



Citrep

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Newsletter of the Murray Valley Citrus Board

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Robert Mansell

Chairman's Report

Welcome to this edition of Citrep!

With future water allocations still up in the air, growers need to keep a close eye on farm management. The MVCB has completed its initial fruit count for next season's forecast, which indicates low counts in Navels, in particular Late Navels. This is just a guide, with the final, more accurate forecast due out when March counts and measurements are completed. It will be a challenge to the industry to keep all of our markets supplied.

Marketing Tangelos will need to be managed carefully with production in Peru continuing to increase rapidly, putting huge pressures on the viability of this variety for us. Growers will need to communicate closely with their packers to make sure they have a home for Tangelos in the coming season.

In what is shaping up to be a challenging season, with reduced production and a record high Australian dollar, I wish everyone the best for the upcoming Navel season.

CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

The MVCB operates under the Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990, Victoria. Specifically the role of the Board is spelt out in the MVCB Industry Development Order 2004. The term of this Order expires on 30th June 2008.

Citrus producers in the Murray Valley area of NSW and Victoria must now decide on whether to renew this Order for a further 4 years. A report on the achievements of the MVCB and its proposed strategic direction is currently being sent out to producers for information and feedback. In anticipation of this report, I would like to draw your

attention to some of the activities the MVCB has been able to deliver over the past 12 months and to highlight the importance of continuing with our current and future projects.

KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE BOARD WERE AS FOLLOWS

Water

- Water Forum, Coomealla
- Critical needs water for NSW
- Approached the Victorian Government to qualify permanent plantings (critical needs)
- Approached the Victorian Premier, Hon. John Brumby, to free up Murray, Goulburn system losses, to create increased Murray River allocations.
- Worked in collaboration with NSW and Vic DPI's running workshops on water budgeting, and strategies to manage with less water eg hedging, pruning, drip irrigation and retiring patches etc.

Pest Free Area (PFA) - Greater Sunraysia

- Establishment of a PFA for the Greater Sunraysia. An initiative of the MVCB.
- The purpose of the PFA is to gain area freedom (Fruit Fly) status to qualify for important markets such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China.
- Significant progress has been made with legislation being passed in Vic, with NSW legislation imminent.
- The project is being funded by MVCB, Summer Fruit Australia Ltd, Australian Table Grape Association and NSW and Vic DPI.

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John Tesoriero

Chief Executive's Report

Group Market Visit to Singapore, United Kingdom, Germany and USA.

The MVCB sought expressions of interest from citrus industry members in December 2007 to participate in the above Horticulture Australia Ltd. sponsored group market visit.



Left: Fruit at the new Covent Garden Wholesale Market, London. Right: Sliced fruit on display at Fruit Logistica, Berlin.

Robert Mansell (MVCB Chairman), Trevor Radloff (Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc Director) and myself together with Neville Mitchell (Sunraysia Dried Fruits), David Flack (Elders), Simon Craig (Birchip Cropping Group) and Craig Urand of Blueprint Consulting participated in the trade mission.

The following overview prepared by Trevor Radloff summarises the outcomes of the trade mission from a citrus industry perspective.

Singapore

The market for Australian citrus in Singapore is still quite attractive, with our quality of flavour, food safety and excellent trading reputation still quite evident in the Singapore marketplace. Pressure is coming from other Southern Hemisphere suppliers such as South Africa and Chile. The continuing strength of the Australian currency is making our fruit increasingly expensive, more so against the South African rand, which is weakening. The Singapore market still values Australian fruit for its superior flavour. Preparations were underway for the Chinese New Year, with the market

operating until midnight to meet orders. The Chinese mandarins available are small, very sweet, but devoid of flavour. These sell for \$6.00 US for 8 KG.

London

In London we were able to make use of the Austrade office in Australia House, and had the benefit of our appointments coming to us, the time saved commuting from one side of London to the other should not be underestimated. We were briefed by the local Austrade Food & Beverage specialist on market conditions in the UK, and the place for Australian produce in the market. It was pointed out that Australian produce is well regarded, and that "Brand Australia" is easily marketable.

After interviewing key staff of two large category managers, it became quite obvious that the large supermarket chains are hard taskmasters, with stringent product specifications, and detailed quality assurance requirements. Product that arrives outside specifications is rejected, no negotiation. The market for organic produce is growing rapidly, and there is a push towards ethical consumerism, with the concept of "food

miles" and "carbon footprint" becoming the latest point of differentiation between supermarkets. It was suggested that if Australian citrus was to be marketed in the UK, it would be best to avoid the large retail chains, and concentrate on small speciality distributors. Shipping to the UK is actually cheaper to go to Rotterdam by ship and then by road to the UK, containers landed in the UK cost £500.00 in handling charges, whereas containers through Rotterdam are charged only £100.00. The group had a meeting with the CEO of the Fresh Produce Consortium, an industry funded body which represents the interests of the supply chain from growing to consumption. Services offered by this organisation include Best Practice guidance, updates on EU legislation changes and a guide to sustainable pesticide use.

Berlin

Fruit Logistica in Berlin is an impressive Trade Fair, comprehensively covering all aspects of fresh produce retailing. We were witness to the professional and impressive displays from Spain, Morocco,

Egypt, Holland and many other nations exhibiting in what is essentially their home market. There is a strong trend in the European and UK market towards cut, prepared and ready to eat fruit and vegetables, and this was obviously on display at Fruit Logistica. We spoke to many importers and Category managers, and the response varied from a quite positive reception to incredulity. Many importers still remembered favourably the shipment of Australian Navels that arrived into the European market approximately 3 years ago. Once again price and distance are the impediments most often quoted. We spoke to a couple of importers based in St Petersburg, Russia, who expressed interest in availability calendars, price and shipping details. Other importers suggested that we approach French and Italian importers, as these markets appreciate the importance of flavour, and quality.

Overall, opportunities for Murray Valley citrus into the UK or European Markets are limited to speciality retailers, and quality wholesale markets. The potential to supply fruit into the major supermarket chains would require local growers to adopt

EurepGAP or GLOBALGAP quality assurance programs, these are then duplicated by supermarkets' own programs, and require auditing by the Supermarkets' own auditors. Once again, any fruit not meeting specifications is rejected, and would require trans shipment, or discounting into the local wholesale market.

USA

The American leg of our trip focussed on the World Ag Fair at Tulare, advertised as the largest of its kind in the world. Tulare is 100 km South of Fresno, in California's San Joaquin valley. The annual agricultural production from this fertile valley rivals many nations GDP.

