

Horticulture Innovation Australia

Final Report

Australian Blueberry Industry development to maintain a profitable and sustainable industry

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NSW Department of Primary Industries

Project Number: BB11002

BB11002

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Summary

The project was established with the aim of facilitating the development of the growing blueberry industry and to build on, and consolidate, the outcomes of the previous industry development project. The project was supported by the peak industry body for blueberry growers in Australia, the Australian Blueberry Growers' Association (ABGA).

The ABGA believes the role of an Industry Development Officer (IDO) is important to support current, and new, growers in a number of states to enable them, to maintain both profitable and sustainable businesses while helping the industry grow. Since the beginning of this existing project the Australian blueberry industry has more than **doubled in size** and it **is expected to double again** over the **next 4 years**.

The IDO project delivery principally targeted the strategies outlined in Objective 1 and Objective 2 of the 2009-2014 Strategic Investment Plan which aimed to enhance sustainable production systems, promote the implementation of management practices and maintain a strong industry. The Blueberry IDO and Communications Manager (CM) roles were two part time roles (both were located in northern NSW) and were funded positions for one day per week and 2 days per week, respectively.

The IDO and CM worked on a range of activities to assist in the implementation of the Strategic Investment Plan and the IDO work plan. These included regular industry communications and a range of technical activities/workshops, field days, conferences, a fruit sorting guide and an industry Code of Best Management Practice. Major outputs include Berryquest 2011 combined Blueberry and Strawberry industry conference in Queensland and the 2013 Berryquest which combined the strawberry, blueberry and raspberry industry conference in Victoria.

The major outcomes for this project were:

- Improved communications and coordination within the Blueberry Industry
- Production of best management information for the industry across all states
- Production and adoption of an Industry Code of Practice
- Facilitation of industry expansion and maintenance of market access with the Strategic Agrichemical Review Process (SARP)

This has allowed industry growth by:

- Addressing priorities listed in the 2009-2014 Strategic industry investment plan
- Improving regular communications in the Australian blueberry industry
- Improving production practices
- Improving berry quality and providing a consistent product to consumers

- Maintaining market access by renewing chemical permits and applying for new permits.
- Establishing grower focus groups in three states; Victoria, NSW and Tasmania

Keywords

Blueberry, industry development officer, communications, ABGA, sustainable, profitable

Introduction

The aim of the blueberry industry development project was to support the Australian blueberry industry to be profitable, environmentally sustainable and contribute to consumer well-being through high quality product.

The current project is a continuation of BB07001 which employed an IDO for two days per week to work with building the capacity of and developing the blueberry industry to be a national industry.

The objectives were to build on the actions and deliver activities under the seven objectives identified from the 2009-2014 Blueberry Industry Strategic Plan and HAL Needs Analysis.

The key objectives aimed to:

- Provide high quality blueberries to the Australian consumer for 12 months of the year by managing and expanding on growing sub tropical varieties.
- Improve adoption of sustainable production systems and implement best management practices.
- Maintain and build industry networks.
- Improve pest and disease management.

The Australian blueberry industry is continuing to expand with production in all states of Australia. The industry aims to have Australian produced berries available to the consumer for twelve months of the year. In 2008/09 season, Australia produced an estimated 2600 tonnes of blueberries, with a farm gate value of \$A40 million. In the 2013/14 season 6100 tonnes of blueberries were produced with a farm gate value of over \$130 million. The industry has more than doubled in 5 years.

Approximately 70% of blueberries are sold as fresh market fruit into the Australian domestic market, 10% is exported to Asia and Europe (this declined in 2013 due to the current high value of the Australian dollar), while the remaining 20% of fruit is processed, principally as frozen product.

The peak industry body for blueberry growers in Australia is the Australian Blueberry Growers' Association (ABGA). ABGA has approximately 150 members from all states except the Northern Territory and all major blueberry growers are members. ABGA members produce at least 95% of the Australian blueberry crop. There are a number of smaller growers who are currently not members of the ABGA but it is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the number. The project has communicated with them where possible.

The IDOs within this project continued delivery of the 2009-2014 Strategic Investment Plan. The outcomes of the Industry Needs Analysis undertaken by Horticulture Australia has been melded with the strategic plan to guide the future work of the IDO.

Growers acknowledge the vital role played by the ABGA in developing the national industry and believe the role of an Industry Development Officer is important to

support current and new growers to enable them to maintain both profitable and sustainable businesses.

