

**Assisting the
development of the
Australian melon
industry**

Jan Davis
Growcom

Project Number: VX02001

VX02001

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Know-how for Horticulture™

Horticulture Australia Ltd

Project VX02001

Assisting the development of the Australian
melon industry

Final Report

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Horticulture Australia Ltd

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Assisting the development of the Australian melon industry

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Purpose of the report:

The purpose of the report is to highlight the outcomes of the Melon Industry Development Officer project

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Media Summary

The Australian melon industry has undergone considerable restructuring and rationalisation over the last decade. Whilst production is concentrated in Queensland, significant growing regions are also located in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Production areas were traditionally located close to capital cities, along the coastline of the warmer states however principal production regions now exist in inland areas and throughout Australia.

Increases in production and consumption are anticipated with research and development activities in recent years leading to the production of seedless watermelons and marketing of sweetness graded rockmelons.

Whilst the market remains positive the challenges of the melon industry include a lack of clear communications, effective technology transfer, industry cohesion and strategic direction. The frequent absence of united representation has also been a key barrier to the progression of the industry and its external and internal relations.

The Industry Development project was developed by industry representatives to address these core issues and constraints. The key role of the project was to enable priority strategic issues to be defined, actioned and resolved by the industry by addressing these challenges. As such, components of the project included:

- The facilitation of the development and annual review of an industry strategic plan.
- The facilitation of working groups to progress the projects identified by the strategic planning process.
- The development and maintenance of an industry database to facilitate communication
- The facilitation of technology transfer activities including field days, conferences, workshops and distribution of relevant publications.
- Regional grower group and industry group alliances for improved production planning and market development

The project has achieved success in a number of areas including the implementation of key projects identified by industry during its strategic planning exercise and a greatly expanded and involved network of industry members and stakeholders to work together on improving the industry as a whole. The project has also had considerable success in improving the industry knowledge base on production and marketing topics. The project evaluation indicates that members of the industry believe that the IDO project has been most effective in improving communication within the industry,

improving industry awareness regarding marketing and production developments as well as events and industry issues, improving technology transfer and developing stronger industry networks. A proposal has been developed for a second stage project which is expected to commence at the end of 2005.

Introduction

The Australian melon industry has undergone considerable restructuring and rationalisation over the last decade. Whilst production is concentrated in Queensland, significant growing regions are also located in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The wide geographical spread of the industry and the subsequent lack of communication between members has been a significant factor that has contributed to a high level of fragmentation within the industry.

Mindful of these issues, Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers (now Growcom) in partnership with the Australian Melon Association and HAL developed a project to employ an AMA Industry Development Officer (IDO) for 1 day a week and a QFVG (Growcom) IDO for 2 days a week to facilitate the development of strategic direction within the industry at a national level and to reduce fragmentation within the industry. Both of these priorities would create a platform from which the industry could address the issues which affect the underlying profitability of industry members.

Subsequently, the development of a strategic plan and a communications plan for the Australian Melon Industry formed the framework for all project activities.

Technology transfer strategy and methodology/activities

The Australian melon industry employed the services of two IDOs to facilitate industry development. The Australian Melon Association (AMA) employed one person on a permanent part time basis (0.2FTE) and QFVG employed one person on a permanent part time basis (0.4FTE). The AMA IDO was based in St George in Queensland and the QFVG IDO in Brisbane during the initial stages of the project and then in Bundaberg for the latter stages. The IDOs travelled to regional areas by car and aeroplane as required.

The progress of the IDO was monitored by a management committee which consisted of 3 industry members representing different regions and sectors of the industry who met (either face to face over the phone) at least 4 times per year to monitor the progress of the project and to plan for the coming periods.

The foundation for the project was developed through the development of a strategic plan in consultation with industry during the early stages of the project. The IDOs worked with all sectors of the industry to develop the plan which has subsequently been reviewed each year. In order to

implement the projects prioritised in the plan and in light of the lack of financial resources available to the industry to do this, volunteer working groups were set up to implement the projects in their specific areas of interest/expertise. Subsequently 5 main groups were formed including Supply Chain, Varietal Performance, R&D, Funding, Code of Practice and Best Practice.

