



Hydroponic Farmers Federation Newsletter

A0033906W

Volume 2, Issue 07

October 2018

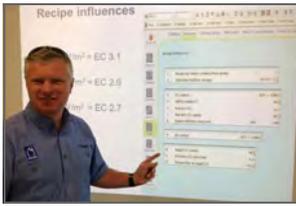


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The Secretary



The recently held HFF conference certainly did not disappoint, and it was great to see so many growers and members of the wider trade at the event. And it was rewarding to see all of the plans come together after so much blood sweat and tears in getting it organised! The conference is very much a team effort and the 'team' comprised of a wide group of people from the HFF committee, ASN events, Powerplants Australia and Garden City Plastics. John has all the details of the major players in his report but needless to say it was a huge effort by everyone. And then it was all over! I do sincerely hope you enjoyed the event and next year will be the PCA conference on the Gold Coast, so at least it will be a bit warmer! For me the conference came at a very busy time in terms of work, which culminated in me travelling to India to deliver a training course for growers wanting to know more about the principles of hydroponic growing. Whilst Indian growing conditions are certainly different!, the basic growing principles are still the same and it was good to able to have a positive

impact on a growers group. I did have a certain degree of pride to be representing the Australian horticultural sector overseas (even though the representative had a pommie accent!) and felt justifiably proud of how our generic horticultural industry is viewed in such a positive light by international growers. Whilst this all sounds like a very glamorous lifestyle for yours truly it was certainly hard work, and I am pleased to say I even managed to avoid a dose of the dreaded 'Deli Belly'!, all be it by living on toast, bottled water and dried bikkies for a week! . Despite the best efforts of the collective growing groups in lobbying MP's on the concerns of the reforms and changes to labour hire company operations, it was disappointing to see the laws passed in the upper house. This particular legislation has some concerning potential impact for larger organisations using labour hire companies, and it will undoubtedly be a trying time as things progress This is a topic that both the HFF and PCA will continue to monitor and advise members on as things progress. Finally I've been on the health kick as I recently completed the Melbourne Firefighter Stairclimb for a second time - I know, at my I age I should know better but it was for a good cause! TB

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The President



Well another conference has been and gone, and what a great event it was! But these things don't just happen by luck, and the positive and vibrant air of the conference was all due to the hundreds (and I mean hundreds!) of hours that was put into this event by the members of the committee and all of the staff at ASN Events. Well done everyone! This newsletter is primarily to showcase the many photos we had taken of the event and my thanks also go to Raquel Neofit who spent most of the conference snapping away with her camera to record the event. As you would have also seen we managed to score a slot on Hortidaily and Rijk Zwaan produced a nice video showcasing things as well. Have a look at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbkGqYfMmAk> and my apologies for the bloke doing the commentary! But there is no rest for the committee and we have a number of things on the go at the moment, including a forthcoming joint grower day with the PCA. This will be held at Chisholm Institute of TAFE in November and will have some really interesting speakers and things to see. More details in this newsletter. A huge issue that is sweeping the soft fruit industry at the moment is the Strawberry contamination case where persons unknown have been putting sewing needles into fruit. This reckless act is potentially lethal to the final consumer and also highly damaging to individual growers and the wider industry. At the time of going to press both Coles and Woolworths were removing all fruit from shelves, and this will certainly have a major financial impact on growers who are the innocent parties in all of this. Now I'm not a vindictive man, but I am sure that I share the thoughts of all of you in hoping that the people behind this act are caught and the full force of the law is brought down on them as a punishment. As an industry we certainly don't need any type of incident that makes the general public doubt our abilities to produce clean, uncontaminated food—something that we always strive for. As Tony B has highlighted in his report, the changes and reforms to laws relating to labour hire company operations was recently passed in the parliament despite intense lobbying from industry. My thanks to all of you who emailed and made comment to your local MP's on this matter. As an organisation the HFF had a number of concerns relating to these changes, and we will continue to keep a close eye on this issue as it develops. But on to brighter things, and with Spring now here and better weather (hopefully!) just around the corner we can all look forward to better growing conditions and less use of the heating system! And of course Spring is Footy Finals season and even though my beloved Cats didn't last long in the finals series, it still is a great time to be watching our national sport. So whoever your team is, I hope they go well! **John**

Membership Report



Hi everyone, and it was great to meet so many people at the conference, both existing and new members, and to share in the experience of the conference with you. The conference helped to increase our membership base, which is always a good thing as having new blood in the organisation helps us to continue to grow and expand. However, we are always keen to get new members on board, so if you know of anyone who would benefit from joining the HFF, let me know! We have a major joint grower day with the PCA coming up and this event will only be open to either HFF or PCA members, so here's a golden opportunity to invite someone along and also get them signed up as an HFF member! The event itself is being jointly sponsored by HFF, PCA, Chisholm TAFE, Philips and De Ruiter seeds so certainly something not to miss. Finally, to those members that have already renewed memberships etc, many thanks as this helps us maintain a steady membership base. Regards **Ian Mortlock**

HFF Conference 2018



Tour de HFF!

