



Citrep

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Newsletter of the Murray Valley Citrus Board

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Jan Denham

Chairman's Report

I welcome the recent announcement that citrus from the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area (PFA) has gained Area Freedom status (from June to December) into Japan.

In this context, I draw your attention to the expanded Chief Executive's report on this important decision in this edition of Citrep.

In challenging times, entry into Japan is a pleasing good news story for our industry sector and the wider community. It has created more optimism for the future as it means considerable savings for Murray Valley growers exporting to Japan this year.

Due recognition must be given to those agencies which achieved this positive outcome. I refer to the DPI Vic; the MVCB and HAL through a voluntary contribution from the MVCB.

Thank you to those who participated in the recent consultation meetings and the survey returns. Both have informed the Board of many issues that growers wish to see addressed.

This information has significantly assisted in the development of the overall Strategic Plan and the Operation Plan that outlines the next twelve months. (Growers should have received a copy of the Operational Plan with their initial voting papers.)

The main aim now is to give an update on all the outcomes of the grower input. Overall, responses indicate strong support for the MVCB activities, although there were some areas recommending where the Board could improve. These issues will be addressed.

In summary, the main outcomes of the grower meetings and survey were:

- CITTgroup activities are seen as great value and relied on by growers for up-to-date information
- Continue the advocacy on regional water issues
- Continue to work on drought management information
- Fruit Fly activities are imperative for the local industry so these must continue
- Crop forecasting is very valuable and should be expanded to give future projections based on young plantings

Future activities that the Board should address:

- Seminars on soil management in continuing dry seasons
- Advanced irrigation systems and better usage
- Regional promotion of citrus should be expanded (recognising that CAL is responsible for the National Citrus Program)
- The future working relationship with CAL is important

This year's activities will include:

- Strong regional promotion
- The improvement of communications in all mediums
- Fruit Fly maintenance programs for Area Freedom

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

- Dissemination of information through CITTgroups and regular communication with growers
- Crop forecasting and the forward projections of yields

Consultation meetings with growers and a vote on the proposed Operational plan and budget for the following year have been carried out and supported by growers. The Board thanks all those who have taken the time to have input into this process.

In addressing the above issues, the outcomes can only improve the services to growers and the MVCB looks forward to working with you in the purposeful spirit that has existed throughout the consultative process.

Jan Denham
Chairman, MVCB



John Tesoriero

Chief Executive's Report

Seasonal Citrus Fruit Access To Japan Granted!



Left - Right: John Tesoriero - Chief Executive, MVCB, Noriko Suto - Japanese Interpreter, Paul Scopelliti - Belvedere Producers, Ryosuke Igarashi - Japanese Inspector, Craig Urand - Trade Start Export Advisor and Kiyoko Ozawa - Austrade.

The MVCB received some very welcome and long awaited news from the Australian Government through Biosecurity Australia in late April that Japan has officially recognised the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area (PFA) as seasonally free of fruit fly. Fresh citrus picked and packed in our PFA Area during the period 1 June to 31 December each year will be permitted to be exported to Japan without the requirement for cold disinfestation treatment against fruit flies.

Recent advice from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF) has also confirmed that citrus sourced from the South Australian Riverland by Sunraysia packers can be packed in Sunraysia and exported to Japan under the same conditions as fruit picked in Sunraysia, subject, of course, to load security during transportation to prevent any potential fruit fly contamination between the South Australian border and Lake Culleraine. Lake Culleraine being the western boundary of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area.

This is great news for the growers and packers in this region and places us on a similar footing to South Australia which has enjoyed the benefits of area freedom for a number of years.

This pleasing decision will result in some major savings back to growers as the current requirement of cold treatment against fruit flies for entry into Japan is a significant cost in the production chain. This will mean better returns to producers who participate in the program.

There are a number of Sunraysia Packers that have registered to export citrus to Japan and I am pleased that the Japanese Inspector, Mr Ryosuke Igarashi, whose visit to our region was funded by the MVCB, has given them all the green light to commence exports.

Mr Igarashi was very pleased with the traceability and quality systems in place at all sheds and orchards visited throughout our region, and I personally thank all those packers and growers involved for their assistance during the Inspector's visit from 29 May to 4 June 2009.

Mr Igarashi was ably supported by a very professional local Japanese lady, Ms. Noriko Suto. Noriko was invaluable as an interpreter throughout the visit.

Hopefully, this area freedom announcement means that we can look forward to positive negotiations with Japan in the future, leading to our long-term aim of full area freedom status being granted for the Greater Sunraysia region and the extension of our Pest Free Area from Lake Culleraine to the South Australian border.

The process of arriving at this successful outcome has been extensive in time, detail and people from across the industry, the Department of Primary Industries (Vic and NSW), Horticulture Australia Limited and community sectors. However, the result is testimony to all that has gone into establishing the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area.

This includes the controls, supervision, publicity and promotion and the acceptance of the wider community in acknowledging the seriousness of any fruit fly outbreak to our economy and social wellbeing.

John Tesoriero
Chief Executive, MVCB

Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area (PFA)



Roadside signage has been installed on the major entry points into the PFA and at railway and bus terminals.

The PFA is a joint project with the Victorian and NSW DPI, the citrus, table grape and stonefruit industries and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). The project is funded until December 2009.

The major operational components of the project include a roadblock program and communications campaign. From June 2008 to mid May 2009, twenty-two roadblocks have been held with a further three scheduled for this season. An additional roadblock site on the Calder Highway near Hattah is currently under construction, which will complement the sites near Kerang on

the Murray Valley Highway and the Mallee Fowls site on the Sturt Highway between Gol Gol and Euston. These are considered as high-risk entry points into the PFA, but other sites have been identified for commissioning should the need arise and resources are available.