The IDOs also developed a communications plan in consultation with industry. The communications plan incorporated a range of communications tools allowing for different communication methods (both one way and two way) to be aimed at specific sectors of the industry. Tools included printed media, electronic media, industry mailing lists, industry development officer reports, Events – conferences, workshops, meetings, Questionnaires and feedback, Governmental bodies and other organisations and Press. Another part of this strategy included the attendance by the IDOs at the annual IDO workshop organised and managed by Horticulture Australia Ltd to develop networks with Development Officers working in similar roles with other horticultural industries around the country.

Activities

Time frame	Activity	Details
February 2003	Regional Meetings	Feedback from regional grower meetings facilitated by QFVG melon industry development officer (0.4FTE) prior to March 2003 was used to develop a draft QFVG Melon Sub Committee Strategy 2002-2005. This strategy was used in conjunction with the Australian Melon Association (AMA) Australian Melon Industry's Strategic Plan 2000-2005 to prepare a report titled "Australian Melon Industry Situation Analysis".
June 2003	Strategic planning workshop	Facilitated by Primary Business Solutions Pty Ltd, a two-day workshop utilised existing industry plans in addition to further industry feedback from workshop participants and by mail, to develop a "2003-2008 Strategic Plan for the Australian Melon Industry". Priority action areas of the plan included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product – enhance the melon eating experience for consumers • Operations – increase the efficiency of operating and marketing systems • Returns – strengthen the competitive position of committed producers and marketers • Industry – build industry unity and increase participation in industry affairs This plan was finalised and its existence publicised to industry in August 2003.
June 2003	Alignment of databases	The ongoing review and alignment of QFVG and AMA industry databases was initiated during 2002. A comprehensive 'detail check' mail out to growers was made by the QFVG melon industry development officer, with over 40 faxed and posted replies used to update existing data. In addition, feedback at grower meetings, follow-up faxes and phone calls were also made by the QFVG melon industry development officer. Details reviewed in this process included variety and acreage

Time frame	Activity	Details
		<p>information. All new data received was recorded on QFVG's IMIS database and shared with the AMA melon industry development officer. New grower information received by QFVG and AMA melon industry development officers at industry events and by word-of-mouth was also shared. As of July 2003 it was agreed that the AMA database would be used for all further project communications.</p>
August 2003	Communications plan	<p>A draft communications plan was established early in 2003 which maintained existing communications by both the QFVG Melon Sub Committee and the AMA. Communications included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QFVG – Queensland Melon Newsletter (monthly), melon web pages with the QFVG web site (www.qfvg.org.au) • AMA – AMA Melon News (quarterly) and the Melon Runner (annual) <p>In response to industry feedback at both the strategic planning workshop and subsequent project management committee and AMA committee meetings, the communications plan was reviewed.</p> <p>The communications plan established as of August 2003 included: printed information, electronic media, industry mailing list, industry development officer reports, events, questionnaires and feedback, governmental bodies and other organisations, press.</p>
August 2003	Volunteer working groups formed to action strategic plan	<p>At the follow up meeting to the development of the strategic plan, 6 working groups were formed and planned activities/projects to implement the relevant section of the strategic plan. The working groups included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Chain Improvement • Varietal improvement • Code of Practice

Time frame	Activity	Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D • Funding • Best Practice
January 2004	Work plans developed	Appendix 1 details the two IDO work plans which were devised over the first 6 months of the project. The first was updated to reflect the implementation of the Industry Strategic Plan and the subsequent shift of some activities to achieve the goals set out in the strategic plan.
May 2003 – May 2004	Implementation of the communications plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and maintenance of the industry website (www.melonsaustralia.org.au) • 16 issues of the fortnightly produced Melon E-news emailed to approximately 460 members of the melon industry nationwide. • 3 issues of the quarterly produced Melon News sent to approximately 850 members of the melon industry nationwide. • The database has been developed, maintained and expanded. It was also been posted on the QFVG web site which meant it was accessible to a number of key melon industry representatives and could be updated by both IDOs.
May 2003 – May 2004	Regional Meetings to communicate project results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Melon Grower meetings in Bundaberg (each attracting 30 growers), 1 Melon Grower meeting in Chinchilla (attracting 30 growers), Field day in Bourke NSW (attracting 40 people) and Field day in Mildura Victoria (attracting more than 100 people). The focus of these meetings/Field Days has been the extension of industry funded research to improve eating quality of rockmelons, communication of the industry strategic plan and the projects aimed at implementing its objectives and information on issues

