

Australian

STONEFRUIT

GROWER

*incorporating the **Low Chill Stonefruit Grower***



NOVEMBER 2014

...Issue No. 4/14

'Australian Stonefruit Grower' is the official publication of Summerfruit Australia Ltd & Low Chill Australia Inc. – the industry bodies representing the interests of Australian stone fruit growers.



Know-how for Horticulture™

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Cover Photo –

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Readers: Please feel free to forward a photo for possible use on the cover of this publication. Ed.

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From the Summerfruit Chairman -

With harvest in full swing and a drought here in Queensland every bit as severe as the droughts of the early 1980's and 1990's my report will be brief, as there is no busier or challenging time of the year than right now.

Since the last edition of our newsletter we have seen two events that will have a major impact in future years on Australia's stone fruit growers.

The release of the final report into *Fenthion* has occurred resulting in a twelve month phase out period for the chemical, followed by the total loss of it as an agent for the control of fruit fly from October 2015.

SAL has fought hard for the retention of this chemical for use against fruit fly as nothing else currently available can compare either in efficacy or economically, however it is a worldwide trend to remove organophosphates from the food chain and it would seem that the loss of this chemical is a continuation of that process.



The twelve month phase out period should now be used constructively by growers to develop the best possible control programs for fruit fly in their regions utilizing the options that will be available post *fenthion* in October 2015.

The one certainty is that fruit flies are likely to become more difficult and more expensive to control, and that managing the endemic fly populations post-harvest and through the winter period will be crucial for successful control through the following growing season.

Testing for chemical residues in fruit is now being done at a much lower level of recording than in the past and *fenthion* can now be detected at a minute presence (0.01mg per kg). Previous *fenthion* test results looked at the parent component of *fenthion* when determining the fruit residue level. Now tests are also including the *fenthion* sulfoxides which result as the raw *fenthion* breaks down. The slightest traces of *fenthion* in fruit can now be detected and we can be sure that stone fruit will be extensively tested following the suspension of label uses for *fenthion* in stonefruit from October 2015.

The forced changes to HAL that have resulted in it moving from an entity owned by the industry bodies representing growers from the many different streams of horticulture in Australia to a grower owned entity have created much uncertainty in how the funding of future research and development and marketing activities are going to be determined.

It could only happen in Canberra, where an existing structure is destroyed before its replacement is functional or the model for its replacement has been agreed to. How your voice as a levy payer is going to be heard or how the projects that are important to the long term development of Australia's Summerfruit Industry are going to get prioritized for funding drawn from the levies that are collected and deducted from the account sales from every kilo of fruit produced on every farm sold either direct to supermarkets or through the central market system is still unknown.

It is important for all growers that their voice is not lost to a few noisy individuals or that the control of the levies collected directly from them from the sale of their fruit is not lost to people with no "skin" in the industry. The levy is not a tax, it is a commitment that growers have given to invest in research and development and marketing in their industry. It is important now that to have a say in how your levy monies are invested you need to ensure that you register as a grower member of **Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited**.

I hope that your harvest is progressing well and that it is not as dry or hot in your part of Australia as it currently is in Queensland.

Kind regards

Andrew Finlay – Chairman





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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 **Tuesday, 16th December 2014** 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 3.30pm.

A Full Meeting Agenda will be forwarded by email to members 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.

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

Mark Napper

LCA President

15 November 2014



From the LCA President –Mark Napper

As the 2014 low chill season moves on, some of us who are finished are slowly raising our heads up out of the picking bag, packing shed or price discussions.

The season for Northern New South Wales has been extremely dry. Fortunately we had the August dumping which blessed us with good water supplies. With reduced numbers of growers and a consequent decrease in production, prices remained similar to last year. Are prices adequate for survival? For some yes, for others maybe not. Unfortunately, the reality is that this is the market and as price takers we have to adopt, adjust or exit. The other reality is that innovation holds the key.



Final report by APVMA on Fenthion was disappointing ...

Looking back over recent months we have had the final report by APVMA on Fenthion which was disappointing. A 12 month transition is grossly inadequate for us to finalise any definite alternatives. A one season crop makes testing slow. This year being a very dry year and low fly numbers made trials on new products difficult to draw definitive conclusions.

The Holy Grail for fruit fly control is a female Q fly trap. With news of some success with guava growers in trapping female flies, a Field Day was hastily arranged at Robert & Robin Hood's property. Early indications were promising with growers' trialling this season. Other trials also continued. Updates on these trials will be discussed at our AGM. The Field Day was extremely well attended with a Brown Rot update being presented by Oscar Villalta. Thanks to Team Hood for hosting us.

