



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:



LUIS GAZZOLA
President

Greetings to all Victorian vegetable grower members, industry associate members and

suppliers to the vegetable industry.

Rain arrived late, but at last it has fallen in all areas, providing relief to some growers from the drought. We can only hope that winter and spring will provide much needed heavy rains to replenish water storages for growers to continue production through next summer.

The Werribee National Vegetable Expo last month was very successful and well attended. Seed companies did an excellent job with their vegetable trials in adverse weather conditions and drought. The trial plots were a picture!

It was also a special day when vegetable growers embraced a new era of soil management, with the official launch of the Ute Guide Booklet by the Federal Minister for Agriculture Hon Peter McGauran. The Minister was most impressed by the trade exhibition area

and the excellent presentation and quality of the vegetable seed plots. He stayed on site for over an hour, meeting growers and industry suppliers.

Environmental Manager Helena Whitman from AUSVEG made comment that the Ute Guide is a valuable resource, tailored especially to the specific needs of all vegetable growers.

On behalf of VGA Victoria, I would take this opportunity to thank seed companies, industry exhibitors and sponsors for their support and attendance at the bi-annual Vegetable Expo. The Expo Committee was again expertly directed by Chairman Les Giroud, with the new coordinator Claire Luppino successfully attracting sponsorship, seed companies and exhibitors to the Expo. A special thanks to the Gordon Institute of TAFE, our new partners at the Werribee campus, for their assistance and cooperation and we look forward to a continued partnership in 2009. Last, but not least, thanks to our 'roving announcer', Jack Walker for commentating over the two days.

As President and representative of the VGA Vic with the Strategic Alliance Group I am very concerned at the issues relating

to market relocation. There is a strong indication that market user groups forming the Alliance Group are starting to yield under pressure from State Government to a market move to Epping. The signing of confidentiality agreements has resulted in restricting the flow of current information. We are a large central market community with big and small businesses and it is our livelihood and future that the State Government is manipulating. I strongly believe that the whole market community deserve to know what is happening with regular releases of information. Behind closed doors meetings by a select few must stop. Have you considered the implications of market relocation to Epping? Will your customers follow and be available to provide your business with the same turnover and return? Will there be district distributions centres developed that undermine a central market? Who will compensate for business losses? It requires your input and voice to be heard. Contact me to let us know NOW your opinions to the market moving from Footscray Road to Epping.

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DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Victorian Vegetable Grower and the Vegelink newsletter is to communicate to the Victorian vegetable industry a sample of the activities that are being carried out in the State in relation to the VGA and the national vegetable levy. The information provided should not be interpreted as an advice or recommendation of any kind. The VGA and its officers disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from your relying on any information in this publication.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: (continued from Page 1)

The AUSVEG National Vegetable Conference was held in Sydney last month and provided some excellent speakers. Some delegates were frustrated when questions at the end of specific industry sessions were restricted. Workshops are a good idea but tend to provide delegates with too many choices. I would congratulate Robert Belcher for his presentation covering corporate MIS farming in Australia. It is alarming the damage that investment schemes are doing to the horticultural industry including water issues around Australia.

May God bless all growers with health and prosperity and again lots of rain!

Luis Gazzola
President



Les Giroud (centre) with Expo award winners from Boomaroo and Rijk ZWaan.

Executive Officer's Corner POST



Tony Imeson, Executive Officer

The tradition of growers' field days continued with the 2007 National Vegetable Expo held at Werribee on the 3 & 4 May 2007.

The National Vegetable Expo is a joint venture between Gordon Institute of TAFE and the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA).

Initiated 44 years ago by the VGA the Expo provides a venue for vegetable growers, seed companies and suppliers of machinery and equipment for the industry to meet together. The informal nature of the Expo encourages discussion and demonstration of products to prospective customers.

The Gordon Institute of TAFE is the major provider of training in Production Horticulture, with certificate courses conducted at the Werribee campus.

Vegetable variety seed trials were displayed on 12 plots providing a major drawcard in viewing the different crops.

Some 70 companies exhibited machinery, chemicals, fertilisers, irrigation, filtration, packaging, computer software and material handling equipment. Worksafe Victoria, Department of Primary Industries, Southern Rural Water and Rural Skills provide information and industry programmes complimented this year's successful event.

Patrick Ulloa IDO Victoria presented a series of technical and marketing seminars based on the Vegetable Industry's R&D program on both days in the VGA booth. The R&D program is funded from the Vegetable Levy with matching funds from Federal Government through Horticulture Australia Ltd.