Time frame	Activity	Details
		<p>specific to the growing region hosting the meeting/field day. Field Days/grower meetings being organised for later in the year included Katherine, Kununurra, Rockhampton and Bowen.</p>
May 2004	<p>Coordination of volunteer working groups to implement projects identified in strategic planning process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practice Supply Chain Project – 5 businesses in collaboration with the QDPI were involved in the supply chain project which monitored a number of supply chains with the aim of pinpointing critical control points along the chain that impact on the eating quality of the final product. This project was initiated by the Supply Chain working group. • Varietal Evaluation Tool Project - The Varietal Performance Group produced a variety guide to assist growers with the evaluation of suitable rockmelon, honeydew and watermelon varieties based on consumer requirements as well as desirable plant characteristics. The sheets were presented in a manual which also included varietal descriptions provided by seed suppliers. The intention of this project was to establish a common dialog that growers, packers, merchants and retailers can use to evaluate and communicate their opinions on varieties. It was also intended that the evaluation forms could be used in conjunction with growers' own quality management system. • The Best Practice Group was instrumental in organising the field days in Bourke and Mildura and assisted to organise those in North Queensland later in the year. • Consumer Sensory Research – Each of the working groups at the outset identified a gap in the market research available regarding what consumers prefer. As brix is the only easily replicated indicator of eating quality available to the industry at present, it was deemed necessary to draw some correlation between brix and consumer eating acceptance. A team of students from Queensland University studying agribusiness conducted a series of sampling activities which assisted the industry to understand the brix levels that are more likely to attain a higher level of consumer satisfaction. The results of this research

Time frame	Activity	Details
		were published.
September 2004	First Review of Industry Events by external party	Prior to the Review, a random survey was carried out targeting industry members who had NOT been involved in any of the activities or working groups that had been in operation over the previous 12 months. The survey revealed that 80% of the industry was aware of the Strategic Plan, and agreed with its priorities. In addition to this, industry representatives who attended the review praised the work of the 2003/04 Working Groups and the IDOs for their role in driving change in the industry.
September 2004	Review of Strategic plan and introduction of 3 new working groups	The IDOs were now required to support the formation of these groups, develop project briefs and assist with funding arrangements. These groups included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product Working Group – responsible for conducting consumer research 2. Operations Working Groups – responsible for the development of a PDL, including brix testing standard 3. Industry Working Group – responsible for implementing the national levy and the young people’s program
May 2004 – September 2004	Support of Supply Chain Improvement Project	This project was initiated by the Supply Chain working group, led by Scott Ledger from the QDPI. This project aims to (i) identify the effect of current handling practices and conditions in supply chains on fruit quality of melons and (ii) determine best practice supply chain systems for delivering high eating quality melons to consumers. Five corporate companies have contributed to fund the project and some results will be made available to the wider industry over the next 18 months.
May 2004 – September 2004	Support for Year Round Monitoring of	This was a sub-project of the project VX00019. The aim of this project was to capture a snapshot of the brix levels of fruit in the central markets over a 12 month period. This data was designed to benchmark this aspect

Time frame	Activity	Details
	Rockmelon Brix Levels & Brix Testing Workshop	of fruit quality, to be used to determine the need for future improvements in quality, as well as being a reference point from which future improvement can be measured. The IDOs captured and communicated these results to the industry
May 2004 – September 2004	Consumer sensory research	As brix is the only easily replicated indicator of eating quality available to the industry at present, it is necessary to draw some correlation between brix and consumer eating acceptance. A team of market research students from the University of Qld conducted a series of sampling activities which were designed to assist the industry to understand the brix levels that are more likely to attain a higher level consumer satisfaction. The IDOs initiated and managed this project
May 2004 – September 2004	Melon Industry Levy and Export Charge	The IDOs worked with the Funding Working Group, HAL, DAFF and others to prepare the levy proposal which was sent to growers.
May 2004 – September 2004	Communication activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance of the Melon Industry Website • fortnightly publication and distribution of the Melon E-News • annual publication of the Melon Runner Magazine (September) • preliminary planning for the International Cucurbit Symposium and Melon Conference in 2005 • some liaising with the organising committee of the Chinchilla Melon Festival
November 2004 – May 2005	Chinchilla Melon Festival	IDOs assisted in organising a Melon Field Day, held in conjunction with the Chinchilla Melon Festival. Approximately 150 people from across the industry and the country attended with at least 50 of those being

