



President David Wallace & the Executive Committee wish all Members and industry colleagues a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

David Wallace re-elected as VGA Vic President

The 2012 VGA Vic AGM, held on Friday 12 October, confirmed the re-election of David Wallace as President for a further term and endorsed the 2012-2013 Office Bearers and Executive Committee.

President David Wallace will return for another term with Rocky Lamattina serving as Senior Vice President. Paul Gazzola returns as the Junior Vice President of the Executive Committee, alongside Treasurer Vince Doria and Secretary and Public Officer Tony Imeson.

The other Executive Committee members serving over the next year will be:

- Craig Arnott.
- William Bulmer.
- Peter Cochrane.
- Luis Gazzola.
- Frank Lamattina.
- Anthony Mason.

At the completion of the business session at the AGM, VGA Vic Executive Manager Helena Whitman and IDO East John Runting provided an update on the work of the VGA Vic IDO team over the past 12 months.

This was followed by a range of industry reviews presented by invited guests including:

- Richard Mulcahy, CEO AUSVEG.
- Allan Crosthwaite, CEO Melbourne Market Authority.
- Sze Flett, Director Horticulture DPI Victoria.
- Graeme Ford, CEO Victorian Farmers Federation.
- Will Gordon, Industry Services Manager Horticulture Australia.
- Martin Kneebone, Director Freshlogic.
- John McCormick, Branch Manager Rabobank.

Around 30 guests enjoyed dinner with a presentation from Mrs Tina Lamattina, this year's winner of the AUSVEG Women in Horticulture Award. Tina spoke about the history of the Lamattina Group's involvement in the vegetable industry and emphasised the essential role of women in horticulture. Tina was recently invited by Monsanto to participate in a panel discussion in the United States.



▲ VGA Vic Executive Officer Tony Imeson, with President David Wallace and Executive Manager Helena Whitman.



▲ Growers and industry representatives hear from industry leaders at the AGM.

President's report



Greetings and Merry Christmas to all.

What a year - the wettest Autumn and early Spring in 15-17 years followed by a dry spell in mid-September. Well that's just normal for growers who face challenges every year from the weather, crop diseases, pests, new or old varieties not performing to expectations, or falling prices.

On the positive side there are exceptions, such as this year where winter returns have been very good for some. That is, if you had the produce to sell given the wet conditions.

We vegetable growers are very optimistic about our future, or maybe we are just kidding ourselves about the future of growing veggies in this state? I say that because a lot of small to medium-sized growers are questioning their ability to be able to survive now and into the future. Why are we questioning our ability to survive? Operational costs have risen steeply in recent times, made worse since the carbon tax was introduced. We growers are very smart

business people - most farming enterprises are. Often our operations are three or four generations old and you don't last that long on luck alone. Our operations are durable, which comes from being adaptable, practical and forward thinking in our ability to grow the world's best vegetables.

As Victorian growers we put our money where our mouth is in purchasing the best and latest machinery to plant and harvest our veggies and secure the future of our businesses. We make it faster and easier for staff to harvest and are able to be cost-efficient while delivering consumers an optimal quality product at an affordable price.

The vegetable industry has its challenges. Many growers toil week in, week out for limited return. So what's the answer? That's where VGA Vic comes into the equation as part of the solution of growers being united. All vegetable growers - with the support of VGA Vic - can have a strong voice and help deliver outcomes that will assist all growers to remain viable. Information is vital to any business. I know that everybody is flat to the board, but sometimes it pays to look up and around you and let us know what you are thinking. Remember, your VGA Vic representatives are just a phone call away.

In recent news, the 2012 Annual General Meeting held at Crowne Plaza in October 2012 was a great event, featuring nine guests speaking on vegetable industry issues. In particular, the presentation by Martin Kneebone on retail market trends was very interesting and I would encourage growers to access reports on his levy-funded project. Our main speaker for the night was Tina Lamattina of the Lamattina Group. This lady is a hidden gem - Tina's passion and philosophy on growing veggies is the best I have heard. Tina's story makes me very proud to be in this great industry, because it reaffirms how much each grower has

achieved in his or her business enterprise. Well done to all involved in this successful night.