Thursday afternoon brought some welcome rain to the area that disrupted for a short time outdoor exhibit viewing but provided the technical seminars with good attendance.

Boomaroo Nurseries from Lara Vic. received the award for "best static display site" and Rijk Zwaan Australia from Daylesford Vic. received the "best growing trial plot" award.

There was a positive feedback from both visitors and exhibitors with above average attendance figures recorded for both days. The committee is looking forward to planning for the 2009 National Vegetable Expo.

The introduction in May of the Horticultural Code of Conduct has not only confused growers with the legislation wording but created concerns with growers in relation to supplying not only the central market agent/merchant but the processing, packing house distributor and provedores. The ACCC who have the erroneous task of policing the legislation are being bombarded with questions at workshop sessions that require to be answered with an industry constructive response. Growers should not bury their heads in the sand but ensure that the growers point of view is genuine and not the fantasies of a small section of the Australian production community.

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The variety trials looked terrific this year



The Presidents (left to right): Lou Gazzola, Robert Allen, Len Souter, and Peter Schreurs



East meets west at the conference (left to right): Alec Berias, Nick Trandos, Lou Gazzola, Jack Walker, and Tony Imeson



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NEWSLETTER

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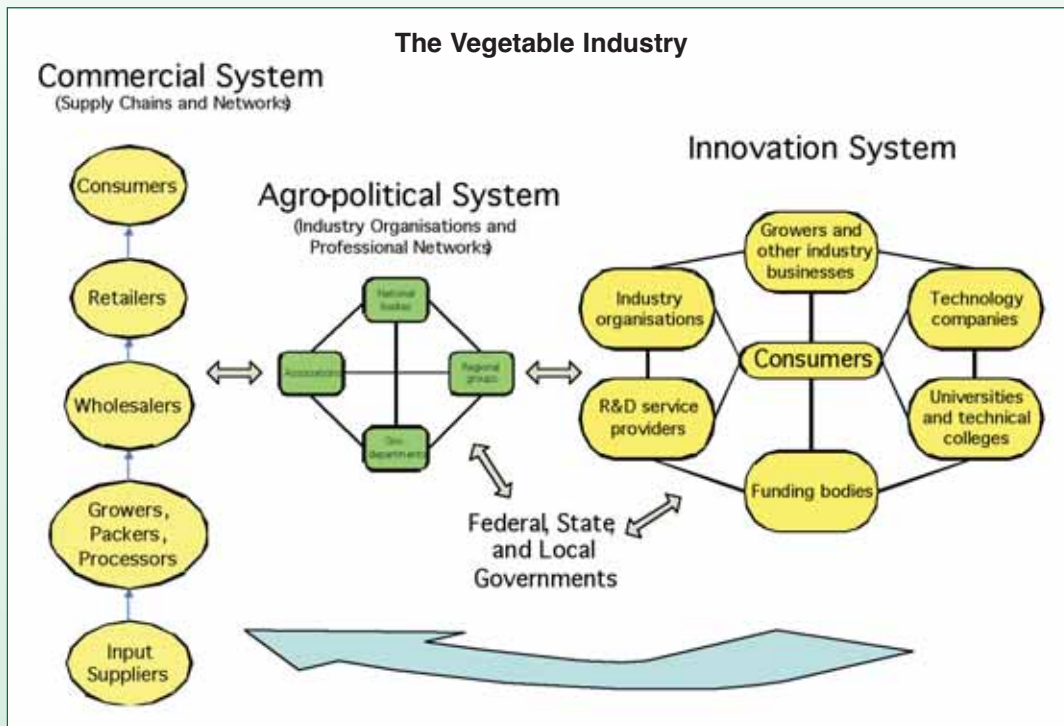
The Many Faces of the Industry

By Patrick Ulloa

For a while, there has been quite a bit of activity to determine the best long term strategy for the vegetable industry. This is not an easy task considering that this industry is very complex. It is important to develop a model to describe how the industry works. This model should represent in a more simple way how all the actors in the industry interact with each other. Without a suitable model, consultants and other industry analysts risk getting lost in the complexity resulting in less than effective recommendations.

In this article, I suggest a simple model that can be used to systematically assess industry problems. This simple model highlights the two major reasons for the complexity of the vegetable industry.

First, what we call 'the industry' is really a combination of at least three systems:
The Commercial System, The Agro-political System, The Innovation System



Without some understanding of these three systems, it is unlikely that the real causes of problems can be identified. Worse, we may select interventions which could have negative implications for the industry.