Technology transfer methodology

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Purpose of this report:

This report is the final report for BB11002 Australian Blueberry Industry Development to Maintain a Profitable and sustainable Industry and is the final milestone 190 for this project which ran from October 2011 to October 2014

Date of report

30th October 2014

The role of the IDO and CM in the project was to contribute to the adoption of best management practices for blueberry growers in all regions using a range of extension techniques but predominantly by a two way communications flow.

The IDO and CM produced a bi monthly information sheet sent out to growers and contributed articles to the spring and summer editions of the industry journal, The Australian Blueberry Grower. The IDO and CM also provided a first point of contact for traders, growers and investors wanting to be involved in the blueberry industry.

Technical enquiries from growers and supply chain partners were handled by the IDO who also maintained the minor use chemical permits for the industry and applied for new permits as required.

The IDO and CM were instrumental in developing and managing two very successful Berryquest conferences (2011 and 2013) with other berry industry partners.

The IDO and CM were involved in organising the Blueberry R&D committee meetings, minutes, and managing outcomes and outputs from research projects and communicating this to blueberry growers via journal articles or workshops.

The IDO and CM worked towards targets outlined in the Strategic Investment Plan 2009-2014 Objectives 1 and 2 and the work plans administered by the project steering committee.

The IDO and CM were involved in identifying new project needs, writing proposals and submitting these to funding bodies. They were also involved in editing and submitting milestones as required for current and future projects.

The IDO has met with new investors wanting to enter the industry and has supplied them with information about key issues in the blueberry industry.

A. Key activities

Best Management Practices

1. Collate material for blueberry packing guide
2. Print and disseminate guide to all growers
3. Develop an IDO and CM work plan with a project steering committee
4. Develop a project on Disease Management of Blueberries BB13002
5. Develop a project on Improving Berry Quality of Southern Highbush Blueberries BB14002
6. Develop and complete a project on The Demographics of the Blueberry Industry BB13000
7. Develop and complete a new project on Communications in the Blueberry Industry to update the website and journal BB13003
8. Develop project proposal Blueberry study tour BB13701
9. Prepare new minor use permit applications as required
10. Develop an industry Code of Good Agricultural Practices

Field days in various states, workshops,

1. Chemical spray application workshop Woolgoolga November 2011
2. Managing Queensland fruit fly April 2013 Woolgoolga
3. Fruit fly management in Victoria on 22nd April 2012 Kinglake Victoria
4. Soils Field day Strathbogie Ranges Nov 2011
5. Strategic planning workshop, Silvan Victoria April 2012

6. Tasmanian blueberry grower information day Grove 20th June 2014
7. Disease management workshop, June 2013 Woolgoolga
8. Fertiliser management workshop July 2014 Woolgoolga
9. Moondarra blueberry information and field day Moondarra Victoria May 2014
10. Attend ISHS international blueberry conference 2012
11. Presentation of ISHS blueberry conference and final report to industry
12. Organise and attend Strategic Agri Chemical Process forum (SARP), August 2012 reviewing new and existing Minor Use Permit requirements and future chemistry requirements for the industry.

Industry development services

1. Maintain and update the industry database of growers and supply chain partners
2. Berryquest combined berry industry conference 2011 organise, communications and coordination
3. Berryquest combined berry industries conference 2013 organise, communications and coordination
4. Provide research and development articles for the journal
5. Bi monthly newsletter production and dissemination
6. R&D sub committee meetings organisation and attendance
7. ABGA committee meeting participation to report on industry development and blueberry research outputs and outcomes
8. Public contact for the Australian Blueberry Industry
9. ABGA AGM 2011, 2012 and 2013 participation to report on industry development and blueberry research outputs and outcomes

B. Key outputs

1. Articles on the Website and in bi monthly newsletters June August 2011, Feb, May, June August, November 2012, Feb, May, June, August, November 2013. Berryquest conference presentations, Chemical permit updates, Changes to funding and International Blueberry industry conference to name a few
2. Journal article contributions Autumn 2012 (3 articles), Spring Ed. 2012 (5 articles), Autumn 2013 (3 articles), Spring 2013 (2 articles), Autumn 2014 (3 articles), Spring 2014 (2 articles). Including Managing Blueberry Rust, Calcium Foliar Benefits, Managing Queensland Fruit Fly and Demographic of the Blueberry Industry to name a few.
3. 2011 Berryquest Combined Strawberry, Raspberry and Blueberry Conference presentations recorded and posted on website
4. 2013 Berryquest Combined berry industry conference presentations sent out on memory stick
5. 2013 Berryquest conference presentations loaded onto the ABGA website

6. Facilitated, developed and submitted to HAL six separate research proposals with consultation from ABGA R&D committee and researchers over the life of this project.
7. Berryquest 2013 final report completed
8. Six monthly reviews with project steering committee completed
9. Industry development services
10. Industry Code of Practice produced released
11. Blueberry sorting guide developed
12. Guide posted to all members of ABGA
13. New minor use permit applications (MUP) prepared and submitted to APVMA for the protectants Switch®, Pristine®, Talstar®, Avatar®, Confidor® and Pyganic® before November 2013. All recurring renewals were managed by the IDO
14. SARP review released to industry for future funding for chemical protectants.
15. IDO project mid-term review and work plan (see attachment 6)
16. ISHS conference information for industry as journal article and presentation
17. ISHS conference voice presentations loaded onto website

Evaluation

Measuring Outcomes

The IDO and CM have regular communications with all members of the ABGA and other industry stakeholders and receive feedback from participants. Most respondents said that they prefer to receive a hard copy journal with the relevant information that is important to them. They also mentioned that they often lose their copies so could we provide back copies on the website, which we have done.

Many of the younger growers in northern NSW (pers, comm.) said they do not like to read long articles and prefer to receive more strategic information by text messaging on their smart phone. They would like to be able to use the industry website more to access relevant information on pests and diseases. They would also like to receive storm, pest or disease alerts by phone message.

Table 1 shows data from a recent survey of the blueberry industry (over 100 growers) across all states, which enquired how growers obtain their information for best management practices.

Of the total responses 67% said they used the ABGA journal and 32.5% said they used the industry website to obtain current information.

Blueberry Industry Survey – Table 1

How do you normally receive your information for best management practices in blueberry production? (e.g. chemical registrations, new products and practices)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Neighbours/other growers	43.0%	49
ABGA journal and newsletter	67.5%	77
ABGA website or other	32.5%	37
Google	43.0%	49
Rural product resellers	28.9%	33
Iphone /tablet	26.3%	30
Other (please specify)	51.8%	59
<i>answered question</i>		114
<i>skipped question</i>		11

Outcomes of field days

Over the life of the life of this project there have been 10 field days/workshops and/or information days. Surveys assessing the quality of the information delivered were handed out at most of these days and the responses were always positive. Some feedback suggested that there was too much information presented and growers wanted more time to speak with other growers at these events. The IDO and CM have accepted this position and will try to make time for future programs for grower interaction.

Outcomes of Conferences

Berryquest 2011 and Berryquest 2013 combined berry industry conferences were well attended and the feedback was generally positive. (see attachment 4)
Some feedback for the next conference was;

What would like to see at future berry conferences?

- more good international speakers
- more time to see exhibitors
- talks on plant nutrition & fertilising, agronomist options
- talks on packaging and product presentation
- more real examples from farmers/growers
- more on biodynamics & organics

Changes resulting from the project

1. Best management practices

Selective spray management

The IDO project developed and implemented a number of projects related to production issues in blueberries.

The Disease Management in Blueberries project BB 13000, which is in its first year is giving growers new information options to control diseases that hinder interstate market access. This project gives growers other options to managing rust, Anthracnose and Botrytis. Without these tools, access to other domestic markets would halt costing the industry around \$2M per week.

The practice change that has resulted from this part of the project is that growers are using sprays very selectively. They are selecting sprays from different chemical groups and using this to better manage resistance of many of the common leaf rusts and fungi. They often ring first to enquire before spraying.

This practice is helping to maintain interstate trade and biosecurity issues for product moving interstate. Once access to other export markets occurs, this knowledge and understanding will help us meet our biosecurity requirements.

2. Minor use permits

The IDO continues to speak to growers and observe the need for new chemistry for Blueberry production based on the SARP process. The IDO works closely with other berry industries RABA to maintain pest controls for berries.

Growers continue to regularly contact the IDO as a technical specialist to verify whether chemical product is suitable and registered for its intended purpose. Being able to speak to a blueberry specialist and enquire about products has encouraged a change in practice amongst many growers. Growers also enquire on efficacy of these products and about alternatives and new chemistry.

3. State based focus groups

The IDO in conjunction with grower co operators in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania has managed to set up and run these state based focus groups to concentrate on running field/information days in their respective regions. These have been supported by funding by the IDO to attract speakers or for running costs at these information days.

4. Field days in various states, workshops,

- I. Chemical spray application workshop Woolgoolga NSW November 2011
- II. Managing Queensland fruit fly April 2013 Woolgoolga NSW
- III. Fruit fly management in Victoria on 22nd April 2012 Kinglake Victoria
- IV. Soils Field day Strathbogie Ranges Nov. 2011, Victoria
- V. Strategic planning workshop, Silvan Victoria April 2012

- VI. Tasmanian blueberry grower information day Grove 20th June 2014
- VII. Disease management workshop, June 2013 Woolgoolga NSW
- VIII. Fertiliser management workshop July 2014 Woolgoolga NSW
- IX. Moondarra blueberry information and field day Moondarra Victoria May 2014

5. Industry capacity building

The majority of the blueberry industry is based in NSW and Victoria. There has been a better understanding and capacity building with the Ozgroup (formerly Ozberry) cooperative which has approximately 80 growers packing together and based in northern NSW. The IDO and CM both employed by this project have formalised information flow to growers and encouraged them to contact the office for their enquiries.

The ABGA has openly encouraged many younger growers within the cooperative to participate in decision making and be on some key industry committees. There are a number of these growers who now actively participate in both R&D, this industry development project and general blueberry committee meetings to try and influence change. Many now have the confidence and a better understanding of how to manage and deal with government and industry. Many are younger growers who will become community leaders who it is hoped will take over the leadership of the ABGA in future. This visible change in confidence has allowed many younger producers to openly suggest and take ownership of research areas that the Australian blueberry industry should pursue through ABGA. Many are monitoring and providing research sites on their own farms for some of these research projects that ultimately will affect their own production. The ABGA has openly encouraged many younger growers to join R&D committees to express their opinions.

The IDO has encouraged the R&D sub committee to meet more often to deal with new research proposals and monitor existing ones. The IDO has set an agenda, organised the teleconferences and provided minutes for these meetings four times/year to help facilitate this change.

6. Industry development services

ABGA Website

- Placing relevant research and industry development information and documents on to website
- Answering website enquiries and linking people to the appropriate information source
- Set up blueberry google webpage for social media, monitoring and answering questions as a problem solver and to recruit casual picking staff during peak season

Enquiries

The IDO and CM will be industry contacts for enquiries with the Australian blueberry industry. The IDO and CM will research and provide growers with technical advice, variety information, orchard management practices and other methods of developing the blueberry industry.

Database

- Maintenance of the industry database.
- The database is used to send out industry issues including field day and conference information and relevant news articles.

Newsletter and Journal

- Bi monthly newsletters relaying relevant information for the both the Australian and the international blueberry industry, communicating to growers and industry stakeholders on these issues including field day information and conferences and assisting in the preparation of said field days and conferences.
- Contribute to articles (at least one per journal) for the Blueberry Growers' journal on issues in the industry both domestically and across the world.

Investment opportunities

The IDO and CM answered inquiries from potential investor contacts who were interested in the Blueberry industry. This involved sending out financial and technical information as well as advising on potential growth of the industry, suitable land and availability of water resources.

Adoption

1. Spray application

There has been a gradual change over the life of this project of growers using registered chemicals suited to the pest. This has largely come about due to the project providing sufficient new selective chemistry and obtaining Minor Use Permits from the APVMA for use in blueberries. There are still many blueberry growers who are not members of the ABGA but the association has been providing these growers with the same information to maintain a safe food product into the domestic market. Growers are now applying less and softer pesticides where possible and taking care to avoid non target organisms.



Fig 1 Calibration of sprays



Fig 2. Spray equipment demonstration

2. Water application

Water application and nutrition go hand in hand as most growers supply nutrition by fertigation.

There has been a gradual change of practices in water application by over 70% of NSW growers from workshops run in a number of states and information packages developed by the IDO projects. (pers. communications and observations)

Most growers in NSW now water more frequently but with much shorter periods. Previously growers were irrigating for over 1 hour each day. Now most growers use half that time and they may do it twice per day. Most understand the concepts of using drippers and soil water holding capacity from the soil workshops run at the beginning of this project. This is an ongoing process and we will need to continue these workshops to capture new entrants into the industry. This has also reduced the incidence of root diseases and plant deaths from over watering which are positives for the industry and the environment.



Fig. 3 Water management workshop



Fig. 4 Installing moisture probes

3. Nutrition

Leaf and soil testing have become quite a normal part of nutrition application for NSW berry growers. There has been a gradual change in nutrition application although fertiliser cost is really a minor cost (1-2%) of production or tray returns to growers. The reduction and better targeting in water usage has resulted in lower nutrient levels applied to most blueberry orchards.

The workshops run in NSW concentrated on comparing nutrient application and berry production. Growers could see a marked difference and were keen to use the program supplied. Most growers now routinely manage their soil pH and lime applications for better plant health. This has resulted in a win for both the industry and the environment.

4. Blueberry sorting guide

The blueberry sorting guide was developed under this project. It is widely used and available to all stakeholders within the blueberry industry. Growers, packers and pickers use this widely within the industry and it is always in demand at the beginning of each season.

The use of this guide has resulted in greatly improved packed product quality within the blueberry industry. There has been a steady demand to further update this chart to include other quality photos from seasonal abnormalities.

5. Cool chain handling

This field day was held in Victoria and it was mainly aimed at small to medium growers to allow improvement in fruit quality and shelf life. It was demonstrated how forced air cooling even on a small scale within a cool room will bring down field heat and improve berry shelf life. Most growers that pack their own product now use this small scale cooling for their own product.

6. LBAM control

The field day in Tasmania in 2014 focussed on controlling this pest using IPM principles and non spray approaches using mating disruption lures. This has been widely adopted by the whole industry but especially in cooler regions of Victoria and Tasmania.



Figure 1 and 2 simple forced air cooling fan for smaller growers

Mechanical mulching

The IDO prepared a You Tube video of mechanical mulching in NSW and showed it at the field day in Tasmania. The video brought out some very useful discussion on costs and application. A number of attendees also had some web links of mechanical mulchers that were suitable. This practice of applying organic mulches to blueberry mounds to reduce weeds is becoming more acceptable and it is slowly replacing plastic weedmat. This showed growers how it could be routinely done on farms with low labour input.

Discussion

The major objectives outlined previously in this project have been met. These objectives were to address key issues outlined in the 2009-2014 Strategic Investment Plan (Attachment 5). The priority issues outlined in this investment plan were to identify and implement industry best practice in all aspects of blueberry production across all states, to provide quality blueberries to Australian consumers throughout the full year and to maintaining good communications within the industry.

The Australian blueberry industry has continued to expand over the life of this industry development project BB11002. This expansion has resulted in the industry more than doubling in size and over the next 2 -4 years it will increase by another 50%. The greatest expansion in the industry has been in NSW, Qld and Tasmania to take advantage of the early and late markets where higher prices are received for lower volumes of fruit from non-traditional areas.

The higher prices growers are receiving now will eventually come back as more producers grow fruit in these areas and volumes increase.

Australian consumers on the other hand are purchasing the increased berry volume and the industry is planning on making berries available for 12 months of the year. How much extra consumption domestic consumers will absorb is unknown at this stage but a recent survey showed that Australian households consume on average 2 punnets/person /year. This is quite low by North American standards and the industry is aware that there is a price tipping point around \$3-\$4 / punnet where a slight drop in price results in greater customer purchasing.

It is logical considering the growth and production of the crop in NSW (84%), Qld (6%) and Tasmania (5%) to have the IDO position in northern NSW however the industry realises that this is a national industry and a market failure from one part of the country will affect the entire industry.

The industry is geographically diverse with a major split being between Northern Highbush (cooler climate) and Southern Highbush (sub tropical climate). The IDO being stationed in northern NSW servicing the majority northern growers where major production and expansion is occurring is a logical step in service delivery. There are obvious limitations to what the IDO can do to service southern growers

however the industry has run a number of information days and will continue to do so in Victoria and more recently in Tasmania to provide relevant region specific information to growers.

As indicated in the project report, the IDO and CM have contributed to the industry by undertaking a wide range of activities. In order to achieve this range of outputs the IDO and CM have been supported by additional time from NSW DPI and Mountain Blue Farms.