There is a wide variety of differing crops throughout the valley, walnuts, almonds, pecans, various stone fruits, dairying, grapes for raisins, and fresh market, and of course, large areas of citrus. During the field day we were able to take in a bus tour of production and packing operations. American growers are currently experiencing a difficult season, with a very large crop

after recovering from the freeze of last year. Production for this year is tipped to be as much as 92 million 18 kg cases.

Grower returns at the moment are as low as \$50 per bin. Count 88 Navels are selling for \$6 per 18 kg case; count 56 offer better returns of \$12 - \$15 per 18 kg case.

A bright note for Growers is the returns available for easy peelers, \$300 - \$400 per bin. With such returns on offer growers are rapidly planting easy peelers, but these plantings are on top of existing production, not at the expense of Navels, so the problem of over production has been compounded. There is a considerable amount of speculation about the extension of the US Navel season into the first weeks of the Riversun program, with such a large crop taking a long time to put to market. There is another aspect to consider, unseasonably warm weather is advancing rind maturity rapidly, so some concerns were raised that the crop may not hold until June.

John Tesoriero
Chief Executive, MVCB

Chairman's Report *Cont'd...*

MARKET ACCESS

China

The MVCB approached Hon. Peter McGauran and succeeded in gaining funding (\$1.2 Million) for Fullers' Rose Weevil (FRW) research to develop a systems approach for the management of pest controls.

Japan

The MVCB has worked closely with Biosecurity Australia (BA) to progress seasonal area freedom (Fruit Fly) for the Greater Sunraysia. This is a work in progress.

In addition, we have hosted delegations from China, Pakistan, Taiwan, South America and Indonesia etc regarding market access and trade related issues, including collaborative R & D.

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

The Board has been active in developing future citrus industry leaders. It conducted its second training program in 2007 with 10 participants graduating. It is pleasing that a number of graduates are now actively involved in the industry at Board and Committee level.

PROMOTION

The Board continues to support the Melbourne Citrus Committee with its promotional activities. In addition, we are represented on the National Orange Promotions Committee.

CITGroups

This remains a high priority activity of the Board. Recent topics have included:

- Oleocellosis Prediction tools and their use in the field
- Pruning and hedging strategies for drought conditions

- Managing a citrus business during drought conditions
- Drought assistance workshops
- Crop manipulation for fruit size
- Morning teas for ladies in citrus production

The MVCB continues to support research projects, in collaboration with DPI's, CSIRO and other Industry bodies.

In all, it has been a consistent drive to achieve positive outcomes in trying times and the Board and Staff are to be commended for the consistent teamwork approach that has been forthcoming, as we continue to deal with challenging circumstances.

Robert Mansell
Chairman, MVCB



Anne Mansell

Sunraysia Citrus Growers Report

Sunraysia Citrus Growers held our Annual General Meeting on Friday, 7 December 2007.

Directors who were re-elected for another two years were:

Jan Denham
Kevin Cock
Vince DeMaria
Anne Mansell

Directors who continue for the next 12 months are:

Susan Chislett
Matthew Cottrell
Trevor Radloff
Amanda Simonetta

I thank all Directors for their hard work over the last 12 months and we will continue to advocate and represent our growers on all issues affecting our industry. A special tribute was paid to former Chair, Peter Crisp, and all his efforts in forging positive change for growers in our region.

At the AGM it was voted to make a change to the Rules & Procedure of the Incorporation to enable broader representation from growers on our Board. The explanation regarding this rule change was sent out to all growers prior to the AGM and is listed below:

The Directors of Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc. would like to revise the Rules of Association regarding who is able to become a Director.

As Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc. no longer has active branches to enable participation of additional interested people, or to provide a training ground for future Directors, the proposed resolution would enable citrus growers across the Sunraysia district, as set down in Rule 21, to be elected as a Director. This proposal will enable the Board of Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc. to keep its numbers up and thus maintain a solid base of representation from the industry.

Also the role of Executive Officer no longer exists and the Chair and Deputy Chair take responsibility for the running of Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc.

Water availability continues to challenge our growers across both states and while we welcome the water releases along the Darling, we know that there is still a long way to go. Tonnages will be affected for the foreseeable future, and many growers have had to make difficult decisions about viability and profitability. SCG has written to the new Federal Minister for Agriculture, The Hon Tony Burke, requesting a meeting and outlining the issues that are currently prohibiting growth in our industry in this region. Similarly we have written to The Hon Penny Wong regarding the water situation. As yet we have not received a response from either Minister.

On 17 January, we hosted a visit from DNE talking about the past season of Navel exports to the USA. Greg Nelson and Stu Monaghan provided a 40 minute presentation on the overall opportunities of this important export market and the issues that our growers confronted, particularly in relation to Tangelos from Peru. A DVD copy of the presentation is available to anyone who is interested. Please contact our office or myself if you would like to view it.

I am sad to announce that Phyl Clay, who has worked for SCG for the last six years, is retiring in mid February. Phyl has worked incredibly hard in supporting the Directors and the growers as we pursue a better outcome for our industry. Her knowledge of the industry will be sorely missed. I would like to sincerely thank Phyl for all her tireless efforts over the last six years, particularly in organizing the Conference in 2004 and for the endless hours she spent assisting with the Toxic Waste Dump fight.

We welcome on board Deb Scott, who has commenced working for SCG. Deb and her husband own a citrus property in the Riverland and she has invaluable experience in office administration in her former employment. The Directors and myself are all looking forward to working with Deb and if you are ever in the office please make yourself known to her.

The Citrus Industry Restructure is continuing to gather pace and a business case is now being developed for growers' information. SCG agreed to a range of points which we placed in a submission to the Restructure Task Force, including the issue of basic regional representation and a discussion of a third option, that is, the single structure option which also recognizes the Statutory nature of the Boards. Staging the implementation was also high on the agenda. Please don't hesitate to contact the office if you require any further information on the restructure.

The Murray Valley Citrus Board is also in the process of having its order remade and growers will be receiving a report shortly on the achievements of the Board over the last five years. Please take the time to read through what will no doubt be a comprehensive assessment of a range of tasks that have been undertaken to provide better services to local growers.

SCG applied to DPI in a recent grant scheme for funding to assist Sunrise 21 in a flyover of the area. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful in obtaining this grant funding, but we continue to work with MVCB and SunRise 21 in ascertaining how the district is coping with the changes to crop plantings.

