



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Newsletter

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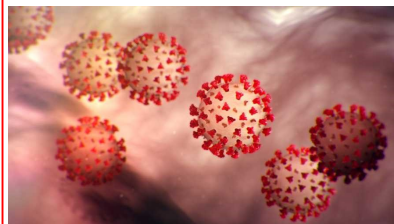


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Seasonal Worker Programme
An Australian Government Initiative



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The Secretary

I am sure that we all hope that 2021 is going to be a better year than 2020 - well let's be honest, it would be hard pushed to be much worse! I think we all though that we had turned a corner as the year started but once again the Covid issue reared its head and pushed us all back into a five day lockdown. But now with the prospect of vaccine roll outs, we can but hope that there are brighter days ahead. So now we are looking to adopt the 'covid normal' life of social distancing, hand sanitising and the use of masks in certain settings. I have to admit that if you had told me twelve months ago that I would ever be seen walking into a bank with a mask on, I think I would have had you declared insane on the spot! On a positive note we now have taken the use of technology such as 'zoom' as the norm, and the adoption of information sharing by mediums such as webinars have enabled us to gather more knowledge without the need to travel. But you really can't beat having a good old fashioned face to face conversation in my view, and it's great that we are now being able to start to plan more of our traditional grower days - and there are further details of these activities in this newsletter. On a

more reflective note, I don't think there is any business in our industry that hasn't suffered from the effects of Covid 19 in a financial way. It's been a tough road, and whilst a lot of us have weathered the storm, some businesses' have not been so fortunate. One of the phrases that came into our vocabulary was the ability to 'pivot' - which loosely translated meant the ability to do things differently. For me personally this saw me getting back into delivering more basic training though online mediums for a training provider, as well as providing remote training for my own customers that I would have usually visited. I think the other 'battle' we all faced was the mental one of being faced with a period of 'lockdown' where you were almost confined to the house for a number of weeks. But on reflection it highlighted what a resilient lot we are in the Horticulture Industry. So let's hope that we can indeed look forward to a brighter time ahead and hopefully put this rather dark bit of history well and truly behind us. So I wish you all well for the coming year, and look forward to seeing many of you at forthcoming HFF events. Take care everyone and stay safe. **TB**

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The President



Hi everyone, and welcome to our first newsletter of the year - and let's sincerely hope that 2021 is going to be a brighter one than 2020! Already we are seeing some signs of things starting to get back to what we might call normal, and on the HFF front that means us restarting our grower days! I am enormously grateful to Annie and the team at Rijk Zwaan who have agreed to host our next grower day and AGM on Thursday the 13th of May at their trial base in Daylesford. We were all set to go there last year and then Covid hit so the brakes went on that event big time! But Rijk Zwaan have been amazing in their response and commitment to the HFF and we are effectively looking at running the same event we had planned twelve months ago - a fantastic effort by the RZ team! Also at this meeting we will be having our AGM. But hang on? Didn't we only just have an online AGM? Well yes we did but that event was a result of us having to constantly push the date back in the hope we could actually meet up on a face to face basis, so I for one am very happy about having an 'In person' AGM as opposed to the 'virtual' version! Full details of the event are in this newsletter so make sure you put the date in the diary and RSVP to me, and here is a great opportunity for you all to think about inviting some guests who may be considering joining the HFF, we always need new members! On the general conference front, you will also see that the PCA are getting their 2021 event back up and running. Traditionally we have always had the two organisations conferences on alternate years and around the June/July time slot, but the dreaded Covid restrictions have played havoc with planning. But it's good to see that Nicky and her team are pushing ahead to offer the industry an event, and at a location that will support local communities. So we have all come a long way in the past twelve months, and learnt a lot about how we do things as well. But while we are starting to see some definite light at the end of the tunnel (and thankfully it isn't a train coming the other way!) spare a thought for our colleagues in New South Wales who have been through fires, then Covid and now devastating floods. These guys are really doing it tough. There is no doubt that flooding leaves behind a very long term mess in terms of a clear up and also structural damage to buildings and equipment. Our thoughts and best wishes go to all growers in NSW who have been affected by this disaster. Finally I need to give a very big 'Thank You' to all the HFF committee members who have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure we keep this particular show on the road. So take care out there everyone, this thing still isn't over so make sure you stay safe and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible again at the Rijk Zwaan / HFF Grower Day! **Regards, John Elford (President)**

Membership

As membership secretary, I'm pleased to report that our numbers have remained fairly stable despite all the hard times that growers have endured across the past year or so. It's great to see that members have 'kept the faith' and continued to support the HFF even in these difficult times. Usually a 'post conference' year sees us with an elevated membership figure but obviously things are not normal at the moment! Any organisation relies on a stable and ideally increasing membership base, so we are looking at ways we can increase our overall membership in the medium to longer term. Short term the Grower days offer an ideal opportunity for people to see what and who we are, so it would be great if we could see a number of new faces at this event. So feel free to invite a guest (or even two!) along to the next grower day, we would be delighted to see them. I'm looking forward to seeing people again - much better than Zoom! **Ian Mortlock—Membership Secretary**



