

# Australian CHERRIES

Autumn 2014 - No 15



#### INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE:

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- Horticulture Australia
- Was 2013 a low winter chill year?
- R&D Article from TIA
- VCA Conference Report
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Cover: Pictures from the Victorian Cherry Association Conference held in March 2013.

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State Reports



Horticulture Australia

This newsletter has been funded by HAL using the cherry levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

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Contact CGA office  
for advertising & any other matters  
relating to

*Australian*  
**C H E R R I E S**



# CGA 2013-14 Associate Members

We are very pleased to acknowledge the support from the following organisations who have now taken up Associate membership with CGA for 2013/14

**BBC Technologies**  
**Campbell Chemicals**  
**Favco**  
**Glamapak**  
**Graham's Factree**  
**Martin Walker Marketing Pty Ltd**  
**Melpat International**  
**NetPro**  
**OakSun Consulting**  
**Specialty Packaging Aust Pty Ltd**  
**Sustainable Liquid Technology (SLTEC)**  
**Sumitomo Chemical Australia**  
**Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture**  
**Wobelea**  
**YV Packaging Pty Ltd**

Please visit the new CGA Website [www.cherrygrowers.org.au](http://www.cherrygrowers.org.au) for links to our Associate Members websites and for more information on becoming an Associate Member of CGA.



**Notice to all readers and ad-  
vertisers that**  
*Australian*  
**C H E R R I E S**  
**has changed from 6 editions**  
**per year to 4.**

This is the first quarterly edition, with the remaining editions for 2014 to be distributed in June, September and December.



Australian  
**Farmer of the year**  
*Awards*  
**NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN**

Melbourne  
Wednesday 10th September 2014

KONDININ GROUP  
ABC Rural

**The Australian Farmer of the Year Awards celebrate the highly professional, innovative and sustainable approach of our farmers and farming families, showcasing their passion and raising the profile of the important role they play in Australian agriculture.**

**NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!**

In its fifth year, the *Australian Farmer of the Year Awards* has quickly occupied its place as one of the showpiece attractions on the national events calendar.

With 11 award categories, the winner of each category automatically qualifies for the prestigious *Australian Farmer of the Year* award.

Hosted by Kondinin Group and ABC Rural this year's dinner and award ceremony will be held in Melbourne on Wednesday September 10, 2014.

Hello, to all readers.

The Cherry season has come and gone with some very mixed results being reported over many of the growing areas.

Over all, cherry volumes were down across the board, which created a strong demand for fruit that was put on the market for domestic and export supply.

### 2013/14 Season Crop Overview is as follows:

- NSW – Had one of their best seasons for a number of years. Some early varieties were light. Weather was not an issue. Estimate of last year's crop % difficult, but likely around 70%. Prices were greatly improved on last year's disaster.
- VIC – 60-70% of last year's crop. Yarra Valley had a light crop and also rain. Northern regions had some rain but no serious damage done. Good quality fruit and prices. Export demand was strong.
- TAS – North of state 60-65% compared to last year, with maturity all over the place. There were various weather events – frost, wind, heat, rain. In the south it's estimated there was 60-70% of last year's crop. A weekend of rain cost an estimated 20% of the crop, which was then followed by days of 30+ degree weather. Overall though, good market prices should make up for lower fruit volumes.
- SA – Had a terrible season overall. Some growers had no fruit at all. It was estimated that there was only 10-20% of a full crop. This has left many SA growers very despondent with cherries.
- WA – Growers had a good average crop with

no major issues to report.

Overall it would be safe to say that the 2013-14 national cherry crop was down between 30 to 40%.

On looking around at trees postharvest over many states, the bud development is showing all signs of a larger crop to come this season.

Over the past weeks we have seen many CGA meetings take place, including the CGA Board, an Export Workshop, the cherry IAC, plus the R&D and Marketing & Promotions subcommittees. These groups are vital for the industry and set the direction now and into the future. Thanks to all those people involved at all levels.

The Export Workshop was well attended and a strong mandate and vision was put forward. This was to formulate a Biosecurity Management Protocol (BMP), which would enable all growing areas the ability to export into phyto markets using a range of approaches. This BMP would use existing PFA's, Systems Approaches for areas of low pest prevalence and end line treatment options for areas that are in outbreak.

This would consist of a full range of options for all growers depending on their growing location and pest status to achieve the ultimate goal of:

***"Absence from pests and diseases of concern in order to qualify for market access."***

This system, if developed right would be used for a range of countries and pest and disease issues that we currently have sitting in the various protocols.

The BMP document would also be used in our dealings with Government for trade negotiations, clearly stating the industry's position on many operational issues for export.

It was pleasing to see a strong unified position

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reached on the future direction of Market Access from all corners of the industry.

The CGA Board met and discussed a range of topics and also endorsed the option to move forward in developing the BMP, ASAP.

The Board also gave strong consideration to some of the early feedback from the strategic plan and levy review. One of these topics was to vary the current levy collection split between marketing and R&D. This paper will be sent out to the state bodies for comment before any further action would be taken on this matter.

It's very important that the state bodies consult with their members for feedback to CGA on these

types of matters.

With the recent Victorian & upcoming Tasmanian Growers Conferences, I must urge all growers in those regions to attend and support their state bodies for these initiatives.

*Andrew Smith*

**President - Cherry Growers Australia**



**Did you have an uneven flowering last season on your cherries? The solution:**

**Armobreak & Armogan**

**Gives earlier bud break & even flowering**

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*Welcome to the fifteenth edition of "Australian Cherries" Newsletter.*

Since the last newsletter, the CGA Board has indicated that to cut costs, the newsletter will now be produced quarterly in March, June, September and December.

The CGA office will continue to update the website and send other information around the CGA database as we have done in the last couple of years.

The season has come and gone and the overall view is that about a 10,000 tonne crop will be levied, which is down from the 14,000 tonnes last year.

This will not however deter the work being done on behalf of the industry.

**Key Activities since the last newsletter include:**

The CGA office has been very busy on a number of fronts and can I say how disappointed myself, the CGA Board and the Export Working Group are that 2 key areas of market access are still in limbo at the end of the season.

We need issues resolved by August/September of each year, not this continual delaying approach taken by countries we are trying to access. It is frustrating for us as I am sure it is with growers and exporters.

To assist in this process there was a Cherry Export Workshop in Melbourne on 22 February 2014, where agreement was made to develop an Australian **Cherry Industry Biosecurity Management Protocol (BMP)**.

This BMP will take a holistic approach to market access, market refinement and market maintenance, so when the Australian Government are in negotiation meetings at all levels with current or prospective importing countries, their teams are fully aware of what

our industry is requiring and at the same time show the importing country that if they import fruit from one region or another, what will be the steps and safeguards in place, so they can be sure that cherry fruit will have:

***"Absence from pest and disease."***

This approach received the endorsement of all exporters of cherry fruit and the Australian Cherry industry and is a new way of looking at what we need to do to achieve our objectives of:

- Increasing exports up to 40 - 50% of the annual crop by 2017-2020;
- Increased airfreight access as a priority to all importing markets;
- Ensuring there are commercially viable protocols in place; and
- Providing a tool that can be used by all stakeholders for the next 10 years in market negotiations and beyond.

