



Melon Fund

Annual Report 2019/20

About Hort Innovation and the Melon Fund

Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australia’s horticulture sector. We work closely with industry to invest the melon R&D levy, together with Australian Government contributions, into key initiatives for growers, through the Hort Innovation Melon Fund. We’re extremely proud of the work we do to help drive productivity, profitability and demand for melon growers, and for the horticulture sector at large.

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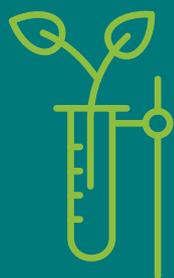
About the year

An intense and unpredictable year, 2019/20 certainly dealt challenges for the world, for Australian horticulture, and for Hort Innovation. There was ongoing drought, a devastating bushfire season, intense floods, the biosecurity threat of fall armyworm and, of course, the global and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage you to download a copy of the overarching Hort Innovation Annual Report 2019/20 at www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal to better understand Hort Innovation’s responses to these events, and how the company was able to change its plans and priorities to best serve the sector.

Through it all, though, activity in the Hort Innovation Melon Fund remained strong. While some activities inevitably changed under COVID-19, it was still a solid year of investment, with some \$849,000 invested in R&D for the industry – including into five new projects. Read on for an overview of what was delivered.

2019/20 Melon Fund snapshot



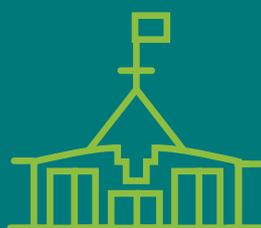
\$849,000

invested in R&D



17

active R&D investments



\$763,000

in levies collected

by the government and passed on to Hort Innovation
for investment

Did you know?



50%

Half of Australian households bought melons in 2018/19



2x

Australia's melon exports have doubled in recent years, growing from 11,753 tonnes in 2013/14 to 21,455 in 2018/19



4

Melon production occurs in four key parts of Australia: the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland

These facts and more can be found in the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook, which is delivered by Hort Innovation each year. The handbook is packed with horticulture statistical information and analysis for some 75 categories, for use by individual industries and the wider sector. The 2018/19 edition was released in early 2020 and, for the first time, features an interactive dashboard format for desktop users. See www.horticulture.com.au/horticulture-statistics-handbook.