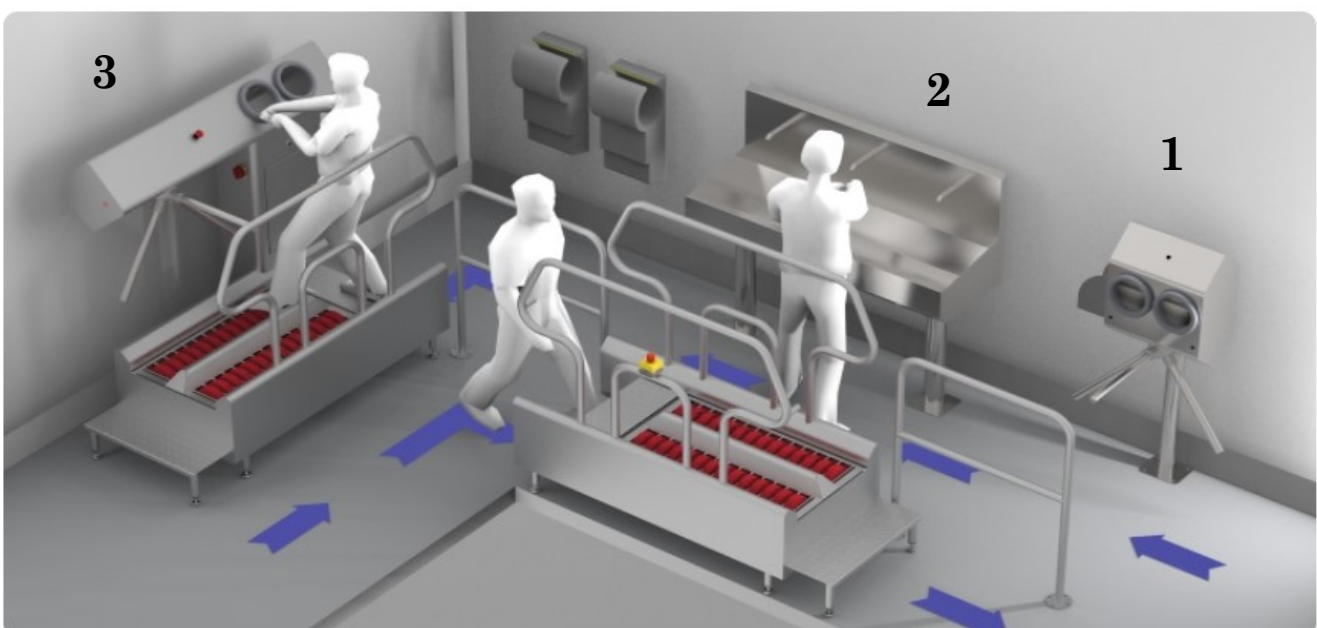
Royal Brinkman Hygiene Focus

The added threat of Covid-19, along with new and known virus and disease infections has heightened many grower's hygiene protocols. So the following points are intended as a guideline for those wishing to upgrade their hygiene protocols. Hygiene starts at the enterprise boundary, and it is wise to have some clear indications for potential visitors as to what is expected. Pests and diseases can also be transferred via clothing, so any visitors to the enterprise should not be wearing clothing that has been worn in other crop areas. Upon entering a greenhouse you often see a hygiene station where you can disinfect your hands, and after that you can enter the greenhouse. It is often thought that the disinfection of hands is enough to make hands free of bacteria and prevent contamination of the crop, but this is not true. The hygiene process has to go much further. It does not stop at just the disinfection of hands. Cleaning and disinfecting are two separate concepts.

In order to disinfect your hands, they must first be cleaned properly. By cleaning hands with soap, you remove the existing layer of dirt and grease. Because you remove this layer, a disinfectant can then reach the persistent bacteria on the hands. If you do not clean your hands first, the disinfectant can't work effectively as it is unable to get any layers of dirt or contamination. The overall aim with hygiene is to prevent bacteria or other plant pathogens getting in to your crop, potentially causing major problems. To avoid this, you want to create a hygienic situation so that employees or other visitors can't spread these organisms in to the crop. For optimal hygiene, you can make the best use of a complete hygiene station which incorporates the following steps.

1. Washing hands with soap
2. Drying hands
3. Disinfecting hands
4. Cleaning the soles of footwear
5. Disinfecting the soles of footwear.

The first step is washing hands with soap. Individual dispensers beside a sink can be utilised, but ideally the unit is linked to a turnstile. (1) The advantage of a unit is that persons are 'forced' to soap their hands because the unit is equipped with a turnstile and will not open until after soaping, so they can't skip this



Royal Brinkman Hygiene Focus

step before they can enter the greenhouse area. After soaping, hands can be washed in the sink. (2)

This will remove any traces of grease and dirt, and hands can then be dried—ideally with a forced air automatic drying system. When the grease and dirt layer is removed, you can disinfect your hands. (3)

For this you can choose individual dispensers or a unit. The advantage of a hygienic gateway is that the hands are disinfected with the aid of nozzles that automatically spray on the top and the bottom of the hands with disinfectant. For the shoe soles the same applies as for the hands, first they need to be cleaned, and then disinfected. Cleaning of shoes happens when you walk on the bristles of the unit (3)

The final part of the operation involves the disinfection of the soles of the shoes (4). By walking across the bristles of the unit which contain disinfectant, the soles of the shoes are cleaned. If you really want to ensure an additional layer of hygiene security, visitors can be issued with protective clothing to wear over shoes and clothing. (5).

So do I really have to go to these lengths? The items we have highlighted represent the top level of hygiene, and it is possible to implement a working hygiene protocol using some of the methods mentioned. But ultimately you have to consider that the hygiene protocol you have in place is there to protect your facility, and ultimately your source of income. For more detail on the automation and equipment available for hygiene protocols, please feel free to have a chat with our hygiene expert, Matthew Dent at Royal Brinkman.



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Cleaning and disinfection are of great importance for hygienic cultivation. It's the only way to prevent fungi, bacteria and viruses, and to prevent infection of crops. Cleaning and disinfection are therefore necessary parts for a healthy crop production.

First cleaning, then disinfecting

For optimal hygiene, ensure you first remove all dirt load from the material or surface with a cleaning detergent. By removing this layer, bacteria, moulds and germs that are found underneath are reachable for disinfection product. Only a visual clean surface will make the second step effective: Disinfection. Bacteria, viruses and fungi (including their duration forms) can be removed by disinfection products. Remember: A surface may look clean after using a cleaning product, but it isn't always so!



