



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Newsletter

A0033906W

Volume 6, Issue 03

September 2022



HFF CONFERENCE 2022 The Review!

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The Secretary



It was so good to catch up with all the familiar faces at the recent HFF Conference - has it really been 4 years since the last one? - let's hope that we are now well on the way of saying goodbye to Covid! Immediately after the conference I was back on my travels working with Local Land Services (New South Wales) in helping growers in the Coffs Harbour region manage their irrigation strategies. However, the growers there are going through a fairly tough time at the moment with the EPA conducting some very vigorous 'spot checks' on growers and their runoff water from hydroponic systems. On top of this the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) are also very active in the region enforcing water management laws in NSW. Now while this all sounds good, there seems to be a lot of misinformation going around. I was made aware of one case where a grower was informed he was not complying with guidelines, but the authorities could not tell the grower what he had to

do to comply with the rules! On top of this the local councils are also getting in on the act with their own interpretation of the rules. So on the bigger picture front, I am working with the PCA to try and get the parties around the 'table' to work out how we can all work together towards identified goals. But my bigger concern is that we may start to see this sort of action taking place in Victoria before too long. So as a word of warning, I'd strongly advise any growers that have drain water just running to waste to seriously start to look at taking steps to make your 'open' system into a 'closed' system. This doesn't have to be an instant move to installing UV treatment systems etc, but just running drain water to a central point and pumping the water into a tank would be a great step forward. Yes there are costs but the size of the potential fines are certainly something to take into account. But on a more cheerful note Spring is with us with hopefully improved weather and temperatures! But by the time you read this I'll be in the Netherlands with work in Autumn with rumoured gas supply shortages from Russia - think I had better pack a couple of jumpers! Regards **Tony**

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The President



Hi everyone, well what an event the conference was! It certainly exceeded my expectations and it was just so good to see all the old faces once again. But for these events to take place there is an enormous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. And our conference was no different and I have to thank everyone at ASN events who spent so much time making sure everything was running smoothly - thank you Jordyn and team! And of course I do need to acknowledge the amazing effort made by all the committee members

who gave so much of their time to ensure the event took place. And it was a truly amazing conference. Perhaps it was the fact that we hadn't seen each other at such an event for over four years but I would have to say this year's conference rated in my eyes as one of the best ever. It's always a challenge picking a venue that suits everyone, but the Atura proved to be something of an ideal venue both in size and location. And I have to say they were very keen to have us on board, and I suspect their bar takings hit an all time high across the three days as well but enough said about that! And of course we couldn't run the conferences without the support of the trade. To our co-naming sponsors - Powerplants and Garden City Plastics - we can't thank you enough for the amazing support you gave us, thank you both. To the rest of the sponsors and the trade, again a massive thank you and we are so lucky to have such a supportive team. And of course I have to mention the conference dinner, not just because it was a great event with Brian Nankervis as MC, but the highlight for me was being able to present David Pearson and Tony Spurling with Life Membership of the HFF. Both David and Tony have worked tirelessly to not only help the HFF but also to assist the wider industry. As you would have heard, David (and of course Marika!) instigated some amazing work in Mongolia helping local communities to develop skills in protected cropping and increase general quality of lives. Tony has been one of the mainstays of the HFF committee and was also a key player in developing his own farm, as well openly helping new players in the game to get a foothold in the industry. Congratulations David and Tony on a well deserved award. And while on committee members I also have to say a huge 'thank you' to Gary Edwards who has stepped down from the committee. In his time on the committee Gary put a massive effort into many projects and on behalf of HFF I would like to acknowledge Gary for his contribution and enthusiasm. And we now also welcome Martin Vadakekuttu on to the committee. Martin will be taking over the role of treasurer with some 'mentoring' initially from David - welcome Martin! So the grower day is the next event on the horizon - all details in this newsletter - and I'm looking forward to seeing you all there at what promises to be a great event! **Regards, John**

Membership

Hi everyone, following the conference our numbers are looking good to date and we now have a grand total of 96 current members. Good, but as my old school reports said - could do better! We need to keep working on boosting our membership numbers to ensure we have a thriving organisation for the future. So if you know of a neighbour, a friend (or even an enemy!) who might benefit from taking up a membership, please encourage them to sign up and come along! And at long last we are returning to having grower days, These events are run at no cost for members, so another good incentive for people to take out membership. Having an HFF membership also entitles you to a discount with our National organisation, Protected Cropping Australia, so it really is a win: win situation for growers to keep their membership current. If you need more detail feel free to get in touch with me via email or the mobile. Thanks everyone! **Ian**



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Shading Agents reminder!

