

EYES ON POTATOES

A U S T R A L I A N P O T A T O I N D U S T R Y C O U N C I L N E W S L E T T E R

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This picture was taken at the UK debut of the sport at Hoop and Grapes pub in London.

Mash wrestling what a way to promote potatoes!

Mashed potato wrestling arrived in the UK last year, courtesy of the British Potato Council (BPC).

Contestants wrestle in a ring made from hay-bales and a tarpaulin filled with mountains of moist mash made from reject potato flakes. Anyone can take part – the only skills required are a good sense of balance and a massive sense of humour.

"We hope mashed potato wrestling will become as big here as it is in the USA," said BPC spokesperson Kathryn Trivett.

"It is hilarious fun for spectators and contestants alike, and a good crowd-puller. We always knew the potato was versatile, but this event gives the word a whole new meaning!"

Mashed potato wrestling is an annual event in North America, particularly in the main potato-growing states of the USA – Ohio, South Dakota and Minnesota - where contenders vie for the title of Potato Champ.

The British event is part of the BPC's 'Dig Potatoes' campaign, and marks the start of the autumn season for

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home-grown potatoes, the nation's favourite vegetable.

As well as organising mash wrestling, the British Potato Council is telling the public about the nutritional benefits of this versatile vegetable.

Extract from British Potato Council press release 11/10/2000

CQ- Potato online

Agriculture Victoria's CQ (Competitive Quality) Potato project concluded last year. An internet site about the project has been published and can be found at www.nre.vic.gov.au/agvic/ihd/projects/cqp.htm

Apart from summarising the project activities and outcomes, the website includes practical information contributed by potato researchers and a list of available publications arising from the project.

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Diana, Jo and Cathy

New Editor for potato publications

Cathy Sage from SageWords will be the new editor of *Potato Australia* and *Eyes on Potatoes* with support from Jo Curkpatrick (Span Communications) and Diana Wolfe (Wolf Words).

All three are agriculturally trained with experience in journalism and public relations.

Cathy has worked for Comcall Business Communication Agency (very active in the grains industry), as the National

Communicator for CSIRO Division of Soils and then started her own consultancy business when she moved to Melbourne with her husband five years ago. She and Diana have both worked as preferred suppliers on several publications for Horticultural Research and Development Corporation since 1997.

Jo has a background in ABC Radio, has held senior public relations positions with Charles Stuart University, the University of Technology - Sydney, ANZ Banking Group and the Wool Research and Development Corporation. In 1993 she was seconded to the United Kingdom as Corporate Communication Manager for the International Wool Secretariat. She also started her own consultancy business five years ago.

Diana worked as a journalist with Shepparton News, specialist writer for Comcall Business Communication Agency, National Communication Coordinator for CSIRO Land and Water Care program and National Communications Manager for Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation before starting her own consultancy business about six years ago.

Cathy provided support as second editor for this edition and will take over fully for the June 2001 edition.

We welcome Cathy, Jo and Diana on board.

Thanks Tassie

This edition will signal the end of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment's involvement in editing the national potato publications, a role it has handled very well since 1994.

Over the years a number of people from the department have helped make the publication a success. On behalf of the industry I would like to thank them for their contribution.

A special thanks also goes to Helen Sims who has been the Production Assistant for the publications for the last three years. Helen has been particularly valuable in assisting me as Acting Editor to keep the publications on track while we appointed another Editor.

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Eyes on Potatoes is produced by the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Tasmania, on behalf of the Australian Potato Industry Council.

EYES ON POTATOES



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Eyes on Potatoes is distributed free of charge to all participants of the Australian Potato Industry with assistance from the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation and the Potato Levy.

Handy hints on GST and BAS

Bill Beard is a director with RSM Bird Cameron Chartered Accountants in Ballarat. He has 23 years' experience in accounting across Australia, particularly in agriculture and small business. Bill has made numerous presentations on taxation, including training workshops for the Victorian Farmers' Federation and articles for publications such as 'The Weekly Times' and 'Farming Ahead'.

In July 1999, Bill addressed the National Crisping & Potato Industry Workshop in Ballarat on the likely effects of the Goods & Services Tax (GST) on potato growers. With the GST now in place for more than half a year, Bill presents some of his observations on the outcomes.

After working with the GST for more than seven months and lodging a number of Business Activity Statements, it is now time to take stock of some of the more complicated situations. In the meantime, the Government continues to spend millions of dollars hoping to convince us that it is a simple system, despite employing thousands of advisory officers to help us through the maze.

Allow me to share with you some of my recent experiences, to assist you to avoid the traps and lodge the correct information.

Firstly, be careful when using computer generated Business Activity Statements. Each program has its own peculiarities and a slight data input error or incorrect

procedure will invariably produce the wrong information.

When selling machinery, motor vehicles or contracting to other farmers it is essential that GST is collected in addition to the agreed price.

