Around the Orchard

Newsletter of the Apple and Pear Growers Association of South Australia Inc.
in conjunction with the Cherry Growers Association of South Australia Inc
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Latest Industry News

Page 2 - New Labour Hire Legislation, Hort Code & Weed Alert
Page 3 - Country of Origin Labelling, Adelaide Show Varroa Mite detection, APAL director
Page 4 - Bruck Lockier celebrates 90th birthday
Page 5 - Omnia update - kelps
Pages 6 & 7 - Hort Connections Review
Page 8 - Opportunities in Asia, Vale Brian Harris

ORCHARD UPDATE

July 2018

DORMANCY BREAKERS

It is becoming increasingly important in our region to be able to supply good sized cherries to the market as early as possible. It's time to consider your strategy for using dormancy breakers to assist with picking fruit earlier whilst maintaining fruit size. There are several products available so please speak to us to discuss your options.

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Calendar of Events

16 & 17 August, 2018 - Fruit Growers Victoria Conference, Shepparton Victoria

19 - 30 August - APAL European apple and pear production study tour

31 August - 9 September - Royal Adelaide Show

5-7 September - Asia Fruit Logistica, Hong Kong

Rainfall

(*Rainfall for the previous month - 30 June 2018, source BOM*)
Ashton - 121.6 mm (*avg 133.3 mm*)
Cudlee Creek, Milbrook Reservoir - 89.7 mm (*avg 110.5 mm*)
Lenswood - 141.6 mm (*APFIP station*)
Loxton - 27.2 mm (*avg 24.7 mm*)
Mt Gambier - 94.2 mm (*avg 84.3 mm*)
Prospect Hill - 77.7 mm (*avg 108.2 mm*)
Uraidla - 135.1 mm (*avg 156.7 mm*)
Woodside - 95.4 mm (*avg 109.9 mm*)

(*Rainfall for the period 1 Jan - 30 June 2018, source BOM*)
Ashton - 341.2 mm (*avg 451.1 mm*)
Cudlee Creek, Milbrook Reservoir - 253.8 mm (*avg 359.7 mm*)
Lenswood - 346.6 mm (*APFIP station*)
Loxton - 54.7 mm (*avg 116.1 mm*)
Mt Gambier - 309.4 mm (*avg 299.9 mm*)
Prospect Hill - 244 mm (*avg 351.7 mm*)
Uraidla - 382.4 mm (*avg 476.2 mm*)
Woodside - 245 mm (*avg 344.8 mm*)

Around the Orchard is published by the Apple & Pear Growers Association of South Australia and the Cherry Growers Association of South Australia

Publication of any information contained in this Newsletter either wholly or in part is not permitted without approval.

From the Office

New Labour Hire Legislation for South Australia

New Labour Hire Licensing legislation has been introduced into South Australia and from 1 February 2019 all labour hire providers must be licensed in South Australia.

While the regulations do not come into effect until next year, the proposed laws as they stand will require a number of steps to be taken by the labour hire providers to obtain a licence, including:

- Proof of solvency
- Demonstration of knowledge and experience in key areas of business management
- Police clearance
- Appointment of responsible persons

It may take some time for labour hire providers to go through the steps to meet these requirements. Therefore, if you use a labour hire provider, it will be prudent to ensure that they are aware of the new regulations.

NOTE: It will be an offence for anyone to use an unlicensed provider. You will be able to check if your labour hire provider is licensed through an online register of licence holders.

For further information go to:
https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/business-and-trade/licensing/labour-hire/labour-hire-licence

Further information will be posted on this site in the coming weeks.

The Horticulture Code - are you compliant?

The Horticulture Code has been in full effect since 1 April 2018, and the ACCC is now commencing enforcement activities. All growers and packhouses are reminded to ensure that they have the appropriate arrangements in place.

The ACCC has instituted proceedings against Australia's largest potato wholesaler, Mitolo, for alleged unfair contract terms with its growers. This is the ACCC's first court action taken under the new Horticulture Code. The ACCC alleges Mitolo's standard form contract contains unfair terms which allow Mitolo to:

- unilaterally determine or vary the price Mitolo pays farmers for potatoes
- declare potatoes as 'wastage' without a mechanism for proper review
- prevent farmers from selling potatoes to alternative purchasers
- prevent farmers from selling their own property unless the prospective purchaser enters into an exclusive potato farming agreement with Mitolo.

