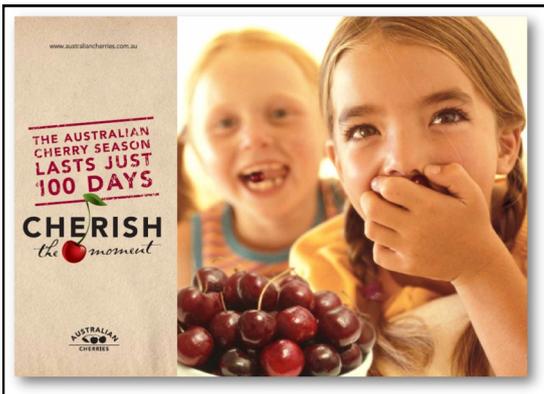


# Australian CHERRIES

August 2012 - No 6



#### INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE:

- President and CEO Reports
- National Food Plan
- R&D Article from TIA
- Plant Health Australia: On-farm biosecurity training
- Export Culture - China
- State Reports and more



Cover - Various pictures from Australian Cherries Magazine 2011/12 editions.

In this issue.....

CGA President

CGA Chief Executive Officer

National Food Plan

Research & Development

- Optimising Cherry Fruit Set, Crop Load, Fruit Nutrition and Size – TIA

Plant Health Australia

- Cherry industry on-farm biosecurity training

TIA - A National Approach to Research?

CGA Projects Update

Export Culture - China

Point of View

- TIA R&D Presentation from Levy Payers Meeting for download from new CGA Website

State Reports (from CGA AGM 4/8/2012)



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Contact CGA office  
for advertising & any other matters  
relating to

*Australian*  
**CHERRIES**



# CGA welcomes 2012-13

## Associate Members

CGA Associate Membership offers industry stakeholders and other associated groups the opportunity to participate more closely with industry and CGA activities.

We are very pleased to acknowledge the support from the following organisations who have now taken up Associate membership with CGA -

Colin Campbell Chemicals

Flight Plastics Extrusion

Melpat International Pty Ltd

Perennial Horticulture Centre, TIA



*Campbell*



**tia**  
TASMANIAN  
INSTITUTE OF  
AGRICULTURE

### Benefits of Associate Membership Include:

- Receiving all mailouts and other industry communications.
- A link to your company's website from the new look CGA industry website which was relaunched in August 2012.
- Discounted advertising rates in "Australian Cherries" Magazine

For more information on becoming an associate member of CGA, please contact the CGA Office on 03 62 311 229 or [office@cherrygrowers.org.au](mailto:office@cherrygrowers.org.au)

## Andrew Smith - President CGA: 2011/12 Season Summary

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*Andrew Smith's President's Report as presented at the 43rd CGA AGM in Melbourne 4/8/12.*

As one of my first official duties as President, it gave me great pleasure at the Conference Dinner in South Australia, to present Life Membership Certificates to three of the six recipients of this prestigious award, Ken Gaudion, Cliff Riseborough and the new inductee, Bill Bishop. Barry Gaudion, Ted Domeney and our other new inductee, John Ritchens were the other three recipients but unfortunately were unable to attend. It was great to recognise and thank them all for their time, effort and contributions to our Industry.

In early September our marketing and promotion campaign kicked off with a media launch in Sydney featuring our new cherry ambassador Jessica Watson along with the new "Cherish the Moment" slogan. The launch was a great platform that created much excitement among the journalists and media outlets regarding the up and coming cherry season. I believe the Marketing and Promotion Committee developed a strong program which gave the Cherry Industry some much needed, positive publicity.

In November a CGA delegation travelled to Nanning in China to attend the World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair.

The CGA occupied a stand in the Australia Fresh section where Summerfruit Australia, Fruit Growers Tasmania, Australian Avocados, Australian Table Grapes & APAL also had displays. The venue was a very large exhibition centre where traders and the public could attend to see many countries exhibiting their products for export.

The stand comprised of our promotion material and various pictures of Cherry production giving a good visual for attendees. Over the course of the Trade Fair there were many inquiries for cherries

and their availability.

This gave a strong indication of the possibilities of trade into China and the requirements that will be needed to satisfy customers.

During the Trade Fair, we and fellow Aussie exhibitors had the opportunity to attend the Trade Fair Banquet Dinner where the AQSIO chairman made special mention of the Australia Fresh displays.

The big event of the trip was a private banquet dinner that CGA was hosting for the AQSIO, CIQA and CIQs. These Chinese government bodies are the equivalent of our own BA and AQIS. We were extremely lucky to get the heads of these bodies to attend. It showed that China is extremely interested in progressing trade with the Australian Cherry Industry. It also showed that we have a strong relationship with the Chinese that has been built by our Industry over time. Well done Simon, Tim and Lucy, you all did our Industry a great service at the banquet dinner. This really was the highlight of the trip and a great political gain for the CGA.



**Members of the CGA enjoying a lunch meeting with AQSIO, CIQA and CIQs of China**

Well the long awaited cherry season had arrived with most areas showing good crops ready for harvest. With the cherries well under way that horrible four letter word arrived- yes RAIN. Most growing

# Andrew Smith - President CGA: 2011/12 Season Summary

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areas on the mainland and in southern Tasmania felt the effects of rain with varying degrees of damage.

It's extremely important that growers do their crop assessments before picking fruit after these climatic events and understand the markets needs. This really does make the decision on whether to pick or not, a more analytical process. The worst thing you can do as a grower after weather damage, is to make a decision with your heart and not with the results of the crop assessment.

Any weather event generally brings the media running, looking to thrive on a bad news story. Media responses need to be channeled through State Organisations or passed on to the CGA so we can all ensure the best media outcome is achieved in the aftermath of rain. This past season the media was handled with a great deal of professionalism and consideration for both growers and marketers alike and shows what can be achieved using the correct strategies.

During December we saw delegations from China, Taiwan and Thailand visit Australia to inspect various aspects of the Australian Cherry Industry. These visits are key components in the market access area showcasing our industry for future trade.

With the cherry season coming to an end we saw yet another rollercoaster ride for many growers. The effects of rain and price pressure on products in the market place had left some growers questioning the benefits of cherry growing. Over the course of the season we saw the highs and the lows of cherry production. These effects were more regional based rather than the previous year's climatic events which were Australia wide and continued from the start to the finish of the cherry production.

Over the past season we have seen the promotions

program roll out with our cherry ambassador Jessica Watson. The "CHERISH THE MOMENT" & "The Australian cherry season lasts just 100 days" slogans and the new creative artwork for in-store displays, along with the new consumer web site, have all appeared to be well received. Well done to the CGA Marketing & Promotions Committee for developing and implementing these initiatives.

During this past season we have also undertaken a number of key R&D projects. These projects were extremely important to the industry as the outcomes will shape the direction of industry into the future. The finalisation of the strategic plan and all of its components will form a strong blueprint for the industry to work with.

Market access still looms as one of the hardest nuts to crack. This subject is a highly volatile creature with many intricacies. We continue to work hard with BA to open new markets with commercial protocols for all cherry growers to service. The CGA's Market Access workshop that was run on the 27th of February, formed a major part of our export roadmap to further our export options, protocols and R&D needs in this area. It will be good to be pro-active instead of re-active in this area. We look forward to working further with key stakeholders regarding this matter. This coming year will see many key issues that the CGA Board will have to deal with over market access. There are many items on the table for discussion as we speak, and the board is very determined to resolve these matters for the best possible outcome for all of the Australian Industry.

Simon and I took a trip to Canberra to raise some of the current problems the cherry industry is facing within a range of areas.

We met with the Agricultural Minister Mr Joe Ludwig in Canberra the day after the budget was announced. During our meeting we spoke on Mar-

## Andrew Smith - President CGA: 2011/12 Season Summary

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ket Access and Biosecurity Issues (China, Thailand & AQIS Charges), National Fruit Fly problems (States Roles, PFA's, Farm Freedom Zones & New Technologies), HAL Issues (OHMA funding, Australia Fresh Program & R&D Funding), how EC applications are actioned (after major crop failure from weather events) and our Cherry Marketing campaign. We also spoke about the importance of his support at the Trade Fair in China in November. Over all we had a very good meeting with some valid points made, that he will consider for the future. In concluding the meeting we invited him to visit our industry in the production phase this coming season so he can better understand some of our issues. This suggestion was met with interest from the Minister and we will talk further on this matter.

Whilst in Canberra we took the opportunity to meet with the team from BA to get the latest, up to date findings on our market access issues. We were lucky to have all members present to talk on a range of problems we are currently facing regarding access to several areas. This created much discussion around the table and although we have much more to do in these areas, Simon and I could see that BA is doing their best to resolve many of the issues. Underlying problems are complex and at times involve political motivation from the other countries as well which can make it tough going. We have engaged BA to put the Cherry Industry's point of view forward in negotiations, and they fully understand our position.

