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## Dear Horticulture Members,

Welcome to the January 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 Horticulture Committee I would like to wish you a happy and prosperous 2011.

Regards,



**Peter Darley**

**Chairman – NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee**

## Inquiry into the wine grape market and prices

The NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development Inquiry into the wine grape market and prices, to which the Association made a submission, has made recommendations that will benefit the industry.

If the recommendations are implemented the outcome will be a better business environment within the industry and more stability for growers. The recommendations include reviewing the assessment of red wine grape colour, early notification of indicative grape prices that are an accurate source of information for growers, similar terms and conditions of payment by purchasing wineries and the introduction of a mandatory Wine Industry Code of Conduct.

## Funding provided to eradicate Tropical Soda Apple

The NSW Government has announced that it has provided \$30,000 for a major co-ordinated weed eradication campaign in the upper reaches of the Macleay Valley (Kempsey Shire) to treat the recently-detected Tropical Soda Apple (TSA) weed. Weeds officers from North Coast and New England councils are targeting this area, conducting on-ground works and surveillance. In December TSA was also detected near Tamworth.

The aim of the campaign is to control the weed before it becomes established in the Kempsey Shire. TSA is rapidly spread by livestock and wildlife eating the mature fruit and distributing seeds. TSA was first positively identified in Florida in the United States in 1998 and by 2005 it had infested approximately 0.5 million hectares.

TSA infests pastures, row crops and native areas. Infestations result in lower stocking rates. It can also host and assist in the spread of diseases and insect pests of solanaceous crops.

More information is available online at

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/tropical-soda-apple>.

### **Horticulture Minor Use Permits**

The Association has the latest list of all horticultural pesticide permits that have been issued by the APVMA. This list is regularly updated by Peter Dal Santo of AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd who manages the HAL funded project, 'Managing pesticide access in horticulture'.

The list has been separated by crop categories, e.g. vegetables, tropical fruit, etc.

For a copy of the list please contact Alison Anderson or your Regional Service Manager. Full details of all permits are available on the APVMA website, <http://www.apvma.gov.au/permits/permits.shtml>

### **Vegetable Industry Development Program**

Vegetable growers across the State are set to benefit from a series of workshops and through receiving tailored information packages regarding Research and Development (R&D) for their industry, thanks to the NSW Farmers' Association.

As part of the Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP), the Association will deliver one of the seven key arms of the program, *Collaborative Industry Organisations (CIO)*, which aims at providing relevant and up to date information to the NSW vegetable industry. The program is funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds from the Federal Government.

The Association's Horticulture Policy Officer, together with the Regional Service Managers, are looking forward to getting information which is useable and practical out onto farms and seeing vegetable growers in NSW implement R&D outcomes which will improve their businesses.

All vegetable growers and industry stakeholders in NSW are invited to participate in the project and can contact the Association's Horticulture Policy Officer, Alison Anderson for more information.

### **Commencement of review of existing policy for apples from NZ**

Biosecurity Australia has commenced a non-regulated analysis of existing policy (a review) for New Zealand apples to Australia. The review has been initiated in response to the final ruling by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) regarding the validity of existing measures required for the import of NZ apples.

The review will look at the measures required for fire blight, European canker and apple leaf curling midge and will be conducted to the standard of an import risk analysis. The draft report will be circulated to stakeholders for comment.

### **Permits to import apples from China granted**

On Monday 6 December 2010 the Biosecurity Services Group (formerly Biosecurity Australia) issued permits to allow apple imports from China. The permits will allow apple imports from four provinces and from orchards and pack houses that have already been inspected and approved to export apples to Australia.

AQSIQ (China), the Chinese equivalent to Australia's AQIS, will implement the protocols in China and conduct inspections of fruit destined for export. However, for the first year, inspectors from AQIS will travel to China each time an apple consignment is about to be made to verify the inspections made by AQSIQ. On arrival in Australia, a further verification is made of the documentation and of the seals on containers. If there is any non-compliance, there is a further inspection of the fruit in the consignment.

A consignment (one 40 foot container) of Chinese apples sought verification in Sydney on January 12. APAL and the Association will implement a media strategy to inform consumers.

