

HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE

Central West District

Committee Chairman

NSW Farmers Vice President

Peter Darley

E: peter.darley@bigpond.com

Riverina District

Vice Chairman

Geoff Moar

E: moar@iinet.com.au

Western Rivers District

Jeff McSpedden

E: jester@bluemaxx.net.au

Northern District

John Cade

E: jmcade@activ8.net.au

Riverina Highlands District

Ian Cathels

E: iancathels@bigpond.com

Hunter/Hawkesbury District

Fred Haskins

E: cotsmagic@yahoo.com.au

Mid North Coast District

Chris Nelson

P: (02) 6569 0881

E: chris@coastalavocados.com.au

NSW FARMERS' ASSOCIATION HORTICULTURE STAFF

Ben Mason

Policy Manager

Cropping and Business,

Economics and Trade

T: 1300 794 000

F: 02 8251 1750

Level 25, 66 Goulburn Street

E: masonb@nswfarmers.org.au

Jason Cappello

Policy Officer Horticulture and

Agricultural Chemicals

T: 1300 794 000

F: 02 8251 1750

Level 25, 66 Goulburn Street

E: cappelloj@nswfarmers.org.au

Website

www.nswfarmers.org.au

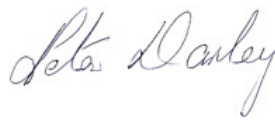
Dear Horticulture Members,

Please find the NSW Farmers' Association (the 'Association') December update including reports from recently attended industry meetings, industrial relation matters and a Pacific Seasonal Islander Worker Scheme update.

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.

Finally I would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and holiday season and a bountiful 2010.

Regards,



Peter Darley

Chairman – NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee

Australian Citrus Propagation Association Incorporated (AUSCITRUS) AGM

AUSCITRUS held its AGM on Tuesday November 10 2009, during the Citrus Australia National Conference. John Cade, Member of the Horticulture Committee, the Association's delegate and representative for NSW citrus growers, attended. More information about AUSCITRUS is available online at: www.auscitrus.com.au.

AUSCITRUS provides propagation material of the highest health status, of the best varieties available worldwide, to protect the health status of the Australian Citrus Industry.

AUSVEG AGM

AUSVEG held its AGM on Monday 30 November. The meeting was held in Sydney, with 30 industry representatives, including several from AUSVEG's new strategic partners, Elders and DuPont, in attendance.

Mr John Brent was re-elected to the position of AUSVEG Chairman without opposition. Mr Geoff Moar, Horticulture Committee Riverina representative, was also re-elected to his position as AUSVEG Director and Dr Elizabeth Duncan was re-elected to her position as AUSVEG Deputy Chair.

Chemical User Training and Refresher Courses

It is important producers maintain accreditation currency, for food safety program requirements and update with changes in chemical use, for best business management practise. Horticulture producers requiring chemical user accreditation and refresher training can contact the Association for course information.

Groups of horticulture producers, requiring specific training needs (i.e. calibration with Airblast sprayers) should discuss this with trainers, to ensure the training delivery suits the user's needs. For further information speak to the Association Training coordinator on 1300 794 000.

Apple Growers Spread Christmas cheer

The Association's Horticulture Committee donated 4,000 apples to the Sydney Special Children's Christmas party held on Wednesday 2 December 2009.

The Sydney Special Children's Christmas party caters for 5,000 seriously ill, disabled and disadvantaged children from all over Sydney and Country NSW, and Committee Chair Peter Darley says it's a great festive-season event.

"It's important that Australian children are introduced to quality fresh fruit to help to ensure they appreciate good nutrition in the future, and these children have to have a special focus on healthy eating," Mr Darley said. It has been an initiative of the Association to encourage healthy eating by school aged children. With the percentage of overweight and obese school aged children increasing, it is important to promote healthy, fresh food as a substitute to fast and often cheaper unhealthy foods.

"Nutrition is so important for our children, and fruit is affordable, available and convenient as a snack," Mr Darley concluded.

VEGINSIGHTS

VEGINSIGHTS is a weekly market insights newsletter for the vegetable industry, produced by freshlogic as part of the Consumers & Markets sub-program of the Vegetable Industry Development Program (VIDP).

It will be distributed weekly by AUSVEG on behalf of the VIDP, and it intends to provide participants in the vegetable industry with insights into the trading dynamics and influences of the past week.

To view the VEGINSIGHTS information, please visit <http://www.freshlogic.com.au/>

Industrial Relations Matters

State Referral of Industrial Relations Powers

The referral of NSW Industrial Relations power to the Commonwealth was completed, with the necessary legislation passing through the NSW Parliament on Tuesday 1 December 2009 and the Commonwealth Parliament on Wednesday 2 December 2009. The NFF and the Association had undertaken extensive lobbying with the Opposition and Members of the Senate Cross Benches, in support of the passage of the necessary legislation.

The referral means that all Association Members bound by the Pastoral Industry Award, will be covered by the Pastoral Award 2010 from 1 January 2010. Other incorporated Members (that is Pty Ltd Companies) will be covered by the appropriate Modern Award from 1 January 2010 and other unincorporated Members (that is sole traders and partnerships) from 1 January 2011.

