



Australian

STONEFRUIT

GROWER

incorporating the **Low Chill Stonefruit Grower**

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Know-how for Horticulture™

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To find out more about Summerfruit Australia Ltd, check out the website: www.summerfruit.com.au





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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the **Annual General Meeting** of **Low Chill Australia Inc.** will be held on **Thursday, 6th December 2012** at the Bangalow Bowling Club, Bangalow, northern NSW, **commencing at 11am** (Eastern Summer Time). The Meeting will break for Lunch and is expected to finish at 3pm.

A Full Meeting Agenda will be forwarded to members by email and those associated with the Low Chill Stonefruit Industry preceding the Meeting and will be available on the Low Chill Australia Inc. website: www.lowchillaustralia.com.au. The Agenda will include an UPDATE on the latest regarding *Fenthion*.

Please NOTE that only Financial Members will be allowed to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Ray Hick
LCA President

Greg Nash
LCA Secretary

11 November 2012



From the LCA President – Raymond Hick - My Last Report -



By now most of us will be over half way through our season. Growing conditions have been good, fruit has tasted well and in some areas volumes have been down on previous years. As I look back over the year it has been dominated with the discussions around *Fenthion*.

On the 31st October the APVMA announced the new label with the new application procedures. Three Sprays with a 21 day with-holding period. This will not work without complementary sprays as this would give us one pick per block. This new label will only apply for 12 months. I don't know what will be the situation after that. I do know that lots of residue tests will need to be collated and accurate spray diaries kept.

Three growers tested *Lepidex* (trichlorfon) *Hymal* (maldison) followed by *Deligate* (spinetoram) without *Fenthion*. The orchards were TWO in Northern New South Wales and ONE in Queensland. **The trial was suspended after 4 weeks as each of the blocks had positive larvae tests. The worst case was a 50% infestation in nectarines.**

All of these chemicals are cover sprays and without *Fenthion* they are of no use.

In an interview recently, APVMA were explaining their actions and stated that we had these alternative chemicals and that they had not been officially advised that the trial was not successful. I personally don't believe this. They also failed to mention that the reason we apply so many sprays of *Fenthion* was at the instruction of the Victorian Government in order that fruit could be shipped to the Victorian market. They make out that we voluntarily apply up to 7 sprays per crop. I know Phillip Wilk from NSW Ag will be writing to all suggesting an integrated programme for future seasons.

I have decided that my time as a Stonefruit grower has come to an end so this will be my last season. As a result of this, I have advised the Board of Low Chill Australia that I will not be seeking re-election as President.

I have enjoyed my time in the role and as a founding member of our association and can look back with pride on how our industry has progressed. The quality of stonefruit produced now is very high, the new varieties have improved quality with subsequent improved prices.

When I took over as President, our association was very short of funds but I am happy to advise that this is not the case today so I leave you in a strong position. It is not easy to single out people who have been great supporters but special mention must go to **Phillip Wilk** and **Col Scotney**. **Without support of the Committee nothing can be achieved and I would like to thank them for the job done.**

I have also resigned from the Board of Summerfruit and I can say that they now have QFF as the priority. This was not the case when I joined. I wish the Board all the best and sincerely hope that they guide our industry professionally and ensure that there is a future for today's and tomorrow's growers.

I would like to wish all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and fruit fly free New Year.

Kind Regards

Ray Hick – President –





From the Summerfruit Chairman -

The long awaited “*Fenthion residues and dietary risk assessment report*” was released in September with the proposal from the APVMA to suspend all uses of *Fenthion* on our crops, pending the release of the final report, which will include Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety assessments. The proposal would have reduced the Maximum Residue Limit of *Fenthion* allowable in Summerfruit from 5 Mg/Kg to Nil for the coming season.

A group of growers in the Perth Hills began an intensive and professional lobbying effort to maintain *Fenthion* with a local Medfly use pattern. They ensured that the Senators on the Rural and Regional Affairs Committee were provided with full briefing on *Fenthion* and the APVMA were required to reconsider the use of audited spray diaries and commercial residue tests in support of the Hills proposal.

As a result, during the period of suspension Western Australian growers will be permitted to spray *Fenthion* twice a season with a 7 day WHP. Growers in all other States will have the ability to apply three sprays with a 21 day WHP.

Summerfruit Australia is attempting to collate spray records and residue data from Stonefruit growers in the Eastern States to support the same regime as the West. We are looking for records from growers who use one or two sprays one or two weeks from harvest, It is thought that this is the most effective use pattern of *Fenthion* in Stonefruit, to stop the development of the eggs inside the fruit.

The disadvantage of the Western Australian permit is that there is greatly increased surveillance of residue levels, using a more sensitive test, and reporting of above MRL to the APVMA within 48 Hr. Above MRL could lead the APVMA to withdraw the permit mid-season with growers having no use of *Fenthion* at all.

Over the last several years the SAL board has been engaged in multiple meetings on the *Dimethoate* and *Fenthion* issue, Fruit Fly in general and the maintenance of Pest Free areas. It has been a matter of great frustration that Fruit Fly have mostly been seen as a problem of trade and quarantine not as an existential problem of production for growers. Summerfruit Australia was part of the meetings that led to the National Fruit Fly Strategy, March 2008. This strategy had 12 components, of which barely only 3 were addressing the problem of production in fruit fly endemic zones.

Despite the expenditure of tens of millions of dollars on research, the best and only proven method of producing Stonefruit in large areas of Australia is by cover spraying with *Fenthion*.

At the same time the Federal Government releases a *White Paper* on Australia in the Asian Century and a *Green Paper* on National Food Plan, there is every indication that Australia will have to import Stonefruit to meet consumer demand since it is unwilling or unable to support domestic production by assisting the control of fruit fly.

In every comparable area of the World, it is Government that drives and supports the control of fruit flies. In Australia, government support for Agriculture at the State and Federal level is falling as expenditure is shifted to areas of higher priority and cost recovery is demanded for every service to growers. As a result there are no large-scale sterile insect factories; no government assisted area-wide management schemes; and no regulations on neglected orchards or backyard trees. We have a plan and a small number of skilled and dedicated public servants, but diminishing funds to do anything to maintain production.

Now that the APVMA have shown that *Fenthion* can be taken from us, some growers have already begun to cancel tree orders and remove orchards as their season ends and others are preparing to walk away from our industry when the inevitable, uncontrollable, infestation of fruit fly appears.

Fred Baronio and Ray Hick are two figures from industry service that are pulling their orchards because they see no future with the current Fruit Fly control. They will not be the last. My family orchard has continued to plant late season peaches



and has another few thousand on order for next year. This could be irrational hope but there are many published papers from Australia and around the world that shows Stonefruit can be grown in Fruit Fly endemic areas without *Fenthion*.

On the positive, the crops across Australia appear fair to reasonable, the hail and frost is no worse than usual and the forecast for the East is for a drier climate than the last couple of seasons, without slipping into general drought. Prices and volume sold appear better than last year – so far. Horticulture Australia has a new brand ambassador and media strategy that should be cranking up soon and your Board has been doing media interviews to support the season.

Mark Wilkinson - Chairman



Industry Information ...



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Mark Mobilio
Agricultural Company of Australia
Wood Wood Vic

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CEO Round Up ...

John Moore – CEO Summerfruit Australia Ltd



The SAL Board have disputed the questionable chemical reviews based on what ‘we all’ think is a long bow by the APVMA when there are no quantifiable recorded health casualties in the last 40 years. The Board representatives, including our stalwart Low Chill President, have met on 3 occasions with the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, some 5 to 6 occasions with APVMA and numerous other officials to put a case forward. Summerfruit has also, as a member of the Horticultural Taskforce Group, been able to raise our express concerns as have other fruit fly host Industries with the Minister on other occasions.

Also, what you must be aware of and it’s not the first time I have said this, on one occasion in the Minister’s office when he was delayed we were engaged in a conversation with his advisor and quote “chemicals and agriculture don’t really mix” unquote he said. Our delegation took this on the chin. Without mentioning names, our delegation included one of Industry’s most respected and acclaimed technical advisor. He was flabbergasted, as were we.

I have been conscious of this day – 8th February 2010 ever since and have focused on pertinent R&D, as have the Summerfruit Chemical Committee, who number in excess of 10 eminent scientists and technical brains within the fruit fly host industries across the spectrum.

This skills-based Fruit Fly/Dimethoate & Fenthion Committee was formed in order to identify and develop new project proposals aimed at the FF pest and the impending withdrawal of the D & F chemical controls under review for withdrawal from the APVMA.

During the 2011/2012 financial year, the Summerfruit industry invested in a total of 9 separate projects associated with Fruit Fly totaling in excess of \$250k of matched levy investment. These projects ranged from “*Determination of cold tolerance in immature stages of Australian pest FF species*” to “*Providing data packages for new FF control technology*”.