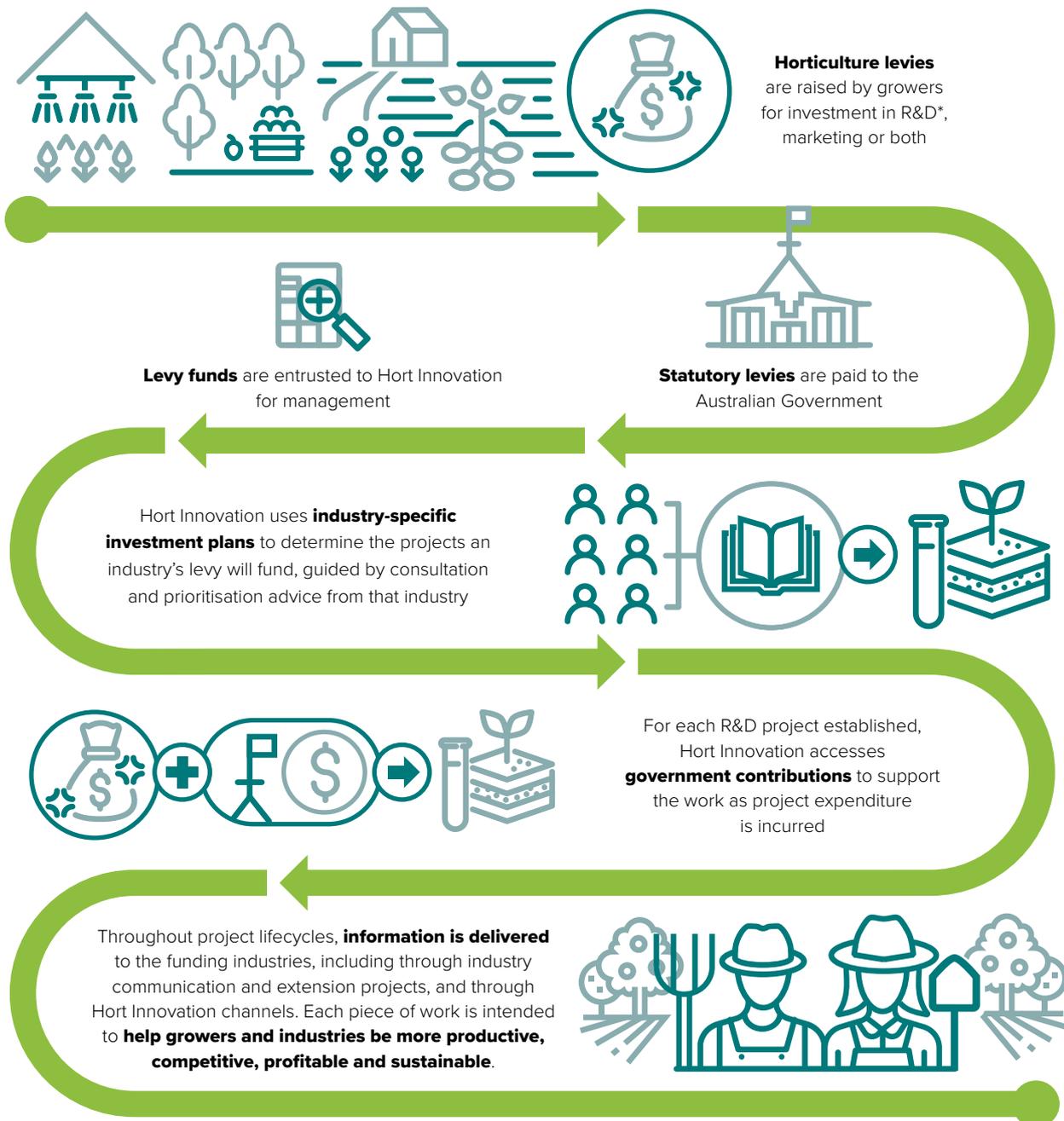
Just some of the things delivered for you during the year:

- ✓ **A guide to maximising pollination on melon farms**, available at www.bit.ly/melon-pollination*
- ✓ **High-impact work to strengthen food safety** and the adoption of best practice across the melon supply chain, which you can read more about from [p7](#)
- ✓ **Information and data to assist through COVID-19**, including the new *Hort Innovation Insights* podcast (www.horticulture.com.au/webinars) and regular consumer attitude and behaviour information (www.horticulture.com.au/impact-monitor)*
- ✓ **Preparation support for fall armyworm**, including emergency minor use permits and an educational podcast series, www.bit.ly/armyworm-podcast*
- ✓ **The industry development and communications program**, delivering events and resources including *Melon Enews* emails and the *Melon News* quarterly newsletter, plus the industry website, www.melonsaustralia.org.au/industry
- ✓ **The Good Mood Food** across-horticulture marketing campaign to support industries through the effects of recent times (www.horticulture.com.au/the-good-mood-food)*
- ✓ **Investments in the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative** to address longer-term and often complex issues and opportunities critical to the future of Australian horticulture – see www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers*
- ✓ **Projects supported by grants** secured by Hort Innovation, ranging from cross-sector Rural R&D for Profit initiatives to horticulture-specific work to aid in access to crop protection products – see the Hort Innovation Annual Report 2019/20 for more*

*These initiatives were delivered outside of the Hort Innovation Melon Fund and, in most instances, did not involve the industry levy

Making investments in 2019/20

The below diagram shows how Hort Innovation makes strategic levy investments on behalf of horticulture industries. The melon R&D levy was invested this way during the year, guided by the Melon Strategic Investment Plan and advice from the industry’s investment advisory panel.



To learn more about funding specific to the Hort Innovation Melon Fund, visit www.horticulture.com.au/melon. During the year, other sources of funding were also used to support activities for the benefit of Australian horticulture, including grant funding secured by Hort Innovation, co-investment dollars brokered through our Hort Frontiers initiative and centralised strategic levy reserves.

