearly as severe as in Irymple, and growers probably escaped with 25 to 40 per cent. losses.

**Lake and Koorlong Districts**—The damage in these areas appears to have been almost as bad as in Irymple.

**Merbein**—Though in isolated cases a 100 per cent. loss has been sustained, the average loss over the whole settlement is probably not 50 per cent.

**Red Cliffs**—Reports confirm very much the same conditions as Merbein, so that, taking the whole fruit-growing area of Mildura district, it is estimated that at least 50 per cent. of the crop has been lost.

Fortunately, only currants and sultanas appear to have been badly affected, and it is anticipated that, although Goads in some areas have been badly hit, they will recover considerably, and still throw a reasonable crop.

Developments during the last fortnight show that where vines have been cut by the frost, say under 50 per cent., they are throwing out shoots much more prolifically than where damaged at a higher percentage, and in many cases, where the loss is round about 100 per cent., the vines and canes still appear very badly affected, and some doubt is expressed as to whether the vines in these areas will have, in the case of sultanas, sufficient canes, or in currants, enough spurs, to carry a good crop for season 1929.

Reports received from the Nyah District and South Australia are very similar to the information to hand from Mildura, but it would appear as though South Australian districts had received more damage than other parts.

The crop of tree fruits, such as apricots, peaches, and nectarines, has also suffered, but at time of writing it is not possible to say to what extent, although it seems certain that the pack will be less than last year, which was comparatively light.
Since India exported more and for longer to Europe, Israeli and Egyptian exporters were in trouble, as they had to cope with a larger volume. To make matters worse for Egyptian exporters, there was also an early start of the season in Spain and Italy, which resulted in grapes being sold at dump prices. Spanish and Italian growers are dealing with a difficult market, but there is still optimism. In China, much is being invested in grape cultivation, which will also lead to higher export volumes. The season in Australia is already over, but most growers and exporters may even be grateful about it. In California, the situation is more positive, as due to a good demand, traders are satisfied with the prices.

**Global market**

### Challenging market for Spanish grapes

The start of the season was particularly difficult for white seedless grapes due to competition from Egypt, which dumped its grapes on the market because of fear to an early start of the seasons in Italy and Spain. In the Netherlands, prices dropped even below 1 Euro per kilo.

Due to the heat wave, the harvest was delayed and it takes longer for the fruit to reach the correct Brix level. An exporter explains that they currently don’t have the volume available for export. He is focusing on the domestic market. However, the demand is limited and the price remains low despite the shortages and the high number of tourists that Spain is attracting this year. Also, the competition from other summer fruits plays a role. Prices for stonefruit and melons are low this year, but with good quality. Compared with last year, prices are a little lower. The temperature has now fallen sharply, by 10 degrees, and this seems to improve the demand. Exporters and growers still have hope for the rest of the season.

### India has impact on Israeli exports

Exports show a whimsical pattern. This year has been a disappointment for the sector. Due to the weather and diseases, the harvest volume was reduced. This, in combination with low prices in Europe, caused exporters to lose their interest in shipping overseas. As a result, a larger volume was distributed on the domestic market, which caused prices to come under pressure.

The country has 3,000 hectares devoted to grape cultivation, most of which are found in the Lachish and Jordan Valley regions. The latter is where most grapes for export are grown. Due to the dry and warm climate in the valley, the harvest is carried out early. The full export season lasts for 5 to 6 weeks, filling the gap between the end of the Indian season and the start of the Egyptian and Spanish seasons. Typically, the Indian season ends in May, but this year, the country exported more grapes to Europe. The prices at the start of the Israeli season were low. The volumes therefore also fell below average.

During a normal season, about 15% of growers export their grapes. With a market situation like this year’s, this percentage drops to 5%. Most of the harvest is distributed in the domestic market, where the season lasts until the summer months. At present, a kilo of grapes costs about 2.30 Euro, which is relatively low.