**China**

CGA is still pushing hard for a separate review of the cherry protocol for improved mainland access.

From the meeting in Beijing in August 2013, there was to be another meeting at the end of October to look at the issues of cold treatment at 3 degrees for 14 days across a number of industries and if this couldn't be agreed to then China were looking to consider a trial shipment of cherries at this level. However, this never eventuated.

This meeting was delayed to the end of November and then delayed again to the middle of December and again delayed to March 2014 due to discussions with AQSIQ and DOA.

A final China workplan has been uploaded to MICoR by DOA and as part of the BMP, there will be services to provide help to exporters wanting to ship to China in the 2014/15 season.

# Simon Boughey - Chief Executive Officer

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## Thailand

The Thailand Protocol was gazetted by the Government of Thailand on 16 January 2014, however we need to make changes so it can be commercial for growers outside PFA's. We are not sure what the timeframes will be to send any fruit to Thailand in the 2014/15 season.

The key aspects are the need for an airfreight protocol with MB and Irradiation options and also 3 degrees for 14 days for in transit or onshore cold treatment for areas outside the PFA's. We also need to put forward a systems approach.

A letter went from DOA in Canberra to DOA in Bangkok requesting those changes on 30 January 2014 but as yet there has been no response.

## CGA Website

The website [www.cherrygrowers.org.au](http://www.cherrygrowers.org.au) is being regularly updated with news, other key documents and stories.

Please give us any feedback and suggestions for the site and for the new Facebook site <http://www.facebook.com/cherrygrowers> and also please have a look at the new marketing Facebook site <http://www.facebook.com/AussieCherries>

## Research and Development

The call for projects for 2014/15 closed in early November, with the key priority being **Market Access**. The projects submitted were assessed by the Cherry R&D subcommittee and Cherry IAC in February 2014. The recommendations now go to Horticulture Australia for final assessment.

## Marketing and Promotion

A full review of the 2014/15 season will occur in May 2014 with the Cherry Marketing and Promotion subcommittee to evaluate the campaign and promotional activities. They will also have the 3 year results from the industry's consumer research project run by Sprout Research.

## CGA Board

**The Board had a meeting in Melbourne on 24 February 2014 where a couple of crucial decisions were made that will benefit the industry in years to come.**

At this meeting the CGA Board discussed a review of the levy as a result of the work done recently as part of updating the Australian Cherry Industry Strategic Plan 2012-17. A final report on this review will be available soon.

Overall, there has been across the industry support to not raise the levy from the current 7cents/kilogram. However with the demands on the industry there is an opportunity to get greater leverage from the current levy, by increasing the Research & Development portion, which is then matched by the Federal government. The additional funds can then go into the key areas of market access, production and communications.

There were also views expressed that the marketing levy to lift domestic consumption was struggling due to the relatively small amount of funding available in the context of what it costs to run an effective national marketing campaign. It was felt that some of this funding could be better spent if used for research and development, which would then get dollar for dollar matching funding from the government.

Marketing work would still be done through discussions with the key retailers and other opportunities that may arise through sponsorship and or other grants.

It was suggested that the Marketing Levy be lowered from \$0.03/kg to \$0.01/kg and the majority of marketing funds go back to the 6 states for local marketing promotions. Based on a 12,500 tonne levied crop, each State would receive \$20,000 per annum for running promotional events, up from the current \$5,000 received annually over the last 4-5 years.

**Currently the \$0.07/kg levy is split up as: \$0.0397/kg for Research and Development, \$0.0003/kg for Biosecurity and \$0.03/kg for Marketing and Promotion.**

# Simon Boughey - Chief Executive Officer

The CGA Board has suggested that the new levels be:

- **\$0.0597/kg for Research & Development (incorporating Market Access);**
- **\$0.0003/kg for Biosecurity; and**
- **\$0.01/kg for Marketing and Promotion**

CGA has sent this recommendation to all State Associations for consultation with members and feedback before proceeding any further.

Levies raised can be seen in the table below prior to any levy collection costs or HAL Corporate recovery costs being taken out.

As you may or may not know, any change to a levy even if shifting funds from one area to another while keeping the same levy in total requires a 12 step process, which is outlined in the Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Levy Principles and Guidelines.

This would mean a likely timeframe to implement the changes if approved, would take 12 months with full consultation on the proposed changes, voting and through the administrative process of the Federal government including sign off by the Federal Minister. Therefore it would be unlikely for this to be able to come into operation until the 2015/16 season.

CGA President Andrew Smith and the CGA Board have however requested me to investigate options to have it ready for the 2014/15 season with the Levy Revenue Service.

This is a major step forward by the Australian Cherry industry to get more leverage for the levy funds it raises, whilst still providing funding to the State bodies to do local promotions and marketing. As a first step we are seeking the support of the 5 State Associations before we proceed with any process for change.

I look forward to seeing growers at the Victorian and Tasmanian conferences over the next few months and visiting your region when I can.

Also please note the 45th AGM for Cherry Growers Australia will be held in the first two weeks of August in conjunction with the annual levy payers meeting. More details to come later.

*Simon Boughey*

**CEO - Cherry Growers Australia**

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<u>Levy</u>	<u>10,000 tonnes</u>	<u>12,500 tonnes</u>	<u>15,000 tonnes</u>
<b>Current</b>	Levy raised	Levy raised	Levy raised
Research and Development and Biosecurity 4cents/kg	\$400,000 matched \$400,000 Total \$800,000	\$500,000 matched \$500,000 Total \$1,000,000	\$600,000 matched \$600,000 Total \$1,200,000
Marketing and Promotion 3cents/kg	\$300,000 not matched	\$375,000 not matched	\$450,000 not matched
<b>Proposed</b>			
Research and Development (Market Access) and Biosecurity 6cents/kg	\$600,000 matched \$600,000 Total \$ 1,200,000	\$750,000 matched \$750,000 Total \$1,500,000	\$900,000 matched \$900,000 Total \$ 1,800,000
Marketing and Promotion 1cent/kg	\$100,000 not matched	\$125,000 not matched	\$150,000 not matched

# Fresher4Longer natural food rinse™ for Long Life Cherries

**Sell more fruit over a longer season, charge a premium for branded product and improve your bottom line.**

## **Naturally Long Life Cherries**

Imagine extending your sales season and being able to promote your cherries as '**Naturally Long Life**'. As the season begins to slow, your cherries will still be fresh and delicious against the competition's poor quality berries or expensive imported fruit. You might even brand your cherries as '**Food Safety Enhanced - Naturally**' because our product surface sanitizes against both, food spoilage organisms AND food pathogens.

## **Expand the Season of your Harvest**

Fresher4Longer natural food rinse™ (Herbal-Active® is the industrial name for the same product) addresses the fast decay of fresh produce (and other foods). Cherries are particularly suited to shelf life extension and a simple dip and drain has been shown to increase the shelf life of store-bought cherries for up to 2 months and the cherries maintain their gloss and look just-picked fresh.

## **Trounces the Competition**

Other fruit and vegetable washes are generally just soapy water which dull the fruits; others contain undesirable chemical preservatives such as benzoates and sorbates. Most are classed as Dangerous Goods or have a high cost of transport. Some are also corrosive to many metals and often pose a risk to workers if they are mixed with chlorinated water. Most chemical rinses also do little in comparison to Fresher4Longer and might drop the microbial load by 100 organisms per gram (2-log) (ordinary water will do that) while Fresher4Longer has been shown to reduce loads up to 10 million organisms per gram (7-log).

## **And it Saves You Money**

The fungicides commonly used on cherries are costly and the concentrates are toxic to workers. They also require additional water for rinsing. Another downside is that they do little to significantly extend the shelf life of cherries in store. The good news is that they can be fully replaced with fruit going from an initial cooling post harvest into a single tank of Fresher4Longer at 1% concentration. No rinsing is needed following this dip and drain step and manageable quantities of fruit can be sequentially dipped in the same solution up to 40 times the weight of solution. That is, 100kg of 1% Fresher4Longer can be used to sanitize 4,000kg of cherries.

Fresher4Longer natural food rinse™ is made from extracts of culinary herbs and spices bound onto Acacia gum as a dispersant. It is what is known in the industry as USFDA GRAS or Generally Regarded As Safe. In fact, it is classed as a natural food flavouring and is not a preservative or regulated chemical. It won the Australian Food Industry Innovation Award for 2013 for its range of applications, flexibility and environmental benefits as well as addressing many food security issues.

What Fresher4Longer does for cherries also applies to many other stone fruits, berries, melons, grapes, nuts and vegetables.

For more information, please email [support@cherikoff.net](mailto:support@cherikoff.net) or call 0418 405 183



# A Chilling Year: Was 2013 a low winter chill year?

Rebecca Darbyshire



Dormant cherry trees in Tasmania (source: P.Measham, TIA)

In spring 2013 apple and pear growers in the Applethorpe (QLD) region noted that flowering appeared to be light. Meanwhile, further south in Victoria cherry growers experienced a low yield season for 2013/14 across many different growing regions. Both of these groups queried if low winter chill accrual in 2013 could explain these unusual and undesirable conditions. Inadequate exposure to winter chill has been associated with light flowering and low yields (Oukabli et al., 2003; Voller, 1986) so questioning whether winter chill was low and potentially driving these observations is fitting.

To take a closer look at winter chill for 2013, data collected for an Australian Government funded project (“Crossing the threshold: Adaptation tipping points for Australian fruit trees”) and a HAL sponsored project (“Understanding apple and pear production systems in a changing climate”) were utilised.

## Approach and Analysis

The Dynamic chill model (Erez et al., 1990), which converts temperature conditions into chill portions, was used to assess winter chill. This model is the current frontrunner of available chill models and incorporates many of the observed relationships between temperature and dormancy breaking. These include optimum chilling temperatures, negative effects of high temperatures, chill enhancement from moderate temperatures and provisions to account for the sequence of temperature over time. For further information, Luedeling (2012) conducted a review of chill models and recommended the Dynamic model for use in chill assessments.

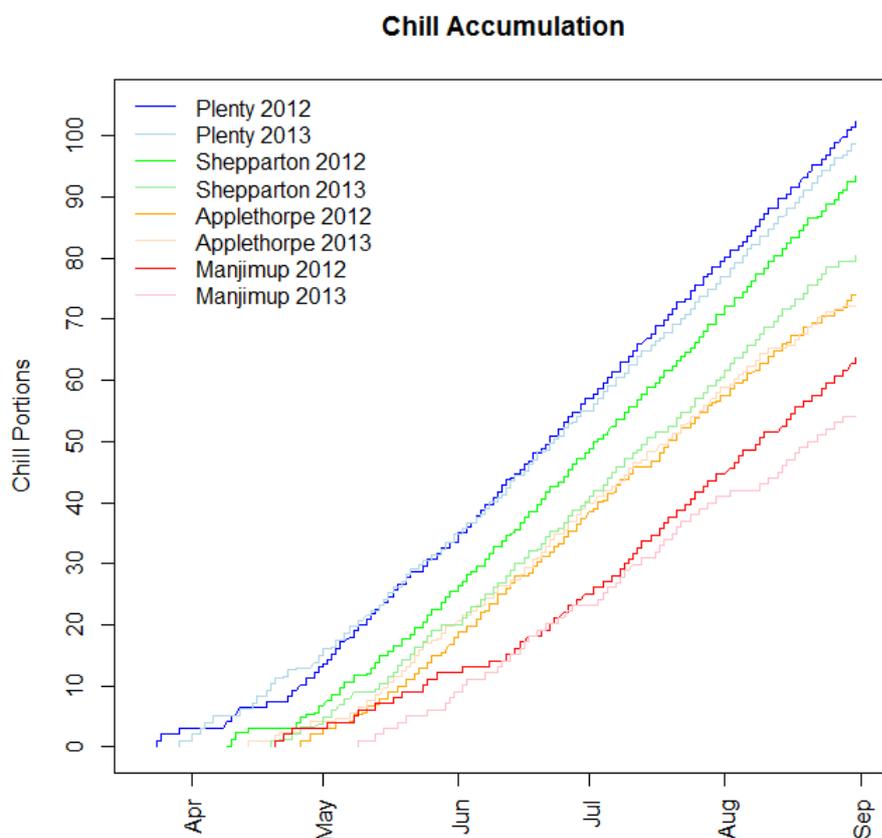
To consider whether winter chill conditions in 2013 were unusual, comparisons between total accumulated chill for 2012, a ‘normal’ year, and 2013, an ‘abnormal’ year were conducted at four

locations including Applethorpe (QLD) and Shepparton (VIC) (Table 1). To further assist in interpretation, comparisons with previously determined long-term averages (Darbyshire et al., 2011) were also made. For a more detailed comparison between 2012 and 2013, Figure 1 illustrates chill accumulation over the chill period.

**Table 1** Total accumulated chill portions and the start day of year of the chill period for 2012 and 2013. Chill was accumulated up until 31<sup>st</sup> August at all sites.

Site	State	Season	Chill Start Date	Chill Portions	Long-term average*
Plenty	TAS	2012	24-Mar	102	88 (Huonville)
		2013	29-Mar	99	
Shepparton	VIC	2012	09-Apr	93	79 (Tatura)
		2013	19-Apr	80	
Applethorpe	QLD	2012	26-Apr	74	72 (Stanthorpe)
		2013	14-Apr	72	
Manjimup	WA	2012	20-Apr	64	67
		2013	9-May	54	

\* 1911-2009 (Darbyshire et al., 2011)



**Figure 1** Chill accumulation for 2012 and 2013 at Plenty (TAS), Shepparton (VIC), Applethorpe (QLD) and Manjimup (WA).

## Discussion

The primary aim of this investigation was to assess if 2013 was a low chill year. This is not supported by the data at Plenty (TAS) or Applethorpe (QLD). Both locations accumulated similar chill portions in 2012 and 2013 and in 2013 chill accrual was close to or above the long-term averages at locations near these sites (Table 1).

At Shepparton (VIC) 2013 accumulated approximately 14% less chill than 2012 and chill accrual in 2012 tracked consistently higher than in 2013 over the whole chill period (Figure 1). However, total accumulated chill in 2013 was close to the long-term average at nearby Tatura. Thus the results are indicative of 2012 being a high chill year rather than 2013 being a low chill year.

Manjimup (WA) was the only site with data that supports that 2013 may have been a low chill year. Accumulated chill was approximately 20% down on the long-term average. 2012 was also lower than the long-term average but only marginally (<5%). If winter chill accrual in 2013 dropped below varietal thresholds it is likely that flowering timing, strength and length would have differed between the 2012/13 and 2013/14 seasons. If growers observed such a difference in Manjimup this would add support to 2013 being a low chill year.

In summary, there is little evidence in the temperature data to support that 2013 was a low chill year, except at Manjimup. The observations of light pome fruit flowering in the Applethorpe region and low cherry yields in Victoria are unlikely to be the result of insufficient chill accrual and additional investigations are required to better understand the unusual conditions that were present in the 2013/14 season.

This investigation has provided some information about winter chill accrual in recent years, however much is still unknown about the process. Better comprehension of the chill mechanism and modelling of this mechanism is fast becoming critical with warmer winters likely, due to future global warming. If winter chill is reduced below varietal thresholds, productivity will likely reduce if adaptive actions are not taken. Many important research questions remain to better prepare for future chill conditions. For instance, when does chill accumulation begin? Does this differ with species/ variety? How can we measure this in the field? Can current chill models account for this? What is the chilling requirement of important species (e.g. Pink Lady apple)? Is there a rootstock influence on chill accumulation? Do varietal chill requirements differ with location? If so, why? How can we exploit species characteristics and/or site conditions to adapt to future lower chill conditions? Two active projects in this space (see below) hope to shine some light on these questions.

*“Crossing the threshold: Adaptation tipping points for Australian fruit trees” contact Dr Rebecca Darbyshire ([Rebecca.Darbyshire@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:Rebecca.Darbyshire@unimelb.edu.au))*

*“Understanding apple and pear production systems in a changing climate” contact Dr Heidi Parkes ([Heidi.Parkes@daff.qld.gov.au](mailto:Heidi.Parkes@daff.qld.gov.au))*

## References

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## **Industry Advisory Process – the latest**

The cherry industry advisory committee and associated R&D and marketing sub-committee's have been extremely active over the past 6 months. In addition to numerous teleconferences, the IAC met face-to-face to review the program and set strategic priorities on 7 August 2013. The IAC also met on 24 February 2014 to agree on budget and deliberate on the annual investment plan for 2014/15, with both the Cherry R&D and Marketing sub-committees meeting on 12 and 19 February respectively, providing advice in addition to the IAC having input into the program.

Whilst there is already a significant level of funding in the 'market access' space, there was strong and united support towards additional market access focused priorities for new projects in 2014/15, with most other priority areas already well covered through existing investments. Subsequently, the following note was made on the HAL website relating to the call for cherry R&D levy projects; 'funding is available for projects that directly address the industry's key research priorities namely *Strategy 1.1.3 Develop appropriate pest and disease management protocols to support market access*'.

To this end, an allocation of \$50,000 was immediately made for strategic market access of which just under \$30,000 has been invested since August 2013 in the following 3 projects;

- Clothianidin Residue Survey (\$9,000)
- China workshop (\$4,441)
- NSW DPI fruit fly mapping project (\$15,852)

Outside these new projects, there has been little variance from the original plan for the 2013/14 year on research (R&D) and marketing (M&P) investment.

### **R&D Program**

Levy income for 2013-14 to date is conservatively anticipated to be \$400,000 (based on a 10,000 tonne crop) by June 2014 which is roughly in line with the revised forecast from Oct/Nov 2013.

The forecast R&D program expenditure for 2013-14 is \$746,295. This expenditure is approximately \$27,000 below the original budget set in February 2013. As a consequence of the lower than expected crop for the year, the forecast closing financial position leaves the program very tight. Based on a projected crop of 14,000 tonnes (for 2014/15), the R&D levy income available for matching for new project investments will be just under \$100,000.

### **Marketing Program**

As per the R&D levy, marketing levy income for 2013-14 to date is conservatively anticipated to be \$300,000 by June 2014 which again is roughly in line with the revised forecast from Oct/Nov 2013.

The forecast marketing program expenditure for 2013-14

is \$274,035. This expenditure is slightly below the original budget set in February 2013. The forecast closing balance at June 2014 is \$120,459, significantly lower than originally forecast due to the lower than expected levy income. The forecast closing balance is however considerably healthier and subsequently more sustainable than the R&D program.

Based on a projected crop of 14,000 tonnes, the marketing levy income available for new project investments will be upwards of \$300,000 in 2014-15. This is based on a cash-flow positive equation.

### **2014/15 Investments**

The IAC considered multiple R&D proposals submitted to HAL during late 2013 at its February 24 meeting. A majority of these proposals had some level of focus on market access and consequently advice was sought from both the R&D sub-committee as well as the Cherry Export Working Group. With only a small amount of funding available for new investments in 2014/15 the deliberations were quite problematic. An allocation towards key gap areas relating to market access has been recommended from the IAC with further advice being sought prior to committing those funds to a specific set of project(s). Further meetings of both the R&D sub-committee and IAC will be held in late May / early June towards this end.

Due to the season not being completed by the time the marketing sub-committee and IAC met in February, a full report of the outcomes of the 2013/14 cherry marketing and promotion program was not available. The committee's are to meet in May to discuss the 2013/14 program outcomes as well as deliberate on the direction of future marketing and promotion investment.

### **Other items**

There are two new members of the Cherry IAC one of which was nominated by CGA, namely Stephen Riseborough. Stephen, who is well known amongst industry, attended his first meeting in February and will no doubt provide considerable value to the ongoing deliberations on behalf of industry more broadly. A second new member, Tessa Jaksewicz, was made from HAL in the form of an Independent Officer with no voting rights. Tessa comes with broad commercial board experience.

The IAC was also made aware of consideration that is being given by industry to make changes to the current statutory levy. As always, the IAC (and hence HAL) won't directly engage in such discussions as this is ultimately an industry issue to consider.

As always, should you require any additional information on the current or future industry program, please contact Stuart Burgess, Cherry Industry Services Manager on 0417 536 300 or email [Stuart.Burgess@horticulture.com.au](mailto:Stuart.Burgess@horticulture.com.au)

# 7<sup>th</sup> cherry international SIMPOSIUM

The final sessions of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Cherry Symposium in Spain last year focussed on disease and post-harvest management. Post-harvest technology and advancements were well represented with techniques to help reduce fruit decay and retain the health benefits of cherries during storage explored.

Dr. Berrie, from East Malling Research in the UK presented 4 years of work identifying the rots found in numerous orchards. This comprehensive study included orchards that had different management systems and experienced different climates. Interestingly, after 4 weeks storage at 0-2°C no *Monolinia fructicola* was found in fruit, although *Monilinia laxa* generally caused the highest levels of rot found (Figure 1). The study also emphasised the need to remove mummified fruit from trees. This was well supported by investigation; no sporulation occurred from mummified fruit that had fallen on ground and no spores were released from mummified fruit within the tree during winter. However, up to 62% of mummified fruit held within the tree released spores in Spring. Availability of effective fungicides poses a concern to production and alternative fungicide regimes are being investigated.

Fungal rot	Cherry cultivar / Year sampled			
	Stella		Colney	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
<i>Monilinia laxa</i>	36.4	50.1	36.5	40.1
<i>Monilinia fructigena</i>	4.2	22.5	2.3	6.7
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i>	41.7	4.1	28.9	12.3
<i>Mucor/Rhizopus</i> spp.	8.1	1.9	4.4	1.7
<i>Penicillium</i> spp.	0.8	5.7	5.0	16.4
<i>Cladosporium</i> spp.	0	0.2	0	2.0
<i>Colletotrichum</i> spp.	1.4	4.2	0	0
Other rot	0.6	0	0.4	0
<b>Total loss</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>65.6</b>
Number of orchards sampled	9	8	8	10

Figure 1. Losses due to rots after 4 weeks in cold store at 0-2°C and 7 days at ambient temperature. (Berrie, UK)

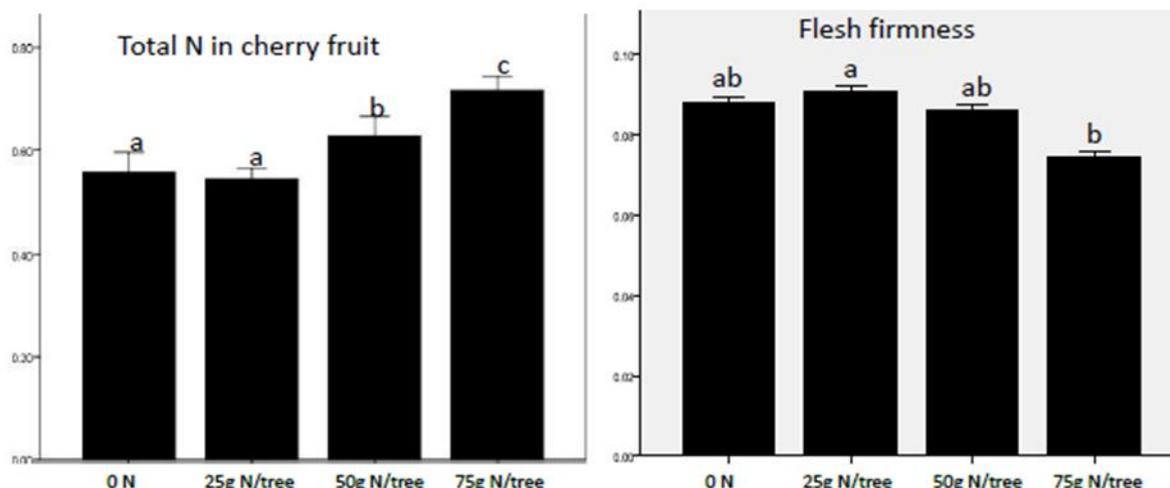


Figure 2. Nitrogen content in fruit, and fruit firmness, under different levels of applied Nitrogen

Dr. Dugald Close TIA presented work undertaken by Dr. Nigel Swarts (TIA) showing that during the fruit expansion stage there is clear evidence of immediate N uptake and movement into fruit (Figure 2). Higher fruit nitrogen levels impacted on fruit firmness and suggest a considered approach to Nitrogen fertilisation during later growth stages for optimum storage potential. Dr. Penny Measham, also from TIA, presented a poster highlighting the immediate impacts on fruit quality of the current season's extension growth (included in the August 2013 edition of Australian Cherries). Dr. Daniel Valero explained that maximum fruit quality was associated with ripening stage at harvest. He presented work using natural compounds to maintain quality and reduce decay after fruit is harvested. Essential oils (Figure 3), oxalic and salicylic acid, and natural edible coatings such as *Aloe vera* gel (under Spanish patent) all showed potential retaining quality. Jesús García-Parra praised the use of high pressure rather than high temperature during fruit processing, as it better retained anthocyanin content and colour (Figure 4).

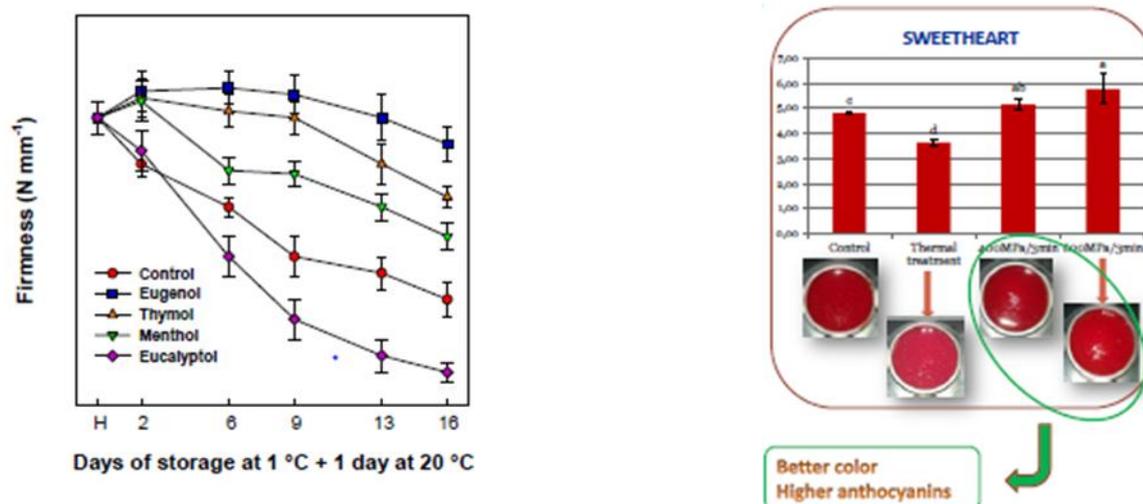


Figure 3. Impact of essential oils on post-harvest fruit firmness (Valero, Spain)

Fruit quality in terms of maintaining health attributes during storage was highly discussed. Dr. David Gonzales-Gomez highlighted the importance of natural compounds within cherries, and the need to preserve and quantify them for health benefits. He focussed on serotonin and melatonin and explained that serotonin plays an important role in mood behaviour and melatonin acts in the regulation of the sleep-wake cycle. He is undertaking work quantifying the level of these health-promoting compounds by variety, by growth stage, and how they might change during fruit storage. Importantly, he presented a study that showed that the regular intake of cherries improved both the amount of sleep, and sleep efficiency.

These post-harvest technologies were of particular interest to attending growers given the industry-identified need to increase export production. The current industry objective for R&D funding is now to “Continuously improve the efficiency of cherry production and packhouse systems”. Identifying the need to monitor the health attributes of cherries also prompted discussion in relation to Australian production. Ensuring the health attributes of cherry fruit were maintained at a measurable level would be a marketing advantage. An upcoming post-harvest conference (ISHS V International Postharvest Conference in Cyprus, June 2014) may have additional information relevant to this topic.

After the conclusion of the symposium an exploration of retail markets was made in Madrid. Premium cherries were displayed in tourist destinations such as the Mercado de San Miguel (Figure 5). These were retailing for 19€ per kilo. Domestic consumption did not seem to be very popular. No cherries were found in 9 out of 10 supermarkets visited. Supermarket sales were based on punnet style packaging in 500g containers (Figure 6). Ten punnets were bought and quality inspected. Table 1 shows the level of damage found in domestically available fruit.



Figures 5 and 6. Tourist and domestic market cherry displays.

**Table 1. The number of damaged fruit within supermarket punnets of cherries**

	number fruit	bird	cracked	bruised	indents	not ripe	acceptable
1	61	10	7	2	9	2	31
2	68	4	4	4	12	3	41
3	66	7	6	3	11	2	37
4	67	8	8	5	6	2	38
5	70	7	9	4	7	4	39
6	64	5	9	3	3	3	41
7	63	1	9	5	7	3	38
8	62	13	13	4	4	3	25
9	67	12	6	2	7	2	38
10	62	15	10	1	7	4	25

This study tour arose from a proposal that centred on building collaboration between research and Industry to build a strong, resilient, informed and progressive cherry Industry. Thanks to Cherry Growers Australia for encouragement and support from the beginning. Also, thanks to cherry growers across Australia who have shown so much interest in research.



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This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd using voluntary contributions and matched funds from the Australian Government.

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The annual Victorian Cherry Conference for 2014 was held on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 March in the picturesque Yarra Valley where seven Victorian Cherry Association members' orchards are located and right at the gateway to the beautiful winery region only 45 minutes from Melbourne CBD.

The conference was designed to learn from the past season and be ready to change and adapt to the future, embracing new concepts, technologies and methodologies to be implemented on farm.

Cherry growers from around Australia came together to hear international and local horticulture specialists address industry issues that affect production and profitability for individual businesses. Together they explored exciting opportunities for growing market access, addressed challenges faced by the industry - such as yield, packout, maximising labour output, pollination, chill, marketing, climate variability and consistent cropping - and planned ahead for a successful 2014-5 season.

The first day of the conference program featured formal presentations from industry specialists and the return of the popular Q & A style forum to review and discuss the past season. On the second day delegates enjoyed the chance to get out and about for two orchard tours and hands on demonstrations.

Alison Jones, Victorian Cherry Association President, said, "It is important for businesses (big and small) to get together where they can share concerns and solutions and feel connected as an industry. This empowers and challenges growers to be assessing methods and techniques to ensure they remain up to date and viable in an ever changing world."

Although the Conference included addresses by international speakers, the keynote speaker was local hero and industry veteran Mark Millis of Flavorite Hydroponic Tomatoes located in Warragul, Victoria. Flavorite can seriously lay claim to having created and benchmarked the truss tomato category in Australia. Mark's industry experience, expertise and insight into running a successful and innovative family farming business was warmly welcomed, with delegates keen to explore how Mark's story can be translated to cherries.

The speaker program, developed by the Victorian Cherry Association working committee, included a range of interesting and relevant topics. Delegates rated the conference and speaker program highly as valuable to their businesses.

Dr Mark Goodwin of The New Zealand Institute presented an engaging and informative video presentation on the topic of *Variations in yield and how to determine if they are related to pollination* for Plant & Food Research. Plant & Food Research welcome the opportunity to share some of their research and practical knowledge in the area of pollination and productivity as well as management of a serious pest in New Zealand – varroa mite. Although presented by remote access, the session was extremely well received, with Mark being available to address questions from the floor via Skype.

One publication, authored by Mark, that might be of specific interest to Australian cherry growers is a manual called "Pollination of Crops in Australia and New Zealand". The manual provides growers with a range of tools that can be used to assess the levels of pollination their crops receive. It also provides growers and beekeepers with methods that can be used to better manage, and optimise, pollination and discusses how to protect pollinators introduced to orchards. This publication is comprehensive and available to be downloaded from the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation website for free ([www.rirdc.gov.au](http://www.rirdc.gov.au) – look under pollination program).

Another presentation of interest was on the topic, *A cherry overview and market access to China*. Philip Webley, Managing Director of Sino Access and China Consultant for the Department of Environment and Primary Industries shared his passion about China and prospects for continued growth in the market, especially for Australian horticulture. Phil operates a China based consultancy with offices in Melbourne and Nanjing with a focus on promoting fresh produce exports from Australia to China. Phil has been working in China continuously since 1996, has visited the market some 35 times and has built extensive relationships across the food sector in the country.

The presentation *An evaluation and discussion of winter chill accrual in Victoria in 2013* by Rebecca Darbyshire, Chill Researcher at the University of Melbourne was also much appreciated.

Graham Fleming of Grahams Factree presented *Varieties - chill requirements*. Zaiger Genetics in California have been breeding cherries for more than 30 years. Much of their focus has been to reduce the chill requirements while maintaining commercial quality. A number of new varieties have now been released with many more being evaluated both in the USA and here in Australia.

Peter Cole and Brett Ryan of Sumitomo Chemical Australia presented the trial results from the 2013/14 season looking at extending the life of cherry flowers to increase pollination, leading to increased fruit set utilising ReTain®.

Industry expert Marcel Veens discussed *Root pruning vs the use of cultar*. Marcel also attended the orchard tours the following day and discussed a range of practical issues in field.

A presentation by Steve Chapman of Chappies Orchard *The future for small and medium sized growers* was very well received with delegates appreciating hearing grass roots reporting from fellow growers.

The *Season in Review* was explored and discussed during a Q & A style forum with a panel of industry specialists addressing questions put forward by moderator Victorian Cherry Association (VCA) member Tim Jones of Wandin Valley Farms and questions from the floor.

Panellists were Peter Chapman of Manthly P/L, Simon Rouget of Koala Country Orchards, Simon Boughy of Cherry Growers Australia, Adam Upton of Landmark, Steve Chapman of Chappies Orchard and Stephen Riseborough of Cherryhill Orchards.

Topics discussed included *Marketing, Export, Chill/Climate, Yield and Pollination* and included discussion on: what varieties performed well in the last season including the difference in the different regions and why; the HAL review and changes to the Levy; market access; the effect of an increased export market; and what farms are planning to do to improve their businesses for the next season.