The climate in your greenhouse is of great significance. Not all crops are able to withstand the harsh sun's rays and high temperatures we are accustomed to across all states and regions around Australia. Shading agents and diffuse coatings offer you the perfect solution.

Applied early in the season, shading agents allow you to reflect or diffuse sunlight, ensuring your crop is not damaged by excessive heat and light intensity. Like us your plants need protection from the sun's harsh rays, preparing early is key to ensuring your operation is protected. Applying shading agents and diffused coatings

designed to reflect and keep excessive sunlight and heat from the glasshouse will help to create a less harsh growing/working environment for both the crop and your working team. Order now, delivery can be coordinated well before the summer months ensuring your protection. Don't forget Removit applied at seasons end to remove the applied coatings.





HFF Grower Day



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Grower Meeting



Wednesday 12th October, 2022

Australian Strawberry Distributors

40-44 Coldstream West Road, Coldstream VIC 3770

Our next Grower meeting and farm tour will be kindly hosted by ASD Strawberries. Join us (HFF) in an opportunity to see and talk with other Growers/Wholesales/Trade at this premier production facility using a retractable roof 'Cravo' structure.

Given the quality nature of this facility, this grower day is likely to be a very popular event and we will be setting a cap on the number of attendees. 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 Gardeners Run Golf Course for lunch (kindly sponsored by Powerplants Australia) followed by the a 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 of ASD's Cravo structure and facility
- 12:30 pm Lunch at the Gardeners Run Golf Course, 130-132 Victoria Rd, Lilydale VIC 3140
- 13:15 pm Ripepi brothers - our journey with Cravo
- 13:45 pm Bede Millar - Cravo Business Development Manager
- 14:15 pm Tony Bundock - EPA issues that may impact Victorian Growers
- 14:45 pm Sam Turner (PCA Executive officer) - PCA Update
- 14:55 pm Any other business
- 15:10 pm Meeting closes

Event charges

Free entry for current HFF Members - \$50.00 for non members - payable to ASN Events or at the event.

RSVP BY FRIDAY 7TH OCTOBER

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

NAME/S.....

NAME OF BUSINESS/COMPANY.....

PHONE NUMBER/Email address.....

Drones the answer for pollination?

“Pollination can help you define your yield potential but whether or not you achieve this depends on how well the farm is being managed and if you can close the feedback loop on each plant,” says Siddharth Jadhav, founder, and CEO of Polybee. Polybee is a spin-off from the National University of Singapore that specializes in microdrones for pollination in controlled environment agriculture.



After identifying the need for improved pollination in indoor farms and greenhouses, Siddharth raised pre-seed funding from the university, received additional backing from the Temasek Foundation, the philanthropy arm of Temasek Holdings, then used his experience in experimental and computational aerodynamics of microdrones to develop autonomous pollination drones. Polybee has developed a method of pollination that works for strawberries, peppers, tomatoes, and eggplants in both indoor farms and greenhouses. These crops self-pollinate and typically use bumblebees to dislodge pollen from anthers and onto the stigma. Whereas bumblebees pollinate by landing on the flower (evidenced by little “bruises” on the flowers), Polybee uses aerodynamically controlled pollination to dislodge the pollen.

“The idea is to transfer enough energy to the flower to dislodge the pollen grains from the anthers so that they fall onto the stigmas. Bees do it through vibration and contact, but we can do it by exploiting turbulent airflow,” says Siddharth.

The Polybee team studied the fluid-structure interaction between the turbulent air and the flower and found that certain inputs in airflow are critical to pollen release. These, according to Siddharth, including turbulence, kinetic energy, airspeed, etc. Knowing this, Polybee worked backward to ensure that the drones created air conditions that triggered pollen release without ever touching the flower.

The company promotes this autonomous pollination technology both for commercial growers as well as for seed breeders, with the latter benefiting from precision pollination in pure line breeding. Cross-pollination in hybrid seed production is also on the company’s product roadmap, albeit at a later stage. Aside from providing autonomous and consistent pollination, Polybee’s autonomous drones have applications for crop registration, which allows growers to track crop status and growth parameters. Assessing plant stress can be challenging, with common methods including measuring the leaf canopy temperature and the normalized difference vegetation index, or NDVI, through multispectral imaging. The latter measures plant status based on the crops’ reflection of certain light wavelengths. For example, high absorption of near-infrared light would indicate plant stress as healthy leaves strongly reflect NIR. While NDVI is used in field-based agriculture, its use in greenhouses and indoor farms has been limited by the physical infrastructure. However, Polybee is taking up the challenge and is exploring multispectral imaging to detect early chlorosis, symptoms of disease, etc.