### Italy: ‘Good quality, but low volumes’

The harvest has already started in several regions. The situation in all these regions is described as: “good quality, but low volumes.” This applies to Apulia (Victoria, Black Magic and Sugraone), the early regions of the Baroque coast (Mola di Bari, Torre a Mare), northern Bareso and Tarantino (San Ferdinando di Puglia, Grottaglie, Ginoso and Castellaneta). Lower volumes are expected especially for the Red Globe and Crimson Seedless. For now, the heat is not having any impact on grape cultivation, partly due to the use of irrigation.

In any case, the results are satisfactory. Growers say that the market is still quiet, but as of 15 August, rising demand and prices are expected. However, there may be competition from other Mediterranean countries. A grower reports that the harvest of the Vittoria grapes started later this year. Due to bad weather, the Brix level was too low. In the international market, there is a lot of competition from other countries, including Chile, India and South Africa. In addition, according to a trader, Italian grapes must compete directly against Israel, Turkey, Egypt and Moldova; an ‘uneven fight’. Growers are working hard to find new customers. For example, a large producer signed a deal with Auchan this year. Export destinations are mostly in Europe (the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany and France) and abroad (Brazil, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Pakistan and Nigeria).

### France: Frost damage in the south-east

In the south-east of the country, the first greenhouse-grown grapes (Prima and Cardinals) were harvested in week 28. Like many other fruits, the season started ten days earlier than usual. Larger volumes are expected from August. Overall, the harvest is slightly lower, especially in the south-east. The grapes were damaged by night frost.
in April. For some areas, losses are expected to reach up to 50%; however, the season start has not been affected by this. The regions that first came to the market escaped the frost. The end of the season in the south-east will happen much earlier, especially after last year’s season lasted until the beginning of 2017.

The PDO Muscat de Ventoux is supplying 2,000 tonnes (grown on 150 hectares) of the total 50,000t of French grapes this year. The variety celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year, so various events and a promotion at the start of the school year are being organised to mark the occasion. The south-west has not suffered the impact of frost because the growers were prepared for it. Apart from a few minor incidents, the Chasselas Moissac grape production is expected to fall by just 5 to 6%.

Italian grapes dominate in Belgium

It is mainly Italian grapes that are sold in the Belgian market. “The quality is excellent and the start of the season is good,” states a trader when asked about the situation. “Italian grapes are known to be the most common, but we are seeing an increase in the availability of seedless grapes. Also in Italy, more growers are switching to seedless varieties.”

Chinese production continues to rise

The Chinese grape cultivation is flourishing. Thanks to the expanding acreage, the harvest will increase by 600,000t this year and reach 10.2 million tonnes. This is also beneficial for exports, which are expected to increase by 33,000t and amount to about 260,000t. Most of the exports are intended for countries in the region, especially Malaysia and Indonesia, which are purchasing considerable volumes. One of the varieties exported is the Red Global, which is mainly grown in the Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces. The harvest of these red grapes in Yunnan kicked off in June, two weeks earlier than normal. Later, Xinjiang followed. Yunnan’s harvest volume has fallen by about 40%, which translated into a price increase of 20% to 30%.

Grape imports are also expected to rise. Estimates point to an increase of 16,000t, which will bring the total imported volume to 265,000t. Demand for grapes continues to increase, resulting in more imports from Chile, Peru, South Africa, Australia and the US. This year, Argentina has also signed an export protocol with China.

Good demand for grapes in California

In California, the harvest started in May. Compared with previous years, it has kicked off later this season, although a trader stated that the start was on a normal date. In recent years, the season has been starting earlier than usual. Up until the end of the season in January, 111.4 million boxes had been packed with 19 pounds (8.6 kg) of grapes. That’s almost 3 million boxes more than in the previous year. Although more than 85 varieties are grown in the United States, the most popular varieties are the Scarlet Royal, Autumn King, Flame Seedless, Crimson Seedless and Sugraone. Last year, 93% of the harvest consisted of seedless grapes.

The export market is relatively small, accounting for 36% of the harvest. The major export markets are Canada, Mexico, China, Philippines, Taiwan and Japan. Due to the good demand, prices are at a good level, according to a trader.

