

February 14, 2018

Middle East in Australian growers' sights

Growers from key horticultural regions across the nation will converge upon the Gulfood trade expo in Dubai on Sunday to showcase Australian produce to close to 100,000 potential buyers from around the world.

Organised by Hort Innovation, the effort will see about 30 industry representatives from the fruit, nut and vegetable sectors appearing at event from February 18 to 22.

Together, the cohort will occupy an eye-catching Taste Australia exhibit filled with fresh produce, cooking demonstrations and samples, gaining exposure to buyers from more than 180 countries.

Hort Innovation trade general manager Michael Rogers said Gulfood is the world's largest annual food event, and fresh premium horticulture products are in high demand with discerning consumers throughout the Middle East.

"With close to 100,000 visitors expected to go through the doors of Gulfood this year, this event provides a great opportunity to showcase how our Australian research and development supports us bringing quality produce to the world," he said.

"We are also very excited because this year is the first time we are bringing Taste Australia to the event, after it was launched last year."

In August, Hort Innovation launched [Taste Australia](#), the horticulture industry's biggest trade effort yet.

"Our in-market international activities – including retail campaigns and signature events – are tracking strongly, and we are well into our six-month trade-tour across Asia and the Middle East, collectively involving close to 300 industry representatives and growers.

"We have helped Australian growers attend major trade fairs in Hong Kong, China and Dubai, and from next month we'll be travelling to Japan and then Singapore."

Mr Rogers said trade event attendance is open to all Australian horticulture growers and industry groups that have an export focus or looking to enter key export markets.

"There are opportunities for smaller operators who are not yet trading but interested in how it all works, to larger experienced commercial operators who buy larger spaces to help increase their presence in major markets."

Mr Rogers said trade events provide an opportunity for the Australian horticulture industry to demonstrate its commitment to priorities such as sustainable farming practices, cutting-edge technology to enhance food safety and biosecurity efforts.

He said with research and development as a basis, Taste Australia was already getting good traction overseas.

"Taste Australia highlights how our horticultural products go beyond being clean, green and safe," Mr Rogers said.

"Our country is known for our great lifestyle with our sunshine, appealing farms, beaches and landscapes, all of which is conveyed through this new in-market activity giving international consumers a sense of Australia every time they buy and eat Australian fruit, vegetable and nuts."

Last financial year, Australia exported more than \$188 million in horticultural produce to the Middle East with key markets in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Lebanon and Bahrain – up from \$90 million in 2011/2012 (IHS Global Trade Atlas 2017).

"Exports to the Middle East have more than doubled over the past five years, and initiatives such as Taste Australia can only help this figure rise," Mr Rogers said.

Growers keen to get involved, should email trade@horticulture.com.au **MEDIA:** Kelly Vorst-Parkes on 0447 304 255 or kelly.vorst.parkes@horticulture.com.au