Time frame	Activity	Details
		growers, travelling from Kununurra, Mataranka, Katherine, Hillston and Canowindra. The program included variety trials, trade displays and presentations.
November 2004 – May 2005	Consumer Research	The consumer research working group met in April to begin developing a brief to commission future consumer research. This aligned with the consumer research project being run under the auspices of the Tropical Fruits Industry Partnership Program and hence some of the required research is likely to be funded through that program. When completed, the melon industry brief will be sent to all members of the industry to seek funding support to carry out the project. The proposal will also be submitted to Horticulture Australia Ltd for funding consideration as a VC project.
November 2004 – May 2005	Melon Industry Levy and Export Charge	The IDOs worked with the Funding Working Group, HAL, DAFF and others to finalise the levy proposal which was posted to growers with a ballot paper in mid 2005.
November 2004 – May 2005	Tropical Fruits Industry Partnerships Program	An IDO attended a workshop on 12 th and 13 th April in Cairns with other industry leaders from the participating tropical fruit industries. Ongoing commitment and participation included submitting export production statistics, identifying candidates for a leadership program, identifying benchmarking opportunities, development of a generic consumer research brief, providing feedback on labour issues, and feedback on a potential web site upgrade..
November 2004 – May 2005	Fungicide Trial for Powdery Mildew at	The IDOs liaised with QDPI and local melon growers to establish a fungicide trial on a block of seedless watermelon. A total of 18 products were assessed and a field walk was held in conjunction with the

Time frame	Activity	Details
	Chinchilla	Chinchilla Melon Festival and Melon Field Day. Unfortunately, the level of disease was insufficient to allow any differences between treated and control plots to be measured and for this reason a full assessment of the trial was not completed.
November 2004 – May 2005	Supply Chain Improvement Project	IDOs supported the Supply Chain Working Group and Scott Ledger from the QDPI as they performed trials to (i) identify the effect of current handling practices and conditions in supply chains on fruit quality of melons and (ii) determine best practice supply chain systems for delivering high eating quality melons to consumers. Preliminary reports were been prepared and a workshop to plan future activities was organised for June.
November 2004 – May 2005	Communication activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance of the Melon Industry Website • fortnightly publication and distribution of the Melon E-News • publication of the quarterly Melon Newsletter in Dec 2004 & Mar 2005 • commissioning and directing the development of a more professional MS Access Database for the industry to assist with managing events • preparing an industry report for the AUF Horticultural Yearbook and • developing the Industry Investment Plan for HAL for 05/06
November 2004 – May 2005	Product Description Language	The Melon Product Description Language project was developed but had to be postponed due to lack of funds. It is anticipated that this project will be addressed in 2006/2007 when there are less demands on industry for funding support (VC).

Time frame	Activity	Details
May 2005 – September 2005	Tropical Fruit Industry Partnerships Program	<p>Ongoing commitment and participation in this program has included submitting export production statistics, identifying candidates for a leadership program, identifying benchmarking opportunities, developing a generic consumer research brief, providing feedback on labour issues, and upgrading the melon industry web site. A report on the outcomes of this project was included in the September Melon News. As a result of this work, several potential projects have been highlighted. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising regarding the FARM READY program for addressing labour issues • Developing a pilot to trial the supply chain management IT system developed by Graeme Forsythe in conjunction with the new web site • Providing the opportunity for the AMA Committee to receive some leadership training • Carrying out the benchmarking project that was not completed due to lack of time and response from key growers
May 2005 – September 2005	National Melon Conference, Townsville, September 2005	<p>The IDOs were instrumental in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing the program according to the industry strategic plan priority areas • identifying and inviting international and Australian speakers
May 2005 – September 2005	Communication activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fortnightly publication and distribution of the Melon E-News • publication of the quarterly Melon Newsletter in June and September 2005
September 2005 – December 2005	Melon Industry Levy and Export Charge	The levy result was negative, and the AMA Committee gave consideration to possible future funding arrangements.

