



Know-how for Horticulture™



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,**  
**Fisheries and Forestry**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

28 May 2008

# **Local experts appointed to help horticulture irrigators with decision making**

Fruit Growers Victoria has been contracted to help horticulture irrigators in the Goulburn Valley and Swan Hill access the financial and agronomic information they need to make business decisions in the face of reduced water availability.

Through the project, growers are able to access one-on-one, free, confidential sessions with local Extension Providers who have a background in horticulture or finance.

John Wilson, General Manager of Fruit Growers Victoria, says the service is designed to help growers manage their businesses today, and plan for tomorrow.

“There are some big decisions for horticulturists to make this year that can have a long-term impact. This is particularly true for orchardists and other perennial croppers as well as annual croppers with significant capital infrastructure.”

“Our Extension Providers can act as a sounding board as you work through the options, whether that’s pulling trees, buying or selling water, expanding or trying something entirely different,” Mr Wilson said.

The Extension Providers for the Goulburn Valley are:

- **Ann Young**, who is part of a successful family farming stone fruit operation and has been a consultant on horticulture related projects at federal, state and local level. Ann also has extensive experience in accounting offices, quality assurance and horticultural training and assessment.
- **David Bell**, a horticultural consultant with David J Bell & Associates Pty Ltd. David has had a successful 28 year career in the agricultural chemical industry and irrigation technologies providing products and services for crops including pome and stone fruit, citrus, tomatoes and vegetables.
- **Henry Schneider**, who has more than 30 years of working in horticultural extension in the region, including 12 years with the Department of Primary Industries dealing particularly with drought, irrigation management and orchard nutrition. Henry has extensive knowledge in the irrigated pome, stone fruit & citrus industries, plus experience in the wine, table grape & dried vine fruits areas.
- **Liz Mann**, who has worked as a Rural Financial Counsellor for the past 12 months. For the past nine years she has also been the Industry Development Manager for the Australian Processing Tomato Industry based in the Goulburn Valley.
- **Russell Fox**, who has a wealth of experience dealing with growers in the Goulburn and Murray Valleys and is currently a Senior Agronomist with I K Caldwell specialising in pest and disease management, nutrition and irrigation programs in fruit and vegetable crops.

The project is being run by Horticulture Australia Limited in partnership with industry and supported by the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Sunraysia irrigator Tony Martin is chair of the project's Implementation Steering Committee. He says water scarcity is a major issue for irrigated horticulture in the Murray-Darling Basin.

"To ensure the profitability and sustainability of the industry, we need to give horticulture irrigators access to good agronomic and financial information," Mr Martin said.

"There's a lot of information out there from a variety of sources, and the Extension Providers have the knowledge and skills to help growers access information that is most relevant to them.

"The project is being run until the end of October across the southern Murray-Darling Basin, in Sunraysia, the Riverina and South Australia as well as the Goulburn Valley and Swan Hill."

For more information, including contact details in other regions, go to the HAL website, [www.horticulture.com.au/mdbdroughtinfo](http://www.horticulture.com.au/mdbdroughtinfo)

Fruit Growers Victoria is the peak industry body for Victorian apple and pear growers and has its head office located in the Goulburn Valley.

It represents deciduous fruit growers in the north east, central and southern regions of Victoria and furthers the interests of more than 300 fruit growing, packing and exporting businesses across Victoria. It provides secretariat support for ten other horticultural associations.

Call 03 5825 3700, email [admin@fgv.com.au](mailto:admin@fgv.com.au), log onto [www.fgv.com.au](http://www.fgv.com.au) and click the link on the front page, or contact the following Extension Providers to set up an appointment.

- Ann Young, 0409 503 711, [hdc2@inet.net.au](mailto:hdc2@inet.net.au)
- David Bell, 0417 501 503, [david.j.bell@telstra.com](mailto:david.j.bell@telstra.com)
- Henry Schneider, 0417 091 679, [f1hawk@hotmail.com](mailto:f1hawk@hotmail.com)
- Liz Mann, 0427 857 578, [lizmann@aptrc.asn.au](mailto:lizmann@aptrc.asn.au)
- Russell Fox, 0428 570 394, [russellf@ikc.com.au](mailto:russellf@ikc.com.au)

*In partnership with industry and supported by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Horticulture Australia Limited has developed this project "Drought Information Delivery for Horticulture in the Murray Darling Basin" (MDB) as part of the Australian Government's Irrigation Industries Workshop Programme.*

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