

# GROWING UNDERCOVER

SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



## EARLY NEEDS RECOVERY PROJECT

Protected Cropping Australia is currently working with Local Land Services - NSW to deliver the Early Needs Recovery Project.

The project itself is primarily designed to give primary producers in the most flood-impacted regions of NSW access to a range of technical support and recovery advice.

The services provided under the program have been designed and delivered in partnership with industry to ensure that the unique recovery needs of the most impacted sectors are met.

The program is also looking to assist growers in making the 'next step, in terms of transitioning from soil based production to 'soilless' production. This has been achieved by the running of two seminars to date with further events planned.

Leading the PCA involvement in the project is PCA member Tony Bundock.

PCA Chair, Matt Plunkett said "Tony has an extensive background in protected cropping and training delivery. As part of his role, Tony will also be writing a number of resources to aid growers in their transitional 'journey' as well as participating in site visits and the delivery of seminars."

Further details will be forthcoming via the PCA social media and websites.





## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**15 - 29 September:** Call For Board Nominations

**02 - 20 October:** Voting For Board Directors

**24 October:** AGM, 12:30pm (AEDT, via Zoom)

Note: in order to nominate or vote for Board roles, you must hold an active financial PCA membership.

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## Gatton AgTech showcase

**Don't miss the chance to see AgTech in action! Leading AgTech companies from across the globe will be exhibiting, and for some it will be their first appearance in Australia.**

Join horticulture growers, agribusinesses, AgTech providers and researchers from around the country and experience the latest innovations in field robotics, sensors, drones, protected cropping, postharvest, cover cropping and strip tillage, and more.

### Featuring:

- Industry exhibitors from greenhouse supply, control systems, irrigation technology, biological control
- Hands-on tutorial for adjusting concentrations of nutrients in fertigation systems
- DAF's protected cropping program—meet the team & learn about research plans for the Lockyer Valley

[Click here to register](#)

**Hort  
Innovation**

### Date

**Wed 1 Nov 2023**

### Time

**10 am to 5 pm**

### Address

**DAF Gatton Smart  
Farm, Warrego  
Highway, Gatton  
Queensland**



**Queensland  
Government**

## MEMBERS, ARE YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE?

Never miss out! Click the button below to ensure we have your correct contact details, preferences, and that your membership is up to date.

**UPDATE DETAILS**



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## NEW BLUEBERRY WATER USE MODEL IN DEVELOPMENT



[Learn more on the CCC website.](#)

The CCC Research project is creating a water use model for blueberry crops, estimating irrigation needs as plants grow and weather changes. Once validated, it will serve as the foundation for an interactive irrigation calculator for growers. The project, led by Dr. Michael Forster of Griffith University and Dr. Sophie Parks from the NSW Department of Primary Industries CCC team, aims to optimize water use and fertilizer application for blueberry growers.

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## CLEANER GREENER CUCUMBERS AND CATCHMENT SUCCESS



The Sandhu and Chouhan families in Bucca, North Coast, have improved their agricultural sustainability and reduced input costs with a Clean Coastal Catchments grant from North Coast Local Land Services. They adopted Priva grow scales in their greenhouse cucumber tunnels in 2022, utilizing automation to optimize irrigation. This precise system saves money, and minimises nutrient

rich wastewater runoff. LLS Senior Land Services Officer, Julie Dart, collaborated with these families and fellow greenhouse vegetable growers to demonstrate the system's effectiveness. The Priva system provides better irrigation control and accurate fertilizer dosing, yielding satisfactory results. Other local vegetable growers will soon have the opportunity to witness the system in action during a farm walk on the property. [Learn more on here.](#)

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## BECOME A MEMBER

PCA has more than 40 years of experience providing relevant and practical services to businesses in the protected cropping industry.

We strive to keep our growers thriving and to provide allied trade and other industry partners with opportunities to grow with the industry.