It is also alleged that Mitolo did not comply with the pricing requirements of the Horticulture Code when trading with potato farmers by:

- failing to specify in its contracts whether the price for the produce will be determined by a method or formula, or before or upon delivery
- failing to agree with growers on the price to be paid (or a pricing formula) for produce, in writing, before or upon delivery.

For further information on the Horticulture Code go to https://www.accc.gov.au/business/industry-codes/horticulture-code-of-conduct

Salvinia - Weed Alert

A recent discovery of a listed Weed of National Significance and State Alert aquatic weed Salvinia (Salvinia molesta), has been found in a dam on a private property in Basket Range within Sixth Creek Catchment. Action is underway to eradicate this incursion and Department of Environment and Water are confident it has been contained to the site. They are also carrying out inspections of dams in the nearby vicinity.

As a matter of precaution, a circular letter has be sent out encouraging all landholders nearby and downstream to inspect their dams, ponds and creeks for this high-priority weed, and to contact us if they suspect they have located another infestation.

If you suspect you have salvinia plants in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Region they should be reported as soon as possible to the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board.

Images by Colin G. Wilson via AMLR Natural Resources Management Board Fact Sheet

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Country of Origin Labelling now Law

Mandatory Country of Origin food labelling requirements for food sold for retail came into force on July 1. If you sell or supply food for retail sale in stores, markets, online or from vending machines it is likely that you will be required to comply with the Country of Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016 (Standard).

Make sure you understand whether and how it applies to your business by going to https://www.accc.gov.au/business/advertising-promoting-your-business/country-of-origin-claims/country-of-origin-food-labelling

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Royal Adelaide Show

This year's Royal Adelaide Show will soon be upon us, with the show this year running from 31st August to 9th September. The Apple & Pear Growers Association will once again be having a stand, this year using it as a platform to promote Hailstorm Heroes. Mel Ware will once again be running the stand and a call will go out shortly for volunteers to help out.

Competitive entries for fruit close soon - on Friday 20th July and growers and Packhouses are encouraged to consider entering fruit - all entries help to provide the eyecatching display that forms an important part of the promotion.

Varroa mite detected at Port of Melbourne

Agriculture Victoria and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources are responding to a detection of Varroa mite at the Port of Melbourne. The detection was made as a ship arrived at the port and was immediately investigated and treated. Surveillance activities include the testing of established sentinel hives, the establishment of new sentinel hives and floral sweep netting which is being undertaken in the port precinct and the adjoining parkland. Laboratory results from the established sentinel hives were negative for Varroa mite.

Nominations sought: APAL Director – South Australia

Apple and Pear Australia Ltd (APAL) is seeking nominations from Class A Members of APAL who are interested in being a Director of the Board of APAL representing South Australia.

Nomination forms can be obtained from Beth Schofield, at APAL, and must be returned by **Friday, 27 July, 2018**.

For more information please contact:

Beth Schofield, *APAL*, on 03 9329 3511 or bschofield@apal.org.au

Susie Green, *Apple & Pear Growers Association of SA Inc (APGASA)*, on 08 8389 8453 or sgreen@apgasa.com

apal
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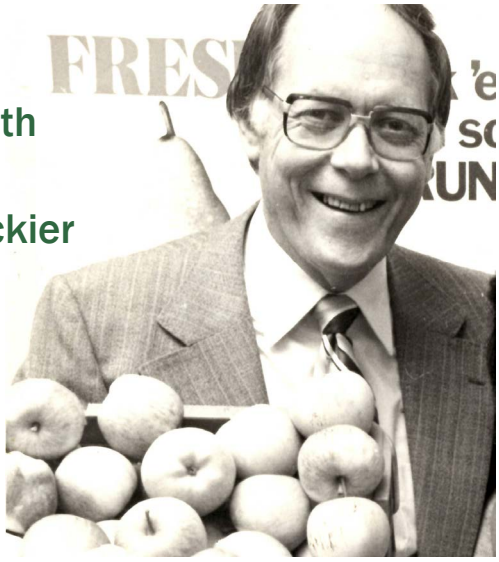
Happy 90th Birthday Bruce Lockier



As the Apple & Pear Growers Association of SA enters its 42nd year, its founding Manager, Bruce Lockier recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Susie Green caught up with Bruce to reflect on his time with industry.

