



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Newsletter

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June 2021



In this issue:-

The Secretary	pg 2
Presidents Report	pg 3
Membership report	pg 3
Queensland Fruit Fly funding	pg 4
Ecomix	pg 5
Royal Brinkman	pg 6
HFF / PCA agreement	pg 8
Garden City Plastics	pg 8
Greenhouse construction code	pg 9
Eclipse Enterprises	pg 10
On the run	pg 11
Energy use audits	pg 12
Energy investment grants	pg 13
Industry assistance	pg 14
PCA Conference	pg 15
Vale Frank Costa	pg 16
A and D Australasia Pty Ltd	pg 17
Fernland	pg 18
Watch this space!	Pg 18
AIS Greenworks	pg 19
Storm damage report	pg 19
Western Sydney University	pg 20
HFF Grower Day and AGM	pg 22
Powerplants Australia	pg 24



The Secretary



I am sure that we all hoped that 2021 was 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 thought that we had turned a corner as the year started but once again the Covid issue reared its head gain plunging all of us into a snap lockdown, as the more moronic element of the population stripped supermarket shelves bare and bought up toilet paper (don't get me started on that one!) For me personally I was just getting back into travelling for work and had planned to attend the Hort Connections conference, so yet another flight credit with my friends at Qantas! But despite the disappointment of having to go through another lockdown, it's fair to say that the Horticultural Industry is made up of some pretty resilient people who are always prepared to find ways to face and overcome issues. Most people I've spoken to have been resigned to the fact that once again, we just have to keep going forward and ride

out this particular storm and keeping a positive outlook. For me personally it's been something of a challenge as the first thing people do when times are tough is generally cut back on marketing and training costs! But I'm pleased to say that I'm still here and looking forward to being out and about with growers again before too long. So, in this edition of our newsletter we have a range of topics and reports to keep you all better informed and aware of what's been happening in HFF land. Sadly I was unable to attend but it was great to see the running of a grower day at Rijk Zwaan and to allow people to get together on a face to face basis. A full report and pictures are shown in this edition, as well as some interesting information about energy audits and potential funding opportunities. However, we also have a tribute to Frank Costa who sadly left us. Like many others I was one of the lucky audience members at the HFF Lorne conference where Frank spoke, providing us all with an amazing insight into his life. A truly remarkable man who will be sadly missed by us all. So stay safe everyone and let's hope 2021 is the year when we overcame Covid-19! **Tony B**

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The President



Hi everyone, and welcome to yet another newsletter. And just when we thought it was safe to come out and play, we suddenly found ourselves in lockdown again! For those of us in regional Victoria the initial impact was just for seven days, but this has been something of an ongoing saga for those in the deemed metropolitan region. Whilst I understand the need for such actions in terms of public safety and health reasons, these lockdowns have a heavy and ongoing toll on small business as they try and keep afloat, And for the trade that supports Horticulture this presents additional barriers to meeting farmers on site to service their needs. However, it is what it is and we just have to try and keep moving forward. So we didn't recognise it at the time, but how fortunate were we to be able to run our recent grower day and AGM in a face to face mode! It was so good to be able to see people again rather than through a computer screen, and I have to thank Annie Walch and the team at Rijk Zwaan for turning on a magnificent day for us. Generally host organisations just provide us with a venue for our visits, but Rijk Zwaan did so much more in providing the venue, lunch, and a range of speakers, all at not cost to the HFF. We are deeply grateful for this, so to Annie and team, a very big 'Thank You' for the day. My second big 'Thank You' is to you - our members (both growers and trade) who supported the event. A big part of these days is to have the chance to talk face to face to our members, so it was great to see so many of you. The other part of the day was the HFF AGM, again a virtual event last year but it was good to have this back as a face to face meeting. Part of the proceedings saw the re-election of Tony Spurling, Ian Mortlock, and Michael Tran to the committee which was good to see these reliable faces back on board. Now while it's great to be working with the team that makes up the committee, the reality of the fact is that we are all not getting any younger! So I'll put the call out there now - if anyone is keen to get on board with the committee I'd be only too pleased to have a chat with them. Whilst you can argue 'If it ain't broke - don't mend it!' the committee are all of the belief that the way forward for the HFF is having new blood join the organisation and the management committee. So feel free to have a serious think about getting more involved. So once again my thanks to the committee for all the work they put in behind the scenes. Finally I was saddened to hear of the passing of Frank Costa. This was a man who had a big impact on our industry and my beloved Geelong Cats, so a very sad time for me personally and I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Costa family. Finally, I hope you are all keeping safe as the Covid-19 issue resurfaces, and for those that remember the words in 'Hill Street Blues'—Let's be careful out here! **Regards, John**