The communications campaign is ongoing and peak holiday times are targeted for intense media attention. Printed material is distributed through tourist information centres and accommodation facilities within and immediately around the PFA boundary.

The project was initiated in 2007 to gain access for these industries to lucrative international markets. Close liaison between Biosecurity Australia, the Market Access Team based at Knoxfield and the Industry has turned this into a reality with significant benefits flowing into industry.

For information on the PFA, visit www.pestfreearea or call Lyn Jacka at DPI Mildura, Phone 03 5051 4500

Lyn Jacka
PFA Co-ordinator, DPI Mildura



Neil Eagle

Notes

From Neil Eagle

At the time of writing, we are experiencing some long awaited, generally widespread rain, giving hope for a break in the season.

Heavy northern rainfall, filling Lake Eyre is a significant change in the weather pattern and is reason for hope of the end of this crippling drought.

However, let us not lose sight of the fact that the devastation wrought on the regions and industries in the three States dependent on the Murray River, is the continuing refusal by the three State and Federal governments, both Coalition and now Labour,

in addressing the massive preventable evaporation losses of 1 million ML's annually from Lakes Alexandrina and Albert.

After guaranteeing South Australia all its essential needs for Adelaide, towns, industry and irrigation, the savings above those needs would have represented about 25-30% additional allocation each year of this drought for NSW and Victorian Murray River irrigators. That is, if the Weir at

Wellington had been built at the start of the drought sequence.

As for the season's prospects for our growers, fruit set is up on last year particularly in Navels, however the continuing dry has had an adverse impact on fruit sizing.

Cont'd on page 11...

Crop Forecast for the 2009/10 Season

January, February and March have been busy months for Tony Bothroyd and myself, as we have been out measuring fruit, assessing the density of the crop and compiling a blemish report, so that growers and packers can be provided with a comprehensive crop forecast before the harvest starts.



Tony Bothroyd measuring fruit.

To enable accurate crop forecasting, the Murray Valley citrus growing area has been divided into 14 distinct geographical areas. From these areas, a fixed percentage of sample trees of each variety are selected. There are 147 density sample sites and 83 size sample sites. Apart from geographical areas, factors such as tree age, rootstock etc are taken into account in selecting these sample sites, which are reviewed on an annual basis to maintain relevance.

At each density site, frame counts of fruit numbers, on each of 6 trees, are conducted on an annual basis. Comparison of fruit numbers from year to year is an intrinsic part of the method. On each of the 83 measurement sites, 60 pieces of fruit are measured and tagged. The growth rate of the tagged fruit is measured monthly throughout the growing season. The final crop volume is adjusted to take into account any variation from the predicted growth rate.

The fruit used for sizing data is also examined and assessed for degrees of blemish in

March using the Riversun model for defects. Assessment is completed without removing fruit from the tree and does not take into account harvest colour or blemishes.

The crop forecast is useful to growers, packers, processors, marketers and exporters as it enables them to make early plans for the various domestic and export markets. Information such as size, quality, volume and timing of fruit on the local and overseas markets is critical when negotiating forward orders and determining price.

Based on fruit density counts, fruit size and growth rate measurements taken between January and March, it is estimated that this season's total Navel crop will be 90,400 tonnes, a 35% increase on last season's May estimate of 66,755 tonnes. Actual Navel production last year totalled 62,738 tonnes. However, that is by no means a record crop. Last season was an extremely small crop due to the sparseness of late season Navels and low water allocations.

Water restriction have again played a role in the decrease in bearing hectares of Navel production, with trees being removed, hedged, mothballed and water turned off, especially on Victorian properties. Overall, hectares of Navels have remained fairly static indicating that young trees are being replanted to replace the 79 hectares of bearing Navels removed during 2008.

The 2009/10 season Valencia crop is expected to be 23,000 tonnes, at a harvest time of September/October. However, due to a few years of low water allocations, the removal of Valencia trees may influence the final tonnage. Valencia hectares have been in decline for the last couple of years and this year the trend is the same with 52 hectares removed over the last twelve months.

Rind quality assessment on Navels indicates pest damage is low this season. However, there is a higher than normal level of sunburn, especially on small, younger trees due to the fortnight of 40°C+ temperatures in February.

In summary, densities on the Navel and Valencia crop are slightly above the long-term average and, as can be expected for a heavy crop load, fruit size is slightly below long-term average.

For a more detailed breakdown of estimates and percentages, a copy of the Navel and Valencia crop forecast for the 2009/10 season is available to all MVCB registered growers and packers by contacting the MVCB office on 03 5051 0500.

MVCB is working on a long-term forecast (5-10 years) based on new citrus plantings to complement the existing crop forecast.

Mary Cannard
Industry Development Officer, MVCB

Citrus Greening (A Threat to be Taken Seriously)

The Australian citrus industry is under threat from an insidious disease that is currently devastating citrus orchards in Florida and Brazil; two of the largest citrus growing regions in the world.



Citrus Greening HLB tree.

Citrus greening is a highly destructive bacterial disease and, if found in Australia would make the incursion of citrus canker look like a walk in the park. The disease affects all citrus cultivars, species and hybrids, irrespective of rootstock and has no known cure. At a recent MVCB CITTgroup, Professor Andrew Beattie spoke to Murray Valley citrus growers about the need to monitor for presence of the disease and its insect vector.