Employers covered by Modern Awards from 1 January 2010 will continue to pay current wage rates until 1 July 2010, when Fair Work Australia's first wage decision will become effective

Horticulture Award 2010

On Thursday November 26 2009, the NFF filed its submission, to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) in reply to the submissions of the Horticulture Australia Council (HAC) and Australian Workers' Union (AWU), with regards to its application to vary the Horticulture Award 2010 (HA 2010).

The NFF submission argues that whilst reserving the right to seek further flexibilities in the HA 2010; that the ordinary hours of work and piece work arrangements within Schedule B & C of the Horticultural Industry (AWU) Award are the most appropriate conditions that may be applied under the process of award modernisation.

The provisions that the NFF are seeking include:

- No ordinary hours of work for casual employees, including piece workers; and
- A genuine piecework rate with a 12.5% piecework loading.

For further details on the Industrial Relations matters please contact the Associations Industrial Relations team.

National Vegetable Industry Leadership Program 2010 - Registrations Now Open

Following a successful National Vegetable Industry Leadership Program this year, Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) is providing a second year of leadership learning opportunities for people within the vegetable industry. The six-month program will commence on the 2nd of March 2010 in Brisbane and will conclude on the 2nd of September.

The Growing Leaders HAL National Vegetable Industry Leadership Program 2010 is managed and facilitated by Rural Training Initiatives through HAL funding. The aim of the program is to act as a leadership platform, focusing on developing skills participants can apply at three levels - personal, business and national industry.

The program is designed for people wishing to take up leadership roles within the vegetable industry.

For further information and registration details, please contact Jill Briggs, Managing Director - Rural Training Initiatives P/L www.ruraltraininginitiatives.com.au or 02 6035 7284. Applications close 8 February 2010.

The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme

Growers and the Pilot

Growers in the horticultural industry who are having difficulty sourcing local labour may wish to consider the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme to help meet their seasonal labour needs.

- The Pilot is **now open to all growers** across Australia, who are able to demonstrate they cannot find local labour.
- The Pilot is designed to be a straightforward way for growers to access reliable seasonal labour.
- Pacific seasonal workers can remain in Australia for up to seven months and have the opportunity to return for following seasons.
- The Pilot runs until 30 June 2012.
- Pacific seasonal workers are a reliable source of labour and they can return in future seasons to apply their experience and training.
- Phase 2 has now started and the remaining 2400 visas can be issued. Phase 1 of the Pilot – aimed to test the Pilot arrangements with up to 100 visas available to approved employers – has now concluded.
- Growers or grower associations interested in the Pilot can talk about their seasonal labour requirements with an approved employer.
- To receive Pacific Seasonal Workers, growers may need to enter into a commercial agreement with an approved employer.

Employers of Pacific Seasonal Workers

Only approved employers (i.e. labour hire companies) can recruit and place Pacific Seasonal Workers with growers. Approved employers are responsible for:

- Pastoral care (accommodation, travel, community support etc.)
- Costs (wages, superannuation, workers compensation, state taxes, half workers' return airfare)
- Recruitment (selecting workers in their home country and arranging for their employment in Australia)
- Administration (entering into agreements with the Australian Government, submitting a recruitment and pastoral care plan and monthly reports etc.)
- Complying with workplace relations, immigration and occupational health and safety laws.

Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme - Approved Employers

The Australian Government has finalised agreements with three approved employers, selected to recruit and place Pacific Seasonal Workers under Phase 2 of the Pilot.

Growers seeking to receive Pacific Islander Seasonal Workers are encouraged to contact the labour hire companies listed below:

MADEC - Sunraysia, Riverland and Mid Murray

Contact: Sue Hammence

Phone: 1300 436 332

Fax: 03 5025 4040

All Recruiting Services - Chullora, Tuggerah, Hunter Region, Port Macquarie

Contact: Mr Paul Kiley

Phone: 02 9722 1000

Fax: 02 9722 1090

A further call for Expressions of Interest from companies or groups who want to employ Pacific Seasonal Workers is underway.

Please contact the Association or Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations, for more information on how to become an employer of Pacific seasonal workers.

You can visit www.workplace.gov.au/pswps or email seasonalworker@deewr.gov.au.

Changes to the Temporary Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa program

On 1 April 2009, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, announced a number of key reforms to the subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa program.

Those reforms have gradually been implemented since 14 April 2009 and include an increase to the English level required for overseas workers; revision of occupations available for sponsorship and the gradual introduction of a formal skills assessment for trade occupations and chefs.

Further changes came into effect on 14 September 2009.

Sponsored subclass 457 visa holders are now entitled, to the same terms and conditions of employment as an Australian worker, doing the same job and be paid market salary rates.

Any 457 visa holders, with visas granted before 14 September 2009, must be paid under the new market rate system from 1 January 2010, unless the market salary rate is below their current Minimum Salary Level.

Further information

Further information on all aspects of the temporary skilled visa reforms is available on the department's website at www.immi.gov.au.

Norberta Pereira is the Immigration Outreach Officer for National Farmers Federation, based with NSW Farmers' Association. She may be contacted on 0434 078 623 or via email norberta.pereira@immi.gov.au.