We must work closely with BA in order to continue our market access negotiations for commercial trade into Thailand and China. The Board is extremely determined to gain entry into these markets, with workable protocols for those growers who are looking to export fruit. We also must look to working on the market maintenance of protocols that are already in place with current export mar-

kets.

To the Board and the State grower bodies, I thank you for the support I have received since commencing my role as President and I thank you for the chance to work together as a formidable team to further improve our Industry's needs. The strength of the CGA Board of Management is only a reflection of the strength of our grower based state organisations. It is the aim of the Board to maintain and increase this strength at State level in order for us to remain one of the leading horticultural industry groups.

I must extend the Board's thanks to Simon for the way he has handled his role of CEO. Simon has stepped in and taken over all the day to day operations of the CGA, as well as attending to projects, meetings and teleconferences on our behalf. Eighteen months in and he is really starting to leave his mark on the CGA. I know when I say this I speak for all concerned "well done Simon".

I must also thank FGT for their management of the CGA's administration. Over the past nineteen months, they have done a great job in setting up all our admin and project accounts, which has been a large job, particularly reporting to HAL on a regular basis. A big thank you must go to Nick Featherstone for all his support in this area and Sally Tennant up until her retirement in December 2011.

In closing, on behalf of the cherry industry "thank you" to Simon and Nick for our fantastic new Cherry Industry Magazine. This type of exposure and accessible information for the Cherry Growers and Industry members can only further strengthen our communications into the future. Well done!

*Andrew Smith*

**President—Cherry Growers Australia**

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### ***Welcome to the Sixth Edition of "Australian Cherries" Newsletter.***

*I have great pleasure in giving my report, which is an excerpt of the report I presented to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of Cherry Growers Australia Inc in Melbourne on August 4th 2012.*

I have now been in the role of CEO for 19 months and over that period the Board and I have pushed CGA and the industry in a new direction but there is more to do over the next 5 years.

The last financial year, has been a time of change for CGA and its operations and the Cherry Industry and there are some great opportunities ahead for the industry in the next 5 years and I will go into that in more detail.

However I would like to begin my report by thanking a few people:

- Andrew Smith, the National President, the CGA Executive and all members of Cherry Growers Australia Inc Board, for their governance and fiduciary decisions over the past year to put the organisation in a much more stable situation, after 2 years of losses totalling \$100,000.
- The members of the Cherry IAC, chaired by Bob Granger, who have encompassed a new way of looking at the Levy funds available and developing projects that will benefit the industry in the longer term. This will be enhanced with the new Cherry Industry 5 Year Strategic Plan 2012-17 that will be available to all members in the near future.
- All members of the Cherry Marketing and Promotions Committee and the Research and Development Committee for all the work they have done in assessing and approving projects for the 2012/13 financial year.
- Sally Tennant, who retired in December 2011

and Nick Featherstone who replaced Sally. Kelsie Linnell, who left in November 2011 and Cassie Palmer, who replaced Kelsie at Fruit Growers Tasmania, who have made my transition into this new role and the functioning of the Hobart office to being a smooth operation over the past 19 months.

- The State Cherry Association Boards and staff in NSW, VIC, SA, WA and TAS who have been fantastic in working with me and the CGA office and I am sure this relationship will only strengthen in the next few years.
- Owen Connelly and Stuart Burgess, the HAL Cherry Industry Services Managers and Elisa Tseng the HAL Marketing Manager for the Cherry Industry, who have provided me with all the advice I need coming into the industry on Research and Development and Marketing and Promotional matters.
- The HAL Board and John Lloyd and all the General Managers at HAL, who have been open to the ideas and change we have had to implement over the past 19 months and for giving us the all clear after the Audit they did on CGA in February 2012.

A range of other staff and CEO's in the other horticulture industries, who have welcomed me into the world of horticulture also other staff from OHMA, DAFF Biosecurity Australia, Plant Health Australia and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and other agencies around Australia just to name a few but there are many more.

The last 12 months has built on the work done in the last 6 months of the 2010/11 financial year when the administration moved to Hobart. The CGA Board decided that we needed change to oc-

## CGA Chief Executive Officer - 2011/12 Summary

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cur for the long term benefit of the industry on a number of fronts. These included:

- Developing a new 5 Year Strategic Plan for the Cherry Industry which includes modules linked to :
  - A new investment strategy for industry Research and Development Levy funds from 2011/12 to 2016/17;
  - A new marketing and promotions strategy using Levy funds from 2011/12 to 2016/17;
  - A new Communications and Extension strategy for the industry both externally and internally;
  - A new Export Roadmap for the next 5 years.
- Looking to consolidate funding of the Industry in larger projects including:
  - Signing a new 3 year partnership with HAL;
  - Developed a 3 year project on Market Access and Biosecurity preparedness; and
  - Developed a 3 year project on Communications, Engagement and Capacity.

These larger projects give CGA and the Industry the opportunity to be much more proactive and not be reactive to the ongoing changes in the industry in relation to market access across global markets, the issue of biosecurity here in Australia and the chance to work with the State bodies to see what their needs are for the next 5 years for capacity and communications and engagement at local regional, State and national levels.

A strong national industry is only as good as its parts and that includes strong State Associations and the networks and partnerships they have. There is such a variation across Australia and the models used by the State Cherry Associations and

the challenge is to harness all the opportunities to build the industry in each State and deal with issues that occur in them by creating better linkages with all stakeholders in the industry and to share knowledge in research and production, processing and marketing.

The new CGA Website was launched on 1st August 2012 and it will provide a wide range of information from technical information through to information consumers of our products might like to access.

The Australian Cherries Newsletter has had 5 editions now and is always being refined to cater for the needs of the industry. It is a mix of news from around the country, international news, technical advice, research results and marketing tips and I am keen to case study growers around the country and see what they are doing.

I have also been working on a number of projects including:

- Lenswood Breeding and Evaluation project, that received funding for another 3 years to do a final evaluation on what we have there and around the country to see if we can provide new varieties to benefit the industry and make some money from commercial opportunities. This project will be run in partnership with SARDI and will have an Australian Cherry Breeding Business Plan developed to be released in late August 2012.
- We completed in partnership with SARDI and DAFF the Climate Adaptation for the Australian Cherry Industry and the final publication was sent to all on the CGA database and we held workshops in each State in 2012.
- The National Cherry Industry Biosecurity Plan was launched last year and we held workshops

## CGA Chief Executive Officer - 2011/12 Summary

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in each State linked to that the Orchard Biosecurity Manual with a copy being posted to all on the CGA database.

- CGA with levy funds published and circulated the Australian Cherry Production Manual which is a great tool for all those stakeholders working in the cherry industry. A copy was posted to all on the CGA database.
- We have successfully asked for the collection period of the Levy to be put back to 31st March each year to be in by end of April each year to suit the needs of the industry and when crops are picked and processed;
- The second year of the consumer research project from Sprout Research was carried out and the report is up on the CGA Website and Heath Adams will present this afternoon at the Levy payers meeting.
- A number of meetings with the National Produce Managers at Coles, Woolworths and IGA and our public relations company Crossman Communications on marketing and promotion for the cherry Industry on 2 occasions, first a wash up from 2011/12 season and second planning for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 seasons.
- Working with OHMA and Biosecurity Australia to gain access into
  - Mainland China, which has been a long and frustrating process.
  - Getting access back into Thailand after they suspended trade on 1 January 2012 for 2012/13.
  - Ensuring the Taiwan protocol from 2010 remains in place after the bad season last year; and
  - We have also provided information on a

range of other protocols as this seems to be an ever-changing area we need to keep an eye on.

- Working on a range of other committees and issues such as:
  - Asian Honeybee project;
  - Dimethoate and Fenthion Response Committee;
  - Horticultural Taskforce;
  - Plant Health Australia issues;
  - OHMA refunding proposal;
  - Talking with Federal Ministers Ludwig and Crean on funding and needs for the industry.

The past 18 months has been a phase of transition moving to a phase of consolidation and planning so the industry can move to a new level in the way it operates both externally and internally.

In the end it is you the grower that needs to benefit commercially from the product quality and much sort after product we produce and sell locally at the farm gate, in local, regional, intrastate and interstate markets and of course for those in the export market area.

I look forward to the challenges that await over the next 12 months and what the CGA Board and I can do to help the industry continue to expand and develop across the country, especially in lifting our domestic consumption per capita and increasing our exports of Australian cherries to the global market.

Thank you.