The MVCB has combined with SCG and growers in NSW in working toward the eradication of Citrus Gall Wasp. IDO of the MVCB, Mary Cannard is continuing to seek funding for follow up over the next three years.

Please contact any of the Directors, myself, or the SCG office, if you have an issue that you believe requires addressing and we will try our best to assist.

Anne Mansell
 Chair, SCG

Citrus Ladies Morning Tea

This timely initiative has received deserved praise from those who participated and Ms Mary Cannard and the MVCB are to be commended for such thoughtful action.



Morning Tea participants Judy Bertalli, Cynthia Keenan, Nicole Radloff and Valerie Wilson.



Morning Tea participants Stephanie Ferdelja and Linda Smyth.

The aim of getting the ladies off the farm into purposeful groups is not only an important social activity, but an effective way of providing necessary information and support to wives and partners in an informal environment.

Mary Cannard, Industry Development Officer, MVCB, provided the following report on activities to date.

'The Murray Valley Citrus Board has been hosting 'Citrus Ladies' morning teas during the past few months to support local citrus growers and their families in these worrying, drought affected times. The wives and partners of our 'blockies' are working in many different capacities on citrus farms to support the family business. Some are keeping the accounts and books up to date, others are out there performing physical work such as pruning, harvesting and spraying etc, while others are running the household and taking responsibility for the children, to ensure their hard working 'blocky' partners have a comfortable home and a warm meal to come home to when the day is finished. However, the wives and partners are often unable to attend Board run activities due to family commitments or they feel the technical information offered at CITGroups is not their area of expertise.'

Mary Cannard, IDO, MVCB, issued personal invitations by phone to small groups to attend the morning teas which she hosted in their local area. 'I just wanted the citrus ladies to turn up, relax and enjoy themselves interacting with their neighbours and friends while enjoying some tasty food; and, if needed, get some information about the many and varied forms of drought assistance being offered by local, state and federal governments, as well as community groups. I've targeted the ladies, as most of the time it's the women who are filling in the necessary forms and organising access to drought assistance', Mary said.

Mary organised representatives from Mallee Family Care and/or Rural Financial Counselling Service to be in attendance. 'There is a lot of misinformation out there about drought assistance and many growers tend to self assess, so the ladies are finding it extremely helpful to be able to access information on grants and exceptional circumstances payments, straight from the people who deal with it on a daily basis. Stephanie Ferdelja from Rural Financial Counselling has been very helpful in this way; and Sue Thornton from Mallee Family Care has been an invaluable addition to these morning teas, as she has a background in drought counselling and drought projects.'

Two morning teas were held in December, the first in the Nangiloc/Colignan area at the Mud Brick Building with a dozen ladies in attendance. The second at the Tooleybuc Sporting Club, with approximately six ladies in attendance. Two more followed in February at Coomealla on 12 February and Buronga/Mourquong on 13 February. Future morning teas are being planned for Barham, Merbein and Irymple.

Mary says 'The morning teas have enabled the 'girls' to get together in small local groups to support each other, make new friends and re-establish old social networks. Even if all that happens is the downloading of some of the stress of coping with anxious partners and reduced income, then it is all worthwhile. Small groups work best, as the ladies feel comfortable with each other and are more likely to share their problems. I'm also finding they are helping each other by exchanging information on access to government funded, satellite internet technology and computer training courses.'

Mary hopes the morning teas may help identify problems with the drought assistance packages which need to be changed, or ways in which the MVCB can better support their growers during the worst drought in living memory.



Neil Eagle

Notes

From Neil Eagle

At the time of writing, overall water prospects going into the 2008/09 season look more favourable than at this time last year, even though the current storage volumes do not reflect that situation.

The reasons for this optimism are:

- 1 The La Nina is increasingly positive.
- 2 We are experiencing improved rainfall events regularly in our Eastern catchments areas servicing Hume, Dartmouth and the Snowy, plus Victorian tributary rivers below Hume.
- 3 There have been significant rainfall events, still continuing in Central Queensland and North Central NSW, providing flows down the Darling River. The current forecast is that the Menindee Lakes will receive about 550 GLs, with another 108 GLs supplied down the Darling River below Menindee, with some reaching the Murray River, as a NSW Credit to that system.

As for the prospects for each State:

Victoria

Victoria has now announced another slight increase in allocation for this current year, up to 42%; with the prospects for 2008/09 starting at a low allocation figure, but projected to rise by February 2009 to 100%.

NSW

NSW has announced that all water suspended in 2006/07 year and again in 2007/08 year, is now returned to irrigators accounts with the ability to use now, or carryover any or all of this water into the 2008/09 season for immediate use in that year.

NSW continues to have zero allocation for the current 2007/08 year for both HS & GS licenses. However, the Department is planning to offset the Critical Water Supplies to Horticultural plantings to be cancelled out by June 2008, with the announcement of up to 50% HS allocation. The intended aim will be to commence the 2008/09 season with a starting of 25% HS and hopefully 10% GS. The 75 GLs of water needed to supply NSW town, stock and domestic is in hand for 2008/09 already.

South Australia

South Australia continues to have approximately half of its normal annual

entitlement going over the border, which equates to 4300 MLs per day or 130 GLs per month.

The flow over Lock 1 at Blanchtown, is approximately 1000 MLs per day, or equal to 30 GLs per month. The irrigators in SA have to come to grips with the current difficult situation regarding resource availability and demand that their State Government and water supply department supply them with an equitable share of the resource crossing the border into South Australia.

As I have said before, I believe that the SA Government's only concern appears to be to guarantee Adelaide's water (which in reality is NOT at risk) and jeopardize its significant horticulture plantings.

If there had been any real attempt to address the massive losses in the Lower Lakes early in this drought sequence, we would NOT have witnessed the current devastation of industries in the three States. During this drought sequence, we have seen the equivalent volume of Dartmouth and half of Hume evaporate in the lower estuarine lakes of Alexandrina and Albert. It has only been in this current year of 07/08 that there has been recognition that these losses can't be sustained, resulting in reduced flows over Lock 1.

To avoid a repeat of the devastation of industries again in a future drought sequence, there needs to be review of the sharing agreement and operational rules put in place early in any given drought, to avoid the totally preventable evaporation losses which have occurred.

Surely this drought reinforces the need for responsible Ministers and bureaucrats, with the charter to provide resources to service human, industry and environmental needs into the future, to urgently re-evaluate the flawed 'No New Dams' mantra seen across Australia.

