



TOMATO TOPICS



Know-how for Horticulture™

NEWS and INFORMATION
FOR THE PROCESSING TOMATO INDUSTRY

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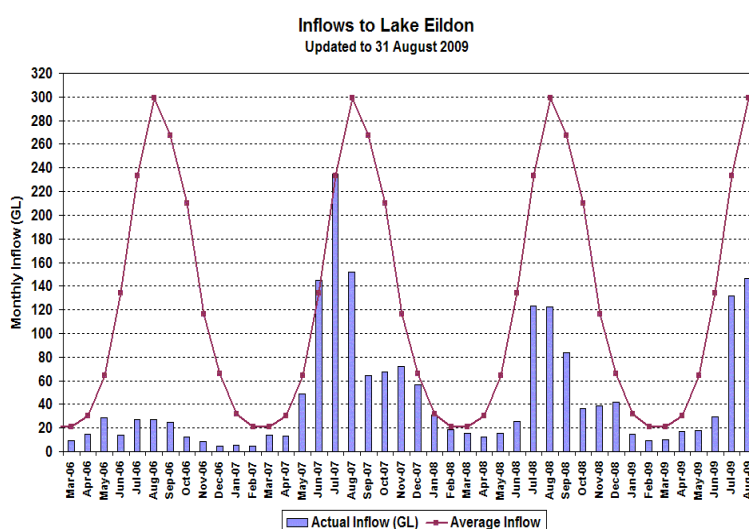
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2009/10 Season About To Commence

Another processing tomato season is about to commence. Once again winter rainfall has been lower than the long term average, resulting in below long term average inflows into Lake Eildon. At this stage the inflows this year are slightly up on last year, although at the time of writing allocations on the Goulburn System were still at 0%.

Once again the APTRC will operate on a tight budget. This is due to the reduced research and development levy resulting from reduced industry tonnes. This means that the industry research program is operating at a minimum level once again, with the industry wide cultivar evaluation program deferred for another year. The project TM06004 managed by Doris Blaesing has also been reduced, although there is an opportunity to increase the budget again if there is a specific request for additional trial work from a grower. The Industry Development Project, managed by Liz Mann will once again continue to operate on a part time basis.

The Annual Processing Tomato Grower Magazine for 2009 is currently being printed. It should be distributed in the coming weeks free of charge to all levy payers. This magazine contains reports from all industry, HAL and DAFF funded research conducted during 2008/09. If you are not a levy payer and would like to subscribe to this magazine please contact Liz Mann (lizmann@aptrc.asn.au)



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Next Gen Grower Visit to Darwin/Kununurra



“This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under its Australian’s Farming Future initiative.”

From the 2nd-9th August 2009 a group of 10 young growers involved in the processing tomato industry participated in a tour to Darwin/Kununurra. This tour was organised by the Industry Development Manager, Liz Mann, but lead by Matt Wright from Cedenco. Tour participants included: Ryan Lancaster, James and Dwight Weeks, Sean Kennedy, Andrew Stott, Mark and Neil Geltech, Chris Taylor, Xavier Mancini and Will Hemphill.

On Sunday 2nd August the group departed Melbourne for Darwin. On the Monday morning the group visited the Amaro’s at Humpty Doo. The Amaro family used to grow melons and processing tomatoes around the Griffith/Darlington Point Area. Recently they have expanded their farming business by now growing melons (Rockmelons and Honeydews) on over approximately 1,000 ha at Humpty Doo, enabling them to have a larger window of supply. Crop nutrition and maintaining soil organic matter levels have been an issue. Due to the heavy summer rainfall nutrients remaining in the soil after the crop are leached through the profile. They have been trialling growing sorghum after melons to assist in maintaining soil organic matter. Crops are irrigated using sub-surface drip irrigation, buried approximately 20cm deep, with the soil surface covered in black plastic. Fertilisers are applied as liquid formulations manually at each valve via their sub surface drip irrigation system. This is monitored 24-7 to ensure all applications occur as required. At the present time they are transporting the liquid fertilisers (approx 500,000 litres) from Whitton to Humpty Doo, costing approximately \$300 per 1,000 litres.