Project No.	Project Title
MT08035	<i>Providing data packages for new FF control technology</i>
MT08036	<i>Providing data packages for new FF control technology</i>
MT09099	<i>National Fruit Fly Strategy - BCA for Australian horticulture industry</i>
MT10019	<i>Improving Market Access for the greater Sunraysia horticulture production area</i>
MT10021	<i>Determination of cold tolerance in immature stages of Australian pest FF species</i>
SF06030	<i>Disinfestation of cherry and stonefruit against Med Fly for access to Taiwan</i>
SF10008	<i>Development of a summerfruit industry Biosecurity plan and orchard biosecurity manual</i>
SF11004	<i>Industry workshops to identify alternate FF control methods</i>
SF11007	<i>Determination of dimethoate and omethoate residues in stonefruit following application as a postharvest dip</i>

For the current financial year 2012/2013 the Summerfruit industry has committed a further \$500k to fund additional projects associated with the FF pest across 12 separate projects. These projects range from “*Low dose methyl bromide against fruit flies to improve market access for Summerfruit*” to “*Fruit fly IPM for Summerfruit, with a focus on developing an effective female lure-and-kill device*”. Two thirds of Summerfruit’s last financial year’s research dollars have been set-aside for fast tracking a range of projects. We all know there is no ‘silver bullet’. It has to be mentioned that a successful levy vote would have been helpful but where’s hindsight when you need it.



Project No.	Project Title
SF12008	<i>Bulk allocation made to parent project to fund FF projects and alternatives for Dimethoate and Fenthion</i>
MT12005	<i>Development of molecular diagnostic tools to detect endemic and exotic pathogens of Prunus species for Australia</i>
MT12004	<i>Improving efficacy of MAT to enhance area-wide management of Queensland fruit fly</i>
SF12016	<i>Low dose methyl bromide against fruit flies to improve market access for Summerfruit</i>
SF12014	<i>Verification of a 3C disinfestation treatment for European plums</i>
SF 12013	<i>Fruit fly IPM for Summerfruit, with a focus on developing an effective female lure-and-kill device</i>
SF12012	<i>Efficacy of potential chemical controls for Queensland fruit fly management in Summerfruit</i>
SF12011	<i>Trichlorfon residues in stonefruit</i>
SF11007	<i>Determination of dimethoate and omethoate residues in stonefruit following application as a postharvest dip</i>
MT10019	<i>Improving Market Access for the greater Sunraysia horticulture production area</i>
MT10021	<i>Determination of cold tolerance in immature stages of Australian pest FF species</i>
SF11004	<i>Industry workshops to identify alternate FF control methods</i>

This is an extract from the submission to save shelf availability of the chemical Fenthion.

“The Australian Summerfruit industry has over 50 years’ experience of safe and effective use of Fenthion, with not one documented incidence of acute or chronic problems to chemical user, or to consumers of the fruit. Residue tests of our product, private or Government, show levels of Fenthion rarely above the level of detection and never in the high levels used in the Fenthion review.

Summerfruit Australia notes that there is data from two trials that show that at 21 days, after the final of three treatments, residues are well within the Acute reference dose for peaches and nectarines.

07-HAL-005(a) GLP-319, on nectarines treated with 3 sprays, had residues of 0.05mg/Kg at 21 days after final application and were 0.19 mg/kg at 14 days. This would give a NESTI 20% of the acute reference dose at 21 days and 75% at 14 days. 07-HAL-005 (a) GLP-166, on peaches with 3 sprays, had residues of 0.16 mg/kg at 21 days after final application and a NESTI 70% of the acute reference dose.

Summerfruit Australia submits that a use of Fenthion with a 21-day withholding period may allow greater numbers of our growers to survive until alternative controls for Fruit Fly are developed. We request the continued registration of Fenthion for Peach, Nectarine, Plum and Apricot for use on Q-Fly and Medfly with a 21-day withholding period.”

Although far from satisfactory, the 21day WHP is at least a point from where we are able to further negotiate a case for growers in parts of Australia where the pest pressure (similar to the West Australian permit) is not as great as it is in the sub tropics.

This critical situation has united the vast majority of producers and we need to be focused on the “same page” and not derail the efforts that have hauled Industry to where it is now. I think the reality of this unification needs to be carried forward and we all continue this way.

There are bulletins out there flagging that more bureaucratic reform is on its way and the idea of a few will fix it is not the formal way anymore. Communication and the lack of it have again become obvious and I implore you to make your email addresses available to me.



Your Board are engaging authorities and addressing issues. Effective quick transfer of information is by email database. If you are not receiving this newsletter directly, you need to send your details now to ceo@summerfruit.com.au. I send regular information at times, where pertinent to certain states and not to others depending on the circumstances and relevance. I try not to clog in boxes unnecessarily.

Another fruit fly issue that is of concern and has implications to the National Industry and other horticultural fruit fly host industries.

The Victorian Department of Primary Industries is seeking a greater collaboration from producers and Peak Industry Bodies for management of the Pest Free Area of Sunraysia. We have been informed of a strategy that the Victorian Government is employing – a tightening of State funds for managing fruit fly. Essentially they are proposing a 70 (industry): 30 (government) funding ratio. **Absolutely not acceptable in its present form.**

Each Industry: - Stonefruit, Table Grapes and Citrus are asked to contribute in the vicinity of \$220,000/p.a. to keep the PFA protocol. Co-sharing industries each X 3 = \$ 650,000 plus contingencies of possible F/F outbreaks, call it \$1,100,000 and NSW Government being a co-contributor to the Victorian Government -\$350,000.

By the way forget about Greater Victoria, this is no longer a priority or on the agenda to undertake any suppression measures. The proposal even includes deregulation of the current “safe” Victorian markets and distribution centres – watch out for the pest free haven status of Tasmania and South Australia – More chemicals for treatment to these destinations and no doubt a greater expense to be incurred by the respective State Governments to maintain their current PFA status.

Please note that an arrangement will have to be made with the threatened Victorian PFA group to have a voluntarily contribution to satisfy equity. The protection of the PFA is critical for the domestic supply index and to keep outward pressure on prices. Negotiations are in progress across the supply chain within this region, with a bumper crop, good brix and with no funds the marketing of this year’s crop is going to be difficult.

What else?

Summerfruit has been represented at the Australian Fresh trade shows in Hong Kong and Beijing as part of the strategic plan to achieve market access for China. The Board and IAC still remain committed to this strategy and see any export market as a bonus for internal pressures. Summerfruit also attended, at the invitation of the Victorian Premier, a whistle stop visit to China and this included some important meetings with Chinese Government agencies.

An excellent meeting was also held jointly with *Cherry Growers Australia, Australian Table Grapes, Apple & Pear Australia Limited* and *Avocado Australia* with *Taiwanese Importers* (25 attendees). *Australian Fresh* arranged this in conjunction with *Austrade Taipei*. Each Industry gave a succinct presentation to the Importers and generally a good appetiser for the coming season. Summerfruit has lost ground to the Chilean Industry caused by the suspension to Taiwan. The key-contributing factor to lesser demand is the exchange rate, however the quality factor is a discerning indicator and this looks in our favour for the coming season.

Finally, I would like to wish Ray Hick all the best for the future and particularly thank him for his sound and guiding influence whilst a key member of the National Board.

John Moore – CEO Summerfruit Australia Limited

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Industry Information ...



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Stone Fruit to Quell Global Metabolic Disease Epidemic

Euromonitor International

02 July 2012

Cherries have been receiving plenty of adulation for their health benefits but less pricy stone fruit varieties like plums, nectarines and peaches have not enjoyed much attention. The tide could be about to turn, however, with fresh evidence emerging that these fruits may be a much weightier weapon in the fight against degenerative chronic disease than previously assumed.

Stone fruit struggles to keep up with berries

Euromonitor International's fresh food data show that in 2011 total global fresh fruit sales amounted to nearly 380 million tonnes. The peaches/nectarines and plums/sloes categories combined accounted for just over 3% of this. For comparison, bananas, the world's single most popular type of fruit, claimed a 21% share of the total, followed by oranges, tangerines and mandarins with 15%, while apples accounted for less than 12%.

The growth of peaches/nectarines and plums/sloes was in line with that of overall fresh fruits, which achieved an 18% volume gain over the 2006-2011 review period. In terms of per capita consumption, for peaches/nectarines the Mediterranean countries of Italy, Greece and Spain led the league table, with Italy achieving 7.4kg in 2011 and the other two countries 6.1kg. For plums/sloes, Japan was the heaviest consumer with 5.7kg per capita, followed by Belgium and Luxembourg.

Peaches and nectarines remain limited by their seasonality. Plums, on the other hand, tend to be available all year round in many markets. They are much more forgiving than other types of stone fruit when it comes to being transported over large distances, allowing consumers to take advantage of the chronologically opposed harvest times in both hemispheres.

And while stone fruit in general remains popular with consumers across the globe, in those geographies where the superfruit trend has gained serious traction, the likes of peaches and plums are finding it difficult to keep up. In Australasia, for instance, volumes of cranberries/blueberries achieved an astounding 431% volume gain over the 2005-2010 review period, while plums/sloes managed a comparatively paltry 14% rise. In North America and Western Europe, the pattern is similar, with cranberries/blueberries topping the growth charts.