*Simon Boughey*  
**CEO—Cherry Growers Australia**

# Australian CHERRIES

Australian Cherries is published in February, April, June, August, October and December annually.

Closing dates for lodgement will be -  
1st day of each publication month, ie 1st October and so on.

## 2012-13 Advertising Rates

All advertising will be in colour & page sizes based on A4 page.

	<u>Associate Member Rate</u>	<u>Non Member Rate</u>
Quarter Page	\$220	\$250
Half Page	\$330	\$360
Full Page	\$440	\$470

## Classified Advertisements

(buy, sell, positions vacant)

\$66 per quarter page

## Newsletter Inserts

\$220 (600 copies required)

\*all prices inclusive of GST

*Associate Member  
Special Offer*

*Associate Members who book an  
annual advertising placement (6 issues)  
in advance, will receive  
a full page editorial for their organisation  
in the publication month of their choice.*





## Stakeholder consultation on the national food plan green paper

There are many ways stakeholders can give feedback on the green paper and help shape the government's approach to food policy, including providing a written submission, attending a public meeting or contributing to online discussion on our National Food Plan Blog.

Stakeholder consultation on the National Food Plan will be undertaken over the period 17 July 2012 to 30 September 2012.

### Written public submissions

- Written public submissions are invited from interested parties on any of the matters raised in the green paper. Submissions are due by **30 September 2012**.
- Consultation questions to guide your feedback are outlined in Appendix 2 of the green paper, but you are not limited to these.
- All submissions, whether lodged by email or by post, must be accompanied by a completed cover sheet. Guidelines on how to lodge a submission can be found in Appendix 1 of the green paper.
- Cox Inall Consultants will receive and manage submissions on behalf of the Australian Government. Submissions may be lodged at:

National Food Plan Submissions  
PO Box 942  
Broadway NSW 2007

Or email: [nationalfoodplan@coxinall.com.au](mailto:nationalfoodplan@coxinall.com.au)

- More information about the submission process is available at [www.daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan](http://www.daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan)

### Web, online consultation and social media

- Everyone can also provide feedback by contributing to the online discussion on the green paper at the National Food Plan Blog ([www.nationalfoodplan@govspace.gov.au](http://www.nationalfoodplan@govspace.gov.au)) and keep up to date on the consultation process by following us on Twitter (@NatFoodPlan).

### Public meetings

- Consultation on the green paper will be supported by a series of consultation meetings across Australia in capital cities and regional centres.
- Public meetings will be advertised in major metropolitan newspapers and regional newspapers and publicised through twitter and our online blog.
- Details of public meetings are available online at: [www.daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan](http://www.daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan)



# Schedule of public meetings for national food plan green paper consultation

30 July – 3 August	
Monday 30 July	Berwick public meeting 7-9pm
Tuesday 31 July	Bendigo public meeting 7-9pm
Wednesday 1 August	Devonport public meeting 7-9pm
Thursday 2 August	Hobart public meeting 7-9pm

6 –10 August	
Monday 6 August	Kununurra public meeting 7-9pm
Tuesday 7 August	Darwin public meeting 7.30-9.30pm
Wednesday 8 August	Alice Springs public meeting 7-9pm
Thursday 9 August	Melbourne public meeting 7-9 pm

13 – 17 August	
Monday 13 August	Penrith public meeting 7-9pm
Tuesday 14 August	Sydney public meeting 7-9 pm
Wednesday 15 August	Mildura public meeting 7-9pm
Thursday 16 August	Geelong public meeting 7-9pm

20 – 24 August	
Monday 20 August	Margaret River public meeting 7-9pm
Tuesday 21 August	Perth public meeting 7-9pm
Wednesday 22 August	Port Lincoln public meeting 7-9pm
Thursday 23 August	Adelaide public meeting 7-9pm

27 – 31 August	
Monday 27 August	Townsville public meeting 7-9pm
Tuesday 28 August	Rockhampton public meeting 7-9pm
Wednesday 29 August	Brisbane public meeting 7-9pm
Thursday 30 August	Roma public meeting 7-9 pm

3 – 7 September	
Monday 3 September	Canberra public meeting 7-9pm
Tuesday 4 September	Orange public meeting 7-9pm
Wednesday 5 September	Lismore public meeting 7-9pm
Thursday 6 September	Bega public meeting 7-9pm

## CY10002 *Optimising Cherry Fruit Set, Crop Load, Fruit Nutrition and Size*

The project CY10002 *Optimising Cherry Fruit Set, Crop Load, Fruit Nutrition and Size* was carried out in Washington State (Prosser, USA) and Tasmanian commercial orchards in 2010 and 2011 by Dr Matt Whiting's team at the Washington State University, and Dr Dugald Close's perennial hort research team at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. There were many interesting parts to the project and quite a few of these findings pave the way for further research in USA and Australia to develop practical solutions for long term consistency in cherry yield and quality.

The project looked at fruit set and what makes some varieties of cherries more variable in crop load than others. It also questioned how specific crop loads affect fruit at harvest (such as size, weight, sugar levels and so on). Some work was done on plant growth regulators (PGRs) and their influence on fruit set and yield. Similarly trunk and branch girdling, and defoliation were tried for their effects on fruit set. How the nutritional content of fruit affects fruit quality after harvest was researched as an Honours project and has led to PhD investigating this further.

### Significant Findings in Fruit Set and Pollination Studies

- Fruit set varies significantly from day to day
- Natural fruit set is low when flowers open during windy, hot conditions
- In low-productivity varieties pollen germination rate and growth rate don't appear to limit fruit set
- Short durability of the ovule in Regina and Benton flowers appears to limit productivity (fruit set)
- Fruit set in Regina, Tieton and Benton can be improved with PGRs applied during bloom
- Under high crop load (in Washington State only), earlier flowers have potentially better fruit quality than later flowers
- Under low crop load there is no relationship between timing of flowering and fruit quality
- Fruit quality potential is similar for all buds in a spur
- Fruit quality is highest for single-fruit 'clusters' compared with multiple-fruit 'clusters' (i.e., 1 fruit set per floral bud vs several fruit set per floral bud)

The environment that today's flowers open into can be very different from yesterday or tomorrow, so it is no surprise that fruit set can be extremely variable, even among limbs in a tree. As an example in Washington in 2009, counting flowers and fruit from 80 'Bing' limbs, fruit set varied from about 4% to 80%. We can develop management strategies to reduce this variability when we understand what causes it.

In the past all trials on fruit set have recorded flowers opening on a single day and counting fruit from those flowers at harvest. This method does not show the variability of fruit set over the complete flowering period, or what causes this variability. In this project individual flowers on sections of 2 and 3 year old wood were labelled with numbered tape on the day they opened (became accessible to a bee). The number of flowers that opened each day was recorded over the flowering period (Fig 1). Fruit set was assessed at harvest by counting fruit numbers for each flowering day (Fig 2).

Over two years (2009 and 2010) the trials were conducted on 'Bing', 'Regina', 'Benton', and 'Sweetheart' in Washington, and on 'Van', 'Sweetheart', and 'Simone' in Tasmania.

Across both years, we documented large variability in fruit set under field conditions in Lapins, Kordia, Van, and Sweetheart throughout the bloom period. For example, fruit set varied from 10% to 100% in Lapins, across the 18 day bloom period (Fig 3).

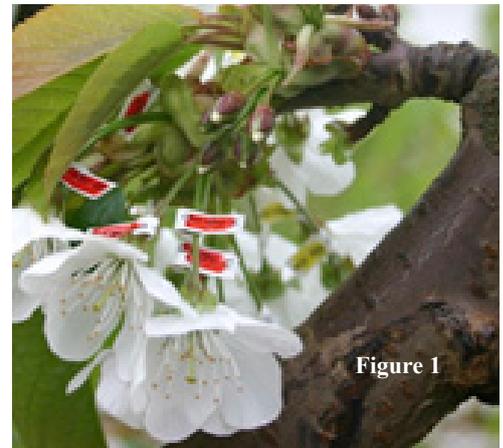
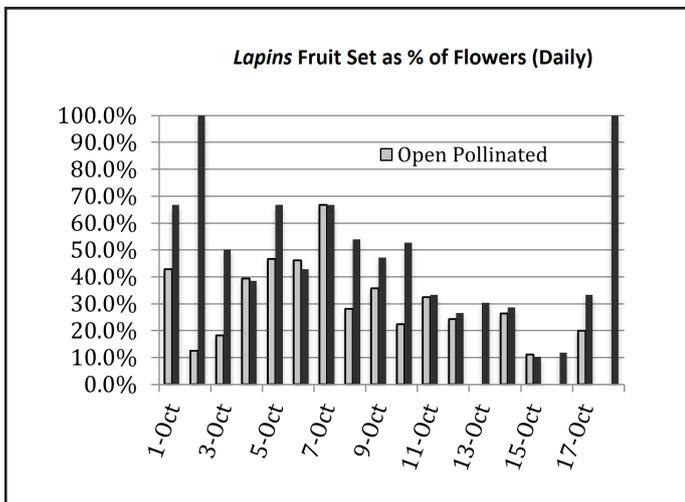