The second reason for the complexity is that most people in the industry 'wear more than one hat' as they take different roles depending on the situation. For example, a grower may be harvesting vegetables in the morning, attending a research and development meeting in the afternoon, and then attending an association meeting in the evening. He may also be selling produce in the market early the following morning. For anyone without a deep understanding of how the industry works, this situation would appear to be chaotic to say the least. However, once we understand how the three industry systems work, the behaviour, expectations, and motivations that drive different people become clearer.

The Commercial System

The commercial system represents those businesses that produce and deliver vegetables to customers and consumers with the hope of making a profit. The majority of these businesses have become part of supply chains and networks.

Competition is one of the major drivers within the commercial system. Competition keeps industries healthy. Industries that try to reduce competition within the commercial system not only risk being accused of collusion, but more importantly, they invite stronger competition from other countries. Fortunately for the vegetable industry, competition in the marketplace is alive and well.

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THE MANY FACES OF THE INDUSTRY:
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Recommendations which take advantage of the competitive environment prevalent in the commercial system are likely to be more effective. Providing assistance and tools to assist supply chains and networks to become more internationally competitive should provide long term benefits. On the other hand, trying to reduce the competitive behaviour in the marketplace promoting collaboration amongst competitors is unlikely to succeed. The only exception to this would be if those competitors were trying to work together to develop a new market.

The Agro-political System

The agro-political system includes industry organisations and professional networks. One of the most important functions of the agro-political system is to shape the environment in which members operate. The idea is to provide the best opportunities for members to prosper. Obviously, there are different points of view regarding what is the best environment for all involved. What is good for some may be detrimental for others.

Since no one in the industry can claim to have all the right answers for everything, the agro-political system should allow industry people to freely discuss all ideas and points of view. This would in turn generate an environment that is positive to most stakeholders. Creating a positive environment requires a system that promotes maximum participation. That may create some duplication of efforts and inefficiencies among the different organisations, but it is a reasonable price to pay for proper representation. The duplication of functions can be decreased by promoting more interaction among the different industry organisations.

The Innovation System

If the agro-political system is meant to create an environment for prosperity, the innovation system is meant to create the tools for prosperity. A successful innovation system provides the venue for organisations to create the tools that will assist progressive businesses develop better offerings for customers and consumers.

Innovation is associated to risk. Few individual businesses in our industry would have sufficient resources to develop significant innovations. They may have the ability to develop incremental improvements to what they are doing, but not to fund those significant innovations that can completely change the way we do things.

Our ability to compete internationally is directly linked to the quality of our innovation system. Since the resources are limited, the need to identify areas with real potential is paramount.

Cooperation and collaboration are very important in the innovation system. There is little room for competitive behaviour here if the system is going to produce the best results for the benefit of the industry. On the other hand, as with the agro-political system, there many different interpretations regarding what areas of R&D can produce the best return on investment. An open system that takes advantage of the interest, knowledge, and experience of all stakeholders is more likely to succeed.

As we continue to be affected by increasing international competition, the three major industry systems (commercial, agro-political, and innovation) must be continuously improved. Being able to identify the principles and drivers behind these three systems is critical to develop effective solutions to the issues affecting the industry.



VGA Forklift Storage Facility

There are two forklift storage bays available for rental in the VGA Melbourne Markets Storage Area in the North Eastern section of the Market.

The quarterly rental is **\$330.00 inc GST** per forklift bay,

**Please contact Tony Imeson at the VGA office
(03) 9687 4707 or Mobile No: 0414 458 561.**



Industry Events

Date	Event	Further Information
20 June 07 (Bairnsdale)	Optimising yield and shelf life of Iceberg and Cos lettuce: A Training Day for the Australian Lettuce Industry	(02) 9527 0826
21 June 07 (Knoxfield)	Optimising yield and shelf life of Iceberg and Cos lettuce: A Training Day for the Australian Lettuce Industry	(02) 9527 0826
21-22 June 07	Biosecurity Awareness Workshop	debra@phau.com.au
24-27 June 07	Australian Hydroponic and Greenhouse Industry National Conference	www.ahga.org.au
9-12 July 07	Farm Labour Management Seminar Series	www.agrico.com.au/events.htm
27 July – 4 Aug 07	Young Vegetable Growers Tour to New Zealand	www.ausveg.com.au
6-10 Aug 07	Keep it Real Conference (QA, food safety, environment)	www.tqainc.com.au
8 September 07	Vegetable Growers Gala Night	www.vgavic.org.au
9-13 September 07	2007 Australasian Postharvest Conference	www.aphc2007.com.au
8 – 18 October 07	Study Tour to the USA and PMA conference	www.quadrantaustralia.com 1300 301 128

In-Market Experience Scholarships

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's New Industries Development Program (NIDP) offers scholarships of up to \$12,500 plus Business Readiness Workshop for managers of innovative agribusinesses.