Investment planning and performance

During 2019/20, Hort Innovation continued to track investment expenditure against the Melon Strategic Investment Plan, while looking towards new developments in 2021. Access an at-a-glance copy of the current investment plan at www.bit.ly/melon-plan.

A performance analysis is coming

The industry's investment plan outlines key goals and outcomes for levy investment. With the plan due for renewal in 2021, Hort Innovation is undertaking a performance analysis to see how the industry has progressed against the current plan's ambitions. This will also help guide ongoing priorities for investment. Look for information to be published at www.horticulture.com.au/melon in 2021.

See how your levy investments align to the industry's current plan

You can see how investment expenditure in the Hort Innovation Melon Fund aligns to the industry's current strategic investment plan with the interactive analysis information available from www.bit.ly/melon-investment. The analysis shows the allocation of funding against each of the melon plan's outcomes, and gives an indication of the projects that are aligned to each outcome.

New ways of obtaining advice and setting priorities

In 2020/21, Hort Innovation will be implementing new ways of obtaining advice and setting priorities for industry investments. Renewed industry investment plans, plus new yearly (or as needed) program plans and new ways of consulting more broadly will mean more efficient investment and better outcomes for industry. Watch this space.



R&D project list 2019/20



NEW INVESTMENTS IN 2019/20

VM18008	Understanding and managing the role of honey bees in CGMMV epidemiology
VM19000	The effective control of listeria on rockmelons through alternative post-harvest treatment methods*
VM19002	2020 Australian melon industry conference and field day
MT19005	Horticulture trade data
MT19013	Podcast for fall armyworm management in northern farming systems

* This flagged project was both new and completed in 2019/20

ONGOING INVESTMENTS IN 2019/20

VM16000	Melon industry minor use program
VM17001	Melon industry development and communication
VM18002	Risk and crisis management planning for the melon industry
VM18003	Food safety training, extension and capacity for the melon industry – phase 2
VM18009	Reverse trade mission activities
AM17010	Taste Australia trade shows [^]
MT16004	RD&E program for control, eradication and preparedness for vegetable leafminer
MT18011	Ex-post impact assessment [†]
MT18019	Development and implementation of protocols to enable importation of improved honey bee genetics to Australia
ST17000	Generation of data for pesticide applications in horticulture crops 2018 [‡]

[^] This investment is a parent program, under which further event-specific Taste Australia investments may sit

[†] This multi-industry project was a key monitoring and evaluation investment during 2019/20 – we encourage you to find the full details at www.horticulture.com.au/mt18011

[‡] Activities for the melon industry under this investment are funded wholly through the government's AgVet grant program

INVESTMENTS COMPLETED IN 2019/20

VM17002	Food safety, training, extension and capacity for the melon industry
ST16008	AgVet collaborative forum

R&D report

Take a closer look at some of the key investments in the Hort Innovation Melon Fund during 2019/20. You can also visit www.horticulture.com.au/melon at any time to access information on new, ongoing and completed projects, and to download resources produced by levy investments, such as fact sheets and guides.

Understanding and managing the role of honey bees in CGMMV epidemiology (VM18008)

NEW IN 2019/20

Key research provider: The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industries and Resources

Beginning in July 2019 and building on an earlier investment within the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund, this project is exploring how honey bees are able to introduce cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV) into melon crops. It is also developing management practices and guidelines to help combat CGMMV for both the melon and apiary industries.

Exposure to the virus is a significant concern for growers and also for the bee industry, with CGMMV being highly destructive and quick to spread. It was first detected in Australia in the Northern Territory in 2014, and has now been detected in the majority of states and territories.

The effective control of listeria on rockmelons through alternative post-harvest treatment methods (VM19000)

NEW IN 2019/20 & NOW COMPLETE

Key research provider: University of Tasmania

Beginning and ending in 2019/20, this investment worked to better understand the causes of outbreaks of listeria in rockmelons, and explored potential risk management strategies.