An open day to assess new varieties from your Low Chill breeding program was hosted by Greg Foster at Greg Nash's property. There were some very exciting and promising results. Again more will be said at our AGM. Thanks to the two Greg's for hosting the morning and being involved in the breeding program. Please consider these varieties when planning your new plantings as the sale proceeds go to support the program and your industry.

Looking forward to seeing you at our AGM on December 16, 11:00 am, Bangalow Bowling Club.

Kind regards

Mark Napper – President

Low Chill Australia Inc.

CHECK OUT THE LOW CHILL AUSTRALIA INC. WEBSITE www.lowchillaustralia.com.au

The Taste of Spring



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Summerfruit CEO Round Up ...



On the cusp of curbing domestic oversupply into the future

Well into November, the season gearing up, shaping up with some very good production outcomes, the long wait for official market access is soon to become a reality. As the eternal optimist, early to mid-December is gaining favouritism for some 'life saving' news for Industry overall.

Free Trade Agreement ...

Recently, September 2014, there have been encouraging representations by Federal & State Delegations to the Peoples Republic of China. These included the **Federal Minister for Agriculture Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP** – I was fortunate to be part of this delegation; the **State of Victoria Delegation, led by the Hon. Peter Walsh, Minister for Agriculture, Water & Food Security**; a high profile group of **stone fruit producers from the Swan Hill & Cobram Regions** accompanied by the **Trade Market Access Division** from Canberra and support from our **Embassy staff in Beijing** as well.



May I take a quick moment to thank and congratulate **Mr. Rob Williams** – Agricultural Post, Beijing, for the work he has conducted for the Stonefruit Industry during his term in Beijing. Rob is returning to Australia in January 2015.

The ‘stars’ are starting to line up for an exciting phase of our Industry. Until recently we were having anxious moments about *Brown Rot* and how to manage this pest/disease. *Brown Rot* has now been agreed to be a management only pest – to minimise presence but no need for freedom. In other words, a non-actionable item in the protocol when announced. Another good news story is that there will be no mandatory preclearance inspections. This will save Industry considerable dollars in export costs. Intransit Cold Treatment schedules have not been finalised and other contingencies are yet to be finalised.

With **exports**, we are to expect **imports** and the Chinese wish to commence shipments of nectarines to Australia for their season of 2015. Industry will have input into the Chinese protocol. Additional to this will be collaboration by both countries for:

- 1. Professional Development and Training** – Lead Agency is ATGA (Table Grapes);
- 2. Research & Development** – Lead Agency is Vic. DEPI; **Component 1:** using world leading genomic selection to fast track peach breeding in China. **Component 2:** Harvest and post harvest handling technology research to improve the export performance of Chinese and Australian fruit exports to assist bilateral trade;
- 3. Marketing** – Lead Agency is Summerfruit;
Program: Chinese stonefruit marketing
Chinese stonefruit is likely to be imported to Australia during July to September (outside of the Australian stonefruit season). The program would target:
 - Australia’s Chinese community with an emphasis on the major capital cities of Sydney and Melbourne
 - Stonefruit lovers
 - Wholesalers and retailers, most likely to be greengrocers and independent supermarkets (may be resistance from Coles and Woolworths).
 - Building a positive perception of the quality and safety of the fruit will be key to the program’s success.
- 4. Apple cooperation** – Lead Agency APAL, **Component 1:** APAL memorandum of understanding with Zhengzhou Fruit Research Institute. **Component 2:** Pink Lady TM Licensing; and
- 5. Research Cooperation** – Fruit Flies – Aim, To facilitate bilateral cooperation with China on technical research and regulatory systems to manage fruit fly for the purpose of promoting mutual trade outcomes. This proposal is made on a without prejudice basis.

What I have just outlined is the ‘new’ dynamic in collaboration and is keenly welcomed by both countries. With the predicted *Free Trade Agreement* about to be announced, this cooperation will surely balance and encourage favourable trade improvements to make commercially viable protocols for the future when more trust is established – ‘guanxi’.

Exclusive Agency for DA Meters ...

Your Board has taken on the exclusive agency for DA Meters in Australia. Please refer to the **No. 3/12 August 2012 edition** of the *Australian Stonefruit Grower*, **Page 16**, for the description and background to this valuable tool for fruit quality. It will definitely lift the bar for your output and quality measurements.

I will take orders ceo@summerfruit.com.au for this meter, please note we have been able to negotiate a very keen price. Presently, depending on exchange rates, to order a unit expect a unit price of Eu 2.900 = A\$. Already 10 units have been ordered. Please think seriously an outright purchase or about how you can cooperatively share one with you neighbours. The future technology being developed will make this device an absolute must have. I will circulate a short pptx presentation on the benefits of these meters.