Rudolf Mulderij is the Editor of FreshPlaza, a daily newsletter especially for the global fruit and vegetable industry. This article appeared on www.freshplaza.com on 11/8/2017 and has been reproduced with their permission.

The FreshPlaza team comprise a growing team of editors who source their news on a global basis and from many different languages. FreshPlaza, by nature, is an interactive concept, which relies greatly on the participation of its readers. Information is shared in articles and Global Market reports through their newsportal:

W: freshplaza.com

Who does biosecurity best in Australia?

If you know an Aussie farmer who takes biosecurity seriously and goes the extra length to avoid diseases, pests and weeds coming on to their property, then nominate them for the 2018 Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year by 20 October 2017.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA), through the Farm Biosecurity Program, are proud to partner with the Australian Government’s Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to deliver the inaugural category specifically for Australian producers as part of the annual Australian Biosecurity Awards.

Whether they work individually or with local, state or federal bodies, producers play a vital role in managing endemic diseases, pests and weeds and are crucial in detecting and containing exotic disease and pest threats.

The Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award was established to recognise the contribution of producers who demonstrate outstanding, proactive on-farm biosecurity practices.

PHA’s Executive Director and CEO, Greg Fraser, echoed Ms Plowman’s comments, highlighting that the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award is the only accolade of its type which recognises the work producers do in safeguarding our country’s excellent biosecurity record.

For information on the awards, including the nomination form, visit W: agriculture.gov.au/aba
Simplifying agricultural export legislation to improve trade

As part of a wider initiative to strengthen agricultural exports and market access, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is improving the current agricultural export legislative framework.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, said the Coalition Government was cutting red tape to improve trade, create more efficient export procedures, and limit the costs of doing business and to ensure agricultural goods aren’t delayed for export.

“While the existing legislation has worked well for 35 years, input to a review undertaken by the Coalition Government showed there is scope for it to be modernised to enable exporters to seize future opportunities,” Minister Joyce said.

“The new export legislation will consolidate the existing web of regulation into a single Export Control Bill and supporting delegated legislation.

“We’re aiming to make the rules for exporting easier to understand, use and comply with, while maintaining the level of regulatory oversight expected by our trading partners.”

Open to comments

Public consultation on the draft Export Control Bill 2017 is now open. Exporters, industry, trading partners and members of the public have 60 days to provide comment on the draft Export Control Bill 2017 and associated Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS).

This is an opportunity for you to review the draft legislation, and to provide comment as to whether it is ‘fit for purpose’ and there are no unintended changes to your business practices.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will consider the outcomes from discussions, comments and written submissions provided during the consultation period.

The scope of this consultation is confined to the draft Export Control Bill 2017 and associated RIS. Requests for substantive policy change cannot be addressed through this consultation. The Bill will be supported by Rules which will be developed throughout 2018.

The consultation period on the Bill will close on 24 October 2017. This will enable the Bill to be considered by Parliament, the Rules to be developed, and implementation of the full framework to be carefully considered by1 April 2020, when much of the existing framework is due to expire.


Grants, Rebate Schemes and Assistance Programs

As a part of the Victorian Small Business Festival, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce ran a Government Grants Briefing in Mildura in August. The presentations covered a range of opportunities for businesses which are available through federal, state and local governments.

The take away tip of the night was to contact the relevant government representative first when investigating a grant, rebate or an assistance program. Department staff will be able to quickly assess your eligibility and advise if it’s worth pursuing, or if there is another opportunity you should be considering instead. Having these conversations can save you a lot of valuable time.

Some of the categories of businesses that receive grants or support include manufacturers, agriculture (food and agribusiness), exporters, those undertaking research, those wanting to upgrade infrastructure or capital equipment, those needing support to improve their business model. This includes looking at developing succession plans or creating a digital presence.

When looking at grants, rebates or assistance packages, be sure to review the eligibility criteria and how to apply. See what free support is available to help you apply and know the difference between a contestable and eligibility grant.

Export Market Development Grants

John McDonald, Assistant State Manager, Business Facilitation AusIndustry, presented information on the Export Market Development Grants scheme. The scheme is designed to encourage businesses to increase their international marketing and promotion expenditure, to help them achieve more sustainable international sales.