Time frame	Activity	Details				
September 2005 – December 2005	National Melon Conference, Townsville, September 2005	The IDOs were instrumental in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the conference • Collating all papers and abstracts for the proceedings to be included in the Melon Runner 				
September 2005 – December 2005	Communication Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fortnightly publication and distribution of the Melon E-News • publication of the quarterly Melon Newsletter (September 2005) • publication of the annual Melon Runner and Conference Proceedings in December 2005, including securing advertising, preparing conference papers and abstracts, and working with a new printer to develop a more professional ‘look and feel’ for the publication 				
September 2005 – December 2005	Development of Project proposals for HAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IDOs developed two project proposals for projects included in the Melon Industry Investment Plan 2006/2007: <table border="1" data-bbox="689 986 1789 1094"> <tr> <td>VM05004</td> <td>Consumer Research and marketing and promotions plan for melons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VM05005</td> <td>Assisting the development of the Australian Melon Industry - continued</td> </tr> </table> • VM5002 Young People’s Program has been postponed due to lack of resources to develop and manage it 	VM05004	Consumer Research and marketing and promotions plan for melons	VM05005	Assisting the development of the Australian Melon Industry - continued
VM05004	Consumer Research and marketing and promotions plan for melons					
VM05005	Assisting the development of the Australian Melon Industry - continued					
September 2005 – December 2005	IDO Project Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed survey to be conducted by Growcom to evaluate IDO project 				
December 2005	An annual report of	Growcom was contracted to carry out a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of IDO activities for the duration				

Time frame	Activity	Details
	<p>projects and events undertaken in the past 10 month workplan, evaluating the progress and performance of IDO activities has been completed</p>	<p>of the 3 year IDO project. The method was to randomly survey 5% of the industry members on the database (including growers, agents, marketers, seed companies, seedling nurseries, input suppliers, and researchers) by telephone. Fifty responses were achieved. The survey results are attached.</p> <p>Some of the significant findings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 64% of respondents knew that the melon industry had an IDO part-time. This was regarded as a surprisingly low result, and could be because the IDOs names were not used, and the terminology ‘IDO’ is not familiar to many people. The IDO committee agreed this was a flaw in the survey construction. → About 25% of respondents listed ‘marketing’ (not currently an IDO responsibility) as either something they thought IDOs were currently responsible for, or should be responsible for in future → 81% believed that IDOs have improved communication in the melon industry → 87% believed the IDOs have improved industry awareness regarding market and production developments, industry events and general horticultural issues → 69% believed the IDOs have improved technology transfer in the melon industry → 78% believed the IDOs have developed stronger industry networks within the melon industry → 56% believed the IDO position has played a role in optimising production systems in the industry → 56% believed the IDO position played a role in optimising marketing systems in the industry → 69% believed the current role the IDOs perform is appropriate, the remainder largely focused on marketing (activities) as a possible IDO role → The relevance and usefulness of activities for which the IDOs were responsible were ranked on a scale 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. The majority result is given here; Fortnightly Melon E-News

Time frame	Activity	Details
		<p>32% ranked 4, Quarterly Melon Newsletter 24% ranked 4, Annual Melon Runner Magazine 38% ranked 4, Industry Strategic Plan 42% ranked 3, Industry Working Groups (as a concept) 38% ranked 3, Regional grower and industry meetings 32% ranked 4, Melon field days 32% ranked 4, Melon Conferences 38% ranked 5.</p> <p>→ 54% said the IDO position should provide a service to Australian Melon Association Members only</p>

Evaluation and measurement of outcomes

SURVEY RESULTS

PURPOSE:

To meet the requirements of Milestone 9 (final milestone).

Milestone 9 description reads “**Overall review of IDO program, activities and projects**”.

Milestone 9 Criteria (in part) reads “An annual report of projects and events undertaken in the past 10 month work plan, **evaluating the progress and performance of IDO activities** has been completed.”

Milestone 9 Criteria (in part) also reads “**Feedback from grower surveys have been utilised to update existing industry plans.**”

METHOD:

Conduct telephone surveys to achieve best possible response rate. Aim to survey industry members (50 pax on database of 1000) selected at random. Attempt to contact twice, and if unavailable do not pursue.

