



TOMATO TOPICS



NEWS and INFORMATION
FOR THE PROCESSING TOMATO INDUSTRY

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TOMATO WOMEN'S NETWORK

Women in many horticultural industries are currently involved with the day-to-day running of the farm business and, in many cases, women are also active with on-farm activities such as in the packing shed and harvesting. However, women tend to be the "forgotten" partners in the business. Extension groups, and training and development activities are targeted at the male partners and women do not have the same opportunities to develop management skills.

In addition, women play an important role in the support of the farm business and can often influence the direction of future on-farm developments. Women's roles in a rural communities are often highly under-rated, particularly in horticultural industries.

The concept of a Tomato Women's Network came from a discussion with DNRE researchers involved in IPM projects in both Fresh and Processing Tomatoes. Key women in the Processing Tomato Industry also expressed strong interest in forming a women's group.

To follow up on these suggestions, a survey was conducted to gauge the level of interest for such a group. Surveys were sent out to 42 growers, 12 forms were returned. The survey included a list of suggested information/training sessions that the women may be interested to participate in. From this survey, it appears that the majority of the women are interested in business/financial

management and computer courses, whereas approximately half are also interested in undertaking an IPM Research to Practice Course. Some of the women had also suggested that they would be interested in a regular social gathering, where by they could network and provide support for each other.

On Friday the 26th November a group of 13 women involved in Processing Tomato Businesses met in Echuca. This meeting was a social luncheon, sponsored by the Department of

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Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE), with a guest speaker talking about how to cope with the pressures of everyday life. It was intended to create an opportunity to bring together a group of women, and to identify what opportunities they require to assist them with their farming businesses. Possible activities and relevant training were discussed, the suggestions included:

- A speaker on Rural Law, identifying the legal liability of employers
- Basic and Intermediate computer courses,
- Basic Email and Internet courses,
- First Aid course,
- GST seminar,
- Training in MYOB,
- Industry Pre-harvest social gathering for all family members,
- Social meeting/luncheon approximately every 2 months.

The 13 women that attended (plus 1 young girl) had a very enjoyable day. Thanks must go to the DNRE for providing sponsorship for this initial gathering. It is hoped that the Tomato Women's Group will continue in the future, providing not only training to address the above suggestions, but also an opportunity for the women to discuss other issues as they arise.

The next meeting is planned for the 14th February, at Echuca, and will include a speaker on Industrial Law.



**Natural Resources
and Environment**

AGRICULTURE

RESOURCES

CONSERVATION

LAND MANAGEMENT

Thanks must go to the DNRE for providing sponsorship for this initial gathering.

IPM UPDATE No 8 DISEASES 1999/2000

By Liz Minchinton^a, Gisele Irvine^a, Ary Hoffmann^b, Bonny Van Rijswijk^a and Swarna Hewa-kapuge^b, ^aInstitute for Horticultural Development, Knoxfield, phone 03 9210 9222; Department of Genetics and Evolution, La Trobe University, Bundoora, phone 03 9479 2769.

News in Brief

Rain early this season has contributed to an outbreak of bacterial speck in Victorian crops. There have been a few reports of tomato spotted wilt virus and traces of bacterial canker have been detected in a small number of crops. Powdery mildew and TOM-CAST trials have been established at Kerang. Weather stations have been set up for the crop scouts to run the TOM-CAST disease predictive model. Surveys for bacterial canker will commence shortly. **PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO RETURN YOUR SURVEY FORMS.**

Staff

David Bardon has departed from the IPM team to manage the blueberry and raspberry production for Chiquita in sunny Coff's Harbour. We have two new members of the IPM team at the Institute for Horticultural Development, Bonny Van Rijswijk and Gisele Irvine. Bonny, (you may remember her from last season's canker survey) is a graduate of Dookie College and will replace David Bardon by continuing work on powdery mildew. Gisele Irvine, is a graduate of Deakin University and has over ten years experience as a plant pathologist, she will be researching bacterial canker.

Bacterial Canker

New exciting research establishing the DNA fingerprints of the various tomato bacterial canker isolates from last seasons' infections is well under way. This is a particularly challenging area and hopefully will provide some ground-breaking insights into the populations of bacterial canker out in the field. If any isolates are found to be positive this season then they will be also added to the collection and processed. A quick overview of the DNA fingerprinting method is that the bacteria are isolated from the plant material and grown on agar plates. The bacterial DNA is then extracted

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and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)'s are performed which give us a pattern or unique fingerprint that can then be compared with all the other isolates.