Membership

Our membership numbers continue to remain fairly steady which is a good thing in these uncertain times. Although I wasn't there. It was certainly good to hear reports of members bringing new faces along to the Rijk Zwaan grower day. Encouraging new members into the organisation is something we all need to be doing, so keep on thinking about who you might be able to introduce to the HFF in the coming year. Whilst keeping our member numbers steady isn't a bad thing, it's better if we are increasing our membership! So even sharing a copy of this newsletter in a hard copy or e format can certainly help to spread the word out there in the wider horticultural community. And at this time of the year I'm sure that many of you are like me at the moment, and are busy pulling out old crops and replanting, so hopefully that's all going well for you! So in the meantime take care everyone, and we will hopefully see you all soon.

Ian Mortlock - Membership Secretary



Queensland Fruit Fly Funding



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

Last month, the Minister for Agriculture announced new funding for Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) area-wide management for Victoria's key horticulture regions: Greater Sunraysia, Yarra Valley and Goulburn Murray Valley. The available funding comprises \$6.4 million over four years for area-wide management programs. \$5.3 million of this funding will be available in grants for the employment of three Fruit Fly Regional Coordinators and on-ground activities to manage QFF. The remaining funds will support Agriculture Victoria staff to administer and evaluate the grants program and deliver the state-wide communication and engagement program. Agriculture Victoria's business as usual activities (not funded by this new money) will deliver other projects within the Strategy such as the trapping network review, an industry surveillance model and a collaborative project to determine the regulatory future of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area. Work is continuing quickly to update Victoria's Fruit Fly Strategy 2021-2025 and Agriculture Victoria will provide you with the opportunity for comment soon. The Strategy is to be finalised by the end of June.

The Strategy Implementation Plan will provide details on the actions to be undertaken to effectively implement the Strategy. Engagement on the draft Strategy Implementation Plan will begin in June.

This is great news as fruit fly infestations are expected to hit orchards hard this spring-summer, and fruit fly campaigners are again reminding home gardeners and growers to strip their ripe fruit as soon as possible.

According to Goulburn Murray Valley regional fruit fly project co-ordinator Ross Abberfield, the effects of La Niña and ripe fruit going unpicked has caused 'increased fruit fly pressure': "It is evident that Qfly (Queensland fruit fly) will cause havoc for not only Victorian growers but also growers in southern NSW and South Australia in the upcoming season. We know we won't see the full impact of increased Qfly activity until the next growing season, however the importance of prevention and control measures now is key to curbing the spread."

The largest concern at the moment is fruit fly adversely impacting fruit exports out of Victoria and southern NSW.

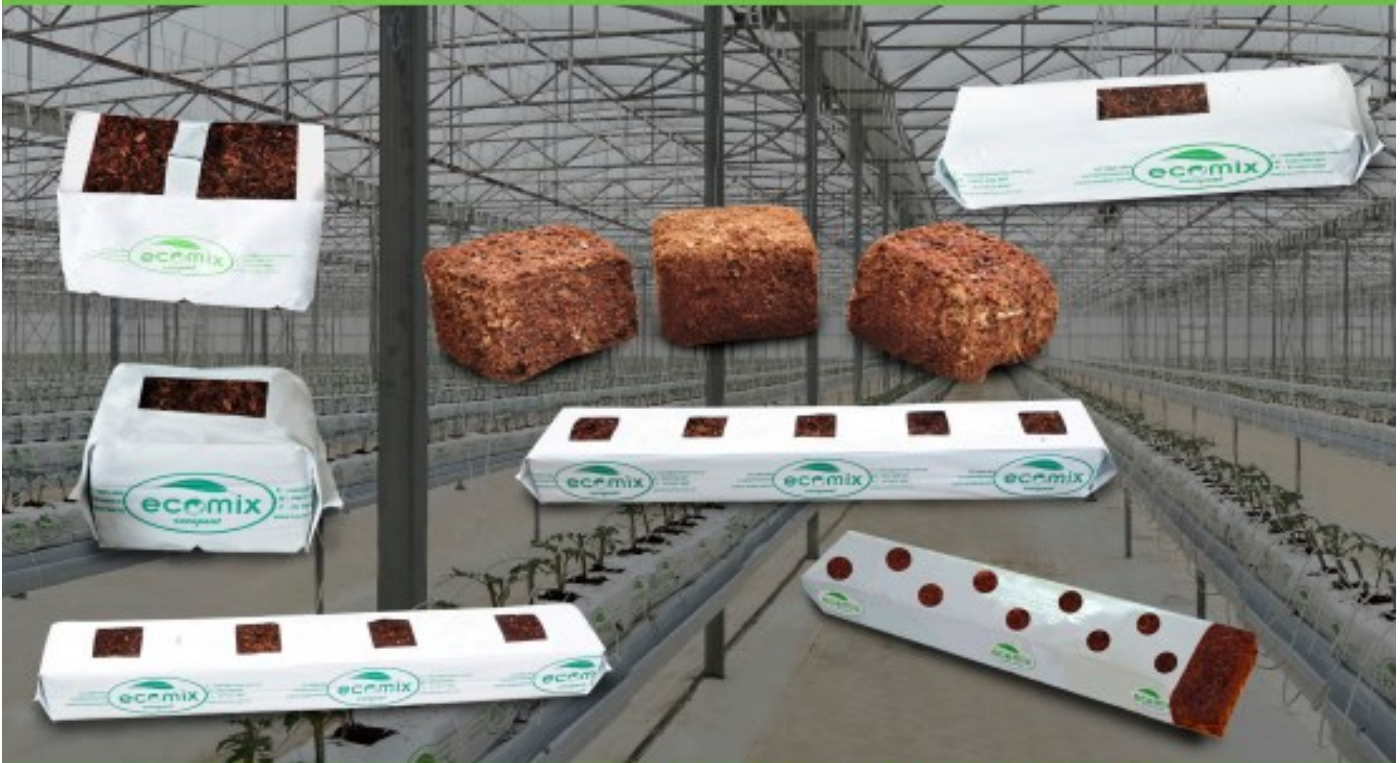
Abberfield said the current situation of increased fruit fly activity had been exacerbated by weather conditions that were optimal for fruit fly survival and spread, on top of serious problems in the harvest of commercial fruit due to travel restrictions for itinerant workers as a result of COVID-19.

