



A message from our Chair

Welcome to the August edition of Growing Undercover – I hope this monthly newsletter finds you, your family, your team and crops all well. The warmer weather and the sunnier days are upon us in New South Wales – here at Family Fresh Farms we are in full spring production, the joys of high-tech growing facilities, we are able to heat up our glasshouses nicely to make the most of the beautiful high levels of radiation, then add a little CO2 and it is pure magic. I know we are usually ahead of the curve production-wise for the southern part of the country for this time of the year, so hang in there your busy springtime period is coming and it is truly wonderful to be functioning at full speed. Our whole team is firing on all cylinders and so grateful to be fully employed and busy during lockdown.

I am really concerned like everyone about the mental health and welfare of our members and our industry suppliers due to the long periods of lockdown and the uncertainty that everyone is facing. I know there are many stresses to face like labour shortages, supply delays, increased freight costs, shortages of some inputs, weather, prices and markets, etc, etc. Please reach out to the PCA Board if you want someone to listen to you or just to hear someone on your side.

We are here to help! Make sure you eat well, exercise and take time out to self-care and enjoy the simple joys of day to day life. I remember someone once telling me “the only way to get through hell is just keep going!” I think that is pretty pertinent right now.

The PCA have tried to get some support and information from NSW government and Commonwealth government with regard to FREIGHT which is becoming extremely problematic and costly due to huge delays, shortages of containers and/or ships and infrequency of shipments causing huge delays, disruptions and rising costs across the whole supply chain. This problem has been acknowledged by all levels of government and is having far reaching affects across all industries in Australia not just the protected cropping sector. There



Nicky Mann • PCA Chair

will hopefully be an announcement by the Minister in a couple of weeks to try to offer a solution to this ongoing problem. Therefore, we will wait and see what happens.

Our quest for a new Executive Officer (EO) is well under-way and we have received some outstanding applicants so far – we are hoping to introduce our new EO at our upcoming conference. So something exciting to look forward to and hopefully this new recruit will really be able to drive our industry forward in leaps and bounds.

We held our inaugural Industry Advisory Committee meeting last week and wow! What a dynamic and passionate group of people – I really feel this will have a huge impact on the PCA and what is delivered in the future. We will introduce our new committee members in the Summer Soilless magazine.

Due to current restrictions in NSW, we have made the very difficult decision to postpone PCA 2021. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to catching up with you all in Coffs Harbour in March next year.

Until next month – happy growing! Take care of yourselves, your families, your teams and your plants!



Capsicum Farm, Virginia SA

Click here to download copy of newsletter



Protected Cropping Australia
2021 Conference
PCA 2021 POSTPONED
NEW DATES, 28 - 31 MARCH 2022
www.pcaconference.net.au



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

Individual Member

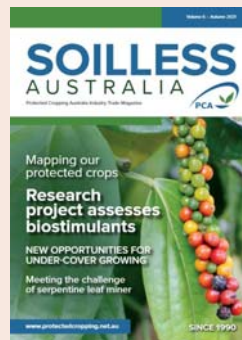
Kevin Black, K & S Black Isis River Produce
Lydhia Brohan, GSG Farms Pty Ltd
Tyson Cattle, AUSVEG

Student Member

Arash Parehkar, University of Melbourne
Phil Thomas, University of New England

We look forward to many successful years together!

Log into your dashboard and change your preference or send us an email at protectedcropping@asnevents.net.au.



PCA Member Survey

The aim of this survey is to seek feedback on how the PCA are meeting your needs as a valued member (for both financial and subscriber members). This information will guide the ongoing implementation of the PCA Strategic Plan and ensure the development of programs and services that better meet your needs. Survey participants can remain anonymous or provide contact details to enter the draw to win a FREE PCA 2021 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (winner chosen at random). We encourage you to complete this short 15 minute survey.



START SURVEY

Submit your feedback by Friday 27 August 2021

PCA Advocacy Update

Greetings to all our members. I would like to particularly thank our financial members for your continued support in these challenging times.

Rising input costs, labour shortages, constant supply chain issues and the burgeoning cost of sea freight are all starting to heavily impact our industry across the whole supply chain due to COVID-19. The PCA are raising these issues across a variety of networks to ensure your voices are being heard.

Investing in our Next Generation-

The PCA Board have approved up to two scholarships annually (\$5,000 each) to assist the Next Generation to support undertaking studies in the protected cropping sector.

Food Innovation Australia Limited have estimated that our sector will require up to 10,000 skilled workers by 2030. Whilst this is a modest commitment, the PCA would like to hear from our Next Generation cohort about designing a program to allow members to network, share information and have access to valuable mentors.