Figure 1



Figure 2

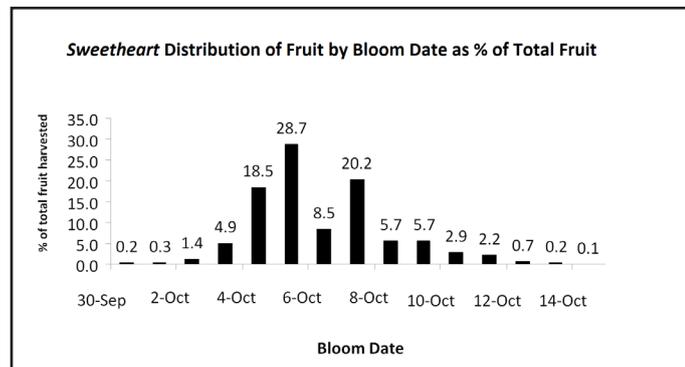


**Figure 3:** Lapins flowers were tagged with the date they opened. Half were hand pollinated and half left to pollinate naturally. Fruit numbers from each day's flowers were recorded at harvest. Some days set more fruit than others, and fruit set from hand pollination was only marginally different most days.

Although there is a relationship between temperature and the rate of flowers opening, we have found no relationship between fruit set and air temperature on the day a flower opened. Interestingly, fruit set from hand pollinations was similar to that of open pollinated flowers on most days. This suggests there weren't many days when pollinator activity was limiting to fruit set.

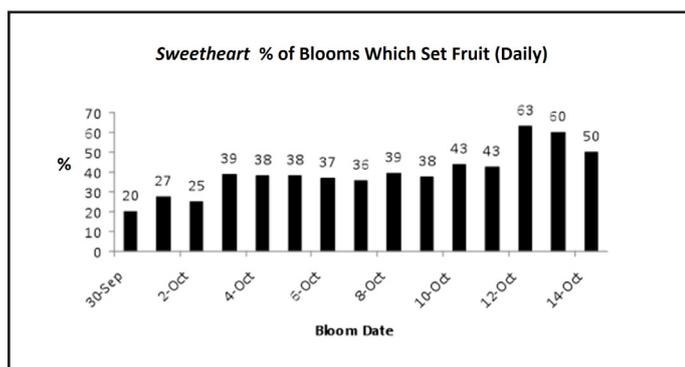
### Sweetheart and Fruit Set

In 2010/2011 flower tagging studies revealed that 'Sweetheart' fruit set was about 37% overall. The



**Figure 4 (above):** 100% of Sweetheart fruit harvested from the tagged flowers, divided according to the first day each flower opened. 75% of all fruit was set within a four-day period. Other data shows that this figure did not change much for fruit set with hand-pollinated flowers.

**Figure 5 (below):** The percentage of flowers that set fruit of all flowers that opened on each day during the bloom period.



daily range in fruit set was from about 20 to 63%. Flowering began slowly, peaking on day 6 and declining slowly thereafter (Fig. 4). Nearly 30% of all fruit at harvest were set from flowers that opened on a single day (Fig. 5). If only the flowers that opened on that day were to have set fruit, overall fruit set would have been about 12%, only slightly less than we estimate being a desirable balance for 'Sweetheart'.

This flowering pattern was common for most cultivars studied and suggests that if conditions are favorable a commercial crop may be set within a day or two.

With more information to support models of bloom progression and a clear understanding of effective pollination period, we can develop targeted crop-load-management strategies. These may include removal of pollinators past peak bloom, or application of caustic thinners.

### Bloom Date and Quality

At commercial harvest there was no apparent relationship between any attribute of fruit quality evaluated and the date that the flower opened during bloom. (Fruit quality was measured as weight, size, colour and sugar levels.) This was true for each cultivar evaluated except for one dataset collected in Prosser, which showed that quality potential was highest in the earliest-opening flowers. This is possibly due to different crop loads, which were heavy in Prosser and light in Tasmania.

The variability among fruit at commercial harvest maturity was high, even among fruit from flowers that opened on the same day. We recorded nearly a 3-fold variability (e.g., 5 to 15 g per fruit) in fruit weight that is obviously not related to timing of flowering.

Investigations showed there was no consistent difference in fruit quality between fruit from the apical-most fruit bud (i.e., that nearest the vegetative bud) and the basal-most bud.

### Bud Hierarchy and Quality

A single floral bud can produce up to four flowers and potentially four fruit. Washington State data compared quality traits of fruit borne from the same floral bud but with different numbers of fruit. These were categorized as single-, double-, triple-, or quadruple-fruit 'clusters'. We found a negative relationship between the number of fruit set in a bud and the size/weight of those fruit. When only one flower in a bud set fruit, the quality of those fruit was always better than quality of fruit from multiple-fruit clusters, regardless of cultivar.

Applications of GA during floral bud initiation could reduce the density of flowers per bud without reducing the number of buds per spur. This may be a practical strategy to achieve improvements in quality by favouring fewer flowers per bud. This will be investigated further.

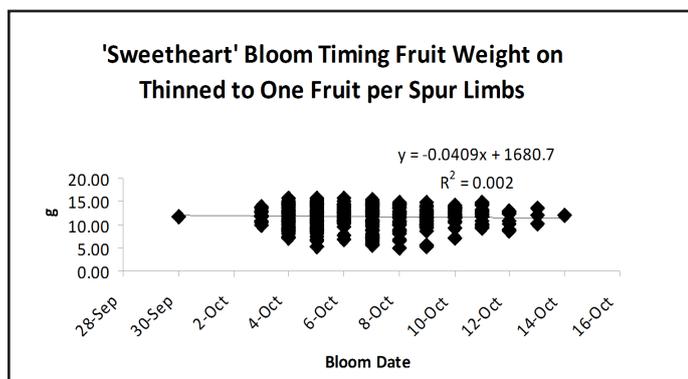


Figure 6 (above): Sweetheart buds thinned to 1 per spur produced a wide range of fruit weights that had no relationship to whether their flowers opened early or late in the blossom period.

### Scrutinising Pollination

In 2011 several studies were conducted in plant growth chambers in Washington State to evaluate the effective pollination period for sweet cherry and to understand the role of temperature on fundamental elements of fertilization. Our assessments of pollen germination, pollen tube growth, stigma receptivity, and ovule viability of ‘Benton’, ‘Bing’, ‘Regina’, and ‘Sweetheart’ reveal differences between productive cultivars (‘Bing’ and ‘Sweetheart’) and unproductive cultivars (‘Benton’ and ‘Regina’), though our analyses are ongoing.

Field trials on Tieton, Benton, Rainier and Sweetheart showed extended stigma receptivity to pollen with fruit being set from pollination up to four days after the flowers opened.

It appears that pistil factors are important in cultivars with low fruit set – we observed lower receptivity of the stigma and faster degeneration of the ovule in ‘Benton’ and ‘Regina’ compared with ‘Bing’ and ‘Sweetheart’. Low temperature reduces the rate of pollen germination and growth through the style and extends the viability of the ovule whereas high temperature accelerates these components.

Under low temperatures, we observed no pollen germination by 8 hours after hand pollination, irrespective of cultivar. In contrast, more than 60% of the pollen grains had germinated on ‘Sweetheart’ stigmas after 8 hours of high temperature treatment. Under our average temperature regime, designed to mimic ‘normal’ spring conditions, we recorded pollen tube growth to the base of the style by 96 hours in ‘Bing’ and by 72 hours in ‘Sweetheart’. In contrast, in ‘Benton’ and ‘Regina’ we did not record similar pollen growth until 120 hours after pollination. Our observations from lab and field studies, as well as anecdotal evidence from growers, indicate that low temperature conditions are favorable for achieving high fruit set. This is likely due to prolonged viability of the ovules.

### PGRs on low-fertility cultivars

Our investigations suggest that ovule longevity is important to cultivars exhibiting low fruit set and so PGRs were trialed as practical strategies in several low-bearing varieties. In 2010 we treated ‘Tieton’ at about 75% full bloom with a synthetic auxin (4-CPA), gibberellins (GA3+GA4+7), and AVG (Retain®). Each treatment improved final fruit set significantly, although GA treatment and CPA have yielded inconsistent results.