Currently, many of our scientists, environmental advocates and many others, witnessing the depletion and even cessation of flows in some tributary streams in our Basin, are lamenting this environmental and social catastrophe.

With even a rudimentary knowledge of history, they would surely know that this is a normal pattern of events moving from wet sequences to prolonged drought sequences, such as we are now experiencing.

Far from being dead or dying, our river systems are in surprisingly good health, considering the protracted dry sequence and that they supply the needs of urban, town, environment, stock, fish, bird and animal life. Meeting this demand would not have been possible if our forefathers had not had the foresight to construct the water saving infrastructure of dams and locks that are now in place; particularly on the Murray System with Hume and Dartmouth and the iconic Snowy Scheme.

Without this infrastructure, the current 'doom and gloom' commentators would indeed have something to lament, as according to the MDBC figures, under natural conditions in March 2003, the Murray River would have ceased to flow at Albury. Considering the 2006/07 inflows were half the lowest ever recorded in 115 years; it has only been due to the dams and infrastructure that the river environment, fish, fauna and human population have been sustained.

Yet these same commentators are advocating returning to more natural conditions, and are instrumental in Australia's wide (political) adoption of the 'No New Dams' policy. At the same time, they are searching for alternatives like de-salination and recycling, which are vastly more expensive in operation, in energy consumption and carbon output, compared to building new dams on sites already identified and partly planned for, to cater for Australia's growth needs.

Neil Eagle

Chairman, Mid-Murray Citrus Growers Inc



Jeremy Giddings

Autumn Irrigations

Important irrigation issues for this autumn and early winter period are:

- The coming months are a critical period in determining fruit size and irrigation has a major impact on this.
 - A reminder that mandarins have an elevated water requirement in the March to May period.
 - Active rootzones become shallower in autumn and winter, therefore alter the depth at which soil moisture is monitored, and adjust your irrigation schedule accordingly.
 - Ensure that your soil moisture monitoring equipment is receiving a true representative water application rate and has not become shadowed by a tree canopy weighed down by fruit.
 - If looking to upgrade your irrigation system, begin planning now to avoid the backlog that local irrigation designers are currently experiencing.
 - If converting to drip irrigation consider retaining the existing irrigation system if possible.
 - Decisions regarding carryover water and purchasing more water need to be made in the coming weeks. There will be differences between States regarding opening allocations next season and this will influence how important carryover water will be. For NSW irrigators, carryover and the accounting of critical survival water is reasonably complex.
- Carryover may be particularly important for citrus growers in the early part of next season. Water requirements for July-August can be 30-50mm per month depending on the situation. To discuss this further contact your water supply authority or the Irrigation Officer at NSW DPI.
- *A reminder that water trading will cease on April 30th in both states.*

Jeremy Giddings
Irrigation Officer, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Dareton

Drought Support



MALLEE FAMILY CARE

towards stronger more caring communities

Mallee Family Care has been funded to provide a free support and referral service to people in drought affected regions across the Mallee. This can be townspeople, hobby farmers, farmers, small business owners, young people, individuals, couples and families.

How We Work

Our priority is to work with you and respect your confidentiality or we can just meet up for a chat and coffee. We are able to meet with you in your home, farm, at our offices or at a venue in your town or nearby.

What Else Can We Do?

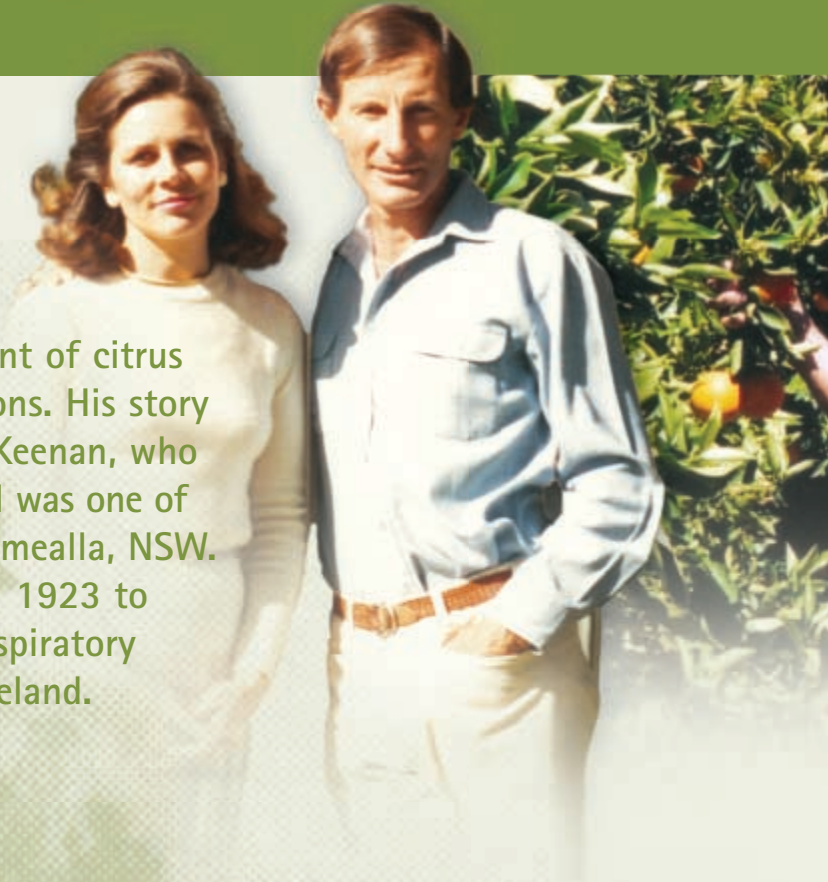
We can support drought events, provide information on drought programs and support in your area and offer referrals to other appropriate services as guided by you. We work closely with other agencies including Rural Financial Counselling Services and Centrelink Drought Rural Services Officers.

For further information or to access these services, contact:

Sue Thornton
Mallee Family Care
Telephone: 03 5023 5966
Mobile: 0439 382 222
Email: sthornton@malleefamilycare.co.au

Michael

Continuing the family tradition est



Michael Keenan grew up in an environment of citrus production and citrus industry organizations. His story has its beginnings with his father, Edgar Keenan, who was born in Northern Ireland in 1899 and was one of the pioneers and community leaders in Coomealla, NSW. He came to Mildura for a working visit in 1923 to improve his health as he had recurring respiratory problems in the damp climate of his homeland.