Backyard fruit and veggie growers are being asked to monitor their plants for fruit fly and remove fruit quickly from the garden after it ripens so pupae have less of a chance to develop. Winter will kill off a certain percentage of the population, but because the fly had such a fertile summer and autumn, experts predict they will bounce back with a vengeance come spring.

Ecomix



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Royal Brinkman



The outbreak of Covid-19 has caused widespread disruption and chaos globally, these are unprecedented, turbulent times for us all. The health and safety of our colleagues, customers and partners is our primary concern, We have taken measures in order to prevent further spreading of the virus (Advice COVID-19). In not wanting to jeopardise the health of any of our customers, we have stopped all visits for the foreseeable future. Technical support and guidance will be provided by mail or phone as usual, and we endeavour to offer you our full support as best we can during these difficult times. **Our goal is clear:** to protect the health of our people and partners. However, as an essential link in the food supply chain, we are committed to ensuring that professional growers receive a timely supply of products to continue providing citizens with healthy food throughout the covid-19 crisis. This responsibility is at the heart of our daily commitment. We will of course stay abreast of all changes to local regulations and keep our customers updated as the situation evolves. We will do our utmost to keep things as close to normal as possible, but due to the seriousness of the pandemic, this may not always be easy or possible, and we are counting on your support as we tackle these trying times together. Our team will keep you informed and updated by phone or email, should you have any queries or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch. This is a difficult time for us all, and it's essential that we stand united, work together and support each other to the best of our abilities. Most importantly, please stay healthy, take good care of yourselves and each other, and stay strong. **David Sobevski—Managing Director Royal Brinkman Australia +61 0429 706 659**

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Huwa-San TR-50 is a unique stabilized hydrogen peroxide that stands out for its superior stability and efficient operation. Huwa-San is the product for powerful cleaning of drip hoses, tanks and other parts of the irrigation system. Thanks to its unique stabiliser, Huwa-San retains its power throughout the entire water system. Moreover, unlike other products, it doesn't contain any harmful substances and is odourless, colourless and non-corrosive at the correct dosage. Huwa-San has proven itself in removing biofilm and preventing blockages in the water system.

Advantages

- Powerful stabiliser throughout the enterprise irrigation system
- Prevents the spread of germs
- No harmful substances
- Biodegradable
- Algae prevention
- Odourless and colourless
- Non-corrosive



Michael Misfud of PaulMar Hydroponics introduced Huwasan into his operation earlier this year he says

“We have defiantly noticed the improvement in the quality of our lettuce since dosing our irrigation water, not only does Huwasan disinfect the water – it adds oxygen, which improves the root development/growth, this adds tremendous value to our operation, It is easily applied and is 100% biodegradable eco-friendly as it decomposes into the water and oxygen and has no impact on the taste or colour of the lettuce”

Andrew Bailey recently commenced flushing his irrigation system with Huwasan

“We used HuwaSan to flush our lines during crop rotation this year, it’s given us a nice clean start and we are looking forward to seeing the benefits later in the season”

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- Huwa-San is a uniquely stabilized powerful hydrogen peroxide cleaning your drip hoses, silos and other parts of the watersystem.
- Huwa-San has proven itself in removing biofilm and preventing blockages in the water system.