To update you all, the Epping Market relocation is still progressing but answers are few and far between. It is a slow process - too slow for all tenants associated within the current Melbourne Markets. In related developments, the VGA Vic, together with Fruit Growers Victoria, have engaged consultant Manny Spiteri to develop a workable solution to the allocation of space on the trading floor. Our aim is to give every current stand holder a workable percentage of area, considering we will reduce from 14,000 square metres at Footscray Road to 7,000 square metres at Epping. To put our views to decision-makers we have also produced a discussion paper outlining what we feel is the best solution for all stand holders. Hopefully by the time you read this the government will have taken notice and agreed to our resolution which takes out the fear that anyone could miss out in obtaining a stand at the new Epping Market. The VGA Vic will continue to fight for stand holders' rights in order to achieve the best outcome on the trading floor at the new market for all growers.

Enjoy your Christmas and New Year with family and friends - and celebrate the New Year just as hard as we work.

Life's good and stay fresh.

David Wallace

President

For Executive Officer's corner

See page 12

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DISCLAIMER: The purpose of *Vegetables Victoria* is to communicate to the Victorian vegetable industry a sample of the activities that are being carried out in the state in relation to the VGA Vic. and the National Vegetable Levy. The information provided should not be interpreted as advice or a recommendation of any kind. VGA Vic. and its officers disclaim all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from relying on any information in this publication.

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Minimum safety requirements for farm trailers

With more users on our roads and the fast pace of modern life, many drivers are not aware of the dangers around farm machinery or trailers on public roads. Impatience and risk-taking when passing slow-moving machinery are a constant hazard for growers.

The majority of vegetable growers will have some form of farm trailer or towed implement on the farm, often having to move them down the road to the next paddock. Many farmers drive these implements without thinking twice about the minimum safety requirements. Most towed implements are designed for a specific task or operation within a paddock without needing to abide by road rules.

With these concerns in mind VicRoads produced a draft information bulletin outlining the minimum requirements for safe use of Agricultural Trailers in October 2012.

What is defined as an agricultural trailer?

An agricultural trailer is a vehicle that does not have its own motive power, that is drawn or towed and used exclusively:

- As an agricultural implement;
- For transporting the comb of a grain header;
- As a bulk bin used exclusively for holding grain and constructed for that purpose; or
- A trailer towed by an agricultural machine operating as an agricultural machine.

The above definition of an agricultural trailer is broad, and does cover most implements that are towed on the roads or could be towed on the road.

Agricultural trailers are exempt from the requirement to be registered or meet the standards for registration, however, this does not remove the obligation of the operator to ensure the trailer, and any combination of vehicles it is part of, is safe and roadworthy.

General requirements

Follow the following guidelines to ensure that your activities meet current regulations.

Tyres:

- Tyres need to be appropriate for the function of the machine.

Mudguards:

- If mudguards cannot be fitted the implement should not be towed on the road at a speed of more than 20km/h.

Brakes:

- The combination of trailer brakes and vehicle brakes must be able to operate and be stable under all braking conditions.

Tow Couplings:

- Ball couplings comprise of either a "Bartlett" ball type used

vic roads

DRAFT

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Agricultural trailers
Minimum requirements for safe use

An information bulletin on safe use of agricultural trailers is available on the VGA Vic website. www.vgavic.org.au/communication/e_news/agricultural_trailers.htm

on heavy vehicle combinations or the common standard 50mm tow ball used on light trailers.

- Ring feeder is a pin and eye coupling used extensively where trucks are the towing vehicle.
- Pintle hook coupling are a hook and eye coupling whereby the joint becomes two closed loops requiring one to be manually opened to separate the joint.
- Clevis couplings utilise a hitch pin to capture the connecting tongue of the towed vehicle between the upper and lower flanges. The hitch pin should be retained in place by a secondary device such as a linch pin.



Linch Pins:

- There are two types of pins the spring linch pin and the "R" clip. Under no circumstances should the "R" clip be used in situations where there is any likelihood that something may catch or hit the "R" clip and force it out of position.

Safety Chains:

- All hitch types described above require safety chains of appropriate strength in case of accidental detachment while the trailer or implement is being towed.

In summary, growers need to ensure the trailer or agricultural implement can be seen clearly by other road users.

Visibility can be improved by fitting the following:

- Rear marker plates of the type used on trucks be fitted to the rear.
- Flashing rotating lights be fitted to the towing vehicle.
- Reflective tape on all faces of the vehicle that can be seen by other road users.