Citrus greening, now called Huanglongbing (HLB) or yellow dragon disease, probably originated in Australasia in the early 1900's and is caused by the bacterium *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* or *Candidatus Liberibacter africanus*. The bacterium invades conducting tissues, causing a decline of citrus trees and renders them unproductive and eventuating in death.

HLB is primarily spread by two species of psyllid insects. The first, *Diaphorina citri*, is found in Asia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Indian subcontinent. The greatest threat to the Australian citrus industry comes from both the disease and this psyllid's presence in Indonesia and New Guinea. The second psyllid insect, *Trioza erytreae*, (found in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula) is not considered a threat to Australia as it is found only in cool climatic condition at elevations over 600 meters.

Adult psyllids are brown mottled insects of 3-4 mm in length. Nymphs are smaller and generally yellowish-orange in colour. The citrus psyllid is usually found on buds and young leaves where it sucks the sap, causing some leaf distortion and curling. Leaves may be covered with honeydew

and sooty mould. Psyllids can often be confused with aphids, which are of similar size and are common on young tender citrus leaves. The main difference is that aphids move slowly, whereas adult psyllids are active insects, which jump when disturbed and may fly a short distance. Adult psyllids also hold an unusual posture on the leaf: head down, almost touching the surface, rear end pointing up, at an angle of up to 30 degrees.

Some of the leaf symptoms of HLB are the same as those of nutrient deficiencies, making early recognition difficult, especially when trees are not well looked after. The leaf symptoms include a blotchy mottle or diffuse yellowing, (similar to zinc deficiency symptoms) which are a green on yellow vein banding and islands of green tissue; and thin, yellow, upright new leaves. On fruits, ripening occurs at the stalk end first, though there may be no colour change in many citrus fruits in warm climates, and the central column of the fruit is curved, distorting fruit shape. Yellowing of only one branch or sector of the canopy that later spreads is characteristic of HLB and this can be clearly seen in an otherwise healthy tree.

The disease can also be spread by contaminated grafting material, but transmission rates can be variable due to the irregular distribution of the bacterium in the tree. Sourcing new citrus trees from organizations that offer certified pest and disease free propagation material is now more important than ever. Anyone illegally moving citrus propagation material into Australia runs the risk of also importing HLB.

The only way to rid citrus orchards of the disease is to bulldoze infected trees, and replace them with certified disease free trees. Therefore, the cost of an outbreak to the Australian citrus industry would be enormous.

Mary Cannard
Industry Development Officer, MVCB



Peter Lamb

A Former and Respected Journalist

Peter Lamb

I have known and worked with Mr Peter Lamb for some fifteen years starting with my appointment to the then Sunraysia Development Corporation in 1992.

Because he came from a farming background, his work as a local journalist was underpinned by astute observation, empathy and practical common sense. These characteristics made him a deserved reputation as a committed professional, and many in the rural sector of Sunraysia owe him a debt of gratitude for his soundly based research, capacity to listen and objective reporting.

The basis for my comments is reflected in Peter's observations, and reflections of the citrus industry over time.

Assisted by some specific questions, his thoughts are worth recording in his own way.

'Never before in Australia has horticulture seen change forced so suddenly, as when tariffs defending Australian citrus production were slashed to a meagre five percent from 30 percent in the early 1990's. This immediately allowed a flood of cheap frozen orange juice concentrate (FCOJ) into Australia from Brazil, one of the biggest citrus producing nations in the world.

There was despair. Australia was a 'level playing field', while our competitors were still heavily protected or used cheap labour.

Suddenly, there was no factory fruit "floor" in the market for our Valencias and prices slumped across the board with thousands of tonnes dumped or used as stock feed. In those days, I can remember, as a new journalist at Sunraysia Daily, standing beside Jacinta Allan (now Jacinta Allan Gange of ABC) and photographer Joe Pasquale watching a demonstration by citrus growers outside Murraylands Fruit Juices. The growers were incensed that imported FCOJ from Brazil was being brought to the heart of the Sunraysia citrus growing region, being re-constituted and sold to supermarkets under the 'Made in Australia' label.

There were bus trips to Canberra to protest, including the dumping of a basket of horticultural produce on the Trade Minister's desk, produce that was labelled 'Made in Australia'. Then there was the added insult of the removal of sales tax exemptions on fresh juice. The Lambs still buy freshly squeezed juice – how many people in Australia now have that luxury?

The removal of tariffs came at a time when there was little support from government, not like the billions of dollars spent since to keep the motor, clothing and footwear industries going. Citrus growers were hung out to dry, bearing in mind that in the 1980's, Australia couldn't produce enough oranges to satisfy our own requirements. Now, recent concentrate imports have seen the Navel over-run price at less than picking cost, undermining fresh market sales.

But, growers have proven a hardy breed and while the voyage to 2009, has been tough, aggravated by the occasional extreme frost and Fruit Fly outbreak, those remaining have made dramatic changes in production and varieties, resulting in the premium quality fruit demanded by export markets.



Peter Lamb with Tim Hermann, Manager of AUSCITRUS at Dareton.

The big challenge to the industry in 2009, is the river drought and low water allocations. I can remember a grower saying that *in the old days, citrus didn't have enough water if the whole block wasn't well saturated*. Now look at the fruit grown with a fraction of the water using the latest irrigation technologies.

And the markets have changed. Australia remains a high cost producer so export fruit must be of a quality that attracts a reasonable return. The North American market has proven lucrative and there was

great joy recently when Japan opened the door to Sunraysia citrus for seven months of the year without cold storage treatment, a luxury already being enjoyed by South Australian citrus growers.

The huge volume of work that goes into market access and phytosanitary issues is a credit to our citrus industry leaders.