Fresh blueberries, in particular, have benefited massively from the hype around their high content of protective phytochemicals, such as anthocyanins and anthocyanidins. These pigments, which are responsible for blueberries' distinctive colouring, are deemed to possess supreme antioxidant powers.

Even in Georgia, the US state famed for its luscious peaches, blueberries have relegated the state's signature stone fruit to the backseat. According to the University of Georgia, blueberries have overtaken peaches in terms of revenue. Its statistics show that blueberries generated revenue of US\$133 million in 2010, compared to peaches' US\$47 million. Within a decade, Georgia's blueberry cultivation area rose from 8,000 to 19,000 acres, while that of peaches dropped from 16,000 to 12,000 acres.

A tool in the battle against diabetes, heart disease and obesity

Thus far, peaches, nectarines and plums, on grounds of not having been ascribed any particular health benefits, have failed to grab a spot for themselves on the coveted superfruit horizon. This may be about to change, however. According to a study carried out by Texas AgriLife Research, due to be presented at the American Chemical Society in August, peaches, plums and nectarines contain a number of phenolic compounds which appear to counteract metabolic syndrome.

Metabolic syndrome comprises a cluster of key risk factors predisposing people to cardiovascular disease, namely central obesity (manifesting itself as the characteristic “apple shape”), elevated blood pressure, a disturbed blood lipid profile (including high levels of triglycerides and high LDL cholesterol) and insulin resistance, where the body has stopped responding to its own insulin, ultimately leading to diabetes. According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), people with metabolic syndrome are three times more likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke compared to people without the syndrome.

The research, funded by the California Tree Fruit Agreement, the California Plum Board, the California Grape and Tree Fruit League and the Texas Department of Agriculture, discovered that bioactive plant chemicals from four phenolic groups – anthocyanins, chlorogenic acids, quercetin derivatives and catechins – simultaneously modulated the workings of different types of body cells, producing a range of anti-obesity, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic effects.

Anthocyanins, which are largely responsible for berries' superfruit fame, are also found in stone fruit. Chlorogenic acid has shown to stabilise blood sugar levels – a promising characteristic for both diabetes and weight management. Catechins, the bioactive compounds found in abundance in green tea, are known for their heart-health benefits and also for their possible application in weight loss. The flavonoid quercetin is believed to act as an anti-inflammatory.

The research team will continue to study these four groups of compounds which occur in different ratios in stone fruit in order to shed further light on the mechanisms of how they act together in fighting metabolic syndrome. Thus far, it appears that these bioactive plant chemicals affect genetic expression, and this could mean that regular consumption of plums, nectarines and peaches might not just be useful in moderating the detrimental effects of full-blown metabolic syndrome but also help to prevent chronic conditions like obesity, diabetes and heart disease from developing in the first place.

Getting children into stone fruit

Motivating the younger generation, which is subject to rapidly rising levels of obesity and diabetes, to eat more fruit and vegetables presents a constant challenge. According to European Union data, childhood obesity amounts to a social cost of between 2-8% of total European health expenditure.

To this end, and firmly in the vein of “fruit is fun”, the FRUITNESS Enjoy It! project was set up in 2006 to promote the consumption of pears, nectarines, peaches and kiwi fruit among children and adolescents in Germany, Austria, Poland, the UK and Sweden. It is funded jointly by the European Union, the Italian government and the Italian Fresh Produce Service Centre (CSO).

For its latest campaign, which kicked off in June 2012, the project developers came up with a new superhero, Mr Fruitness, to lead its sporty tribe of Fruit Team cartoon characters. This year's focus falls specifically on plums. The campaign touts the fact that plums are the perfect summer fruit for accompanying sports and open-air activities because they are ideal for




Pomegranate Passion
Cafe - Nursery - Gifts - Plant Hire
John McDonald Ph: 0746714745 - Mob: 0437432835
Email: pomegranatepassion@hotmail.com

ROOTSTOCK FOR SALE:

We have had a carryover in our Nursery with **Nemaguard Peach** rootstock 20,000: 1.8m tall single trunk straight trees in 4 litre bags - ready to bud. These trees are growing in a sterile bark-based mix.

Price \$100/100, we can load 200 trees on a pallet.

Also available:

Queen Garnet:

The new high anthocyanins plum **QUEEN GARNET**, this high value fruit is grown for the juice market (Nutrafruit) and well as the fresh market. Chill requirement is around 600 units, an upright blood plum bred by Dougal Russell at Queensland DPI. These trees are 1.5m tall and ready to plant out - **NOW - Price: \$7.50ea**

605 - 88:

Queen Garnet pollenizer, flowers to cross with Q.G. and has similar high Anthocyanin levels. These trees are 1.5m tall and ready to plant out - **NOW - Price: \$7.50ea**

Rubycot:

A new generation fruit, cross - Blood Plum X Apricot. Reddish -Pink outside, Blood red inside, some pubescence. These trees are 1.5m tall and ready to plant out - **NOW - Price: \$7.50ea**

Pomegranate:

Wonderful, Rosavaya. We also have 20 other varieties under trial in our orchard block, some of which are showing very good promise. These trees are 1m tall and ready to plant out - **NOW - Price: \$7.50ea**

We also have many other types of **Peach, Nectarine, Plum, Apricot, Almonds** and different cross types available - **Price: \$7.50ea**

Call John McDonald and talk over your fruit tree needs.



replenishing fluid and minerals lost through sweating. It also points out that plums are packed with beneficial chemicals that contribute to preventing degenerative processes in the body. Promotional scope includes materials such as posters, pamphlets and video games, as well as activities and sampling sessions in supermarkets' fresh fruit aisles.

Innovation to heighten consumer appeal

With the health benefits of stone fruit finally starting to move into the spotlight, consumers are expected to become more open to new varieties. Khalsa College's Department of Agriculture in India reported in June that it had succeeded in creating a new variety of plum, christened Allu-bukhara Amritsari. This new variety is less tart and much sweeter than traditional Allu-bukhara plums, which were disliked by many Indian consumers on account of their sourness. Another positive and novel feature of the Allu-Bukhara Amritsari is that its flesh easily separates from the stone.

Top-end grocer Marks & Spencer, the UK's 12th ranked grocery retailer by 2011 retail value sales, is well-known for its innovative premium fruit and vegetable offerings, including that of stone fruit. In June 2012, the company added Blue Apricots, Yellow Plumcots and Peachcots to its Latest Discovery range. These offerings follow on from Black and Red Apricots introduced earlier this spring.

Plumcots, also sometimes referred to by the trademarked name 'Pluots', are a hybrid fruit bred via cross-pollinating plums and apricots. They hold much promise for enthusiastic consumer reception, not least because of the sheer number of varieties blessed with a highly appealing appearance and extensive flavour profiles. Californian fruit grower Family Tree Farms, for example, offers 24 varieties of plumcots. Among the most visually stunning are Tropical Plumana, Candy Stripe, Dapple Fire and Dapple Dandy. The Family Tree Plumogranate, an appealing crimson-red fleshed variety, is described as very high in antioxidants with a very sweet, intense flavour.

If past experience, especially in the realm of berries, is anything to go by, then it is that the discovery and promulgation of health benefits can serve as an incredible boost to any fruit or vegetable category, particularly in the case of produce which was already appreciated by consumers for its delicious taste. Stone fruit definitely falls into this category. For stone fruit growers, the future R&D focus should not exclusively fall on creating new and exciting varieties but also on providing excellent quality fruit all year round, particularly in the case of peaches and nectarines.

For further insight, please contact Anastasia Alieva, Head of Fresh Food Research at Euromonitor International on anastasia.alieva@euromonitor.com

NOTE: This article has been reproduced with appreciation extended to Anastasia Alieva.

Industry News ...

Tatura Stonefruit Field Laboratory Progressing Well

By Rod Jones (DPI Knoxfield), Dario Stefanelli (DPI Knoxfield) and Mark OConnell (DPI Tatura)

Planning has progressed well for the SFA/HAL and DPI Victoria Summerfruit Field Laboratory to be planted at DPI Tatura next autumn (HAL Project # 12003). The Summerfruit Field Laboratory will investigate the effects of rootstock selection, irrigation, canopy management and crop load on nectarine and peach fruit yield and quality, with an emphasis on sweetness.

An introductory planning meeting was held in Tatura in June, and from that an advisory committee has been formed. Industry representatives at the meeting also discussed the orchard concept, the proposed experiments, the general design and layout and details on rootstocks and scions to be included.

The advisory committee members are:

John Moore (CEO Summerfruit Australia Limited), **Rowan Little** (General Manager Montague Fresh), **Nick Parris** (ACN Orchards Bunbartha), **Andrew Routley** (The Little Tree Company), **Bruce Tomkins** (Summerfruit IAC), **Jason Size** (Grower SA), **Kathryn Lee** (Program Manager, HAL), **Dario Stefanelli** (DPI Victoria), **Ian Goodwin** (DPI Victoria), and



Mark O'Connell (DPI Victoria). The committee will meet twice per year to advise on trial design, progress and results, and to suggest future R&D that will involve the Field Lab.