Update on Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited ...

To bring you up to date with your new organisation, I have included the latest advice from the HIAL Chair.

Dear Mr Moore

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) has been working closely with Government over the last four months to implement much of the recent report “Better Value for Growers – a Future for HAL” prepared by ACIL Allen Consulting.

As a consequence of the recommendations in this report a new company, Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd (HIA Ltd), was created with the specific purpose of assuming the role of industry services/export control body at the expiry



of HAL's statutory funding agreement (SFA) on 4 November 2014. This company will have a new constitution and will transition to grower levy payers as registered voting members in November 2015.

Progress towards this goal has generally been on track. The company has been established and the new board was welcomed by the Federal Minister for Agriculture on 7 October 2014.

HIA Ltd has been advised by the Minister that it will receive all of HAL's industry assets and liabilities through a declaration that will come into effect on 4 November (today). By declaration dated 23 October 2014, HAL ceased to be industry services/export control body at midnight on 3 November 2014. HAL's SFA expired simultaneously. HIA Ltd will not be declared the industry services/export control body until the negotiations regarding a new constitution and SFA are concluded. These negotiations are still in progress, and hopefully they will be completed by the end of this week.

HIA Ltd has been advised by the Department of Agriculture that due to administrative protocols the estimated date of the outstanding declarations could be delayed until 24/25 November, although earlier resolution is possible. HIA Ltd has also been formally notified that it cannot expend any Commonwealth funds until the effective date of the declarations. It will also not receive any additional Commonwealth funds, including research and development and marketing amounts or matching funding.

Until HIA Ltd is declared the industry services/export control body:

1. It may not enter into new contracts and funding arrangements
2. All payments associated with the transferred HAL portfolio of investments will be suspended from 4 November. HIA Ltd undertakes to attend to all payments and other matters as soon as it is able.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or John Lloyd on 02 8295 2321.

Selwyn Snell HIA Chairman

I will keep you posted on any new developments as they come to hand. In the next newsletter I will include a broader overview of events and the outlook for the new HIAL.

John Moore CEO – Summerfruit Australia Ltd

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





Industry News ...



Agriculture minister welcomes new horticulture body

The Australian Government has welcomed the registration of *Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited* as a new research, development and marketing body to support Australia's \$9.5 billion horticulture industry.

"*Horticulture Innovation Australia* will be ably led by its board members **Ridley Bell, Rob Clark, David Cliffe, Susan Finger, David Moon, Stephen Morrow, Mark Napper, Selwyn Snell** and **Peter Wauchope**," Minister Joyce said.

"These board members bring well-rounded skills to the company, including a wealth of corporate and horticulture knowledge which will help deliver a profitable future for Australia's horticulture industry," Minister Joyce said.

"I expect *Horticulture Innovation Australia* will finalise its structure and the company's constitution at its first meeting. I also expect it to commence negotiations with the government around a deed of agreement which could see it receive and invest more than \$100 million in grower levies, industry contributions and taxpayer funds in horticulture programmes annually."

The establishment of *Horticulture Innovation Australia* follows a recent independent report into the performance of *Horticulture Australia Limited* which recommended a change to a new, grower-owned research and development company. It also follows the commencement of a Senate Inquiry into industry structures and systems governing the imposition of and disbursement of marketing and research and development levies in the agricultural sector.

"The levy system is a critical element in Australia's research and development model. It is important to ensure it is operating efficiently and effectively. That is why I support the recently commenced Senate inquiry into levies," Minister Joyce said. "Many of the changes stemming from the HAL independent performance review are foundational and can happen separately to the inquiry. While I do not want to pre-empt any outcome of the inquiry, there is still scope to make additional changes to the horticulture levy system later on down the track."