I was a wool grower until the end of 1984, and while our costs were also increasing, I always admired horticulturists who had to put such a large sum on the line to get a crop every year, money they had to recoup. In our case, if we had a drought, we pulled our heads in – you can't do that with permanent plantings. If you skimp on costs and water, it seems you can risk losing more than if you go for a full crop. Who would have thought, just a few years ago, that we'd see such issues with water and growers having to factor in the cost of water when doing the farm budget? This additional item in farm accounts adds to the cost of production and the need to generate an even larger return. Is it global warming or just another drought with the potential for water costs to reduce in the future?

The only known element is that change is going to continue in horticulture, in Sunraysia, and with people. A lot of horticulturists, including citrus growers, with wonderful work ethic have left the land. There is life after farming as I found. I've now moved on from Sunraysia Daily after 18 years and work for Federal Member for Mallee John Forrest. You never know what's around the corner.

From where I sit, the next big challenge to farming including horticulture, will be carbon and the other greenhouse 'emissions' that will be taxed in one form or another. Will farmers be able to get sufficient return for produce in markets to accommodate this new impost on production and production inputs such as fertiliser, chemicals and fuel?

My take is that citrus might have already done the hard yards and that the future will be brighter, and provided research is not neglected, the hardship and determination over the past 25 years will be well rewarded.

Production Costs and Profit Planner Software

During hard economic times, it is vital for growers to be aware of the actual cost of production and therefore, their viability. A number of tools have been developed to assist growers to assess their production costs and profitability.

I suspect that after a period of madness, the regional wine sector will settle down with better and better wines (our friends will confirm we are enthusiastic supporters of our local product). I see dried fruit being viewed with new appreciation. Table grapes seem to be doing well. (What will the Chile impact be?) As well, enormous gains have been made in dry land farming varieties and techniques. All of this showing that the agricultural horizon might not be as gloomy as some predict.

In the case of Sunraysia, the region has a certain critical mass that will see the economy continue to move forward alongside horticulture and agriculture, including citrus and other niche industry opportunities.



Peter Lamb with Michael Keenan.

We all dream of the day when primary industry is in a better bargaining position, getting a better return for a year's work and having more profit to invest in research to keep ahead of our international competitors.

In the meantime, let's hope our dams soon spill and that horticulture never again has the uncertainty of water supply we've experienced in these last couple of years. That needs to be sorted out, not just for citrus, but all irrigated agriculture, and our river communities.'

E. Warhurst
Compiler

The MVCB, in conjunction with RMCG, has developed an information tool to help growers learn about their own performance in key aspects of their business. It also assists in understanding how other businesses operate. Most importantly, it aims to encourage growers to take action based on what they have learned.

The Practice for Profit - BizCheck method was developed from economic and financial farm surveys carried out over a range of agricultural and horticultural properties. Data collection was based on tax returns and physical farm information. This information was combined to provide performance indicators that anyone can use. While the data was collected before the drought, there are a number of lessons that will assist growers to understand the relationship between practice and profit. This is key information to assist with planning drought strategies and business viability. The citrus Practice for Profit, Bizcheck, Cost of Production and Case Studies reports can be downloaded free from the MVCB website www.mvcitrus.org.au/general.

There are also free software options that can help horticultural businesses to plan, budget and analyse their current financial situation to better manage growth, performance and risk.

AgriGater for Horticulture, developed by Victorian DPI, is designed specifically for horticulture and contains a specialised water module to assist irrigators prioritise water use. There is also a range of highly useful reports, including: Farm Cash Flow, Profit and Loss, Assets and Liabilities, Input Shopping List, Gross Margin, Cropping Performance and Cost of Production.

The software is very user friendly and works by entering the expected on-farm management practices over a twelve month season, AgriGater calculates all of the key financial information required to make smart business decisions on the farm.

The task is made simple due to a comprehensive pre-loaded list of operations and inputs, while the lists are still totally editable providing the flexibility to customise costs based on individual farm business. AgriGater software can be downloaded from <http://www.agrigater.com.au/>

The Irrigator's Toolkit is software developed by Primary Industries and Resources, South Australia. Resources available in the Toolkit include:

- Irrigated crop information for each horticultural crop
- Water budgeting and trading tools
- Salinity management
- Business decision making tools
- Technical information and drought information

The Toolkit is continually updated as new information is provided, and can be downloaded from the PIRSA Drought Information website at: http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/pirsa/drought/irrigation_and_water_management/irrigators_toolkit



OUT AND ABOUT WITH MV

The Age Picnic at Hanging Rock and the Werribee Harvest Picnic

The Age Picnic at Hanging Rock

The MVCB continues to be involved in regional promotions that are successful and sustainable. *The Age Picnic at Hanging Rock and the Werribee Harvest Picnic* are two such ventures.

A pleasing and constructive feature of these promotions is the opportunity for growers and consumers to come face-to-face in the market place.

Mr Tony Bothroyd, Field Officer, MVCB sets out the procedure involved in participating in the February Picnic at Hanging Rock promotion.

His diary gives an insight into the organisation involved, and the positive outcomes that can be realised. Hopefully, this will encourage other growers to become involved in future activities.

21 February

10:00am

We head off to Hanging Rock, two utes with trailers fully loaded with blood orange juice, Murcott juice, red grapefruit and Valencia oranges to taste, sell and juice. The Radloffs (Trevor and Nicole from Ellerslie) in one ute, my daughter Alesha, Jill Purich (MVCB), her son Mathew and myself in the other. David and Barb Goldup (growers from Nangiloc) in their car make up the convoy.