Initially, Edgar Keenan worked for a fellow Irishman, Mr Bob Gordon, who grew citrus and grapes in the Old Mildura Area adjacent to the Murray River. (This farming land later became the Golden River Fauna Park.) Edgar also worked with Mr David Gordon and his son John (of the dried fruits industry and Mildura Shire Council fame) at Irymple.

While working for the Gordon families, the new development of Coomealla Irrigation Area became available for application and ballot. Edgar acquired Farm 131 of 31.5 acres on 17th June 1926. The soil type was ideal for citrus. Two adjacent farms were added later, making a present total of 33 hectares.

In the first year, Edgar cleared and prepared land, installed small concrete channels and planted seven acres of sultanas and eight acres of citrus (five acres of Valencias and three of Emperor Mandarins as well as some Seville oranges - the trees costing £3:15:0 per 100, or 9 pence each). He planted a

further two acres of Washington Navels and some Mediterranean Sweet Oranges and Lisbon Lemons the following year.

The remaining area was planted in 1931 - 1934 with 5 acres of sultanas and six acres of Valencias. There was also a drying ground for grapes which was later used for a citrus tree nursery before being planted to avocados in 1972. The sultanas were replanted to citrus in 1942 and 47.

Edgar and Marjorie Cowderoy were married at Caulfield in 1935. They had four children - Michael, Anne, Anthony and Shaun. They both became very involved in early community activities. He was President of the Mildura and District Citrus Growers Association for many years, retiring in 1963 and was also Chairman of the Victorian Central Citrus Association. As well, he was President of the Federal Citrus Council of Australia and the Australian Citrus Growers Federation at different times.

Edgar represented Coomealla on the Council of the Municipality of Wentworth and the Shire from 1941-1958 and was Mayor in 1947, 48, 51 and 52. He became the first Shire President in 1957 when the local government area was expanded to Shire status. Edgar retired in September 1958. He passed away in 1972 with Marjory predeceasing him 10 years earlier.

Michael and his wife Cynthia continue to live in the family home on their property 'Tamlaght', Coomealla.

There is little doubt that Michael is as highly motivated as his father in his commitment to the citrus industry and his community.

Michael states that the more significant improvements in citrus production during his father's time in the industry were with irrigation installations and management, mechanisation and the bulk handling of harvested citrus.

Keenan

ablished by a worthy citrus pioneer!



Left - Right:
Cynthia and Michael Keenan.
Michael Keenan amongst his
Valencia trees just prior to
their removal due to severe
water restrictions - Nov 2007.
Edgar Keenan.

'The development of fungicides and the waxing of 'washed' citrus were two major developments in the packing sheds at that time.'

Michael's secondary education commenced in 1950. He enrolled at Yanco Agricultural High School, a boarding school for boys in the MIA, NSW. He greatly enjoyed his time there, where he gained wider experience with livestock and cropping.

'I spent five years at Yanco, initially making contact with members of the Gordon and Morris families. The experience gave me a lifetime connection to the Leeton and Griffith region.'

Michael developed a strong desire for further education in livestock and cropping. He progressed to the Hawkesbury Agricultural College at Richmond, just west of Sydney, where he completed a Diploma of Agriculture (Honours) in 1957.

'A veterinary science degree at Sydney University was then on my radar, but the new development of the Buronga Irrigation Area was opening up. I acquired a parcel of land (Farm 11) and had the advantage of my father's local knowledge, farming skills and interest to assist me. These factors influenced my decision to continue in horticulture - a decision that became a lifetime commitment.'

Citrus plantings in the Buronga orchard (1958-9) consisted of a broad range of varieties and numerous budlines, with a dominance of Valencias and Navels. Overhead sprinkler irrigation enabled vegetables to be grown in the early development phase.

'In these formative years, the Buronga Settlers Association fostered a friendly and cohesive team spirit among the twenty-six farming families in the area and my early involvement in industry and community organizations commenced from this time.'

Like his father before him, Michael became involved in the Wentworth Show Society, and also joined the Wentworth Junior Farmers, Apex, the local church and football club. It was as a Junior Farmer that he participated in local, regional and State finals in project work that culminated in him winning the notable 'Star Junior Farmer of NSW' in 1961.

The major prize from the then Rural Bank of NSW was a 'round the world' trip in 1962. Combined with his own resources, it became a nine-month tour for Michael that included many citrus growing areas in the northern hemisphere.

In the early 1960's Michael became a committee member of the Mildura and District Citrus Co-operative Association - a forerunner to the Sunraysia District Citrus Co-operative Society (SDCCS) formed in 1965. Michael was one of the original directors.

Michael Keenan *Cont'd...*

He remained a director until 1979, and represented SDCCS on the South Australian and Mildura Marketing Association (SAM Citrus) and the Australian Citrus Growers Federation - 1968 to 1983.

The Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board (NSW) was formed in 1970 and worked in concert with the Victorian Citrus Marketing Board. Michael was Deputy Chairman until 1979 and Chairman from 1979 to 1982.

'In 1975, until its cessation in 1984, I represented 'non-canning' fruit industries on the federal statutory Fruit Industry Sugar Concession Committee. (FISCC) which administered sugar refunds to the fruit processing industries in Australia. It also set the minimum prices for processing fruit and assisted in stabilising many citrus prices, especially in years of full supply.'

The combined Boards operated through the Citrus Management Co Ltd, and the Citrus Marketing Co Ltd from 1974. Michael remained a director of both companies until 1982.

Michael's strong interest has always been in research and development. He was invited to be an acting member of the (HRDC) in early 1991, was appointed a Board member in the second and third trienniums (1991-1997) and experienced the rapidly evolving role of the HRDC.

'Research agencies such as State Departments of Agriculture, primary industry sectors, the CSIRO and universities all became more dependent on external funding, and it meant that horticultural industries had a much greater influence on the direction and setting of priorities for R and D, together with technology transfer.'

I greatly enjoyed the challenges and achievements while on the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation [HRDC] Board and believe that horticultural industries, and citrus in particular, gained much from the success of the HRDC and AHC and now HAL.'

Michael was a member of the federal Citrus Market Development Group formed in 1994, to administer a 3-year grant in compensation for the removal of the tariff on imported orange juice. It concluded in 1997.

He was a member of the National Citrus Research Liaison Committee during its existence in the 1990's, being chairman for a couple of years. It has been replaced by the HAL Industry Advisory Committee.