Properties:

- Sustainable and proven to be effective.
- Chlorine-free, no added organic compounds and acids.
- No harmful by-products.
- No traceable residue in the crop.
- Active at extreme pH values and high temperatures.

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HFF and PCA Formalise an MOU



The Hydroponic Farmers Federation (HFF) and Protected Cropping Australia (PCA) have always had a close and good working relationship. Many of the HFF members have served (or are serving on the PCA Board) and visa versa, and for some time the



organisations have had something of a 'gentleman's agreement' about what benefits each organisation can offer. The HFF committee and the PCA Board have recently developed a more formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to clearly identify the conditions that each organisation offers as mutual benefits. This document has now been ratified by both parties and offers HFF members the following:-

- A discounted rate of 10% for financial HFF members to become 'grower' members of Protected Cropping Australia. This to a 'one off' discount for the individual grower.
- A discounted registration rate for all financial HFF members wishing to attend the biennial PCA Conference exhibition. For this conference this equates to a \$100 discount for non PCA member rates.

The agreement also clarifies the reciprocal arrangements that both organizations have for providing booths and access for two committee/board members at each others biennial conferences.

'It's been great to get this agreement formalized after many years' commented HFF President John Elford.

'For as long as I've been around we've had an agreement, but now we have a clear set of guidelines to work to' said PCA Chair Nicky Mann. The Memorandum of Understanding comes into effect immediately giving both parties a clear vision of how the relationship now works.

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Greenhouse Construction Code

Following on from the detail we listed in our last newsletter, and a subsequent request to Minister Littleproud, The HFF has been in receipt of a response shown below. It is fair to say that this was not the response we were hoping for, and the indications given are that we can not expect any changes until 2025 at the earliest, with consideration only being given to any such changes. In light of this, the HFF will be working closely with the PCA to further this issue in the short term. We will be formulating a response, and we understand that the PCA is planning to lobby the Minister directly via a face to face meeting in Canberra, at which we are hoping to have representation to support reforms to this important issue. Whilst we appreciate that this doesn't impact everyone, it does have the potential to put some large barriers in the way of industry development. We will keep you all posted.

Mr John Elford
President: Hydroponic Farmers Federation
273 Harbours Road
YENDON VIC 3352



Dear Mr Elford

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 April 2021 to the Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management. Given the nature of your letter it has been referred to me to provide a response

I note your letter seeks priority inclusion of proposed amendments to the National Construction Code (NCC) concerning intensive horticultural buildings proposed by Protective Cropping Australian (PCA) in the next edition of the NCC (ie NCC 2022).

When the Building Codes Committee (BCC), the ABCB's peak technical advisory group, considered the technical merits of the proposal it did not recommend adoption of the suggested amendments.


Instead, the BCC advised that the matter be considered as a part of an ABCB project that holistically considers the fire safety requirements of the NCC. This advice was to ensure that any proposed NCC amendment is consistent with fire safety requirements of the NCC, particularly the relevant Performance Requirements.

The holistic review of fire safety project work in turn was deferred in the current financial year due to other program priorities determined by the Board and Building Ministers. As such the element of project work relevant to intensive horticultural buildings is yet to be completed.

Therefore, the amendments are not included in the consultation draft of NCC 2022, which is currently being displayed. It is anticipated that any NCC amendment arising from this work, if found necessary, would be considered for inclusion in the 2025 edition of the NCC.

I trust this letter explains why NCC amendments relevant to intensive horticultural buildings will not be found in NCC 2022. If you require further information please contact Graham Moss, 02 6276 1869, who oversees the NCC amendment process.

Yours sincerely


Neil Savery
Chief Executive

28 May 2021

Eclipse Enterprises



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TOM-System is the new, quick, and easy working method for trellising greenhouse plants such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and capsicums/peppers to string lines. The AgriFast V-46 ring clips are fastened using the Model TT235 electronic application tool. These metal clips support similar or heavier loads than other tying methods, do not hinder plant growth and support formation of the stem. The Model TT235 allows the user to apply ring clips to string line up to 50% faster than standard clipping methods and requires no specialised training. The clips are designed to rust away after composting. The period depends on the conditions but there have been some reports here in Australia of clips disappearing after only 7 months

What are the benefits of TOM System?