The orchard will be split into 3 trials: **Rootstock**, **Canopy Management** and **Irrigation Management**. Because of the size of the orchard (total of over 7500 trees), and a limited budget, trials will be planted over two years, starting in autumn 2013. All trees for the 2013 planting have been ordered.

The Rootstock trial will be planted in 2013 and will consist of:

- (i) *Nemaguard* (red leaf);
- (ii) (*Elberta*;
- (iii) (*Krymsk86* – new semi-vigorous rootstock tolerant to drought and wet soil;
- (iv) *Cadaman* – an alternative to GF677; and
- (v) (*Cornerstone* – may offer greater vigour and disease resistance.

Two scions will be grafted onto each rootstock: a late season peach cv *September Sun* and an early season nectarine cv *Rose Bright*. Trees will be trained in open vase shape. All trees in this block will be drip irrigated. The trial will also be investigating the interaction between rootstock and crop load (high, medium, low).

The Canopy Management trial will also be planted in autumn 2013. This will test 3 crop loads (high, medium, low) on Central leader and Tatura Trellis on peach cv *August Flame* and nectarine cv *Spring Bright* grafted on *Elberta* will be used for each treatment. All trees will be drip irrigated.

The Irrigation trial will be planted in autumn 2014 and will test 4 irrigation volumes (125, 100, 75, 50 % of tree evapotranspiration) and 3 application timings (stage I, II and III of fruit development). One peach (cv *Elegant Lady*) and one nectarine (cv *September Bright*) scion will be grafted on *Elberta* rootstock to be used in the trial. All trees will be drip irrigated independently of volume and time of application and trained as central leader.

Site preparation began in winter 2012 with an EM38 soil survey (Figure 1). The regional soil survey shows the eastern portion of the Stonefruit Field Laboratory consists of Shepparton fine sandy loam. This area will be planted in autumn/winter 2013 and consist of the Rootstock and Canopy Management experiments (Stage 1).

Stage 2 planting of the Irrigation experiment (planned for autumn/winter 2014) will be located on Goulburn loam. The site is now being prepared with installation of irrigation lines and trellising underway.

For further information, please contact:

Dr Dario Stefanelli, DPI Knoxfield:

dario.stefanelli@dpi.vic.gov.au

Dr Mark OConnell, DPI Tatura:

mark.oconnell@dpi.vic.gov.au



Figure 1. EM38 soil survey being conducted at the site of the Summerfruit Field Laboratory, DPI Tatura.





Industry News ...

SMARTER STONEFRUIT VARIETY SELECTION NEEDED SAYS NEW NUFFIELD SCHOLAR



Jason Size, from Loxton in South Australia, has been awarded the prestigious 2013 Nuffield Scholarship supported by Woolworths. Jason will focus on linking consumer-eating patterns to stonefruit flavour profiles and retail marketing strategies.

Currently self-employed in a partnership with his wife and parents-in-law, Jason’s primary business is growing fresh market stonefruit. He is involved with two companies that help sell and pack the end product, supplying fruit from various growers to customers around the capital cities of Australia and overseas.

Part of Jason’s role is as a varietal evaluator, and he has found in the last couple of years there is an increased emphasis on flavour.

“The more I continue to research and evaluate varieties, the more intrigued I am in accurately defining flavour. My aim is to develop a way to assist growers and breeders in identifying varieties that satisfy flavour parameters and meet consumer demand,” Jason explains. In addition, he hopes to understand supply chain relationships and how consumer satisfaction impacts on varietal selection at the farm-level.

“This will create value within the industry and reduce the waste of time and resources spent planting varieties that don't fit within defined flavour parameters,” Jason says.

He hopes to tour France to investigate consumer sensory testing practices and, more broadly, to understand European quality parameters that result in enhanced sales. Jason would also like to visit North America to study retail/grower relationships and also a significant private breeding program in Israel.

Pat McEntee, General Manager of Woolworths Fresh Food says, “Woolworths has supported the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships for three years in recognition of the great work that is done in advancing leadership in the primary production industry. These scholarships give Australians the opportunity to study best current farming practices around the world. Congratulations to Jason, we wish him a successful year as a Nuffield scholar.”

Note: Jason Size is a Summerfruit Australia Ltd. Director.

Scholarships for Australian primary producers

Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships is a unique program that awards primary producers with a life-changing scholarship to travel overseas and study an agricultural topic of choice. Nuffield has been selecting primary producers for over 60 years and it is the leading program for primary producers in Australia.

Scholars are selected annually on merit as people who are committed and passionate about farming or fishing, are at the leading edge of technology uptake and potential future leaders in the industry. There are approximately 300 Nuffield scholars in Australia who, through their Nuffield scholarship, have had a world experience into global agriculture to enhance their knowledge and skills. Scholars represent a wide number of rural industries and have returned to Australia to adopt best management practice so that excellence in all aspects of agricultural production is achieved.

Nuffield Australia is also part of a unique global network of 1,250 Nuffield Scholars from seven countries which also award Nuffield Farming Scholarships annually. More information about Nuffield International is available by visiting their web site.

As a Nuffield Scholar, the learning process continues for life with state-based, national and international Nuffield tours and conferences. Scholars are encouraged to communicate new knowledge and ideas to both the alumni and to the wider agricultural industry.

If you are a primary producer, engaged in farming or fishing as an owner or manager, please explore this website and find out how Nuffield can assist you join a unique, worldwide agricultural network



Marketing ...

Summer Stonefruit Marketing Campaign 2012-2013

The 2012/13 marketing campaign has been developed to address the Summer Stonefruit industry's strategic marketing objectives. The plan is based on consumer insights and past marketing campaigns. This season, the industry has a very exciting marketing program and the industry has up the ante by further bolstering the campaign and here's what we have in place!

Marketing Objectives ...

The Summer Stonefruit industry's long term marketing objectives are:

- To build awareness and excitement of the start of the summerfruit season
- To increase distribution and purchase of summerfruit over the course of the season with focus on the period: January to March
- To promote and educate the general public regarding the correct selection, handling and storage practices for the fruit in order to maximise the eating quality & enjoyment
- To continue efforts regarding building awareness of the new Summer Stonefruit logo & the Summerfruit tagline (100% Dribbilicious, Get stuck into summer stonefruit)

Consumer Insights

Below is a summary of the consumer insights from various consumer research resources:

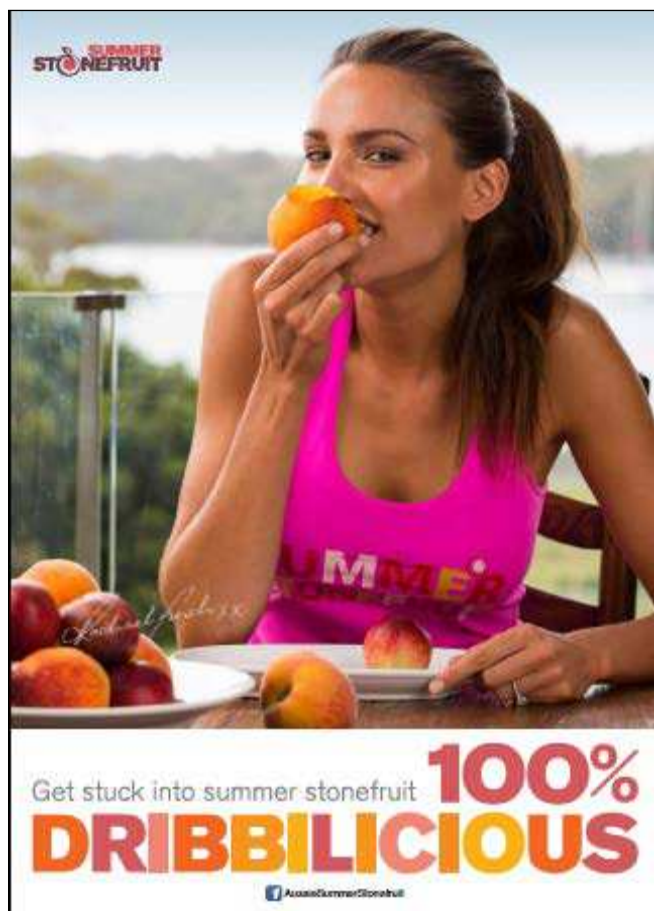
- Summer stonefruit has high household penetration for a seasonal crop group with around 80% of the Australian households buying.
- A typical household spend on summer stonefruit is around \$28 and this equates to around 7.1 kilos.
- Each household buys around 7.2 times over the season.
- The typical summer stonefruit consumer is someone who is aged 60+.
- Summer stonefruit is under trading in consumer segments with children aged between 12-17 and households with adults between the age of 18~35 with no children.
- Consumers consistently prefer soft/ripe fruit (reflecting the industry's tagline 100% Dribbilicious).
- Consumers like yellow-fleshed and sweet peaches & nectarines.
- Consumers like to try before they buy summer stonefruit, sampling returns a high conversion rate (60%+).
- Information is king, consumers crave for information. In-store point of sale (POS) materials are well received.
- Currently only 5 in 10 consumers include summer stonefruit in recipes, there are opportunities to lift incremental consumption by increasing usage ideas.
- Around 30% of summer stonefruit buyers are responsible for 65% of fruit bought.
- 60% of the summer stonefruit buyers purchase the fruit once throughout the season, there are opportunities to drive purchase frequency.
- Increase usage ideas & occasions should increase purchase frequency.