Riverlink, which began in 1991, is a network of the four research agencies of Departments of Primary Industries and CSIRO, servicing the horticultural industries of Sunraysia and the Riverland. The Riverland Council was formed in 1995, incorporating horticultural industry representatives to overview and drive development. Michael was the first Chairman, a position he held for two years.

Michael's main industry involvement in recent years has been representing Sunraysia Citrus Growers on the Committee of the Australian Citrus Propagation Association (ACPA), trading as Auscitrus since its formation in 1991. He has been on the Executive Committee for a number of years and its Treasurer since 2005.

The Australian Citrus Improvement Association was also formed in 1991, of which Michael was a committee member until it was amalgamated into the ACPA in 2001.

'Auscitrus has developed significantly in recent years in its production of budwood and rootstock seed. Sound management has extended planting and facilities from the initial site at the NSW DPI's, Dareton Research Station, to more recently on the newly acquired land on River Road between Dareton and Buronga.'

'Evaluation research done at Dareton is a crucial part of the improvement program for citrus variety selection. The health assessment and pest eradication processes at NSW DPI, Camden are likewise vital. The South Australian and Queensland Citrus Improvement Committees are also closely associated with Auscitrus.'

The Sunraysia Avocado Growers Association was formed in 1975 with Michael as its first president until 1977 and then as a committee member through to 1988.

Michael was a Councillor of the Wentworth Shire Council from 1965 to 1970 and on the Murray Regional Development Board during that time. He represented Council on the Mildura Arts Centre Management Board from 1968 and continued as a Board member for 8 years. He became the

President of the fledgling Sunraysia Arts Council for a couple of years during that period.

'It was the beginning of a lifetime interest in many forms of the creative arts.'

The Wentworth Show Society has been part of Michael's life since his teen years helping his father. He was president in 1986 to 1988 and his active involvement continues today. He is a Life Member and has been Patron for the past 12 years.

Michael was one of the original Directors of Western Murray Irrigation Ltd formed in 1994, after being a member of the Lower Murray Irrigation Board and its predecessors before that.

'WMI has been an outstanding example of efficient and sustainable management of irrigation water, enabling extensive on-farm upgrading of irrigation systems.'

'The current long-term drought and restricted water supply has put huge pressure on irrigators and the irrigation company, but the area is now in a much better position given the major developments of ten years ago.'

Currently Michael is a member of LaTrobe University's Regional Advisory Board - Mildura Campus, and has been since it was established in 2000. In 2005 he became a Board member of the Sunraysia Area Consultative Committee and continues in that role. *'Both organizations contribute greatly to the well-being and progress of our Sunraysia region.'*

He has been a Justice of the Peace since the late 1960's.

Church life in Dareton and Wentworth over many years remains a commitment and Michael also looks back on his involvement with primary and secondary school communities with considerable pleasure.

'Throughout, I have had wonderful support and teamwork from my wife Cynthia from the time we were married in 1969. Cynthia continues as an active participant in a diverse range of community activities, especially in the Wentworth district.'

The Keenans have three children. The eldest, Rowena lives in the Merbein district with her husband Ian and their three children. Prue and Simon, since completing university,

MVCB Forthcoming Events

EVENT	DATE/S
Water Forum Guest speaker David Harris from the Snowy Hydro Scheme, plus guest speakers from Goulburn Murray Water (Vic) and Department of Water and Energy (NSW).	Friday 16 May 2008
Citrus Ladies Morning Teas For Wentworth, Barham, Merbein, Irymple areas.	To be confirmed
Farm Walk High Density Plantings Can be a Way to Increase Profits	June
Crop Forecast and Blemish Report	April
Organic Citrus Growing and Using Mulch to Manage Kelly's Citrus Thrips	Tuesday 8 April
New Technologies in Drip Irrigation	May
Replanting Citrus Orchards With New Varieties	August
Orchard Accreditation Requirements for Domestic and Export Markets	September
Impact on Citrus Leadership Program	November

continue on with their adventures in Australia and the world.

Michael Keenan makes some informed comments when asked about the future of the citrus industry and itemises the following factors:

- The increasing importance of large fruit size, quality and condition
- The selection of the best varieties and rootstocks
- Irrigation water management
- OH and S considerations
- Minimising costs on farm and the post harvest, marketing chain
- The importance of R & D and technology transfer
- The strengthening of market development in export and domestic markets to improve farm gate returns, especially with the power of supermarkets in Australia dominating
- Greater export market access, including reasonable protocols and standards
- The move to larger production and marketing units
- The development of niche markets - organics, value adding in fresh and processed citrus products and specialist minor varieties

Overall, he sees a sound future, especially with Navels, in particular mid-season and late varieties, and "easy peels".

Michael Keenan continues to give freely of his time and expertise to the citrus industry, for citrus has been the central plank in the Keenan family history. His life, (and that of his father before him), has been one of continuous commitment to the community in which they live. There is every reason to be proud of their achievements and their story is worth telling

E. Warhurst
Compiler



Images from the last Farm Walk.

Pest Free and Proud for a Greater Sunraysia

Fruit Fly Launch (Gaining support in the fight against fruit fly).

The new Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area (PFA) Community Awareness Program was officially launched in Mildura and Swan Hill on Thursday, 6 December 2007.



Quarantine bin and sign installed at the Kerang roadside stop.

The main purpose of the PFA is to keep the region free from fruit fly and provide producers with the opportunity to access important and lucrative overseas markets.

The PFA covers key horticulture production areas along the Murray River from Lake Cullulleraine to Kerang and the Darling River from Wentworth to Pooncarie.

Gaining widespread community and industry support is crucial in the fight against fruit fly. Both of these important launches attracted a good attendance of key players from across the region.

The area covered is extensive and the eight Municipal Councils involved on both sides of the River are totally supportive of the initiative.

The three-year campaign aims to inform and educate residents and visitors of the importance of the new PFA to the local community through television, radio, print media, billboards and the distribution of a community brochure.

Roadside signage will also alert motorists of the new Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area. The Sturt and Calder highways are the first entries into the PFA to be signposted. Signage near Kerang will follow and then key entry roads leading into the New South Wales component of the PFA will occur shortly after.

The two launches were the culmination of months of planning by the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Project Operations Committee. The determination throughout the planning period was to get it right and develop a credible program that carried a clear message of serious intent for all industry and community players.

Cr Eddie Warhurst, as the local government representative on the committee, encouraged people to remain vigilant and continue to help prevent any outbreak of fruit fly.