- Reduces labour costs by 40% or more
- Reduces damage to the plant caused using other trellising methods
- User friendly with no specialised training required
- Adjustable tension to suit different string thickness
- Compatible with eco-string
- Clip closure between 22mm and 23mm
- TOM-System can hold plants more than 8kg
- Reduces transport costs compared to other clips
- Reduced fatigue on the operator
- Battery will last up to 2 days



For a demonstration or quotation, feel free to contact
Michael Tran at EE Muirs - 0418 899 586

The Secretary Is On The Run!

Now many of you probably may know or not know that HFF Secretary – Tony Bundock – has been a CFA volunteer firefighter for the past 30 years.

But this year he is taking his fire brigade involvement a literal ‘step’ further!

Along with three other members of the brigade, Tony will be completing the Royal Children’s Hospital ‘Run for the Kids’ event in a ‘running’ fire engine. (Think the Wiggles meets the Goodies!)

The ‘Running Fire Engine’ concept was developed and built by Tony and fellow Narre Warren Fire Brigade members Karen Bundock (Tony’s long suffering wife!), Rob Beard and Peter Green.



Team Narre Warren—Tony and Karen Bundock, Peter Green and Rob Beard

The team are regular runners at Berwick Springs Parkrun and were looking for a way to participate in fun runs whilst promoting the Fire Brigade.

Tony initially saw a similar ‘fire engine’ that had been built by Firefighters in the UK at St Mary’s, Southampton. The St Mary’s team were incredibly helpful and sent across plans of their running fire engine for the Narre Warren team to use.

Constructed at the brigade’s top secret research facility..... (well Tony and Karen’s garage to be exact!) the fire engine is made out of PVC irrigation pipe and printed canvas. Although the team self-funded some of the materials, a large proportion of the costs were sponsored thanks to kind donations by:-

Bunnings
Snedz Fit Studio
The Printed Shade Cloth Company



The ‘Running Fire Engine’ on its maiden outing at Berwick Springs Parkrun!!

The initial first run for the fire engine was made at Berwick Springs Parkrun, but now the team are in training for the challenging RCH event. This will see the team running the Royal Children’s Hospital 15km ‘long course’ on Sunday the 29th of August 2021.

The brigade has set up an ambitious target of raising \$10,000 for the cause, and sponsorship donations can be made at <https://runforthekids2021.gofundraise.com.au/page/NarreWarrenFB>

If you want to see the fire engine in action have a look at If you want to see the team in action, have a look at <https://youtu.be/76lG2z7wFrw> (we bet you can’t view this video without laughing!)



On Farm Energy Assessments



Agriculture Victoria are currently offering free on farm energy assessments to farmers and growers as part of the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan. The On-Farm Energy Assessments analyse on-farm energy use (electricity, gas and diesel) and identify opportunities to make energy savings; improve output volumes per energy unit; and convert to renewable energy sources. The assessments make recommendations tailored to the type and size of individual farms. The On-farm energy assessments form part of the Victorian Government's Agriculture Energy Investment Plan (AEIP) and will identify what improvements need to be

made on-farm. On-Farm Energy Assessments are conducted by registered independent experts to the national standard (AS/NZS 3598.2:2014). Type 1 and Type 2 Energy Assessments are available depending on the farm business's energy expenditure.

Free on-farm energy assessments – (Type 1) - Farm businesses with farm energy expenses from \$8,000 to \$25,000 per annum (including GST)

Free on-farm energy assessments – (Type 2) - Farm businesses with farm energy expenses over \$25,000 per annum (including GST)

To be eligible for an energy assessment farms must:

- **Be a business with an ABN;**
 - **Have an eligible farm located in Victoria;**
 - **Be a primary producer who is either:**
 - Cultivating or propagating plants, fungi or their products or parts (including seeds, spores, bulbs and similar) in any physical environment; or
 - Maintaining animals for the purpose of selling them or their bodily produce (including natural increase);
 - Manufacturing dairy produce from the raw material that they produce; or
 - Operating on-land aquaculture facilities.
- Have spent more than \$8,000 per annum (including GST) on energy at the farm site location to be assessed, inclusive of electricity, gas, LPG and diesel (excluding energy for transport);
- Be a legal entity;
- Meet all industrial relations obligations as an employer in accordance with the National Employment Standards;
- Agree to participate in future program evaluation activity.

Undertaking an on-farm energy assessment provides you with advice and a plan to reduce on-farm energy consumption and bills, which may not require any further upfront investments. Energy assessors conducting the assessment have specialist knowledge on the latest technologies, programs and processes to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs. They can provide you with information not just about where improvements can be made, but insights into what the best solution for your energy situation may be and where you can find support to implement changes to processes or fund new investments. Once an on-farm energy assessment is made, you might elect to make simple changes in management practices which could help you make equipment changes identified in the on-farm energy assessment.