One of Polybee’s pioneering innovations is accurate measurement of key plant features such as fruit dimensions and stem thickness using onboard 3D cameras. “There are so many layers to this technology. You can even develop algorithms to determine the weight of fruit. It’s as close as you get to yield estimation. This is something we’ll be continuing to develop as we have more deployments and more data,” explains Siddharth. Aside from validating the autonomous pollinator’s efficacy at scale, Polybee is also using its trials to evaluate the business model for its services. Siddharth describes the traditional business model

Drones the answer for pollination?

as zero-sum, where growers pay a fixed cost for an input regardless of the profit earned from the input. Alternatively, Polybee is anchoring its business model to the improvement of yields, with the client only paying if their yield actually improves using Polybee. To validate its business model, Polybee runs a trial project with a customer whereby autonomous pollination is compared to conventional pollination methods, namely manual and ventilation-based. “We haven’t benchmarked with bumblebee pollination because we don’t really have bee pollination in Singapore, but that is in the pipeline for our upcoming deployments in the UK and Australia,” says Siddharth. By anchoring Polybee’s profits to the grower’s yield improvements, Polybee ensures that all parties involved have aligned incentives. The first service offering focuses on pollination and growers can also opt into the crop registration and microclimate documentation. According to the company’s website, Polybee is currently calling for pilot projects globally for the pollination of strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants in both greenhouses and vertical farms.



For more information check out the website at: www.polybee.co

Polybee

Story courtesy of Hortidaily



A & D Weighing

One of the more novel stands at the recent HFF conference was the A & D Scales display, The stand was unique in that it is basically a large van that expanded out to become a large display and presentation area. And potential customers were welcomed onto the stand by Julian and the team for a refreshing cup of coffee while they discussed their equipment needs. It has to be said that the coffee was a particularly ‘aromatic’ blend that saw many returning customers keen to get a ‘top up’! Thanks to A and D for their support of the HFF conference and conference dinner - greatly appreciated by all!



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HFF Conference review



Well in the end it was nearly four years in the making, but boy was it worth the wait! After all the dramas with Covid, finally we could run the conference that has become something of an icon on the horticultural calendar. However, even at the last moment we were still concerned about who might pull out at the last minute due to positive Covid testing, but all those fears were quickly dismissed.

And so on the Tuesday morning we saw the trade frantically moving all their exhibition materials into place to be ready for the start of proceedings. Interstate flight was causing some headaches and long time HFF supporter Folco Faber arrived fashionably late and was ably assisted by others to set up his banners etc!

The Atura proved to be a great venue with all the trade stands on the upper level of the venue, and the speaker auditorium in the downstairs location. So at 11:00am the show was set to start. We welcomed back long time HFF supporter Herman Van der Gulik as Master of Ceremonies who proved he hadn't lost his touch at that particular task over the absent years! the President (John Elford) gave his welcome address to the delegates. John also invited Gary Edwards (Garden City Plastics) and Simon Gomme (Powerplants Australia) to address the delegates as joint sponsors of the event which they duly did. The official opening was to have been performed by the Honourable Gayle Tierney MP who had become the recently appointed Minister for Agriculture. However the minister had decided to take leave at this time, so the Deputy Secretary for Agriculture and Chief Executive Officer for Agriculture Victoria - Matt Lowe - stepped in to save the day. Matt gave us some inciteful viewpoints on the operations of Agriculture Victoria, and especially at the time the issue of Foot and Mouth Disease was prevalent in Bali, and the potential impact on Australian Agriculture.

The keynote address was given by Paul Higgins on emergent futures in hydroponic growing and provided some inciteful views on what he sees as the challenges and opportunities for the industry going forward.

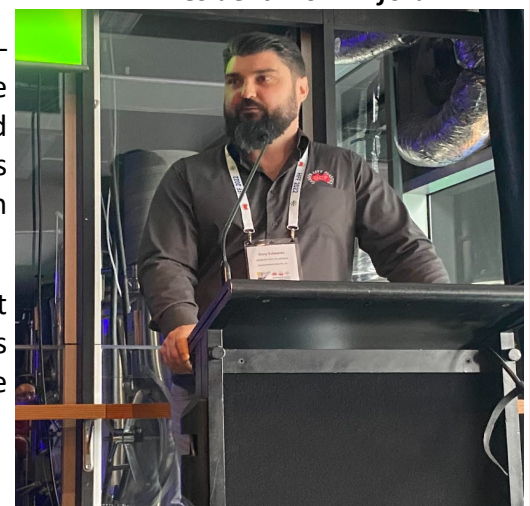
The lunch was held in the main exhibition areas allowing delegates the opportunity to not only eat but also network with