The Conference Sub Committee have worked closely with Australian Society of Horticultural Science (AuSHS) to provide support to students at the PCA Conference. In addition, the Western Sydney University have also been very generous supporting and encouraging students to present at the conference.

It was exciting to be part of the inaugural Industry Advisory Council meeting last week to hear members talk passionately about developing a Next Generation network. Stay tuned in the coming months for further information on this exciting initiative.

Greenhouse Construction Code Update-

The Australian Building Codes Board have advised the PCA that the work regarding classifying horticultural buildings into the National Construction Code is formally included in the schedule of works for the next iteration of the code (2025). This is a welcome decision, but important that sustained advocacy continues in this area.

Mapping Project Underway-

The Mapping Project contracts have been signed and this 2-year project has commenced. Stay tuned for more details and updates on this important project.



Matthew Plunkett • PCA Deputy Chair

Serpentine Leaf Miner-

Growers in the Sydney Basin are still reporting widespread damage due to Serpentine Leaf Miner. Growers have reported better success managing the pest without using heavy sprays and using a range of cultural and biological tactics. Fortunately, growers on the mid north coast of NSW have not reported significant damage or crop losses. The American Serpentine Leaf Miner has also been detected in Queensland and Western Australia. Our friends at AUSVEG have developed the fact sheet below on this invasive pest and further information can be found at:

www.ausveg.com.au/articles/american-serpentine-leafminer-has-now-been-detected-in-australia/

Cucurbit Aphid Borne Yellow Virus-

A PCA member recently shared information regarding the Cucurbit Aphid-Borne Yellow virus (CABYV) that has increasingly being seen in the Netherlands. The following article was published in Hortidaily on the 13th of August, and further information can be found at:

www.hortidaily.com/article/9342121/growers-warn-of-massive-spread-of-new-virus-in-dutch-cucumber-crop/

Please report any sightings of exotic pest plants to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Grower Member Telephone Survey-

In the next 2 months, our wonderful team at ASN Events will be reaching out to 40 of our grower members to better understand your needs. Thank you in advance for your valuable input and time shaping the future of your Association.

Until next time, please take care and stay safe.



Light Sharing Agri Voltaic Systems for Crop Growth and Energy Generation

By Mike Nichols

I recently received an email from Nine Sigma Company asking whether I was interested in being involved in a project converting solar radiation into electricity while at the same time using some of the solar radiation for crop production. I first became aware of this concept some years ago when I was asked to review a paper by a Dutch scientist examining the potential for selectively using some of the solar radiation to be converted into electricity while allowing the rest to be transmitted through the greenhouse roof. I put it in the too hard basket, as it was well outside my area of expertise.

The world has changed in the meantime and we are now much more conscious of the importance of using solar energy more efficiently in order to reduce and eventually eliminate our reliance on fossil fuels. Australia is blessed with an excess of solar radiation, and the potential to use considerable areas of land for energy production, however the possibility of getting crop production and electrical power from the same system must have considerable merit. In any case we know that with most greenhouse crops the level of solar radiation in the middle of the day is far in excess of what is required by the plants, so if we could simply reduce the solar radiation load in the middle of the day and at the same time convert the excess energy into electricity that would be a double plus.

The whole concept also has considerable merit where electricity is not reticulated and can only be produced locally by using fossil fuels. Rural Africa would be an excellent example but equally well would be some of the areas in Australia distant from the larger cities.

In the future it is clear that greenhouse producers everywhere will have to eliminate the use of fossil fuels as a source of energy, and only use some form of renewable energy for heating and cooling greenhouses.

Members in Action!

Grown under license in Marlborough, New Zealand. Puro New Zealand completed their first harvest of THC and 1:1 THC:CBD type medical cannabis!



Image provided by Tom Forrest, Indicated Technology



Image provided by Tom Forrest, Indicated Technology

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Queensland Regional Tour announcement - stay tuned!



Shané Steffen • PCA Director

Monday September 27th, there will be a Regional Tour for our members in the Gatton regional area.

Features of the day will include demonstrations, farm tours and research discussions on numerous topics with the primary focus of the day being Serpentine Leafminer and American Leafminer, Robotics and Post-harvest.

One of the exciting locations will be at the Gatton Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Research Facility!

Write the date in your calendars and keep an eye on your inbox for the Registrations forms.

We encourage Sponsors to come forward now also to be involved in this Regional Tour with our members.