After conducting a comprehensive review of both Australian and international listeria outbreaks, and looking at methods that are being used or proposed to manage the risk post-harvest, the project team reported:

- » **Outbreaks are rare.** While the bacteria that causes listeriosis, *Listeria monocytogenes*, is common in the natural environment and can colonise food processing plants, outbreaks from whole rockmelons are rare. Only three outbreaks associated with whole melons have been reported in international literature over the last 40 years.
- » **Contamination often occurs in the packhouse.** While a range of factors can contribute to outbreaks, it was suggested colonisation of the packhouse – likely undetected for many weeks – was a factor in the contamination of melons in two of the largest outbreaks investigated. In a 2011 United States outbreak, colonisation was suspected to be caused by failure to use sanitiser spray on melons, or contamination from trucks, or the introduction of contaminated food processing equipment. It was also suggested that high-prevalence but low-level contamination of melons occurred in the field in the 2018 Australian outbreak after adverse weather events, and was not eliminated during processing in the packhouse.
- » **More work is needed to confirm the optimal use of sanitisers.** While they play an important role in product safety, the researchers revealed limited evidence to determine the efficacy of sanitisers under the conditions currently used in Australia to kill or remove *Listeria monocytogenes* from the surface of whole melons.
- » **Alternative sanitisation methods are promising, but not all are relevant for the Australian industry.** From their review, the researchers found evidence that a range of technologies can be effectively used to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes* from the surface of rockmelons, including X-rays, hot water, superheated steam, dry steam and octenidine dihydrochloride.

The project has developed a summary of essential information for the industry, which is available together with the project's final research report at www.bit.ly/vm19000.

Continued >>

The team has also worked closely with other levy-funded programs, including *Food safety training, extension and capacity for the melon industry – phase 2* (VM18003), described below, to ensure that their findings are easily accessible.

Food safety training, extension and capacity for the melon industry – phase 2 (VM18003)

Key research provider: NSW Department of Primary Industries

This investment is strengthening the food safety systems of the Australian melon industry, by supporting the adoption of best practice across the supply chain. It follows initial investment *Food safety, training, extension and capacity for the melon industry* (VM17002) which finished early in 2019/20.

Like its predecessor, VM18003 supports food safety training activities across the country for melon growers, farm managers and key farm staff. With the initial project focusing on rockmelons, this second phase includes watermelon businesses as well.

Information on the project's training opportunities is circulated through the Australian Melon Association's channels (www.melonsaustralia.org.au/industry).

The project also involves delivery of key practical resources for industry, including maintenance of a best practice guide to help the industry identify and manage potential microbial risks (the 2019 edition is available at www.bit.ly/melon-bpgg), along with other essential food safety information, brought together in the *Melon food safety toolbox* (2019 edition available at www.bit.ly/melon-toolbox).

For a summary of completed project VM17002's activities, and to access its final research report, visit www.bit.ly/vm17002.

Risk and crisis management planning for the melon industry (VM18002)

Key research provider: Control Risks Group

This investment is reviewing and updating the Australian melon industry's crisis management guidelines. As well as identifying risks and mitigation activities, in the event of an issue or crisis, having a clear plan in place ensures the industry is prepared with the information and processes needed to respond effectively, responsibly and in a coordinated, unified way. The management guidelines – and the relevant training this project is delivering – also ensure that stakeholders involved in crisis response for the industry understand the process and are equipped and ready to be involved.



Melon industry development and communication (VM17001)

Key research provider: Dianne Fullelove

Ongoing through 2019/20 and due to conclude towards the end of 2020, this investment has been supporting Australian melon growers in adopting improved practices on-farm and keeping up to date with the latest industry news, information, resources and technologies. To this end, it has funded the position of dedicated industry development manager Dianne Fullelove, who has undertaken a broad range of activities geared towards improving the circulation and uptake of information within the industry.

Core communication channels that have continue to be produced and maintained by the project include:

- » Monthly *Melon Enews* e-newsletters
- » The industry's quarterly newsletter, *Melon News*
- » The Australian Melon Association website, with the industry area holding news, information and resources for growers
- » The Australian Melon Association's Facebook page
- » Fact sheets, as needed.

Visit www.melonsaustralia.org.au/industry to access all of the above.