In addition, all lights and lenses should be kept clean and in good working order at all times.

For a copy of this draft document from VicRoads please contact your VGA IDO.



VGA updates from In-the-Field

If you don't receive the VGA electronic newsletter, In-the-Field, and would like to, please email contact@vgavic.org.au with your email address so that it can be sent to you.

Migration Amendment (Reform of Employer Sanctions) Bill 2012

As this Bill could have significant impact on vegetable growers, VGA Vic is tracking its progress through Parliament. Currently, the Bill has had two readings and is now before the Federation Chamber.

In essence, the Bill is seeking to amend the criminal offences and create new non-fault civil penalty provisions for persons who do the following:

- Allow an unlawful non-citizen to work or refer an unlawful person to a third person for work.
- Allow a lawful non-citizen to work in breach of a work-related visa condition or refer a lawful non-citizen to a third person for work in breach of a work-related visa condition.

The Bill then seeks to:

- Extend liability for contravention to a wider range of persons and entities enabling an infringement notice to be issued as an alternative to commencing civil penalty proceedings.
- Extend the geographical jurisdiction in relation to work-related civil penalty provisions; and introduce investigation powers to allow authorised officers to gather evidence of suspected breaches. This would place the onus back on the grower to ensure that all workers are legal.

Agricultural trailers

VicRoads has put out draft guidelines for 'Agricultural Trailers' covering

all aspects of their use including: tyres; mudguards; brakes; tow couplings; visibility; and lighting. There are some requirements outlined in the Guidelines that could pose problems for vegetable growers, however, the requirements are not mandatory. As with all things we need to keep an eye on this in case it does become mandatory. A copy of the paper is available on the VGA website, www.vgavic.org.au.

Inquiry into rural drainage

The Victorian Parliament's Environmental and Natural Resources Committee has launched an investigation into rural drainage following the 2010/2011 floods. The inquiry, however, has not taken into account Werribee and Cranbourne surrounds as they are deemed 'metro'. VGA Vic has requested that these areas be included in the review.

Fire Services Levy

VGA Vic is keeping a watch on this and will keep you informed through In-the Field of any significant changes.

Country of Origin Labelling

The Consumer Amendment (Australian Food Labelling) Bill 2012 (No. 2) has been tabled and the Senate has referred the Bill to the Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport. They are due to report back on the first sitting day in 2013.



Thursday 2nd & Friday 3rd May, 2013

Put it in your diary so you don't miss it!

The National Vegetable Expo Committee would like to advise that the 2013 Prospectus is now available for those interested in taking a site at next year's Expo. Several sites have already been booked by suppliers showing the keen interest in the event. Many of the favourites will be there again next year.

The Prospectus can be downloaded from www.vgavic.org.au or you can call Helena on 0407 772 299 for a copy.

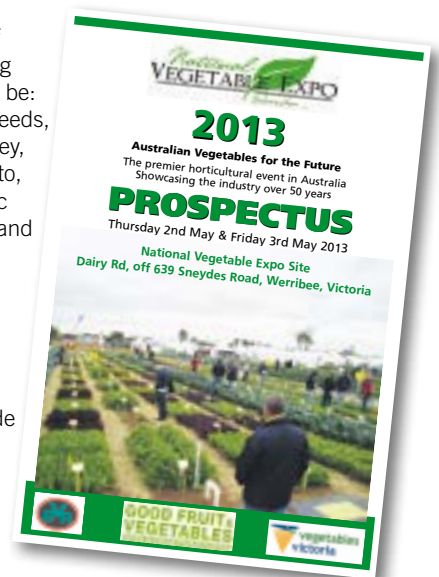
Work has begun on preparing the seed plots for the seed company plantings. Les and David have been fumigating, bed forming and applying lime to the beds during November. Planting by the 11 seed companies should start in the near future and it should prove to be a great spectacle once again, drawing large crowds to the displays.

The Committee would like to thank the following seed companies

for their continued support of the industry. Those displaying their produce at the Expo will be: Syngenta Seeds, Terranova Seeds, WHS, Bejo Seeds, Lefroy Valley, Rijk Zwaan, Seminis/Monsanto, Nunhem Seeds, South Pacific Seeds, Clause Pacific Seeds and Fairbanks Seeds.