Bruce was born on 24th June, 1928 and during his working life gave 28 years to the apple and pear industry.

After 22 years with the Government Printing Office, Bruce began work with the Fruit Growers and Market Gardeners Association where he worked for 6 or 7 years. At that time in the late 1970s, the apple and pear industry was facing a challenge, as the wooden boxes that were used to supply fruit to market at the time were expensive and the second hand wooden boxes were no longer acceptable.

Bruce travelled to Western Australia and Queensland looking for alternatives and eventually came up with a crate option. He worked closely with the Engineering Department at the University of Adelaide and they were able to develop a crate washing machine which one person could operate. He put forward the concept of setting up the SA Crate company to provide a crate exchange service for industry and this company was formed in 1977 alongside the Apple & Pear Growers Association of SA and Bruce took on the role of Manger of both companies. Growers bought the right to use the crates and they had two staff going around collecting crates from the retailers.

When the market moved from the East End to Cavan, the two warehouses in King St, Norwood, which housed SA Crate, were sold off and land was purchased in Cavan and new warehouse and office facilities were built. This was a good asset for the Apple & Pear Growers Association and the building is still owned by the Association today. Bruce expresses great sadness however, that SA Crate is no longer around today, as it provided an important service to industry at the time and generated income for the Association.

Along with leading SA Crate and the Apple and Pear Growers Association, Bruce was active within industry in a number of other ways. Bruce recalls that in the early days, a number of growers used to bring early, immature eating apples to market and sold them as early cookers. This didn't do the industry any good, so Bruce did a lot of work in establishing a juice concentrate industry. The various co-operatives had depots, where trucks used to go around and collect immature and downgraded fruit for juicing.

Bruce was appointed by the South Australian government to represent the concentrate fruit industry when sugar concessions came in. He was also the first non-grower to present the industry outlook to the Outlook Conference in Canberra and he gave two papers at an ASEAN conference on returnable containers. Bruce was Chairman of the Shippers Association for a number of years. The Shippers Association played a role in finding out what industry wanted in terms of shipping and travelling interstate to find out what ships were available at certain times. He was involved in the industry when shipping containers first came in and Bruce recalls that they were a real asset to industry, as containers would come to the packing shed to be loaded up, saving fruit having to be carted and loaded onto ships by hand.

Bruce in his role with the Apple & Pear Growers Association ran a number of national conferences. "Get to the Core Before '94" was the first conference where trade displays were introduced, and Bruce remembers this conference with great pride, as is provided a lot of publicity to the businesses involved, made money for the Association and was well supported by industry.

Bruce relates that one of the key benefits of having an Association was that it gave the apple and pear industry a lot of publicity, whereas in Bruce's words, "Fruit Growers and Market Gardeners didn't know whether they were cauliflowers or cabbages".

In fact, promotion was a real focus under Bruce's reign, where he developed an excellent relationship with the media and sought publicity whenever he could to keep the public informed as to what was going on. In his time, the Association ran a wide range of promotions including apple peeling competitions with a knife to see who could produce the longest unbroken peel from a 3-inch apple, and a contest to find South Australia's Granny Smith.

The display at the Royal Adelaide Show was a major feature and the Assocation announced the opening of "Apple and Pear Week" from the verandah of T&G building in Grenfell St, with plenty of media interest.

There was also a baking of the world's biggest apple pie at the Lenswood Harvest Festival, which was claimed in Guinness Book of Records at the time and Bruce was credited with having the biggest pear in the world – which was actually a Pound Pear grown by Ashleigh and Harleigh Mason.

While Bruce retired at 65 in 1993 he has retained a great interest in what is happening in the industry. His advice is "you have to be able to change with circumstances and preferably be one step ahead. When times are challenging, industry needs to all pull together to make things work, because there is only the strength in numbers that is going to give any pull whatsoever."