	Response	No Answer	Machine	Declined
23.11.05	1	10	12	
24.11.05	9	23	23	3
25.11.05	22	17	31	
28.11.05	18	16	15	2
Totals	50	66	81	5
Total Calls				202

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES:

1. Are you aware that the melon industry has an Industry Development Officer position (part time)?

Yes 64%

No 36%

2. What is your understanding of the purpose of this position? (Brief responses in own words)

- To liaise with growers, improve the industry and provide marketing assistance
- To give latest information to growers, help with marketing
- To assist the melon industry as a whole with research and conferences etc
- To help get better prices, also looking after grower interests
- Paperwork & looking after the conferences and the newsletters and magazines
- Not really sure
- To promote the industry
- Develop the industry and improve the industry
- To give information
- To survey what way we go with growing and marketing
- To liaise with growers and market forces
- Liaison sort of role
- Increase awareness and to support growers
- To further the industry
- Communication of what association thinks is important
- Coordination of events and provide assistance to growers

- Talking to agents, growers, find where the industry needs to move forward as a group
- Don't have a great understanding, maybe to provide more awareness about the product in the market place
- To help information flow within the industry
- To coordinate what is happening in the market, grower feedback and future planning for the industry
- The strategic plan and administration for the association
- Conferences and newsletters
- To coordinate the industry news and developments
- Trying to better the industry, teach and forward information, they are a waste of time
- To organise the association and get things done
- To know about market trends and pass on any information to growers and suppliers
- To inform growers of developments in the industry
- Give growers information and help market melons
- To help with growers issues, secretariat to the association

3. In your opinion, have the IDOs improved communication in the melon industry?

Yes 81%
No 19%

4. In your opinion, have IDOs improved industry awareness regarding market and production developments, industry events and general horticultural issues?

Yes 87%
No 13%

5. In your opinion, have the IDOs improved technology transfer in the melon industry?

Yes 69%
No 31%

6. In your opinion, have IDOs developed stronger industry networks within the melon industry?

Yes 78%
No 22%

7. Has the IDO position played a role in optimising production systems in the industry?

Yes 56%
No 22%
Unsure 22%

8. Has the IDO position played a role in optimising marketing systems in the industry?

Yes 56%
No 44%

9. In your opinion, what should the role or purpose of this position be or what activities should an IDO be conducting? (Brief responses in own words)

Current role is appropriate 69%
Alternative role/purpose/activities

- Focus on overseas market
- More marketing

- Encourage big chains & markets to buy locally, not send product to city just for it to be transported back
- They should be getting in more with the retailers and promoting the product
- Always more to be done, but would probably require more funding
- Would like to see more in general
- Getting out into the marketplace, more marketing like bananas, oranges etc
- Waste of time shouldn't bother with an IDO
- Not at all necessary
- More marketing

10. Indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, the relevance and usefulness to your business the following activities for which IDOs are responsible.

	Not Aware	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)
Fortnightly Melon E-News	8%	14%	8%	26%	32%	12%
Quarterly Melon Newsletter	8%	8%	4%	24%	24%	22%
Annual Melon Runner Magazine	6%	22%	6%	6%	38%	22%
Industry Strategic Plan	12%	14%	6%	42%	24%	6%
Industry Working Groups (As a concept)	4%	6%	18%	38%	18%	16%
Regional Grower and Industry Meetings	8%	14%	4%	26%	32%	14%
Melon Field Days	12%	14%	10%	14%	32%	18%
Melon Conferences	2%	10%	0%	20%	30%	38%

11. In your opinion, should the IDO position provide service to Australian Melon Association Members Only?

Yes 54%
No 46%

12. Do you have any further comments or suggestions you wish to make about IDO performances? (Brief responses in own words)

No 94%
Yes More development into quality of fruit processed
More grower input into newsletters and magazines
More information of what is being grown at the beginning of season, to prevent over supply and bad prices

13. Do you wish for your responses to remain anonymous?

Yes 60%
No 40%

14. Type of business you are in

Grower	40%
Supplier/Reseller	28%
Association	6%
Researcher	4%
Marketer/Agent	18%
Retailer	4%