The Expo Dinner will be held on Thursday 2nd May at the Italian Social Club and tickets will be available from the Expo Committee. For further information about trade displays please ring Helena on 0407 772 299 or email helenaw@bigpond.net.au.

We look forward to seeing you next year.



Work has begun on preparing the seed plots for the seed companies with fumigations, beds forming and lime application being completed during November.



Bee survival threatened

A Harvard University study has found that a common pesticide kills bees, which are essential to both pollination and environmental health. The use of pesticides and bees is a contentious issue, with claims and counter claims, as well as vested interests from those opposed to pesticide use. It is enough to cloud the issue as to whether *Imidicloprid* and other pesticides in this chemical group are affecting bee population numbers. The latest Harvard study, however, holds a lot of weight due to the strong reputation of the American university.

The vegetable industry is as dependent on bees as the fruit and broadacre cropping sectors. The industry is also a significant user of the insecticides in the chemical group which features in the Harvard Study- *Neonicotinoids*. So what do growers need to be concerned about, and what can be done?

Vegetable crops in the cucurbit family (melons, pumpkins, squash, zucchini), and tomatoes, capsicum and other produce where a fully-pollinated fruit body is harvested, are reliant on the honey bee for pollination. Other pollinators may be active, but may also have adverse reactions to these chemicals.

What can be done

Vegetable growers, as always, will need to observe recommendations

on labels regarding bees when using chemicals, especially during times when bees are active. Additionally, there may need to be an increased awareness of the impact flowering crops may have on bees if the crop has been sprayed with *Imidicloprid*. This is also yet another reason for immediate post-harvest clean-up to prevent crop remnants or weeds flowering and attracting bees.

Other research supporting the Harvard Study

The APVMA is vested with the registration of chemicals in Australia and has recently instigated a study of current research. They have stated concerns around the *Neonicotinoid* class of insecticides which may have a lethal effect on bees, reducing their ability to pollinate plants and produce honey. Furthermore, a RIRDC publication titled 'Honeybee pesticide poisoning - A risk management tool for Australian farmers and beekeepers' published in May 2012 lists 349 pesticides registered for horticultural and broadacre use in Australia that are known to be toxic to honeybees. Many of these agro-chemicals may be toxic due to the same mechanisms that make insecticides toxic, such as a disturbance to an insect's metabolism, causing death. In the case of the *Neonicotinoids*, the disturbance for bees appears more subtle. Initially, the bee accesses the chemical via the nectar and pollen collected from flowers (it is systemic in the plant, one of its key attributes), before returning to the hive and affecting the entire bee colony. Research indicates that several behavioral aspects of bee foraging may be impacted and these align with the incidence of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), recognised as a worldwide problem. These chemicals may be causing the weakening of bee colonies increasing susceptibility to pest, disease, and climatic challenges.

Note: of the *Neonicotinoid* chemical group the most common, *Imidicloprid*, is the active ingredient of 'Confidor', the most widely used insecticide in the world.



drumMUSTER: Recycling for farmers



In just over 14 years Australia's only agricultural and veterinary chemical container recycling scheme has helped prevent more than 25,000 tonnes of waste ending up in landfill.

In this time more than 20 million drums have been collected, crushed or shredded and transformed into things like plastic cable covers, wheelie bins and pipes.

Almost every farmer in the country knows the *drumMUSTER* name, but only about 60 per cent say they have used the program to get rid of their unwanted containers. Growers across the country are urged to take a look in their shed or paddock, round up their containers and

take them into their nearest *drumMUSTER* site.

To find your local *drumMUSTER* site log on to www.drummuster.com.au and find your local council and arrange a time to drop your drums off.

Remember to make sure drums are residue free, with the lids removed before being delivered. Metal drums should be pierced to allow better airflow for drying. There's no need to pierce plastic containers.

For any further information on the *drumMUSTER* program, call 1800 008 707.

E.E. Muir & Sons kick start the festive season with grower BBQ



Attendees enjoy the festivities at the E.E. Muir & Sons family barbecue.

The Geelong-Lara region recently played host to a family BBQ for growers, hosted by VGA Vic Industry Associate Member E.E. Muir & Sons. Good weather and the generous hospitality of industry suppliers ensured a good day was had by all, with a strong turnout of growers and their families. Emerging young growers from the Vietnamese community were also present at the event, speaking to suppliers about new technologies that have been adopted in their hydroponic operations.