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Understanding the hormonal benefits of kelps and variety of products in the market

omnia NUTRIOLOGY* *the science of growing

By Ryan Sheridan

The use of kelps in horticulture has increased over the last 20 years. It can be said that kelps are now an important part of any crop inputs program. They are applied at different stages of growth, at planting to increase root mass and to reduce transplant shock, during flower initiation to increase flowering and during times of stress to reduce the effects of extreme heat or frost. It is now recognised that kelp extracts provide plants with the stimulus that needed for them to realise their greatest yield potential.

There are many types of kelp products available on the market and their performance varies depending on the extraction method and the variety of kelp used. The most common types of kelp species used are (Ascophyllum nodosum, Durvillaea potatorum and Ecklonia maxima).

Kelp extracts contain plant hormones auxins, cytokinins, ethylene, gibberellins, abscisic acid and more. With all different types of kelp products available in the market there is varying results because of the different levels of available plant hormones.

For example Durvillaea potatorum contains high levels of cytokinin whereas the South African kelps (Ecklonia maxima) have a higher level of brassinosteroids (along with gibberellins and abscisic acid). Kelp extracts also provide plant benefits as they contain high levels of Ammonium molecules (betaine and proline) and alginates that offer a buffer during times of stress.

Auxins in kelp extracts play a key role in root development and root flushes by increasing the production of Indole Acetic Acid (IAA). IAA is better known in common terms as "rooting hormone". By assisting in increasing root mass it helps the plant to take up water and nutrients to reduce transplant shock and plant losses.

Cytokinins will reduce senescence (and prolong dormancy initiation) reducing the breaking down of chlorophyll and photosynthetic proteins. Cytoknins also play a key role in plant responses to biotic and abiotic stresses and play a diverse role in plant development and plant growth. Cytokinins act in synergy with Salicylic Acid to improve the plants defence mechanisms to guard against plant infections.

Abscisic acid is produced when cytokinins stop being produced so an application of kelp at this time can stop abscission (fruit and leaf drop).

Kelps extracts play a role in reducing the effects of plant diseases and the plants ability to cope with stress. While there is no in field scientific evidence to prove that kelp extracts will improve frost resistance it is a widely agreed upon fact. Kelp extracts reduces damage by increasing cell wall strength and by increasing the solutes within the plant cells therefore reducing the freezing point of the cell water.

It acts like antifreeze (like antifreeze used in a car's radiators) and decreases the temperature at which the cell water freezes forming icicles that damage the cell walls. Kelp extracts also aid the plant to recover from the frost event and then reduce the time for the plant to return to full production.

1. Auxins
- Required in every aspect of plant growth.
- Contribute to root growth by stimulating IAA production
- Promote stem elongation, inhibit growth of lateral buds (maintains apical dominance). They are produced in the stem, buds, and root tips.
- Promoting root flushes to assist in production of cytokinins (that are developed in root tips).

2. Gibberellins
- Increase internode / stem elongation
- Impacts (positively and negatively) seed germination (GA:IAA ratio) and leaf numbers.
- Growth hormones that stimulate cell elongation and cause plants to grow taller.

3. Cytokinins
- Increases photosynthesis and reduce senescence.
- Reduce fruit drop and kelp annual crops holding on for longer.
- Cytokinins promote cell division in roots and shoots.
- Affect apical dominance, axillary bud growth
- Used to break dormancy.
- Cytokinins are produced in the root tip and stimulating root flushes will ensure the production of Cytokinins and the reduction of Ethylene production.

PuraKelp and K Kelp are highly concentrated kelp extract products that contain high levels of plant stimulants to maximise plant growth and yields. Mega Kel P is a combination product that contains a high level of kelp extract with the added benefit of humic acids (K Humate). The combination of these two products means Mega-Kel-P is packed with the essential nutrients needed to stimulant plant growth, aid in stress mitigation, optimise nutrient uptake and increase a soils water and nutrient holding capacity. A must use product to realise a tree crops full potential.

Mega-Kel-P™ PURAkelp™

Hort Connections Review

This year's APAL Conference was held in Brisbane in conjunction with Hort Connections 2018, which attracted close to 3000 attendees from across the horticulture industry to the trade shows and seminars.

APAL ran a dedicated Apple & Pear stream, with special features including Speed Updating, Future Business, Variety Showcase, Social Events, Pome Zone, Awards for Excellence and Panel Session.

Speed Updating
Speed Updating is a session designed to allow attendees to gain a quick snapshot into some of the latest research and development activities that are happening within the industry.

APAL Technical Manager Angus Crawford kicked off the session by giving an overview of the Australian Apple & Pear Industry Innovation Program (AP15004), which combines Future Orchards©, Technical Manager and Industry Services projects. Future Orchards© provides practical learning for growers aimed at improving orchard productivity and is the most visible component of the program. In its current iteration (2015 - 2021) it will deliver 112 Orchard Walks, 80 demonstration trials, 55 Australian Fruitgrower magazine articles, 16 Focus Orchards, 8 Front Line Advisers, 30 Business Development Group newsletters, Industry Benchmarking through OrchardNet, 5 Annual Orchard Business Analysis and 5 Pear Masterclasses.

Further areas in the program include overseas and regional study tours, facilitation of R&D adoption (including Speed updating), grower and industry technical support, crop protection stewardship (eg industry response to changes and updates) and biosecurity preparedness.

Ross Wilson, Horticultural Consultant from AgFirst then gave an overview of the Future Orchards Program, highlighting the plans for the next 3 years, which include providing a different focus for each year - Future Quality (2018), Future Climate (2019) and Future Orchard (2020).

Dr Sally Bound from Tasmanian Institute for Agriculture provided an overview of a semi-commercial scale demonstration trial of Artifical Spur Exctinction (ASE) on Buckeye Gala, along with a cost comparison between ASE and chemical thinning. The trial also looked at two different pruning regimes to see the impacts of ASE on pruning costs.

The trial showed that ASE provided benefits in improved yield, fruit size and quality. In addition, while initial tree setup for ASE required an additional pruning cost at the start of the trial, hand thinning requirements were less. Overall, the cost of implementing ASE in an established orchard was found to be similar to the cost of a standard chemical thinning program, and once the trees are set up, there is a reduction in crop load management costs. Cost of implementation will vary depending on the age and structure of the trees. However, there is the added benefit that trees can be set up up with a pre-determined crop load with reasonable accuracy, enabling improved management of fruit size. In addition, bud position is optimised in ASE, fruit is well spaced and light distribution into the canopy enhanced.

The program then saw a break in technical content, with Olivia Grey, Apple and Pear Marketing Manager for Hort Innovation giving an overview of the Aussie Apples and Australian Pears marketing campaigns. The key focus of 2018 for Aussie Apples will be amplifying the "get your crunch on" message across more platforms, while for Australian Pears it will be on helping to increase demand locally and overseas through incremental investment in export and domestic marketing. The domestic campaign will centre around consumer education around pear ripeness.

Dr Romina Rader from the University of New England presented on the research of her group in studying the pollination of apple flowers and how many visits are needed to produce fruit. The studies show so far that surrounding landscape and local management conditions dicate what taxa (eg bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles etc) live where and which crops they visits. Some pollinators are more effective than others and different pollinators together have different impacts on fruit set. There is more research to be done on the impacts of visitation numbers.

John Lopresti from Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) gave an overview on work done to develop harvest maturity guidelines and post-harvest storage protocols for the new blush pear cultivars ANP-0118 (Lanya®), ANP-0131 (Deliza®) and ANP-0534. Key findings were for Lanya - maintains crisp texture up to 10 days after harvest but requires >12 weeks storage to improve sweetness and induce optimum melting similar to Corella and Packham. Can be consumed either crisp or melting. Susceptible to scald beyond 20 weeks storage unless stored under CA. Key findings for Deliza were - green background colour with wide range of skin blush and can be consumed either crisp or melting. Stores well up to 8 months in air and 10 months under CA when picked at 5kgf. Rapidly softens during ripening relative to Lanya but good eating quality. Key findings for ANP-0534 were - very sweet, high blush pear can be eaten crisp or soft; distinct colour change from green to yellow background when ready to eat. Stores well up to 8 months in air and 10 months under CA when picked at 7kgf.

Professor Jens Wunsche from University of Hohenheim, Germany presented on research to find the triggers of biennial bearing in apple trees. According to Jens, apple is one of the most researched fruit crops in the world, yet we still don't fully understand what triggers floral bud initiation. The research being conducted is looking at identifying which genes are differentially affected in the "on" and "off" year of biennal and non-biennial cultivars.