Further details and the application process can be found at <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources/funds-grants-programs/agriculture-energy-investment-plan/on-farm-energy-assessments>

Agricultural Energy Investment Plan Extension

Following on from the On Farm Energy Assessment, growers may be able to apply for either a fast track rebate or a grant to assist with undertaking activities such as the purchase and installation of capital equipment that improves the energy efficiency and productivity of an Applicant's farming activities.

The funding is offered on a \$1 for \$1 basis up to the maximum value of either the rebate or the grant that is awarded.

The available funding will depend which type of energy assessment your property has undergone, but as a guideline the table below outlines the three components to the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan grants that are on offer.

Program element	Who is it for?
Fast Track Rebate Up to \$20,000 ex GST with matched fund-	Farm businesses that have received a Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment through the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan
Tier 1 grants – Between \$20,000 - \$50,000 ex GST with	Farm businesses that have received a Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment
Tier 2 grants – Between \$50,000 - \$250,000 ex GST with	Farm businesses that have received a Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment

Please note: An On - Farm Energy Assessment is required before applying for a grant or rebate and the eligibility criteria for the particular grant must be met.

The AEIP comprises five key actions:

assessments



providing on-farm energy assessments to help farmers identify where they may reduce energy consumption

grants



to support farmers invest in energy efficient or own-generation technology within existing energy policy

demonstrations



showing energy efficient or own-generation technology on-farm

skills and education



linking farmers and businesses to information and education resources

research



facilitating partnerships to commercialise research for the farming sector.

Local Industry Supporting Students



As you are all only to aware, thing have been pretty tough in Victoria across the past few weeks and many companies are struggling to stay afloat in these turbulent times. So it has been great to see one Victorian based company still willing to help out where they can in supporting our next generation of growers.

Devon Meadows based Fresh Leaf Limited recently donated 1500 Coriander plugs for the Certificate III Horticulture student cohort to utilise as part of their studies at Community College Gippsland. The college has an NFT system for leafy green production, which the students utilise on a weekly basis. Currently the students are working their way through a Protected Cropping competency - Operate Fertigation Equipment, as well as two pest and disease evaluation and monitoring subjects.

‘We currently have an apprentice studying at CCG, and we are always happy to lend a hand when we can’ said David McMillan - Head Horticulturalist at Fresh Leaf Limited, ‘It’s great that the students have some practical industry based equipment and crops to aid their learning.



CCG's NFT system with Coriander plugs

The recent lockdown has placed some additional challenges on the college, but teaching and support staff have been on hand to keep the crops growing across the lockdown period. ‘Our teaching staff are highly committed to keeping our resources operational, and through a process of remote climate monitoring and on site maintenance we have been able to keep our greenhouse crops going’ said CCG’s Director of Education and Training, Julie Thomas. ‘We aim to replicate industry conditions for the students, so having the need to keep operations running is paramount.’

Whilst the lockdown was in effect, the crop progress was monitored and reported on using an app called iAuditor. This is basically an auditing app that the students modified to record a number of growth and observational parameters, which uploads to a pdf format report. The student’s template is available for general use from the iAuditor site under the title of *CCG Certificate III Crop Monitoring Tool*. Live ‘zoom’ sessions were delivered to the students by the teaching staff to keep the students engaged in the crop progress.

‘Having industry support from growers such as Fresh Leaf Ltd really helps us both engage with Industry as well as providing students with great training resources’ added Julie Thomas.



PCA Conference Update

Protected Cropping Australia 2021 Conference

**PACIFIC BAY RESORT,
COFFS HARBOUR, NSW**

25 – 28 OCTOBER 2021

www.pcaconference.net.au



The Protected Cropping Australia Conference is an unmissable opportunity to connect with like minded people driving protected cropping management in Australia. Attending the conference will enable you to share new experiences and advancements in knowledge and practice.

Are you interested in sponsoring PCA 2021?
To receive a copy of the 2021 sponsorship prospectus contact nitesh.p@asnevents.net.au

REGISTRATIONS

ARE NOW OPEN

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\$825

HFF Member

\$875

\$950

Non-Member

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Student

\$500

\$600

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5 REASONS TO JOIN US AT PCA 2021

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PCA 2021 is the perfect place to grow & maintain your professional network with top hydroponic and greenhouse experts.

LEARN



Advance your knowledge of the latest developments and best practice by registering to attend PCA 2021 now.