Did you know PCA offers a range of Membership options?

Financial Individual Members are usually individual grower or smaller allied trade organisations. Corporate Memberships are usually for larger grower or allied trade organisations.

See our corporate members at <https://protectedcropping.net.au/our-partners/>

A Corporate Membership 'bundle' includes five Individual Memberships and up to 10 Subscriber Memberships. Subscribers are non-financial members who are encouraged to upgrade to financial membership status to access PCA's full range of benefits and opportunities.

Details of Membership options are available at: <https://protectedcropping.net.au/become-a-member/> or by contacting:

Michelle Harris - Spencer: +61 (0) 3 8560 4391 or at protectedcropping@asnevents.net.au

Tell us your story!



People love hearing about what their peers are up to - and we're always on the lookout for news about what's going on in the protected cropping industry. Our monthly e-newsletter, Growing Undercover, is a great place to catch up on these stories.

If you've got something you'd like to share, or there's an issue you'd like addressed, we're all ears.

Please give us a call on +61 (0) 3 8560 4391 or via email: pca-events@asnevents.net.au



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Meet our New Corporate Member: Netafim

Netafim, part of the Orbia community of companies, is the world's largest irrigation company and the global leader in precision irrigation solutions committed to fighting scarcity of food, water, and land, for a sustainable future. With 33 subsidiaries and 17 manufacturing plants worldwide, Netafim offers innovative, tailor-made irrigation and fertigation solutions to millions of farmers from smallholders to large-scale agricultural producers, in over 110 countries.

Founded in 1965, Netafim pioneered the drip revolution, creating a paradigm shift toward precision irrigation. Today, the company specializes in end-to-end solutions from the water source to the root zone, and offers a variety of irrigation, open field and greenhouse projects, as well as landscaping and mining solutions supported by engineering, project management and financing services. Netafim also leads the way in digital farming, having integrated real-time monitoring, analysis, and automated control into one state-of-the-art system.

In 2017, Orbia acquired 80% of Netafim, while Kibbutz Hazerim holds the remaining 20%. Netafim is part of the Orbia community of companies, working together to tackle some of the world's most complex challenges.



Netafim acquired Dutch Greenhouse Company Gakon Horticultural Projects to Meet Growing Demand for Local Food Production in All Climates.

Tel Aviv Israel, March 8th, 2021, Netafim, the global leader of precision irrigation solutions and agricultural projects and part of the Orbia community of companies, announced that it had signed a definitive agreement to acquire Dutch turnkey greenhouse projects provider Gakon.

Netafim has been active for several decades in the greenhouse market and is now expanding its offering in the production and supply of top-tier greenhouse projects to meet the increasing demand for the most advanced farming methods. Driven by growing populations, the call for sustainable agriculture and increasing concern over food security there has been a surge of interest in locally grown fresh produce.

Netafim will provide growers with a comprehensive offering of the best greenhouse technologies, structures, irrigation, fertigation, and crop growing expertise as well as other ag related services to enable farmers to maximize productivity and efficiency in all climate conditions.

The acquisition is synergetic, combining Netafim's global presence and expertise in precision agriculture and Gakon's advanced greenhouse technology.

With 56 years of agricultural project experience and array of advanced irrigation technologies utilized in 80% of the world's professional high-end greenhouses, Netafim is well-established as a leading player in global agriculture technology. Gakon brings unique expertise in all aspects of greenhouse project execution, glasshouse manufacturing capabilities, and a proven track record in key markets. The expanded offering leverages Netafim's capacity as a holistic destination for the increasing numbers of growers of year-round crops and farm-to-table local produce.

"Greenhouse projects were already a strategic priority for Netafim, with Covid-19 further validating the importance of food security and a local fresh supply. We are delighted to join forces with Gakon to enhance our in-house greenhouse related capabilities, including production, and provide local farmers and growers across the world with greenhouse solutions and services that will support both farmers and local food security," said Gabriel (Gaby) Miodownik, Netafim CEO.

"Teaming up with Netafim unlocks a world of opportunities for us," said Pieter van Berchum, Director of Gakon. "We are excited to be able to apply our deep knowledge and skills of greenhouse horticulture to new markets and be part of a group that is set to drive forward sustainable and profitable crop production."



Gakon Horticultural Projects is one of the leading companies in the world for producing, supplying, building, and servicing high quality turnkey horticultural projects. With 70 years of experience, Gakon has been managing projects from ideation to completion. In their headquarters with integrated production based in Westland, Netherlands, Gakon produces their own greenhouses.

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT



Knowledge grows