Upon arrival in Kununurra the group met with Geoff Strickland from the Ord Irrigation Co-op. Kununurra has a huge abundance of water in its Ord irrigation area. The Ord Dam provides a reliable storage of 11,000 gegalitres in Lake Argyle of which 335 gegalitres are allocated to Stage 1 of the Ord River Irrigation Area. Water costs are in the vicinity of \$110 per hectare; each farmer is allocated 17 ML/ha, although most only use 12-14ML/ha, hence the cost per megalitre is approximately between \$6.40-\$15/ML. It is clear that water availability is not an issue to the farmers. However Stage 2 development has had a better look at developing recycle systems on farm, which should assist in encouraging farmers to improve their water management. At the moment no run-off water is captured for recycling. With the opening of Stage 2 an additional 12,000 ha will be available. The cost of irrigation ground is in the range of \$10,000 -\$14,000 per ha, which has increased from \$5,000-\$7,000 with the introduction of sandalwood into the area.

A range of farming businesses were visited in the Ord Irriga-

tion District. These included a research farm, private farming businesses and MIS operations, growing a range of crops including seed crops, annual and perennial horticultural crops and sandalwood. The group were surprised with the diversity of crops grown in the region, with growers appearing as working closely together to share ideas. Crops are produced during the winter months due to the summer “wet”. During the summer time weeds are sprayed 2-3 times for control.

Seed crops produced at the Pacific Seeds Farm include sorghum, sunflowers, wheat, barley, corn, cotton and broccoli. Their on-farm costs of production are approximately 20-25% of the export value after grading and marketing. They are fortunate to be primary, secondary and tertiary producers, thus the final product is effectively value added and sold both domestically and exported. The farm employees approximately 6 full time employees and a number of casuals. Their main issues are costs of production. With the price of water being cheap it is cheaper to let the water run over night than having people work during the night to change siphons.

Another grower visited in the area who produced seed crops was Spike Desert. Spike moved to Australian in 1986 from the USA, having travelled to the region for a number of years involved in cotton seed production. He grows a range of crops including coriander, seed lettuce, seed pumpkins, seed onions, seed sunflowers, seed tomatoes, nigar (for birdseed) and also an experiment trap crop for heliothis. With the development and expansion of the sandalwood industry in the region he has also commenced production of sandalwood seed. Seed is collected from trees during their 3rd, 4th and 5th year. Once the tree reaches its 6th year, production of the seed declines.

Two annual fruit and vegetable growers were visited in the region, these included Darryl Smith and Peter Pegg. Crops grown in the region by these growers included rockmelons, pumpkins (Jarradale, Jap and Butternut), chickpeas, maize, beans and sweet potatoes. Produce is sent to markets in Melbourne, Sydney and Western Australia. Cost of freight is high along with costs associated with labour. It can be difficult keeping the same labour throughout the season, along with keeping this labour over the weekends. In some cases on farm accommodation has been provided for the casual labour, which further increases the production costs.

The group also meet with Lachlan Dobson from Kimberly Produce. They grow, pack and sell mangos and red grapefruit. Lachlan moved from Northern Victoria to the region approximately 15 years ago with the plan to expand their sup-

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ply window. The company supplies both the domestic and export (Japan and SE Asia) markets. Sourcing and retaining labour has been an issue for the business; hence they have adopted technology, both in the field and packing areas with the aim of reducing their labour requirement. The packing shed was built 2 years ago, with the ability to grade the fruit by weight, skin condition and size, whilst at the same time track all produce from the field to the market using bar code scanners. Kimberly Produce was provided an opportunity to expand through the involvement of a MIS venture. The group were provided with an insight into the vast size and costs associated with running the MIS.