- F model: (narrow orchard) ideal for work in small-sized, narrow-lane orchards.
- GE model: (low orchard) ideal for work under low orchards and overhead trellis systems.
- GT model: (large orchard) for use in standard-size orchards and in open-field cultivation.

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If there are different genes present, we get closer to understanding the fundamental triggers of biennial bearing.

Dr Nigel Swarts from TIA presented on soil profiling work that is currently being undertaken as part of the PIPS program for improved tree and fruit nutrition. The hydraulic and physical properties of soil series from different apple growing regions across Australia are being compiled. These are key components in the development of a model called SINATA (Strategic Irrigation and Nitrogen Assessment Tool for Apples), which will be a strategic support tool to guide advisors and growers on the optimisation of irrigation and nitrogen applications for apple.

Dr Hannah James from Agrofresh gave an overview of the work that is being carried out on Harvista™, which is a pre-harvest formulation of 1-MCP that will soon be registered for use in Australia. The primary physiological target for Harvista is the control of ethylene. By managing the perception of ethylene while fruit is still on the tree, Harvista can slow down starch hydrolosis, maintain fruit firmness, maintain juice acidity and reduce fruit drop.

David Williams from DEDJTR, Victoria presented on two projects - AP15001 Integrated Pest and Disease Management Phase II (Codling moth) and AP16007 Apple & Pear IDMP manual. The codling moth work is looking at mating disruption, mass-trapping and release of the biocontrol agent - Mastrus ridens, which has now been released at 12 locations across Australia, including Ashton and Lobethal in 2018. Work on updated the IDPM manual has begun and workshops will be conducted in each of the growing areas later this year.

Mastrus ridens - image from APAL website, David Williams article

Dr Anthony Kachenko from Hort Innovation gave an overview of a new Ag-Tech apple industry research investment that will bring a product offering to market that will perform autonomous flower density mapping and tree canopy measurement; and to provide decision support for variable rate autonomous spraying. It is anticipated that the project will generate productivity improvement through reducing the amount of fruitlet thinning chemical via the use of a variable rate spray system regulated by a flower measuring vision system.

Dr Karen Theron from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, was another of the international guest speakers. In the Speed Updating, Dr Theron gave an overview of the pomefruit R&D investment structure in South Afrcia - HORTGRO. The main focus of HORTGRO is to ensure a constant stream of well qualified people to the industry, and to maintain capacity to develop technologies and create new knowledge. There is a very close relationship between industry and the University and they focus on their key areas of strength.

Andrew Horsfeld, Adama Australia, provided an update on Australian trials and registration for Brevis® in Australia. Brevis is a novel pome fruit thinner and its registration in Australia is pending in the third quarter of 2018. Beyond the initial registration, Adama are evaluating interactions with existing thinning products, varying application rates and expanding the label to include additional apple varieties and pears.

Dr Ian Goodwin, DEDJTR Victoria gave an update on the Profitable Pears project where orchard management to maximise productivity of new blush pear varieties are being investigated. Key areas of focus include the effects of different training systems and densities, comparing drip and microjet irrigation, root pruning as a mechanism to stimulate fruit bud development, the effects of rootstocks, preliminary studies on fruiting behaviour, colour development and PGRs, measuring and modeling nitrogen use and exploring remote sensing of nitrogen status.

Lee Kalcsits, Washington State University presented on research to better understand bitter pit - using synchotron technology to map xylem and cell structure in fruit and looking at variation in calcium distribution at the fruit, tree and orchard level to explain some of the underlying reasons by some fruit get bitter pit and others don't. Elemental balance contributes to the development of bitter pit in apples. Both soil and contact uptake through fruit development are important for high calcium in the fruit.

Bitter pit in apples - image from APAL website

Hort Connections other sessions

Following on from Speed Updating, Leadership consultants Paul Tribe and Jackie Smith ran an interactive session on "Negotiating for Success". The session looked at negotiation styles and the challenges often associated with negotiating. Negotation is used in many different parts of our lives and having good negotation skills can be very important for success in business as well as at a personal level.

Participants learnt about the impact of different personality traits and then ran through a four-step process for use in a range of practical situations – whether for negotiating to advantage (potentially short-term only benefit), or negotiating a mutually beneficial (and therefore sustainable) outcome or trying to influence others.

The Hort Connections event was formally opened on Monday evening, with concurrent Plenary sessions commencing on Tuesday morning, with key note presentations looking at future trends. The afternoon APAL session saw more in-depth presentations from three of the international presenters from Speed Updating. Professor Karen Theron spoke about University of Stellenbosch research into plant growth regulators and their use in apples and pears in South Africa. Dr Jens Wunsche spoke on the key limiting factors to productivity and fruit quality of apple and Dr Lee Kalcsits spoke in more detail about the use of calcium sprays for reduction of bitter pit. Steve Saunders, from Plus Group Horticulture, NZ closed with a presentation on innovations in automation and robotics for horticulture.

The program on Wednesday had a large focus on technology and global innovations in horticulture, with a range of interesting presentations focusing not only on the possibility but also the practicality of technology adoption. There was an afternoon APAL panel session continuing on with this theme.

Congratulations to all the winners of the APAL Awards for Excellence, who were recognised at the opening breakfast. It was well deserved recognition for the many talented people we have in our industry. For more details on the award winners see http://apal.org.au/apal-announces-2018-award-winners/

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Opportunities for Horticulture in Asia

The ANZ bank have released a series of articles outlining trends and opportunities for agriculture and horticulture. ANZ's Future of Fresh report highlights that fruit and nut exports to China have increased by 500 per cent in the past four years. This upward trajectory has played a significant role in horticulture becoming a $A10 billion industry and Australia's fourth-largest export commodity, worth $A3 billion in 2016 alone.

To view a copy of this report, go to https://thesbhub.com.au/content/dam/anz-smallbusiness/downloads/HorticultureIrrigatedIndustriesReport.pdf

While there are significant opportunities, the report also highlights some of the challenges. Selling fresh produce into China for example, is a complicated task, with may hurdles to jump before export can take place. Australia has recently gained technical market access for cherries and does not yet have technical market access for apples or pears.

"Once technical market access is achieved, the key concerns for producers or wholesalers include deciding who to partner with to help export and distribute their produce, and which in-country structure to adopt. While trading through the grey market channel, (a partially legal/illegal channel used to avoid taxes and duties via Hong Kong) has been a long-standing access point to China, it is becoming riskier as Chinese authorities have cracked down on this behaviour.

Alternatively, legal trading directly to China will require a number of partners to import, distribute and sell produce. The exception to this is the emerging channel of e-commerce sales, where producers sell directly to online customers through an online platform. The growth in the e-commerce channel has the potential to greatly increase the ease of import for those products, and small producers, seeking to enter the Chinese market."

As highlighted at the recent Cherry Export Workshop held in Canberra, there are some technical challenges in meeting the export protocols for China, which will require effort and coordination to ensure that high quality produce can be delivered to market.

A recent ANZ Blue Notes outlines that "to fully realise its potential Australian horticulture must focus on continuing to reliably and sustainably present a quality product. Businesses must give themselves adequate time to develop a greater understanding of a market's nuances and build strong and trusted relationships."

However, the opportunities are cetainly there to be captured. "Looking at the trends and figures it appears the middle class has already developed a strong liking for Australian fruit and nuts, particularly almonds, macadamias, tropical and stone fruits, as well as the traditional apples and table grapes - and a willingness to pay for quality. There's no doubt Australia's reputation has been a significant advantage for the horticulture sector."

For the full copy of this article see https://bluenotes.anz.com/posts/2018/03/Plum-opportunities-ahead-for-horticulture

Vale Brian Harris

On behalf of the Apple & Pear Growers Association of SA and the Cherry Growers Association of SA, we would like to offer our sincere condolences to the Harris family at the passing of Brian.

Brian Leonard Harris was passed away peacefully on the 21st June 2018, aged 78 years. Brian was the husband of Marley, also Marlene (deceased) and father of Sherilyn, Craig and Lois.

Brian was a dedicated contributor to the family apple and cherry business, still going to market until recently and will be greatly missed by many in the industry.

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