Two years of field trials in Tasmania confirmed the efficacy of AVG for improving fruit set of ‘Regina’. We have evidence from two orchards that two

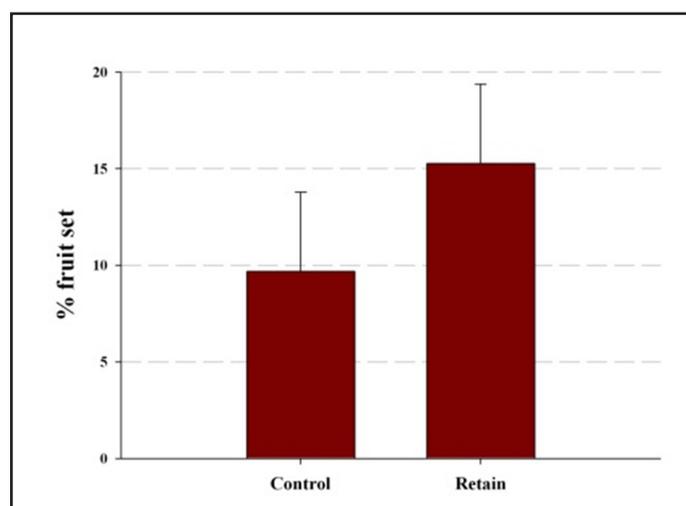
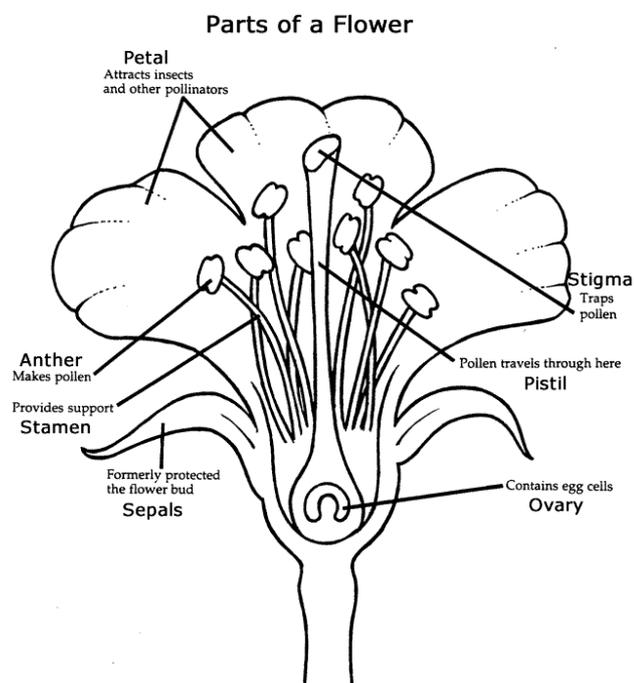


Figure 7 (above): Regina flowers treated with Retain® were more likely to set fruit in than untreated Regina flowers; and

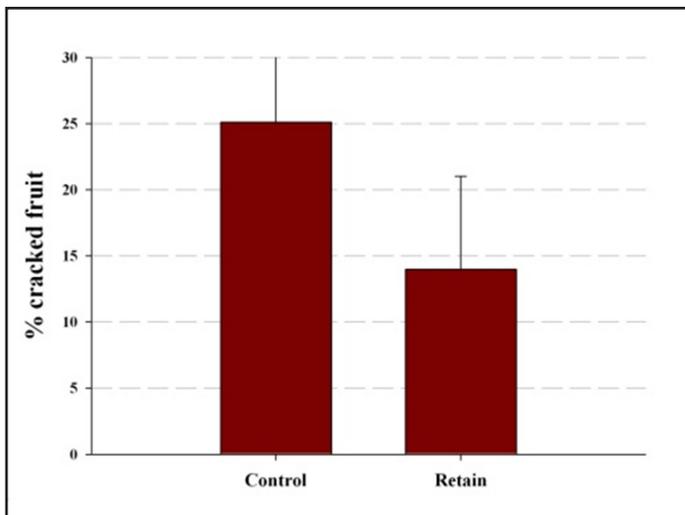


Figure 8 (above): Regina flowers treated with Retain® were less likely to crack than fruit from untreated Regina flowers.

applications of AVG, made at about 20% and 50% of full bloom are effective for improving fruit set. At this stage the most promising program for improving fruit set is two applications of AVG made during early stages of flowering (about 10-20% and 40-60% bloom).

### Significant Findings in Crop Load

- The earlier the thinning, the better the fruit quality response
- The benefit of thinning on fruit quality depends on the fruit density – there are benefits from thinning after pit hardening if crop density is high
- Trials with BA, ABA, methyl jasmonate, and NAA showed no efficacy as post-bloom thinners
- Ethephon and PCa + ABA show potential as post-bloom thinners applied 2 – 3 weeks after full bloom.

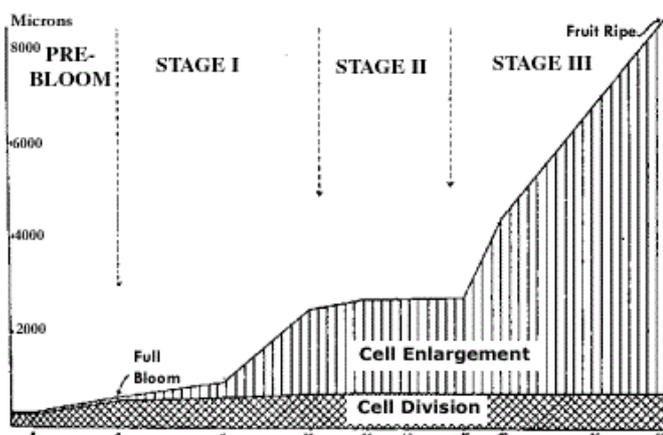


Fig 9 The growth pattern of a cherry fruit. From Tukey and Young, 1939. The Botanical Gazette 100(4):745.

### Timing of Thinning

We investigated thinning at key stages of fruit development and how it affected fruit yield and quality for Bing and Sweetheart in 2010, and Van and

Sweetheart in 2011 by bud, bloom or fruitlet thinning treatments. In addition, we investigated target crop loads by thinning entire trees to leave 1, 2, or 4 floral buds per spur. This work is intended to answer a few simple questions – when is the best time to thin, and, to what targets should we thin?

In every case, earlier thinning was beneficial compared with thinning later in the season. For example, when crop load was adjusted by thinning dormant buds or flowers at full bloom, ‘Sweetheart’ fruit weight was about 17% heavier compared to later thinning times.

In Tasmania an even spread from 14 to 33 tonnes per ha was achieved by thinning entire trees to leave 1, 2, or 4 floral buds per spur. Fruit weight and size were lower at high crop load, as were sugars, acid and firmness. Fruit quality generally improved as crop load decreased, with the exception that split fruit was dramatically higher in trees with low fruit density and large fruit size (cracking was 59% at low crop load compared to 18% at high crop load).

The results with ‘Sweetheart’ contradict slightly our previous results that showed benefits from thinning up to early stage II of fruit development. This may be due to the relatively light crop load in the ‘Sweetheart’ trial – when crop load is heavier, later thinning may be beneficial, as late as early stage III in heavily cropped trees. However, our results do underscore the importance for thinning programs to be imposed as early as possible in the fruiting timeline. The significant challenge of course is not knowing what fruit set is until well past full bloom. Our future work will continue to investigate post-bloom thinning strategies.

Effective thinning with Ethephon application three weeks after full bloom was found in Washington on Sweetheart, Bing and Rainier. BA, ABA, methyl jasmonate and NAA were all ineffective as thinners although BA did improve fruit size slightly. There did not appear to be any collateral damage to the Ethephon-treated trees – leaves did not fall off and shoot growth continued. Thinning was excessive at the rates of Ethephon applied – we propose to investigate rates and timing for Ethephon for multiple cultivars as an effective post-bloom thinner for sweet cherry would give growers a convenient tool for managing crop load.

Acknowledgements for this article: Dr Matt Whiting (WSU), Dr Dugald Close (TIA), Dr Sally Bound (TIA). For further information contact Dr Sally Bound at Sally.Bound@utas.edu.au

## Cherry industry on-farm biosecurity training

Improving on-farm biosecurity practices in the cherry industry was the focus of a series of workshops delivered by Plant Health Australia (PHA) in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania. These workshops were funded through Cherry Growers Australia and Horticulture Australia Limited, and were based on the *Orchard Biosecurity Manual for the Cherry Industry* and how to implement many of the simple recommendations within it.

Attendees at the workshops learnt about the major pests that impact on overseas industries, but have yet to become established in Australia. These pest threats highlighted why everyone in the industry needs to support good biosecurity.