Based on consumer insights, opportunities to grow summer stonefruit consumption are in the driving of purchase frequency in households that are made up of adults under the age of 35 and also households with children aged between 12 - 17.

Con the Fruiterer has been front and centre of the past three public relations (PR) campaigns to promote Australian summer stonefruit. He has attracted high profile media coverage and interacted with trade and consumers at a range of events, however interest in him has waned and he holds little appeal for younger generations.

New Ambassador – Rachael Finch


As a result, the industry has enlisted **Rachael Finch** who appeals to a wide range of demographics; to re-energise the PR strategy for 2012/13 and beyond. The new ambassador Rachel has extensive media experience. She first rose to stardom when she won Miss Universe Australia 2009. Rachael is healthy, active, wholesome and in demand as an Australian A-lister. She is also highly skilled in the kitchen, who was the first runner up in the Celebrity Master Chef series 2009. Her high profile TV/media engagement to date includes Dancing with the Stars, The Great Outdoors, The Morning Show and the Spring Racing Carnival.



The industry has developed six new Rachael Finch '100% Dribbilicious' summer recipes to whet the media's appetite as well as using them in in-store promotion to encourage Australians to consume peaches, nectarines, plums and apricots more often by inspiring them to include summer stonefruit in recipes based on opportunities identified in our consumer insights.



Additionally, Rachael is showing Aussies how to get a '100% Dribbilicious' beach body with a short two minute full body workout and stay in great shape this summer. Rachael's workout routine will be seen in media, in-store materials as well as across the summer stonefruit's social media channel

 AussieSummerStonefruit and Twitter).

To further integrate the campaign the industry is utilising Rachael in additional nationwide promotions during the peak of the season. The key highlights include the following:

- **'Win lunch with Rachael Finch'** This is a partnership with community based publications / newspapers in NSW, VIC, QLD, WA and SA. This activity will provide the industry with access to a collective readership in excess of four million Australian consumers. Media hype about the summer stonefruit in season and Rachael will be created in January/February when the crop is in abundant supply.
- **News Limited 'Body+Soul' Summer Holiday Promotion.** This is a nationwide print and online promotion to the popular supplement/liftout of 'Body+Soul'. The promotion will provide the industry with a minimum reach of 5 million consumers. The message will be promoting the availability and quality of summer stonefruit. Readers will also be ready about Rachael's '100% Dribbilicious' workout to coincide with the promotion.



Merchandising and Trade Education ...

The 2012-2013 season is the 4th year that the industry will be conducting merchandising and trade education.

Some insights from the program are:

- POS material including recipes are very well received and look great in store.
- 100% of retailers that have participated in the program know how to handle and identify ripe fruit. However only 58% are reported to know to store the fruit correctly. Opportunity to improve storage knowledge.
- 57% of consumers reported they do not use summer stonefruit in recipes. Opportunity to increase usage by providing options.
- Shoppers love information, advice and the opportunity to try before they buy. Sampling consistently achieved a 60%+ conversion rate.
- 300 green grocers are covered under this program. Each store will be visited twice throughout the season.
- The visits focus on targeted education (storage), POS placement and data capture.
- Education: focus on how to store summer stonefruit. Based on statistics gathered to date only 58% of the green grocers are placing fruit in cold storage at 0-2 degrees.
- POS placement: continue to drive '100% Dribbilicious' summer stonefruit exposure in store.
- Data capture: continue to capture market intelligence and insights.

100%

DRIBBILICIOUS

Tips on keeping summer stonefruit



The Summer Stonefruit season has arrived and to make it the best ever, we've prepared the simple retail guide. Here are a few tips on what to look out for this season when selecting the best stonefruit for your customers and the best way to store it to keep it 100% dribbilicious!

Selection

Step 1: Look
The sweetest nectarines have small white spots (spockles) on the top half.
Plums and nectarines come in a range of colours and generally become dull just before they are ready to eat.
Apricots vary from yellow to orange with a red 'blush'. Wait until they lose any green background colour before consuming.
Stonefruit with a bright green background colour is immature and will NOT ripen to customer satisfaction.
Remember, stonefruit should have eye appeal and be free of bruises.

Step 2: Smell
Fruit should have a delicate sweet fragrance.

Step 3: Taste
Test the fruit daily to check its eating quality. If it's very firm and acidic to taste, the fruit is immature. If it's dry or mealy, it has been stored at the incorrect temperature.

Storage Temperatures

22 - 27°C	DANGER! Too hot.
18 - 22°C	Opening fruit to best kept at room temperature.
8 - 18°C	Fruit ripens slowly.
2 - 8°C	DANGER! Never store fruit between 2° - 8°C - this causes the fruit to become dry and mealy.
2°C	Keep fruit between 0° - 2°C for longer storage to maintain quality.
0°C	DANGER! Never store below 0°C.

Step 4: Touch
Stonefruit is best just as it starts to soften and should 'give' slightly when squeezed.
Only keep enough fruit for 2-3 days sales to avoid the quality deteriorating.

Handle Fruit Carefully

- Stonefruit bruises easily - minimise handling by displaying in the original trays. Avoid stacking fruit more than 2 deep when loose.
- Fruit which has been bruised by squeezing or dropping should be discarded.
- Brown Rot is a fungal disease usually found around the stem. Discard fruit with brown rot as it can transfer to other fruit.

Problems
Report any quality problems to your supplier or distribution centre, especially if:

- The fruit looks immature.
- The fruit is sour and lacks aroma.
- The tray has more than a few pieces of bruised fruit.
- The tray has more than two pieces of fruit showing fungal decay.
- The fruit has no juice and is browning in the flesh.

www.summerfruit.com.au or email: info@summerfruit.com.au




Sampling ...

- 190 green grocer stores. Each store receives 1x4 hour sampling session.
- Sampling consistently achieves a 60%+ conversion rate.
- Opportunity to increase consumption by providing more usage options
- Sample summer stonefruit with complimentary dairy products
- Continue to '100% Dribbilicious' summer stonefruit exposure in store
- Data capture: continue to capture market intelligence and insights.





Research ...

Commercial Application of the Maroochy V Trellis System for Production of High Quality Stonefruit

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Stonefruit is a labour intensive fruit to produce, with the majority of available labour unskilled. Low chill stonefruit is even more so. This project evaluates the ability of the Maroochy V Trellis System to produce stonefruit at a lower cost per kilogram, using a simple pruning regime that provides high-quality, consistent results and a low reject rate. Due to the simplicity of the system, it is able to be undertaken by unskilled labour, including backpackers, which allows growers to reduce labour costs.

By reducing the tree height to a level that allows all work to be performed from the ground, the efficiency of each work unit is also increased. Working from the ground also significantly reduces the probability of a workplace accident. It is intended that the production per hectare will be at least maintained, if not increased.

PROJECT PROGRESS SUMMARY

The 2011 season was good for the production of low-chill stonefruit. The weather was fine, but a cold spring delayed the harvest by up to 5 weeks on some varieties. This meant that the product clashed with southern fruit, which was approximately 1-2 weeks early, and suppressed prices.

The Maroochy V Trellis System (MVTs) performed well ...

1. **Pruning** was appreciably quicker on these trees; however they were trained during late summer /early autumn which contributed to the ease of the winter prune.
2. **Thinning** was simpler and hence quicker for the staff. Even though we do this activity on a piece rate, the cost per kg will still be lower due to the ease of the operation per tree.
3. The **colour** of the fruit was very good, as it was not shaded under excessive leaf cover. This was able to be achieved because of the ease and low cost of completing a pre-harvest prune.
4. **Fruit size** was above what was expected for such young trees. The average size of the fruit was quite acceptable, especially once one considers that this is their first crop. 43.4% of the fruit was tray size, and 87.7% was first grade.
5. **Volume** of fruit is not able to be compared at this stage as the trees are too young. This will have relevance next season.
6. **Taste** of the fruit was on a par with the other fruit, of the same variety, produced on trees of other systems.
7. **Harvesting** of the various varieties appears to be, at this early stage, achieved in a fewer number of picks. This will lead to improved profitability via reduced labour inputs per kg of fruit produced. Appendix 1 shows how the fruit was harvested earlier than the Hedge Row style fruit. This has also lead to a higher per kg return for the Maroochy Trellis fruit.

Orchard Maintenance ...

This has mainly been comprised of weed control, leaf and fruit protection, fertilization, irrigation, pre-harvest and post-harvest management.

Weeds are harder to contain as the branches of the first wire can hang too low and thus be contacted by the herbicide. This effectively means that the use of glyphosate is prohibited. Hence:

1. Use of a 'knockdown' type of weed chemical is required. This leads to a less effective kill and more sprays being required.
2. Another alternative would be to use a knapsack and a covered spray head. However this would increase the cost significantly due to the time taken for staff to walk along and spray the strips.
3. Staff can prune low hanging branches, so that the use of glyphosate becomes practical.



What is becoming evident is that where the trees are reaching full size, the weed problems are reducing. This will be further monitored over the remainder of the project.

Leaf and fruit protection has shown to be more economical than expected. This is due to a smaller area of chemical laden air being required to spray the same amount of fruit. This has been a pleasant surprise.

Other Issues ...

An area that has become evident is that training of the leaders along the wires needs to be undertaken as soon as possible while the tree is growing vigorously. If these critical limbs are not regularly attended to, they grow in the wrong direction and become more difficult to train. (See Photo 2)

We are against using paclobutrazol on young trees before they are fully established. This has led to a lot of long growth developing very quickly following harvest. During the summer prune we removed most of this strong growth leaving the potential fruiting wood for next season. This looked very good upon completion. However, about 3 weeks later, a large percentage of this wood dropped its fruiting buds and shot out new wood again. This wood however did develop into fruiting wood by winter and although we had less fruit buds to choose from during winter pruning, than we are used to, the fruit developed as per normal.

Next Steps ...

Following the 2012 harvest, we will be able to provide a more detailed evaluation of the results from the fruit production.



← 70-53N Nectarine shows good shape and colour. A good crop for the first harvest.



Photo 2 - Note that limb 1 and limb 2 should have been trained along the wire before now, as the limbs are searching for light into the row.



Tropic Beauty with a fair crop for a young tree. Note the limb being trained on the lower right to provide structure for next year's crop.



*The open tatura V to allow light access.
Weed control in this middle area is not simple.*

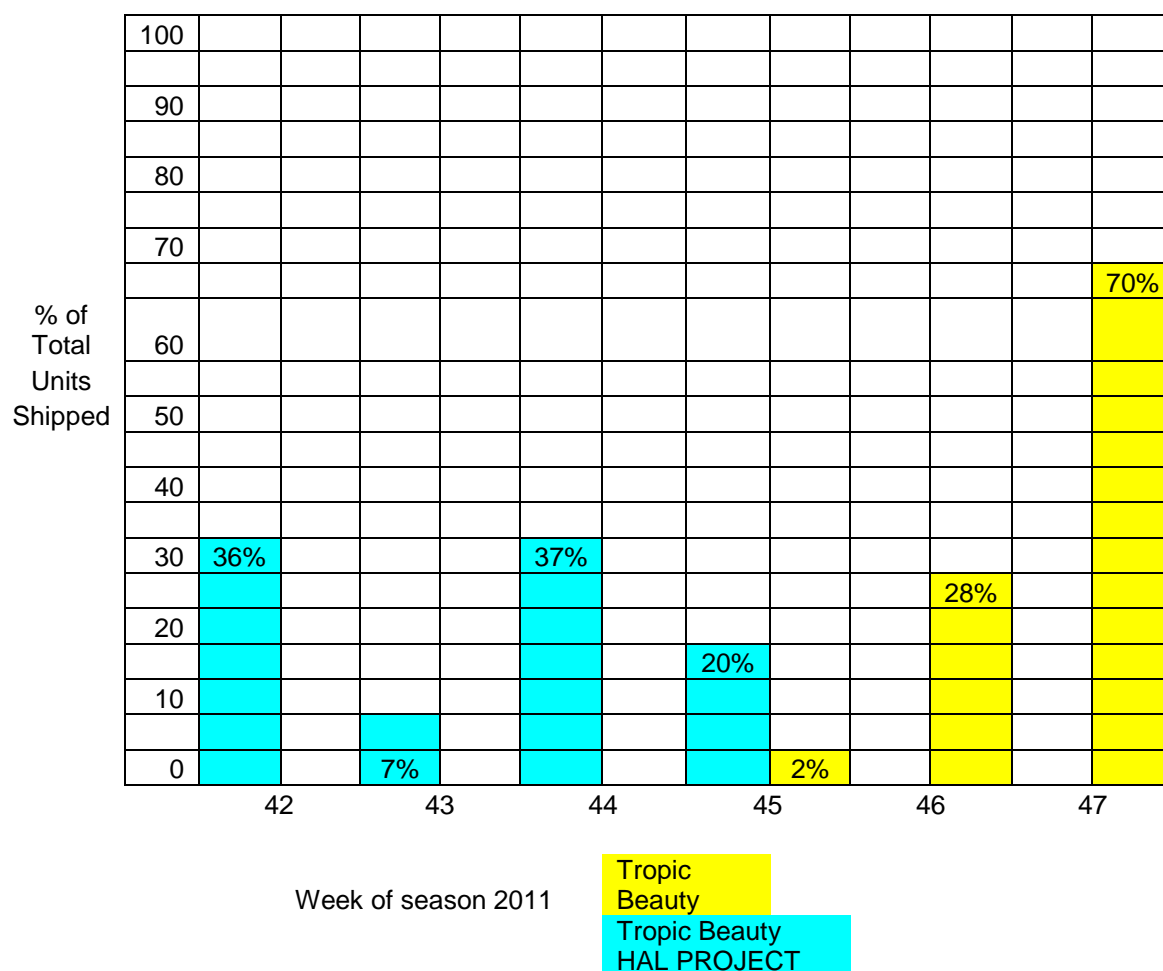


Looking carefully you can see the basic training of the limbs. ↓

Another example of the high cropping ability of young trees under this system →



APPENDIX 1



We look forward to continuing the project and are excited by seeing the first fruit from these trees and how the system works, especially for harvesting.

If any grower would like to see the system for themselves, they should feel free to contact us to arrange a visit.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of HAL in co-funding this project.

For More Information Contact –
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 Email: bbr385@bigpond.com



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Industry Information ...

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QUEENSLAND KIDS WILL
THANK YOU FOR IT.
CALL FOODBANK TODAY ON
07 3395 8422 TO MAKE A
DONATION.**

About Foodbank ...

Did you know that if you considered donating surplus/not-fit-for-market produce, anything donated to **Foodbank** is 100% Tax Deductable!

Let's start from the beginning. **Foodbank** hates food being wasted when we know people (including children) within our community are going hungry (read more at <http://www.foodbank.org.au/hunger-in-australia/the-endhunger-report/>). We would like primary producers to know that food not-fit-for-market or surplus produce doesn't have to be wasted. Donating this produce to a worthy cause is an alternative with many benefits.

Foodbank collects unsalable, surplus and donated food and grocery products from farmers, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and the public and distributes them to over 2,500 charities and community groups around Australia. The food goes to hostels, shelters, drop-in centres, school breakfast programs, home hampers and emergency relief packages for people in need.

Foodbank sources food for charities such as *Meals On Wheels*, *The Salvation Army*, *Canteen*, Ronald McDonald House etc. just to name a few. **Foodbank Queensland** alone provides food to more than 300 charities/community welfare groups every week. That's more than 88,000+ needy people per week who depend on us for a meal. Sadly, about half are kids!

EMERGENCY FOOD RELIEF: In addition, **Foodbank** distributes food to disaster affected areas throughout Queensland and Australia as required. In the last few years demand for food at the frontline has been huge. And the need for ongoing support equally so. **We just can't keep up with the demand!**

Foodbank is constantly sourcing food from wherever we can get it. Typically, the food we source is second grade or not-fit-for-market produce which is often wasted! In reality there is nothing wrong with the product nutritionally or from a safety point of view. As a general rule 'if you or I can eat it, we will gladly take it' and redistribute it to where it's needed. Sadly though, a lot of this type of produce gets dumped and we would like to change that.

In the event a member wishes to participate in this worthy cause and make a donation, here are some of the benefits to them:

1. The value of any donation made to **Foodbank** is 100% tax deductible.
2. **Foodbank** can provide bins, boxes or even pallets at no cost to the grower.
3. **Foodbank** can arrange transport at no cost to the grower.
4. Making a difference to someone in need. We make sure the donor knows where their produce is going and the difference it will make.

If you would like to know more about us, visit our website at www.foodbank.com.au.



Market Access ...

AUSTRALIA CHINA AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Summerfruit Delegation – 8th July – 22nd July 2012.

“To get through the hardest journey we need take only one step at a time but we must keep on stepping.” – Chinese Proverb

Perhaps it is time that both China and Australia “Kept on stepping” as we move to finalise official access for Australian stonefruit to China.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the Summerfruit Industry Strategic objectives is to “**secure commercially viable market access to China**”.