Michael Tran, Growers Consultant, from the principal sponsor E.E.

Muir & Sons, was the driving force behind the event, along with Steve Moore from the Werribee South Branch.

IDO West, Rod Hall, and local vegetable growers were joined at the event by other industry supporters including Stephanie Knight from Rijk Zwaan, Conrad Leeks from Monsanto, Shane Davey and staff from Total Eden, Anthony Serra from In Focus Security, and hydroponic tomato industry stalwarts Andy & Porta Kakouras from Torquay.

Forum on Food Safety to set new paradigm for industry

Industry representatives including Helena Whitman, VGA Vic Executive Manager, recently met at a forum held at the University of Sydney titled *Food Safety - Building a new paradigm*. The forum was established to examine best-practice in responding to food safety outbreaks, as experienced in 2006 in the USA.

All facets of the fresh produce industry including growers, facilitators, auditors, retailers, researchers and government agencies attended the forum to develop greater knowledge to protect Australia's considerable reputation for producing affordable, nutritious and safe fresh produce.

Keynote speakers included Ms Bonnie Fernandez-Fenaroli, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for Produce Safety (CPS) at the University of California. Speaking at the event, Ms Fernandez-Fenaroli explained that the CPS is a collaborative partnership that leverages the combined expertise of industry, government and the scientific and academic communities to focus on research that preserves and enhances food safety.

"One of the CPS priorities is to support industry-wide food safety programs by making scientific research available through reports, webinars and direct access to experts," she said.

The forum aimed to increase cooperation between international fresh produce professionals and the Australian fresh produce industry. Expected benefits are models for fresh produce safety and greater clarity in prioritising food research and extension in the Australian fresh produce industry.

Australian industry representatives are encouraged to access information on the CPS through the centre's website at www.cps.ucdavis.edu.



Other speakers at the forum included:

- Ms Lorna Christie, Exec Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, PMA;
- Dr Robert Whitaker, Chief Science & Technology Officer, PMA;
- Mr Michael Worthington, CEO, PMA Aust-NZ;
- Associate Professor Dr Robyn McConchie, Head of the Department of Plant & Food Science, University of Sydney; and
- Mr Richard Bennett, Product Integrity Manager, HAL.

Speakers outlined activities that had been undertaken following the 2006 outbreak and explained how industry had united to deal with public concerns and the media. They also emphasised that following an outbreak the public wanted to hear from growers, not retailers or other representatives, as growers were trusted by the public.

The calibre of speakers was outstanding and several priorities were identified for future research. Furthermore, a taskforce initiated by the Australian Produce Marketing Association will work collaboratively with the industry and research and regulatory communities to identify research priorities for Australia and to facilitate communication and outreach.

The project partners were PMA Australia – New Zealand, the University of Sydney and HAL. The entire forum was recorded and will be available for viewing in the near future.



Speakers address attendees at the Food Safety Forum.





Food Hub for Casey

Feasibility studies are now underway to create a Food Hub in the City of Casey, which will provide an opportunity for the public to access local fresh food.

What is a Food Hub?

VicHealth funded a 2011 study through the Victorian Eco Innovation Lab (VEIL) at the University of Melbourne which considered food hubs.

The concept of a Food Hub comes from the USA where there are over 160 operating. The idea is to create affordable and convenient ways for the public to access local fresh food. The hub would work directly with farmers to assist in the marketing and distribution of fresh products.

The key ideas that have emerged from the initial research relate to:

- Increasing market access for local growers.
- A fast and convenient source of healthy, delicious, local and

affordable meals for busy families.

- Training, employment and business opportunities for the community.

The hub concept could benefit Victorian growers by offering an additional distribution channel to market their fresh produce.

In addition to growers, the study found that the Food Hub could have benefits to the local community by creating jobs, growing regional earnings and revenue and strengthening local businesses.

The Food Hub concept needs further work to determine how it would actually work, including its ownership and government structure as well as a feasible business model. A number of models are now being considered and the final choice will be very important for the viability and success of the Food Hub.

If this concept interests you and you would like to find out more detail and read case studies visit www.foodhubs.org.au or visit the Facebook site at www.facebook.com/Ausfoodhubsnetwork.