This project has also involved face-to-face events for the industry (prior to COVID-19), with the industry development manager running a program of grower technical meetings throughout each year. It has also assisted in the running of industry conferences and field days, and has involved working closely with researchers and government agencies to support the sharing of information, to maintain industry plans, foster collaboration between research projects and more.

2020 Australian melon industry conference and field day (VM19002)

NEW IN 2019/20 & NOW COMPLETED

Key research provider: Australian Melon Association

This investment was originally established to support the running of the Australian melon industry conference and field day for 2020, which was intended to be held in Perth in March 2020. However, due to the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person event was cancelled. Instead, there was a shift to the delivery of webinars in place of the conference's presenter sessions, and videos from trial sites were developed. In this way, the project was still able to present the latest research, industry and marketing information to melon growers and other supply chain stakeholders. The focus remained on communicating the outcomes of levy-funded investments, as well as delivering technical and practical information to growers that they can implement in their businesses.

The recorded sessions have been placed on the Australian Melon Association industry website, including at www.bit.ly/melon-videos, and promoted via the industry's communications and extension program.



Taste Australia trade shows (AM17010)

Key research partner: Various

This investment is a parent program that supports industry attendance under the Taste Australia banner at relevant international trade shows, to further develop export opportunities in key Asian and Middle Eastern markets. Taste Australia is the whole-of-horticulture brand used to increase the profile, sales and consumption of premium Australian horticulture products in international markets, and is a central component of Hort Innovation's Hort Frontiers Asian Markets Fund (learn more at www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers).

In 2019, the melon R&D levy supported the attendance of industry representatives for the first time at the Asia Fruit Logistica trade show in Hong Kong, under the sub-project *Melons outbound trade mission* (VM18007). This was a chance for the industry to raise international awareness of Australian melons with buyers and decision makers. The trade mission also involved retail visits and other international networking.

Podcasts and national RD&E gap analysis for fall armyworm in northern farming systems (MT19013)

NEW IN 2019/20

Key research provider: Cotton Research & Development Corporation

An incredibly destructive exotic pest, fall armyworm was detected on Australian shores for the first time in 2020. This multi-industry and cross-sector project was established to support readiness and help protect the horticulture sector, through the delivery of an educational podcast series for growers.

The series is available from www.bit.ly/armyworm-podcast and will come to include five episodes featuring interviews with international experts on their experiences with the pest; two episodes with Australian scientists on current advice and knowledge gaps; and four episodes with growers and advisors discussing regional topics and responses.

This project is a collaboration between Hort Innovation and other research and development corporations including the Cotton Research & Development Corporation, Grains Research & Development Corporation, Sugar Research Australia and AgriFutures Australia. It is being delivered through the Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative, which you can learn more about at www.pbri.com.au.

RD&E program for control, eradication and preparedness for vegetable leafminer (MT16004)

Key research provider: Cesar, in conjunction with others

Ongoing through 2019/20, this multi-industry project is bolstering preparedness for and protection against the potential spread of vegetable leafminer (*Liriomyza sativae*), as well as American serpentine leafminer (*Liriomyza trifolii*) and serpentine leafminer (*Liriomyza huidobrensis*), through Australian growing regions.

Project activities include developing information and resources for monitoring, managing and eradicating leafminers; identifying and modelling the spread of the pests; reviewing and looking at accessibility of chemical and biological control options; and generally increasing awareness and understanding of the leafminers in the relevant industries and in the community.

Development and implementation of protocols to enable importation of improved honey bee genetics to Australia (MT18019)

Key research provider: CSIRO

This investment is laying the groundwork to allow the first importation of desirable honey bee germplasm into Australia, with a focus on sourcing genetic material from bees with a tolerance to Varroa mite and its associated viruses. Import of and access to this material for breeding purposes will allow both the honey bee and horticulture industries to prepare for the threat of Varroa, by pre-emptively establishing Varroa tolerant genetics in Australia's honey bee population. See www.bit.ly/mt18019 for more.

Melon industry minor use program (VM16000)

Key research provider: Hort Innovation

Through this project, levy funds and Australian Government contributions are used to submit renewals and applications for minor use permits for the melon industry as required. These submissions are prepared and submitted to the APVMA.

For more on minor use permits, including a list of permits, see [p11](#).