15. What region are you from?

Adelaide	10%
Brisbane	2%
Burnett	8%
Central Queensland	4%
Kimberly	4%
MIA	8%
Melbourne	4%
NT	10%
Nth Queensland	8%
SE NSW	2%
Sth Queensland	4%
SUNRIV	8%
Sydney	18%
Tasmania	2%
WA	6%
Wst NSW	2%

Measurement of Outcomes

Planned outcome	Delivery of outcome
<p>1. Clarification and updating of opportunities and constraints throughout the industry, and the presence of a process to develop strategies appropriate to address these issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clarification and updating of opportunities has been an ongoing process. This was achieved through the strategic planning process facilitated by the IDOs and undertaken by industry. Prior to the first review of the strategic plan in 2004, a random survey was carried out targeting industry members who had NOT been involved in any of the activities or working groups that had been in operation over the previous 12 months. The survey revealed that 80% of the industry was aware of the Strategic Plan, and agreed with its priorities. This indicates that the strategic planning process undertaken was successful in accurately drawing out the issues affecting the industry and implementing strategies necessary to address these issues. • A clear and robust process for continuously developing and updating strategies to address current issues, opportunities and constraints has been implemented. Strategies are constantly implemented as part of the review process and more importantly, the working group system which has been adopted has ensured that members of the industry have taken responsibility for ensuring that identified projects are carried through to their agreed outcomes.
<p>2. Improved industry awareness regarding market and production developments, industry events and general horticultural issues</p>	<p>Strict adherence to the communications plan developed at the outset of the project has been instrumental in ensuring awareness of market and production developments. The IDOs have ensured that projects developed as a result of the strategic planning process have been appropriately and widely communicated to relevant sectors of the industry. These projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and production developments – the strategic focus for the industry as stated in the strategic plan was to produce a high quality eating melon. A number of the projects were developed to address that issue

	<p>including the Supply Chain Project aimed at identifying critical control points along the supply chain that affect the final quality of the product for the consumer, the Best Practice Project in which results from research identifying agronomic practices which assist in producing a better eating quality melon results were widely communicated to growers and the Varietal Improvement Project in which a handbook was produced to make available to industry the most current information on melon varieties. The results of these projects were communicated to industry through field days, grower meetings, articles in the melon e-news, melon newsletter and annual melon runner magazines, posting results to individual growers and round table face to face meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General horticultural issues have been communicated comprehensively through the regular melon e-news, melon news and melon runner magazines. There were also a number of regional meetings held to discuss relevant topics and a broad range of information made available through the industry website. • The success of these activities in achieving the desired outcome are expressed in the evaluation survey results ie. 87% of respondents believed the IDOs have improved industry awareness regarding market and production developments, industry events and general horticultural issues
<p>3. Improved support for whole industry business planning and operations management through greater industry knowledge base</p>	<p>Prior to the review of the strategic plan in 2004, a random survey was carried out targeting industry members who had NOT been involved in any of the activities or working groups that had been in operation over the previous 12 months. The survey revealed that 80% of the industry was aware of the Strategic Plan, and agreed with its priorities. In addition to this, industry representatives who attended the review praised the work of the 2003/04 Working Groups and the IDOs for their role in driving change in the industry. This indicates a high level of support for the planning processes adopted by industry.</p>

Recommendations

The project management committee supports the continuation of the IDO project for a second term. A project proposal has been developed and submitted to HAL and is awaiting approval. There are however administrative differences between the first and impending project. There will be just one IDO employed for 3 days per week (0.6FTE) and although the IDO will be employed by Growcom, the project itself will be administered by the Australian Melon Association.

The purpose of the second stage project will be to build on the achievements so far.

The proposed outputs are:

1. Annual review and update of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008.
2. Production and distribution of industry publications to transfer information on general industry and regional issues and technical advances, including the annual Melon Runner magazine, quarterly Melon News and fortnightly Melon E-News.
3. The maintenance of an industry database which includes contact details for all known growers and supply chain members in the melon industry.
4. Nine regional meetings per annum.
5. Coordination of industry events, projects and activities in accordance with the Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

The success of the project will be measured against the pillars of success for the industry (ie the planned outcomes of the project) that underpin the strategic plan, developed early on in the initial IDO project.