The IDO and CM have:

- Implemented the Blueberry Strategic Plan 2009-2014 priorities.
- Developed a better understanding of industry practices.
- Maintained communications across the whole industry.
- Developed and implemented research projects to address industry needs.
- Identified gaps in industry knowledge.
- Delivered workshops, field days and conferences.
- Provided best practice production information.
- Produced and delivered of a range of manuals and information notes.
- Contributed to the development of industry networks and capability.

This has advanced the industry by:

- Providing clear future directions and action plans to address industry priorities as outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- Improving communication within the Australian blueberry industry.
- Improving industry production practices.

Recommendations

1. That an industry survey be conducted to evaluate the impact of the IDO project. A survey has been written into the next project, BB14000 – Stage 2 of Australian Blueberry Industry Development.
2. Information on blueberry diseases in Victoria needs to be developed given the recent incursions of Blueberry Rust into both Victoria and Tasmania.
3. Further field /information days be conducted in both Victoria and Tasmania on localised production or current issues.
4. A comprehensive industry survey be undertaken by the IDO at least every two years to measure adoption and uptake of new practices and changes within the industry.
5. An orchard management guide for blueberries be developed with current information on best orchard practices and pest management across a number of states. The first edition is due as a hard copy for each grower by July 2014 and on line as an electronic version.

6. A revised industry strategic plan be developed for 2015-2019 by the IDO and CM as part of their next industry development project if appropriate to provide direction for future industry investment.
7. A small steering committee be appointed early in the life of the project to monitor the IDO and CM progress and prioritise activities.

Acknowledgements

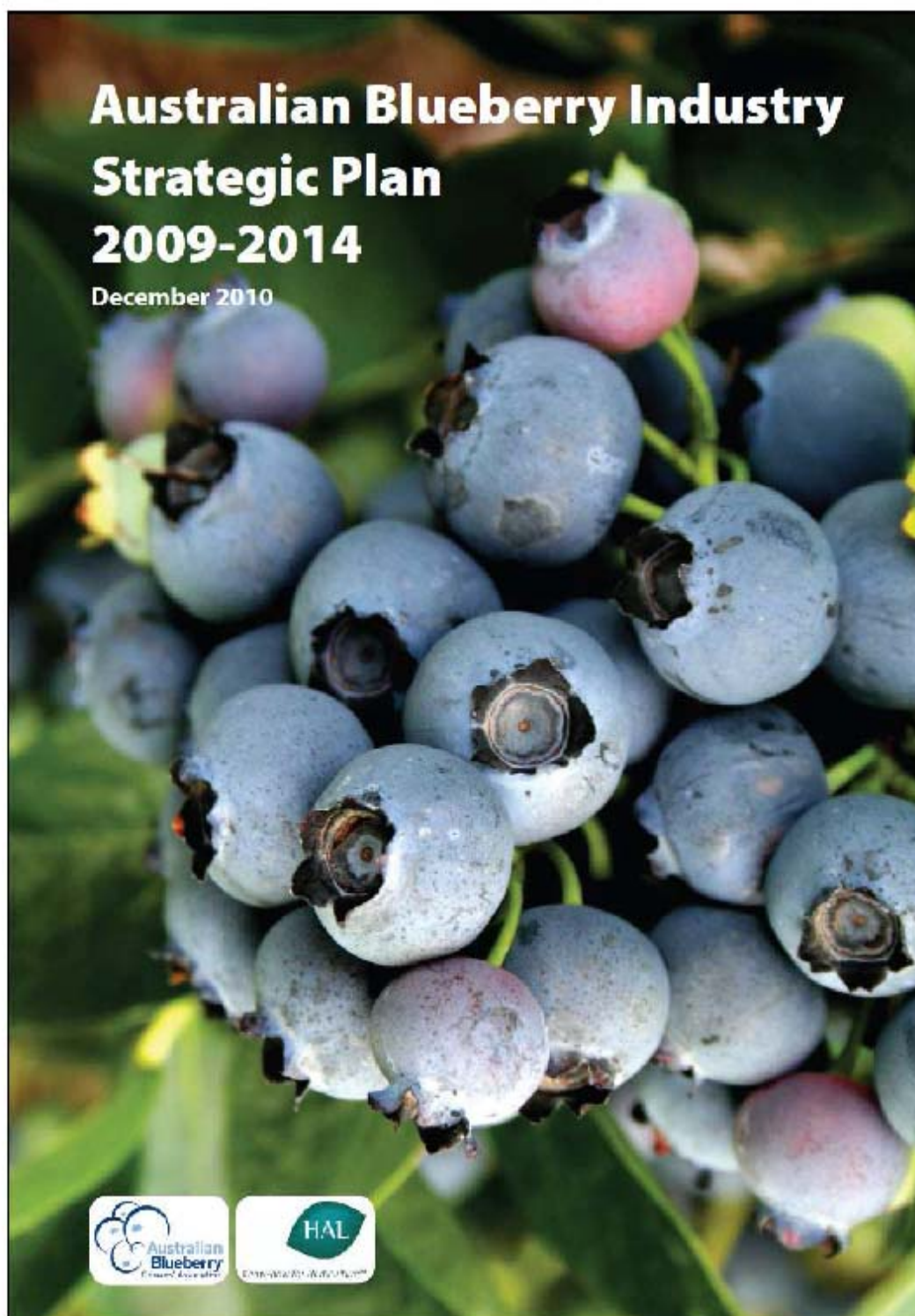
We acknowledge the support and funding given by Horticulture Australia Limited and the Australian Blueberry Growers' Association for this project with matching funds from the Australian Government. We also wish to thank the blueberry industry steering committee Mal Deveson, Greg McCulloch, and Tony O'Connell

