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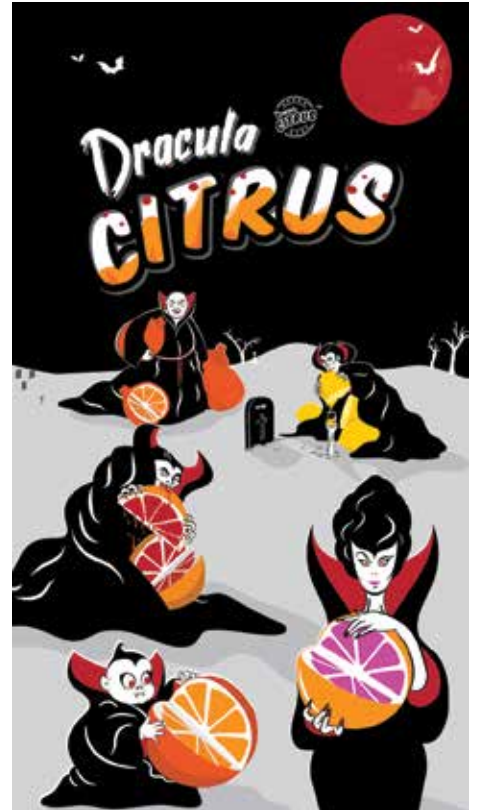
SINCE 1990

Staying in touch online

Online events continue to link us together as face-to-face gatherings remain off the agenda. Two important industry awards were made this year to online audiences.



Blood oranges have become a hit in the US thanks to a clever Australian marketing campaign that renamed them Dracula Citrus.



In store promotions were echoed in social media.

Marketer of the Year

The 2020 PMA-Produce Plus Marketer of the Year Award should have been presented at a Gala Dinner during Hort Connections in Melbourne in June. When COVID-19 restrictions led to the cancellation of the event, the award presentation was moved online.

The award recognises excellence in marketing promotions for fresh produce. Among the five finalists was the Costa Group for its campaign for Perino tomatoes (see page 26 for more on this campaign).

This year's winner however was Pinnacle Fresh for the Dracula Citrus campaign. Developed in 2017 to promote Australian-grown blood oranges, the campaign used Dracula-themed imagery and has run in six countries around the world. Since the campaign began, Pinnacle Fresh has seen sales of blood oranges grow from 228 tonnes to 695 tonnes in 2020. The campaign, which includes baby mandarins and pink Cara Cara navel oranges, was lead by Daniel Newport for Pinnacle Fresh, who also accepted the online award.



Mandarins were also included in the Dracula campaign.





Finding workers in a COVID world

Robert Hays, State Manager, MADEC, says planning is the key to find the labour you need in your business.

The first national movement restrictions commenced on March 18 as the COVID-19 pandemic started to have a significant impact in Australia. Much has happened in the past six months as restrictions became more stringent, eased and then were reinstated in Victoria. Likewise border restrictions have changed from open to closed, to partially open. Currently all states have some entry restrictions. Inbound and outbound international travel is also limited and only available to those with exceptional circumstances.

Not surprisingly many of these changes have had a major impact on the horticultural workforce – particularly for unskilled workers to pick and pack fruit and vegetables. This workforce mainly comprises three distinct types of workers. All have been affected differently by COVID-19 restrictions.

Surprisingly, most horticulture workers are actually Australian residents, with family members, local residents and some travellers performing a range of tasks, which are often semi-skilled or as supervisors. This group hasn't been overly affected by COVID

restrictions, although any travelling workers such as grey nomads are finding it difficult to travel between states.

The impact on the current Australian workforce is likely to be the least of any of the worker groups in the horticulture sector. Apart from individuals in this group coming down with the virus, or having to self-isolate, these workers should continue to be available at the same level as previously. Any infection issues will be short-term and staggered over time, although a specific workplace with an infected worker is likely to have others around that same time. The impact of directly infected Australian workers on a single farm is likely to be measured in weeks rather than months.

Itinerant Aussie workers who make a living from travelling and working in peak harvest areas are a small proportion of the workplace in the modern age. Border restrictions are making it increasingly difficult for these workers to move freely around the country.

Grey nomads are highly regarded but make up only a minuscule proportion of the seasonal workforce. However, they often fill critical skilled or supervisor positions, as well as administrative support during production and employment peaks. Some of this group, or their partners, may extend into a higher risk category due to age. So whether they avoid contact for a while will be dependent

on their health risk profile and personal finances and is an unknown quantity.

Unfortunately a large number of Australian residents have recently found themselves unemployed. Unemployment overall is predicted to increase even further as JobKeeper payments decline.

This group however is potentially a new pool of experienced, reliable Australians with a proven employment record, who may be available to fill horticulture positions.

One difficult factor for those farms wanting to access recently unemployed Australian workers is that they are largely based in the city or regional centres, while most horticulture is not. For potential workers, it is a big decision to leave their home and family in the city to travel to the regions, source accommodation, and take up seasonal work, even in the short term.

It will be up to the government to work with the horticulture industry to make sure these opportunities are made as attractive as possible for this potential working cohort if it is required.

Backpackers

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the backpacker workforce with many of these potential workers leaving

Snack attack hits home

Costa Group launched a new look and 'Snack Attack!' campaign for Perino tomatoes. Kylie McKnight shares the story.

With premium snacking tomatoes now a leading growth segment within the Australian tomato category, Costa has developed a new-look and campaign for glasshouse-grown Perino snacking tomatoes.

The strategic choice to rebrand Perino tomatoes was built off consumer research and insights that revealed that the lack of clear differentiation between tomato varieties hindered consumer's ability to make more informed choices and build brand loyalty.

Kylie McKnight, Marketing Manager – Tomato Category for the Costa Group says branding will play an increasingly important role in the future growth of the produce industry and the Costa Group.

"With insights pointing towards growth in the premium snacking tomato segment, we felt it was the right time to build a strong brand foundation and brand pillars for Perino," said Kylie. "This comprehensive brand strategy and communication campaign aims to raise awareness, build familiarity and cement Perino snacking tomatoes as the consumer's preferred choice."

The project began with the formation of a brand proposition, personality traits and differentiators to create the foundations and framework for the Perino brand. This then led into the development of brand guidelines to bring Perino to life through its brand story, key messages and visual identity, including the creation of a new logo, tagline 'Naturally Sweeter', which is used on the pack label.

The updated label has recently rolled out at Coles nationally and, while retaining the brand's distinctive pink roundel, delivers a more refined and premium feel for the product's packaging.



Clean and fresh – some of the images seen in Perino's summer campaign.

"Aligning with Perino's quality differentiator, the design also provided a stronger call out of the Perino 'wordmark', ensuring it stands out on shelf," said Kylie.

Communications campaign

Following the completion of Perino's brand strategy an advertising and communications campaign was developed.

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