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Queensland Fruit Fly Threat



By Bronwyn Koll, Agribusiness Yarra Valley (qff@agribusiness-yarravalley.com or 0490381999 or www.fruitflyfreeyv.com.au) March 2021

The Yarra Valley has been prepared for Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) since the Yarra Valley QFF Action Plan was adopted in 2016. The Plan, that focuses on surveillance, prevention, risk mitigation and community education, has been funded by the State Government and a selection of Yarra Valley fruit growers (2017-2021). First discovered in QLD shortly after white settlers began growing peaches, this pest initially attracted the name 'the peach maggot'. QFF is a small insect, 7-8mm long, red-brown in colour with distinct yellow markings. The female QFF lays eggs into fleshy fruit. Then the developing larvae eat rotting fruit before ejecting themselves out of the fruit into the ground to pupate. The lifecycle can take as little as 28 days, and females can lay approximately 800 eggs over a few months (Credit A. Jessup).

QFF can attack ripening fruit still hanging, whilst other insects are restricted to attacking only injured or fallen fruit. Often the first experience one has with QFF is of the larvae, safely tucked away inside the fruit. The larvae exhibit a pointed black head, are legless and have a plump, flat rear end (no tail like a common drosophila larvae). Typically, the mature larvae can jump or skip away from danger by placing head to tail and leaping. Commonly, QFF issues in fruit production systems are related to areas outside the production area, such as unmanaged home gardens, abandoned commercial enterprises, and fruiting weeds like blackberries, plums, apples.



QFF larvae in a nectarine, note the shape of the QFF larvae, and QFF beginning pupation phase. Credit Agribusiness Yarra Valley.

Area Wide Management (AWM) acknowledges that the pest does not respect barbed wire fences, and relies on the coordination of actions in the region that are all focused in dealing with the QFF pest simultaneously to prevent reinfestation. AWM acknowledges the need to use a multipronged approach to QFF prevention and management.

QFF is now considered an established pest in Victoria (Since 2013). QFF are not a world wide pest, nor are they considered established in Western Australia, South Australia, or Tasmania. For this reason, areas with QFF are subject to providing certification of fruit fly freedom or post harvest treatment before fruit is traded to these sensitive markets. The Yarra Valley has traditionally been deemed QFF free, until 2018 when QFF was discovered and ultimately affected trade into sensitive states.

Now the growers are concerned about urban QFF pressure and unmanaged weed hosts, likely the current main impact in the region. Production in a pest free system is best, because post harvest treatments like fumigation can impact fruit quality. For any production system dealing with QFF, the chemistry associated with broad spectrum cover-sprays are an integrated pest management concern, as beneficial insects

Queensland Fruit Fly Threat

promoted in the crop to deal with other pests are compromised. Prevention is better than any cure in the QFF case. So how does this affect Hydroponic Farmers?

The shift from in-ground strawberry production to table tops is an issue for QFF management. Essentially, the QFF is known to prefer tree fruits, and a strawberry on a table top is more like that of a tree fruit. Similar could be said for capsicums, chillies and tomatoes grown on elevated gutters. The environment that hydroponics are normally grown in (protected cropping) that creates ideal fruit growing conditions, is also an opportunity for QFF to extend their season and their range. Advantages of hydroponics grown under a crop protection system may be the physical exclusion that can be enforced to keep pests out.

Strategies used for QFF prevention and management include

- Production area hygiene (destroy/remove waste)
- • Regular harvest (never let the fruit fall)
- • Traps, monitoring and fruit checks
- • Protein baiting and MAT (mating disruption) when QFF are 'in the area' or in 'high risk seasons'.



Chisholm Update

Following on from the round table discussions last year, Chisholm Institute of TAFE is continuing to move forward with it's aim of reopening their Greenhouse Training Centre at Cranbourne. Leading the re-establishment program is Chisholm's Associate Director, Stuart Hoxley. In order for Stuart to have a better understanding of the protected cropping sector, members of the HFF and PCA recently took Stuart on a trip around the industry to look at key facilities, and to meet the various industry personnel. The trip included visits to Australian Fresh Leaf where Stuart was able to witness first hand leafy green production and also talk to AFL Director Jan Vydra, A trip to Ball Australia was also included in the tour which highlighted the latest in hi-tech growing and control. General Manager - Paul Boland was on hand to highlight how the industry is moving forward at a rapid speed, and has a need to employ technicians as well as growers. The tour gave Stuart some excellent background to the current training needs of the industry which he is now looking to implement at Chisholm across the coming year as the Institute looks to resume training at its world class facility in 2021.

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Flavorite and Murphyfresh Merge



Chris Millis – Chief Operating Officer and Mike Nichol – Chief Executive Officer from the Flavorite Group.

The Flavorite Group are pleased to announce the merger of their business with the Murphy family businesses in Victoria, formerly known as Murphy Fresh (Mansfield) and Tatura Fresh (Tatura). Since the July 2020 consolidation of the Flavorite entities into the Flavorite Group in collaboration with Roc Partners, acquisitions, mergers, growth and diversification were all on the strategic agenda. In the short months since their last announcement, the Flavorite Group have diversified into commercial Blueberry & Cucumber plantings at their Warragul site, and commenced their strategic growth plans with the construction of 45,000m² glasshouse also on the Warragul site due for completion by August 2021. These developments alone will create employment for a further 120 fulltime employees during peak harvest. Flavorite's

