

How Prepared are You for Pest and Disease Management?

Tracey Steinrucken, CSIRO, Innovation Facilitator; Hazel Parry, CSIRO, Project Leader;
Scott Wallace, Growcom, HortESG Manager

Take the new IPM module in Hort360 to find out!

Managing pests and pathogens effectively across whole regions works best when growers, advisors, and industries work together. Sustainable Integrated Pest Management (IPM) starts with informed decisions – using chemicals strategically and exploring other non-chemical options.

CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, has teamed up with Growcom's Hort360 team on the Pest READI™ project to build a practical tool for growers and advisors. It helps assess how prepared they are for pest and disease issues on-farm, how well they're using area-wide IPM strategies, and where their biggest risks lie.



Fruit spotting bug, an important pest in the Northern rivers on Mock Orange leaves

Photo credit: CSIRO

What is Pest READI?

The Pest READI™ project is a \$12 million, five-year collaboration working to transform how pests are managed at both farm and regional levels. Pest READI™ aims to bring together knowledge from landholders, advisors, Traditional Owners, and scientists to co-develop a digital platform to support healthier, more abundant landscapes


Right now, the team is working with growers in the Northern Rivers of NSW across a diverse mix of horticultural industries – including macadamia, avocado, berries, banana, coffee, and custard apple – to build tools that make pest management decisions easier and more effective. Many of these crops face the same challenges (like Fruit spotting bug, or *Phytophthora*) and coordinated, area-wide IPM delivers stronger results when industries work together.

Helping growers plan for the future

Chemical use in Australian agriculture has more than doubled since 1992, now costing growers around \$3 billion each year. With growing pressure from resistance, regulation, human health and environmental impacts, there's never been a more important time to support strategic chemical use and provide practical information on other IPM options.

7. Governance

Have large room to improve

61% 

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
3	2	2	3	2	2

7.4 How often do you share pest pressure information with your neighbours or other farmers in your region?

You answered: 3 - Occasionally [75%]

Your risk/s	Actions to take
Room for Improvement: Sharing pest pressure information on your farm with other farmers will help these farmers plan their pest management strategies. In contributing to better management of pests in your area you will be helping reduce pest threats to your own property.	Consider how you might best share pest pressure monitoring results on your farm with other farmers in your area who might benefit from this knowledge. This could be through regular face-to-face catch-ups, as part of a farm discussion group, utilising local pest consultants, or use of computerised pest-monitoring technology for your area e.g., smart phone app.

Resources

[Hort frontiers AWM website](#)

Example output from the Hort360 module that gives you feedback about your risks and actions to take when it comes to IPM, and links you to verified information resources to find ways to improve

Photo credit: Growcom

The Hort360 IPM Benchmarking Tool for Growers

As a grower, you can access the IPM module as part of Hort360's suite of benchmarking tools. Based on your answers to a set of questions, the tool enables you to spot any gaps in your pest and disease management, build on what's already working, and create a simple action plan to support your farm's long-term sustainability.

Access to and use of the Hort360 suite of tools is free for all Australian growers.
Find out more at www.growcom.com.au/hort360

The outputs will show:

- which areas of IPM can be improved, and what you're doing well
- how you compare with others who have used the IPM tool
- customised advice on risk, actions you can take to improve, and verified links to free online resources



Interested in testing the tool out?

We're looking for growers and advisors to get involved with the project and give their input on the tools we're developing. We're actively taking feedback and would love to hear what you think! Get in touch with the team via email: pestreadi@csiro.au, or scan the QR code to visit our webpage: www.research.csiro.au/pestreadi

Acknowledgements

Pest READITM: 'Regionally Enabled Agroecological Decision Intelligence (BY22003)' is funded through Hort Innovation Frontiers with co-investment from CSIRO's 'Catalysing Australia's Biosecurity' initiative, Macquarie University, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Queensland Department of Primary Industries, Growcom, Jagun Alliance Aboriginal Corporation and contributions from the Australian Government.