MC for the event Herman Van der Gulik



HFF President - John Elford



Gary Edwards - Garden City Plastics

HFF Conference review

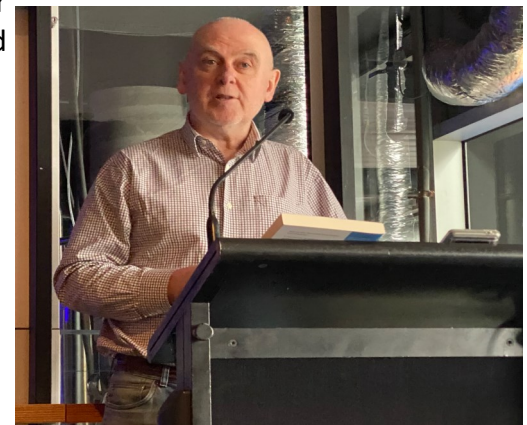
the trade at the same time. The afternoon session commenced with Signify's Aart Slobbe explaining the concepts between light and plant interaction and the role of LED lighting in the process. Through the magic of technology, the next speaker was a virtual presentation by Paul Simmonds of Rijk Zwaan on trends in the world tomato market. The presentation itself was a pre recorded and shown as a video with Phil Ritchie acting as host, and then Paul linked into the event via 'Zoom' to answer questions. The tyranny of distance removed in an instant! The remaining sessions were devoted to presentations by Sue Pickering - who gave her dynamic viewpoint on organisational leadership and change management in horticulture, followed by Graeme Smith explaining the 'Missing Bits' in vertical farming. The final presentation for the day saw some of the industries key leaders coming together to for a 'High Tech' panel in a question and answer format. Moderated by Chris Millis, the panel comprised of Will Mills (Flavorite), Steve Marafiotte (Sundrop Farms), Peter Van Den Goor (Katunga Fresh, Naresh Singh (Perfection Fresh, and Nicky Mann (Family Fresh Farms). This was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the conference with all participants giving some great insights into how they are dealing with current and perceived future issues. The final event of the day was the HFF AGM (which is must be said was attended by a die hard few as others raced to the bar!) but once business was concluded it was time for the welcome reception. Needless to say it was thirsty work networking after a four year break, so the delegates took full advantage of the liquid refreshments that were available!



Simon Gomme - Powerplants Australia



Matt Lowe - CEO Agriculture Victoria



Paul Higgins - Keynote Speaker



Aart Slobbe - Signify



The High Tech Panel! From left to right: Pete van der Goor, Steve Marafiotte, Nicky Mann, Will Millis, Naresh Singh, and moderator Chris Millis.

HFF Conference review

Day two of the conference commenced with the Perfection Fresh sponsored breakfast session with John Zeigler providing a very entertaining presentation on his view on the world. This was followed by a presentation from Soham Gandhi on the concept of using Biomass as a fuel for heating, and with current gas prices going up in leaps and bounds this was certainly an area of interest for all. Following the morning tea Sue Pickering took to the stage again to present a practical workshop for horticultural leaders that certainly challenged many in their thoughts on leadership! Greg Carrick from Garden City Plastics rounded off the presentations for the morning explaining how GCP are looking at leading recycling initiatives in plastic waste management. After lunch it was time to climb aboard the busses for the field trips. These involved seeing a Biomass boiler at Van Wyck's, the production facility at Haar's Nursery and a tour around Van Wyck's production nursery. Our heartfelt thanks must go to the companies previously named for allowing the delegates to look around these amazing facilities. Then it was down to the serious business - the Conference Dinner! This was held at Bunjil Place in Narre Warren and our MC for the night was none other than the star of the Rockwiz TV show - Brian Nankervis. And in his inimitable style, Brian certainly wasn't going to let the evening go quietly! So we were treated to a live version of the Rockwiz show with the boys vs the girls, which even saw Graeme Smith being roped in as the score keeper! (And a pretty fair job he did as well given the general uproar going on around him!) We also had some surprise presentations, but more on that later on in this newsletter. Then it was back to the Atura for the Enza Zaden 'after party'. In order to protect the innocent we won't provide details of the event, after all what happens at the after party stays at the after party..... but it was fair to say there were several sore heads the following morning! So day three commenced and we had a range of speakers to complete the program including Emily Rigby (Medicinal Cannabis) Arie Bealde who spoke on the transformation to vegetable greenhouse and plant factory production in Asia, Patrick Ulloa on process control, Juxi Leitner who detailed his viewpoint on human machine interaction and future automation in protected cropping. To round the day off we then had Simon Dornauf present on how his farm had developed (and he had literally flown in from Tasmania for the day to be with us) followed by Tony Murphy explaining the process of risk mitigation. Last but by no means least, we had a presentation from Sheree Marris who explained what Octopus sex can teach us about the future of hydroponics amongst other diverse topics! And before we knew it the event came to a close. It was a great event and so good to be able to meet on a face to face basis once again. Thank you to the organising committee but a huge vote of thanks to all the sponsors, and of course the delegates for coming!