CEO Mike Nichol said: "We promised organic growth, and we have started on that path with our Blueberries and new glasshouse construction at Warragul, and fortunately our long-term relationship and friendship with the Murphy family has presented us with the perfect opportunity to formally merge two great family businesses to strengthen our market position and allow further product and geographic growing diversification. The merger will allow us to further strengthen our offer to customers and deliver great products to market through innovation and quality for consumers." The new Flavorite Group, incorporating the existing talent and expertise in place at the Mansfield and Tatura sites, will enable the businesses to join forces to create a consolidated powerhouse which is well positioned to maintain long-held family values whilst unlocking the full potential of our talented people, growing and marketing expertise and world class asset base. By streamlining operations and the way we interact internally and externally, this will enable us to respond quickly to the market, our customers and new opportunities. Flavorite COO Chris Millis said "We have been working together with the Murphy family for 20 years, sharing knowledge and expertise. We have very similar management styles and are excited to merge the two businesses. Operationally, this further strengthens the Flavorite Group by bringing onboard the highly skilled Murphy team." Jon Murphy said



Jon, Russell & Jill Murphy from Murphy Fresh

"For the last 20 years we have been working closely with the Flavorite group utilising the most innovative farming technology to deliver great produce to Australian families. This merger allows us to combine our knowledge and expertise to keep expanding on what we do best". Roc Partners' Managing Partner Michael Lukin said "Roc is delighted to support the merger of these two great Victorian businesses to provide additional scale, production efficiencies and geographic diversification. The Murphy and Flavorite teams already operate closely together, and the family-owned cultural similarities should lead to a relatively simple integration. We welcome the Murphy's to the enlarged business and look forward to many more years of sustainable fresh produce production together."

PCA Conference Update

The PCA has been no different to the HFF in that well laid plans have been destroyed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Traditionally the PCA conference and the HFF conference have been held on alternate years around July, providing growers and the allied trade an annual conference experience. As you are all aware, the 2020 HFF conference has been postponed to 2022, and the traditional PCA conference for this year has been in a state of limbo thanks to the ever changing Covid landscape and associate border closures. However, the PCA are proud to announce that they will be holding a conference in October 2021. PCA Chair, Nicky Mann, provided the following update.

“As the Chair of Protected Cropping Australia and on behalf of our wonderful Board of Directors – I am super excited to announce that PCA will be holding it’s biennial conference between 25th and 28th October, 2021 at Pacific Resort in Coffs Harbour. Yes, we are trying to be positive and confident that we will be able to pull off this really important event for the benefit of our members, amazing growers & allied trade. We have pushed our conference away from it’s historical date in June/July to give the situation with COVID19 time to really settle down especially over the cooler months and allow most of us to be vaccinated by October 2021.

As a grower, I really understand that October is a very busy time of the year but hopefully everyone can get away from the farm for a couple of days to connect, re-connect, learn, share and simply enjoy networking with the fabulous people in our industry. I have so missed all your wonderful faces and I know most growers are dying to get off their farms and meet up with suppliers, customers and fellow growers. After the year that we have all had – we really do deserve a break away in a gorgeous sunny location.

We have selected Coffs Harbour this year to support a regional area of Australia and to highlight the amazing growers, packhouses, co-operatives, corporates and people in this part of the world. The farm tours will be diverse and full of great learnings. We hope you can bring your families with you to enjoy the wonderful beachside holiday that Coffs Harbour can offer.

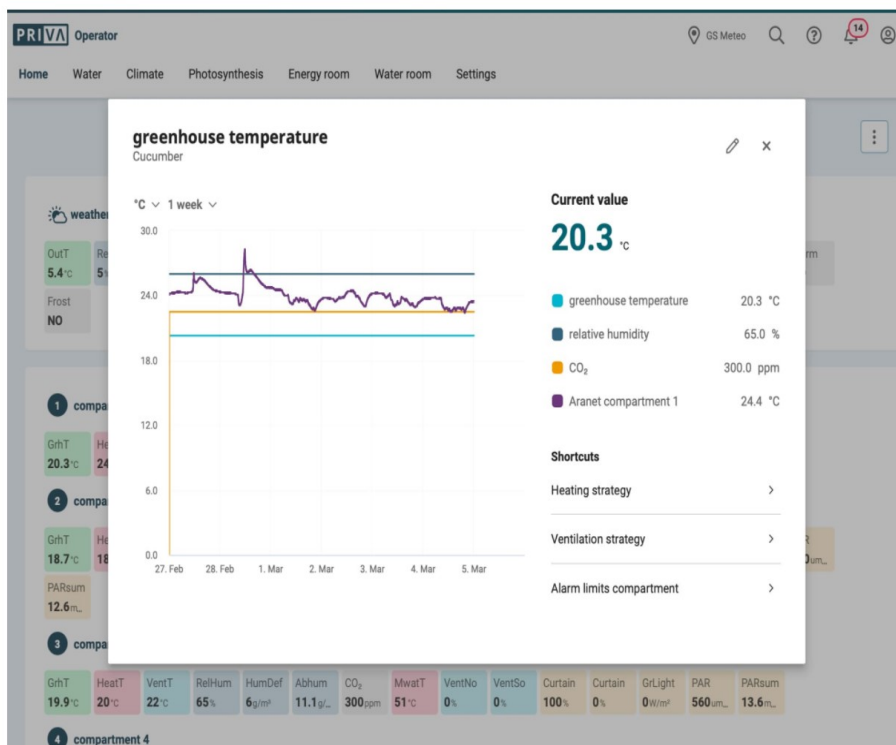
We are so excited to welcome you all and ASN Events will be our Professional Conference Organiser and Emily Rigby is the Conference Chair for this years events.”