3:30pm

Arrive at Hanging Rock and set up our display. We share our marquee with Eric Wright from Just Go Pistachio Nuts, as this brings costs down and helps promote other produce from the Murray Valley.

Once set up, we head off to our accommodation in nearby Woodend at Westminster Lodge (as we have for the past two years) a great gathering place for growers from different areas to get to know each other, to talk about their industry and what they are doing on their blocks. A barbecue is the go for tea, accompanied by some great wine from Blackjack Winery. (Eric and myself are head chefs for the night).

22 February

6.30am

Back on cooking duties. Bacon and eggs for brekkie to sustain us for the long day ahead.



CB PROMOTIONS

Left - Right: A sea of people at the Werribee Harvest Picnic. Nicole Radloff preparing citrus juice samples. Mathew O'Callagan and Alesha Bothroyd (background) offering sliced citrus samples.

7.30am
Off to the Rock for the day's activities. Matt and I set up juice and granita machines. David Goldup looks after the juicing, knowing it will be in big demand. Jill, Alesha and Barb put the finishing touches to our marquee and set up the table and umbrella for our fresh tastings.

9.00am
Gates open and people (expected crowd of 20,000) come flooding into the Picnic. John Tesoriero, Keith and Jan Richards (Ellerslie growers), and Gina Pretrascu, a grower from Barham, now join us. The growers are out in front, taking turns to offer fresh samples of citrus products (pink grapefruit, white grapefruit and Valencias).

As fast as the fruit is cut up, it is consumed by the ever-growing crowd. The bonus of the activity is the interaction between

growers and consumers who ask plenty of questions about the different varieties and the best time of the year to purchase them. Growers also gain an inside look in to what consumers expect of their fruit.

Back in the marquee, tastings begin of the four different flavours we have on display. Big bowls, which contain the juices, catch the eye of people walking by. The colours stand out with the blood orange, pink grapefruit, Valencia orange and Murcott juices. Our granita style Blood OJ and Valencia OJ sell fast, keeping the pressure on the juicing machine.

Barb Goldup again draws the crowd with her demonstrations in using the Murray Valley Citrus Peeler.

One of our main realisations is that people of all ages are more than willing to try all our products.

We display a lot of information on the Murray Valley area, the citrus that is produced there and in which seasons. A free calendar, containing a seasonality chart on all citrus varieties, is a great hit with the people. Information is also given out on the Sunraysia pest free area. Many people are interested and take the opportunity to ask questions which are extremely well handled by our team of volunteers.

As we are located next to the main stage, we have a lot of through traffic, which works to our advantage. The entertainment, headlined by Darryl Braithwaite, is fantastic. Our team of workers enjoy it immensely and it helps to break up the day for us. Darryl is promoting his new album, titled 'The Lemon Tree' which is quite appropriate, as he wants to do signings in our marquee. He provides a couple of autographed copies for us, which we greatly appreciate.

OUT AND ABOUT WITH MVCB PROMOTIONS *Cont'd...*



Left - Right: Happy team at the Werribee Harvest Picnic. Barb Goldup and Nicole Radloff cutting up fruit samples. Jan Richards and Gina Petrascu mingling with the crowd.

In total, we used 400 litres of orange juice, 30 cases of citrus and 100 bags of oranges. There are over 120 marquees at this year's event, promoting everything from wine to mushrooms. In such a large gathering, we are delighted our stand is awarded the Silver Medal for Excellence.

5.00pm and the day has come to an end. Time to pack up. Some of our crew with enough energy left decide to climb Hanging Rock, as they might not have the opportunity again.

The Age Picnic At Hanging Rock is a very professionally run event and is an excellent venue to showcase our products directly to the consumer. I thank the growers who made this trip possible by giving up their time to help in the promotion of citrus in the Murray Valley Area. After speaking with them they agreed that this was a fantastic experience and they would be willing to go next year, as they enjoyed themselves immensely.

Werribee Harvest Picnic

Ms Jill Purich (Staff Member, MVCB) shares her impressions of the Werribee Harvest Picnic promotion after her first visit.

'The location for the Werribee Harvest Picnic at Werribee Mansion was amazing. The garden surroundings were green, luscious and the weather was perfect. The grounds came alive with fantastic live entertainment and a vast array of stalls of food, wine and fresh products,' Ms Purich said.

'Our site was the only one that solely displayed, promoted and sold fresh citrus produce. This made us very popular when the weather warmed, as people were looking for a healthy, cold choice of beverage. The blood orange and Navel granitas were a strong favourite in the afternoon. They appealed to all ages from toddlers to mature customers who enjoyed them immensely.'

'The marquee looked very appealing with large glass bowls of Ruby Grapefruit, Blood Orange, Tangelo, Navel and Murcott Mandarin on display, chilled with ice. The ever-popular Murcott Mandarin was well and truly the favourite of the day with the sample testing. The colour of the juices in the clear glasses was very appealing to the public. It was fantastic that they were willing to try each of the varieties and freely gave us very positive feedback in relation to their approval and furthermore requesting where they could purchase these fresh citrus products!' Jill added.

Jill reported that the blood orange juice and granitas were a true hit as well, with people coming back for seconds and thirds as they felt they tasted so good. 'There were a lot of queries regarding the availability of blood oranges, nutritional information,

Notes

From Neil Eagle *Cont'd...*

Unfortunately, market reports indicate the destructive practices of some of our packinghouses continue. Namely, the forwarding of gassed, immature and unordered fruit dumped on the market, at prices equivalent to and below the cost of packing and freight.