On the following day, during the orchard tours hosted by Steve and Mark Chapman at Chappies Orchard in Wandin East and Andrew Corbett of OakSun Cherries in Silvan, growers got to have hands on demonstrations of: the a new Felco 820 Powerpack and convenient harness by Blaise Vinot of sponsor, Felco Distribution Pty Ltd; and the Martignani Electrostatic Spray Tank by Shane Kelly from sponsor, Burder Industries. They also got to hear Dr Riaan Lourens from Kelp Company outline the differences between different seaweeds and the importance of the seaweed Kelpak for the cherry industry.

The Victorian Cherry Association aimed to maximise the benefits sponsors received in return for the loyal and generous support, including growers speaking about their experiences of using Gold sponsors' products and services and encouraging sponsor and grower face to face interaction throughout the day.

The Victorian Cherry Association also wishes to take this opportunity to thank their gold and silver sponsors: gold sponsors included AustSafe Super, Felco, Gallard Services, and GlamaPak and Visy; and silver sponsors included BASF, Cherry Growers Australia, HAL, Hybrid-Ag, Landmark, Moreno Global Solutions, Ultimate Agri Products (Aust) and Wobelea.

Also appreciated were: AustSafe Super offering the chance to win a \$200 RM Williams Gift Voucher: Favco Qld kindly offering a door prize of \$250 to the winner's favourite charity; and YV Packaging providing two on-the-spot prizes of a \$100 Visa Gift Voucher and a Bottle of Yarra Valley wine. In summary, the Victorian Cherry Association would like to share words from long time supporters of the industry – David and Yvonne Pike of Neerim Hi-Plains Growers who are retiring, "Keep on keeping on. Our best wishes for continuing success!".

**CGA would like to thank the VCA and Vikki Leng for this report. Some photos from the Conference and field visits are featured on the front cover of this newsletter.**



## Australian Cherries 2013 Integrated Program Update 18.03.14

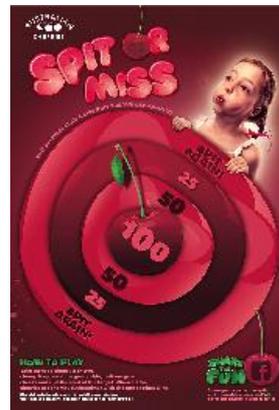
### Campaign

**Objective:** To generate, maintain and increase consumers' interest and purchases of Australian cherries for the duration of the season.

**Challenge:** Consumers viewed cherries as a special treat, reserved for Christmas.

**Insight & Opportunity:** Cherries have a strong playful side, therefore we have the opportunity to position cherries as more of an everyday fruit by celebrating their playfulness.

**Strategy:** In addition to standard Press Office activities, we developed a Spit or Miss game to evoke memories around childhood fun. The game was distributed nationally via green-grocer POS kits, promoted on the Aussie Cherries Facebook page and highlighted through a national launch activity. We also launched a Facebook Page to gather a social community of cherry lovers.



All traditional media results captured in this document are accurate as of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2014, social media results are accurate as of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014. A full campaign wrap report will be supplied at the end of the season.

### **Overall Campaign Results**

- 479 pieces of coverage
- 115,258,112 audience reach
- \$2,820,096 in Advertising Value
- \$8,460,288 in PR Value
- ROI of 77:1

### Launch Activity



A giant Spit or Miss game was created for Channel 10's national breakfast program, Wake Up, to highlight the start of the cherry season. Further online and print media outlets were then approached to run the story.

### Results:

- National broadcast and print coverage
- An audience reach of 1,706,000
- \$53,842 in Advertising Value
- \$161,526 in PR Value
- ROI of 7:1



### Facebook

The Aussie Cherries Facebook page has more than tripled its original KPI of 5,000 fans to date. The page is a content rich platform, offering thoughtful recipes, media clippings, interesting facts and figures about cherries as well as tips on how to pick and store the best produce.

Spit or Miss is also promoted on the page via a 15 week consumer promotion – fans are encouraged to share their love of cherries and game playing strategy in return for the chance of winning a 2kg box of cherries and limited edition Spit or Miss board game.

### Results (to date):

- 18,238 fans
- 2,010 competition entries
- 17,980,901 audience reach (number of people who have seen *any* content associated with the page to date)





**Press Office**

In the lead up to, and throughout the season, we have pitched to all national, metro and regional media outlets across newspapers, weekly magazines, TV, radio, online and blogs.

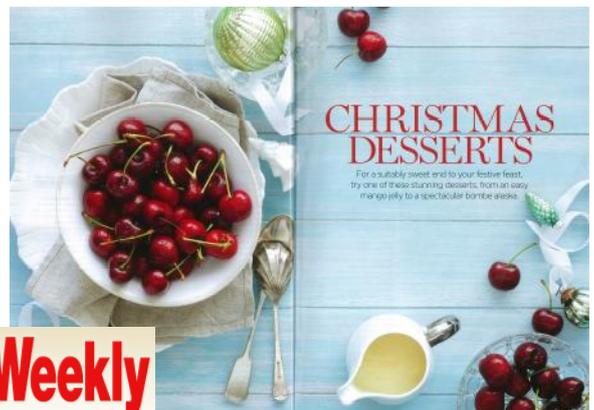
Targeted top tier media drops were also co-ordinated at the beginning of the season to ensure cherries were kept top of mind with key food editors. They received kits including fresh premium cherries, a copy of the Spit or Miss game, launch press release and a cherry grading tool (for food media only).

Feedback to date has been extremely positive with some of the most prominent food writers sending their personal thanks and following up with national coverage.

See below for a selection of coverage highlights.

**Results:**

- 468 pieces of coverage to date
- 113,552,112 audience reach to date
- \$2,766,254 in Advertising Value to date
- \$8,298,762 in PR Value to date
- 754:1



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# STATE REPORTS



## Cherries

The Victorian Cherry Association

This is my first report for CGA and my main aim as VCA President is to work on communication. Unfortunately we have just been informed by HAL that funding for our newsletter has not been approved so that is something we will need to work through.

We are currently planning our season review conference which will be held on 13th and 14th March at the Heritage Golf Course in Chirnside Park.

The theme is “**5 Key Steps to Cherry Profits**”

Day 1- Will be an opportunity to engage sponsors, growers and supporters of the cherry industry and discuss the past season with a focus on what went wrong, what can we do to avoid some of the issues, what worked and to look at industry development. There are a number of presenters organised. Please see the program for further details.

Day 2- Chappies Orchard, Silvan. Tour led by Steve Chapman. Main focus on Fruit Set & Chill on Dwarf Rootstocks.

Then onto Oak Sun’s Orchard in Wandin. Tour led by Andrew Corbett with a focus on Rootstock and Root Pruning.

We would like you to join us as most states had similar problems at varying degrees and I’m sure we would all like some answers.

### Victorian season 2013-14 snapshot:

As follows thanks to the feedback from some of our growers-

Koala Country - Michael Rouget

Cobram region “Light to medium crop depending on the variety. Little rain damage and reasonable pack outs.”

Yarck & Alexandra- “Medium crop with good fruit size and minimal rain damage.”

Strathbogie - “Good crop and fruit size.”

“Overall fruit from all regions had good flavour. Good pack out’s across the board and higher than average price made for a good season.”

