

HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE

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Dear Horticulture Members,

Welcome to the August edition of the NSW Farmers' Association (the 'Association') horticulture update, including reports from recently attended industry meetings, information about current issues and industrial relation matters.

On behalf of the Association and the Horticulture Committee I would like to thank delegates, speakers and guests who attended the recent Horticulture AGM and Conference and the Association Annual Conference.

In terms of representation, I will be continuing in the position of Chairman of the Horticulture Committee for the next 12 months. Also continuing in their roles on the Horticulture Committee are Geoff Moar (Vice President), Jeff McSpedden, Chris Nelson, Fred Haskins and John Cade. Barney Hyams is joining the Horticulture Committee for the Riverina Highlands District Council and I welcome him to the Committee. I also thank Ian Cathels for his input to the Horticulture Committee and Association over the last 12 months.

The Horticulture Committee congratulate Charles Armstrong on his re-election as the Association's President. We look forward to continuing to work with him on issues impacting on Agriculture and Horticulture.

Horticulture continues to be well represented on Executive Council with Peter Comensoli as Association Treasurer and myself as an Association Vice President. Additionally Jeff McSpedden and Geoff Moar are Horticulture Committee Representatives, Fred Haskins Region 7 Representative, John Ward Region 9 Representative and John Ainsworth Region 13 Representative.

I look forward to working with the Horticulture Committee in the next twelve months on issues that are important to our horticultural industries. The Committee and the Association welcomes Member's feedback and input in regards to issues of concern to your region and/or industry. This will assist the Horticulture Committee to work towards obtaining the best outcomes for NSW horticulturists.

Finally, what a triumph for horticulture in NSW that Ridley Bell, the owner of the blueberry farm and nursery "Mountain Blue Orchards" on the fertile, undulating Alstonville Plateau on the NSW north coast, has taken out the NSW Farmer of the Year title for 2010. With 35 years of experience in the industry, Ridley has been a pioneer in the development of the blueberry industry in Australia. In 1978 Ridley was instrumental in setting up the Australian Blueberry Growers Association. Congratulations Ridley on receiving a most deserving award as recognition of your work on-farm and in your local community.

Regards,



Peter Darley

Chairman – NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee

Horticulture Annual General Meeting & Conference Report

The Horticulture Committee held their Annual General Meeting and Conference on Monday 19 July 21010 at Sydney Showground. It was attended by 55 delegates and guests who heard from a number of informative and thought-provoking speakers and also discussed current and emerging issues.

The AGM and Conference is the major policy forming event for the Association's Horticulture Members during the year. The theme of this year's conference was 'Sustaining Horticulture' with a focus on presentations addressing topics that will contribute to the future sustainability of horticulture in NSW and Australia.

The Conference was opened by Mr John Lloyd, CEO Horticulture Australia Limited. He had the positive message that horticulture is one of Australia's most rapidly growing agricultural industries and could soon be it biggest agricultural industry due to its rapid growth.

Horticulture has many good news stories and messages. Some of these highlighted by Mr Lloyd include that it is a major contributor to regional development, has significant untapped domestic demand and export potential and its outputs assist the community to live healthier, happier, longer and more productive lives.

Other speakers were: Ms Lynne Wilkinson (CEO, AUSBUY); Professor Bill Bellotti (University of Western Sydney); Gerard McEvilly (E3 International and Horticulture Supply Chain Services); Ian James (Industry Data Economic Analysis); and Graeme Ratford. Topics covered included: food security; soil carbon; climate change; business sustainability; the value of horticulture; food labeling; market access; and water metering.

Some comments about the presentations by delegates included: "I learned from the presentations"; "Each presenter gave me something to take away and think about"; "I was buoyed by learning the importance of horticulture to Australia"; "There is a need for horticulturists nationally to come together on issues of common interest and concern".

The Horticulture Conference was proudly sponsored by Syngenta, Kleenheat Gas, WFI, PrimeSuper, NAB and Mitsubishi Motors.

2010 – 2011 Horticulture Committee Representatives

Central West	Peter Darley (Chairman, Agriculture Chemicals Committee Representative)
Riverina	Geoff Moar (Vice Chairman, Executive Council Representative)
Riverina Highlands	Barney Hyams (Exotic Disease Committee Representative)
Western Rivers	Jeff McSpedden (Executive Council Representative)
Northern	John Cade
Mid North Coast	Chris Nelson
Hunter/Hawkesbury	Fred Haskins

Motions discussed at the 2010 Horticulture AGM

Transferable Development Rights

Motion: That the Association promotes a system of Transferable Development Rights as a means of preserving prime agricultural land in areas adjacent to major cities and regional cities.

Carried

Sydney Markets Limited

Motion: That the Association approach Sydney Markets Limited to ensure that the regulations regarding stand boundaries, access and operating times are enforced equitably for all stand holders, in both D and F sheds.

Carried

Imports

Motion : That the Association pressure the Australian Government to implement the same import policy for fruit and vegetables as in the USA.

Carried

National Horticulture Body

Motion: That the Association work towards establishing a federal horticultural body to lobby Federal Government regarding horticulture specific issues.

Carried

Foreign Ownership of Australian Farms

Motion: That the Association develop a policy towards the buying of Australian farms by the Chinese Government.

Amended Motion: That the Association develop a policy towards the buying of Australian farms by foreign governments.