HAL BOARD MEMBERS

- **Mr Ridley Bell (NSW)** – Mr Bell is a blueberry grower and the owner of Mountain Blue Farms. He is a commercial fruit grower, supplying to retailers and nurseries in both the domestic and international market. Mountain Blue Farms is committed to advancing the development of R&D in terms of breeding and technology.
- **Professor Rob Clark (TAS)** – Mr Clark has considerable research and development experience including a previous position as Deputy Chairman of Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation and the Director of the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture at the University of Tasmania.
- **Mr David Cliffe (NSW)** – Mr Cliffe has broad experience across a number of horticultural industries in his capacity as a nurseryman supplying plant material to the vegetable, deciduous fruit tree and citrus industries.
- **Ms Susan Finger (VIC)** – Ms Finger is a Victorian apple orchardist, with a successful history in farmer and industry representation organisations. She is currently a Board member of the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) and the immediate past president of the VFF Horticulture Group.
- **Mr David Moon (QLD)** – Mr Moon has an understanding of company and marketing management as well as grassroots grower experience as Managing Director of Moonrocks, an onion growing company. Mr Moon is also a member of the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee.
- **Mr Stephen Morrow (QLD)** – Mr Morrow has over 30 years experience in agribusiness across a number of industries as both a CEO and a non-executive Director. Mr Morrow is currently Chairman of Buderim Ginger Ltd, Chairman Priestley's Gourmet Holdings Ltd, and a Director of Pilton Valley Premium Pork Ltd.
- **Mr Mark Napper (NSW)** – Mr Napper has 30 years experience in Australian agribusiness, 22 of which have been in horticulture. Mr Napper owns a fruit orchard in Bangalow NSW and currently grows peaches, nectarines and custard apples having previously grown avocados, mangoes and mandarins.
- **Mr Selwyn Snell (QLD)** – Mr Snell has extensive experience as a senior executive with leading agribusiness and biotechnology enterprises in Australia and internationally. Mr Snell is currently, Chairman of the Council of Rural



Research and Development Corporations, the Queensland Government's Horticultural Development Committee and Barawyn Pty Ltd. He is a non-executive Director of Plant Health Australia Limited and member of the APVMA advisory board.

- **Mr Peter Wauchope (WA)** – Mr Wauchope is the General Manager of Center West Exports and Sun City Farms. Mr Wauchope has a robust understanding of sales, marketing and export experience given Center West is a major exporter of produce to various countries including Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Middle East, Maldives as well as supplying the domestic market.

Industry News ...

ACCC takes further action against Coles for alleged unconscionable conduct towards its suppliers

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has instituted proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia against Coles Supermarkets Australia Pty Ltd and Grocery Holdings Pty Ltd (together, Coles) alleging that Coles engaged in unconscionable conduct in contravention of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL).

“This is a matter of significant public interest involving allegations of unconscionable conduct by a large national company in its dealings with small business suppliers in the highly concentrated supermarket industry,” ACCC Chairman Rod Sims said. “The ACCC alleges that Coles took advantage of its superior bargaining position by demanding money from suppliers that it was not lawfully entitled to, and was, in all the circumstances, unconscionable.”

“The ACCC has commenced these proceedings because it considers the alleged conduct was contrary to the prevailing business and social values which underpin business standards that apply to dealings with suppliers,” Mr Sims said.

“These proceedings will provide the Court with an opportunity to consider whether conduct of this nature, if proven, is unlawful in the context of large businesses dealing with their suppliers.”

These proceedings arise out of the same investigation as the proceedings that were instituted by the ACCC against Coles on 5 May 2014 in respect to Coles' Active Retail Collaboration (ARC) program. "The proceedings relating to ARC allege unconscionable conduct in the design and implementation of the ARC program specifically, whereas these new proceedings concern conduct which occurred in the course of Coles' day to day interactions with suppliers," Mr Sims said.

In the latest proceedings, the ACCC alleges that in 2011, Coles, outside of its trading terms with the suppliers concerned:

- pursued agreements to pay Coles for “profit gaps” on a supplier’s goods, being the difference between the amount of profit Coles had wanted to make on those goods and the amount it had achieved;
- pursued agreements to pay Coles, both retrospectively and prospectively, for amounts it claimed as “waste” on a supplier’s goods which occurred after Coles had accepted the goods, and price reductions, or “markdowns” implemented by Coles to clear goods;
- imposed fines or penalties on suppliers for short or late deliveries.

It is alleged that the causes of both profit gaps and “waste and markdowns” were usually outside the control of suppliers, and that the amount of the fines Coles imposed was unrelated to the value of the goods, to any loss that Coles might actually have suffered from the short or late delivery, or to the reasons for the short or late delivery.

The ACCC alleges that Coles took advantage of its superior bargaining position and sought to achieve these outcomes by, among other things:

- **demanding agreements to pay money where it knew, or ought reasonably to have known that it had no legitimate basis for doing so;**
- **failing to provide adequate information to suppliers to allow them to understand the basis upon which the demands were made;**
- **applying undue pressure by, in some cases:**
 - threatening measures that were commercially detrimental to the suppliers if they refused to agree to payments;
 - by pressing suppliers for urgent responses to agree to payments; or
 - by making multiple demands of suppliers for different types of payments;
- **withholding money due to suppliers and refusing to repay money when it knew it was not entitled to retain it.**

The ACCC is seeking pecuniary penalties, declarations, injunctions and costs. The matter was listed for a directions hearing in Melbourne at 10am on Friday 24 October 2014 before Justice Gordon.