I would like to acknowledge and thank Pam Vroland for her great help and enthusiasm in organising and managing field days in Victoria, Tony O'Connell for organising Tasmanian information days and many ABGA committee members past and present for their great support in attending and presenting at these field days.

In NSW I would like to thank the many growers and management committee in the Qzgroup cooperative at Woolgoolga , the management and staff at Mountain Blue Farms and the staff at Costa Exchange at Corindi for their help and support in providing technical information, venues for field days and guidance for organisation of workshops and field days.

Finally I would like to thank the ABGA and Horticulture Australia for their support and in particular the Industry Development Managers Alison Anderson and David Lowe.

Attachment 1



Attachment 2

Blueberry sorting guide

This sorting guide is to help pickers and sorters identify reject fruit before it is packed to maintain minimum quality standards.



Typical Class 1 standard domestic punnet (125g) packed at 148g (includes punnet weight and allows 10% shrinkage). Stored at 2-6°C.



Unacceptable damage

Anthracnose and botrytis



Bird damage



Bleeding



Insect stings



Insect damage



Splitting



Tearing scars



Unacceptable quality

Blossom beard



Bloom (white waxy coating) must be present



Over ripe



Pollen discolouration



Colour



Retained stems



Frost damage



Punnet rubbish



Acknowledgements: Photographic assistance from Steve Young Photography. Blueberry specimens supplied by Mountain Blue Orchards, Alphadale NSW. Editorial assistance from Phil Wilk, Industry & Investment NSW. Poster design by Warwick Press, Industry & Investment NSW.

Attachment 3

Australian Blueberry Industry Code of Practice



October 2013



Phillip Wilk
Industry Development Officer-
Blueberries



**Primary
Industries**



Know-how for Horticulture™

Attachment 4

Delegate Evaluation – BerryQuest 2013

76 evaluation forms completed.

Detail	Average Rating
Foothills Conference Centre	7.8
Cost of Conference	7.3
Meals	7.7
Cost of accommodation (if applicable)	7.4
Geographic location	8.1
Conference booking & registration process	8.3
Pre-conference advertising & promotion	7.6

Detail	Average Rating
Speaker program	8.2
Value of conference to your business	7.7
Quality & relevance of speakers	8.0
Bus tours (if applicable)	7.9
Overall program format	8.0
Trade display & exhibitors	8.0

Berries that you grow	Number who completed survey
Strawberries	16
Rubus	22
Blueberries	24

WHAT influenced you to come to the conference?