The Export Market Development Grants scheme is a key Australian Government financial assistance program for aspiring and current exporters. Administered by Austrade, the scheme supports a wide range of industries through a reimbursement process. The scheme:

- Encourages small and medium sized Australian businesses to develop export markets
- Reimburses up to 50% of eligible export promotion expenses above $5,000, provided that the total expenses are at least $15,000
- Provides up to eight grants to each eligible applicant
- One of the important considerations when looking at this scheme is to work out when is right time for your business to participate in the scheme. Questions to ask yourself include - Are you export ready? Would it more beneficial to participate in the scheme in the early years of your business or once you have become more established?

As eligible applicants can be provided with up to eight grants, speaking to an Austrade representative first can help you work out when is the most beneficial time for your business to apply for the scheme.

To assess your eligibility to participate in the scheme, Austrade have developed a check list. More information can be found at W: austrade.gov.au/export-export-grants or by calling an Austrade representative on T: 13 28 78.
Trellis drying

The adoption of trellis drying allows growers to commit large areas to drying quickly, and allows the more effective management of the process following rain events during harvest. The development of trellis drying as the most efficient and cost-effective technique for dried fruit harvesting has required the implementation of summer pruning techniques.

The planning and completion of an efficient summer pruning operation at the optimum time is a key factor in maximising the quality of the dried fruit crop. It is important that everything possible is done to maximise the speed of drying, in order to minimise the time that drying fruit is exposed to the elements.

Cordon bunch removal

Removing the unwanted cordon bunches that are not attached to the severed canes is an integral step in trellis drying. It reduces contamination of the grapes as some harvesters remove both dried and undried fruit.

Cordon bunch removal is particularly required for varieties with canes that are fruitful from the base bud to the end of the canes (Sunmuscat, carinas and, to a lesser extent, Sunglo). However, cordon bunch removal is also recommended in the management of sultanas that will be summer-pruned.

Not having to deal with cordon bunches at harvest allows a better chance of concentrating on timely cutting and wetting.

Chemical cordon bunch removal vs crown picking

The removal of cordon bunches can be done by the use of chemical or by hand.

Chemical cordon bunch removal minimises the summer pruning operation, as there is no need to pay for bunches to be hand-removed and placed on the trellis during harvest. It is estimated that the cost of hand removal at harvest is about equal to the value of the fruit – resulting in no nett gain in returns.

Due to the draping of the picked cordon bunches over trellis wires, fruit from these bunches generally dry slower and thus darker than the natural hanging summer pruned fruit remaining on the fruiting canes. In most cases, this will reduce the colour quality of the harvested fruit resulting in a lower grade and thus lower returns.

In the event of rain, this fruit is also more vulnerable to mould infestations due to its inability to shed water unlike the naturally hanging bunches, which will most likely still turn a dark colour but will not be as susceptible to mould infections.

Because of the difficulty in seeing cordon bunches for picking, and the nature of being draped over the wire, drying of this fruit is slower than the rest of the crop. This can cause a bottleneck in the harvesting of the crop because of its higher moisture content possibly delaying harvest while waiting for this fruit to dry. This delay waiting for picked cordon bunches to dry could jeopardise the whole of the remaining crop if adverse weather occurs.

Chemical application

Traditionally, ammonium nitrate was used to remove cordon bunches, but security concerns have heavily restricted the use of the chemical.

As a replacement for ammonium nitrate, calcium nitrate applied at a rate of 2.6% (w/v) can be used. Calcium nitrate is effective in burning off the unwanted cordon bunches.

Target the area above the cutting zone, also spraying the replacement canes where unwanted bunches are developing. Spray when the developing bunches are at pre-bloom at the 6 to 8 leaf stage.
QUALITY YOU CAN TRUST

- Over 20 Years of proven success
- Reliable and consistent sulphur dioxide emission
- Protects your fruit in storage and transport
- Maintains greener stems for longer

Uvasys sheets come in different sizes to ensure:
- Sufficient and even distribution of sulphur dioxide
- Better protection of your grapes

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