The strategies that are part of the objective include: -

- **Implement processes to open export markets for Australian Summerfruit**
- **Encourage or initiate appropriate research and development that will assist in opening new markets and make commercially viable export protocols available.**
- **To promote Australian Summerfruit in the Chinese market place.**

Market access has been a major priority for the Australian Summerfruit Industry for a number of years and remains the highest priority there is a 20% surplus of production to consumption in Australia

SAL visited China under the Australia China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement (ACACA) program, a delegation of four visited China during the period 8th to 22nd July 2012. The delegation consisted of Mr. John Moore, CEO, Mr. Mark Wilkinson, Chair Summerfruit Australia, Mr. Adrian Conti, Deputy Chair and Mr. David Minnis, Summerfruit Technical Advisor.

The purpose of the visit was to further expand our “**high quality Stonefruit production and marketing by developing opportunities for collaboration with China in stonefruit production and new technologies, promotion and marketing for mutual benefit of the stonefruit industries in both countries**”.

The aim of the proposed visit was to: -

- Investigate the stonefruit market in China to ensure that the Australian industry is able to meet the expectations of the Chinese market once access has been achieved.**
- Develop an understanding of the supply pathway for Australian Summerfruit into the Chinese market and identify potential impediments in this pathway to ensure these are addressed, prior to establishment of this trade.**
- Liaise with Chinese stonefruit producers to identify areas where Australia can assist them to develop and expand their industry.**
- Investigate reciprocal trade arrangements and identify collaborative opportunities to jointly market Australian and Chinese Summerfruit.**
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiencies in the supply chain: such as exporting summer fruit to China as bulk product, gaining efficiencies in packaging and freightage from Australia and enabling China to repackage the product in a tailored way.**
- Establish key industry and government contacts in China to allow further building of relationships between Australia and China in Summerfruit production and trade.**



Over the fourteen-day visit the delegation met with a diverse range of individual growers and representatives from industry, research institutions, regional authorities and government agencies. There is a large Stonefruit industry in China and we gave those we met some understanding about the Australian Summerfruit industry.

- 1) Australia views food security as a global issue, China views food security as looking after the 1.4 billion citizens.
- 2) Plantings of Stonefruit in China are 723,000 hectares, 50% of world area and 8,000,000 metric tons or 45% of world production, contrasting with the 27,000-hectare industry within Australia with 90,000 metric tons. There is a small percentage of greenhouse production, approximately 3 %. There appears to be a ratio of 10:1 peach-nectarine production. With Apricots coming from the autonomous regions and some evidence of increasing plum planting, from a low base.
- 3) The Stonefruit seasons are counter-seasonal, which has advantages in relation to trade not affecting the viability of either industry. In addition it allows for counter seasonal travel, research and information exchange.
- 4) Peaches are an integral part of Chinese culture 'zhong hua shou tao' –longevity; tao-peach. Peaches have a large presence in history and mythology. The Chinese have developed over 200 traditional peach varieties over 3,000 years of cultivation. The delegation ate "World famous Shanghai, Wuxi, Beijing and Pingu Honey Peach". With investment in breeding, new varieties are being developed and grown that are more suitable for trade over longer distances.
- 5) Peaches and nectarines are planted in two main zones, Northern China including Beijing, Hebei, Shandong, Henan, Liaoning, northern Jiangsu and Anhui, Shaanxi, Shanxi and Gansu. The other area along the Yangtze River: Shanghai, southern Jiangsu and Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan basin. The study tour visited Shanghai, Jiangsu, Shaanxi and Beijing Provinces.
- 6) The Stonefruit Industry in China is built around small farms linked through the village system; area is measured in Mu, 15 Mu to one hectare. Area available to agriculture is diminishing under massive urbanization. Rural farm workers are paid 120 RMB/day (A\$18.00), well below the rate of pay for a city worker.
- 7) The rural workforce is aging, with no evidence of the mechanization required to keep older workers productive.
- 8) The Chinese stonefruit market is built around strong domestic consumption; much of the product is traditionally sold through farm direct sales, street vendors or roadside sales. The consumer is rapidly shifting to supermarket style shopping as disposable income levels increase. Market returns for stonefruit varies significantly throughout China, areas close to Tier 1 & 2 cities enjoy higher returns than those production areas in the mid-Western provinces like Shaanxi, Shanxi that supply the less lucrative markets.
- 9) There are small volumes of fruit exported to countries like Malaysia and Singapore mainly to expatriate Chinese, but there is interest and pride in these exports. There is said to be over 3,365 export orchards for movement of fruit, with 899 packhouses registered with AQSIQ. There is little mechanized packing and limited cool storage for Stonefruit within China, we were fortunate to view a new cool store and mechanized Kiwi fruit packing installation in Meixian, Shaanxi province.
- 10) Australia and China need to be conscious of the differing tastes and preferences of markets if trade is going to be successful and sustainable. An airfreight protocol needs to be in place for peaches and apricots; these commodities will not survive sea transit journeys. Chinese authorities are not embracing irradiation techniques for quarantine measures, but will accept Methyl Bromide fumigation. A pre-shipment treatment with Methyl Bromide before airfreighting the fruit would be the logical outcome to be negotiated for both China and Australia if two-way trade is to take place.
- 11) There is widespread 'bagging' of stonefruit by growers to protect fruit from the elements, birds and pests. Paper bag costs are helped by Local Government subsidy, (20% to 100% of costs).
- 12) In the orchards visited there were diseases present. Many species of *Monilinia* fungus, causative of brown rot of Stonefruit, have been detected and reported in the areas of China visited by the delegation. There was no obvious brown rot in the fruit on orchards, or in the marketplace, despite the lack of chemical control. It is possible that there is genetic resistance to *Monilinia* species after thousands of years of selection, if so these genes are urgently required in the stonefruit cultivars grown in Australia. Gummosis was a major problem within most orchards. Large carvings, said to be of ancient peach wood, showed no sign of historic gummosis. Oriental Fruit Moth was evidenced by shoot tip damage and controlled with solar powered light traps of Chinese design; the bagged fruit was protected from insect damage. Generally very few other pests were observed and our host orchards were striving to be organic under Chinese government certification.





- 13) Research into Stonefruit cultivation and breeding are important parts of the Industry in China and are well funded by the appropriate Chinese government agencies
- 14) The Northwest Agricultural & Forestry University in Shaanxi Province is well established, funded and maintained. They appear to be a major conduit of technical information to growers; regional cooperatives have a strong association with this University. This University is well considered as a future investment for a plant breeding exchange program with Australian Industry
- 15) Regional cooperatives/research farm centres are established as 'eco-tourism' farms to which the general public is allowed to visit. Demonstration farms exist across the country; these are maintained as commercial businesses and for other farmers/villages to come and learn from.
- 16) Water availability is projected to be a problem within China in the next 20-30 years. Most orchards visited were flood irrigated with some poorly regulated drip systems being tried, soils appeared uniformly saturated and irrigation awareness appeared minimal.
- 17) China has been surveying their crop for Sharka virus after a scientific paper demonstrated disease presence in apricots in Hunan province. The paper from Wei Meisheng to the *Canadian Phytopathological Society/International Plum Pox Virus Joint Meeting* in Canada June 2012 is negative for the presence of Sharka in China.
- 18) The Chinese people we met have a strong desire to see cooperation and the exchange of information; resources and personnel to continue and expand, mutual market access for stonefruit was seen as a high priority in the immediate future.

Summerfruit Australia needs to build from this visit by continuing to raise the profile of stonefruit at all levels within industry, government and the general consumer in China.

At each meeting the Australian delegation left a package of technical information in the Chinese language about the Australian Industry with a subtitled video about Australian orchards and packing sheds. As new information becomes available, the Industry will be in a position to update and build with our new network within China.

The following are some resolutions/recommendations going forward: -

- a) That the network established within China be maintained and that regular communications are established with the major industry cooperatives, researchers, regional agencies and government representatives.
- b) That Summerfruit Australia Limited participates in the China Fruit and Vegetable Fair to be held in Beijing in November along with other fairs to promote the Australian presence.
- c) That Summerfruit Australia Limited encourages and supports the organisation of a market access technical meeting linked with the China Fair. Continue the biannual meetings established by the Sino- Australia Workshop Cooperation Agreement, driven by AQSIQ and OHMA (Office of Horticultural Market Access)
- d) That Summerfruit Australia Limited liaise more closely with Biosecurity Australia with the aim of assisting the process of mutual access for Stonefruit in the shortest possible time frame.
- e) That once new information becomes available that Summerfruit Australia Limited makes it available to the appropriate bodies within China.
- f) That Summerfruit Australia Limited seek to establish variety trials in conjunction with Northwest A & F University – Xian within Australia to hasten research findings and commercialize any intellectual property beyond China.
- g) That Summerfruit Australia Limited looks at establishing an Australian grower study tour with Northwest A & F University, to coincide with the Xian production calendar.
- h) That Summerfruit Australia Limited looks to working closely with the Northwest A & F University staff to develop the export/import opportunities once trade commences. In addition look at how the Australian industry may assist with their request for information relating to good technology for keeping fruit fresh and dissemination of information to the regional research cooperatives visited during our visit.
- i) That Summerfruit Australia Limited offer formal invitation to representatives of AQISQ, CIQA, Northwest A & F University, the research stations and Industry/Grower organisations to come to Australia for relevant conferences/forums.
- j) That Summerfruit Australia Limited encourage and pursue the opportunities for individual growers/businesses to consider visitations to key regions utilizing the contacts made during this and previous visitations by Summerfruit.
- k) Summerfruit Australia Limited supports the continuation of the Australia China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement program through any media and publicity.