Bacterial Canker Hygiene Issues

When bacterial canker is detected and confirmed at IHD, the person who submitted the sample will be notified and a letter will be forwarded to the grower. This letter addresses certain issues that relate to the process of trying to contain the disease by informing people who walk through the crop, for example your scouts and field officers. These issues will enable you as the grower to help protect other parts of your property that may not be infected and also to help protect the industry as a whole. We would ask that all growers make every attempt to implement them as far as is practicable.

Powdery Mildew

The good news is that different rates of Flosul ap-

1. It is the responsibility of the grower to notify all people that will be walking through the infected crop where bacterial canker is present. This may assist in preventing further spread of the disease.
2. The grower needs to inform the following people;
 - Scouts.
 - Processing company field staff who you are currently dealing with.
 - Researchers if a trial is situated near the infected crop or if a survey is being carried out.
 - All farm employees who are involved in the growing of the tomatoes.
3. All people entering the infected crop must carry out the suggested field hygiene protocol before entering any further tomato crops (the field hygiene guidelines should have been distributed to you by the APTRC).

plied for powdery mildew control do not affect emergence of the beneficial parasitic wasp, *Trichogramma*. In glasshouse trials at IHD, *Sitotroga* egg cards containing *Trichogramma* pupae were placed on tomato plants infected with powdery mildew and exposed to Flosul[®] (sulphur) at 0, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5 and 4L/ha. Ary Hoffmann's group at La Trobe University examined the eggs for wasp emergence and found no significant difference in wasp emergence at the different rates of Flosul[®].

This season, fungicides that may improve control of powdery mildew are being trialed on a property at Kerang. There are 10 chemicals being trialed in 11 different treatment combinations. Fungicides will be applied six times during the season, foliage assessed for mildew symptoms and fruit collected for residue analysis. Results will be available after the trial is harvested in late February. Cards containing *Trichogramma* eggs will again be placed in the trial prior to a spray and Ary Hoffmann's group at La Trobe University will again examine the effects of the fungicides on wasp emergence.

TOM-CAST

The crop scouts, Michael Hind, Brian Walker, Ann Morrison and David Webb are now running the TOM-CAST disease predictive model, with the help of Liz Minchinton and Bonny Van Rijswijk. Weather stations have been placed in the field at Boort, Colbinabbin, Kerang, Leeton and Jerilderie. The model predicts the outbreak of three fungal diseases, Early Blight, Septoria Leaf Spot and Anthracnose Fruit Rot. Currently in the US the model is undergoing modifications to incorporate black mold into the list of diseases that can be accurately predicted by TOM-CAST. A trial to test US modifications in the model has been established at Kerang for the 1999-2000 season.

TOMATO VARIETIES FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM!?

By Bill Ashcroft and Stephen Wade
Project Leaders, DNRE, Tatura

The industry's cultivar improvement program this season involves the assessment of some 180 lines planted at ten locations across northern Victoria and southern New South Wales. We are testing about 70 of these for the first time, including several from France. As usual, cultivars have been grouped as early-maturing, mid-season/whole-peel and mid-season/paste. The delayed arrival of some seed lots meant that the planting of most sites was a little later than normal this year, but at this stage all trials have established well. On-farm trial locations and replicated planting lists are shown below, and our thanks go to all participating growers and seed companies. A large observation site has also been established on the institute at Tatura.

Please note that no site should be visited without first obtaining the grower's permission to enter the property, and that crop hygiene procedures must be followed at all times to prevent the spread of pests and diseases.

EARLY

MID-SEASON WHOLE-PEEL

MID-SEASON PASTE

Replicated Trials:

Boort -

Lou Chirnside

Whitton -

Richard Stott

Colbinabbin -

John Pike & sons

Jerilderie -

Henry & John Robinson

Colbinabbin -

Danny Rosaia

Jerilderie -

Neessen/Kirchhofer

Replicated Lines:

1. Heinz 9280

2. CXD 204

3. ENP 113

4. Fancysset

5. Heinz 9507

6. ES 96-100

7. Heinz 9928

8. OX 88

9. Hypeel 696

Heinz 9723

FMX 1031N

OX 38

Hypeel 696

Falcorosso

Hypeel 303

SPS 4968

Sun 615

Oxford

Heinz 9035

AB 721

OSX 388

CXD 188

CXD 206

FMX 1031N

FMX 9144

Heinz 9614

Sun 6270

Observation plots planted next to the replicated lines:

28 lines approx.

