

# Horticulture Conference a success

The Association's 2011 Horticulture Conference was a resounding success with approximately 70 members and industry stakeholders attending.

Opening the Conference, the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, provided a positive outlook for horticulture in NSW stating that horticulture contributes around \$1.2 billion to the NSW economy each year and makes up some 15 per cent of the State's agricultural production and output.

Delegates were pleased to hear about the NSW Government's significant investment in research and development, in particular the opening of a new research centre on the Central Coast for horticulture and protected cropping.

The Minister also spoke about the issues of key concern to NSW horticultural industries, including biosecurity and flying-fox management, and her commitment to addressing them.

Delegates came from the major horticultural regions across NSW such as the Central West, Riverina, North Coast and Hunter Hawkesbury to hear presentations from guest speakers on the theme of 'Food Security', discuss current and emerging issues and to set policy for the Association's



Horticulture Chair Peter Darley and Horticulture Policy Adviser Alison Anderson present Primary Industries Minister Katrina Hodgkinson with apples at the conference.

Horticulture Section.

Guest speakers were Senator Nick Xenophon (Independent Senator for SA), Mr Richard Mulcahy (CEO, AUSVEG), Ms Amanda Hill (Principal Advisor Food Safety,

FSANZ) and Dr Kerry Mills (Senior Scientist Food Safety, FSANZ).

The major sponsors of the event were Chep Australia and the National Harvest Labour Information Service.



## POULTRY NEWS



By Peter Cashman -  
Poultry Meat Adviser

### Industry Energy Audits saving members money

The Association's Poultry Meat Committee was recently contacted by the Department of Industry and Investment. The Department was interested in assisting farmers and agribusinesses understand the potential implications of climate change and government policy responses in this area.

A significant amount of work has already been done in the NSW dairy industry utilising the Office of Environment and Heritage Energy Efficiency for Small Business Program (EESB).

Like the dairy industry the modern poultry industry is a high energy user, and has the potential to make significant gains in this area, benefiting individuals and the sector overall.

An initial pilot project was conducted on six Hunter Valley farms including Tocal Agricultural College, to determine opportunities for the EESB audit and incentive program which will now be promoted to the broader industry.

### FSANZ Primary Production and Food Processing Standard

A final draft Food Safety Management Statement has been agreed nationally between farmers, processors and relevant food authorities.

The management statement is based on the Industry's current national Biosecurity manual and will come into effect on 20 May 2012.

Farmers will be required to pay an annual licence fee. Final auditing procedures and costs for the implementation of the new regulations in NSW have been discussed with the Food Authority, but are yet to be finalised.

### Building Codes Australia (BCA)

Over recent years there have been many complaints from members about local councils classifying new Poultry sheds as commercial Class 8 buildings instead of Class 10 farm buildings.

This leads to increased costs and delays in the DA process and requires the costly installation of signage, exits and fire fighting equipment that is impractical and unnecessary. South Australia has produced a ministerial directive for concessions to the BCA in that State and the Association will be lobbying to achieve a similar outcome for the Industry in NSW.

# Fire Blight still a risk to apple growers



By Alison Anderson -  
Horticulture Policy Adviser

Apple growers in NSW have cautiously welcomed quarantine protocols announced by the Federal Government regarding the importation of New Zealand apples.

NSW Farmers Horticulture Chair Peter Darley is pleased Biosecurity Australia has taken the farm lobby's concerns into account, but remains concerned the measures don't go far enough.

"We've come a long way since recommendations made in May suggesting New Zealand apples be imported without any Australian checks or balances," he said.

"After raising concerns with Biosecurity Australia, it's encouraging to see Australia isn't leaving all biosecurity responsibilities up to the New Zealand export industry.

"Australia has some of the toughest quarantine standards in the world, and we need to see them maintained to protect our clean green image.

"The quarantine protocols don't mention whether apples from orchards found to contain the disease will be completely excluded.

"We're concerned there's still a

heavy reliance on visual inspections of fruit when Fire Blight often can't be detected by the naked eye.

"We would also like a guarantee from Biosecurity Australia that random fruit audits and orchard inspections will be regular," he said.

NSW Farmers is relieved some steps have been taken to minimise the risk of devastating diseases such as Fire Blight and European Canker from arriving in Australia.

"Orchard managers will have to abide by pest and disease control measures, which will be monitored by Australian authorities," Mr Darley said.

"We're particularly pleased that our request for a zero tolerance for trash – small leaves and twigs that can carry Fire Blight – has been adopted.

NSW Farmers is also warning the Federal Government to ensure Australian apple growers have the ability to manage any potential pest or disease outbreaks.

With more and more imports entering the Australian market, the Australian apple industry has launched the 'Aussie Apples' campaign to ensure that Australian consumers know how to pick an Aussie Apple.

Developed by Apple and Pear Australia Ltd (APAL) in partnership

with Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) the campaign includes an Aussie Apples logo for all Australian apples growers to use, allowing all Aussie Apples to be easily identified.

The logo can be used on apple stickers, truck liners, cartons, invoices, uniforms, or wherever it is appropriate to drive the Aussie Apples message to consumers.

Meanwhile, the Australian potato industry is awaiting the release of the Draft import risk analysis for potatoes from New Zealand.

If potatoes are allowed to enter Australia from New Zealand for processing there is the potential for the devastating disease zebra chip to be introduced.

Very little is known about this disease and it has cost the international potato industry millions of dollars.

Without a good understanding of the management of zebra chip, the risk posed by allowing the importation of New Zealand potatoes should be considered too great.

The Association will provide a submission to Biosecurity Australia on New Zealand potatoes.

The Horticulture Committee has been raising awareness of industry's biosecurity concerns with state and federal politicians.

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