Industry News ...

“Local” gains traction for Sydney Summer Fruit Growers

Peach and nectarine growers on Sydney’s outskirts have combined with Woolworths, Australia’s largest supermarket chain, to deliver tree-ripened fruit to 22 local Woolworths’ stores, all within 30km of their orchards.

The families, marketing under their exclusive brand “*Bombowlee - local fruit for local families*”, have been known for their premium, early season peaches and nectarines since the 1930s, and supplying Woolworths for over 50 years.

Mark Jolly of *Jolly Family Orchards*, and part of the Bombowlee group says “the response by consumers in Sydney’s northwest to our initial tree-ripened program last season with Woolworths was outstanding. This season is shaping up to be bigger and better for even more consumers and for our growers, thanks to the support by Woolworths”.



Bombowlee orchardists Linda and Mark Jolly with Woolworths’ Garth Leary

“Although Woolworths has around 900 stores nationally, they have demonstrated the flexibility to link with local growers to market to local families through their local stores. As a result, our growers, consumers and Woolworths all benefit,” Mr Jolly observed.

Fruit is being selectively picked at its peak maturity and is on the Woolworths’ shelves within 24 hours. This means fruit spends more time on the trees to develop the best flavour, sweetness and juiciness. **Ray Christie** of *Christie Orchards*, and part of the Bombowlee group says, “*Bombowlee* is a local brand that allows us to pool our fruit. Most importantly it allows us to provide consistent quality and eating experiences to local consumers. We also take special care to protect our fruit from harvest to consumers, because it is tree-ripened and ready to eat.”



The fresh picked and locally grown peaches and nectarines will be available from early November through to December.

One Way of Marketing Fruit – ‘Dressing’ up peaches in China

Sent to the Editor for possible publication?





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Research ...

Market Potential for Value Added Peach, Nectarine, Plum and Apricot Product.

Project Leader: Joanna Frith

Research Provider: Montague Fresh

Project Number: SF13000 (Completion Date: July 14, 2014)

Author: Joanna Frith



Technical Summary ...

The market for fresh summerfruit is under supply pressure, heavily driven by the volume of less than optimum retail grade fruit, typically due to visual defects. If other distribution options can be found for this fruit, it would leave a platform in these fresh fruit markets that is more receptive to further value being added. Juicing this imperfect fruit is an option that would remove volume from the fresh market, which is core to the rationale for investigating this possibility.

Market precedents exist for fresh apple juice, however there are minimal existing examples of fresh summerfruit juice products in either the Australian market or internationally. As a result, summerfruit could present a unique and positive product feature, but also an unknown that requires a marketing investment to gain consumer confidence.

This project maps out the overall juice market in Australia, profiling apparent distribution channel volumes and mechanisms and the requirements to access these as a juice supplier. It also analyses the current competitive landscape in the Australian juice market which a new product would be required to face, and the relationship between juice product attributes and value, and what can be learned from this for a new juice product.

- The Australian juice market is highly competitive, with the majority of the market controlled by four key players. Small suppliers are exposed to high costs and face risks and a precedence of high failure rates. The premium juice segment is characterized by a large number of small and mid-size players.
- There is a clear correlation between pack size and price per litre, pointing to the use of smaller sizes as an approach to establish a price premium.
- Retail sales of juice are relatively consistent over the course of the year with a small peak over the summer months.
- Success in the juice market requires the correct bundling of features including pack size, product attributes, branding/marketing and distribution arrangements.
- There are a wide range of product attributes attached to a premium juice product, and individual attributes are not a guarantee of a price premium.
- A premium is more frequently associated with a bundle of attributes, and the highest value is attached to attribute bundles incorporating a 'base', a health attribute, and a 'premium' attribute which adds a unique aspect to the brand.
- Summerfruit has a small presence in the Australian juice market, but where used it has been positioned as a special ingredient.
- Many premium juice brands have effective marketing platforms that include a personal story, attractive packaging and an active social media presence. A new competitor would need to consider the requirements to compete in each of these areas.
- There are a range of pathways to market available for independent juice suppliers, which offer distribution potential for a range of different supply volumes.
- Direct supply to supermarkets offers advantages in simplified logistics and high volume, but new products face challenges capturing sales in a highly competitive juice category.
- Corporate juice suppliers hold significant influence. Securing distribution through this pathway requires large volumes, branding support and a range of juice product variants.
- Use of third party distributors is a common approach for independent juice suppliers, but requires direct competition with other smaller-sized juice players, branding support and moderate volumes.
- The foodservice sector presents an opportunity for smaller-scale supplier with niche products, but direct distribution can require significant investment in delivery capacity.
- Distribution through wholesale markets to greengrocers and foodservice has the lowest volume barrier to entry and offers a number of market positioning advantages



Research ...