They are:

1. Delivery of product that is consistently preferred by consumers/lives up to expectations.
2. Adequate resources - funding, people, allies (eg. government).
3. Participation at all levels of the supply chain.
4. Engagement by the key retailers with the industry's core strategy.
5. Innovation - for exciting new products/tastes and systems improvement.

Feedback from the survey, conducted as part of the project evaluation process indicated that members of industry believed that the IDOs should focus more heavily on marketing than in the first phase of the project. In line with this feedback, it is intended that one of the first projects to be facilitated by the IDO in the second phase will be to commission comprehensive consumer research.

Although the IDO project is being funded by the Australian Melon Association, maintenance of a sustainable source of funding to resource future projects and initiatives is an issue that the industry

continues to face. The IDO will have a major role in working with the AMA to find a sustainable source of funding for those purposes.

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- Paul Centofanti
- David Weeks

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Appendix 1:

Workplan 1: Developed in July 2003 in line with the agreed project outcomes and objectives

	Communications	Activities / Events	Strategic Plan Initiatives	HAL Milestones	Other IDO tasks
July	E-news, website development	Melon study tour	<i>Assist the development and activities of working gps / steering committees</i>	1 & 2	Chem/registr. tasks with PMO / review regional training providers & courses
					Distribute 'before' survey
August	E-news	Regional meetings (Bowen, Ayr/Home Hill, Tully)	<i>Collate and review existing market research / ongoing desktop and in-market research on melons and competing products</i>		Chem/registr. tasks with PMO / review regional training providers & courses
	Articles for Melon Runner			IDO Mgmt Comm teleconf	AMA committee rotation
September	Melon Runner	Regional meetings (Chinchilla, B/berg) & Beemart meeting	Research / develop accurate nutritional information	3 (6 month review) & Strategic planning workshop final report	<i>Set up training project - sourcing providers and developing programs that meet industry training reqts (with VIDO)</i>
October	E-news		Value adding (2' product) industry forum / meeting		Start tech transfer project
				Study tour final report	
November	E-news		Finalise 5-year strategic plan in line with est working gps		
December	Melon News	Start to organise field day event (best practice theme)			
January	E-news		Identify examples / models from other industries - developing and implementing Codes of Practice		Distribute tech transfer project
					Distribute 6-month 'stage 1' progress survey
February	E-news		Examine future funding options for IDO project	IDO Mgmt Comm meeting	
March	Melon News	Hold 'best practice' field day event		4 (strat plan submitted, tech trf proj completed, mgmt review & future workplan)	
April	E-news				
May	E-news				
June	Melon News		Review of strategic plan		

Workplan 2: Updated to reflect the implementation of the strategic plan which was updated with strategies for its implementation effective in September.

Melon Industry IDO Work Plan 2003-04

	Communications	Activities / Events	Strategic Plan Initiatives	HAL Milestones	Other IDO tasks
Ongoing	Website development/ sponsorship, database development		Support the activities of 6 industry working groups		Database maintenance
December	E-News (Fri fortnightly)				
	Melon News	Regional Meetings - Chinchilla	R&D & COP - Scope brix testing project	3 (6 month review of project activities)	
January			VPWG - develop set of varietal characteristics (wm, rm, hd, specialty)	IDO Mgmt Comm meeting	VIDO - training in response to needs - discuss possibility of organising with VIDO (w/b 22/12/03)
			SCIG/BP WG project EOLs sent to industry and replies accepted		
			WG Leader's teleconf		
	Send out survey to industry to evaluate the IDO project		COPWG - Funding application to HAL for Product Description Language		Make resource database available to industry/ research and compile accurate nutritional information and upload to website
February			BPWG & SCIG finalise details of project & secure partnership from industry		AMA Committee Meeting
			FWG - Examine future funding options for IDO project, levies, industry projects (specifically SCIG/BP Project)		
March	Melon News	Regional meetings (Bowen, Ayr/Home Hill, Tully, KNX, Kath)		4 (strat plan submitted, tech trf proj completed, mgmt review & future workplan)	AMA Committee Meeting
April					
May					
June	Melon News		Review of strategic plan	IDO Mgmt Comm meeting	AMA Committee Meeting
July			COPWG - develop Product Description Language	5 (1st rev grower/indust. events, 2nd rev dbase, IDO minutes to HAL)	
August					
September	Melon Runner				AMA Committee Meeting

KEY:
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