### **Draft Pest Risk Analysis Report for *Drosophila suzukii***

The Association has provided comment to Biosecurity Australia (Biosecurity Services Group) on the 'Draft pest risk analysis report for *Drosophila suzukii*'. The Association supports strict quarantine measures in regards to *D. suzukii* (Spotted Wing *Drosophila*) given its high probability of importation due to the range of host fresh fruit that are imported into Australia (e.g. cherries, strawberries and table grapes); and high probability of distribution and establishment in Australia if importation of these host fruits are unrestricted.

Comment was given on the options that are being considered to reduce the import pathway risk to meet Australia's appropriate level of protection (area freedom, treatment of fruit and flowers and a systems approach) as well as raising other concerns such as reports that mutations of *D. suzukii* in Hawaii now enable flies to penetrate harder-skinned fruit such as apples and pears.

## **Freshcare AGM**

The Association attended Freshcare Limited's 2010 Annual General Meeting on 25 November 2010.

The Freshcare Program Manager reported that Freshcare now has 5,500 individual members and 20 industry 'owner' groups, of which the Association is one. There are 4,693 with Food Safety & Quality (FS&Q) membership and 911 with Environmental membership. Training has been underway for FS&Q 3rd Edition, with 2,015 existing Freshcare members and 641 new members having undergone training. In early 2011 the transition to FS&Q 3rd Edition will be completed. Also in 2011, Primary Production Standards for horticulture (FSANZ) will be rolled out.

Horticulture Committee member Jeff McSpedden was re-elected to the Director Selection Committee.

## **Detection of bacterial canker of kiwifruit in NZ**

Bacterial canker of kiwifruit is a disease of kiwifruit vines caused by the bacteria *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *actinidiae* (PSA). It was detected in kiwifruit (*Actinidia* spp.) orchards on both the North Island and South Island of New Zealand in November, 2010.

Biosecurity Australia initiated a review of import conditions for *Actinidia* spp. to Australia in May 2010 in response to the detection of bacterial canker, caused by PSA, in Italy. This review will now be extended to include New Zealand. A preliminary review highlighted that the disease only attacks wood of foliage of *Actinidia* spp. and that nursery stock is the main pathway for transmission. Imports of nursery stock from countries where PSA is present have been suspended until the review is completed.

Imports of kiwifruit pollen from New Zealand have also been suspended pending additional assessment of the risk posed by this pathway. Studies have shown that fruit cannot be infected, even under laboratory conditions.

New Zealand is currently conducting research on the pathogen and delimiting surveys to establish the extent of disease occurrence, as well as trace back to determine the pathway for its introduction. Biosecurity Australia is working closely with Biosecurity New Zealand on this issue and is in close contact with Australian kiwifruit industry representatives and importers to keep them informed.

## **Disease Guides for Vegetable and Fruit Crops**

Two recently published guide's, 'Diseases of Vegetable Crops in Australia' and 'Diseases of Fruit Crops in Australia' contain the latest information on diseases in Australia, as well as diseases that are biosecurity threats to vegetable crops and fruit and nut production. They are the new standard references in applied pathology in Australia for the horticultural industries.

They feature high quality colour images to help diagnose diseases, and explain how to identify and manage each disease, describing symptoms, importance, source of infection, spread and control measures. The guides are essential tools for growers, horticulturists, crop consultants, research scientists, plant pathologists, quarantine officers, agribusiness representatives, pest management personnel, educators and students.

The guides are available from CSIRO Publishing for \$150 each: [www.publish.csiro.au](http://www.publish.csiro.au) or 1300 788 000.

## **Assistance available to find seasonal workers**

The time leading up to harvest can be nearly as stressful as harvest itself. Finding enough pickers, packers, shed hands and tractor drivers is just one of many jobs to do before growers are ready for the mad rush that starts the moment the first fruit or vegetable is ready to pick or cut. Wouldn't it be nice if there was someone to do the advertising, take the calls, filter out those that appear to be suitable (and being polite to those that aren't), fill them in on how to get to the district, what accommodation options are available, and answering the hundred and one questions that workers ask.