Corporate	Individual	Student
\$1000 <sub>/yr</sub>	\$250 <sub>/yr</sub>	\$50 <sub>/yr</sub>
+ GST	+ GST	+ GST

[SIGN ME UP](#)

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## LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ROLE OF IODINE IN PLANT NUTRITION

Missed the PCA conference buzz in Brisbane? Don't worry, here's the scoop on iodine's agricultural impact: It enhances fertigated crop yields and quality, aids calcium translocation to fruits, and protects pollen quality in hot greenhouses. In rock wool-grown tomatoes under salinity stress, iodine boosts yield, even in non-stressed plants, by improving growth and fruit firmness. Discover iodine's stress-mitigating power and ask Elders in Australia about Ultrasol®ine K Plus for efficient fertigation dosing! [Learn more here.](#)



### Iodine, a new plant micronutrient in horticulture Application of KNO<sub>3</sub> with iodine can alleviate loss of yield or lower fruit quality due to heat stress

#### Summary

- Iodine (I) can be co-applied as micronutrient with potassium nitrate in fertigation, to improve root growth, biomass production, timely flowering and fruit quality.
- Iodine may lower damage from abiotic stress by improved function of antioxidative pathways.
- Covalent binding of iodine on heat shock proteins and superfamily peroxidases (H) is identified. This helps to prevent yield losses due to abiotic stress, such as high temperatures.
- Vegetable producers' experiences confirm findings from fundamental science.

#### Plants need iodine

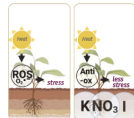
48 genes in shoots and 531 genes in roots are uniquely regulated by iodine in the nutrient solution

Iodinated proteins in antioxidative pathways help to reduce damage due to heat stress

at least

82 proteins in leaves and roots contain iodine

Kiferle et al. 2021  
rpls.2021.616868



#### Case studies from farm practice



Control KNO<sub>3</sub>  
Nutrient solution with conventional KNO<sub>3</sub>

KNO<sub>3</sub> + I  
Same nutrient solution with KNO<sub>3</sub> + I

8 locations, 3 countries:  
India, Netherlands, Ukraine  
2 crops: Tomato & Capsicum pepper

Katja Hora<sup>1</sup> and  
Harmen Tjalling Holwerda<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SQM International N.V.  
Specialty Plant Nutrition unit, Antwerp, Belgium;  
Email: katja.hora@sqm.com

**Open Field Tomato,**  
Tmax range 30-43 °C - 6 x 0.2 ha

**Greenhouse Tomato**  
T max 40 °C - 4 ha

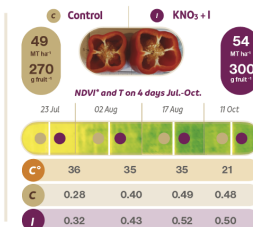
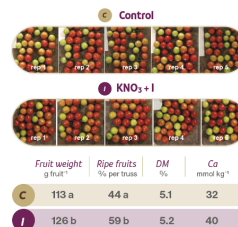
**Open Field Pepper**  
T max 36 °C - 7 ha

6 trials, 3 states, 2 seasons



In all trials the sectors with KNO<sub>3</sub> + I showed:

- More (+6% to +18%) revenue from higher yield
- Better quality: more uniform and bigger fruits



\*Normalized Difference Vegetation Index

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sqmnutrition.com

## THE PROTECTED CROPPING PODCAST

The latest news, tools and resources for the Australian protected cropping industry.  
Hosted by Protected Cropping Australia.

Click the image to catch up on all the latest episodes, with a bunch of great guests!



# fci

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SEPTEMBER 2023



AIPH

VIS-A-VIS WITH TIM BRIERCLIFFE

Thoughts on a decade as  
AIPH Secretary-General

GARDEN RETAIL

How is the Italian garden  
centre sector faring?

PLANT BREEDERS' RIGHTS

Discussing the legal  
challenges with  
Emanuela Truffo

## BIOCONTROL IN HORTICULTURE GAINS MOMENTUM

But the EU's lengthy authorisation process  
hampers future growth

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