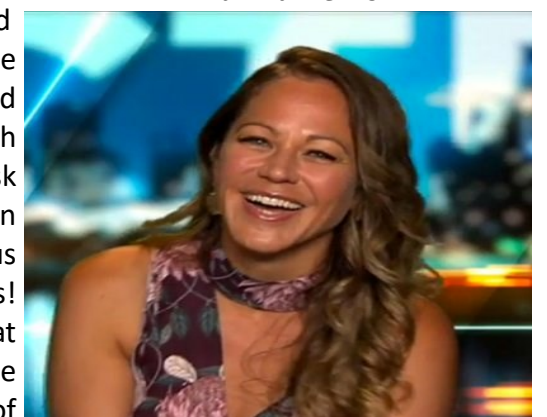
John Zeigler



Sue Pickering



Brian Nankervis



Sheree Marris

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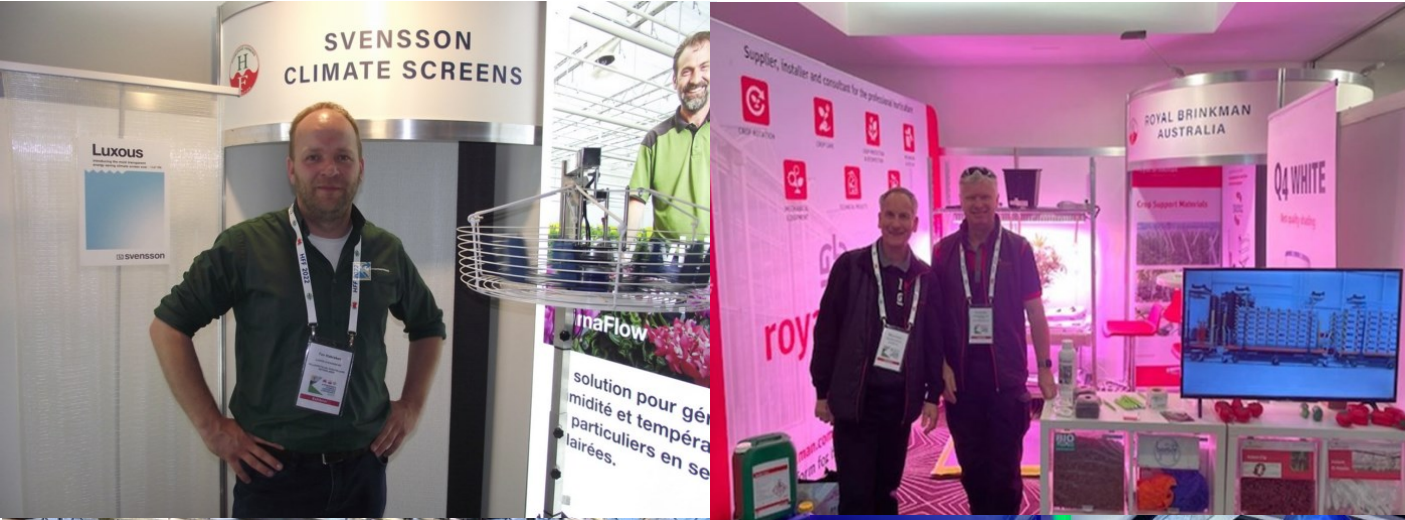


Trade Exhibitors

HFF Conference Pictures *Thanks to Hortidaily*



HFF Conference Pictures *Thanks to Hortidaily*



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Recycling Leaders

Garden City Plastics (GCP) have been one of the leaders in plastic recycling, and have made some great headway with the Nursery Stock Industry. GCP current use of recycled Polypropylene (PP) is over 7million Kilograms annually.