Biosecurity measures implemented at the orchard level by growers play a key role in protecting the Australian cherry industry from exotic pests. They also help to manage pests that are already present on your property, and to limit the establishment of new pests.

The sessions highlighted biosecurity risks to cherry orchards and looked at ways to reduce them. A key part of the workshops was the completion of biosecurity best practice checklists and together the group was able to discuss where the common risks were for all the participants.

Growers who attended the on-farm sessions received tips on a variety of biosecurity measures and emergency responses, including:

- **Simple biosecurity measures:** Practices that can be put in place in normal day-to-day operations to help protect the livelihood of growers include:
  - Sticking to regular pathways through the orchard
  - Cleaning and disinfecting secateurs between blocks
  - Displaying biosecurity awareness material in staff rooms, and trimming and packing sheds. Keep the messages simple and effective.
- **Pest surveillance:** Orchard monitoring and surveillance involves looking for and recording the presence, absence and population levels of pests. Regular monitoring is a basic part of orchard management practise and gives the best chance of spotting a new pest soon after it arrives.
- **Reporting suspect pests:** If you have spotted something unusual, the following general precautions should be taken to contain the pest and protect other parts of your orchard:
  - Mark the location of the pest and limit access to the area for both people and equipment.
  - Wash hands, clothes and boots that have been in contact with affected plant material or soil.
  - Restrict operations in the area while waiting for the identification of the suspected exotic pest.

There was also a focus on how biosecurity can go hand in hand with U-pick operations or orchards open to growers (eg, for field days or equipment demonstrations). Some of the suggestions were:

- Limit the number of access points to the property
- Display a biosecurity sign at the orchard entrance to demonstrate the importance of orchard hygiene
- Provide a dedicated visitor parking area, away from production areas
- Use signs to clearly indicate where visitors are able to pick fruit
- Monitor the area surrounding the parking for pests and weeds
- Have a sentinel block of trees to provide early warning of a pest or disease
- Use a defined pathway to trees.
- Keep a register of visitors on field days to enable trace back and trace forward in the event of an incursion.

The on-farm biosecurity training sessions support the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) training provided previously to many industry members. In these workshops participants were informed of the key aspects of the EPPRD, what is required of them in an Emergency Plant Pest response, and how industry and government parties work together in responding to exotic pest detections.

**The EPPRD:** This is a formal, legally binding document between PHA, Australian and state and territory governments, and plant industry signatories. As a signatory to the EPPRD, Cherries Australia has a seat at the decision making table and also contributes to funding if an approved Response Plan is implemented to eradicate an Emergency Plant Pest. Under the EPPRD, the cherry industry has a responsibility to report suspect pests. The earlier a new pest is detected, the greater the chance an eradication response will be mounted and the more likely it will be successful.

**Owner Reimbursement Costs:** An underlying principle of the EPPRD is that growers are neither better nor worse off as a result of reporting a suspect Emergency Plant Pest. As a result, grower reimbursement payments (Owner Reimbursement Costs; ORCs) may be included for direct costs incurred as a result of the implementation of an approved Response Plan. ORCs may cover direct grower costs or losses through such actions as the destruction of crops, enforced fallow periods, replacement of trees and additional chemical treatments.

The *Orchard Biosecurity Manual for the Cherry Industry* is on the PHA website ([www.phau.com.au/go/phau/biosecurity/cherry](http://www.phau.com.au/go/phau/biosecurity/cherry)). It includes fact sheets on exotic pests, and biosecurity advice on planting and propagating material, chemical residues, handling waste fruit and plant material, and honey bee hives. Material distributed at the workshops, including a biosecurity best practice check list, visitor register, pest surveillance sheet, and production value summary record, are also available. For more information on the EPPRD refer to [www.phau.com.au/epprd](http://www.phau.com.au/epprd)

## A National Approach to Research?



The Perennial Horticulture Centre (PHC) of the Tasmanian Institute of Tasmania (TIA) is the lead agency for Cherry Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) under the National RD&E framework.

What does it mean?????

- In 2005, the then Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) promoted the concept of a more collaborative national RD&E model, and endorsed the development of a National Primary Industries Research, Development & Extension Framework (the Framework).
- The Framework is developed jointly between the Commonwealth, the States and Northern Territory, Rural R&D Corporations, CSIRO, and universities.
- PIMC is now known as the Standing Council on Primary Industries (SCoPI), and the Framework is one of the key issues of national significance under the SCoPI terms of reference. (<http://www.npirdef.org/framework>)
- The Framework for horticulture was developed by the National Horticulture Research Network (<http://hin.com.au/NHRN>)
- The NHRN is a formal network of senior horticultural R&D representatives from the State and Commonwealth government agricultural agencies, Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). It was formed in 2001.
- NHRN also has connections with the Rural Industries R&D Corporation, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the Grape and Wine R&D Corporation.
- NHRN provides a senior national forum for horticultural RD&E coordination and inter-agency communication to drive integrated national programs and activities.
- The NHRN is responsible for the development and ongoing delivery of the National RD&E Framework for Horticulture.
- The NHRN is committed to a vision of focused and cohesive research, development and extension that underpins vibrant and growing Australian horticultural industries.
- Under the framework, TIA has taken on the role of lead agency for the cherry industry, with SARDI and NSW DPI taking on roles as support agencies.
- It means TIA will liaise closely with Industry bodies (state and national) and HAL to ensure the RD&E objectives of the cherry industry are recognised and considered in research activity. In other words, it means that future research should align with Industry developed RD&E objectives.
- It means that the direction of cherry RD&E is in good hands. TIA's mission as stated in the 2012-2017 Strategic plan is to "undertake quality, innovative and responsive RD&E to further develop agricultural industries in a sustainable manner". So - the mission of TIA and the aims of the framework for RD&E are related. TIA has an excellent record in perennial horticulture RD&E.
- It does not mean that all cherry research will be undertaken by TIA. The lead agency will make RD&E in cherries a priority, but it will also provide linkage opportunities for

all agencies, co-ordinate research capability and provide leadership and development of collaborative research projects.

In order to fulfil the role as lead agency, TIA has commenced facilitation of discussions between national RD&E providers, including TIA, SARDI, NSW and VIC DPI, to undertake evaluations of current and future research projects, and existing capabilities and resources. TIA has worked alongside Cherry Growers Australia (CGA), state industry bodies and HAL to support the development of the Cherry Industry RD&E strategic plan.

A co-ordinated nationwide approach to RD&E will benefit all cherry growers. Through optimised resource use RD&E outcomes will make the best use of levy-funding. Through increased research collaboration RD&E outcomes will be relevant and targeted to specific regional issues or overarching national issues where appropriate. Through a considered and co-ordinated approach RD&E outcomes will address gaps identified in the RD&E strategic plan. In addition, a cherry communications and extension plan will ensure that RD&E outcomes are effectively communicated to all stakeholders.

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## CGA-HAL Projects for 2012-2013

### **CY11026 — Maintenance and ongoing Development of Communications across the Australian Cherry Industry**

CY11026 is a 3 year funded project with the key objective to provide strong communication amongst all stakeholders in the Australian Cherry Industry. It is vital for the major stakeholders and in particular growers, to be able to make informed decisions when facing future challenges and opportunities.

The aim of this project is to maintain and build on progress made with project CY11018.

Proposed key objectives of this project include:

1. Ongoing publication of Industry magazine "Australian Cherries" to be distributed 5-6 times annually.
2. Other mailouts of relevant information as required.
3. To deliver information to growers and other industry stakeholders, through facilitation with State Associations.
4. Ongoing maintenance and development of industry website, to include updated and relevant information and links.
5. Ongoing collection and evaluation of feedback from stakeholders to gain a better understanding of which communications media are most effective, plus evaluation of emerging and future communications technologies.
6. Keeping growers informed of and encouraging their participation in National marketing campaigns.
7. Promote strong communication with State Associations to facilitate effective planning and marketing projects.
8. Development of a strong export focus amongst growers and state associations.

### **CY12007 — Export Development for Australian Cherries**

CY12007 is a 3 year funded project and is a continuation of Project CY11017 to ensure that the market access and development work on behalf of the Australian Cherry industry continues. This is particularly important in regard to maintenance of existing markets and ensuring opportunities for further development in those markets are taken up.

A key focus of the project will be to build on the export culture already being developed among Australian Cherry growers across the growing regions.

*There will be more details regarding project CY12007 in the October edition of "Australian Cherries"*



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# EXPORT

## Culture



### China

#### Country Facts - (From Austrade website: [www.austrade.gov.au](http://www.austrade.gov.au))

<b>Capital city:</b>	Beijing
<b>Surface area:</b>	9,561,000 sq km
<b>Population:</b>	1.348 billion
<b>Official language(s):</b>	Mandarin
<b>Head of State</b>	President HE Mr Hu Jintao
<b>Head of Government:</b>	Premier of the State Council HE Mr Wen Jiabao
<b>Australian exports to Hong Kong:</b>	A\$71,561 million
<b>Australian imports from Hong Kong:</b>	A\$42,144 million
<b>Principal export destinations:</b>	USA, Hong Kong, Japan
<b>Principal import sources:</b>	Japan, Republic of Korea, USA

#### Economic climate

China has the fastest-growing manufacturing sector in the world, which has been propelled by extensive foreign direct investment, cheap land and a low-cost labour-intensive base. These conditions have given rise to an increase of foreign enterprises relocating manufacturing operations to China, and a boom in demand for resources and raw materials.

#### Political climate

Chinese politics is dominated by the Communist Party of China (CPC). While there are some minor political parties, they work in harmony with the CPC and under its leadership. The CPC came to power on 1 October 1949 upon defeating the Kuomintan (Nationalist Party), and subsequently founded the People's Republic of China (PRC). From this point in time, the CPC has controlled all aspects of political power in China.

The Chinese Government works subordinate to the CPC and its primary function is to implement CPC policies. There are two major instruments of state (government) in China, the National People's Congress (NPC) and the State Council. In recent years, efforts have been made by China to decentralise power from the CPC leaders to government institutions.

# CHINA – great expectations

By Wayne Prowse

**C**HINA ! ... so much is riding on the expectation that China is pulling the world economy through the current downturn and is the market for the future. The numbers are huge; whether the 1.3 billion population, import values of A\$1.69 trillion or its 9.27 per cent GDP growth per annum over 20 years. This month we will take a look at China as a market for cherries and what to expect.



China is the Australian cherry industry's No.1 market access priority and is hopeful that sometime soon the access will be resolved and trade will begin. However it will not be easy. When Australian cherries reach China they will have to face a complex distribution network with mostly non refrigerated trucks and may pass through many hands to reach the end consumer.

Pause for a moment and consider that China grows and markets some 1 million tonnes of strawberries each year so a few thousand tonnes of cherries should not be difficult! Or will it?

Local produce such as strawberries are marketed usually by the growers taking their small volumes to a local market not too far away and selling to consumers who will usually enjoy them the same day.

On the other hand imported fruit lobs in larger volumes into a central market such as in Guangzhou and then is sold to traders who may take smaller volumes to a regional market for further sale to local

markets and eventually to a wet market stand holder and finally the consumer. Each step adds more value



*Distribution methods are not state of art*

to the product while at the same time each step that is without refrigeration deteriorates the quality and effectively reduces value to consumers.

Someone bears this loss if the product is not saleable by the time it reaches the consumer. Of course this is not ideal and there needs to be better ways to reach consumers that are viable for growers, exporters and importers that delivers a product worthy of a high price.



*Consumers still buy most fruit from street carts – no refrigeration here!*

## **Know the market....**

When too many cherries arrive in Guangzhou, which is near Hong Kong in the south, they have little chance in reaching distant destinations such as Beijing in peak condition. Last year we heard about the 20,000 tonnes of cherries arriving from Chile within the space of a few weeks and the problems that it caused as the market could not cope with the handling.

Direct access to China is vital so that exporters can tap into market opportunities deep into China and beyond the mega cities. For example there are over 30 cities of 2 – 10 million populations known as Tier 2 cities and include Wuhan, Xian, Nanjing, Qingdao and Kunming to name a few. These are forecast to expand faster than the mega cities (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou) in the next 10 years and will mean increased wealth driving more supermarket development and new opportunities for consumers to be offered more fresh imported produce. China's 12th Five-Year Plan which lays out national policies in major social and economic areas for the next five years, is currently being drafted and is expected to continue funnelling major investments into Tier 2 cities according to the China Business Review.



*Qingdao is a modern Tier 2 city of 8.7 million*

Setting up air freight distribution channels into retail customers and high end markets in some of these cities may provide an opportunity to step ahead of the competition and serve customers with fresher products through a shorter distribution chain.

### Marketing strategy ...

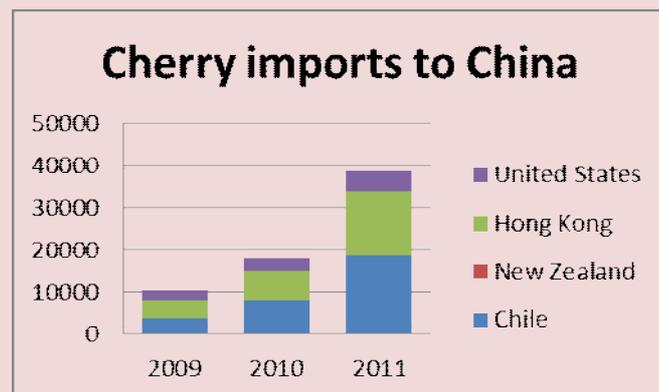
Australian cherries, and other southern hemisphere cherries, are only available for a short period and the marketing strategy should reflect a short period for something very special (and worth the price!) as many retailers and consumers may only get a chance to buy once or twice in the season. The market is so large that homework to identify areas where competitors have not gone will be more prudent than lobbing fruit into the same markets as the competition. First mover advantage is certainly possible in many sectors which may gain higher rewards for those prepared to take some risks to break new ground.

### Building trust...

There needs to be a strong level of trust built up both ways. It is just as important for the market buyer / importer to know and trust that the supplier is going to deliver fruit that meets his expectation for quality and price as it is for the suppliers to know that they will be paid. This takes time with possibly small volumes of trade and effective communications to build trust and gradually increase trade. Some exporters are certainly building these relationships today and it is important to understand that this is not something that every Australian grower can expect to develop individually, though is vital that support is given to exporters who are.

When Australia gains access to China we will be at least 3<sup>rd</sup> of the Southern players. As the chart shows Chile has moved in with large volumes supplemented by the recorded volumes from Hong Kong to deliver imports approaching 40,000 tonnes annually.

### Cherry imports to China (tonnes)



Source : China Customs, ITC Comtrade, Fresh Intelligence analysis

According to China Customs data cherries account for 2 per cent of the total fresh fruit imported by China. Downside is that they are not top of mind and many handlers do not know how to manage cherries in the supply chain. The upside though is there is growth potential. Chinese buyers want firm fruit with fresh taste and will accept a range of colours and sizes. The cherry industry needs to be able to deliver this fruit to the end user well beyond the point of market entry.

**Fresh Intelligence Consulting** is providing market and trade information to the fresh produce industry including analysis of import at export trade statistics, market share and strategic market intelligence. For more information contact:

[wayne.prowse@bigpond.com](mailto:wayne.prowse@bigpond.com)

# Point of View



## Overview of cherry industry Research, Development & Extension at TIA

Dugald Close  
Deputy Director and Centre Leader – Perennial Horticulture



This project has been funded by HAL using the cherry industry levy, voluntary contributions from the Washington Tree Fruit Commission and matched funds from the Australian Government



TIA is a joint venture of the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government



*This presentation was given by Dr Dugald Close of TIA to the Cherry Growers Australia Annual Levy Payers Meeting in Melbourne on 4th August 2012. To download the full presentation go to the R&D Page of the new CGA Website:*

<http://www.cherrygrowers.org.au/research/>

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# STATE REPORTS - 2011/12 Season Summaries

From 43rd CGA AGM 4th August 2012



The year kicked off to a good start with the majority of the Victorian growers attending the VCA AGM in Euroa with the highlight being Dr Penny Measham's (TIA) presentation on her research on "Management of Fruit Cracking". This presentation was timely given the previous wet season and what was to come for some growers in the 2011/12 season. The group then braved the rain to head out to Koala Country Orchards at Boho for a tour from Simon Rouget. The areas of special interest were the high elevation block, late maturing varieties, managing vigour and strategies used to control bacterial canker.

Once again the major Victorian promotion was the seasonal launch at the Werribee Spring Harvest Picnic in November. Superb weather reflected the strong numbers of visitors and this combined with the high quality of cherries resulted in the VCA selling out of cherries by 1.30 pm – a lesson learnt there! The now regular Cherry Pip Spitting competition was a highlight of the event and was given substantial media coverage and prominent space from the picnic organisers. The professional presentation of the VCA stand was recognised when the VCA exhibition received first place in the People's Choice awards with the Harvest Picnic Foundation reporting "The Victorian Cherry Association was the overwhelming winner, with visitors commenting on how helpful and friendly the staff were. The Cherry Pip Competition also added to

the festivities of the picnic, as it was very popular with visitors."