New Industry Associate Member

We are pleased to welcome Prime Plastic Bags as an Industry Associate Member of VGA Vic.

Prime Plastic Bags are situated at Lakeside Avenue, Reservoir, Victoria and provide a wide range of produce storage bags for vegetables.

Check out their website www.primepb.com for more information or call them on (03) 9460 1866.



Whole black carrots - the key to colon health?

Recent research by Dr Anneline Padayachee from the University of Queensland shows how fruit and vegetables like black carrots help maintain gut health and reduce the risk of developing cancer.

A recent study by the University of Queensland using black carrots has revealed that the antioxidant compounds contained in fresh fruit and vegetables combine with fibre to play an important role in protecting the colon from cancer. These compounds, known as polyphenols, are released from the plant cell during chewing. Dr Padayachee found that, while the majority of polyphenols are bound to fibre during this process, they were not free for absorption until they reached the colon in the final stages of digestion.

“Black carrots which are actually deep purple are packed with polyphenols similar to those which give blueberries and red wine their vivid colour,” said Dr Padayachee.

The study showed that these compounds became bound to the fibre during chewing and remained bound throughout digestion in the stomach and small intestine.



Dr Anneline Padayachee in the lab (Photo courtesy: Kathy Grube, University of Queensland)

“We discovered that fibre not only works as a ‘bowel scourer’, but is also able to safely traffic polyphenols to the colon, where they are involved in gut health protective mechanisms.”

“Products resulting from digested polyphenols then protect the colon from cancer,” said Dr Padayachee.

“So, to gain the benefits of polyphenols, you need to consume everything - the whole vegetable or fruit, including the fibrous pulp if you’re juicing it. Not only will you have a clean gut, but a healthy gut full of protective polyphenols.”

Dr Padayachee hopes her work might also help uncover medicinal uses for plant fibre in targeted treatments of dietary conditions. She is one of 12 early career scientists unveiling research to the public for the first time thanks to Fresh Science, a national program sponsored by the Australian Government.

Dr Padayachee worked on this research project with the ARC Centre of Excellence in Plant Cell Walls, the Centre for Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Queensland and the CSIRO.



Webinars:

learning opportunities without leaving the farm



A webinar is a seminar that is held online which allows you to view the guest speaker's presentation over the internet and to ask questions, make comments and share information with other participants. Webinars are a great time saver as you can join in from practically anywhere. Why not give one a try?

Many organisations, consultants, advisors and government departments are offering webinars, which are opportunities to keep up-to-date with information in a time effective way. Webinars overcome many of the reasons a grower is unable to make a seminar in person, by offering a convenient solution which doesn't take them away from their business.

Key benefits of webinars

- Attendance is achieved by sitting at your desk.
- Reminders are sent via email when you register for a webinar, which helps you plan and set aside the time required.
- The presentation is usually at a convenient time in the day for farming enterprises.
- Webinars are usually only 30 to 60 minutes in duration.
- Opportunities to be directly involved vary depending on the setup.

You can often choose a number of ways to interact from pre-posting topics or questions, to responding and communicating during the webinar, or just sitting at your desk and listening and watching.

So what are you missing out on by attending a webinar, rather than a seminar?

- Registration fees (some private consultants may charge as part of an advisory package).
- Driving to a venue and searching for a car park.
- Sitting uncomfortably, unable to make notes, while trying to get a view of the PowerPoint presentation.
- Balancing a cup of tea or coffee from an urn, opening a packaged biscuit and greeting someone whose name escapes you during a break.
- The show bag of hardcopy information within which there are lists of links to important websites to follow up – if you can find the lists.

The Horticulture Information Network (HIN) has been instrumental in facilitating webinars, and these are also being supported by HAL, in cooperation with consultants who are experts in their fields.

The Victorian DPI has run a series entitled *The DPI Climate Webinar Series*, which commenced in October 2010 and has expanded to discuss all aspects of climate, climate change, greenhouse gas

emissions, and detail of the various forecasting tools used in providing seasonal outlook reports.

Most webinars are uploaded to the presenter's or organiser's website for later viewing or assessment (see links below), although participation at the scheduled time allows for real-time discussion or follow-up.