Cherryhill Orchards- Glenn and Stephen Riseborough

Cobram – “This season was approx 40%-50% lower than forecasts on most varieties. Timing was a record kicking off on 22nd Oct. Fruit size and quality was generally exceptional and flavour outstanding from Cobram. Had a mild winter and a cool spring, with not great weather conditions at pollination. No major rain events or untoward weather conditions that damaged fruit significantly.”

Wandin – “Crop volumes approx 40% down overall, (some growers in the Yarra Valley reported crops down by 80%. On top of light crops several rain events damaged the crop significantly. Overall the season was not successful in this region.”

Tolmie – “Crop set appeared to be strong initially however lower than a full crop on some varieties. Quite warm conditions. The quality has been outstanding.”

Gisborne Cherries – John Learmonth

Gisborne – “Early varieties performed poorly and not worth picking. Poor flower set and fruit retention were the main reasons.

Timing of the crop was similar to last year with the majority of the varieties just a tad later 2-3 days. This was a surprise because flowering was very early in the 750 M block. Warm Spring weather eg. 30 degree days at the end of August.

Outside of early varieties, production was down by about 50% of last year with some varieties down to not much at all. Fruit size was also down a little.

There were a number of factors but I feel environmental factors (outside of rain induced cracking)

# STATE REPORTS



were the major reason for the reduced production. A very warm winter by normal standards preceded by an extremely cold start at the end of last Autumn. Then the very erratic conditions all the way through Spring. The better producing block was certainly the higher altitude block this year.”

## **Pickworth Orchards** - Stuart Pickworth

**Shepparton** – “Including external supply the crop was down by 70%. There was only one lot of rain with not much damage. There was a bit of fruit drop due to lack of early chill and terrible pollination weather. Some cultivars didn’t crop.

The weather was not as hot during the season and generally perfect weather conditions. The quality was excellent and size was up.”

## **Wandin Valley Farms** – Tim Jones

**Wangaratta** – “This season was a lighter crop than expected. Quality, size and flavour were excellent. We had a very early start but strangely finished later than previous years. Some varieties had a very mixed crop load dependant on block location such as Bing and Ulster. Sylvia cropped very poorly. Domestic sales were very strong and Export was excellent. Coming off a lighter year we could expect to see a big harvest next season so I hope the industry is prepared.”

**Alison Jones**  
**President VCA**



This past season has been one of great disappointment for most growers in South Australia. At our Pre-Harvest meeting the majority of growers indicated

disappointment in fruit set and we concluded that the coming crop would be down by approximately 60%. This proved to be optimistic and some didn’t have a viable crop. To add salt to the wounds we saw prices not seen in a long time!

The Promotional Committee organised our latest edition of the SA Cherry Map and there were many enquiries and emails of interest about it and it seems a growing market share. Thanks to the

Promotional Committee for all their hard work and time dedicated to producing this once again.

CGSA had representatives at two Fruit Fly Outbreak Planning meetings, planning for the inevitable. This proved useful with two outbreaks in SA, one being Qfly in the Riverland and the other MedFly south of Adelaide (both after the cherry season). Bio Security SA is working on these and with no more outbreaks these will present no problems next season.

Just a friendly reminder that Membership for the last season is due!

**Andrew Flavell**  
**President CGSA**

# STATE REPORTS



Fruit  
Growers  
Tasmania Inc

The 2013/14 season has been generally reported as a good one by most Tasmanian growers, despite some adverse weather events including frost, rain and wind.

Whilst most growers are reporting lower yields than last season, stronger market prices for both first and second grade fruit have helped make up for the lesser volumes of fruit.

There was plenty of very high quality fruit, of which a good percentage went to export.

A large number of growers and packers registered for China this season. China sent out 2 officers to audit newly registered orchards and packhouses, however due to the audit occurring during the season, it was too late for most of these operators to send any fruit by the time they were cleared to export. Demand from China was very strong this season, with literally hundreds of enquiries for cherries received by our office alone.

The gazettal of the Thailand cherry protocol in late January happened just in time for a handful of exporters to send some airfreight consignments before the season ended. It was pleasing that it was possible to make these first steps to rebuilding a share in what was once a very large market for Australia.

During the season, there was a confirmed detection of Little Cherry Virus 2 on a Tasmanian property. This disease has never previously been reported in Australia and was only identified due to the diligence and knowledge of one of our growers and their agronomist. An emergency response team has been set up by the state government as a result of this detection, in which Fruit Growers Tasmania has played an active role. Growers have been very cooperative in providing information to the response team, which has led to testing being undertaken

on suspect trees on a number of other properties as well.

It has been encouraging to see the expertise and resources which were able to be mobilised in a very short timeframe to manage the response to this detection. It reinforces the importance of governments, both state and federal maintaining adequate human and financial resources in the key departments required for situations like this, and goes to show that at a time where they are looking at reducing funding to these areas, they really need to be increasing it. Fruit Growers Tasmania would like to thank all members of the Emergency Response Team for the work that has been done to-date.

FGT's May Conference will be held from 22-25 May in northern Tasmania. There will be a berry field trip on Thurs 22nd, followed by formal conference sessions at the Country Club Casino in Prospect on the 23rd and 24th, then a cherry field day on Sunday 25th. As always, we welcome growers from all around Australia to attend. More information will be sent out through the CGA network shortly, however the key note speakers will be Prof David Hughes, an international fruit marketing expert from the UK and Dr Ken Eastwell from Washington State University, who is an expert in the Little Cherry Virus 2 and codling moth.

**Nick Featherstone**  
**Executive Officer**  
**Fruit Growers Tasmania**

# STATE REPORTS



Most NSW Cherry Growers have waited a long time for the planets to line up as they did during the 2013/14 summer. Whilst certainly many growers did not have a significant volume to work with, many others ultimately reported reasonable yields, excellent quality with associated high pack outs and general satisfaction with most market returns.

Significant rain events were few and far between and daytime temperatures during the harvest time were not generally excessive and were typically broken by cooler evenings – in all a recipe for quality fruit and a summer that has put NSW back on the map as a producer of quality cherries after a long sequence of most difficult seasons.

There was a strong focus on exports in most NSW sheds with good volumes outbound to Asia, Middle East and Europe. Hong Kong typically was the main destination for NSW export cherries.

NSW Cherry Growers welcomes the consensus position reached by industry last month at the

CGA export meeting in Melbourne. It was pleasing to arrive at a united industry position for market access encompassing PFA's, systems type approaches and end point treatments in recognition of the diversity of growing regions within our industry. The NSW cherry industry looks forward to the final document being made available in due course.

Myself and Guy Gaeta, on behalf of NSW Cherry Growers, took the opportunity to meet at NSW Parliament earlier this month with our local member and the Philippine Consul General to further discuss improved market access to the Philippines. The discussions were most positive and hopefully a stepping stone to improved market access to an enormous potential market for all Australian cherry growers.

**Andrew Gartrell**  
**President**  
**New South Wales Cherry Growers Association**



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# 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.

## 2013-14 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

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