The harvest started early with reports of between 7 to 10 days earlier than an average season – this was reported in most growing areas in Victoria. This resulted in a short supply of cherries during Christmas week. Prices were under immense pressure with extreme competition within the retail sector. This caused a follow on effect within the wholesale markets with unrealistic prices offered. There was some rain damage early in the season, mainly in the south of Victoria, weather cleared for the latter part of the season.

Market access and Queensland Fruit Fly continued to be the biggest issues confronting Victorian growers. I feel this issue is going to get worse unless we get sensible and workable protocols for mainland cherries.

This year the VCA decided to extend the yearly "Season in Review" to a 2 day conference in March. The trial was an outstanding success with great support from growers and sponsors. The highlight of the event was the key note speaker, John Warmerdam, who is a grower, packer and marketer from California. The remainder of day one comprised presentations on topics such as rootstocks – varietal and future, cherry chill hours research, grader innovation using air jet technology, market activation research and seasonal review. Day 2 was spent negotiating floods in the North East of Victoria to visit Wandin Valley Farms for an orchard tour and workshops.

The VCA annual meeting will be in October.

**Stuart Pickworth**

## Western Australia

2011/12 season reinforced the position of WA producers in the supply chain where substantial supply from the East throughout the season, combined with very light local crops meant that most growers concentrated on either farmgate sales or direct supply to smaller independents. Small amounts of local fruit did find their way to market and sold well during Christmas week. This would appear to be the trend for the foreseeable future.

South Australian fruit quality was very mixed, with literally the very best and worst available. Supermarkets struggled badly with very poor quality. We make similar comments each year but little seems to change, so

no doubt growers will continue to seek out better ways to maximise their returns.

The WA Cherry Growers Association really needs a big lift, but it is difficult to see growers giving much more of their time when they see themselves being swamped. I guess there will be a process of natural attrition, and each will find their own solution.

The Manjimup festival continues to grow and looks to have a solid future with a local focus. We look forward to developments over the forthcoming months, and thank CGA for their unwavering support.

**Gary Fergusson**

# STATE REPORTS - 2011/12 Season Summaries

From 43rd CGA AGM 4th August 2012



The South Australian cherry season was a bit of a mixed bag this past year depending on whether you were producing in the early, mid or late part of the state. Prices were barely above production costs at some times during

the 100 day harvest. The earlier lower foothill areas of the Adelaide Hills appear to be losing the premiums they once received for their early fruit. This year prices started at a lower level and did not improve all that much until late in the season when production in other states slowed.

Although there was some level of rain damage we did not have anywhere near the level of damage as in the previous year, there was however a higher degree of brown rot again this year.

The coordinated approach nationally in regards to controlling bad weather stories worked well with very little negative press featuring in local news. SA

promotional activities this year concentrated on distributing the national and SA material from the Pooraka markets to wholesalers and retailers.

SA production will be increasing over the next few years with new plantings reaching maturity, this will provide challenges. A small amount of fruit was exported to non phyto markets this year, this is also expected to increase in future years.

It is absolutely a must for mainland states to gain access to export markets with suitable workable protocols.

I would like to thank Sally, Lucy and Kelsie for their help in running our successful conference in Adelaide last year.

Thanks also to the SA state executive for their support over the past few years that I have been SA President and to Simon, Nick, Andrew Smith and the rest of the CGA Board .

**Grant Wotton**  
**President CGSA**



Once again the NSW industry lost its crop to rain. It has been estimated that 85% of the states cherries were damaged. Total losses for the Young district have never been recorded in 140 years of cherry growing and to have that happen two years in a row is definitely a 1 in 100 year event. No cherry growing region was able to qualify for any assistance due to the rain.

Market access still remains the main issue for the growers of NSW. The suspension of Thailand which is one of the main markets for NSW cherries has many growers worried that this will be another market lost. The growers are after a commercial and workable protocol for airfreight and methyl bromide seems to be the preferred option if our fruit is to be treated. China seems to be slow in its progress but growers would like to know more of what is happening especially as there is a lot of interest for mainland cherries.

The NSW DPI did some initial trial work to prove that cherries are a non-preferred host and while results have been mixed there is enough evidence to continue the work. It will take a number of years to gather enough data but it can be done. But while Q-fly does not prefer cherries, growers must not be

complacent with their controls and must do everything in their powers to keep the numbers down. If we can achieve this we may be able to get a much better protocol.

Once again the NSW association attended Asia Fruit Logistica. There remains a lot of interest in mainland cherries especially from China, Taiwan and Thailand but unfortunately we didn't have the fruit in the last two seasons to support our efforts.

Our association has just appointed a part time BDO who will be helping our association with a lot of our secretarial work. They will be responsible in sending out of newsletters, updating our website and helping with the task of organising our conference next year. Next year's conference will be held in Canberra the first week of August. The two venues we have received quotes from are the Mercure and the Lakeside. Both have excellent facilities to accommodate everyone. The conference dinner could be held in the Australian War memorial with a light and sound show underneath the bombers. We will keep you all posted.

I hope everyone has a good season this coming season and at next year's conference there will plenty of good news.

**Scott Coupland**

# STATE REPORTS - 2011/12 Season Summaries

## From 43rd CGA AGM 4th August 2012

Last season once again was a challenging season with overall light crops across the state and some intensive rain periods which damaged some crops. The harvest was about a week earlier than the previous season which was fortunate given the early Chinese New Year. Unfortunately the affect of an early New Year created some disparity within the normal seasonal purchase patterns both domestically and overseas which did cause some concern with growers. A large export tonnage from Chile also had impacts on the overseas Asian markets and has certainly increased the pressure on the competitiveness of these markets for Tasmanian growers.

The loss of the Thailand market was unfortunate for the Tasmanian industry as growth within this market had increased. Increased tonnage was recorded in some markets but due to the lower crop tonnage the % of exports was still down and compared to the rain affected 2010-2011 season. Fruit Growers Tasmania attended two trade shows last year, Asia Fruit Logistica and China World Fruit & Vegetable Fair.

Last season Fruit Growers Tasmania took a proactive step in looking at long term market access and undertook some irradiation research trials with Steritech. With chemicals options becoming reduced and an overall global trend away from chemical usage and methyl bromide, FGT believes that the option of irradiation is one of the best alternatives. The trials were pleasing and we have been continuing our work with Steritech to get approval for irradiation of cherries within Australia. With new technology available the use of irradiation is an excellent alternative as a market access treatment option.

After years of negotiation DAFF have released with new fee model for export inspections and registrations. Whilst an interim financial package will assist industry in the short term the longer term viability for small to medium cherry exporters is uncertain. Unless Authorised Officers are accepted with our major protocol trading partners then it is likely we will see a reduction in exports to these countries.

The challenges for this season are still numerous: the continuation of the comparatively high Australian dollar, higher casual wages (and other work place issues in relation to tax rates and superannuation) and in-



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creasing competitiveness from our other southern hemisphere counterparts.

2011-2012 also saw the release of the 4th Tasmanian Fruits Farm Gate Guide which has had broad appeal to tourists and locals alike and 30,000 copies were distributed through various tourism outlets across the state.

The 2012 May Conference, held in Launceston, was well attended with over 220 delegates attending the 4 day event. The key note speaker, Dr Marlene Ayala from Chile, was very well received and certainly injected some direction, resilience and enthusiasm into the Tasmanian industry.

Fruit Growers Tasmania has been very busy over the winter period with many training courses and seminars. A 10 week basic plant physiology organised in conjunction with the University of Tasmania has been very popular and well attended by growers. The Compliance seminars held in the north and south of the state were also timely with plenty of new legislation and changes for the business owner. Fruit Growers Tasmania has also held a seminar with the health and nutrition industry to try and increase collaboration between producers and consumers and promote the health messages of fresh fruit.

Fruit Growers Tasmania, along with Tasmanian growers and exporters will once again be attending Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong this September and will be looking at promoting Tasmanian cherries into the greater Asian region. Given the challenges moving forward we need to ensure that cherry growers are given the tools and information to ensure that they can grow quality fruit with wide consumer appeal and acceptance.

**Lucy Gregg**

Business Development Manager  
Fruit Growers Tasmania



**Campania**



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The package, known to the Coal Vally Orchard, is offered for the first time due to the well-deserved retirement of its current owners. They developed it in 1998 from rundown pastures into the financially rewarding orchard enterprise that it is today.

The property is 444 acres (179 hectares) in total. The orchard - cherries, apples and apricots – consists of around 45 hectares; the balance is arable and volcanic grazing country.

**Sally Murfet 0409 196 861**  
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**\$3,500,000**