Citrus Australia Ltd (CAL) has already had discussions on the above issues, including with the major retail chains on the marketing of immature fruit, particularly gassed fruit, with assurances that they will work with CAL on these matters for next season's market commencement. My hope is that these actions will move us one step closer to implementing a marketing plan that our industry suppliers will work with and abide by.

As always, the issue is really in the hands of the growers. They must demand responsible actions of their packers, aimed at maximizing their returns by gearing supply to orders and not merely maximizing quantity through their plants to achieve a packing profit, regardless of market impacts.

These are some of the many national issues requiring the leadership of an effective well-resourced National Body. Therefore, I urge growers who are not yet members of Citrus Australia Ltd to join for the good of our citrus industry and themselves.

Currently, regional committees are working with CAL to identify regional needs, resources and staff that will be required in each of these areas, as the industry moves to be administered by the National Body.

Neil Eagle
Chairman, Mid-Murray
Citrus Growers Inc.



seasonal availability and planting questions, which all our team answered confidently. People wanted to know where else we would be offering these fresh juices and produce, as they wanted to continue to purchase them. I felt this was a great achievement for our small time at the picnic, to have such an impact on people's healthy lifestyle choices.'

'We had a wonderful team on the day including John Tesoriero, Mary Cannard, Tony Bothroyd, Nicole Radloff, Keith and Jan Richards, Gina Petrascu, Bill Brown, myself and two youngsters, Alesha Bothroyd and Matthew O'Callaghan. We worked exceptionally well together, keeping the flow and productivity of the day running very smoothly. Tasks were alternated so that everyone had a variety of duties.'

'We were positioned in an ideal spot next to the stage, which attracted attention to our stand. By lunch time there was a sea of people all around the grounds enjoying the day immensely.'

'Our sales for fresh citrus and the citrus peelers were strong throughout and we had sold all of our fresh produce by the end of the day. Customers were really taken with the thought of purchasing our fresh Sunraysia Oranges after tasting the juices.'

Overall, it was a very successful day of promoting and educating people about citrus products and their usage. In return, it created a greater awareness for our fresh products and people have stated they will include them in their daily diet. This in turn, should be a great benefit to the Citrus growers and Industries involved in Citrus production,' Jill concluded

The Age Picnic at Hanging Rock Article:
Tony Bothroyd
Field Officer, MVCB

The Werribee Harvest Picnic Article:
Jill Purich
Staff Member, MVCB

Board Profile: Mr Trevor Radloff Deputy Chairman, MVCB

Trevor Radloff came to citrus growing from a diverse agricultural background.



Trevor Radloff with his wife Nicole and children Natalie and Christopher.

Currently, Trevor and his wife Nicole farm 32 hectares of citrus and 20 hectares of winegrapes. They also operate a small citrus nursery on the property preparing for further development.

Trevor grew up on his parents' farm, a mixed enterprise of cereal crops and merino sheep, in Karoonda, South Australia, in the heart of the Murray Mallee. On finishing Year 12 at Karoonda Area School, he commenced work with Elders in merchandise sales and administrative support. Transferring through four branches, he ended-up doing a two year stint in Wentworth, NSW. After five years with Elders, Trevor then returned to Karoonda and worked in a mixed agency business, supplying fuels, oils, fertiliser and other rural merchandise. He regards this as a very valuable time in terms of experience and character building.

Four years later saw him return to Mildura, joining the staff of D and W Adams, once again in rural sales. 'One year later, I left to take up the idyllic lifestyle of a 'blockie' at Ellerslie, NSW, working for my wife's parents, Greg and Wendy Loomes. Fifteen years later, it is obvious that I have never left'

'It is now 11 years since we bought our own property in Ellerslie North, and we have almost completely re-developed it. The table grapes are gone, our new citrus plantings are maturing and bearing fruit,

and we are now starting to feel the block shrink around us. I feel it is time to again look for more land, and the new opportunities that this brings. However all of the current circumstances that are outside of our control, remind me of the doubts that my parents faced in the drought of 1982/83 in Karoonda.

Trevor admits that he loves the life of a blockie, as it is satisfying and rewarding to nurture and grow a crop.

'We now grow all of our own replacement trees from seed, and once again the personal reward exceeds the money saved. The reality of the block is that it is a business, and we have done everything in our power to remain profitable, as margins have been constantly squeezed for the past 6 years. The family no longer employs any full time staff; we now rely on casuals when required, and a team of pickers through the citrus season. The earlier laconic lifestyle has given way to a determination to remain, and succeed as long as we have influence. I am sure that good times will return, and we're keen to be there to capitalise.'

'As the Citrep compiler you asked the question, *what sustains your interest and drive - the challenges, the encouragements, the future?* I would answer yes to all of the above points, but more than that, I

remember a conversation we had, in which you spoke of the dignity of being a family farmer, and that conversation, at that time, struck a chord with me. I have never been far from family farming, my childhood, my early work, my family. Now I find myself raising two kids in the most beautiful surroundings, working alongside my wife every day, and having the opportunity to be involved in our community in a meaningful way. Who could ask for more?'

In 2007 Trevor took part in the *Impact on Citrus* leadership course. He found it to be an excellent program, which gave him the confidence to begin to play an active role in the industry locally.

'I think the previous Board should be commended for setting in train a worthwhile succession plan. I would recommend the course to anyone looking to expand their horizons.'

Soon after completing the course, Trevor became a Director of Sunraysia Citrus Growers and travelled with the ACG to China as part of the ACCACA exchange program. In February last year, he also travelled with the Austrade delegation to Fruit Logistica in Berlin, as well as spending time in the UK, Singapore and the USA. All visits proved to be an eye-opener and a thoroughly worthwhile, overall experience.