Applications close 19 July 2007

**For more information and how to apply, contact NIDP on 1300 884 588,
 Email nidp@daff.gov.au or visit www.daff.gov.au/agribiz**

Lift off to Houston!

Quadrant Australia is offering a professionally led study tour to the United States designed to expose vegetable growers and industry representatives to issues associated with global vegetable production, marketing, processing, value adding, supply chain and research activity. This tour includes attending the prestigious Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit International Convention & Exhibition to be held in Houston, Texas from the 12 - 15 October 2007.

The tour runs from 8 – 18 October 2007 and is being supported by Horticulture Australia (HAL). Tour prices start from \$6,495 and deposits are required by 15 June.

Further details and application are available from Quadrant on www.quadrantaustralia.com or 1300 301 128.

Old Spraying Practices can cause Pesticide Contamination



Demonstration of spray drifting onto lettuces in other beds.

Michael Laity, DPI Chemical Standards Officer.

Investigations by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) have found that spray drift within a property was the cause of many unacceptable residues in produce. Such residue contamination can threaten access to domestic and export markets.

Until recently it was often difficult for vegetable growers to manage spray drift, however advances in nozzle technology and spray adjuvants now allow growers to use coarser droplets from low drift nozzles and still get the required spray coverage. Many nozzle manufactures now have low drift nozzles that are suitable for use in horticulture.

DPI recently demonstrated how easily spray drift can occur between crop beds at the National Vegetable Expo in Werribee. Commonly used flat fan nozzles on a conventional boom sprayer were used to spray a fluorescent dye with a moderate crosswind. Participants then used an ultraviolet light to view the many fine spray droplets that had been blown onto the crop in the adjacent beds.

To further prevent spray drift, growers should monitor weather conditions such as wind direction and strength and stop spraying if necessary. Handheld weather stations that accurately measure wind speed and other variables are now available. Recording wind direction and wind speed in a spray diary is required for many Quality Assurance programs and is a legal requirement for restricted use chemicals in Victoria. With increased chemical residue testing by supermarkets and governmental bodies, vegetable growers must review their current spraying practices to see if they are at risk of causing unacceptable residues from spray drift.

For more information contact Michael Laity on (03) 9785 0191.

An opportunity to attend the 'Keep it Real' conference free

Tasmanian Quality Assured, in conjunction with its industry partners, is offering successful applicants the opportunity to attend this premiere industry event for free.

A range of activities are planned for the conference, revolving around on-farm environmental, food safety and quality assurance issues.

Successful applicants will have their registration fees paid for (valued at \$850) and will receive assistance with travel and accommodation expenses up to \$700.

**The full conference program is available at www.tqainc.com.au.
 For application forms, please contact Daryl Connelly on 03 6423 6008**

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Survey of Vegetable Growers

IPM has been a priority area for many horticultural industries and funding from HAL (and the National Vegetable Industry Levy) has been directed towards IPM. However, in most horticultural industries there has not been great adoption or implementation of IPM despite this funding support, and we need to know why, and what is needed to improve adoption of IPM. To achieve this end, HAL has commissioned a survey of both growers and advisors to help to determine who is adopting IPM and why? Also, who is not adopting IPM and why not, and for advisors, what are the reasons influencing adoption?

A number of Victorian growers and consultants would have received a copy of the survey. Please make sure you complete the survey and send it back with your answers.

For more information contact Jessica Page, IPM Technologies Pty Ltd on 0408 308 809

Comprehensive Cover for you and Extra Support for VGA



Now there is a way for you to receive an easy to understand product, tailored to your requirements, backed up by local personal service - and help support the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria. How is this all possible? Well, by simply calling your local Wesfarmers Federation Insurance (WFI) Area Manager.

The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria is an alliance partner of WFI. As such, the Association receives a small commission each time one of our members takes out or renews a policy with WFI. These extra funds help us to continue to represent and support vegetable growers, and the industry. With WFI you receive personal on-farm service from a local Area Manager. There are 16 WFI branches across Victoria, so you can rest assured that WFI is never far away.

To decide whether WFI's Rural Plan is the right product for you, give them a call on 1300 934 934 to obtain the product disclosure statement and an obligation free quote.