Fruit Fly – A global research effort has finally resolved a major biosecurity issue: four of the world’s most destructive agricultural pests are actually one and the same.

For twenty years some of the world’s most damaging pest fruit flies have been almost impossible to distinguish from each other. The ability to identify pests is central to quarantine, trade, pest management and basic research.

In 2009 a coordinated research effort got underway to definitively answer this question by resolving the differences, if any, between five of the most destructive fruit flies: the **Oriental fruit fly**, the **Philippine fruit fly**, the **Invasive fruit fly**, the **Carambola fruit fly**, and the **Asian Papaya fruit fly**. These species cause incalculable damage to horticultural industries and food security across Asia, Africa, the Pacific and parts of South America.



Oriental Fruit Fly - Photo Ana Rodriguez

The Philippine fruit fly was formally recognised as the same species as the Asian Papaya fruit fly in 2013. The latest study goes further, conclusively demonstrating that they are also the same biological species as the Oriental and Invasive fruit flies. These four species have now been combined under the single name: *Bactrocera dorsalis*, the Oriental fruit fly. The closely-related Carambola fruit fly remains distinct.

Professor Tony Clarke, Chair of Fruit Fly Biology and Management from the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (PBCRC) and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), believes the integrated multidisciplinary nature of the project leaves little doubt the species are identical.

“More than 40 researchers from 20 countries examined evidence across a range of disciplines, using morphological, molecular, cytogenetic, behavioural and chemoecological data to present a compelling case for

this taxonomic change,” he said.

“This outcome has major implications for global plant biosecurity, especially for developing countries in Africa and Asia,” said Professor Clarke.

“For example, Invasive (now Oriental) fruit fly has devastated African fruit production with crop losses exceeding 80 per cent, widespread trade restrictions with refusal of shipments into Europe and Japan, and significant economic and social impacts to farming communities.”



Map 1: Fruit fly distribution before



Map 2: Fruit fly distribution now

Keeping exotic fruit fly out is a major concern for Australian biosecurity agencies. While an outbreak of Papaya fruit fly near Cairns in the mid-1990s inflicted \$A100 million in eradication and industry costs, current estimates rate the Oriental fruit fly as the biggest threat to Australian plant biosecurity, with the total cost to the nation of an invasion estimated at \$A1 billion.



Combining the four species will mean a major reassessment of Australia's exotic fruit fly risk.

“Globally, accepting these four pests as a single species will lead to improved international cooperation in pest management, more effective quarantine measures, reduced barriers to international trade, the wider application of established post-harvest treatments, improved fundamental research and, most importantly, enhanced food security for some of the world's poorest nations,” said Professor Clarke.

The paper, *B. papayae*, *B. invadens*, and *B. dorsalis synonymy*, is published in the journal *Systematic Entomology*: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/syen.12113/abstract> and is a collaboration between 33 research organisations in 20 countries, supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Study implications ...

- a major reassessment of the risk of exotic fruit fly incursions to Australian horticulture – currently the biggest threat to Australian plant biosecurity
- improved international cooperation in pest management
- more effective quarantine measures
- reduced barriers to international trade
- the wider application of established post-harvest treatments
- improved fundamental research
- enhanced food security for some of the world's poorest nations



Tony Steeper –
*Corporate Communications and Engagement
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Industry Information ...

Horticulture Centre of Excellence



The Horticulture Centre of Excellence is a vibrant centre located in the heart of the Goulburn Valley that connects, innovates and promotes a horticulture sector that is productive, profitable and globally competitive. The centre will focus on state-wide industry development, act as an industry hub, and provide industry education and training programs.

The Centre, an initiative of the *Goulburn Valley Fruit Growing Industry Roadmap*, aims to position growers to capture profitable new opportunities in export and domestic markets as outlined in the Victorian Government's *Food to Asia Action Plan*. This will be underpinned by the latest market intelligence, deep industry networks and science excellence across the DEPI sites of Tatura, Mildura, Bundoora and Rutherglen.

The Centre's impressive scientific facilities include pear and stone fruit field laboratories, state of the art soil laboratories, glasshouses and controlled environment rooms, insect rearing facilities, and a new sensor-equipped grading and coolstore facility to measure fruit maturity, quality and composition.