Almost 4 decades ago, suppliers like GCP & Norwood began partnering to use the same plastic (PP). The decision to keep the streams of packaging in the industry aligned, was made through in-depth research and sound reasoning. Many things have changed in the past 40 years but the decision to manufacture Horticulture products in PP means today, the industry is a long way further ahead of others and actually leading closed-loop recycling methods.

According to Garden City Plastic's Gary Edwards, "If we discarded PP as our chosen container and label material in favour of another resource, such as compostable or biodegradable materials, Australia would automatically need to find landfill space for all the PP used in our industry per year. Meaning that through the use of PP plastic for pots etc, the nursery stock industry's members are already leaders in good sustainable practice. If we stopped using PP, we would have to use something less suited and less sustainable as packaging preventing finite resources from being used elsewhere."

GCP is also involved in a number of other recycling initiatives:

GCP source all of their cardboard cartons, packaging and plant transport boxes from Visy with the maximum included recycled cardboard percentage. They take care to work with Visy ensuring that recycled cardboard content increases. Together, they also ensure that each product is fit for purpose and of the right quality and standard for dependable use.

Biological Services and Organic Crop Protectants

GCP partners with these two organisations to convert commercial plant health solutions to IPM and Organically integrated offers assisting growers to give consumers better Greenlife.

APCO

GCP is a signatory to the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) and work closely with APCO in assisting industry to close the loop on packaging of Horticultural Plastics.

PP5 Recycling Initiative

Largely, in Australia, plant pots and labels are made from PP5 plastic – a plastic that can be recycled over and over again. However, currently only 8% of this plastic found in plant pots gets recycled. GCP actively encourage collection and recycling PP5 plastic plant pots and labels and give them another plant pot life. PP5 collection points have been set up at around 30 locations Australia wide at participating suppliers and retailers. The collected pots are then recycled by GCP to produce new products.



University of Tasmania

Growing the leadership skills of today with a Graduate Diploma in Agribusiness

Owning and managing any business requires a diverse set of skills across strategic planning and management, leadership, human resources, business development and operations. In agriculture, it is paramount that these skills are of a high level to operate a sustainable business in an everchanging and complex environment. The University of Tasmania's Graduate Diploma in Agribusiness, with a specialisation in Horticultural Business, has been specifically designed to support individuals and businesses in the horticulture sector to take these skills to the next level.

The online course is delivered by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and was developed in partnership with some of the world's leading names in horticulture, including New Zealand's Lincoln University, the Wageningen Research Academy in the Netherlands, and Hort Innovation.

Industry leaders are encouraged to attend an information session to learn more about the program. There are two sessions in October and November.

The flexible program provides practical content, applied to the business from day one, and optional face-to-face industry tours, learning and networking opportunities through the course. These face-to-face opportunities, combined with the online delivery, have been a highlight of the program for many years, providing an opportunity for students to create lifelong networks.

Feedback from both employers and students in the years following graduation highlight the importance of the management and leadership skills gained in their businesses, maintaining competitiveness in an ever-changing business environment.

"Participants have demonstrated this through their own career advancement and business expansion since completion," said Michael Sims, Academic Lead of the program.

"Many have noted that as a result of completing the course, they have increased profitability within their business, improved their financial literacy, have a greater understanding of the industry, increased business confidence and continue to engage with the valuable networks created through this unique course offering" he said.

Several industry scholarships are currently available for 2023 in the vegetable, onion, nursery, strawberry, rubus and avocado industries.

Applications are now open for January 2023 and information sessions will be held October 4 and November 22.



Students visiting the Sydney Growers Markets, as part of the Student Workshop 2022.

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11/20/2017

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

Drone Technology for Shade Painting



Applying shade paint to a greenhouse roof isn't a new concept. Modern shade paints provide a high quality solution to protecting plants from severe radiation, but the application process can pose some issues. Wind the clock back a bit and we were all climbing up on greenhouse roof spaces without a care in the world! However, with modern OH and S laws in vogue, the older practices are now not seen as safe. So what's the answer? Many companies have sought the services of aircraft contractors to spray the roof areas from a helicopter, but this can prove to be some what expensive. But with the assistance of drones we are now seeing an increase in the use of this technology to provide a practical, safe and cost effective answer to this application issue. We spoke to Mark Spessot (Operations manager and RPAS pilot) of XAG Australia for his viewpoint. 'As a company we have seen a marked increase in the use of drones for shading paint application in the commercial greenhouse industry. For example, a greenhouse area of 1 hectare usually takes about 1- 2 hours to complete. The aircraft usually is flown at 4 metres above the target area, with a diluted concentrate solution. We also have the capacity and added advantage of being able to fly multiple aircraft, in a swarm to increase the efficiency and safety on the worksite. Existing client feedback utilising our aircraft for this process has been excellent as our treatment processes are a safe viable option and alternative to manual application and less intrusive to manned aviation techniques..' said Mark. In order to fly the drones there is a fair amount of logistical work that needs to be carried out first. The drones only have a limited battery life, so there is a strong need to have a number of spare batteries on hand to enable recharging and a suitable supply of recharged batteries to keep the process going. The shading agent also needs strong logistical plan behind it to ensure there is ample supply for the painting operation. The general rule is the drones only have a 20 litre tank so having a large 'bulk tank' of material to enable quick refilling of the drone tanks is vital. is crucial. For further insights into the practice of using a drone to apply shading paint, have a look at the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zA5euvyGhg> to get a first hand view of the process or check out XAG Advanced Horticulture at www.xagaustralia.com.au