'To travel with Austrade, and to have access to their network, and to be able to set up appointments with major consolidators and supermarket buyers was truly a privilege. I was surprised at the power that the supermarkets are able to wield in the UK, a sure sign that they have no issues with short supply. Fruit Logistica in Berlin showed me the might and power that large food brands have in the market. To visit Logistica as a small grower in a small industry was somewhat overwhelming. I still think that we should not feel the need to compete, we have the world's best citrus, there is nothing like it anywhere, but for some reason we feel that we need to compete against the low cost producers of the world. I keep coming back to the analogy of Mercedes Benz and Hyundai. They both make cars, they both get you from A to B, but there is a segment of the market that is prepared to pay five times

the price for the Mercedes. I wish that our fruit marketers would wake up to the same possibility for our fruit.'

When asked about his visions for the future, Trevor responded with characteristic honesty. 'I'm not sure: the tougher things get, the more we tend to take a short-term view. The citrus game is one of long lead times, long-term plans and sufficient confidence in the future to take the ten-year gamble on new plantings. At home, we continue to redevelop old areas of the block with new trees, and I know that if we ever stop we are doomed. I would like to see the marketing of our fruit improved. Witness *Sunkist* in China, confident enough to set

a price, and say to the entire market 'take it or leave it'. To see the *Riversun* program at work in the US, knowing that the market would degenerate into a rout if it wasn't for the single importer arrangements. I can only wonder why we are not collectively clever enough to extend this good practice into other premium markets.'

Trevor Radloff's other interest is research and extension. 'As we face a challenging future, I think that growers are going to need reassurance that the latest production technologies are available in tried and tested form. Another aspect that I think needs work and direction from government is the nutrient cycle. We as farmers are

importing fertiliser, and exporting food, but the elements basic to all of this are ending up as sludge, to be disposed of by urban water authorities. There must be a way to close the loop, and return these nutrients to the soil, for nature to process and reuse. These and other challenges remain, but so do the potential rewards in an industry with a long and proud history.'

Clearly, Trevor Radloff has started making a serious contribution in a considered and active manner.

**E. Warhurst
Compiler**



Jeremy Giddings

Aspects to Consider When Selecting a Soil Moisture Sensor

Demand for soil moisture monitoring tools is increasing with the growing need to conserve water.

A wide range of tools is available, all with their advantages and disadvantages. The following aspects should be considered prior to selecting a soil moisture-monitoring tool.

After-sales Service and Agronomy

After-sales service is the most important aspect to consider when selecting a soil moisture sensor. All scheduling systems will work and give similar results if correctly installed and calibrated etc. It is important that service and support are available locally to make them work for you. This should include advice on location of sensors, installation, calibration and data interpretation. Service and support are just as important, if not more important than good hardware and software.

Data Presentation

If a computer is required, then the software must provide information that growers will find easy to understand. Growers are often highly frustrated by software programs that are cumbersome and confusing. Basic computer knowledge should be all that is needed to make informed decisions on when and how much to irrigate.

Case Studies / Examples / History

Often the best person to talk to about a particular product is another person using that product. With so many options becoming available, this is particularly the case for soil moisture monitoring tools. Suppliers should be prepared to put you in contact with growers using their products. If this is not possible, contact your local Department of Primary Industries office which should be able to provide you with grower examples as well as independent advice.

New products are becoming available as various companies identify increased demand for this service. Products that have a proven history of success and are available from agents who have a history of providing suitable backup and support are most likely to be successful for you.

Level of Detail Required

Growers using drip irrigation in hot dry regions such as Sunraysia will require detailed information on soil moisture levels. In this situation, continuously logged systems are preferred. Where irrigation is

applied less frequently (such as orchards irrigated with full cover systems) manually read equipment can be adopted more successfully.

Time Input Available

Soil moisture readings should ideally be made before and after each irrigation, with at least one reading between. For drip irrigation systems in hot regions where daily irrigations are possible, this means a large time commitment in the peak of summer, if you are using manually logged systems. Again, for this reason, continuously logged systems are preferred if you are pressed for time or labour.

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

Orange Drive

The Nangiloc/Colignan and District Primary School continues to develop its commendable 'Enterprise Learning Program'.



Left - Right: Children viewing the bagging process. Children discussing the project with Frank Sos.

The Nangiloc/Colignan and District Primary School continues to develop its commendable 'Enterprise Learning Program'.

Mr Tony Bothroyd, Field Officer, MVCB was approached by schools in the Mornington area with the idea of conducting an orange drive to replace the traditional, fundraising 'lolly drives'.

Tony saw this as an ideal extension of the Nangiloc/Colignan School's involvement in the promotion of the citrus industry.

As a result, posters and fliers were drafted and forwarded with one school responding positively to date. The Mallee Network of Schools has been informed and has indicated their involvement in a trial run of this new initiative.

The National Australia Bank 'Schools First' concept has also been briefed and has requested additional information. They have passed the idea onto other media outlets, which are starting to show keen interest. 'The program will not rely on donations. It will be a commercial undertaking that will have a direct impact on our local economy. The program is the next step in our Enterprise Learning Program and has exciting prospects of continuing the fine relationships we have with the citrus industry, commercial outlets, media and Local Government,' Mr Eric Wright, Principal said.

'The MVCB has again extended its support to the program, assisting with printing costs. The program emphasises the promotional ideas of the MVCB and the school in attempting to get a bag of oranges on every kitchen table. As all schools and school canteens are now required to have

a healthy eating policy, this is an ideal chance to support such a direction. The Melbourne Citrus Committee have also been approached for permission to use their orange cartoon character on all our advertisements, furthering the connection between the relevant interest groups,' Mr Wright concluded.