If you are keen to attend, be a sponsor, exhibitor or speaker or involved in our conference in any way – please contact: Tim Hancock at tim.h@asnevents.net.au



Integrated Wireless Technology

Last year, Priva and Aranet signed an exclusive partnership to enable integrated wireless technology in greenhouses. With the integrated solution from Priva and Aranet, it is now possible to connect wireless sensors to Priva's Open Platform which allows the grower to view and analyze all data from sensors and other systems in the greenhouse in a single overview. The demand for data continues to grow. As a result, the demand for more and new sensors to generate data is also growing. Patrick Dankers of Priva commented "In the current way of working, however, growers often spend too much time organizing data. This is at the expense of time for analyzing data. Growers can now link the Priva-Aranet wireless sensors to Priva's Open Platform. This allows them to view all data clearly in the online application Priva Operator, which can be used to manage climate, water and energy remotely. In this way, growers can analyze their data and change settings based on new insights, all in one overview. The integration of sensor and greenhouse data creates more opportunities for in-depth analyses with which growers can improve their cultivation strategy. The climate conditions in the greenhouse are usually not the same



everywhere. To detect and react to these possible deviations, you will need (more) sensors on site. However, installing wired sensors involves high costs because it requires new cabling and installation by a service technician. Wireless sensors are cheaper and flexible to install at any location in the greenhouse. Whether you want to measure the microclimate around the top of the plants or around the fruit in the lower part; you can decide which additional data you want to collect to gain more insight into the environment in which the crop is growing. Priva and Aranet entered a partnership in 2020 to enable integrated wireless

technology in greenhouses. Patrick Dankers added, "We aim to help growers with every challenge they face. Therefore, we are committed to working with specialized partners and linking them to our open platform. Aranet is one of those partners. They are specialists in wireless technology and have developed an extensive portfolio of wireless sensors for the horticultural market." The sensors can monitor the following for you, among other things:

- Air temperature and humidity
- PAR light level- CO₂ level
- Water content in the substrate
- Salt content (EC) in the substrate
- Temperature of the substrate
- Weight of the substrate and plants
- Micro variation of the stem diameter

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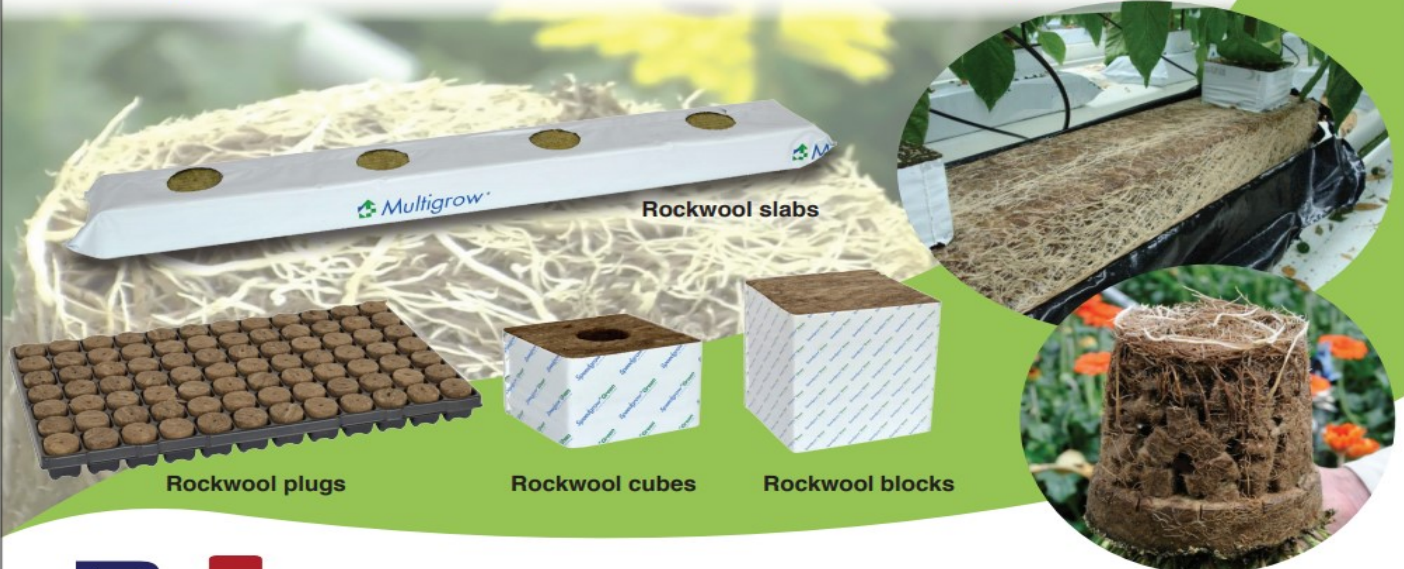


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Greenhouse Construction Code

Five years ago, the protected cropping industry through Protected Cropping Australia (PCA), the peak industry body representing greenhouse and hydroponic growers nationally prioritised the need to update the National Construction Code (NCC) specifically relating to intensive horticultural building requirements and fire safety. The NCC is a uniform set of technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings in Australia. For the past three years, research has been undertaken by Hort



Innovation for the protected cropping industry regarding necessary updates to the Code. The changes requested for prioritization by the Australian Building Codes Board relate to definitions and verification methods for intensive horticultural buildings, and of particular concern is fire safety. The proposed changes are listed below and can also be viewed via the link to <http://www.greenhousetoolbox.com/farm-management/2017/4/18/overview-of-proposed-changes-to-the-2019-national-construction-code>

AREA	PROPOSED CHANGES	
VOLUME 1		
1	Redefine Farm Building	It is proposed that farm building definitions shall be revised to include Intensive Horticultural Buildings (IHB) as is provided within the Classification Definitions category on pages 4-6 of this document. This option retains the farm building definitions and incorporates the IHB definitions. An IHB shall be classified as either a Group A, B or C structure. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 1 2016 > A1 Interpretation > Part A1.1 Definition > Farm building (REVISED)
2	Provide Definition for Intensive Horticulture Building	This proposed change adds a definition into the NCC Volumes One and Two for intensive horticulture buildings which specifies the building's primary usage for horticultural means. An IHB is a greenhouse, grow structure, canopy or the like belonging to one or a combination of the aforementioned in NCC Volume One, Part A1.1, Farm Buildings. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 1 2016 > A1 Interpretation > Part A1.1 Definition > Intensive horticulture building (NEW)
3	Alteration to Part H3 Farm Buildings and Farm Sheds	To be added to NCC Vol 1 Part H3. This allows for inclusion of the Intensive Horticultural Building into Part H3 of the NCC – here specific deemed-to-satisfy provisions for each identified classification of Intensive Horticultural Building will be documented. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 1 2016 > Part H3 Farm Buildings and Farm Sheds > Part H3.1 Application of parts (REVISED)

Greenhouse Construction Code

VOLUME 2

4	Part 1.1 Interpretation	An addition shall be made to Part 1.1.7 Language of Volume Two to include the classification Class 10d. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 2 2016 > Part 1.1 Interpretation > Part 1.1.7 Language (REVISED)
5	Part 1.1 Interpretation	This proposed change adds a definition into the NCC for intensive horticulture buildings which specifies the building's primary usage for horticultural means. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 2 2016 > Part 1.1 Interpretation > Part 1.1.1 Definitions > Intensive horticulture building (NEW)
6	Part 1.3 Classification	An addition shall be made to Class 10 at Part 1.3 Section 1.3.2 Classification whereby a subclass 10d shall be added. This allows for inclusion of the Group C Intensive Horticultural Building into Volume Two of the NCC. An explanatory information note has also been included in this part. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 2 2016 > Part 1.3 Classification > Part 1.3.2 Classification > Class 10 (REVISED/ ADDITION)
7	Part 1.3 Classification	An addition shall be made to Class 10 at Part 1.3 Section 1.3.3 Multiple classifications whereby a subclass 10d shall be added. This allows for inclusion of the Group C Intensive Horticultural Building into Volume Two of the NCC for multiple classification applications. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 2 2016 > Part 1.3 Classification > Part 1.3.3 Multiple Classifications (REVISED)
8	Part 2.3 Fire Safety	An alteration shall be made to Part 2.3 Fire Safety to ensure a Class 10d building does not significantly increase the risk of fire spread between Class 2 to 9 buildings. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 2 2016 > Part 2.3 Fire Safety > Part 2.3.1 Protection from the spread of fire (REVISED)
9	Part 2.3 Fire Safety	An explanatory information note has been included in Part 2.3 Fire Safety which outlines specification for Class 10d structures. NCC Change Location: NCC Vol 2 2016 > Part 2.3 Fire Safety > Explanatory information (REVISED/ADDITION)

Since 2018, the prioritisation of horticultural buildings to be considered for incorporation into the NCC has not occurred. This delay is adding confusion to what is required across local planning and consent authorities, and adding unnecessary costs and red tape to the expansion of the protected cropping sector. Some of our members have reported spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on fire safety studies alone without clear advice on what is required. PCA with the support of HFF are now actively lobbying Federal Minister David Littleproud (Federal Minister of Agriculture) to have these changes implemented as a matter of urgency. We will update members with more detail as it comes to hand

Dookie Graduate joins Haifa

THE strength of Dookie Agricultural College for developing young rural careers is alive and well, with graduate Emily Corbett already joining the Australian team of one of the world's highest quality water soluble fertiliser manufacturers, Haifa Group. Ironically, the head of the Australian team, Trevor Dennis, is also a Dookie Agricultural College graduate. Emily has been based at her family's apple and pear property at Seville in Victoria's Yarra Valley, and it has been a case of the proverbial fruit not falling far from the tree when it comes to her career aspirations. The family grows predominantly apples and some pears at Seville, as well as strawberries on another property at Wandin North. Cherries also were grown earlier, a time of fond memories for Emily, when she was involved with picking and packing in the warehouse alongside her siblings and cousins. Her cousins still work on the properties today. Emily recently completed a Bachelor of Agriculture, majoring in plant and soil science, from the University of Melbourne that included time at its Dookie Campus, where she also achieved a Cert III in Agriculture. Classes at Dookie, understandably, involved more hands-on learning in field situations. Emily said despite the degree being more focused on broadacre agriculture, her interest had always been in horticulture. "Broadacre agriculture is not as in-depth and I don't have a strong interest in animals," Emily said. "Everything about horticulture interests me. I like to understand how everything works and to figure out how it works. It is more intensive and each element influences everything. "I also started my degree with an agriculture economics major, but I didn't want to be cooped-up in an office." Recently relocated to Bayswater, near Melbourne, Emily said she was excited to join a large-scale company with such unique, high quality fertilisers and a footprint in many different countries around the world. Emily initially joined Haifa Australia two days a week as a Trainee Agronomist while completing her degree and moved into a full-time position at the start of February. As part of the trainee program, Emily worked with retired Haifa Southern Agronomist Shaul Gilan and said she had gained enormous learnings. Haifa Australia Managing Director Trevor Dennis, a former graduate of Melbourne University and the Dookie Campus, said he was pleased to continue the tradition, with another Dookie student now joining the Haifa ranks. "Emily already has shown great enthusiasm and an eagerness to learn," Trevor said. He said Dookie Campus had great relationships with various organisations across the agricultural sector that provided students with experience and, in numerous cases, a pathway for commencing their careers. Dookie Campus Director Ros Gall has chalked-up 32 years at the Campus and so has had a hand in many of those careers, including that of Trevor. Focused on agricultural sciences, the Dookie Campus accommodates about 200 students a year undertaking agricultural degrees. "There is strong demand for our program and our graduates. Demand into an agricultural degree has been on the increase again since 2012," Ros said. "Around 86-87 per cent of students have jobs within three months of graduation. We have been amazed this year at how many have picked up jobs considering the year we have had, (with the coronavirus)." Students have the option to do internships with suitable organisations, while Dookie Campus also runs a mentoring program for students linked with industry partners. A 2400-hectare working farm located in the productive and diverse agricultural area also provides for plenty of engagement with production agriculture, and has proved vital considering 85% of students are from metropolitan areas.



Dookie Campus Director Ros Gall, and Emily Corbett and Trevor Dennis of Haifa Australia

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A photograph of a woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white lab coat, standing in a greenhouse. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle smile. The background shows green plants and the structure of the greenhouse.

BE A SECTOR LEADER

IN PROTECTED CROPPING

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PROTECTED CROPPING GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PROTECTED CROPPING

The Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate in Protected Cropping will educate future leaders for the Australian horticultural sector via an innovative and flexible industry-supported training model.

Be part of the fastest growing food producing sector in Australia and join the only protected cropping course delivered at a postgraduate level in Australia. Western Sydney University offers a unique Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate course in Protected Cropping providing exciting learning opportunities. Extend your knowledge and further develop your expertise in the areas of science, technology and business with a strong focus on high-tech and intensive horticulture.

This course is designed to comprehensively cover both Australian and international challenges in sustainable greenhouse production in a changing global climate. Students will learn how protected cropping utilises cutting-edge technologies in the core areas of crop production, plant physiology, biotechnology, pest management, postharvest, climate control systems, integrated data intelligence, and business management and logistics. Additionally, students will learn best-practices from the protected cropping industry experts to equip graduates for employability and mobility.

The Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate courses in Protected Cropping are funded by the Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund, part of the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative developed by Hort Innovation, with co-investment from Western Sydney University, key industry partners (Flavorite, Costa Group, Perfection Fresh, Australian Fresh Leaf Herbs, and Greenworks) and contributions from the Australian government.

The industry partners will host students for their industry research projects. Therefore, engaged students will be job-ready to start in the protected cropping industry following completion of the course.

ACCREDITATION

Both the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma in Protected Cropping are recognised by the two industry organisations – Protected Cropping Australia and the Hydroponic Farmers Federation.

WHAT YOU'LL STUDY

The course includes a combination of flexible online learning modules and practical on-site workshops to allow you the flexibility to work while studying.

The highlight for your learning journey is the Masterclass experience, where you will meet with industry experts and work on real life industry challenges in a world-class, high-tech greenhouse facility. Themes within the workshops for the Masterclass include software and hardware systems, crop and produce management, integrated pest management and fertigation systems.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

The Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate in Protected Cropping courses are a key education and training component of National Vegetable Protected Cropping Centre, jointly funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia and Western Sydney University. The Centre encompasses 1800sq. m. over 9 independently controlled growing spaces designed with the world's very best glasshouse infrastructure and sensor controlled systems, to offer research, education and training opportunities in modern protected cropping horticulture.

The practical experience gained during this course will allow you to be part of the sustainable solution that focuses on resource management, reducing agricultural pollutants and environmental footprint, and using technology to advance production.

Graduates of this degree can look forward to career opportunities, such as; Horticultural Business Managers, Crop and Nursery Managers, Business Consultants or High-tech Growers.

HOW TO APPLY

Postgraduate course applications are processed online and can be made directly to Western Sydney University at westernsydney.uac.edu.au/ws or alternatively through the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) at uac.edu.au/postgraduate.

Students are eligible to apply for one of the 65 **scholarships** (up to \$5,000 each) and **internships** (up to \$17,500 each) generously provided by the five industry partners. The applicants need to submit an Expression of Interest form and the Project Reference Group will make the selection.

For more information about studying this course, please contact

Professor Zhonghua Chen

0466 544 696

z.chen@westernsydney.edu.au

Visit our Protected Cropping course pages for more information.

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate-certificate-in-protected-cropping

westernsydney.edu.au/graduate-diploma-in-protected-cropping



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HFF AGM and Grower Tour

Rijk Zwaan are located at 269 Dairy Flat Road, Musk, VIC 3461



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Grower Meeting and AGM

Thursday 13th May, 2021

PROXY VOTING FORM

Dear Sir/Madam I hereby nominate Mr/Mrs/Ms _____
 of _____
 to vote on behalf of _____

During the Hydroponic Farmers Federation AGM meeting to be held on Thursday the 13th of May, 2021

NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS _____

SIGNATURE _____

TITLE _____

COMPANY _____

HFF AGM and Grower Tour



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Grower Meeting and AGM Thursday 13th May, 2021 Rijk Zwaan



269 Dairy Flat Road, Musk, VIC 3461

Our next Grower meeting and farm tour will be kindly hosted by Rijk Zwaan at Daylesford. Join us (HFF) in an opportunity to see and talk with other Growers/Wholesales/Trade at these premier industry research and trial facilities.

Given the quality nature of this facility, this grower day is likely to be a very popular event, so we would ask that you indicate your intention to attend via the RSVP as soon as possible so that we can cater accordingly.

Following the farm tour we will be moving in to the Rijk Zwaan office area for lunch followed by the AGM and grower meeting.

AGENDA

09:30 am Registration tea/coffee

10:00 am Welcome and introduction by the HFF President—John Elford

10:15 am Farm Tour, Nursery, Seed production, Hydroponics, Seed threshing and cleaning, Export

12:00 pm HFF AGM—Including President's report, Treasurers report, Memberships report Voting for vacant positions

12:30 pm Lunch with salads provided by Rijk Zwaan, hosted by Stephen Roberts

13:15 pm Rijk Zwaan in Asia, plant factories and more by Arie Baelde

14:00 pm Jurgen - Issues surrounding seed health, testing, import requirements

15:00 pm HFF wrap up—including briefing on forthcoming conference

15:10 pm Any other business

15:15 pm Meeting closes

*Due to Covid protocols we may be facing restrictions on numbers.
Priority will be given to Financial growers followed by Financial trade.
Please note, Program may change on the Day.*

FOR CATERING PURPOSES PLEASE RSVP BY FRIDAY 7th MAY

PLEASE EMAIL RSVP TO John Elford—johnelford@bigpond.com.au

NAME/S.....

NAME OF BUSINESS/COMPANY.....

PHONE NUMBER/Email address.....

Digital Harvest Program

La Trobe University recently invited farmers, agri-producers, distributors and sellers to apply for *Digital Harvest*, a free online program designed to help companies adapt and grow, as a response to the events of 2020. This offer has been taken up by a number of HFF members who are reporting great outcomes from the program.

The initiative has been supported by AUSVEG who stated that:- *"2020 has accelerated the move to the digital economy, and our members need agribusiness e-commerce as a safe and sustainable sales channel to existing*



and new customers. AUSVEG supports this program as it will include modules to support farmers and small-scale producers increase their digital presence and impact, through digital marketing tools."

Digital Harvest is designed to support farmers and producers to develop and enhance e-commerce skills and implement an effective e-commerce strategies as part of ongoing operations. The program is part of a \$1.5m E-Commerce and New Marketplace Transition Package announced by the Victorian Government, as part of an Agricultural Workforce Plan. This plan aims to support agriculturists to transition to new markets and new ways of doing business. Delivered fully online and at no cost to participants, the program is supporting a wide range of agricultural sectors, including farming, cropping, broadacre, farmgate, community growers and distributors, etc.

Participants are receiving insights from experts in agribusiness development, sales, retail, eCommerce and digital marketing, as well as gaining access to toolkits that can help attract customers and grow into the future. Participants also have access to a growing virtual library of expert-led resources on key topics including Digital Strategy, Analytics, Email Marketing, SEO & SEM, Social Media, Storytelling and more.

The program has been developed in partnership with Investible, a leading early-stage investment group and experts in entrepreneurial and business development, Outcome.Life an international student community focused on employment outcomes through intern placements, seminars and networking events, and La Trobe Business School. The commitment for this program requires the participants to attend 13 online workshops delivered over 12 weeks.

Participants are receiving expert insights & guidance so that they can Learn what is needed to move forward into a new digital age with confidence and supercharge their business, sales, marketing, and communication strategies.

On top of this, the course has offered participants access to a supportive community of like minded people and business owners who understand the challenges and opportunities ahead, to share feedback, support and continued learning.

Further courses are being proposed and we will promote these to members as they arise.

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Rijk Zwaan Blueleaf® cucumber variety

Blueleaf® cucumber variety offers greater insurance for growers

A new Rijk Zwaan cucumber variety, Insula RZ, answers the market's call for reliability and quality, especially during cooler growing periods, with the added benefits of Blueleaf® and CGMMV resistance. Insula RZ has been an outstanding and consistent performer in our trials. With uniform fruit length in the 34-35cm range and a strong well-balanced plant, Insula RZ has demonstrated that it has the ability to produce over a long harvest window, especially during the cooler autumn, winter and early spring periods.

Growers can expect high yielding crops with good vigour and strong transitional growth. The wide package of resistances, Blueleaf® trait and high quality fruits make Insula RZ a must see variety this year. Sales Representative, Steve Natsias, is excited to welcome Insula RZ into Rijk Zwaan's portfolio this season.



"To have the Blueleaf® trait already there and the added benefit of CGMMV, it really is a good package to offer a grower," he said. Blueleaf® cucumber varieties have dark, blue-green foliage. These leaves contain more chlorophyll which enables the plant to absorb more light and this converts into more growth and fruiting. The plant is slower to yellow, meaning it remains productive for longer, even in the case of infection with the cucurbit yellow stunting disorder virus. Blueleaf® varieties are also better able to withstand viruses, fungi such as Fusarium and mildew and pests such as whitefly and thrips.

"It's hard to go past the Blueleaf® trait for crop sustainability and endurance," Steve said. "We do find the fruit traits of Blueleaf® varieties are an improvement compared to non-Blueleaf® varieties. They're darker, they are straighter and they present better. From a visual perspective, they are superior."

"The combination of Blueleaf® and CGMMV is added insurance. It certainly gives growers a greater likelihood of achieving a more successful crop."

Since being introduced earlier this year, interest in Insula RZ is coming from every state in Australia.

"In unheated crops, Insula RZ certainly offers the marketplace the desired fruit length for winter production. With existing commercial varieties, the fruits can be a bit shorter, but Insula RZ is longer and also adds the CGMMV equation to the mix – we haven't had these advantages in our winter segment before," Steve said. The cucumber industry has grown in the past five years so it's advantageous for everyone in the chain to have new varieties on offer.

"We've seen increase in demand in all of the cucumber categories including the continental types," Steve said.

"There's a couple of reasons behind that: the affordability of continental cucumbers, particularly for the service sector, and people have acknowledged the quality and shelf-life."



Rijk Zwaan Blueleaf® cucumber variety

Shield your crops with Blueleaf® from Rijk Zwaan

CVV

Powdery
mildew

CGMMV



Read more about our range
of continental, Lebanese
and slicer cucumber
varieties with Blueleaf®

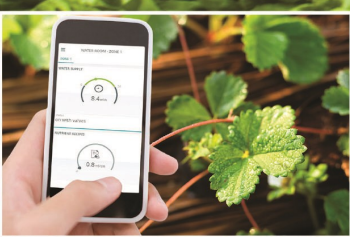
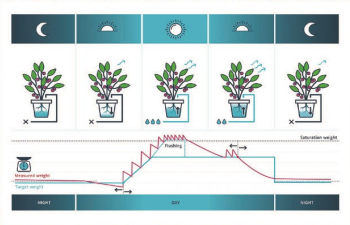


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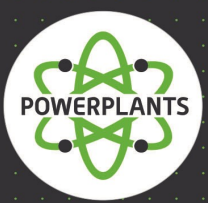


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