



A message from our Chair

Welcome to the August edition of Growing Undercover.

It has been a busy month catching up with a range of members and stakeholders at various conferences and events throughout the country.

Discussions with growers recently has highlighted further inconsistencies in how land use planning laws are interpreted and implemented by various Government jurisdictions. More specifically, how protected cropping structures are classified in the National Construction Code.

PCA have written to the Australian Building Codes Board seeking an update on progress relating to the technical review of fire and egress that is being undertaken in the 2022-2023 financial year.

PCA have and will continue to advocate for streamlined approaches to ensure red and green tape are minimised and will update our members on progress once a response is received.

Our Conference Committee are hard at work planning an exciting event in Brisbane next year. Growing our Future is the theme for our conference and will be based on three key areas being People, Planet and Profits.

Over the coming months, PCA will be seeking Expressions of Interest from members who wish to contribute on one of PCA's Committees. This is a great way to meet new connections, network and give something back to our industry. I encourage all our members to consider nominating for a committee position when this expression of interest opens.

Congratulations to Rachel Mackenzie, Peter McPherson and all the team at Berries Australia for organising a very successful conference on the Gold Coast in late July. PCA have forged close links with Berries Australia and look forward to building on this relationship in the years to come.



Matthew Plunkett • PCA Chair

Special mention to Peter McPherson who has played a significant role in driving the berry industry through a considerable era of change and growth in his tenure as Chair and wish him well in his future endeavours.

Similarly, congratulations to Ian Atkinson and the team from Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland on the Green Expo held on the Gold Coast. It was also great to connect with Jo Cave, Nick Hutchinson and other members from Greenlife Industry Australia at this event to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

As I write this article, I would also like to congratulate Anita Campbell, David Jakobs, Malcolm Calder and all the team at Nursery & Garden Industry NSW/ACT as they celebrate their 50-year anniversary of running the Sydney Trade Show. Congratulations to all involved on this milestone achievement.

Until next time, have a great month.



Nick Hutchinson and Jo Cave from Greenlife Industry Australia at the Queensland Green Expo on the Gold Coast.



PCA South Australia
Regional Virginia Farm Tour

REGISTER TO ATTEND

Thursday 8th September 2022

(0)3 8560 4391
ADMIN@PROTECTEDCROPPING.NET.AU

9:45am: Depart Virginia Nursery
10am: SA Tomatoes Tour
12pm: Quan Nguyen's Farm Tour
1:30pm: Lunch (hosted by Bugs for Bugs)
3-5pm: RMCG hosted Soil Wealth ICP Workshop
in cooperation with VegNet SA
5pm: Networking BBQ (Sponsored by EE Muirs)
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RMCG Soil Wealth Integrated Crop Protection Hort Innovation E.E. Muir & Sons achmea Farm Insurance BUGS FOR BUGS

Register to Attend



PCA Sydney Regional
Farm Tour

SAVE THE DATE

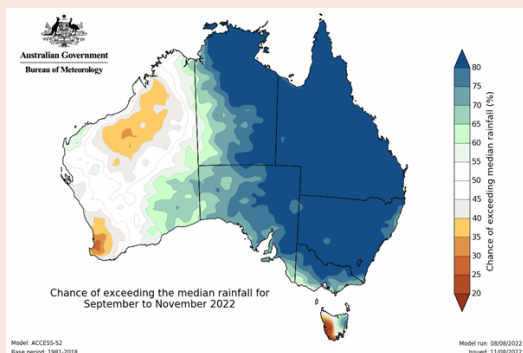
Tuesday 25th October 2022

(0)3 8560 4391
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National Vegetable Extension Network NSW GOVERNMENT Local Land Services Hort Innovation Strategic levy investment VEGETABLE FUND AUSVEG

A message from our Executive Officer

As we plough through the depths of winter, protected cropping systems have shown their worth by protecting some of our most vulnerable crops and providing a level of security in an otherwise chaotic and risky horticultural landscape. The wild weather in the east is easing and we are seeing the first signs of spring, however, from all reports it is shaping up to be another cold, wet season.



In market news, total horticultural purchases improved marginally by 0.1% in terms of dollars, while declining -2.4% in terms of volume for the 52 weeks ending 19 June 2022. Compared to 2021, the average household spend fell, from \$1173.73 to \$1170.21, while the average weight purchased fell from 222.4kg to 216.0kg.

Total vegetable purchases are up 3.7% from last year, despite falling -5.7% in terms of volume. This indicates what we already know, that the price of vegetables is higher, and consumers are purchasing less.

Berries meanwhile have seen a -5.5% drop in dollar sales, largely driven by low supply and increased prices.



Sam Turner • PCA Executive Officer

For more market and consumer purchasing information, head over to www.harvesttohome.net.au.