The program will begin taking orders in July, 2009.

ORANGE DRIVE
The Healthy Alternative

The Orange Drive was the initiative of the Nangiloc/Colignan & District Primary School.

Nangiloc is a small rural community near Mildura and the main industry is Citrus. Many of the 70 pupils have family and friends who live and work on a citrus 'block'.

Supporting the 'Orange Drive' will not only provide your family with the tastiest oranges, but will also support your local school and have a direct impact on the education/economy of Nangiloc.

All the fruit will be sourced locally, sales and income will flow back into the Nangiloc economy.

The local Primary School children will co-ordinate the project as part of their "Enterprise Learning Program."

PROJECT PARTNERS

MURRAY VALLEY MELBOURNE CITRUS COMMITTEE

Nangiloc/Colignan & District Primary School - 9402

Sunrise To Visit Local Pack House

The channel 7 Sunrise morning show weather girl, Fifi Box will be doing live crosses from Frank Sos' packing shed at Colignan on 1 July.

The crosses will be based on the Nangiloc/Colignan Primary Schools Enterprise Learning Programs latest venture (The Orange Drive. The Healthy Alternative).

The project will fulfil two major goals:

- 1 Provide schools and organisations with a Healthy Alternative and at the same time promote our local citrus industry.
- 2 If successful it will provide economic benefit to our shire and especially to the Nangiloc region. Rural kids helping their own economy in these tough times.

Orders will be taken from schools over the coming months. All schools participating will make a dollar a bag for their own schools along with promoting healthy eating in schools.

Sunraysia Citrus Growers' Report

With another season upon us we continue our fight against the worst drought on record.

With another season upon us we continue our fight against the worst drought on record. Despite this continuing battle, the positive news for the citrus industry in Sunraysia last week was the opening of the window of access to Japan for fruit from the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free area. Hopefully, this positive news will auger well for the coming season and will give our growers a much-deserved boost.

The Directors of SCG express our thanks and commend Anne Mansell on the effort and enthusiasm she put into her position as Chairperson over the past two years. We wish Anne well in her new role as CEO of Mildura Development Corporation and look forward to working with her on future development opportunities in our region. Anne's departure has left big shoes to fill, and for this reason the Directors will be sharing the Chairperson's role on a rotational basis until a new appointment is made. We will be approaching potential candidates for the position in the coming months and would welcome member suggestions of suitable candidates.

We would like to encourage all citrus producers to be members of SCG and to advise their packing sheds to deduct the 50 cents per tonne levy on their behalf and remit to SCG. Please ensure that the packing sheds are forwarding your grower details to SCG so that we can maintain our records and allow you to exercise your voting rights.

We encourage our members to contact SCG with any issues they feel need addressing. We will lobby on your behalf and provide assistance in seeking answers to your questions. We will tackle issues that are specific to Sunraysia and the Murray Valley, but will also work with other bodies on national matters. If you have a problem or a question, an idea or dilemma or would just like to have a say,

SCG can be contacted in the following ways:

Phone: 5023 8205
 Fax: 5021 1905
 Mail: PO Box 420, Mildura VIC 3500
 Email: scg@mvcitrus.org.au
 Office: 58 Pine Avenue Mildura

The SCG Directors welcome direct contact from our growers to discuss any concerns. Our Directors are:

Vince DeMaria (Acting Chair)
 Trevor Radloff
 Kevin Cock
 Sue Chislett
 Matthew Cottrell
 David Stevens

We hope that you all have a smooth and prosperous harvest!

Vince DeMaria
 Acting Chairman, SCG

Post Harvest Research Project

For the past 15 years, Dr Peter Taverner (SARDI) and his group has provided on-going technical advice and practical research to assist packers and marketers satisfy the needs of global retailer chains and consumers.

The SARDI citrus post harvest unit provides a National postharvest coordination role and their accumulated experience is highly valued by Australian Citrus Industry.

In 08/09, financial support from the national citrus levy was not possible due to a reduction in available funds collected from growers. The National Citrus Industry Development Committee (IAC) recommended that if voluntary contributions could be collected they should be matched by federal tax payer funds so that work could continue.

The Murray Valley Citrus Board recognizing the importance of SARDI citrus post harvest unit banded together with the SA Citrus Industry Development Board, Riverina Citrus and Riversun Export Pty Ltd to provide funds to continue work in this area. In 09/10, MCVB has again agreed to contribute to the maintenance of this valuable postharvest technical service to the citrus industry.

In 2009/10, the emphasis of the SARDI group will be to provide support through the 'advisory desk', conducting a seminar

series on decay control procedures and resistance management, maintaining a website with updated technical information and publishing research results and 'postharvest handling tips' in the *Packer Newsletter*. The research activities will concentrate on decay related issues including new treatments to control the increased rots occurring in export markets and replacing synthetic postharvest fungicides with reduced risk chemicals, such as carbonate salts.

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
Drip Irrigation Book	\$10.00
Physiology Notes 04/2003	\$18.00
Good Bug Book	\$44.50
CD Citrus Pests & Their Natural Enemies	\$45.00
PRODUCTS	
Citrus Peelers - Complete	\$1.00
Cranston Gauge	\$45.00
Hand Lens	\$8.50
Sizing Ring America (Yellow)	\$25.00
Penetrometer 011	\$274.00
Phenolphthalein PH Indicator	\$50.00
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	\$89.40
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

Advertise
your product
or service
in the next
issue of



For further
information about
advertising in Citrep
please contact the
MVCB office on
03 5051 0500.