All current minor use permits for the industry are searchable at portal.apvma.gov.au/permits. Permit updates are also circulated in Hort Innovation's *Growing Innovation* e-newsletter, which you can sign up for at www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up.



Generation of data for pesticide applications in horticulture crops 2018 (ST17000)

Key research provider: Peracto

The generation of pesticide residue, efficacy and crop safety data is required to support label registration and minor use permit applications made to the APVMA which, when approved, provide access to safe and effective chemicals for the management of pests, weeds and diseases.

This multi-industry project is generating the data required for a range of registration and minor use applications across several horticulture crops, including melons. Its work is supported by grant funding secured by Hort Innovation through the Australian Government's Access to Industry Priority Uses of AgVet Chemicals program.

Minor use permits

The Hort Innovation Melon Fund supports the submission of applications for new and renewed minor use permits for the industry, as well as data generation activities to support chemical permits and registrations, and strategic agrichemical reviews.

Together these efforts provide industry access to safe, relevant and effective chemicals for the management of pests, weeds and diseases.

For full details on these activities and links to relevant information, visit www.bit.ly/minor-use-melon.

Permits in 2019/20

Fall armyworm – an incredibly destructive exotic pest – was detected on Australian shores for the first time in 2020. To support readiness and protect the horticulture sector, Hort Innovation was involved in securing emergency permits for crop protection chemicals, with all horticulture industries having at least one effective option available to them by the end of 2019/20. For the melon industry, PER89263, PER89293, PER89241, PER89259 and PER89870 were obtained for this reason.

Details for these and all other permits can be found in the following table.

Current permits

Below is a list of minor use permits for the melon industry, current as of 21 September 2020.

PERMIT ID	DESCRIPTION	DATE ISSUED	EXPIRY DATE	PERMIT HOLDER
PER14840 Version 3	Bupirimate / Cucurbits (bitter melon, cucumber, gherkin, pumpkin, squash, watermelon, squash, zucchini) and peppers / Powdery mildew	1-Oct-14	30-Sep-24	Hort Innovation
PER12221 Version 4	Petroleum oil / Specified vegetable crops (including melons) / Specified insect pests (including greenhouse whitefly, sweetpotato whitefly and silverleaf whitefly B biotype and whitefly Q biotype)	29-Jun-12	30-Nov-22	Hort Innovation
PER87065*	Dimethoate / Melons, including watermelons (post-harvest) / Various fruit fly species	18-Feb-19	28-Feb-24	Hort Innovation
PER82428 Version 4	Methomyl / Various crops including fruiting vegetables (cucurbits) / Various pests: Helicoverpa, cucumber moth, cluster caterpillar, loopers, webworm, Rutherglen bug, thrips – including WFT	22-Apr-16	31-Mar-24	Hort Innovation
PER14650 Version 2*	Etoxazole (Paramite miticide) / Melons, including cantaloupe, honeydew melon, watermelon / Two-spotted mite	07-Nov-14	28-Feb-23	Australian Melon Association Inc (AMIA) C/Hort Innovation
PER14765 Version 4	Hexythiazox (Calibre) / Cucurbits including melons / Tomato russet mite, broad mite, and two-spotted mite	21-Feb-15	30-Sep-23	Hort Innovation
PER80718 Version 3	Methyl bromide / Fruit and fruiting vegetables, food producing plants and ornamentals / Fruit fly, whitefly and thrips (quarantine treatment, all states)	12-Apr-15	31-Mar-25	Biosecurity SA

