

Data and insights fuel grower resilience

Andrew Francey, General Manager, Industry Service & Delivery, Hort Innovation

After 20 years working in the Australian fresh produce sector, both in commercial production and now at Hort Innovation, one thing that strikes me is the resilience of our growers.

At the recent Hort Connections 2024 annual conference in Melbourne, cautious optimism was evident amongst the 4,000 delegates, despite growers being tested by extreme weather patterns, surging input costs, consumers tightening their household budgets and more. Yet, in spite of these factors, the Australian horticulture sector is growing.

In the past decade it has expanded by 81 per cent, from \$9 billion to \$16.3 billion in total value of production. It is outpacing Australia's agriculture sectors, and by 2030 is projected to reach \$22 billion. This extraordinary growth is built on the innovation of growers across Australia who are doing things differently. It is part of their DNA to ask 'how can I learn?' and 'how can I continue to innovate?'

Hort Innovation's key priority, which is enshrined in legislation, is to provide growers with the best answers to those questions. Our teams work with growers to hear what's happening on farms while providing access to data and insights to identify the right technology solutions and research and development programs to deliver improvements and productivity gains. In fact, productivity tops the priority list for growers given the challenges faced over the last few years.

Innovations addressing those challenges range from the 'one percenters', such as the control of fruit drop in mango, to larger-scale programs such as the \$10 million vegetable industry-led biosecurity program that will strengthen pest surveillance, preparedness

and management efforts. These grower-led programs are underpinned by an ever-improving understanding of what's happening locally and across international markets. In fact, export growth is projected at 11% this year, to reach a record \$4 billion in 2024-25.

In the past 12 months we have introduced a fit-for-purpose advisory system, with 10 Industry Service and Delivery Managers (ISDMs) based in the regions meeting and working with growers on the ground. Via these deeper connections, we are receiving an increasing number of requests from growers for information and insights to support them.

Consumer insights: Hort IQ

The new Hort IQ platform, launched at Hort Connections recently, provides access to the latest, most comprehensive Australian fruit, vegetable and nut consumer data, giving growers access to market dynamics, purchasing trends and consumer perceptions. The easy-to-use portal, which houses more than 100 pieces of consumer research and integrates more than 10,000 consumer surveys, is a vital one-stop shop for consumer, farm, industry and export market insights. Growers can register at www.hortiq.com.au/requestaccess to gain access to Hort IQ.

Grower insights: Hort Stats Handbook

The Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook is released in the first quarter of each year. This resource provides growers with a deep dive into 75 different horticulture categories, equipping them with more data to help inform business decisions.

Say g'day to your ISDM

Our 10 Industry Service and Delivery Managers (ISDMs) are based in major growing regions across Australia. Each ISDM manages three to four industries and is charged with coordinating growers' engagement with the latest R&D, international trade and marketing information.



BIOLOGICAL SERVICES

ISDMs also manage the investment advisory panels that meet regularly in the regions. The reset of these advisory panels has provided a 70 per cent increase in new grower participation, which is energising these important groups. It doesn't matter if you are a large grower or a smaller family business, a member of advisory panels or not, ISDMs want to hear your ideas.

New Frontiers

To bolster Australia's \$16.3 billion horticulture industry, Hort Innovation recently launched a new approach to its non-levy-funded co-investment program. Frontiers will inject an extra \$500 million into research and development over the next decade through partnerships with local and global innovators, including Australian growers with big ideas, start-ups, tech companies and others. This new co-investment approach is unapologetically commercial outcome-driven, designed to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving horticulture industry. To keep across opportunities, register your interest at communications.horticulture.com.au/signupfrontiers

How to get involved

1. Talk to our Berries ISDM Adrian Englefield to discuss your challenges, ideas and resources available to you: **Adrian Englefield | 0427 143 907 | Adrian.Englefield@horticulture.com.au**
2. Find out about levy-funded R&D and marketing sharing events in your region and online webinars at www.horticulture.com.au/hort-innovation/news-events/events
3. Ask your ISDM how to join an Investment Advisory Panel or get involved in a project reference group to help steer investments.
4. Become a Hort Innovation member for free to enjoy perks such as Board voting rights, trial opportunities and free access to ticketed industry events at www.horticulture.com.au/growers/become-a-member
5. Subscribe to regular information about the latest resources available to you, straight to your email inbox at communications.horticulture.com.au/signupcomms

**Hort
Innovation**

IPM for Berry Crops

Wherever you are in our vast country, our experienced consultants stand ready to tailor an Integrated Pest Management program for your strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries.

High-quality beneficials

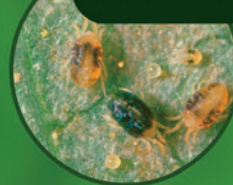
Monitoring service & consulting available

Fewer chemical inputs

Trusted by growers since 1971



TWO SPOTTED MITE



PERSIMILIS

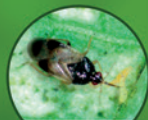


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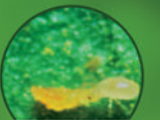
THRIPS



CUCUMERIS



ORIUS



MONTDORENSIS

FUNGUS GNAT & THRIPS



HYPOASPIS 'M'



HYPOASPIS 'A'

We also supply beneficials for whiteflies, aphids and other pests.



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