You will not only be helping yourself to comprehensive cover, but also helping your Association. WFI will also have a special offer for members at the VGA annual dinner, your chance to win \$500 towards your insurance premium.

The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria does not make any recommendation or provide any opinion about this product. Any advice or product information contained above was provided by WFI and does not take into account any individual's objectives, financial situation and needs.

2007 Nuffield Scholarship applications open

Fourteen outstanding primary producers from across Australia have the opportunity to explore overseas farming practices as 2007 recipients of Australia's most prestigious agricultural award – the Nuffield Scholarship.

The 2007 industry-sponsored scholarships, valued at \$25,000 each, are now open to Australian primary producers. Winners will be selected based on their farming and leadership capabilities, and their potential to make a strong, valuable contribution to the future of Australian agriculture.

Scholarship recipients participate in a Global Focus Program where they spend six weeks in New Zealand, Asia, Europe, North and South America studying agricultural marketing, trade and environmental issues. They then spend at least 10 weeks researching the topic of their choice in whatever countries best suit their individual needs.

Applications close on 30 June 2007.

Application forms are available from the Nuffield Australia office on 02 6964 6600, via email enquiries@nuffield.com.au or on the website www.nuffield.com.au

Renewed interest in food safety

A fresh produce food safety summit was organized by the Australian Institute of Food Safety and Technology (AIFST) in Brisbane to take a leadership role and be proactive in bringing stakeholders along the fresh produce supply chain together with regulators and scientists to discuss trends in produce related food safety and what actions are needed to ensure our fresh produce is as safe as possible for our consumers.

The meeting was attended by over 80 people, with many from industry, but also from retail, food service, regulatory agencies, State and Council, and Government.

The key finding of the summit included:

1. There is a need to work toward national agreed food safety goals for fresh produce along the food supply chain from farm to consumer with alignment of all programs
2. The science underpinning regulations and requirements for fresh produce safety must be robust
3. An Incidence Response Protocol that will include all stakeholders.
4. Investment is required for research into management tools for food safety and quality of fresh produce



THOUGHTS FOR WINTER

When you work, work hard.
 When you play, play hard.
 The perfect career is when you can find a way to make hard work seem like play
 Just don't make play hard work
 I don't know anyone who has got to the top without hard work.
 That is the recipe.



The Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Peter McGauran (centre) visited the Expo and met many of the exhibitors.



The white blister seminar at the EXPO was well attended



The variety trials attracted huge interest



The Soil Health 'UTE' guide was officially launched at the EXPO.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS CORNER POST: (continued from Page 2)

The recent National Vegetable Conference held in Sydney was generally well received by those in attendance. The programme content for the first day plenary sessions was very informative and the second day breakout workshops gave the opportunity for a wider selection of topics. These events provide excellent networking opportunities for growers and it was disappointing that the opportunity to ask questions at a national industry forum was limited. Vegetable growers attending as delegates outlay both money and time away from the farm to participate, yet once again were denied general question time participation.

The presentation dinner was well-supported and 2007 industry awards presented by the Minister for Agriculture Hon Peter McGauran. The Victorian Vegetable Grower congratulates all winners of the vegetable industry awards with a special acknowledgement to VGA Executive Committee Member John Said upon receiving "The Innovative Marketing Award". "Also the VGA congratulates Rick Butler for his appointment to the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) which is a critical part of the national R&D program".

The VGA have been challenging industry leaders to review the vegetable industry levy structure. There is an urgent need to promote vegetables to the Australian consumer, which cannot be funded under the present vegetable levy legislation. Support from vegetable levy payers is encouraged to provide the vegetable industry with a more effective national system to convince consumers to eat more fresh vegetables.

A recent American Vegetable Grower publication featured an article "Maintaining Vegetable Nutritional Quality" and it was interesting to read and part quote "that improved awareness of good nutritional value is a leading factor contributing to the increased consumption of fresh vegetables. Consumers know vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre content and contain possible cancer fighting compounds. However the nutritional value generally deteriorates following harvest, especially vitamin C content. So consider the nutritive value of your produce when estimating its shelf life and consider possible effects on the nutritional content when making changes to in your production, handling and storage procedures".

This is renewal time for VGA 2007-2008 membership with invoices now being distributed. All vegetable levy payers in Victoria are encouraged to renew their membership and strengthen the Victorian vegetable industry in providing representation on all issues that involve the growing of vegetables.

Keep smiling
 Tony Imeson
 VGA Executive Officer

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mail to: PO Box 4837, Wantirna South VIC 3152

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