

HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE

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Dear Horticulture Members,

Please find the NSW Farmers' Association (the 'Association') April update including reports from recently attended industry meetings and industrial relation matters.

The Association welcomes Member's feedback and issues to be raised, to ensure they are addressed by your Association and the best outcomes for farmers in NSW Horticulture.

Regards,



Peter Darley

Chairman – NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee

Proposal for Government Grants towards Flying-Fox exclusion netting

The Association attended three separate meetings on Thursday 11 March 2010 encouraging Government grants towards exclusion netting for orchards in the Sydney Basin, to protect fruit crops from damage from Grey Headed Flying-Foxes.

1/ The Hon Steve Whan MP, Minister for Primary Industries, Ministerial and Departmental staff.

2/ Deputy Chief of Staff - Minister for Climate Change and the Environment.

3/ The Hon Duncan Gay MLC, Shadow Minister for Industry.

The proposal which has the support of animal welfare and environmental groups would provide funding of up to \$20,000 per hectare towards construction costs of netting, which based on uptake upon 300 ha, would cost the Government no more than \$6 million.

Harvest Trail Grower Guide 2010

The 2010 edition of the Harvest Trail Grower Guide has undergone a facelift and is packed full of valuable information for the harvest employer. Not only a resource on how to use the National Harvest Labour Information Service, this guide also provides tips on employing backpackers, who to contact in relation to work related issues along with information on biosecurity.

To order your copy of the 2010 Grower Guide, either phone 1800 062 332 or email nhlis@madec.edu.au - please ensure to include your:

- contact name
- business
- postal address (including city, state and postcode)
- contact phone number
- Please note: When placing your order, please indicate if you require a single copy or multiple copies.

National Agricultural Chemicals Review

The Association has provided a submission to the National Scheme for Assessment, Registration and Control of Use of Agricultural and Veterinary

Chemicals which raised the following points.

- The Association strongly opposes any pesticide regulation which further erodes the right of farmers to use agricultural chemicals, and additional regulatory or restrictive controls on chemicals once they have satisfied the registration requirements of the APVMA.
- The needs of chemical users vary from region to region and with the production systems in place. A national framework needs a mechanism where chemical users can provide feedback about the operation of the system, and reflect the diversity of the stakeholders the framework deals with.
- In order to develop streamlined re-accreditation processes, a point system for users to undertake re-accreditation similar to systems used by Certified Practising Accountants and Doctors using paper based check audit systems should be introduced.
- The regulatory body needs to look at international advances in practices to ensure Australia's registration system and the associated costs are in line with international best practice.
- Competency based training is an integral part of chemical use to ensure that chemicals are applied safely and in a manner which minimises harm to the environment and complies with commodity quality assurance systems.
- The Association recommends working with colleagues in major agricultural producing countries, such as the United States for AgVet chemical data and risk assessment details so as to enhance current processes and efficiency of chemical assessments.

Dimethoate and Fenthion Review

The Association participated in a teleconference on 12 February discussing the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) review of Dimethoate and Fenthion registrations. The review aims to establish if the registrations meet current regulatory standards and to understand the effect on consumer exposure through dietary intake. Some of the uses for these chemicals may be outlawed, such as for fruit fly control in vegetables and fruits with edible peels.

There are significant data gaps in the current research as the data used to register the pesticides is old and may not comply with current standards. It was shown that research on estimated short-term dietary intake in regards to large portion sizes has emerged as a new area of risk assessment. Areas requiring more data were identified and trials to gather such data were organised to be undertaken.

Modern application technologies may mean that new dose response curves can be created, meaning that reduced rates with no loss of product efficacy can be registered, mitigating dietary intake risks.

National Working Group on Pesticide Training and Licensing

The Association took part in the inaugural teleconference of the National Working Group on Pesticide Training and Licensing on Tuesday 23 February 2010, which is linked to the current review of the National Framework of the Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary (AgVet) chemicals. The Association highlighted that competency based training is an integral part of chemical use to ensure that chemicals are applied safely and in a manner which minimises harm to the environment and complies with commodity quality assurance systems. An auditing system of the rigor in which assessments are conducted needs to be applied nationally, to ensure all trained users have achieved the same assessment outcomes across each State.

Plague Locusts

The Australian Plague Locust Commission has released its April bulletin on locust activity. The report indicates swarm activity from Hay up through the western areas of NSW to White Cliffs and the Queensland border. The report is available at <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/locusts/bulletins>.

The APLC and Industry and Investment NSW are concerned this activity is some of the heaviest seen in recent times and that it may have serious implications for spring. Landholders are encouraged to report all sightings through their local Livestock Health and Pest Authority.

Exotic Mealybug Outbreak

An outbreak of an exotic mealybug (*Phenacoccus solenopsis*) has occurred in cotton. Subsequently, some samplings have been undertaken to verify its presence in horticulture production areas. It was unfortunate that the establishment of the *Solenopsis* mealybug in Bowen and Burdekin area has been confirmed. The pest was mainly found in hibiscus, eggplants, pigweeds, caltop and sida weeds. Distribution in the districts is not clearly known at this stage. Many horticulture crops, including tomatoes, melons, cucurbits, ornamentals are good

host for *Solenopsis mealybug*. At this stage, efficacy of insecticides against this species is unknown. Few home gardeners have reported that poor control with common garden insecticides such as imidacloprid and pyrethroids. A fact sheet has been produced to alert industry at the following link http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_16221.htm

Fruit Fly Outbreak Notification – Griffith Area NSW

AQIS has been advised by NSW Industry and Investment of a Queensland fruit fly (*Bactrocera tryoni*) outbreak at Beelbangera in the Riverina district of NSW. Any product that was sourced within the outbreak zone before the 3 March 2010 may be exported under area freedom certification provided the security of the product can be verified by AQIS. No exports can occur from the Beelbangera outbreak zone under fruit fly area freedom until the outbreak zone is re-instated.

Any product that has been sourced within the outbreak zone can only be exported if:

1. It is being sent to countries that accept product from fruit fly affected regions; or
2. It is appropriately treated for fruit fly.

A map of the outbreak site will be issued shortly.

Any exporter who is unsure of the status of the fruits they intend to export should contact their regional AQIS office for clarification or additional information.

For more information on specific markets please refer to individual country requirements on the PHYTO database <http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/export/plants-grains-hort/phyto> or seek advice from your regional AQIS office. Contact details are provided on the AQIS website at <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/about/contact/plants-grains-hort>

Composition of Potato Industry Advisory Committees announced

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) has announced the composition of the Fresh and Processed Potato Industry Advisory Committees (IAC),

The Committees make important recommendations to HAL about how the National Potato Levy should be invested to best meet the needs of the potato industry.

The new Fresh Potato IAC consists of:

- Mr Max Baker (Tasmania)
- Mr Gary O'Neill (South Australia)
- Mr David Montgomery (New South Wales)
- Mr David Nix (Queensland)
- Mr Simon Multoni (Western Australia)
- Mr Des Jennings (Victoria)

The new growers appointed to the Processed Potato IAC are:

- Mr Rod Fraser (Victoria)
- Mr Daryl Lohrey (Tasmania)

Dr Kevin Clayton-Greene has also been appointed as Chair of the newly formed Technical Advisory Group which will provide specialist advice to the IAC's.

HAL uses the National Potato Levy and matched funds through the Federal Government to fund research and development conducted by a range of service providers, including research agencies, tertiary institutions and industry bodies.

The Fresh and Processed Potato IACs recommended projects worth around \$2.8 million to HAL for funding in 2008/09. The announcement of the new Committee follows the appointment of Tasmanian, Mr John Rich, to the position of independent chair of Fresh and Processed Potato IACs last October.

Composition of Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee announced

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) has announced the composition of the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). The Vegetable IAC makes important recommendations to HAL about how the National Vegetable Levy should be invested to best meet the needs of the vegetable industry.

The composition of the new Vegetable IAC will be as follows:

- Mr Kent West (Queensland)
- Mr Roger Turner (Victoria)
- Dr Melina Parker (Tasmania)

- Mr Danny De Ieso (South Australia)
- Ms Denise Ellement (Western Australia)
- Mr Peter Ward (New South Wales)

HAL uses the National Vegetable Levy and matched funds through the Federal Government to fund research and development conducted by a range of service providers, including research agencies, tertiary institutions and industry bodies. Mr Jeff McSpedden has recently been appointed to the position of independent chair of Vegetable IAC.

Horticulture Award 2010 and Fair Work Ombudsman Compliance Program

The modernised Horticulture Award 2010 (the Award) commenced application on 1 January 2010 for all incorporated employers (ie Pty Ltd companies) in the horticulture industry. For unincorporated employers (ie sole traders and partnerships) the application of the Award will commence on 1 January 2011.

In January 2010, the Association circulated its *Modern Award at a Glance – Horticulture Award 2010* to all Members who have registered horticultural production on their Membership. Additional copies of the Modern Award at a Glance and the National Employment Standard are available by contacting the Association's Industrial Relations Department on 1300 794 000 or downloaded from www.iressentials.com.au under the menu selection "Current Rural Wage Guide & Fair Work".

The Government, through the Fair Work Ombudsman has also commenced a Shared Compliance Program in the Horticulture Industry. The first stage of this program is to provide education to the industry on new obligations arising out of the *Fair Work Act 2009* as well as existing obligations. The Fair Work Ombudsman has also announced that it will be undertaking a random audit of horticultural employers during May and June 2010.

The Association is able to provide advice to any Members who are selected by the Fair Work Ombudsman as part of their compliance program. IR Essentials Members will also receive full assistance in any claims of underpayment that may arise as a result of the compliance program.

To assist Members in better understanding these obligations, the Association is holding a series of Member only seminars in horticultural producing regions. These seminars will be at a cost of \$55 to Members with the fee waived for IR Essentials Members.

NSW Farmers' Association Horticulture Award Seminars:

Town	Dates	Venue	Regional Membership Coordinator	Registration Contact
Lismore	29 April	Lismore worker's club	Michael Burt 0428 228 988	Industrial Relations Department 1300 794 000 industrialrelations@nswfarmers.org.au
Richmond	3 May	Richmond Club	Frances Vella 0428 228 818	Industrial Relations Department 1300 794 000 industrialrelations@nswfarmers.org.au
Griffith	4 May	Griffith Ex-Servicemen's Club	Ben Poynter 0427 773 584	Industrial Relations Department 1300 794 000 industrialrelations@nswfarmers.org.au
Young	6 May	Young Services Club	Rick Bremner 0427 773 495	Industrial Relations Department 1300 794 000 industrialrelations@nswfarmers.org.au