PERMIT ID	DESCRIPTION	DATE ISSUED	EXPIRY DATE	PERMIT HOLDER
PER13859 Version 2	Dimethoate / Orchard clean-up – fruit fly host crops following harvest / Fruit fly	09-Feb-15	31-Jul-24	Hort Innovation
PER80101 Version 3	Clothianidan (Samurai) / Cucurbit vegetables / Cucumber fruit fly	10-Nov-15	30-Sep-23	Hort Innovation
PER81876 Version 3	Abamectin / Fruiting vegetables including cucurbits (except sweet corn and mushrooms), leafy vegetables (except lettuce), legume vegetables, root and tuber vegetables, bulb onions, cabbage (head), celery, rhubarb and bulb vegetables (including leeks and spring onions) / Vegetable leafminer (<i>Liriomyza sativae</i>)	24-Jun-16	30-Apr-24	Hort Innovation
PER87051	Thiamethoxam + chlorantraniliprole (Durivo) / Various specified crops (including melons protected and field) / Various specified pests, including corn earworm, native budworm, cabbage aphid, green peach aphid, silverleaf whitefly, greenhouse whitefly, western flower thrips, onion thrips (QLD only – within specified regions)	25-Feb-19	28-Feb-24	Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Cooperative
PER80138 Version 8	Alpha-Cypermethrin / Cucurbit vegetables / Cucumber fruit fly	26-Feb-15	31-Mar-25	Hort Innovation
PER89263	Emamectin (Proclaim Opti Insecticide) / Cucurbits / Fall armyworm	10-Mar-20	31-Mar-23	Hort Innovation
PER89293	Methomyl / Cucurbits / Fall armyworm	10-Apr-20	30-Apr-23	Hort Innovation
PER89241	Spinetoram (Success Neo and Delegate Insecticide) / Cucurbits / Fall armyworm	06-Mar-20	31-Mar-23	Hort Innovation
PER89259	Chlorantraniliprole (Coragen, Altacor and Altacor Hort Insecticide) / Fruiting vegetables, including cucurbits / Fall armyworm	06-Mar-20	31-Mar-23	Hort Innovation
PER89870	Spinosad (Entrust Organic) / Various, including cucurbits / Fall armyworm	21-Jul-20	31-Jul-23	Hort Innovation

*Please note: Of the minor use permits listed, these flagged permits are the only ones to involve the melon levy. Most (but not all) other permits have been fully funded by the vegetable industry levy. The vegetable industry may choose to change any details of these permits or surrender these permits at its discretion.

All efforts have been made to provide the most current, complete and accurate information on these permits, however you should always confirm all details on the APVMA website at portal.apvma.gov.au/permits. Details of the conditions of use associated with these permits can also be found on the APVMA site.

Keep up to date! Find monthly minor use permit updates in our *Growing Innovation* e-newsletter. Sign up for free at www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up.



Financial statement

Financial operating statement 2019/20

	R&D (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
	2019/20 July – June	2019/20 July – June
OPENING BALANCE	1,429,074	1,429,074
Levies from growers (net of collection costs)	763,352	763,352
Australian Government money	513,457	513,457
Other income*	19,939	19,939
TOTAL INCOME	1,296,748	1,296,748
Project funding	849,369	849,369
Consultation with and advice from growers	14,988	14,988
Service delivery – base	40,050	40,050
Service delivery – shared	57,507	57,507
Service delivery – fund specific	65,000	65,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,026,913	1,026,913
Levy contribution to across-industry activity	–	–
CLOSING BALANCE	1,698,909	1,698,909
Levy collection costs	30,853	30,853

* Interest, royalties



THE GOOD MOOD FOOD

BONUS ACTIVITY: THE GOOD MOOD FOOD

In 2019/20, Hort Innovation created The Good Mood Food campaign to deliver an immediate and enduring behaviour-change message to motivate more Australians to eat more fruit, vegetables and nuts.

With the central message that these Aussie horticulture products are natural mood boosters, the campaign was developed to support the sector through the impacts of recent challenges including bushfires, drought, floods and of course COVID-19 – the effects of which continue to be felt in consumer spending and purchasing behaviour.

Initially running between May and November 2020, The Good Mood Food has been seen across the country on TV; in newspapers; on radio and music streaming services; online (including on YouTube and TV catch-up services); on social media; and via retail partnerships and advertising screens near supermarkets.

In July, 56 per cent of surveyed consumers said The Good Mood Food had positively influenced their shopping habits, and by the end of campaign's run, 98 per cent of all Australians were expected to be reached.

Learn more at www.horticulture.com.au/the-good-mood-food.

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The projects in this report have been funded by Hort Innovation using sources including the melon levy, Australian Government contributions and, in some instances, co-contributions from a variety of sources.

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