Detail	Average Rating
Range & quality of speakers	7.4
International key note speakers	7.6

Opportunity to see trade show	6.6
Opportunity to meet other growers	8.7
Bus tours	7.2
Never been to a conference before	4.8

MOST enjoyed:

- bus tours
- international speakers
- networking

LEAST enjoyed:

- not enough time to see exhibitors
- bus tours
- gala dinner speaker

Would like to see at future berry conferences:

- more good international speakers
- more time to see exhibitors
- talks on plant nutrition & fertilising, agronomist options
- talks on packaging and product presentation
- more real examples from farmers/growers
- more on biodynamics & organics

Attachment 5

STRATEGIES & ACTION PLAN FOR 2009 to 2014

Objective 1: To improve the adoption of sustainable production systems and implementation of Best Management Practices

Strategy	Action	Task	Priority	Timing	Responsibility
1.1 To develop information on best production practices	Develop water efficiency strategies for blueberry production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop blueberry irrigation projects in NSW and Victoria • Develop information packages from the research in irrigation • Hold information days to deliver information from irrigation research • Publish information in ABGA journal and on website • Develop or acquire a specification chart for pickers and packers 	High	2009-2010	Individual grower groups with NSW IDO NSW IDO NSW IDO
	Develop strategies to improve berry harvest quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate and build awareness of specification chart for pickers and packers from BerryXchange 	Medium	2009-2010	NSW IDO,

	Develop disease management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop project proposal to research disease management such as stem blight and rust 	Low	2009-2014	Regional growers groups and R&D committee
1.2 To build awareness of best practice chemical use	Ensure chemicals on permit are available for use on blueberries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run chemical field days on reading chemical labels, chemical selection resistance, correct spray application and calibration Provide list of registered chemicals for blueberries and withholding periods Provide list of upcoming permit renewals Identify gaps where further registration or permits are required for the industry 	High	2009-2014	NSW IDO's NSW IDO's NSW IDO's NSW IDO's

Attachment 6

Blueberry Industry Development Officer and Communications Officer work plan 2012/0213

Strategy	Action	Individual tasks/outputs	timing	comments
Information on best management practices	Develop a project to better manage major blueberry diseases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult with major industry representatives 2. Prepare presentation for R&D committee 3. Prepare project proposal and submit to HAL 4. Collect data from project. 5. Produce information for the industry to better manage rust disease 6. Provide some information workshops for blueberry growers recognising diseases 	<p>Sept 2012</p> <p>Oct 2012</p> <p>Nov 2012</p> <p>2012/2013</p> <p>2013/14</p>	

		7. Produce information for growers to better manage chemical sprays for disease control	2013/14 2013/14	
Provide technical support to Australian Blueberry growers	Manage technical information support	1. Provide telephone support on production issues 2. Provide electronic information support 3. Provide on farm and packhouse support to growers	Ongoing as required	
Chemical permits new /renewals	Speak to growers about new chemistry for pest controls	1. Prepare permit renewals for expired chemicals	Ongoing	
	Communicate with other industries about similar pests	1. Look for chemicals registered in blueberries in other countries 2. Use other industry information 3. Organise data collection for permit renewals	Ongoing	
Support Blueberry grower groups in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania	Information days and field days as requested by members and as issues arise as identified by the IDO	1. Support state champions in individual states to organise and find speakers for local field days	Ongoing	
Support and coordinate blueberry	Work with chairperson to send out reminders for	1. Send out reminder notices and information.	Meetings held each month as	

R&D committee	meetings, collate minutes and organise teleconferences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Organise teleconferences 3. Distribute necessary R&D project information to members 4. Take minutes and distribute to committee 	required	
Information for blueberry growers to be informed of industry matters	Provide relevant articles for ABGA industry journal and newsletter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IDO report for Spring and Autumn editions of Journal 2. Obtain and write relevant articles on field days and current blueberry research 	Spring and Autumn	
Combined 2013 BerryQuest conference	Organising committee role	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organise regular monthly and fortnightly meetings 2. ? 	October 15 th to 17 th 2013	
Industry services from Communications Officer	Prepare monthly newsletters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute bi monthly newsletters 2. Edit and collect material for newsletters 3. Provide topical information for growers 	Six newsletter over 12 months	December, February April June August October
	Prepare for regular industry committee meetings every 3 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organise agenda items and past minutes 2. Distribute to committee 3. Keep minutes of meetings 	As required	
	Manage industry database	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep database up to date with industry membership 	Ongoing	

	Distributing articles and information to blueberry growers	1. Distributing blueberry industry related articles through email and post	Ongoing as required	
	Manage social media information for ABGA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage growers to update information on ABGA Face book, Twitter & Pinterest pages 2. Share information on farms to consumers 3. Share blueberry facts, tips and recipes to encourage consumption and awareness 	As required	
	Updating and maintaining the ABGA's website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing an additional location for blueberry growers to find information that has been distributed 2. Promoting events and news in the industry 	Ongoing as required	