Hire purchase agreements entered into since July 1st, 2000 provide significant challenges when preparing GST records. Most farmers have adopted the cash basis for GST accounting and therefore input tax credits are only available over the term of the hire purchase agreement.

To calculate the amount of GST credits available in each period, we need to know the amount of principal repaid in each period. Most finance companies have not previously provided this crucial information; hence each borrower will need to contact the financier to obtain it. In many instances, trade-ins are used as deposits on these contracts and therefore one-11th of the deposit will be an input tax credit at the commencement of the contract.

Please keep in mind that no GST is refundable for most new road vehicles acquired before July 1st, 2001.

Without doubt, one of the more complex areas of GST law is the definition of food. Initially, there was a great deal of confusion and conjecture as to whether farmers had to collect GST on the sale of seed potatoes.

The Australian Taxation Office has issued the following ruling, which I have

edited to exclude references to the GST Act:

"Seed potatoes are normally subject to GST as they are not food for human consumption. However, where the grower determines that the seed potatoes be supplied to the market as food, the supply will be GST-free."

This decision is made on the basis of information provided by industry that seed potatoes are generally used to grow potato crops.

Information from industry indicates that seed potatoes are sold as food for human consumption when the grower can obtain a good price for the potatoes. At the time the farmer decides to sell the seed potatoes as food rather than for the purpose of growing crops, the potatoes are food for human consumption and this sale will be GST-free.

Farmers who derive a significant portion of their income from seed potatoes may now decide to opt for quarterly GST registration at the end of June 2001, to gain a cash flow benefit and reduce their reporting requirements to the tax office.

Bill Beard

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Important: Please note that changes in legislation may occur rapidly and the above are general comments only. It is therefore recommended that formal advice be obtained before acting.



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Plant Breeder's Rights



Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) are a form of intellectual property right that provides breeders of new plant varieties exclusive commercial control over the propagation, sale, import and export of their variety. In Australia, rights are issued under the *Plant Breeder's Rights Act 1994* (PBR Act). The PBR Act is based on the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, 1991 (UPOV 1991). There are about 47 other countries with similar legislation.

Currently there are about 17 varieties of potatoes in Australia in the process of obtaining PBR and a further 24 with rights already granted. Most of these were bred overseas. The number of potato varieties registered under the PBR Act in Australia is small compared to some other countries. The Netherlands for example has around 280 active registrations.

Benefits for industry

The main benefit of the PBR scheme to the Australian potato industry is potential access to overseas varieties, which helps Australia's competitiveness in the world market. The owners of many overseas varieties are not willing to import their new improved varieties into Australia unless some form of intellectual property protection can be guaranteed. Without PBR, many varieties will not be accessible to Australian growers and the public will not benefit.

PBR does not prevent the use of protected varieties for further breeding. It is possible for overseas varieties to be brought into Australia and used in the local breeding program to develop varieties more suited to Australian conditions.

It is also important that varieties bred and developed in Australia are protected by PBR, especially if it is intended that the variety is to be marketed overseas. Overseas companies are often unwilling to take up the agency for a variety unless it can be protected by PBR.

Activities that may infringe PBR

Whilst the owners of PBR varieties are generally aware of their rights, the same may not be true for the average potato grower. It is important that users of PBR protected varieties be aware of their obligations so that they can avoid expensive legal action. The penalties for infringement are quite severe - \$55,000 for an individual and \$275,000 for a corporation, plus costs and compensation for damages.

Under normal circumstances, a grower has some form of license agreement or contract with the owner or agent of a protected variety. This specifies the terms under which the license is provided and may include provisions that extend the owner's rights beyond those normally provided by PBR. For example, arrangements for the payment of royalties may be included. The PBR office has no control over license agreements and legal advice should be sought if there is any concern regarding the legal obligations or validity of such contracts.

Under the PBR Act, several activities may constitute an infringement if done without the owners consent. These include commercial propagation and importing or exporting for the purpose of propagation. It is also an infringement to use the name of a PBR variety for a non-PBR variety.

Generally, when a seed potato has been sold by the owner, PBR rights to that potato are exhausted. It is not necessary to get permission from the owner to resell the potato unless a contract has been signed which states otherwise. Similarly, the sale of harvested material from that potato, provided it is for final consumption, is not an infringement.

It is important to realise that a PBR variety is still protected even if it is sold without any form of warning labels. Most owners ensure that varieties are clearly labelled as it is in their best interests to make others aware of the PBR. The label and style may vary but usually includes the wording; "Unauthorised commercial propagation or any sale, conditioning, export, import or stocking of propagating material of this variety is an infringement under *the Plant breeder's Rights Act 1994*". The variety name, PBR logo (or Plant Variety Rights logo) and application number usually appear somewhere on the label.

What can an owner do about infringement?

An action for infringement of PBR in a plant variety may be begun in the court. Recent developments in DNA fingerprinting techniques should make such disputes easier to resolve. Many samples can now be tested rapidly and cheaply to determine whether a potentially infringing variety is the same as a protected variety.

What can a grower do if they are infringing?

If growers believe they may be infringing PBR, they should stop the potentially infringing activity immediately and seek advice from the PBR office. Depending on the circumstances, the PBR office may also suggest that legal advice be sought. It is important to stop the infringing activity, as it may be possible to claim innocent infringement, which can greatly reduce any costs and penalties imposed. If it is shown that a person was aware of the infringing activity and continued to infringe, it is highly unlikely that a claim of innocent infringement would be accepted. In the vast majority of cases it is possible to reach a mutual agreement with the owner of a variety without going to court.

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Varieties granted full protection* in Australia

by PBR as at 24 January 2001

Applicant (Agent)	Varieties
Caithness (Elders)	Argos, Heather, Kestrel, Nadine, Redgem, Valor, Winston
Cygnnet Potato Breeders (Wrightson Seeds)	Saxon
Frito-Lay (Smiths Snackfood Company)	FL 1867
Hettema (Sunrise Seed Potatoes)	Liseta, Mondial, Novita, Remarka, St.Johns
NZ Institute for Crop & Food Research (Crop and Food Research)	Red Rascal
Smiths Snackfood Company	Smith's Astra, Smith's Aurora, Smith's Comet, Smith's Orion
ZPC (Harvest Moon)	Celeste, Goldstar, Latona, Royal Blue, Symfonia

See internet site for the latest listings.

* Varieties listed do not include those accepted into the scheme that are provisionally protected pending examination.

Nik Hulse

Senior Examiner and Deputy Registrar

Plant Breeders Rights Office





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✉ Nik.Hulse@affa.gov.au

Internet: www.affa.gov.au/agfor/pbr/pbr.html

Wrightson exits Australian seed potato business

Wrightson has announced it is in the process of rationalising the commercial operations of its Australian seed potato business. Under the terms being discussed, certain parties will have exclusive operating licences to the key technologies owned by Wrightson, with certain proprietary genetics associated with the business being assigned to the respective parties.

	
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Horticulture Australia Limited Update

As indicated in the December edition, the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation (who administer the use of the levy funds) and the Australian Horticultural Corporation have merged to become Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) as of 1 February 2001.

The merger aims to produce an organization better equipped to meet the future research, development and marketing service needs of horticulture industries.

The new Board for Horticulture Australia Limited

Dr Jane Wilson – Chair. Dr Wilson has a strong technical and business background and is the director of a number of companies including the Energex Retail Corporation and IMBcom Ltd, a research commercialisation company owned by the University of Queensland.

Councillor John Brent. A horticultural producer and processor from Boonah, QLD, with a depth of knowledge in practical farming, processing and business.

Mr Denis Byrne. A solicitor with experience in commerce, finance and agri-business. Mr Byrne also chaired the Horticultural Industry Consultative Group during the industry consultation phase that led to the establishment of HAL.

Dr Elizabeth Dennis. A leading plant scientist with expertise in management of research projects and advances in plant breeding. Dr Dennis currently leads a research program in CSIRO Plant Industry and has been recently awarded the Prime Minister's prize for Science.

Mr Terry Hill. An expert in design and delivery of horticulture extension programs and is currently the program manager for horticulture with AgWest.

Ms Sandra Hook. A marketing and communication specialist with brand-building experience in several horticulture sectors.

Mr Bob Seldon. The past Chairman of the Australian Horticultural Corporation (AHC) and a merchant banker with extensive knowledge of commerce and finance. Mr Seldon will bring continuity to the Board as HAL replaces the Australian Horticultural Corporation.

Mr Peter Walker. The past Deputy Director of the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation (HRDC), the Chairman of Riversun, and a citrus producer based at Ramco, South Australia.

A new Chief Executive Officer is still to be appointed.

Jonathan Eccles remains the main contact for research and development programs in the potato industry.

Staff for the new company have moved into new premises in Sydney so please note the following contact details.

Horticulture Australia Limited

Level 1, 50 Carrington Street

Sydney NSW 2000

☎ (02) 8295 2300

Fax (02) 8295 2399

Internet: www.horticulture.com.au

Certified Potatoes Australia Update



Keith Ingleton and Marlon Kuhl in an early crop of certified Atlantic in East Gippsland

The National Seed Potato Certification Standards are currently being road tested by the certification authorities and seed growers across Australia.

Some of the key features of the National Standards are:

- Any generation of seed can be sold as certified seed provided it meets the minimum standards.
- Seed will be described by variety and generation, doing away with the older confusing terminology used to describe the various stages of the schemes such as, foundation, mother seed, certified seed, etc. This part of the National Standards makes it simpler than any other system around the world.
- The maximum permitted defects will be expressed in the same way and be at the same level for most defects across Australia.
- It gives buyers and sellers of a seed a more effective tool to discuss seed quality specification.
- The defect levels are expressed using the Potato Product Description Language developed by Andrew Henderson and Richard Bennett as part of an earlier Australian Potato Industry

Council (APIC), Horticultural Research and Development Corporation and Department of Natural Resources and Environment funded project. This makes it easier to know what the standard is.

An important goal of Certified Potatoes Australia (CPA) is to ensure the National Standards are updated faster to meet the changing needs of the commercial potato growing industry for cleaner seed and new varieties. It will also facilitate the introduction of new seed production technology as it evolves.

The Certification Manuals are in final stages of production and will be available in hard copy, CD-ROM and through the Internet. This will allow cost efficient distribution, revision and updating.

There will be an information package sent out with the June edition of Eyes on Potatoes.


Russell Sully

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Plant Health Australia update

Plant Health Australia (PHA) was established as a public company to identify and coordinate priority plant health issues in Australia and to promote international and domestic confidence in Australia's plant industries.

Its' new office is located at:

Plant Health Australia
Suite 5, 4 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600
Ph: (02) 6260 4322
Fax: (02) 6260 4321
Email: admin@phau.com.au.

PHA is currently recruiting staff.

In it's first year of operation it will identify national priorities in plant health management; review existing plant health programs; consult members on issues of concern; and establish internal procedures for the company to operate effectively.

In consultation with its members and other plant industry stakeholders, the PHA Board has developed a Corporate Plan, an Executive Summary and an Annual Operational Plan.

The Corporate Plan identifies the following four priorities:

- A nationally coordinated plant health preparedness and prevention system
- An enhanced plant pest and disease emergency response system
- A national perspective on plant health service capability
- A national system of plant health information

Copies of the Corporate Plan, Annual Operational Plan and Executive Summary are available from Plant Health Australia by ringing: (02) 6260 4322.

The Board of PHA comprises Mr Andrew Inglis (Chairman), Ms Kathryn Adams, Mr Rob Delane, Dr Tony Gregson, Mr Xavier Martin, Mr Brian Newman, Mr Jim Pederson, Mr Tim Roseby and Mr Neil Fisher (Chief Executive Officer).

The potato industry is a member of the company through AUSVEG.

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Southern Choice buys potato business

Southern Choice continues its rapid expansion into the Australian seed potato industry with the recent acquisition of a major part of Wrightson Seeds (Australia) Pty Ltd potato business. Executive Chairman, Peter Ryan, indicated that the acquisition included the Waikerie growing facility and the license for the Potex minituber technology, and the assignment to Southern Choice of a number of PVR varieties with high potential for the Australian wash and processing industries. The acquisition will complement Southern Choice's own rapid multiplication minituber technology and seed production program. Details and implications for the Australian industry will be featured in the next edition.

GMO Research

SCOTLAND – Researchers at Edinburgh University have inserted a jellyfish gene into a potato, so that the plant's leaves glow in the dark when it requires water. This technology has implications for plant irrigation and feeding.



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Cost of farm labour **up** almost 20% since 1995

Unless Tasmanian farmers can improve efficiency or the price they receive for their product, increasing labour costs will reduce their income.

Information provided by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association's (TFGA) Industrial Association shows that the current cost of employing a level three (experienced) farmhand under the State Award, starting with a base rate of \$11.86 per hour, with add-ons, reaches \$19.22 per hour for farm accounting purposes. This final cost includes allowances for annual leave loading, holiday pay, sick pay, long service leave, workers compensation, occupational superannuation and an allowance for the cost of employer administration of the employee.

In 1995 the base rate started at \$10.30 and after the necessary add-ons finished at a cost of \$16.07 per hour.

These rates are likely to be similar in other States.

Farmers who employ labour need to be aware that under this example the wage rate has increased by almost 20% since 1995.

For a full time experienced employee the farmer will therefore need to find \$6,224.40 per year more than was required to be paid in 1995. This is a significant amount of money.

Based on this calculation and 70% of the farm income coming from potatoes, processing potato growers with a 500 tonne contract will need to receive a price increase of around \$9.00 per tonne to recover the increased cost of labour for the year 2000 or reduce costs by the same amount. This does not take into account any catch up for the intervening period since 1995, nor does it account for any other cost increases for items such as fuel, fertiliser, electricity or interest rates.

Given the pressure that has been on farmers to reduce costs over many years, achieving additional savings is not likely to be easy. The price paid for processing potatoes has also remained relatively unchanged so if savings cannot be made then farmers' income will be further eroded.

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Potato consumption increasing

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates consumption of potatoes using statistics on production, population, imports and exports. The following information includes both fresh and processed potatoes.

Period	Average Consumption (kg/person)
1940s	55.3 *
1950s	48.1
1960s	49.2
1970s	50.9
1980s	58.6
1990s	66.1 #

(Source: Australian Bureau Statistics)

* last six years # first eight years

So between the early to mid 1940s and the late 1990s potato consumption has increased on average by 0.3 kg per person per year.



Promoting potatoes

from

paddock to plate



Coach tours of potato country near Thorpdale, Victoria are helping to promote potatoes as a versatile staple food to city visitors and are bridging the rural-urban communication gap.

The one to seven day tours for Probus, Senior Citizens and other interested groups are called Potatoes, Paddock to Plate and are conducted by Val Murphy, a potato grower's wife from Thorpdale who ensures a fun and educational time for all.

"Thorpdale's God's own country, and I intend to share it", said Val.

The tour takes in the picturesque countryside, potato harvesting or planting and spring lambs, as Val shares local stories, jokes and poems and gives her visitors an insight into how quality potatoes are produced for the most discerning palate.

Groups enjoy a large baked potato for lunch (with all the trimmings), before Val gives a talk and cooking demonstration of sweets like potato coconut roughs and potato strawberry

balls. The tour includes a visit to her large country garden, where she serves potato ice cream and the travellers are each given a small bag of potatoes to take home.

On one of Val's recent coach tours, one woman was heard to comment "...she's a farmer's wife and she's wearing earrings!" Another replied "Yes, and nail polish, but no gumboots!" Clearly Val is helping to change perceptions of rural women.

Val also does potato-cooking demonstrations throughout Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. For further information, contact Val Murphy - phone/fax (03) 5634 6267.

Thorpdale is 1.5 hours' drive south east of Melbourne in Gippsland, Victoria. It offers beautiful scenic views and grows great spuds in its rich red volcanic soil. More than 150 semi-trailers leave the district each week from January to June, loaded with potatoes mainly for the Sydney and Brisbane markets.

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The following articles are from GMO - Guiding Meaningful Opinions, The Gene Technology Newsletter for the Horticulture Industry - compiled by Agrifood Awareness Australia for Horticulture Australia Limited.

Labelling of Genetically Modified food

Mandatory labelling of GM foods, where introduced DNA or protein is present in the final food, will come into effect on **8 December 2001**.

Food or ingredients labelled "genetically modified" either contain new genetic material or protein as a result of genetic modification or they have altered characteristics (eg. changed nutritive values - compared to the conventional food).

The labelling on or attached to a package of GM food must include the statement 'genetically modified' in conjunction with the name of that food, ingredient or processing aid.

Where GM food is not sold in a package, for example fruit and vegetables, any information required about the gene technology status of the food must be displayed on the food or in connection with the food display.

Some GM foods may require additional labelling. These requirements relate mainly to whether the food has altered characteristics.

Altered characteristics mean that when compared to its conventional counterpart, the GM food is different. It may:

- contain a new factor known to cause an allergic response in

some people;

- raise ethical, religious or cultural concerns, for example some people have ethical concerns about moving genes from animals into plants; or,
- have significantly different nutritional or compositional levels.

Food intended for immediate consumption which is prepared and sold from food premises and vending vehicles, including restaurants, take away outlets, caterers or self-catering institutions does not have to be labelled.

A one percent threshold, where labelling is not be required, exists for the unintended presence of GM material in non GM foods.

A GM Labelling Compliance Guide is being developed by the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) to assist food businesses, consumers and government agencies to understand the new guidelines.

For further information:

www.anzfa.gov.au/FoodStandardsCode/code/parta/A18.htm



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Labelling GM Foods – Around the World

CANADA – The Canadian Government is currently investigating the logistics and cost of introducing a mandatory labelling system.

EUROPEAN UNION - All foods that contain GM material must be labelled. A one percent threshold exists to cover the accidental presence of GM ingredients in food.

JAPAN – Japan exempts GM ingredients from labelling, if they are less than five percent of total content and if they are not one of the top three ingredients in the food.

TAIWAN – Mandatory labelling of GM foods will be implemented by 2005. The Taiwanese Government intends to implement a threshold of five percent, for GM presence in foods not labelled GM.

UNITED KINGDOM – All foods that contain GM material must be clearly labelled. A threshold of one percent has been set for the accidental presence of GM material in foods. Genetically modified foods sold in restaurants and at fast food outlets also require labels.

USA – Mandatory labelling of GM foods is not required in the USA, however a voluntary labelling system is being investigated.

Latest R&D reports

The following is a list of HRDC Final Reports released in the last six months. From now on they will be referred to as Horticulture Australia Final Reports (see Update on Horticulture Australia on page 6).



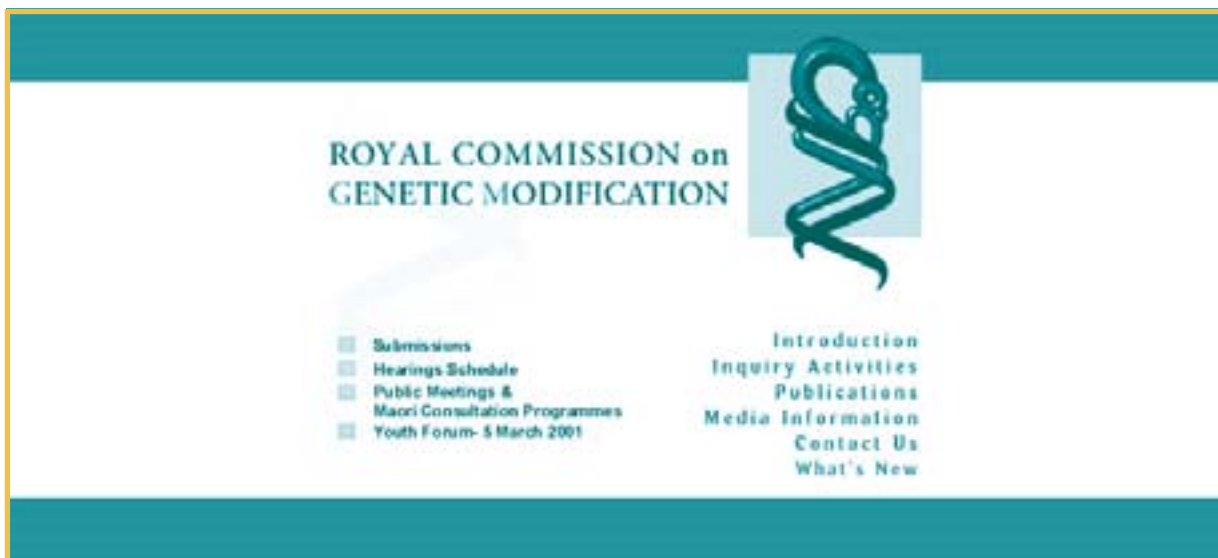
A national strategy to reduce cadmium accumulation in potato crops	PT423
Biological and chemical control of Rhizoctonia	PT98036
Developing soil and water management systems for potato production on sandy soils in Australia	PT97026
Development of a quality assured production and marketing system for fresh potatoes	PT96014
Integrated management with biofumigation to control soil pests and diseases in potatoes	PT447
Reduced chemical usage in seed potato production	PT98030

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 Alternatively, reports can be purchased through the Horticulture Australia internet site at www.horticulture.com.au

These are available from Horticulture Australia for \$22.00 each in Australia or \$US30.00 outside Australia including postage. To obtain reports send a cheque or money order with a note quoting the project name/s and project number/s to:

New Zealand Royal Commission on Genetic Modification

For those interested in following the debate on GMOs, the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification in New Zealand has produced some very interesting outcomes. Information can be found at the Commission's internet site at - www.gmcommission.govt.nz



Crisp factory closes at Lonsdale

Snack Brands Australia has closed its factory at Lonsdale in Adelaide, South Australia to take advantage of economies of scale at their Melbourne plant.

Computers are great until you lose your data

About eight years ago, a power spike destroyed the hard disk of my computer. It actually broke the hard disk in half! The computer company had never known it to happen before but that was little consolation as I had lost nearly six months work. I then used a \$20 surge protector. That solved the problem of protecting the new hard disk but did nothing for all the information I lost.

A merchant once told me they lost their computer due to fire. Luckily I haven't experienced that problem nor have I had a computer stolen – but others have.

Since the incident of the hard disk breaking in half, I have lost information from the hard disk due to it stopping and not wanting to go again, accidental deletion, corrupting of the data and through a very annoying virus attack that scrambled all my email and re-arranged all my icons.

I won't tell you what I thought of doing to the person who created the virus!

The virus protection program now protects my computer and I have a backup system so I do not lose any information.

Any one of these incidents could also happen to you, and what would you do?

Do you have a backup system in place that can replace the lost information or would the information lost be gone forever. Some might even consider it is a good way to start off 'fresh' again!

Step 1 – Protect against power surges

Power spikes through the electricity lines are not common but do occur and some areas are more susceptible than others.

Always use a surge protector. They are only about \$20 from an electrical supplier, hardware or supermarket and do work. The only time I would not rely on them is in a lightning strike. The safest thing to do during a lightning storm is unplug the computer and disconnect the modem from the telephone line.

Step 2 – Protect against viruses

Viruses are programs that enter the computer with other files and cause mayhem or in some cases just create a nuisance.

To prevent viruses attacking your system you need a virus program (eg. Nortons Antivirus, VET antivirus, Dr Solomons Antivirus, McAfee Virus Scan). Ideally the program should be easy to update via the Internet with information on viruses that have come out since the release of

the program.

Step 3 – Back up files to protect against loss

One day you are likely to lose important information due to accidental deletion, a failed hard disk, virus, fire or theft.

Anybody using a computer for their business should be saving their important files onto removable disks or tapes that can be stored away from the office. These are called backups. It is no good having your only backup stored in the desk where the computer is located if you have a fire.

What I do is rotate backups between home and work so I always have the most recently completed backup at home.

Leigh Walters

☎ (08) 8232 5555

✉ lwalters@saff.com.au

Kidattack

If using your computer for business and pleasure, be sure to lay down the ground rules with your kids and other users to protect your business information. Not all threats come from outside!

AUCTION CLEARING SALE COBRAM POTATO & VEGETABLE EQUIPMENT, TRACTORS, SUNDRIES

A/C R.J. Cornish & Co Pty Ltd. - Fruit & Vegetable Growers - Friday 11th May 2001, 9.30am on site, Cottons Road, Cobram

POTATO PLANTERS & HARVESTERS Kverneland 6 row planter, Myers 6 row planter, Gimme Q inline DI, 1500, 2 row harvester, and 2 row potato digger.

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TRAILERS 10 x 2 wheel and 4 wheel 3 & 4 ton farm trailers.

IRRIGATION MATERIALS Large quantity of spare parts, piping, sprinklers, C.I fittings etc.

MISCELLANEOUS Huge amount of items too numerous to mention here, a complete disposal sale of all potato & vegetable equipment and associated items.

CULTIVATING Discs, scarifiers, plough, hiller, roller, shredder, cultivators, rippers, fertiliser units and 2 Inter 1066 tractors.

Remarks: R.J Cornish & Co Pty Ltd are dispersing of their complete potato & vegetable operations. All plant & machinery is for very genuine sale. Full catering.

Terms: Strictly cash or cheque on day of sale. Number system operating.

Directions: Approx. 8 km East of Cobram off Murray Valley Hwy- turn right Cottons Road.

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ROUND-UP

State

Tasmania

After most of the planting was delayed till late October, the state then experienced a cold snap in early November further delaying those who hadn't yet planted. Since mid-November conditions have been hot, dry and occasionally windy over the whole state which rapidly depleted water stocks that looked so abundant after the spring rains. Trying to keep water up to crops has also placed a high demand on infrastructure and labour, and water needs have not always been met, increasing the likelihood of lower yields and quality in some paddocks. The dry weather also affected emergence in some areas.

Early crops of *Shepody* and *Kennebec* for processing are yielding well, with the quality meeting expectations. *Russet Burbank* crops are tending to die back early due to the rapid growth caused by the hot weather. This could limit the yield potential but we are not sure at this stage of the season.

Meanwhile, seed crops are progressing well with very few foliar problems.

Disease pressure from eelworm and powdery scab is about normal for the early intake of processing potatoes, and although late blight has been more prevalent than in other years for all sectors of the industry, rigid preventative fungicide programs have been effective. Incidence of tomato spotted wilt virus, especially in the south of the state where it is usually most prevalent, has been less than previous years, while common scab is starting to be seen in some crops.

Overall, the last few months have seen a positive start to the season.

Linda Wilson
Seed Potato Production Officer
Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment

Queensland

Most North Queensland growers had excellent crops last year. Weather conditions late in the season remained good and yields were high. Potato quality overall was very good, although there were some problems with breakdown in a few late crops harvested in very hot, humid December conditions.

Sebago prices dropped in December affecting a few growers who had late plantings. Marketing was also a problem for some growers of speciality varieties, as some wild fluctuations in price were experienced, especially in December.

South Queensland also grew some very good crops, with the Lockyer Valley having one of its best seasons in years. The dry finish to the season resulted in some excellent quality crops. Price tended to remain reasonable for much of the season, although prices did fall in December affecting some growers.

Bundaberg produced some good results although there were a few problems with fleck in some of the late season crops.

South Queensland processing producers had a much harder season. Some production areas experienced drought conditions during the past 12 months and hot 40°C days during December and January. These areas also experienced increased insect attacks, especially tuber moth. Overall specific gravity in most areas, Inglewood, Darling Downs and Lockyer valley, was lower than expected.

Some good rains have fallen in February providing much optimism for the coming season.

Michael Hughes
Extension Agronomist
Department of Primary Industry

South Australia

The summer has been hot and dry with below average rainfall and above average temperatures.

This has resulted in higher than normal soil temperatures, which have increased the challenge of effectively irrigating and managing the crop.

A significant rainfall event in late December for the processing crop in the South East is always welcomed as it assists with irrigation management. This is probably due to the reduced number of irrigations and for those with marginal water quality, lowering the level of salinity close to the tubers.

We have not had this rainfall event this season, so the combination of these negative factors will reduce the total processing crop by a small amount. There will also be an increase in misshapen tubers.

In the Mallee and Riverland the increased soil temperatures has resulted in some seed losses at four to six weeks after planting with both cut and round seed. The extreme weather conditions have generally slowed crop growth and stressed the crop throughout the season resulting in the production of some misshapen tubers.

All these challenges have slightly reduced yield. Quality will be average apart from a few misshapen tubers.

Bob Peake
Senior Consultant Potatoes
PIRSA Rural Solutions

Western Australia

The Potato Growing Industry Trust Fund has been replaced by the Potato Producers committee of the Agriculture Produce Commission. The Trust fund was responsible for funding the Potato Growers Association as well as research and development. The new committee will comprise of seven growers each representing a production area.

To enhance the industry's protection from exotic threats an Industry Protection Plan is being formulated under Hortguard which is a collaboration of industry and government. Major risks are assessed and plans are made so that the threat can be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Questions about who will be responsible for the agreed actions as well as who will provide funding are discussed too. This approach means that decisions can be made objectively "in the clear light" of day instead of in post incursion "fire-fighting" panic.

Fresh market

This summer has seen a much better production season than last. Quality is good, sales are strong and returns to growers are up.

A supply chain management workshop was held last December that allowed all stakeholders to consider improvements to the marketing of potatoes in WA.

Crisp

The Smith's SnackFood Company's Perth factory will have its capacity increased later this year. The increased production will allow the establishment of ongoing exports of crisps to Asia.

Export

The proceedings of the ACIAR workshop that followed the Potatoes 2000 conference have been published. Improving the Efficiency of Potato Production and Marketing in Indonesia, The Philippines, Vietnam and Nepal is available from Peter Batt of Curtin University for \$35 (Ph: 08 9266 7596).

The Manjimup Horticultural Industry Advisory Group (MHIAG) has started a pilot project to test the market for seed potatoes in Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Seed

Virus indexing of all Generation 2 planted crops will take place this season to improve the Certified seed scheme. Indexing will give seed growers improved information on the virus status of their crops. Previously virus levels were only assessed by field inspection.

Peter Dawson
Project Manager, Potatoes
Agriculture Western Australia

New South Wales

Digging of the early Central Coast potato crops started in early November and finished by mid-December. Crop yields were fair – averaging 35 tonnes a hectare. However ware prices fell from \$360 to \$160 a tonne on-farm over this period. Planting of the late crop started in mid-January and was completed by mid-February. The late crop areas remain similar to last year.

Harvest of the early North Coast and lower Northern Tableland's crops started in early December and ended in late January. Despite a dry start to the season, crop yields were reasonable – averaging 36 tonnes a hectare. Fresh market prices remained firm, ranging from \$360 a tonne in mid-December to \$500 a tonne on-farm by late January. There were no harvest delays with the dry weather over Christmas. Although planting of the late crop was slowed by heavy rain in early February, sowing was completed in most districts by mid-February. The late crop areas in the northern districts are similar to last year.

Digging of the early Riverina crop started in early December and finished by mid-February. Following the mild, wet growing conditions potato yields were up – averaging 38 tonnes a hectare. However fresh prices remained down, ranging from \$140 to \$200 a tonne on-farm over the harvest. Sowing of the late crop started in mid-February with crop areas down on last season due to the continuing poor returns for ware potatoes.

The main crop in the Tableland's districts was planted on schedule with the dry conditions before Christmas. Crop areas are down on last year, with many growers sowing their own seed to cut costs. A wet finish followed the dry start to the season. The main crop harvest should start in early March, with only average yields – 37 tonnes a hectare - expected in many districts.

Stephen Wade
District Horticulturist
NSW Agriculture

Victoria

Very hot and dry conditions have been the feature of this season, keeping growers busy with irrigation. There have been some temperature fluctuations and rainfall in the south of the State which have provided occasional relief. Apart from the dryness, periods of high winds have made it difficult to get water to the ground, especially where gun irrigators are used.

Still on the subject of water, the Victorian Potato Growers' Council last year made a submission to the Farm Dams Review Committee, on behalf of all Victorian potato growers. The recommendations of the Committee have since been released and have raised concerns within the industry about their implications. Following meetings with growers, the Growers' Council will be making a further submission to the Committee, pushing for changes to the recommendations.

This year's French fry crops around Ballarat have made up some of the time lost in delayed planting. However, the early crops seem to be growing a bit better than later ones, which were put under additional heat stress. As usual, the next couple of months will be critical.

After much negotiation, the McCain's grower group and McCain Foods have reached an agreement for the contract price of *Russet Burbank* to be raised by \$4/tonne. Monitoring of production costs by the McCain's growers has shown a dramatic increase in costs over the past 6-9 months. The main contributing factors have been the cost of fuel, chemicals, interest rates and machinery (both capital and repairs/maintenance).

Fresh market growers have been enjoying higher potato prices of around \$400/tonne, however, this has made it more difficult for exporters trying to move table potatoes overseas at a competitive price. Exporters are also receiving requests from some countries for specialised potato lines, but are not always able to find sufficient quantities at this stage.

No major problems have been observed in certified seed crops, with very few rejections recorded. In general, very few pest and disease problems have been observed this season.

In January, the Victorian Certified Seed Potato Authority held another training workshop at Toolangi for seed potato certification officers. The workshop covered field inspection procedures, variety descriptions and identifying varieties in the field. There was also considerable discussion about how certification officers will implement the new national seed standards. In attendance at the workshop were four Victorian officers, four from South Australia and one from Tasmania. Four Agriculture Victoria representatives also appreciated the chance to sit in and gain some useful experience.

Andrew Henderson
Technology Transfer, Potatoes
Agriculture Victoria



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