12 lines

80 lines

Machine Harvest Sites - comprising whole rows of the replicated lines listed above:

Whitton - Richard Stott

Corop - Gerard Ryan

Rochester - Wolfe & Foott

Field days will be held at all sites in the new year (dates will be circulated as the crops near maturity), and we hope to see you there, because your opinions will help us decide which lines to pursue. Finally, to all in the industry, we wish you a prosperous New Year, from the Cultivar Improvement Project Team.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2000?

IRRIGATION AUSTRALIA

2000,

Conference & Exhibition - "The Conference Event that will set the Irrigation Agenda for the 21st Century"

23-25 May 2000, Melbourne
(Registration before 15 May 2000)
Key Issues of the conference will be:

- Global issues
- Water competition
- On farm irrigation developments
- Climate change
- Turf and landscape
-

For registration details, and further information please contact Liz Mann (contact details on last page)

4th WORLD CONGRESS of the PROCESSING TOMATO & 7th ISHS SYMPOSIUM on the PROCESSING TOMATO,

June 10-14, 2000

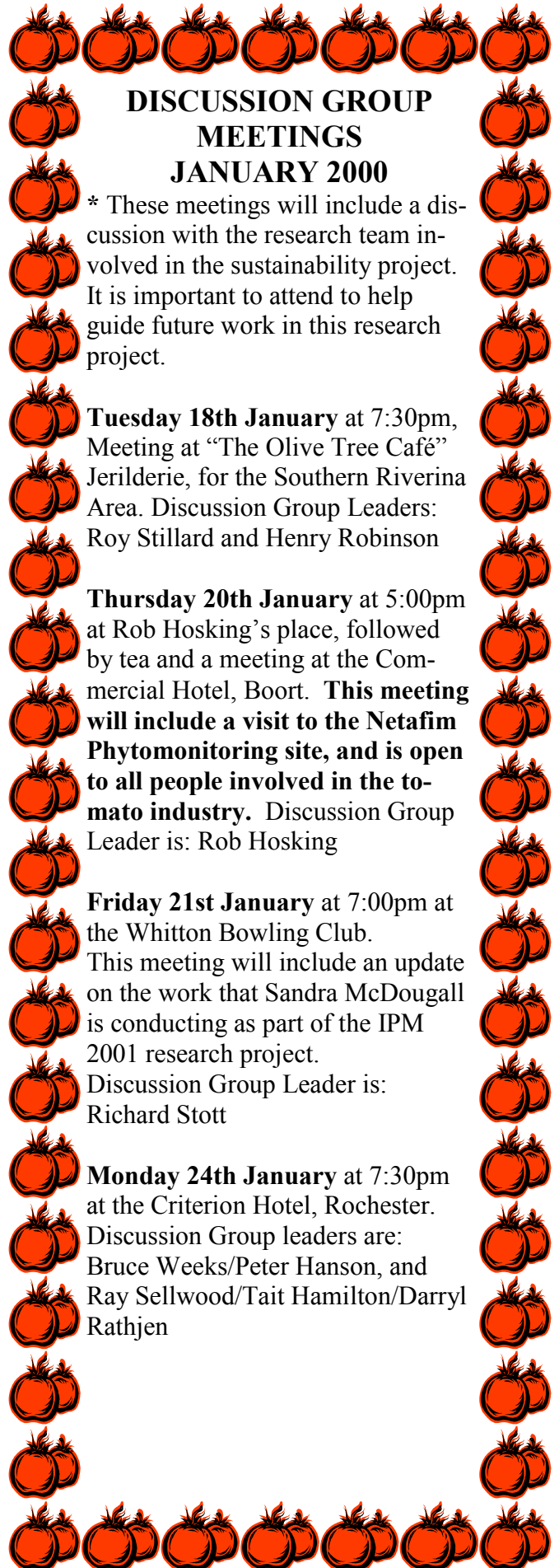
Sacramento, California, U.S.A.

Please Notify Liz Mann ASAP if you are interested in attending this conference, and participating in an industry tour.

AUSTRALIAN PROCESSING TOMATO FORUM,

Wednesday 31st May, 2000.

Venue to be advised at a later date.



DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS

JANUARY 2000

* These meetings will include a discussion with the research team involved in the sustainability project. It is important to attend to help guide future work in this research project.

Tuesday 18th January at 7:30pm, Meeting at "The Olive Tree Café" Jerilderie, for the Southern Riverina Area. Discussion Group Leaders: Roy Stillard and Henry Robinson

Thursday 20th January at 5:00pm at Rob Hosking's place, followed by tea and a meeting at the Commercial Hotel, Boort. **This meeting will include a visit to the Netafim Phytomonitoring site, and is open to all people involved in the tomato industry.** Discussion Group Leader is: Rob Hosking

Friday 21st January at 7:00pm at the Whitton Bowling Club. This meeting will include an update on the work that Sandra McDougall is conducting as part of the IPM 2001 research project. Discussion Group Leader is: Richard Stott

Monday 24th January at 7:30pm at the Criterion Hotel, Rochester. Discussion Group leaders are: Bruce Weeks/Peter Hanson, and Ray Sellwood/Tait Hamilton/Darryl Rathjen

PLEASE NOTE:

THE MOBILE NUMBER FOR LIZ MANN (INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER) HAS CHANGED, IT IS NOW: 0427 857 578

ENHANCED BIODEGRADATION OF METHAM SODIUM REVEALED

By John Matthiessen, Project Leader
CSIRO Entomology, Perth

Metham sodium is a very useful pesticide used widely in horticulture for controlling soil-borne pests and diseases. Its use in Australia is increasing rapidly.

Metham sodium does not leave undesirable residues in the way that some earlier pesticides did. However, there are other issues that have the potential to limit the benefits growers obtain from modern pesticides like metham sodium.

ENHANCED BIODEGRADATION

These pesticides are more easily broken down in the environment, which is a good thing. But what if it happens so fast that the pesticide doesn't get the chance to do its job before it's gone?

This is precisely what happens when the phenomenon of *enhanced* (also called accelerated) *biodegradation* occurs.

Simply, this occurs when microbes in the soil that happen to be able to use the chemical as a food source build up in response to it being applied. This can often occur surprisingly quickly.

Different soils react differently, so it is important to understand what the risks of enhanced biodegradation developing in various soil types are.

RESEARCH PROJECT

This is the focus of an HRDC-funded project that commenced last February. The project is funded largely from the Vegetable and Potato levies, with Voluntary Contributions from APTRC and Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers.

A research chemist, Ben Warton, has been appointed to CSIRO Entomology to carry out the analysis of soils from areas around Australia where metham sodium is being used.

As this was a completely new project, the first task was to obtain, set up and test the sensitive analysis equipment. Samples of soil from a vegetable production site where metham sodium has been used frequently for some years were then analysed to see if enhanced biodegradation of metham sodium could be detected.

A SEVERE EXAMPLE

Soil was collected from both previously-treated and untreated parts of the same farm. The results showed a spectacular example of the phenomenon.

After applying metham sodium to soil with no previous history of use, 90% of the active MITC (methyl isothiocyanate) toxin was produced, and it took 15 days to disappear.

In stark contrast, the previously-treated soil only allowed 43% of the MITC production, and it disappeared in 5 *hours*.

To prove that the effect was biological, a sample of the previously-treated soil was sterilised by heating. When this soil was 'spiked' with metham sodium, it behaved just like the soil that had never been treated.

BIOLOGICAL IMPACT

It is important to stress that this example is likely to be an extreme case, as we deliberately selected an intensive use situation. The key point is that it illustrates what *can* happen.

Also, enhanced biodegradation is only a problem if the breakdown becomes so fast that the pest control effect is no longer achieved. The biological impact will depend on the pests being controlled and the type of production system.

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NEW BUSINESS TAX SYSTEM

In six month's time, we are due to enter the brave new world of a radically different tax system. The most visible manifestation of this may be the GST, but there are many other changes taking place that will also have an effect on your eventual tax position. Incidentally, the government is currently studying around 1,000 amendments to its GST regulations as the system is developed towards 1st July.

For some time, the National Farmers Federation and the VFF have been lobbying government about a number of the proposed changes that emerged from the Ralph Review into Business Tax Reform. Whilst some of the NFF and VFF concerns have been accepted, there are other key issues about which businesses should be aware.