Fernland



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HORTICULTURAL Cropping Products



READY TO GROW MEDIA for Your Hydroponic Crops

We stock and supply a wide range of grow bags, customised to your requirements. Supplying growers with grow bags for berry crops, vegetable's, cut flowers and medicinal cannabis.

- ▶ Bags made for excellent water holding capacity and air filled porosity.
- ▶ UV Rated bags to your specifications
- ▶ Layered bags for longer term crops
- ▶ Consistent quality coir with stable EC
- ▶ Available in low EC or buffered
- ▶ Drainage, dripper and plant holes cut to your requirements

PRODUCT RANGE:

- ▶ Grow Bags
- ▶ Substrates
- ▶ Stakes
- ▶ Coir Pot Tops
- ▶ Shadecloth
- ▶ Coir Discs & Pot Tops
- ▶ Plant Bags
- ▶ Weedmat
- ▶ Shadecloth
- ▶ Bird Netting
- ▶ Hold Down Pins
- ▶ Fixing Channel
- ▶ Wiggle Wire
- ▶ Plastics



Risk Management

It's fair to say that we are in changing times, and if we would have said two years ago that the world would effectively grind to a halt no one would have believed you. However, we are now facing ongoing weather issues as well as uncertainty of material supplies, so taking a risk management approach to business is becoming a necessity. As most business owners and operators would know, every organisation should have a risk register to protect themselves and their employees, and never has this been more appropriate than in these turbulent and unprecedented times of disruption.



There are many guides to '[How to do a risk assessment](https://www.britsafe.org/training-and-learning/find-the-right-course-for-you/informational-resources/risk-assessment/)' (https://www.britsafe.org/training-and-learning/find-the-right-course-for-you/informational-resources/risk-assessment/) but the basic steps are as follows:

but the basic steps are as follows:

- Identify potential risks/hazards
- Identify who or what may be impacted by them
- Evaluate the likelihood and severity of each risk/hazard identified (in point 1)
- Implement controls to reduce or eliminate risk/hazard
- Review & re-assess your risk assessment register

The risk assessment process should consider internal and external hazards and risks. Many risks for an organisation will have an external focus. It is common for a business to be impacted by third party suppliers for example.

It is important to document your assessment in a register for reference and communication as well as for reviewing and updating – it's not a set and forget exercise! The register should include who is accountable for the management of any particular risk and regular reports should be provided on the state of the risk; ie whether it is reducing or increasing.

Identifying risks/hazards

Sometimes easier said than done but the key to identifying risks and hazards is consultation. Talk to staff and service providers, take a walk around your premises, review previous accident or Ill-health records and any manufacturers' recommendations for goods-handling or storage or machinery operations. And use third-party data, such as insurance contracts, to provide information and ensure your processes are rigorous and comprehensive.

Identifying who might be impacted

Different groups can be impacted differently by the same hazard or risk. For example, pregnant women would be more at risk from exposure to, say, radiation than other groups; Employees on site might be more at risk than contractors visiting. So, identifying categories of 'at risk groups' becomes critical to evaluating the severity of a risk and the controls you choose to mitigate or eliminate risk.

Evaluating the likelihood and severity of each risk/hazard

In a nutshell, any assessment will basically evaluate how likely it is for a risk/hazard to occur and how severe the consequences would be should it occur. By doing this you can consider what controls are available to eliminate or reduce risk 'as far as practically possible'. And you can identify any costs associated with the control measures you choose to eliminate, reduce or control the risk.