Visit some of the sites listed below and see what interests you. This form of communication will be increasingly offered in the horticulture industry as time and financial constraints limit the provision of printed information (already limited), seminars, conferences and email newsletters.



Webinars offer:

- Immediate responses to current issues.
- Access to experts (at their desk) while you sit at yours.

State-wide, national and international attendance by industry participants.

Further information:

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-management/weather-climate/webinar>

A basic explanation of webinars from the Victorian DPI. View the series of webinars on climate or join the email list for new events.

<http://cynthiamahoney.com.au/category/social-media-2/>

A webinar about Twitter called "Who gives a twit about Twitter"

http://www.awri.com.au/information_services/ebulletin/2012/08/09/awri-2012-webinar-series/

An example of what the wine industry is doing.

<http://www.piarn.org.au/events/piarn-webinar-series>

Tasmanian DPI series of webinars

Executive Officer's corner



We welcome and congratulate the re-election of David Wallace as President of VGA Vic for another term. Over the past 12 months David has attended numerous industry meetings and retained the Chair of the Growers' Advisory Committee at the Melbourne Market.

The Growers' Advisory Committee is concentrating on ensuring that stand holders receive their correct entitlements with the relocation to Epping Market in 2014. The engagement of consultant Manny Spiteri to obtain data from licenced stand holders

and preparation of a discussion paper, together with meetings with State Government and MMA representatives has been a top priority. In order to offset the additional costs incurred by VGA Vic, an Epping Fighting Fund has been opened with an invitation to all vegetable growers who have not yet contributed to consider supporting our efforts concerning the trading floor relocation to Epping.

Preparations for the 2013 National Vegetable Expo are now full steam ahead, and the event is planned for 2 and 3 May at Werribee next year. All seed plots have been prepared and allocated to seed companies for vegetable seed planting, with planting of a range of varieties commencing during the coming spring. A Prospectus for exhibitors' static sites is now available by contacting the VGA Vic office. The biennial Vegetable Expo attracts visitors from each State and New Zealand and there is an expectation that 2013 will be an excellent year for displaying a large number of vegetable varieties and sharing industry knowledge.

On behalf of vegetable growers in Victoria, VGA Vic have raised concerns regarding the Migration Amendment (Reform to Employer Sanctions) Bill 2012. AUSVEG have kindly highlighted some commentary that has been released with the Bill and the implications for growers. The policy commentary which accompanies the proposed amendment legislation outlines that employers need to "create a contractual obligation for another party to verify whether a worker is an unlawful non-citizen". This suggests that the onus of responsibility and cost for ensuring the legality of a worker falls on the grower, unless there is a written agreement in place that says otherwise.

VGA Vic have stated previously that it should not be the grower's responsibility or cost to ascertain whether a worker has the correct legal documentation to be able to work in Australia when that worker has been hired through a labour hire company. The expectation is that labour

hire companies have performed all due diligence and have correctly-determined that the migrant can legally work in Australia. While this is a national issue, it would appear that there are differing views across the states and AUSVEG would appreciate any comments from vegetable growers.

I recently attended a Victorian DPI forum in Melbourne outlining the proposal to deregulate Queensland fruit fly in Victoria. There was concern expressed by the horticulture industry that the State Government's decision goes against its policy of increasing productivity and profitability for growers in Victoria. Queensland fruit fly is not a major concern to the majority of the Victorian vegetable industry, however, expecting the horticulture industry to financially fund any outbreak or eradication programs is most unreasonable and it should remain the State Government and DPI funding responsibility.

Our VGA Vic website promotes the critical and often undervalued role of vegetable growers in their daily struggle to reliably produce the healthy food we all enjoy at our dinner tables. The site regularly attracts over 3000 visitors each month. Searchable content has expanded to almost 2000 pages of interesting articles, over 300 R&D report summaries, as well as topical news and events. Go to www.vegetablesvictoria.com.au or www.vgavic.org.au.

Remember VGA Vic is YOUR voice of the Victorian vegetable industry and needs your support.

Should you require more information about the services available to you, please contact one of our vegetable industry team.

Keep Smiling,

Tony Imeson

For more information please contact:

Executive Manager Helena Whitman: mobile 0407 772 299.
IDO East John Runting: mobile 0417 356 364.
IDO West Rod Hall: mobile 0403 215 935.

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VGA Vic. proudly recognises our industry supporters:

