



A message from our Chair

A warm welcome to the April edition of Growing Undercover.

In late March, PCA hosted its first conference face to face since July 2019 in Coffs Harbour. It was a great success and wonderful to network and connect with so many of our members and partners despite the challenging weather conditions.

A huge thanks to all our team including the Organising Committee, our premium partners and sponsors, exhibitors, speakers and delegates for supporting and contributing to the event. I would also like to thank the NSW Government, through Destination NSW for their support of our conference in a regional area.

A big shout out to all our award winners – special individuals who are achieving amazing things in our industry. Well done and congratulations to you all.

I particularly enjoyed the face-to-face conversations around the challenges and opportunities in the industry and it was encouraging to see so many of our Next Generation and students actively participating and wanting to become involved in the PCA. You are the future of our industry, and it looks very bright indeed!

Another highlight for me was listening to Tristan Kitchener talk about how protected cropping products can be better differentiated in a crowded market and how we engage the consumer better in selling the advantages of how protected cropping produce is grown on a lighter environmental footprint.

PCA have already commenced planning for our next conference, to be held next year at the Brisbane Exhibition Centre from the 17th – 20th July so stay tuned for further details in the coming months.



Matthew Plunkett • PCA Chair

Here in NSW, we have yet again experienced floods in parts of western Sydney. PCA have been assisting the relevant Government Departments assess damage and assist with the recovery in southeast Queensland.

Poor weather conditions, low light levels and high humidity have been challenging for many of our growers on the eastern seaboard. Returns for growers continue to be tight due to rising input costs and labour shortages.

In closing, it is with sadness to inform our members that Rick Donnan, a PCA Life Member passed away after a long battle with illness recently. Our thoughts are with Rosemary, his family and friends at this difficult time. Rick was a great friend of PCA, a mentor to many and a pioneer of our industry. Vale Rick Donnan.

Have a great month and best wishes.

Regards
Matt Plunkett



[Click here to download copy of newsletter](#)

Polyfab Australia

The recent PCA Conference has sparked a lot of new discussion here at Polyfab, particularly around the positive influence that netting, and shading have over crop yields, as discussed in detail by Giao Nguyen from DPIRD and Nicky Mann of Family Fresh Farms, at the PCA event in Coffs Harbour.

Whilst in Coffs Harbour, Tom Fleming and Alan Bresnehan from our Polyfab team visited Red Hill Blueberries. Discussion quickly focussed on a relatable challenge for most growers - the ability to shade during the summer months and remove the shade during the winter months without needing to whitewash or have internal screening.

Red Hill Blueberries grow as the name suggests, blueberries, but also cucumbers in greenhouses and currently use a 30% Covershade™ as a fixed internal screen to control the influence of the sun on their crops.

Bari and Vindhya Mann were very interested in how Polyfab Horticovertm – an ultra-light removable and reusable roof cover - helps reduce temperatures over the summer months.

As Giao Nguyen spoke in depth about how, shade factor has an enormous impact PAR and temperatures and in fact, improves growing conditions and increases yields compared to the absence of shade - fantastic knowledge Tom and Alan were able to share with Bari and Vindhya.

Horticovertm offers a three-fold solution to growers, like Bari and Vindhya:

Reduce temperatures and UV plant burning, resulting in less strain on the plants,
Reduce the UVR degradation on the tunnel poly/plastic covers, resulting in less frequent replacements,
and Remove the need to whitewash.

Horticovertm is ideal for flower, vegetable and wholesale nursery production and is available in light and medium block-out. The UV stabilised fabric will last three (3) seasons of use and won't rot because polyethylene tape does not absorb water.

For optimal greenhouse and tunnel crop protection solutions, along with Horticovertm, we suggest inquiring about Covershade™, Solarpro™ or our NEW greenhouse plastic available in the second half of 2022.

For more information about Polyfab Horticovertm, email Tom and Alan at sales@polyfab.com.au



Alan Bresnehan (Polyfab Australia) (Left), Vindhya Mann (Centre), Bari Mann (Right)

Image taken at Mann family property at Woolgoolga.

TAFE NSW is running a fully subsidised Waterworks Course



AgSkilled is a \$15 million NSW Government-funded, industry-led initiative that seeks to upskill NSW's agricultural industries (including horticulture) to manage the challenges of the future.

Troubleshooting irrigation systems

learn to locate and identify irrigation system faulty components and blockages, shut down and isolate components, replace faulty components, clear blockages and return irrigation system to normal operating status.

Maintaining pressurised irrigation systems

learn to interpret a maintenance program, inspect and maintain pressurised irrigation systems, and record and report maintenance activities.

Measuring irrigation delivery system

learn to measure pressure, flow and distribution uniformity of an irrigation system, monitor supply of equipment and spare parts, and record system performance.

This course is targeted to nursery workers/leading hands with at least 2 years' experience or workers with at least 12 months direct irrigation experience.

SG00008562 SoA in Waterworks Skillset for Production Nursery and Turf

Mode of Delivery:

Lesson 1: Online 6pm - 8pm | Tue 26 April

Lesson 2: Online 6pm - 8pm | Wed 27 April

Lesson 3: Practical day at Richmond 8am - 5pm | Wed 4 May

Lesson 4: Online 6pm - 8pm | Tue 10 May

Lesson 5: Finishes online 6pm - 8pm | Wed 11 May

Rsvp by completing the attached EOI and emailing it to:

applications@tafensw.edu.au AND
stephen.rixon@tafensw.edu.au

Investing in the future of tomato production

By HM Clause



Plant breeding is essential to achieve efficient and sustainable food production. Growers, processors, distributors, clients, and consumers alike count on seed companies to continuously improve varietal traits - because better varieties (& therefore seed), means improved yields, disease characteristics, taste profiles & agronomic performance to name a few, which ultimately means producing more with less inputs. This is our aim.

HM.CLAUSE is continuously working on new trials and varieties suitable for both protected cropping and open field.

As a large scale plant/seed breeder and producer, HM.CLAUSE has committed to a number of key corporate social responsibilities. One of those being a commitment to develop innovative solutions through plant breeding and genetics, contributing to the sustainable performance of all agriculture.

Each year we are faced with new challenges, first and foremost of which, being the need to meet the food requirements and expectations of an increasing world population. Consumer demand for high quality, year-round consistency in Tomatoes continues to grow as time goes on. To meet these future challenges head on HM.CLAUSE continuously develops sustainable plant and crop solutions.

With a strong Investment in research and development HM.CLAUSE backs up its promises with 16% of all seed sales re-invested, across over 100 research centers worldwide. Aware that the earth is our primary resource, they are constantly updating cropping systems to reduce environmental impact.

The result of these efforts will be to allow the production of a sufficient quantity of quality food, more efficiently.

One such new development progressed to commercial status is Canova, a new round gourmet tomato variety to the commercial market.

Canova was specifically bred and tested through numerous trials to be a vigorous, grower friendly crop, complementary to HM.CLAUSE's market leading Duncan variety. Canova has great weather tolerance & adaptability, especially in warmer climates, along with its consistency in fruit setting, premium fruit quality, uniform large size and exceptional shelf life.

This variety has been proven to perform well in both soil and hydroponic production systems, resulting in fruit size reliably between 180 – 200g.

Canova holds resistance to: Fol:1,2 / For / ToMV:0,1,2 / Pf:A,B,C,D,E / Va:1(US) / Vd:1(US) and an intermediate resistance to: Ma / Mi / Mj / On / TSWV:T0 / TYLCV

It's great to see seed companies continue to introduce new products to the market, that evolve and adapt to meet the demands of an ever-changing population, we look forward to what may come next.



Department of
Primary Industries



berries
AUSTRALIA

Hort
Innovation

MANAGING NUTRIENTS

BLUEBERRY NUTRITION, RE-CIRCULATION SYSTEMS, HOW
NUTRIENT'S MOVE THROUGH SOIL, BIOREACTORS

All NSW berry grower's welcome

Thursday 12th May, 2022

Event Time: 9am to 3pm – lunch provided

Where: C-ex club Woolgoolga, 18 Boundary St, Woolgoolga NSW
followed by a farm walk to view substrate run-off, capture and re-
use in practice

Topics will include:

- Latest nutrition research on blueberries
- How soil type affects nutrition
- How nutrients move through soil during rainfall
- Water quality monitoring
- Bioreactors
- Re-circulation system - blackberries



RSVP: Please RSVP to Melinda Simpson via text 0447 081 765 or email
melinda.simpson@dpi.nsw.gov.au by Monday the 9th May.

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BLACKBERRY FUND

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STRAWBERRY
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This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using research and development levies from the Blueberry Fund, Raspberry and Blackberry Fund and Strawberry Fund and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the funds and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au



Hortitech celebrates 40 years!!

Hortitech is celebrating our 40th year of supplying premium cover and crop protection solutions to the Australian Horticulture industry; using Aussie smarts to combat our unique Aussie growing conditions. Check out our new website; hortitech.net.au and get in touch with us today to see how we can help to optimise your plant growth today. Grow With Us, at Hortitech.



Waste Management Survey: Have your Say!

If you work in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, you're invited to complete a survey to help capture current waste volumes and practices and increase the knowledge of cross-sectoral waste issues across the industry.

The survey is focused on pre-farm gate waste material and all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. This baseline data will be used to empower industry in making informed decisions and investments to better access options for improved waste recovery and management.

You can also complete the survey via telephone with one of our team members. Please call Jacqui Longford at RMCg on (03) 5441 4821 or email jacquil@rmcg.com.au.

This survey is being conducted in partnership with Kynetec and is endorsed and supported by AgriFutures Australia and Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

Complete the survey

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Government & Industry Partnership Turbocharges NZ's medicinal cannabis industry

Media Release By Puro 8 April 2022



A partnership between the New Zealand Government and the country's largest medicinal cannabis grower could see the industry become as successful as the wine industry in the near future.

The \$32.2 million programme will run from 2022 to 2027, with the Ministry for Primary Industries' Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures (SFF Futures) programme contributing \$13 million.

Founded in 2018, Puro is Australasia's largest grower of medicinal cannabis and one of the world's largest certified organic producers.

Managing director Tim Aldridge says the grant is a gamechanger that will provide the starting material for a wider range of high quality, New Zealand grown and made products for kiwi patients and those around the world, easing suffering and improving quality of life.

"Organic medicinal cannabis is a huge and lucrative opportunity for New Zealand, and this grant is a recognition of the potential of Puro and the local industry," says Tim.

Under the agreement, Puro will develop production systems, support skills and training, explore contract growing and identify pathways to market for industry growth.

"Being one of New Zealand's first medicinal cannabis companies has meant we've had to overcome some major challenges – it hasn't been easy. This programme will see us create an organic production handbook that will be invaluable for Puro and our industry.

"The grant will also support Puro in developing post-harvesting processing technology and build the IP required to produce premium organic cannabis flower to meet increasing domestic and global demand."

Tim says the funding will enable Puro to develop unique cultivars and seed stock for the New Zealand industry.

"Our cultivation team are researching and developing the strains of medicinal cannabis best suited for New Zealand's unique climate. The grant will see the acceleration of a large genetic database of cultivars to support the New Zealand industry and differentiate our cannabis products in global markets".

Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor believes now is the perfect time to grow this high-value industry, as international demand for medicinal cannabis takes off.

"We're proud to support the medicinal cannabis industry as it sets out to follow in the footsteps of our wine industry which, from first planting on commercial scale in the 1970s, has now reached over \$2 billion in export value," Damien O'Connor said.

Puro expects 50 per cent of its product to be exported this year and aims to increase this year on year as more market access and greater production is achieved. Puro expects to export their first shipment next month.

About Puro

Puro is New Zealand's largest grower of medicinal cannabis and one of a few accredited large-scale organic growers globally.

They have premium growing sites in Kaikōura and Marlborough, the country's largest cannabis drying facility and a hi-tech research and breeding facility. Puro sells its pharmaceutical-grade cannabis flower to

Clean Coastal Catchments Fertiliser Stewardship Research Update Forum & Farm Walk

Register now for the Clean Coastal Catchments (CCC)

Fertiliser Stewardship Research Update & Farm Walk

Woolgoolga - Thursday 12 May 2022

This forum will focus on the blueberry and protected cropping sectors

To register for this event, email your name and contact details

to Meg Strang at .ccc.info@dpi.nsw.gov.au



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

Individual Member

Bob Dunnett, Beachworth Berries

We look forward to many successful years together!

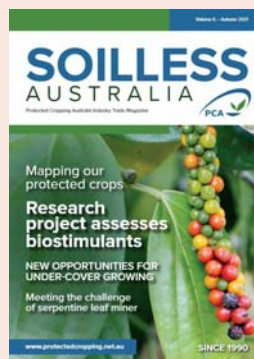
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