Simplified Tax System (STS)

After 1st July, businesses with a turnover less than \$1 million may use a simplified tax system (STS). Under STS they will gain access to:

- Use of a "pooling system" for depreciable equipment (this maintains accelerated depreciation for most equipment) other than that with a life in excess of 25 years
- Immediate tax claim for items under \$1,000
- Use of a cash accounting system
- Use of a simplified trading stock system

Under the cash accounting system, items sold, but not paid for, will not be included in taxable income. However, it also means that goods purchased, but not paid for, will not be claimable. This means that fuel, fertiliser and chemicals (traditionally bought at the end of the financial year) will no longer provide a tax benefit unless they are paid for.

For those businesses that cannot use the STS because their turnover is over \$1 million:

- Accelerated depreciation is no longer available for equipment purchased from 21st September 1999
- Profit on sale/trade in of equipment after 21st September 1999 will be fully taxable
- From 1st July 2000, equipment costing more than \$300 must be depreciated (previously 100% immediate claim)
- From 1st July 2000, all equipment costing more than \$1,000 must be depreciated in a pool at an annual rate of 37.5%
- Prepaid expenses after 21st September 1999 will only be claimable as the service period expires

The removal of accelerated depreciation claims will have the greatest impact on equipment with longer lives. For ex-

ample, most equipment with motors may drop from 30% to 22.5%, and most equipment without motors may drop from 25% to 15%.

Capital Gains Tax

CGT has been relaxed significantly; this should be welcomed by most businesses

Tax Rates

New tax rates from 1st July 2000 will reduce all marginal rates up to the top rate of 47%, which now applies from a threshold of \$60,000.

Trusts

Under the entity taxation system, from 1st July 2001 trusts will be taxed as a company at 30%.

Currently trusts are not taxed; instead, trust income is taxable in the hands of the person entitled to the income. Under the proposed system, trust income will be taxable in the hands of the trust. The person entitled to trust income will be taxable on that income and receive a credit for tax paid by the trust on that income.

Loans from shareholders and beneficiaries to companies and trusts

Non-commercial loans from shareholders and beneficiaries to companies and trusts after 22nd February 1999 will be treated as being additions to capital. As a consequence, the repayment of principal of these loans may be taxable.

This should be a major concern for all businesses operating through a company or trust structure. A significant increase in effort will be required to comply with the documentation and repayment requirements, otherwise business owners may be taxed on the repayment of their own money.

OTHER PROPOSALS

Accounting method of taxable income

Businesses not using STS may be required to change the method of calculating taxable income to "cash receipts less cash payments plus (minus) changes in the value of assets". Under this method, tax values will need to be determined annually for all assets and liabilities. It is expected that this will increase compliance costs.

Removal of balancing charge rollover on the reformation of a partnership

Currently, a partner may retire from a partnership and, in certain circumstances, take the option to use the value recorded for tax purposes for trading stock, livestock and equipment on transfer to the ongoing partners. This has the effect of deferring any tax payable on the difference between market and tax values. This option is very useful when transferring assets between generations in a family.

The new proposal will mean that the retiring partner will be

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NO CURES

Enhanced biodegradation cannot be cured (except by sterilising the soil – an impossible task). The best option is prevention.

Our research aims to establish risk profiles for different soils so that growers can make informed decisions about their use of the pesticide. Metham sodium is too useful a product to be robbed of sustainable use by enhanced biodegradation.

The first samples of some typical soils used for processing tomato production will soon be taken. Once they have been tested, results will be reported to industry

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is supported through HRDC by the industries mentioned above.

A free 'How Degrading' newsletter on enhanced biodegradation is produced. If you would like to receive it please phone 08 9333 6641 or e-mail: johnm@ccmar.csiro.au.

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required to pay tax based upon the market value of the assets transferred to the ongoing partners.

Taxation of consumables and spare parts

Currently, the cost of business consumables and spare parts on hand at the end of the tax year are not included as stock. This provides an effective tax deduction for the cost of these items even though they remain unused.

Where the value exceeds \$25,000, it is proposed that the value of these items will be included as income. Affected consumables would include fuel, fertilisers, chemicals and spare parts.

Conclusion

A number of tax policy items are already in place, whilst others are still being negotiated by politicians and lobby groups. The items described above are only a few of the changes being considered. All businesses, but particularly those whose turnover exceeds \$1 million, should ask their tax accountant to be kept fully informed of relevant issues.

Please note: in May next year, a special workshop will take place on GST. An expert will be on hand to answer processing tomato growers' specific questions. More details in due course.

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