Left on the table to progress to Executive Council for discussion and determination of wording as the issue will impact on all of agriculture, not just horticulture.

Australian Grown Logo

Motion: That the Association lobby Government to allow the 'Australian Grown' logo to be used on complying produce free of charge.

Defeated

Hawkesbury-Nepean Water Metering Project

Motion: That the Association sponsor a public meeting at which the NSW Office of Water be invited to explain in detail the costs and liabilities to irrigators involved in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Water Metering Project.

Withdrawn

Murray Darling Basin Plan Survey

The NSW Farmers' Association needs your help to better understand the potential impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan on the horticulture industry. The Murray Darling Basin Plan, being prepared by the Murray Darling Basin Authority on behalf of the Australian Government, will have serious implications for all Members within the Basin. It will include limits on the amount of water that can be extracted for consumptive uses (including agriculture), as well as new rules about the trading of water within the Basin. It will not be clear until the draft is released just how severely impacted your farm and/or business may be. However, the Association will have an opportunity to provide feedback in response to the draft Plan, and will be lobbying strongly on your behalf for the best possible outcome for farmers and rural communities in the Basin. As part of that process, the Association is conducting a survey to better understand the needs of irrigation and dryland farmers in the Basin. The summary of responses will be used in the Association's submission in response to the draft Basin Plan, as well as in targeted media and lobbying strategies.

Please help us by completing the survey, which should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete. The survey can be completed online at www.nswfarmers.org.au/surveys/mdb, or a hard copy can be sent to you by contacting your Regional Membership Coordinator or the Association's Member Service centre on 1300 794 000. The closing date for the survey is Sunday 29th August, 2010.

Horticulture Award 2010

The Fair Work Ombudsman has formally reviewed its position in regards to the entitlement or not, of casual employees to overtime under the Horticultural Award 2010 and takes the view that casual employees under the award are not entitled to overtime.

The Fair Work Ombudsman notes that the award provides a specific entitlement to overtime for full-time, part-time and shift worker employees. Casual employees are not specifically included.

The National Farmers' Federation has done considerable work to confirm the status of casual employees in relation to overtime with the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Apple Imports

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has ruled against Australia's 89 year ban on New Zealand apple imports. The WTO panel found that the import risk analysis (IRA) underpinning Australia's requirements for New Zealand apples is not sufficiently supported by scientific evidence and also that the requirements are unduly trade-restrictive.

The Australian Government has decided it will appeal the decision and the outcome of the appeal may be known by the end of 2010. The existing measures for New Zealand apples will remain in place pending the outcome of the appeal.

Australia has vigorously defended its science-based quarantine system throughout this dispute. Of concern are the quarantine risks associated with New Zealand apples in relation to the diseases fire blight and European canker, and the insect apple leafcurling midge.

In a win for the Association and apple growers Biosecurity Australia has confirmed that they have inserted the requirement that any damaged, cut, spoilt, rotten or badly blemished fruit must be removed during the early stages of processing (i.e. cleaning, sorting and grading) into the protocols for importing apples into Australia from China. The requirement that produce is free of damage, and the rejection of damaged fruit, is to reduce the risk of Spotted Wing *Drosophila* (*Drosophila suzukii*) entering Australia.

At the 'Inquiry into the biosecurity for Chinese apples' the Association made it clear that although the literature suggests that SWD does not attack undamaged apples and pear fruit, there is a risk of injury to apples and pears when harvesting and in the process of packing, potentially making injured fruit vulnerable to attack by SWD. The Association asked for this to be considered when making inspections of fruit prior to export from China.

Horticulture Email Updates

There are a number of email updates that the Association regularly receives. These include:

- Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) eNews
- Apple and Pear World News
- AUSVEG Weekly Update
- AUSVEG Potato Periodical
- Veginsights – a weekly market insights newsletter for the vegetable industry
- Minor Use Permit Updates – summaries of all permits available and advice on new permits

If you would like to receive any of these updates please contact Alison Anderson.

Plague Locusts

The Association has a list of what insecticides are currently approved, by horticultural crop, for Plague Locust control. If you would like a copy please contact Alison Anderson.

USA Vegetable Study Tour

Subject to HAL approval, nine lucky Australian vegetable growers will have the chance to travel to the United States for 12 days from 13 - 24 October as part of a grower study tour, which will also include attendance to the PMA Fresh Summit in Orlando, Florida.

Growers will travel through Florida, Washington DC and San Francisco touring vegetable farms, farmers markets, tourist attractions and the DuPont headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware.

The tour cost is substantially subsidised by the National Vegetable Levy with matching funds provided by the Australian Government. Growers will be required to make a voluntary contribution of \$3,500 toward the cost of the tour. All air and land travel, single room accommodation and most meals will be included, as well as registration for the PMA Fresh Summit. Non-levy payer places on a non-subsidised basis are also available for a limited number of participants. For further information please contact Elizabeth Cox at AUSVEG on 03 9822 0388 or email elizabeth.cox@ausveg.com.au

Membership Offer

The New Membership Campaign will run from 17th August to 19th November, 2010.

New Members who join during this period can effectively sign up now for free – we will then invoice them in January 2011. This gives them until January 2011 for free – if they join now they get nearly 4 months at no cost.

If a current Member refers a new Member, the current Member will get an additional 3 months of Membership at no cost when they next renew.

Please encourage anyone you know who may be interested in membership to take advantage of this offer.