A new crop produced in the region is Chia. Chia seed is considered a super seed that originally formed part of the staple diet of the ancient Mayans and Aztecs. Chia was first grown in the Ord 5 years ago. Very little knowledge is available globally on producing this crop, hence the Chia Co is still learning how to improve crop yields. The company is also responsible for their own marketing which has been challenging as this was a new product in Australia. Currently around 1,000 ha of the chia is grown. The chia seed takes about 110 days from planting to maturity and is then windrowed and harvested with a commercial header. The seed is worth approximately \$2,000 to \$2,400 per tonne. It's a small higher-value crop, so, although the yields are lower, the freight percentage of the yield is significantly less compared to something like maize or beans which might produce 4 to 10 times more tonnage per hectare but the cost of freight per ha increases proportionally. Hence chia is competitive in a remote area like this. Fertiliser applications for chia are approximately half of that used for maize. Other crops grown on the farm include maize, seed sorghum, and commercial pumpkins, with yields of 11.5 tonne/ha for the maize, 5.5 tonne/ha for the sorghum and 35tonne/ha for pumpkins. They are also doing trials with rice on beds.

Another new industry in the region is Sandalwood. The first plantings occurred in the late 1990's. Sandalwood is a tree that is planted with two host plants to assist in nutrient supply. Sandalwood is grown for the heart wood, taking about 10-12 years before first harvest but has been known to take up to 20 years. The heart wood contains an oil that is used widely in perfumes etc. At the moment growers are unsure what yields they are going to obtain but are confident of the future, gauging from some of the core samples taken to date. At the moment sandalwood plantings are constantly expanding, encroaching on the available irrigated cropping country, with final yields and returns still unknown. Prices the group were told were in the vicinity of \$100,000 to \$120,000 per ha.

The group finished their tour on the Friday afternoon with a cruise on Lake Argyle. Providing an opportunity to view this vast mass of water from a different angle. This lake contains enough water for 4 years supply of irrigation and environmental water. It is approximately 70 by 40km in size and 25m deep.

The main points arising from the group who participated in

this tour were:

- The area provides an extended or expanded cropping season, thus you are able to supply your markets for a longer period of time
- They do have seasonal troubles e.g.. insects, starting and finishing time of the wet season
- The climate is consistent for 8-9 months of the year. With temperatures ranging from 30-32oC in the winter and increasing to 35-36oC. There is very little rainfall during the growing season.
- Daylight hours during the winter months are lower than what is experienced in Northern Victoria and Southern NSW during the summer months and can result in slightly lower crop yields. Wheat and barely is produced in the area but yields are only in the range of 2-2.5 t/ha.
- The wet season results in a good germination of weeds, therefore there is no need for rotation of crops, hence farmers can continually grow the same crop year after year.
- There is only a small amount of cropping ground available, therefore making it more expensive to purchase or find land. The cost of irrigated ground is high, with most costing around \$10,000 -\$14,000 per ha. As sandalwood plantations expand this land appears to becoming more scarce and expensive.
- Cost of leasing ground is around \$1,000/ha.
- Input costs are high as things like fertiliser need to be transported considerable distances, and can cost \$250-\$300 per tonne for freight.
- The cost of freight to market is also high, hence high value crops need to be produced to remain sustainable.
- Water availability is not an issue, hence water was not used as efficiently as what we are accustomed to in Southern NSW and Northern Victoria. If water use efficiency was improved the group felt that growers in the area may experience increased crop yields, as many crops appeared to experience periods of water logging.
- Farmers in the area were concerned about corporates (e.g Sandalwood companies) coming in and taking over ,resulting in the demise of the family farm.

Overall Darwin and Kununurra show a lot of potential and could be the nation's next food bowl, particularly the land around Kununurra which has an endless supply of water. However, production agriculture is struggling to compete with the Sandalwood plantations which occupy half of the fertile land for a return which is currently unknown. Farmers in the region find it very hard to attract new industries to set up, such as tomato processing plants and cotton gins, because it is simply not economic to lay out all that infrastructure cost for the amount of land that is left available for cropping, although this should change with the opening of stage 2. A good example of this is the sugar mill which eventually folded because the lack of sugar cane being planted. At the moment Kununurra has no more space on the electrical grid for expansion and no available gas. These factors will continue to limit potential growth in the area and restrict new

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2009/10 Season's Research

Due once again to the reduced APTRC funds this years research and development program will be once again run on a tight budget.

Cultivar Evaluation Trials

The industries cultivar evaluation program will once again be managed on a similar level to last year. NSW DPI will be responsible for the direct seed machine harvested cultivar trial at Darlington Point, while Liz Mann will be responsible for the transplanted machine harvest trials.