The National Harvest Labour Information Service (NHLIS) provides a FREE service that provides growers with exactly those functions. This not only saves a lot of time when needed most, but in some circumstances it can actually save money, particularly if someone on the property is paid to do the administration work.

Often known as the Harvest Trail, the Service has been operational since 2003, and was set up by the Australian Government as a support to the horticulture industry. The purpose is to reduce production losses caused by shortages of workers at critical harvest times. The Call Centre, based in the horticulture area of Mildura, takes thousands of calls per week in the peak season from willing job hunters seeking seasonal

work. The workers include experienced Aussie workers who travel the country doing this type of work, backpackers looking to cash-up, grey nomads supplementing their income to pay for their travelling holiday, and even locals.

For the grower it is as simple as a phone call to the freecall number 1800 062 332. The vacancy is described and advertised on [www.harvesttrail.gov.au](http://www.harvesttrail.gov.au) calls from interested workers will usually start within a few hours.

For more information please contact the NHLIS NSW State Manager, Peter Angel on 0429 173 263.

### **Do your employees have a valid visa to work in Australia?**

The Association has an Outreach Officer from the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to assist Members with their immigration and visa related questions. Suzanne Gillham, who commenced as Outreach officer to the National Farmers' Federation in November 2010, is based with the Association two days per week.

Amongst other matters, Suzanne can advise you on how to check whether a prospective employee is entitled to work in Australia and how to use Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO), a free, internet-based system that allows you to check the work entitlements of a visa holder online. The VEVO service gives you current visa information and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Suzanne can be contacted any weekday on 0403 395 154 or email: [suzanne.gillham@immi.gov.au](mailto:suzanne.gillham@immi.gov.au)

### **Dimethoate and Fenthion Response Coordination Committee**

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) are currently reviewing the pesticides dimethoate and fenthion. The possible outcomes of the reviews may significantly affect current fruit-fly control methods and trade arrangements for produce that might be affected by fruit-fly.

The Association participates in monthly teleconferences of the Dimethoate and Fenthion Response Coordination Committee which is facilitated by the Office of the Chief Plant Protection Officer (DAFF). The Committee is a taskforce of Commonwealth, State and Territory Government representatives, regulators and members of the horticulture industry which is working to prepare for the outcomes of the review.

The Taskforce ensures that potentially affected parties are working together and that every option is explored to reduce possible impacts on Australian horticultural businesses. Participation in the teleconferences allows the Association to be kept informed of progress on alternatives to dimethoate and fenthion, the review, research, residue trials and available communication material.

The Association is also a member of the AUSVEG Dimethoate and Fenthion Working Group which has regular teleconferences.

### **Melon E-News**

The Australian Melon Association distributes a monthly electronic newsletter to bring melon growers up-to-date on research projects and industry development. If you would like to receive the E-News please contact Dianne Fullelove, Industry Development Manager – Melons on 0413 101 646 or email: [idp@melonsaustralia.org.au](mailto:idp@melonsaustralia.org.au)

### **Horticulture Websites**

Below is a list of some of the websites for horticultural peak industry bodies. They cover a range of topics such as industry news, upcoming events, research and development and marketing project updates, nutrition and recipes.

Australian Avocados: [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au)

Apple and Pear Australia: [www.apal.org.au](http://www.apal.org.au)

AUSVEG: [www.ausveg.com.au](http://www.ausveg.com.au)

Australin Banana Growers' Council: [www.abgc.org.au](http://www.abgc.org.au)

Australian Blueberry Growers' Association: [www.abga.com.au](http://www.abga.com.au)

Australian Herb and Spice Industry Association: [www.ahsia.org.au](http://www.ahsia.org.au)

Australian Mushroom Growers' Association: [www.mushrooms.net.au](http://www.mushrooms.net.au)

Citrus Australia: [www.citrusaustralia.com.au](http://www.citrusaustralia.com.au)

Protected Cropping Australia: [www.protectedcroppingaustralia.com](http://www.protectedcroppingaustralia.com)

Summerfruit Australia: [www.summerfruit.com.au](http://www.summerfruit.com.au)