'Fruit fly control is a whole community issue – not just primary industry, government and local councils,' he said. 'A high level of co-operation is essential. Our economic, social and emotional welfare is underpinned by primary industry. We depend on a buoyant agriculture sector. The ramifications of an outbreak would impact across the whole community and this needs to be constantly reinforced, through effective awareness campaigns and committed community support,' Mr Warhurst said.

Residents in particular, have a crucial role to play in the implementation of the strategy. Backyard fruit trees and vegetable gardens need to be well maintained and supervised.

Locals can also educate intending visitors of the region's determined purpose not to allow any host produce to be brought into the PFA.

The official launch emphasised that such vigilance was essential in the overall community awareness program that the area was about to embark upon.

The key message:

FRUIT FLY HOST PRODUCE MUST NOT BE BROUGHT INTO THE PFA WITHOUT CERTIFICATION.

The apt slogan 'Pest Free and Proud for a Greater Sunraysia' says it all in a clear and compelling manner that emphasises the importance of this project in our part of the world, particularly in the region's current economic climate.

The last thing we need is a Fruit Fly outbreak. Please do all you can to spread and reinforce the message.

Members, Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Project Operations Committee:

Project Manager

Gary D'Arcy, DPI Knoxfield

Project Co-ordinator

Lyn Jacka, DPI Mildura

Members

Bill Ashcroft
Plant Standards DPI Tatura

Dr Andrew Sanger
NSW DPI Albury

Robert Mansell and John Tesoriero
Murray Valley Citrus Board

Richard Dow
Swan Hill Summerfruits Association

Jeff Scott
Australian Table Grape Association

Eddie Warhurst
Local Government

Glenn Bowman
Biosecurity Australia

E. Warhurst
Compiler

Fruit Fly in the Spotlight

Queensland Fruit Fly continues to be in the spotlight with the declaration of the Victorian component of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area (PFA). Covering the production areas from Lake Cullulleraine to Kerang, the PFA has a simple purpose: to keep the Greater Sunraysia Area free from fruit fly. The aim is to obtain Area Freedom and increase the marketing opportunities for the area's world class produce.

The project has several major components, two of those being community awareness, and installation of roadside signage and quarantine bins.



A set of mobile billboards reinforcing the PFA message were located on major roads heading into the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area.

The community awareness component of the project, Pest Free and Proud was launched in December. Television and radio advertisements have been produced and were run in tandem over the Christmas period. Another block of advertising is scheduled for Easter. These advertisements are designed to inform and to keep attention on the fruit fly message.

Seven mobile billboards were displayed on major roads heading into the PFA over the Christmas break and random mobile roadblocks have been, and continue to be deployed. Legislation allows for fines to be issued to anyone bringing uncertified host produce into the PFA and the roadblocks are an excellent means of transferring that message.

A series of roadside signs, located along the major roads heading into the PFA alert motorists of their impending entry. Quarantine bins, have also been installed and provide motorists with the opportunity to safely dispose of uncertified host produce.

Regional airlines and bus companies have been approached and have been very co-operative. Announcements are to be made by bus drivers and aircraft cabin crew upon arrival at Mildura, Robinvale, Swan Hill and Kerang.

The PFA message is to be extended into the schools; children often being great ambassadors and family educators. A Teacher Resource Kit is nearing completion and will be rolled out into the primary schools shortly.

Accommodation businesses now have their information packs and continue to reiterate the fruit fly message. Visitor Information Centres at Wentworth, Mildura, Robinvale, Balranald and Swan Hill have provided space for displays and distribution of the brochure.

www.pestfreearea.com.au is the dedicated website with the map and information explaining the reasons for the PFA and responsibilities of those entering. Also included is the lifecycle and behaviour of fruit fly and a game for those interested in a little entertainment.

With funding from both the NSW and Victorian Departments of Primary Industries, the stonefruit, citrus and tablegrape industries and Horticulture Australia, the establishment phase of the PFA project is set to continue until December 2009.

Further information on the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area can be obtained from the website, www.pestfreearea.com.au or by contacting the Co-ordinator, Lyn Jacka at DPI Mildura on 5051 4500.

How Things Have Changed

The following extract has been taken from the 1939 catalogue of Herbert Keck and Sons, Bendigo Nurseries and Orchards.

ORANGES AND LEMONS 5/- - to - 7/6 each

This is our specialty, and we can offer large quantities, grown in our Bendigo Nurseries, sent out carefully lifted with a good ball of earth.

This class of tree always gives satisfaction. We hold by far the largest stock of this class in the State.

Also without ball of earth. 2/6 each; 30/- per dozen; £7/0/0 to £7/10/0 per 100.

6,000 3-year-old ORANGE TREES

Golden Nugget Navel

The latest introduction from the Pacific slopes; fruit very smooth, solid, and even thinner skinned than Washington Navel; exceptionally free from core, and seedless; ripens early and carries well. Pendulous habit. Slow growth.

Mandarin, Imperial

A new introduction, similar to Emperor Mandarin but earlier. Regular bearer; large fruit; bright colour. A very fine Mandarin.

Mandarin, Emperor

The largest of the Mandarins; skin almost red and loosely attached; flesh very juicy, but not so highly flavoured as Thorny Mandarin; the most profitable for market.

Mandarin, Thorny

Fruit medium size, quite flat, flesh very juicy; the best flavoured of all Mandarins, and an immense bearer.

Mediterranean Sweet

Remarkable for its early bearing and late ripening; splendid flavour; one of the most esteemed in California.

Seville

Fruit large size, roundish, rather flattened, very solid; the best variety for marmalade.

St. Michael

Fruit of largest size.

The Queen

Large round, skin thin; splendid flavour and good cropper.

Valencia Late

Large, oblong, and firm. This orange is very late in ripening, and valuable on that account, as it would be marketable when other varieties are done.

Washington Navel

This is in all respects equal or superior to Bahia Navel but, unlike that variety, it is a good cropper; in California considered to be the best of all oranges. We have seen quite small trees of this variety loaded with most beautiful fruit.

Lemon, Lisbon

A well-known variety, and probably best of all.

Lemon, Lisbon Thornless

Fruit larger than Lisbon Lemon,

Lemon, Eureka

Resembles Lisbon. Strong grower, almost thornless.

Lime, East India

Large and prolific.

Grape Fruit, Marsh Seedless

Strong grower, prolific bearer

HINTS ON PLANTING CITRUS TREES

When your trees arrive, remove the hessian from the side of the box and give a couple of buckets of water round the edges of the box; the edges of the box dry quickest (always protect them from the wind). If windy weather, citrus trees should be kept in the boxes or packages till the wind moderates.