The NSW direct seed trial will include the following varieties:

H7204	Heinz
ENP 113	Lefroy Valley
H3002	Heinz
SPS 669-6	SPS

The transplanted trials will be replicated on 3 farms, including Kennedy's at Corop, and NCP and SS Farms at Rochester. The varieties included in these trials will be:

SPS 669-6	SPS
Early Magnum	Lefroy Valley
TOM 90031	Lefroy Valley
TOM 90032	Lefroy Valley
H5803	Heinz
H3506	Heinz
H4001	Heinz
H3402	Heinz
H4401	Heinz
Sun 6366	Nunhems

Arbuscular Mycorrhizal (AM) Fungi Project

This project will continue to investigate the role of arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi in sustainable processing tomato production.

The association between host plant and AM fungus is usually mutualistic, in that the fungus transfers nutrients, most notably phosphorus (P), into the plant and receives carbohydrates in the form of sugars from the plant for growth and activity. AM fungi use the plant sugars to grow a network of thread-like filaments (hyphae) through the soil which can explore a much greater volume of soil per unit of carbohydrate supplied than plant roots, often making the hyphal network a more efficient proposition to the plant than growing an equivalent length of roots.

Due to their very small diameter (tens of microns) AM hyphae can also gain access to nutrient sources in small spaces that are physically inaccessible to plant roots and may also be able to access plant-unavailable nutrient sources by secreting compounds that can release nutrients from soil minerals, for example, calcium phosphate. In these ways AM fungi may increase plant growth and yield, and potentially

decrease the amount of fertiliser needed to obtain a given yield and increase the use efficiency of applied fertilisers (particularly P). Initial work conducted by Dr Ash Martin in 2006 found that inoculation of tomato seedlings with AM fungi increased fruit yield by an average of 38% across two varieties under field conditions.

However, AM fungi can be sensitive to some farming practices, such as applications of metham sodium, fungicides and high fertiliser applications. The work conducted by Dr Tim Cavagnaro and Dr Ash Martin in 2008 found that metham sodium use was linked to depressed levels of AM colonisation in tomato crops. Fungicides and large applications of inorganic fertilisers are also widely known to reduce AM colonisation in tomatoes and other crops.

Due to these results 2 small plot field trials will be conducted this season using inoculated transplants, 1 at Corop and the other at Rochester. The objectives of these trials will be:

- Confirm the previous yield increase measured in tomato plants inoculated with AM fungi during the nursery stage.
- Determine the effect of the systemic insecticide [Syngenta Experimental] on mycorrhizal colonisation in tomato roots and subsequent mycorrhizal nutrient and yield effects.
- Determine the effects of compost application on mycorrhizal colonisation and other soil microbiology.
- Investigate the interaction, if any, between [Syngenta Experimental], compost application and mycorrhizal fungi in terms of plant nutrient status and yield.

Doris Blaesing's Project TM06004

Following the feedback from last season Doris is working on completing a number of nutrient management tools for growers. These will include:

- An updated version of the sap nutrient graphs in a simple chart for growers to plot their own results.
- A fortnightly phone conference whereby growers can call a 1 800 number to speak to Doris on a conference call if they have any queries regarding interpretation of their sap test results.
- Finalisation of the Nutrient Management Manual, available to all levy paying members
- Development of a generic Risk Assessment for Soil and Water Management.

Other Research

Syngenta Crop Protection is planning on doing a number of larger scale trials this year to assist in obtaining registration for 2 new products. It is envisaged that an inspection of one of these will be included in the January Crop Inspection around the Rochester/Corop region.

Individual On-Farm Trials

If you are interested in trialling something on your own farm and would like some assistance to make sure you can rely on the results etc please contact Liz Mann.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Irrigation: meeting the challenge, Irrigation Australia Conference.

This year's conference is being held in Swan Hill 18 to 21 October 2009.

www.irrigation.org.au

Keep it Real[®] 2009

6th National Food Safety, Quality and Environmental Assurance Conference

9th—12th November, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Launceston Tasmania

www.tqainc.com.au

9th World Congress on the Processing Tomato

Sunday 20th June 2010 - Wednesday 23rd June 2010, Estoril, Portugal

At this stage it is proposed that a tour will occur for Australian Participants.

