

Export case study — VG13072 Export Opportunities for Carrots, Sweet corn, Beans, Broccoli and Baby leaf - symposia

Grower	Jim Trandos – Trandos Farms
Location	Wanneroo WA
Founded	1939
Vegetables grown	Sweet Corn, Beans
Sales channels	Grow, pack and market on farm, currently exporting up to 15% of produce

What was the research about?

Between February 2014 and August 2018, VG13072 *Export Opportunities for Carrots, Sweet corn, Beans, Broccoli and Baby leaf – symposia* (lead by AUSVEG) delivered a series of four symposia / seminars, as outlined below;

- An export symposium focused on Malaysia and UAE to explore the opportunities for Australian grown vegetables (specific focus carrots, sweet corn, beans, broccoli and baby leaf vegetables) 2015. Held in Adelaide SA and attended by 66 participants (invited as they were already exporting to the destination or had an active interest in commencing exports). The aim was to *provide growers with a range of information on the exporting requirements of these unique markets while also identifying current commodity trends and demands for both countries.*
- A ‘Practicalities of exporting symposium’ 2016 (non-market and non-vegetable specific). Held in Gold Coast QLD with the *aim of delivering a forum specifically designed to provide vegetable growers with a practical overview to begin or expand on their export operations.*
- An ‘Australian vegetables export seminar’ 2017 (non-market and non-vegetable specific). Held in Adelaide SA and attended by 75 vegetable growers from across Australia. The *aim of the event was to provide the industry with an overview of the recently developed Vegetable Industry Export Strategy 2020 and how it will help the industry to drive export growth.*
- An ‘Australian vegetables export seminar’ 2018 (non-market and non-vegetable specific). Held in Brisbane QLD and attended by 100 vegetable growers from across Australia. The *key aims were to provide an ‘export 101’ detailing the basics of the export process for growers who are looking to commence their export journey. And to provide a session on ‘export opportunities’ to provide exporting growers with insights from other horticultural sectors who have been successful.*

The symposia / seminars were assessed to have increased vegetable growers’ knowledge, skills and resources relating to participating in export markets. As a result, VG13072 supported an earlier and higher increase in export volumes than would otherwise have occurred. Jim Trandos, managing director of Trandos farms talks about how project VG13072 contributed to the growth of his export business.

How were involved in VG13072?

“I attended the initial Symposia in Adelaide and several of the following symposia / seminars. I found that they were very useful, presenting good information and resources. I went actively looking for information and was able to get it. Every time I went, I found the events to be well attended by the right people (growers who were interested in export growth and active buyers). The ability to network (particularly with buyers) was also very helpful.”

What were the impacts and benefits of your involvement in VG13072?

“The information and tools from the symposia/seminar series would have contributed in some way to our businesses growth in exports. At this time, we were already exporting our vegetables. Over time we had developed a pretty specific business model and sell direct to supermarkets (skipping the agents and middle men). I recall that I was introduced to one of our now current overseas customers at the first symposia”.

“Because of the many external factors influencing our export business, it is unlikely that we would shift all of business over to export. Sometimes there is a slight market premium for exports, but with the extra costs involved with export it is often similar per unit return to domestic sales. For our business, the benefit of exporting is the addition of customers that have a consistent demand. A diverse customer base reduces the risk of demand shock.”

What are you currently working towards, and how has VG13072 supported these efforts?

“We welcome opportunities to expand into new markets. Any tools and information that assist our business to do this are valuable. Every market has its own characteristics. We recently started exporting into the Hong Kong market. We are also planning to build on our existing Middle East export market to include Saudi and Qatar. The first symposium had a UAE Focus, although we were already exporting to that market the symposium was helpful even down to simple detail such as labelling colours. These Symposium seminars generally increased our export preparedness.”

Have there been any challenges along the way?

“Ideally, we want consistent demand from our customers. Fluctuating freight rates (that are currently significantly higher than pre COVID levels) can result in our produce becoming non cost competitive, (as can increased supply from competing produces in other countries). It takes time to develop relationships and enter export markets, so it is frustrating when factors beyond our control result in us being closed out of markets”.

Would you support funding of further export symposia / seminars?

“If they can be run in a cost effective manner – yes. There is always something to learn. And where they can be treated as an inbound trade mission (connecting potential buyers with Australian vegetable growers) this is of great value.”



Image credit: Trandos Farms

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Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture. For more information visit www.horticulture.com.au.

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