ENGAGE



Increase the power of your network at PCA 2021 by engaging with peers, invited speakers and our 65 exhibitors.

SHARE



Peer-to-peer learning is a great way to generate new ideas & fill knowledge gaps. We encourage you to share your know-how at PCA 2021.

DISCOVER



Visit farms to experience some of the regions most advanced growing operations. Discover all this and more at PCA 2021.

WWW.PCACONFERENCE.NET.AU

Vale Frank Costa



The HFF and the wider horticultural community were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Frank Costa on the 2nd of May. Frank was a much loved and well respected member of our community, who passed away at the age of 83 after battling ill health for a year. He is survived by his wife Shirley Costa. Frank was an influential figure in the vegetable industry as well as having a great involvement with AFL through his time at Geelong Football Club.

Frank's history in the vegetable industry stems back to when he and his brother Adrian, the sons of Italian immigrants - moved to Australia in the 1880's. Frank and Adrian bought the Geelong Convent Garden Garden fruit shop on Geelong's Moorabool Street from their parents in 1959 before expanding it into a national wholesale fruit and vegetable empire. From humble beginnings, the Costa Group became Australia's largest horticultural company and a major supplier of berries, mushrooms, tomatoes, bananas, avocados and citrus fruits. In the early 1990s, Mr Costa was said to have faced death threats from the Calabrian mafia after famously refusing a \$1 million-a-year bribe to go along with an extortion racket that was inflating the price of fruit and vegetables by 50¢ a case for supermarket giant Coles. Since listing on the Australian Securities Exchange in 2015, Costa Group has grown to a market valuation of \$1.87 billion today. The company has operations in Australia, China, Hong Kong, Spain and Morocco, employing about 6000 staff. Although retiring from the company's board in 2019, Frank and his extended family have remained significant shareholders in the company.

Sean Hallahan, Costa Group Managing Director and CEO commented: 'Frank was a great Australian who through his leadership and vision helped build the Costa Group into the global leading fresh produce business that it is today. Frank was a people champion and he lived by the mantra of "hire for character, train for skill". He placed considerable store in a person's character and integrity, most importantly he led by example and created a strong people focused culture within the Costa business which is still going strong to this day. We can all say we were better off for knowing Frank. All those who came into contact with him were struck by his generosity of spirit, his genuine interest in their personal welfare, his wise counsel, and his positive outlook on life.'

Frank had an enormous presence in the business and cultural life of Geelong and the region. He was a former President of the Geelong Football Club (1998 – 2010), and received life membership in 2011 following more than 30 years' involvement. He was also just the 26th to be named as a legend of the club – and the first non-player. Frank helped turn the Cats from a financially struggling team to a powerhouse that won AFL premierships in 2007, 2009 and 2011. At the national level, Mr Costa's achievements were given due formal recognition. In 1997, he was awarded Medal of the Order of Australia for service to youth and to the community of Geelong. In 2001, he was awarded the Centenary Medal for service to the Barwon community, and in that same year was awarded the Australia Sports Medal for services to Australian football. Frank was a guest speaker at the HFF conference in Lorne in 2016 - and he was scheduled to give a twenty minute presentation. His presentation was absolutely captivating and as he passed the one hour mark in his speech, you could still have heard a pin drop as everyone sat mesmerised by the man. His presentation was met with a standing ovation, and is still a great memory for many of us.

The HFF would like to acknowledge the great impact Frank has had on our industry and extends sincere condolences to the family.

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Oops!



On Friday, May 28, there was a traffic accident in Vicar (Almeria) that ended up with the partial destruction of a tomato greenhouse and its production. The driver lost control of his vehicle at a roundabout and then crashed into a tomato greenhouse, wreaking havoc as can be seen in the picture shown above. (Story thanks to Hortidaily) The full video showing the resulting carnage of the wayward car can be viewed at:-

https://www.club-caza.com/actualidad/video/13264_001.mp4

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Grower's and Trade Member's Dinner

The HFF committee are currently looking at the potential for hosting a Growers and Trade Members dinner at the Atura Hotel. The idea behind this is to host an event prior to the HFF Conference at the same venue. Aside from a first class meal, the event will also allow all trade and

grower members to enjoy an evening of networking and socialising. "We are looking to run this event on an informal basis, but it will also give us a chance for both trade and grower members to catch up with each other", said President John Elford. 'Networking is important for all of us as an organisation, and HFF members usually manage to excel at this, especially round the bar!' added John. At this stage August is pencilled in the diary as the proposed month for the event, and hopefully we will be able to have farewelled covid issues so that this event can proceed. The committee will be working through this idea in the next two weeks and after that we should be in a position to advise of firm dates and format.