HAL funding is available, but it is predicted that this will only be sufficient to cover the registration cost to attend the World Congress.

If you are interested in attending please let Liz Mann know by the end of the year.

Annual Crop Inspection and Industry Dinner

January 2010, details TBC

Nuffield Report Available

A study into sub-surface drip irrigation by Mathew Stott - 2008 Nuffield Scholar

- Australian farmers must increase their on-farm water use efficiency
- Sub surface drip irrigation (SDI) can be adapted to many different types of farming systems
- In the past, farmers have had access to almost unlimited quantities of water
- SDI should be used as a finishing tool
- SDI should be considered, as globally there will be issues of food shortages
- It is possible to germinate a crop that is directly above the drip tube

Please visit the following website to obtain a copy of Matt's report.

http://www.nuffieldinternational.org/rep_pdf/1250471341Stott_Mathew_2008_Report.pdf

Australian Processing Tomato Grower Magazines

The Industry Development Manager has just recently completed updating the CD containing electronic copies of all the past industries magazines (1980 to 2009). This CD was first compiled in 2006 and distributed to industry members. It consists of all magazine reports, listed under various topics.



This CD will be distributed to all levy papers with their 2009 magazine free of charge. Other people are welcome to purchase a CD by contacting Liz Mann (lizmann@aptrc.asn.au)

World Processing Tomato Council Crop Update (1/9/09)

Italy

AIIPA:

The harvest is expected to finish around 15-20 September, a week before the normal date, with a final volume lower than that contracted. Good colour and quality at present, but brix are slightly lower than normal at 4.7-4.8. The night temperatures have been getting lower in the last few days.

ConfCooperative:

The cooperatives have processed approximately 50% of the tomato surface with a production of about 70 tons per hectare. Until now the weather has been fine and the field situation is quite good even if the high temperatures registered during the last period have been accelerating the tomato maturation and, as a consequence, in this period the 10% of fresh tomato is being lost. The cooperatives expect to finish the crop one week or ten days earlier with a total crop as was initially forecast.

ANICAV:

The situation in the south is different. The crop development has been slower than normal and the harvest is 9-10 days late. Good weather in September is needed to achieve the forecast as so far the proportion of the crop harvested to date is 10-12% lower than normal.

The volume of 5.2 million tonnes can still be achieved in there is a good weather in September in the South.

Greece

The weather has not been so good in some areas, with some rains at the beginning of the season and now in the north, lowering yields in the fields. The forecast has now been reduced by 5% to 760 000 tonnes but the final volume will depend on the weather for the rest of the season.

Spain

A few days of very high temperatures in the middle of August have accelerated the maturation of the tomatoes. Temperatures have now lowered. In the North, farm yields are generally higher than normal. In the South of the region, the situation is normal. In Andalucia, tuta absoluta developed very rapidly and led to significant losses in the late crop. In the Ebro Valley, the harvest is early due to the hot weather. Good yields and good quality are reported. The total forecast remains 2.4 million tonnes, although this figure could be exceeded if the weather remains good throughout September.

Portugal

The field yield is lower than last year, but larger surfaces were planted so the total volume processed should be close to 1.2 million tonnes if the weather remains good in September. Brix is slightly higher than last year.

France

No changes in the forecast. The harvest is progressing well although there are problems with over-mature tomatoes because of the high temperatures.

Turkey

The forecast is maintained at 1.6 million tonnes. The crop is late and the achievement of the forecast will depend on the weather in September. The quality is good but brix slightly lower than normal leading to a factory yield 3% lower than expected.

Tunisia

The forecast of 800 000 tonnes is maintained.

Currently, the total forecast for all AMITOM countries (10 member countries + 5 Associate members) stands at 15.57 million tonnes, of which 9.77 million tonnes for the 5 EU countries.

Other countries:

California

According to the NASS report released on 31 August, the 2009 contracted production for California processing tomatoes is shaping up to be a record year with a forecast of 13.5 million short tons (12.24 million metric tonnes) and average yield of 43.97 tons per acre (c. 98 t/ha). The forecasted contracted production for 2009 is 13 percent above the previous record in 1999.

Other US States

According to information received from the USDA, late blight has been identified in most of the eastern tomato-growing states. The disease did not reach Indiana and Ohio (the 2 largest producing states in the east) until early August. Until this past week, much of Indiana (especially in the Northern parts of the state where tomatoes are grown) had been relatively hot and dry which does not favour spread of blight.

Canada

Harvest has begun. Crop quality is excellent, with yields expected to be average to slightly above. Some late blight but not significant enough to reduce contract volumes.

China

Heavy rainstorm with hails attacked the production region of Inner Mongolia last week, which created a shortage of raw materials and the prices had a 15% increase. Up to now, the weather in Xinjiang is normal with satisfactory unit yield and fruits in good maturity. So we expect the production still remain at about 7.38 million MT.

South Africa

The tomato harvest in the North is currently on track with above average yields per hectare. The forecast is maintained at previous quantity of 170 000 tonnes.

Hungary

About 150 ha of tomatoes were destroyed due to bad weather at the beginning of the season, but the remaining 1850 ha are in very good condition. It is estimated that about 130 000 tonnes of tomatoes will be processed if the weather remains good till the end of September, which means more than 70 t/ha average yield this year.

Poland

Because of the very cold and rainy conditions during June and July disease development (Phytophthora and bacterial diseases) has been a problem and there were some hailstorms. Consequently the crop forecast is now being reduced from 160 000 tonnes to 100 000 tonnes. 3 700 ha have been planted with tomatoes and the price this year is equivalent to 82€/tonne.



WORLD PROCESSING TOMATO COUNCIL

Date of last update: 1 September 2009

		2007 FINAL	2008 FINAL	2009 FORECAST 11 Aug 2009	2009 FORECAST 1 Sept 2009	AVERAGE 2006 to 2008	
all figures in 1000 metric tonnes							
NORTHERN HEMISPHERE*	MEMBERS IN MEDITERRANEAN REGION (AMITOM)	Algeria**	300	260	300	300	247
		France	99	125	210	210	115
		Greece	640	670	800	760	673
		Iran**	2 100	2 060	2 200	2 200	1 987
		Israel	225	240	231	231	217
		Italy	4 600	4 900	5 200	5 200	4 633
		Malta**	9	12	12	12	11
		Morocco	140	160	160	160	140
		Portugal***	1 030	998	1 200	1 200	976
		Spain***	1 801	1 770	2 400	2 400	1 717
Syria**	70	150	150	150	128		
Tunisia	580	800	800	800	614		
Turkey	1 650	2 700	1 600	1 600	1 933		
Ukraine**	85	150	350	350	162		
Subtotal Mediterranean Region	13 329	14 995	15 613	15 573	13 553		
MEMBERS IN NORTH AMERICA	California	10 950	10 720	12 066	12 247	10 247	
	Canada	563	560	485	485	565	
	Subtotal North America	11 513	11 280	12 551	12 732	10 812	
MEMBERS IN ASIA	China	4 600	6 405	7 380	7 380	5 102	
	Japan	43	44	40	40	42	
	Subtotal Asia	4 643	6 449	7 420	7 420	5 144	
Subtotal WPTC members		29 485	32 724	35 584	35 725	29 509	
NON MEMBERS	Bulgaria	140	150	150	150	143	
	Hungary	115	83	130	130	100	
	Poland	205	160	160	100	195	
	Czech Republic	15	15	15	15	14	
	Slovakia	30	30	30	30	29	
	Other US States (exc. California)	524	439	513	513	475	
	Subtotal non-members	1 029	877	998	938	956	
Total Northern Hemisphere		30 514	33 601	36 582	36 663	30 142	
		2007 FINAL	2008 FINAL	2009 FORECAST 11 Aug 2009	2009 FORECAST 1 Sept 2009	AVERAGE 2006 to 2008	
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE*	MEMBERS	Argentina	340	350	450	450	327
		Australia	229	151	270	270	224
		Chile	670	510	618	618	600
		South Africa	160	150	170	170	153
		Subtotal WPTC members	1 399	1 161	1 508	1 508	1 303
	NON MEMBERS	Brazil	1 291	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 217
		India	120	130	130	130	132
		Mexico	17	18	20	20	20
		New Zealand	70	65	65	65	67
		Peru	70	70	70	70	62
Senegal		52	51	70	70	60	
Taiwan	20	20	20	20	20		
Thailand	260	260	260	260	260		
Venezuela	40	40	40	40	40		
Subtotal non-members	1 940	1 854	1 875	1 875	1 876		
Total Southern Hemisphere		3 339	3 015	3 383	3 383	3 179	
GENERAL TOTAL		33 853	36 616	39 965	40 046	33 321	
of which members of the WPTC		30 884	33 885	37 092	37 233	30 812	
		91,2%	92,5%	92,8%	93,0%	92,5%	