The Hydroponic Farmers Federation Conference 2018 and technical exhibition held at Mantra Bell City from the 25th to the 27th of June 2018. Over 200 delegates attended the event which had a large number of exhibitors at the trade show as well as a packed speaker program. Also running through out the conference was the Rijk Zwaan 'Love my salad Bike N Blend challenge'. This was effectively a pair of exercise bikes linked to a blender—the harder you peddled to quicker your vegetable smoothie was ready for consumption! There was a competition to see who theoretically travelled the furthest during a set time and the President and Secretary were at one stage holding first and second place! President John Elford opened proceedings and Martin Kneebone from Freshlogic delivered the keynote speech on 'Why will Australian Consumers buy more of what of Hydroponic Farmers deliver? As ever, Martin has his finger on the pulse of industry and provided some inciteful views on how growers will need to respond to changing market needs. Catering at the HFF events is always good and this year kept to the same high standards. If you went hungry it was your own fault! Further

speakers during the day included Chris Millis from Flavorite presenting a paper on labour management, Andrew Olley providing a great view on growing substrate berries, and Dr Jessica Lye addressing the needs for growers to adapt growing practices to meet new bio security practices. In the afternoon, delegates were treated to the collective thoughts of an assembled collective panel comprising of Graeme Smith, Carl van Loon, Ton Habraken and Roger de Lagher around the topic of greenhouse cooling. Some lively debate and knowledge exchange followed leaving everyone with a more rounded and informed viewpoint on the topic. As per tradition, the PCA held their AGM at the conference which was well



Martin Kneebone

attended. The HFF conference is never all about work and at the end of the day the delegates moved into the Cocktail evening. A great evening of good food and drinks and even better company! During this event the HFF presented Cordy from South Pacific Seeds with flowers as recognition of her hard work and to also wish her well before she embarks on a period of maternity leave. Day two commenced with the Perfection Fresh sponsored breakfast which was followed by a presentation by Paul Boland on the



PCA Rogues Gallery.....

state of the Australian Nursery sector. One of the highlights of the HFF conference is to allow delegates to see 'behind the scenes' of major production facilities. This year the site visits commenced at Ball Australia's brand new 3.5 hectare propagation site at Skye where the delegates were able to view the full production facility and the high level of automation employed by the Ball organisation. The second site visit was at Humpris nursery to look at plant

HFF Conference 2018

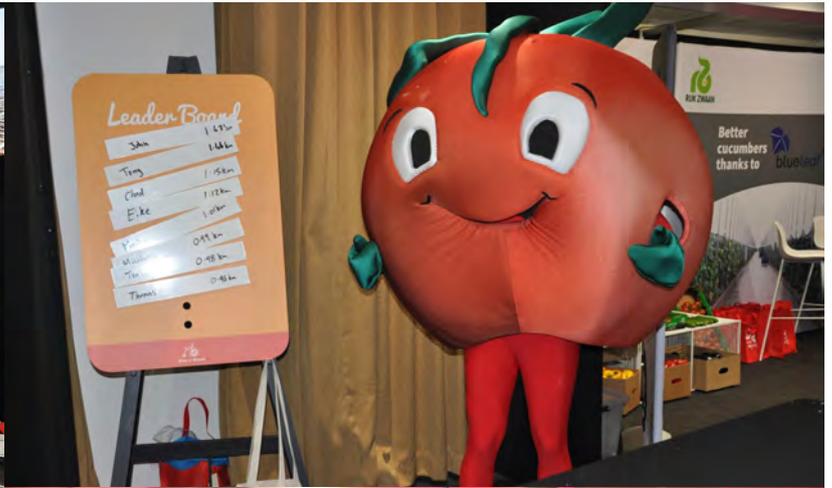


Networking....