Industry development

- Horticulture industry networks
- Export market information and analysis
- Management of biosecurity risks
- Horticulture business planning
- Horticulture research and innovation fund

Education and training

- Industry capability development
- Postgraduate education and training

Research

- Plant physiology (pre & post harvest)
- Horticulture management systems
- Bioprotection and biosecurity
- Soil sciences
- Irrigation sciences
- Spatial sciences



Horticulture Centre of Excellence



The Horticulture Centre of Excellence will make a difference by:

- Strengthening the links with industry and commercial partners to facilitate information flow, innovation and collaboration efforts across the sector to address development challenges and opportunities.
- Enhancing collaboration nationally and internationally, attracting world-leading scientists and experts to bring the latest in horticulture to Victoria.
- Improving our productivity with research and development in horticulture management systems that produce consistently high quality fruit that meets the requirements of consumers.
- Protecting the horticulture industries by linking expertise on the rapid detection, response and management of pests and diseases.
- Optimising horticultural exports by connecting industry to in-market experts, market information and trends.
- Providing horticulture postgraduate education and training, industry leadership development and increased capabilities in business entrepreneurship and service provision to build the capability of the industry for now and the future.

Features of the Horticulture Centre of Excellence

Located at Tatura, a 98 hectare site with extensive office facilities, conference and meeting room facilities, laboratories, greenhouse and the research farm.

- Strong links to DEPI horticulture sites at Mildura, Bundoora and Rutherglen.
- Uniquely co-located with other agriculture agencies and businesses providing the horticulture industry with insights and expertise to keep abreast of emerging issues and increase collaboration efforts.
- Specialist facilities including state of the art soil physics laboratory, plant growth facilities (glasshouses and controlled environment rooms), chemical ecology laboratory, insect rearing facilities and a new sensor-equipped grading facility to measure fruit maturity, quality and composition.
- Pear and stone fruit field laboratories to research management systems for new fruit varieties.
- Supported by PC2 and PC3 glasshouses and controlled environment facilities and rapid disease diagnostic capabilities in AgriEko, Bundoora.

For further information, please contact:

Director, Horticulture Centre of Excellence
Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Tatura Centre
Telephone: +61 03 5833 5222

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Research ...

Reducing variability in summer fruit quality through improved tree management

Horticultural Production Sciences, Agriculture Productivity
- DEPI Victoria

The problem

- Consistent fruit size and high soluble solids concentration (SSC) in peaches and nectarines are important components of fruit quality and consumer acceptability
- High variability within trees can be a major impediment to meeting consumer and export market requirements for consistent quality

Our research aims

- Understand tree management and environmental factors resulting in fruit quality variability
- Compare different tree management techniques for improving fruit quality
- Determine effects of fruit quality variation and harvest practices on postharvest quality

Orchard experiments and technologies

- Determine effect of tree crop load, leaf-to-fruit ratio, fruit thinning, and fruit position and shading, on variability in fruit quality
- Model the effect of tree and environmental factors (eg. fruit temperature) on variability in fruit quality
- Utilize non-destructive vis-NIR technologies to monitor fruit maturity and sugars during growth



Crop load and fruit thinning

Fruit maturity using DA meter



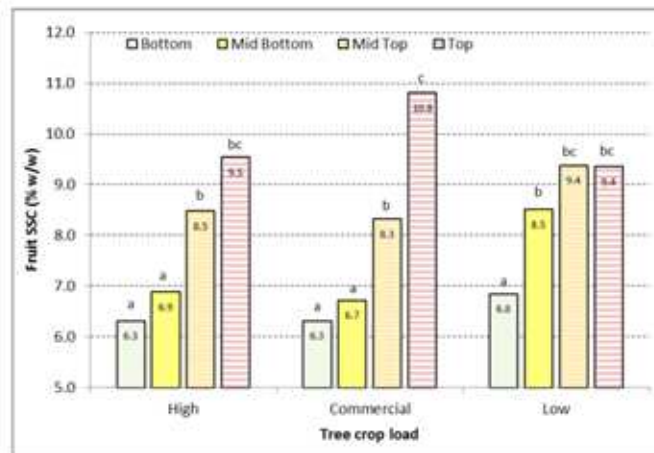
Fruit sugars using vis-NIR

Fruit temperature monitoring





Reducing variability in summer fruit quality through improved tree management



Effect of tree crop load and fruit height on fruit SSC in 'Rose Bright' nectarine at 94 DAFB. Means followed by the same letters are not significantly different at $P>0.05$.