all figures in 1000 metric tonnes

In pink: estimate, no recent information on the country

DISCLAIMER

All figures are provided to WPTC members and other participating experts of the processing associations. WPTC does not guarantee or assume any liability for the accuracy of the contents of this site/report and shall not be responsible for any losses sustained as a result of relying on the contained information.

*Hemispheres are not defined in the strict geographic sense but as:

Northern Hemisphere: crop period mainly July to December

Southern Hemisphere: crop period mainly January to June

** AMITOM associate members

*** Tomatoes produced in Portugal but processed in Spain are reported in Spain

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industries developing in the area. Government assistance will be required to expand the infrastructure to attract new industries in the future.

Having the abundance of water doesn't guarantee a good income. Growing costs in the region are high due to their isolation and cost of freight for their crop inputs and produce. It was felt that many growers needed to average \$3,000 to \$5,000 a hectare to make a reasonable profit. At the same time there is potential for the markets to be easily flooded if a number of the growers in the area produced the same crop. Growers need to be producing high value crops to survive. Good management and a good level of farming experience is required to survive in the valley. Many people have moved to the area over the past 25 years with either to much money and no experience, or experience but no money and have failed. When moving into a new cropping area or enterprise it is important that all aspects of production are studied, along with potential market opportunities for the final product.

Additional benefits of participating in this tour included an opportunity for all young growers to mix not only within the group but also with other farmers in similar industries. Enabling the participants to talk about how to improve our own crop production techniques, e.g., fertilising, spraying, irrigation and also to discuss how to better manage and look after employees. Participants were also able to discuss their current farming practices and issues which have arisen.

It was felt that if the Murray Goulbourn System could achieve 100% water right in the near future the Ord Irrigation area would not look so appealing. Our area has the land and the expertise to efficiently grow many high value crops with minimal water and lower growing costs.

Pesticide Usage

APVMA have recently released their Preliminary Review Findings for chlorpyrifos (see the link below).

From the processing tomato industry perspective, the APVMA have recommended that its use can continue on field grown tomatoes used for processing.

They have indicated that it can not be used on fresh market tomatoes (see page 31 of the report). Their concern relates to a lack of information on residues from cherry or grape sized tomatoes due to their greater surface area to volume, i.e., potential for higher residues.

http://www.apvma.gov.au/chemrev/downloads/chlorpyrifos_prf_sep09.pdf

New Rules for Ag and Vet Chemicals and Stock Food

A few changes have occurred to the Victorian Act, Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992.

The amendments mean the DPI can regulate animal food. All inputs to stock food, including manufactured food, fodder and organic by-products must now comply with the APVMA MRL's and the DPI will be able to prevent the sale/distribution of 'contaminated' animal feed that exceeds those MRL's.

More information is available from:

APVMA website:

<http://www.apvma.gov.au/residues/mrl.shtml>

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Phone: (03) 5825 4633, Fax: (03) 5825 4725, Mobile: (0427) 857-578, E-mail: lizmann@aptrc.asn.au

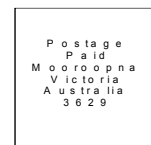
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Sender:

APTRC Inc.

P.O. Box 2293

SHEPPARTON, VIC 3632



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