production but also to have a close look at the 1 hectare retractable roof structure. For both site visits this was a great chance to get 'up and close' to some truly amazing technology. In the evening the gala dinner was on the agenda and all delegates enjoyed a first class meal as well as being entertained by the 'Three Waiters'. This was an innovative act who slowly started to make themselves known to the audience (many people had no idea that the first member of the troupe wasn't actually a member of the hotel staff!) before they collectively took over the event. A great source of entertainment! The usual collection of sore heads were present for the start of Day Three, and Paul Horne from IPM technologies delivered a timely warning about the potential issues for the industry if the Spotted Wing Drosophila should ever reach Australian shores. Following the reviving cup of coffee for those who needed to quell the excesses of the previous night!, Dr Sam Stacey delived a paper entitled ' Access all areas' which was followed by Piotr Bankowski enlightening us on ' What Thermtrac and Dynexus lets us...do?'. And to wrap the morning up Daniel Vaughan of the Victorian State Department of Economic Development explained what grants are currently available to the Horticultural Industry, followed by Tony Bundock from Genesis Horticultural Solutions explaining how he was setting fire to the irrigation rule book! Mercifully TB didn't actually demonstrate his pyromaniac tendencies so we were saved from having the sprinkler system activate in the venue. The final speaker for the event was Meiny Prins, CEO of Priva, who delivered an amazing presentation entitled ' What is your licence to grow? Are you still there in 2025?' This presentation was one of the outstanding presentations of the event and you certainly missed out if you didn't witness this. President John bought proceedings to a close, and another conference was over. If you missed any of the presentations, ASN Events will be posting these on the HFF website in the near future. The planning process has already started for the next HFF event, so hopefully we will see you at HFF 2020—wherever it will be held....On that note the committee are always open to suggestions for a suitable venue, so feel free to let us know where YOU would like to see the event staged in 2020. The HFF is a grower organisation that helps growers. So if we can organise an event that suits the majority of growers in terms of a venue then that is a result for both the growers and the HFF. So don't be afraid to let us know your thoughts!

HFF Conference 2018



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HFF Conference 2018





HFF and PCA Grower Innovation Day



Tuesday 13th November 10am - 3pm

VISIT

Chisholm TAFE

Precision Growing Centre (Glasshouse) tour

High Tech Research and Training Facility

Philips LED Lighting for Tomatoes

De Ruiter variety trial

GUEST SPEAKERS

Philips, Roelf Schreuder, Gourmet Mokai "Growing with LED lighting"

De Ruiter, "Sharing passion. Seeding your success"

E Agri, Patrick Duffy, "Vertical farming: the next generation"

Priva, Marcus van Heijst, "What is your licence to grow"

Chisholm TAFE, "Growing Skills"

Afternoon workshops and more

*** OPEN to PCA & HFF members only. Due to limited places (85) priority will be given to grower members of each organisation.**

RSVP by Friday 3rd November

marketing@chisholm.edu.au or phone (03) 5990 7009

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HFF and PCA Grower Innovation Day



Hydroponic Farmers and Protected Cropping Australia Grower Innovation Day Tuesday, 13th November 2018



Chisholm Institute of TAFE 2 New Holland Drive, Cranbourne, VIC 3977

Our next Grower meeting is a joint event with the PCA. In a move away from our traditional format, the day will include a number of key industry speakers and also an opportunity to inspect first hand the first trial of Tomato’s growing under LED lighting, as well as hearing from New Zealand grower, Roelf Schreuder on his experiences with lighting. The day will also include an opportunity to review the latest variety Tomato trials being grown by De Ruiters seeds, and an insight into vertical farming

Given the quality nature of this facility, this grower day is likely to be a very popular event. There will be a limit of 85 delegates with preference being given to HFF and PCA Grower Members.

Please ensure you RSVP directly to Chisholm as soon as possible so that we can cater accordingly.

AGENDA

- 09:30 am Registration tea/coffee
- 10:00 am Roelf Schreuder—Growing with Led Lights
- 10:30 am De Ruiters Seeds—Sharing passion, seeding your success
- 11:00 am Chisholm TAFE—Growing skills
- 11:30 am Eagri—Vertical Farming, the next generation
- 12:00 pm Lunch—kindly sponsored by De Ruiters Seeds
- 1:00 pm Round robin of Variety trials/Technical aspects of LED lighting/Greenhouse Integration
- 3:00 pm Meeting closes

Please note, Program may change on the Day.

PLACES FOR THIS EVENT WILL BE LIMITED—PLEASE RSVP BEFORE FRIDAY 3RD NOVEMBER TO SECURE A POSITION

PLEASE EMAIL RSVP TO MARKETING@CHISHOLM.EDU.AU OR PHONE 903 0 5990 7009 with the following details:-

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