Implementing controls

Not all controls are equal! That is, what's good for the goose isn't always what's good for the gander. Whilst some businesses or organisations will often have the same risks/hazards the choice of suitable control measures may vary depending on the likelihood and severity of potential impact. The consequences of a fire on an offshore major hazard facility are likely to be more serious and require more costly control measures than say a fire in a single storey storage unit housing non-hazardous goods for

Risk Management



distribution. There is a proportionality relationship between the risks and controls which are evident in many regulated sectors to exemplify the principle that not all controls are equal.

Reviewing & assessing your risk assessment

Having a written record of your risk assessment is critical; in most cases it's also a legal requirement, not just an excellent business practice. We refer to this document as the 'Risk Register'. Having a risk register not only provides a record of your assessment considerations and control measures but it provides the basis for auditing your business/

organisation enabling you to be proactive in identifying new risks and new controls. It is a fundamental and significant business resilience tool for any organisation.

Before 2020 how many businesses/organisations would have had 'working from home' procedures identifying and evaluating risk and appropriate control measures? How much would mental health factors have been a consideration before the global Covid pandemic? And would the evaluation of mental health factors be the same now as it was in 2020?

Published by Nuffield Group - a safety & risk consultancy promoting compliance and supporting SMEs through its free online risk register: www.Riskfacta.com.au

Life Membership of HFF Awards

At the recent HFF Conference dinner, there were two very surprised committee members who were named as life members. David Pearson and Tony Spurling were given the honour for their unswerving dedication and service to the industry. David Pearson, who also previously owned Country Fresh Herbs, is retiring from the committee because he wants to spend more time travelling with his wife Marika. "What I have done with the HFF, I have done because I wanted to do it," David said. "I have got more out of it than I could ever have imagined. This is just an honour that I just cannot thank everyone enough for, and I look forward to keeping in touch with everyone, but equally spending a little bit of time for ourselves as well." The HFF also announced Tony Spurling as the fifth life member of the organisation. He became involved in the



HFF Committee members (LtoR) Ian Mortlock, Tony Spurling, David Pearson, John Elford, Tony Bundock and Martin Vadakekuttu
(Picture courtesy of Hortidaily)

industry when he set up Gateway Hydroponics in Coldstream, Victoria. He joined the HFF in 2001 and was nominated in 2006 to the committee. "You don't join an organisation like this to get as much as I have out of it," he said. "You get out more than you put in and I certainly feel that over the 21 years in the industry that is what seems to happen; we get out so much more than we put in - I almost feel guilty about it. It's a fantastic organisation and we have a fantastic bunch of people." Congratulations David and Tony!

AgNova Technologies



Brad Johnson
AgNova Area Sales
Manager

Powdery mildew is the most common and widespread disease in Australian cucurbits. Powdery mildew infection occurs when spores are blown onto leaves, with symptoms appearing 3 – 7 days later. The disease infects green tissue and appears as white fluffy growth on either side of the leaf. Heavy disease infection leads to leaves becoming fragile and yellow to brown in colour. Any stresses to the crop will favour the development of powdery mildew, which includes the stress associated with fruiting. Flute and Kusabi are protectant fungicides which control powdery mildew. They perform best when applied to a clean crop and used alternately. Kusabi is ideally suited to follow Flute in a fungicide spray program from flowering until harvest (as shown in the table below). Flute and Kusabi offer strong vapour action when applied with optimal spray coverage. The performance of powdery mildew fungicides can be improved with Du-Wett, especially when lower spray volumes are used. Flute (Group U6) and Kusabi (Group 50) are compatible with a wide range of commonly used insecticides and fungicides. They offer strong vapour action when applied with optimal spray coverage and have 1 and nil day WHPs respectively, which provides great flexibility around picking time. Both products have a proven track record of successful use in crops where IPM is practiced. For further details, please visit the AgNova Technologies website - agnova.com.au

DOMINANT DISEASE	CROP STAGE					
	ESTABLISHMENT	FLOWERING	FRUIT SET		FRUIT MATURITY	
Powdery mildew	Group 3, 7, (7+11), 11 or 13	Group 3, 7, (7+11), 11 or 13	Flute ⁵⁰ EW FUNGICIDE (U6)	Kusabi [®] (50)	Flute ⁵⁰ EW FUNGICIDE (U6)	Kusabi [®] (50)



Grodan Resources

The Grodan company has some great growing resources on their website that are free for growers to download, and some of the resources relate to some basic concepts of growing which can be of use to all growers regardless of their choice of growing media. The web page provides links to a number of white papers that provide some excellent reading and resource material. To access the white papers follow the link at the website:- <https://www.grodan.com/learning/> and just register your details. Happy reading!

Making informed decisions in respect to water and EC management

Grodan

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