In conclusion Summerfruit Australia Limited would like to sincerely thank the Australian and Chinese Governments for their support of the visit of the Summerfruit delegation to China in July 2012.

Special thanks to the team at East Asia Trade Market Access Division - DAFF and our host and interpreter from the Ministry of Agriculture in China – Song Yuxing.



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 - Shanghai Municipal Agricultural Commission
 - Beijing Municipal Commission of Rural Affairs
 - Austrade –Shanghai & Beijing
 - Northwest Agriculture & Forestry University, Shaanxi
 - Australian Government Embassy -Beijing
 - Animal and Plant Committee of CIQA
 - General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ)
 - China Inspection and Quarantine Service. (CIQS)
- The many Stonefruit Association representatives, Cooperative representatives, growers, farmers and workers that we met during our visits to their farms and/or villages.
- Australian Embassy, Beijing.
- Song Yuxing, Program Officer, Center of International Cooperation Service, Ministry of Agriculture, P.R. China. **Our interpreter for the time we were in China.**

Authors: John Moore, Mark Wilkinson, Adrian Conti & David Minnis – October 5th 2012



Diary Note for 2013 ***17 to 19 July 2013 – Gold Coast – Queensland***



*The Conference will include the Annual Levy Payers' Meeting and Summerfruit Australia Ltd. Annual General Meeting. – **For More Information Contact:** John Moore – CEO Summerfruit Australia Ltd, 8/452 Swift Street, Albury, NSW 2640 – Ph: +61 2 6041 6641, Mobile: 0419 305 901, Email ceo@summerfruit.com.au.*



Phillip Wilk's Low Chill Stonefruit Seasonal Update ...

Low chill stone fruit varietal evaluations for 2012 Season

Seasonal conditions were dry and ideal for stone fruit production. Continuous rain and showers, overcast conditions continued through the year until late July when the rain stopped and no other rain fell until late September.

Some varieties set poorly either due to rain washing pollen from flowers or it was very cool and bees were not flying. Some varieties such as UF Sun were quite late while others such as UF Gold were very early.



Varieties that showed promise this season

17-20 yellow peach

This variety from Bruce Topp breeding program is a good early non melting yellow peach. Early October harvest before Tropic Beauty. Size range is 68-75 mm or 39 tray size. The skin is full red with yellow background colour. Looks very similar to 98-1 variety. Brix levels 12°. This variety has been grown commercially in the region for 5 years and has performed well each year.

32-59 yellow nectarine

This variety is seen as a replacement for SunWright nectarine. It has low chill in the 150-200 CU range. Harvest slightly before SunWright but in the second week in October period. It has a firm flesh with high sugar levels around 12° with a bright yellow orange blush. Size is around 67-70mm.

Richen white nectarine

White melting flesh nectarine that is harvested in the second week in October. Attractive full red skin with good shape balanced flavour and 12° Brix levels. Looked very good this season and last. Size around 65-67 mm. This nectarine has full red skin with attractive background colour. Shape is oblong round and good for packing. This industry standard has produce well over a number of seasons.

Honey May yellow nectarine on Okinawa rootstock

Late September to early October harvest in NSW. Low acid variety full red skin. This sub acid variety performed better and harvested earlier on Okinawa rootstock than Nemasun. Sugar levels are round 12°. Fruit of this quality harvested at this time of the year from this variety is worth good money.

Polar light white non melt nectarine

This variety is being widely planted in NSW and Qld. It is a full red non melting flesh nectarine variety with low acid. Colours up very early and sometimes difficult to know when to pick. Easy to pack as it is a non-melting variety. Harvest begins early October in northern NSW. Losses from fruit damage and soft tip are less than 1%. It can be a little bland in taste if wet weather occurs before picking. Prefers a cooler site and chill hours are around 250CU.

Orchard management after harvest

In many regions growers are noticing a number of tree deaths that are caused by poor root systems indicated by a slow dieback in the foliage. This is a result of the two previous wet seasons that allowed *Phytophthora* root rot to flourish and only now when trees are under pressure from heavy crop load and hot weather are they showing dieback. This is due waterlogging or poor drainage and then *Phytophthora* root rot kills root systems – especially the young feeder roots causing whole tree to die.

There are a number of chemicals based on phosphorus acid and Phosetyl Al (Agriphos®, Alliette®) that can help control this disease but the long term strategy should be to improve drainage in these areas.

Brown rot has been manageable this season due to the low rainfall. Growers will still need to apply sprays for flower blight early in the season before shuck fall to stop early infection. The automatic weather station has issued a number of brown rot infection warnings this season which does not have to be linked with rainfall. Many of the warnings have come during mornings where humidity the previous night was high and leaf wetness and warm temperatures signalled a brown rot infection period.

Growers will need to maintain rust sprays early in the New Year to maintain healthy leaf. Early defoliation may result in an early incomplete flowering.



Pruning should begin now with early varieties being pruned first. New bud development occurs in January which is borne on the new growth.

If Paclobutrazol is used to control tree size it should be applied as a half dose at this time of the year once trees are pruned. If trees are unhealthy or not growing rapidly then make a decision as to whether to add Paclobutrazol this time. If in doubt avoid treating trees as it is very easy to overdose trees.

Soil and leaf tests should be taken at this time of the year. The last two seasons have been very wet and many nutrients may have been leached from the soil profile. It will be beneficial for growers to know if anything is lacking.

Interstate certification Assurance (ICA) changes for stone fruit market access to Victoria in 2013

There have been a number of changes to the Interstate certification assurance (ICA21) scheme for growers wishing to send fruit from fruit fly endemic regions to Victoria.

The main one will be the availability of ICA47 for stone fruit growers in the 2013 season.

Growers will be notified by the NSW DPI or their regulatory authority that these changes are taking place. Anyone wishing to send fruit under this new scheme of inspection of a 600 fruit sample should contact the department to obtain an application. (Details will be available on LCA website)

ICA 21

Produce certified under this ICA procedure must comply with the following:

All source plants on the property must be treated with a pre-harvest cover spray for stonefruit, blueberries, blackberries, persimmons and pome fruit:

- (a) with a product containing 500g/L Trichlorfon as the only active constituent; and
 - (i) applied at intervals of seven (7) to ten (10) days; and
 - (ii) commencing at least twenty eight (28) days prior to harvest; and
 - (iii) in accordance with all label or APVMA permit requirements,
 or
- (b) with a maldison mixture applied in high volume application containing either;
 - (i) 140mL of 440g/L product per 100L water; or
 - (ii) 60 mL of 1000g/L per 100L water; or
 - (iii) 55mL of 1150g/L per 100L water; and
 - (iv) at a maximum of three (3) applications per season; and
 - (v) at intervals of every three (3) to seven (7) days; and
 - (vi) commencing at least twenty eight (28) days prior to harvest; and
 - (vii) in accordance with all label or APVMA permit requirements;
 or
- (c) a combination of Trichlorfon and maldison applied in accordance with all the requirements of (a) and (b) above;
- or
- (d) a fenthion mixture applied to stone fruit except cherries;
 - (i) that contains 75mL of 550g/L per 100L spray mixture; and
 - (ii) at a maximum of three (3) applications per season; and
 - (iii) with at least 2 applications prior to harvest; and
 - (iv) at intervals of every seven (7) to fourteen (14) days until 3 weeks prior to the commencement of harvest;
 and
 - (v) in accordance with all label or APVMA permit requirements; and
 - (vi) followed with at least two applications of Trichlorfon or maldison in accordance with the requirements of (a) and (b) above; and

Pre-harvest spray program must continue until completion of harvest.

Phillip Wilk - NSW Department of Primary Industries – Alstonville NSW





Publication Details ...

Australian Stonefruit Grower ***incorporating the Low Chill Stonefruit Grower*** ***- 2013 Publication Timetable -***

Contributions are invited for the next scheduled publication - **FEBRUARY 2013.**

FEBRUARY	APRIL	AUGUST	NOVEMBER
<i>Advertising Deadline</i> 7 February	<i>Advertising Deadline</i> 14 April	<i>Advertising Deadline</i> 31 July	<i>Advertising Deadline</i> 31 October
<i>Copy Deadline</i> 10 February	<i>Copy Deadline</i> 21 April	<i>Copy Deadline</i> 7 August	<i>Copy Deadline</i> 7 November

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