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Storm Damage hits a wide area



Photo courtesy of Mariske de Witt



Recent storms had a catastrophic effect on the Gippsland region and Dandenong Ranges of our state with flooding, and a huge number of trees being blown over, resulting in damage to buildings and power outages. To date there has been some damage to horticultural structures but we have no firm detail as to the extent. The storms caused some damage to igloos at the property of Sunny Hill Flowers as can be seen in the accompanying photo. Access to many parts of the Dandenong Ranges and Gippsland was severely hampered due to fallen trees in massive numbers. According to SES Deputy Chief Officer, David Baker, there was a lot of work still to be done as we went to print. "Our mission objective is to get right on top of the debris issue out in the elevated areas, so to open up the roads, get the communities reconnected, Mr Baker said. "But there will be ongoing works for a little while for councils and road management authorities just for the clean-up and getting things back to normal." The SES still had more than 30,000 outstanding requests for assistance, mostly in the Lilydale, Emerald and Maroondah areas, as well as in Woodend and the Hepburn Shire. SES state agency commander Mark Cattell said about 35,000 Victorians were still without power one week after the event with no clear dates for reconnection.



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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.

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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

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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.

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HFF AGM and Grower Day



Well it had been over 18 months since the HFF had a chance for its members to meet on a face to face basis. The ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic had made these events almost a distant memory. So it was a great pleasure to be able to host a Grower Day once again, which was coupled with the HFF Annual General Meeting. The Grower meeting and farm tour was kindly hosted by Rijk Zwaan at Daylesford. This was almost a case of where we left off, as the last grower day we had planned was at Rijk Zwaan, which was cancelled due to covid! So when we announced this planned meeting the response was quick and positive, with 50 delegates registering, which included a good mix of both growers and the trade.

The HFF is very fortunate to have a fantastic partner/friend in Rijk Zwaan, and we owe a great deal of gratitude to Annie Walch for her work in putting the day together. Rijk Zwaan put together a complete package for us which included providing a venue, hosting a guided tour, As well as providing lunch and guest speakers all free of charge.

The day started with a tour of the Rijk Zwaan facility which has certainly undergone a massive upgrade since the HFF were last on site. Members were able to see first hand a variety of areas that included the Nursery, Seed production, Hydroponic growing areas, and Seed threshing and cleaning.

Following the tour, the AGM was held next and was chaired by Arie Baede. Again, our last AGM was a 'virtual' event so it was great to have a face to face version again. The meeting included the President's report, Treasurers report, Membership report, and voting for vacant positions. Three committee members were seeking re-election, and Tony Spurling, Michael Tran, Ian Mortlock, were duly reappointed to the committee.

Lunch was provided by Rijk Zwaan and hosted by Rijk Zwann staff members Stephanie Knight and Annie Walch. The lunch featured a widerange of salad items refelecting Rijk Zwaans vegetable varieties—a great chance to taste test the products!

The afternoon presentation sessions saw a wide range of topics being delivered. Arie Baelde delivered a presentation on Rijk Zwaan's activities in Asia an ongoing work involving plant factories. This was followed by Jurgen Paar highlighting to us the issues surrounding seed health, testing and import requirements.



The regular PCA update at these events was delivered by PCA Board Member - Marcus van Heijst - who gave insights into what is planned for the forthcoming PCA Conference in October at the Coffs Harbour Pacific Bay Resort.

Finally, our own President - John Elford - gave an update on developments for the HFF 2022 conference which is planned for the Atura Hotel in Hallam. John highlighted how the trade is still very supportive of the event, and ASN Events are working hard to secure speakers even at this stage of being around twelve months out from the event.

The day was a great success and as we mentioned earlier, a great chance to get back to something approaching 'normality' in this dynamic and changing world in which we currently live.

***Covid compliant seat spacing
- an ongoing sign of our times!***

HFF AGM and Grower Day

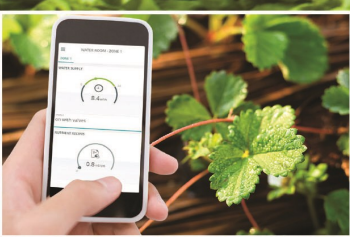
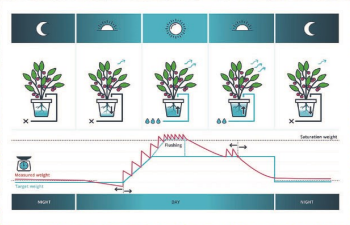


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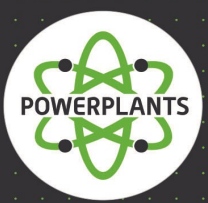


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