Potential tree management solutions for improving quality

- Fruit thinning based on a uniform leaf-to-fruit ratio along scaffold limbs rather than based on number of fruit per fruiting branch (if there are fewer fruiting branches at the top of the tree then leave more fruit per branch)
- Earlier fruit thinning (fruit diameter <15mm) to maximise cell number in fruit flesh, and fruit size at harvest
- Maximise fruit number higher in trees and reduce number at the base to improve uniformity of leaf-to-fruit ratio
- For new plantings reduce tree size (e.g., Spanish vase training) and rootstock vigour, and increase planting density to maintain yield
- For open vase trees, train to a more open centre to maximize light penetration at base of trees
- Adjust tree crop load to maximise fruit size and SSC if economically viable (i.e., if economic returns are greater for higher quality fruit)

Research team:

John Lopresti, Dario Stefanelli, Glen Hale, Christine Frisina, Bruce Tomkins, Ian Goodwin

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Industry Information ...

Importance of Soluble Calcium in Stone Fruit

One of the most important functions for Calcium (Ca) in stonefruit is for “Cell Integrity and membrane permeability”. Without which the cells become “leaky” and lose control over the ability to import and export elements leading to cell breakdownⁱ. This in turn leads to quality and yield losses.

Calcium is relatively immobile in plants, which means you need to supply water soluble calcium into the root-zone, available for plant uptake at key fruit development stages. The most essential periods are pre stone hardening, to help fortify rapidly dividing fruit cells and post stone hardening, to maintain skin cell resilience as the fruit rapidly expands. Another key timing for calcium application can be at post harvest (with your nitrogen application).

It’s my contention that there may be links to this Calcium conundrum and early season skin breakdown observed on stone fruit this season (2013-14). When looking at the problem under a microscope the cells looked like what has been described above, “Leaky”. There is a chance this problem could be minimised by good Calcium nutrition practices. In season applications are an obvious choice for calcium timing, however post harvest also presents an opportunity to help build calcium levels in the tree prior to the following season.

It’s true that in the Swan Hill District we often have high levels of Calcium (Ca) in our soils. We see those little white limestone rocks everywhere, but in the words of a very wise Agronomist “trees can’t suck up rocks”ⁱⁱ.

The presence of Ca in soil does not mean it’s readily plant available. In fact, besides its physical (rocky) state mentioned above, where it’s adsorbed to form insoluble compoundsⁱⁱⁱ, it can be fixated strongly to the soil, particularly where soils are of a high pH^{iv}. So, there is a strong distinction between what is “water soluble calcium” and what is relatively insoluble, limestone based calcium.

And that’s the point. For calcium to move through the soil to the roots and then pass into the root cells needs to be soluble/or in solution. Only a very small percentage of this naturally occurring soil calcium may be available to the plant roots during the season. At times when the tree demand for calcium outweighs the soils ability to supply enough calcium, such as pre and post stone hardening, additional, water soluble calcium must be supplied to the plant roots.

If you think that fruit quality and tree performance might be improved by the application of more available calcium, then post-harvest is a good time to start. Campbells Calcium Nitrate is particularly suitable as a post harvest application on stone fruit, as the nitrogen and calcium can be taken up immediately. Nitrogen post-harvest helps to improve flower quality, fruit set and early fruitlet development the following season and calcium will help improve overall tree Ca levels.

This post harvest combination means that you will have a tree, well supplied with calcium and nitrogen that will have the best chance of a strong, healthy start and productive season in 2014/ 15

For more information or [Special Offers](#) on your Calcium Nitrate Contact:

Steven Lorimer – Sales_Agronomist
E.E. Muir & Sons – Swan Hill
0407048511

ⁱ Johnson R. S & Urio K: Mineral Nutrition, University of California

ⁱⁱ Andrew Stewart: Senior Agronomist, E.E. Muir & Sons

ⁱⁱⁱ Article: Supplied by Mat Stewart, Campbell’s Fertilisers

^{iv} Johnson R. S & Urio K: Mineral Nutrition, University of California



Publication Details ...

Australian Stonefruit Grower

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- 2015 Publication Timetable -

Contributions are invited for the next scheduled publication - **FEBRUARY 2015**.

FEBRUARY	MAY	AUGUST	NOVEMBER
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Copy Deadline 10 February	Copy Deadline 28 April	Copy Deadline 7 August	Copy Deadline 7 November

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That's all from me for 2014. The very best to readers for a truly great festive season. Back in February 2015.

Col Scotney - Editor – Australian Stonefruit Grower

LCA Communications Manager