As the challenges facing Australian agriculture continues, there has been renewed interest in protected cropping from growers and the general public alike with more and more people interested in the benefits of growing undercover and the agronomic, social, financial, and environmental benefits.

This interest represents an opportunity and PCA are looking to capitalise on this good will to secure more resources to deliver better services to growers.

Over the next few months, PCA will be improving the level of service and information we provide to growers, and we need your help. PCA members are invited assist in shaping the future of the industry by getting involved with a local study tour, volunteering to sit on one of our various committees, or even just letting us know your thoughts in the survey below. Everyone is welcome help grow the future of PCA and the protected cropping industry.

If you have a thought, query, question or issue, please reach out for a chat.

Let us know your thoughts
(<https://forms.office.com/r/sUcHWWERsz>)

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Sponsors of South Australia Regional Tour

Farm Walk & Workshop

Family Fresh Farms Peats Ridge (proud PCA Corporate Partner), together with the Soil Wealth Integrated Crop Protection team, Applied Horticultural Research and Local Land Services (VegNET NSW) hosted an interactive farm walk and workshop on Integrated Pest Management recently.

Fascinating to hear about a range of biological, cultural and chemical control options in high tech vegetable production. Prevention is better than cure as they say when it comes to managing pests and diseases was one the key messages from the day.



Thank you to Wade and Nicky Mann for sharing your knowledge and wisdom to attendees and hosting this event. Big shout out to Jake Byrne (Biological Services), Andy Ryland (Consultant), Stephanie Tabone (AHR) and Sylvia Jelinek (LLS) for sharing your knowledge.

PCA look forward to promoting and assisting with a similar event and Regional Tour in Virginia South Australia on the 8th of September 2022.

This event was funded by Hort Innovation with vegetable grower levy funds with matching contributions from the Australian Government.

Getting water and fertiliser applications just right with Groscale technology

Register now for this CCC webinar on Friday 26 August, 10.30am - 11.30am



Groscales monitor weight and drain measurements that trigger automated irrigation scheduling.

The August [Clean Coastal Catchments \(CCC\) Webinar](#) will be delivered by [Alastair McLean](#) from Powerplants Australia.

Alastair has helped more than thirty berry and cucumber farmers in the Coffs Harbour region to automate irrigation scheduling using Groscale technology. His webinar will discuss how Groscales can streamline irrigation management while reducing fertiliser waste and excess run off.

According to Alastair McLean, using a Groscale to measure precisely when irrigation is required, means less stress, less waste, and more profit for growers, as well as more time to spend on other tasks.

During the webinar presentation Alastair will discuss Groscale technology and related issues such as water disinfection, as well as taking questions from growers and industry professionals.

[Click here to register for the August 26 CCC Webinar](#)

**10.30 am - 11:30 am
Friday 26 August 2022**

[Getting water and fertiliser applications just right with Groscale technology.](#)

The Clean Coastal Catchments project is funded through the NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy and delivered by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.





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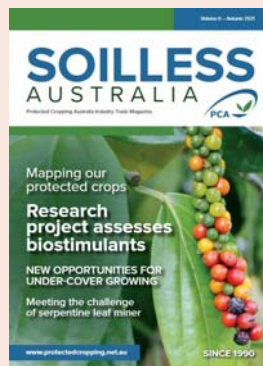
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preference or send us an email at
protectedcropping@asnevents.net.au

The PCA Board would like to extend our warmest
welcome and good wishes to our new members.

Individual Members

Sonja Cameron, Camerons Nursery
Steffen Kraushaar, Flavorite
Daniel Robinson, Burlington Berries

We look forward to many successful years together!



Varroa Mite Update

Australia is the last beekeeping country in the world to be free of the destructive pest Varroa Destructor (mite). It is a very serious parasite of European Honeybees that carries a range of viruses and diseases and threatens the productivity of a range of crops reliant on pollination from European Honeybees.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has detected Varroa mite, which was confirmed as Varroa destructor, in biosecurity surveillance hives at the Port of Newcastle in June this year.

NSW DPI is working to protect the NSW honeybee industry by ensuring they can eradicate the parasite.
Surveillance is ongoing and a Biosecurity Emergency Order is in place.

Further updated information can be found at:

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response>

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response/varroa-frequently-asked-questions>

Hydroponic Rubus Growers: We Need Your Opinion

RM Consulting Group (RMCG) are currently delivering the Hort Innovation project RB21002 - Alternative growing media for hydroponic berry production - a desktop review.
The aim of this project is to identify emerging substrate alternatives for hydroponic Rubus crops that can be adopted or adapted to Australian production conditions.

To determine what emerging substrates might be suitable, we have put together a grower survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DKKFJ3P>) to gain an understanding of existing substrate use, preferences and requirements.

Please take a few short minutes to complete the survey.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT



Knowledge grows