In the boxes they are packed with sawdust, swilled in with water, and if kept damp, your trees will take no harm for a week or so; but keep them-out of the wind, and do not let the roots get dry when-you start planting.

In planting, make a hole big enough to take the spread of the roots nicely and nine (9) inches deep. Before digging the hole mark the stake with a piece of chalk at the surface level; this is a fine guide to plant to. Cut the taproot, so that your tree, when planted, is one inch deeper than it was when growing in the nursery. Spread the roots nicely, working some fine soil well about them; do not dip the surface roots too deep.

Fill the hole three-parts full and tramp it firmly. Do not be afraid to firm the soil well, as many trees are lost by loose planting; then give water. This helps to firm the soil and start your tree: fill the well up afterwards with loose soil.

Having planted, the head of the tree should be cut back by one-half. Do not be afraid to prune at planting time. Citrus trees must be kept moist to give them a good start.

Information from the MADEC Harvest Labour Office



MADEC continues to be the leader in the provision of Harvest Labour Services throughout the Sunraysia, Mid-Murray and the Riverland. It operates for 12 months of the year to assist local growers and contractors to meet their harvest labour requirements.

Whatever the requirement may be in the fruit and vegetable industries, whether it is pruners, packers, pickers, bunch trimmers, vine trainers or general block duties, MADEC Harvest Labour Offices are committed to providing growers and contractors with the right people for the job.

With the 2008 grape season now underway, growers and contractors are encouraged to lodge their seasonal vacancies as early as possible, which will in turn allow the Harvest Office to effectively manage and meet labour demands.

A combined effort between the Harvest Labour Office and the National Harvest Labour Information Service, continues to bring labour to the area as demand calls for it, minimising the time the employer needs to spend in sourcing labour.

MADEC Harvest Labour staff are experts in understanding the needs of the horticultural industry. They have over 100 years of combined experience and are committed to fulfilling the labour needs of all employers.

MADEC Harvest Labour Co-ordinator, Cos Stizza, said 'The Harvest Labour Office is now operating from the new MADEC Wesley Centre at 126-130 Deakin Avenue. Letters have been sent to all registered growers and contractors advising them of the 'no cost' services available. Included with these mail-outs are fast fax vacancy forms which allow growers to get in early and fax through their requirements to the Harvest Office, enabling employers to continue with their day to day work while the Harvest Office works to source their labour.'

'The Harvest Office and the National Harvest Labour Information Service are currently receiving a steady flow of calls from backpackers, grey nomads and itinerant workers enquiring about work opportunities in the region.'

As an added service to growers and contractors the Harvest Labour office conducts electronic visa checks to verify work entitlements of working holiday-makers whilst in the country.

'MADEC acknowledges that the horticultural industry is currently going through tough times, and will endeavour to support and assist local growers with the provision of a quality, harvest labour service, and wishes growers all the best for a successful harvest,' Mr Stizza said.

Employers and job seekers can contact the Harvest Labour Office by calling into the MADEC Wesley Centre at 126-130 Deakin Ave (Corner of 10th St and Deakin Avenue), by visiting or contacting 28 Darling St Wentworth, or 68-72 Herbert St Robinvale. If preferred the free call number 1800 032 662 allows you to be transferred to your nearest MADEC Harvest Labour Office.

Mark Ross
Marketing Manager, MADEC

Harvest Picnic at Hanging Rock



Left: David Goldup (grower from Nangiloc) talking to the public on citrus varieties. Right: Robert Grant (grower from Nangiloc) encouraging people to taste Ruby Grapefruit.

Preliminary reports indicate that this year's MVCB promotional display at Hanging Rock on Saturday, 24 February, 2008, was highly successful. It was attended by staff and growers and generated considerable consumer interest.

A full report will be included in the June issue of Citrep.

Murray Valley Citrus Board Product Price List

Available through the Murray Valley Citrus Board office.

Item Name	Grower Price
PUBLICATIONS	
Citrus Disease and Disorders	\$26.00
Citrus Growing Manual	\$22.00
Citrus Pests & Their Natural Enemies	\$85.50
Citrus Field Guide - Citrus Pests and their Natural Enemies	\$35.00
Drip Irrigation Book	\$25.00
Physiology Notes 04/2003	\$18.00
Good Bug Book	\$44.50
Citrus Disease & Defects found in the marketplace	\$118.75
CD Citrus Pests & Their Natural Enemies	\$45.00
PRODUCTS	
Citrus Peelers - Complete	\$1.00
Cranston Gauge	\$39.00
Hand Lens	\$8.50
Plastic Juicer	\$3.50
Sizing Ring America (Yellow)	\$22.00
Penetrometer 011	\$274.00
Phenolphthalein PH Indicator	\$44.00
Refractometer REF103 Brix	\$340.00
TDS Solid Tester pocket (PH WATER TESTER)	\$125.00
NET BAG SALES	
Grapefruit 3 kg net bags - per 1000	\$178.75
Imperial 1.5 kg net bags - per 500	\$89.38
Navel 3 kg net bags - per 1000	\$178.75
Navel 1.5 kg net bags - per 1000	\$139.00
Valencia 3 kg net bags - per 1000	\$178.75
MEETING ROOM FACILITIES	
Half day Board Room hire	\$55.00
Full day Board Room hire	\$110.00
Half day Projector Multimedia hire	\$110.00
Full day Projector Multimedia hire	\$220.00
Coffee Tea Biscuits (per head) - Board Room hire	\$1.50
CITREP NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING	
<i>Black & White</i>	
1/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 85 mm)	\$35.00
2/9 PAGE Landscape (125 mm x 85 mm)	\$70.00
2/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 175 mm)	\$70.00
4/9 PAGE Portrait (125 mm x 175 mm)	\$140.00
1/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 85 mm)	\$110.00
2/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 175 mm)	\$200.00
FULL PAGE (190 mm x 265 mm)	\$275.00
<i>Colour</i>	
1/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 85 mm)	\$80.00
2/9 PAGE Landscape (125 mm x 85 mm)	\$160.00
2/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 175 mm)	\$160.00
4/9 PAGE Portrait (125 mm x 175 mm)	\$310.00
1/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 85 mm)	\$240.00
2/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 175 mm)	\$500.00
FULL PAGE (190 mm x 265 mm)	\$610.00
FLYER - 1 PAGE INSERT	\$300.00

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03 5051 0500.