



MVCB Weekly News

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www.mvcitrus.org.au

Murray Valley Citrus Board

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Qfly Update

Detections of Qfly within the Board's defined area are still low as evidenced by the samples received from Vic DPI last week. The table below sets out the number of Qfly adults and larvae found in the last week.

| Area | # Qfly | Action |
|-----------------|--------|--|
| Tooleybuc Town | 2 | Extends Outbreak |
| Kerang South | 2 | "Supplementary traps to be deployed and larval searching |
| Goodnight North | 2 | Extends Outbreak |
| Swan Hill | 2 | Extends Outbreak |
| Kerang | 8 | Extends Outbreak |

Senate Establishes Citrus Inquiry

A Senate committee inquiry into the Australian citrus industry provides a great opportunity for growers according to Anne Ruston, Senator for South Australia.

The inquiry will look at the structure of the industry as well as issues surrounding export opportunities, supply chain efficiencies and competition.

'The citrus industry has been through a very tough time recently so I am hopeful this inquiry will produce some positive and constructive outcomes and solutions' Senator Ruston said. 'I encourage anyone who has an interest in the citrus industry to make a submission. An efficient and robust structure is needed for the industry so it can withstand the constant external pressures of cheap imports, the high Australian dollar, pests and diseases and weather events. This structure also needs to be sufficiently representative of the industry at all levels, and fully transparent and accountable to growers in all aspects. There is also a role for the Government to play in this process as I'm sure there are many efficiencies to be gained by reduced red tape and streamlining of regulatory processes.

The Australian citrus industry is a world leader in high quality produce and best practice farming, but pressures on the industry have seen it losing share in export markets. Costs of production are in some cases not being met, which threatens not only the industry's sustainability but the economies of regional communities. I look forward to seeing submissions that offer some effective solutions to these problems, and which provide for a viable and sustainable citrus industry in the future. Ideally, solutions will come from within the industry itself. The Australian citrus industry was built with hard work and innovation over many decades, and I am confident these traits will see the industry through these tough times,' Senator Ruston said.

(Source: Media Release Senator Anne Ruston, 28 February 2013)

Revised Conditions for Export of Qfly Host Fruits From Australia to the Philippines

Australian citrus growers will gain access to a new market, the Philippines, following successful negotiations between the Philippines Bureau of Plant Industry and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), to allow in-transit cold disinfestation for fruit flies. The pre-existing conditions allowed only for fruit to be treated prior to exporting, which didn't favour quality and shelf life of citrus fruit.

DAFF and the Australian citrus industry have invested significant resources over the years accessing and developing Class 1 markets such as China, Korea, Japan and Thailand and we have recently seen significant gains and premiums paid in these markets. Manila has an

Diary Dates:

almost identical population and similar demographics to Kuala Lumpur, the fourth largest market for navel oranges. It is therefore reasonable to expect that Manila will take volumes of around 10,000 – 15,000 tonnes once the market is developed.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, welcomed the agreement and said it was the result of significant collaboration by federal and state agriculture departments as well as horticulture exporters. "Australian horticulture exports to the Philippines have been low but these new arrangements make it easier to access the Philippines, with a population of nearly 100 million people," Minister Ludwig said. "The Philippines has also accepted new, more effective, cold treatment schedules which will ensure that product arrives at this important market in a much better condition. Improvements and flexibility agreed to by both countries will help reduce the cost of exporting product to the Philippines and facilitate increased fruit exports."

The Philippines has also accepted Australia's reforms to export certification, including the use of Authorised Officers to supervise cold treatments and conduct export inspections. "This demonstrates confidence the Philippines has in the quality of Australia's export product and Australia's world class export certification system," Minister Ludwig said.

(Source: http://www.freshplaza.com/news_detail.asp?id=106466#SlideFrame_1)

Cold Sterilisation Facility to be Built at Merbein

Citrus growers have welcomed today's announcement of an export fruit disinfection facility at Merbein, west of Mildura. Wakefields Ironhorse Intermodal plans to build the \$920,000 facility, with the aid of a Victorian Government grant of \$300,000 and a \$150,000 contribution from Mildura Fruit Company.

Murray Valley Citrus chief executive Hugh Flett said the facility would increase the state's capacity to start cold sterilisation of fruit destined for Queensland fruit fly sensitive markets. "A lot of the product has had to be transported down to the Shepparton cool stores to commence its cold sterilisation there, depending on what export market it's going to," he said. "That will benefit growers because sterilisation for short-haul shipments can be started there, rather than having to be transported twice. "They can kick it off here, containerise it and train it straight to the port and have it loaded and away." Mr Flett said timeliness was less important for fruit destined to be shipped on journeys of 20-days or more, when cold treatment could be completed in-transit.

While the region's horticulture industry was committed to regaining pest-free area status, Mr Flett said this depended on export markets recognising Sunraysia's Pest Free Area status. "We're confident we'll be back to pest-free in the northern part of the zone within a year," he said. "We're in a much better situation than we have been (in previous years). A lot of the outbreaks have been declared closed." Current outbreaks at Buronga and Gol Gol were extended by the detection of single flies last month.

Former citrus grower, Member for Mildura Peter Crisp said the Mildura region produced 74 per cent of Australia's table grapes and 24 per cent of its citrus. Mr Crisp said this contributed \$500 million to the local economy. "The only currently available facility to treat fruit in this way is located in Shepparton, almost 500km away, which adds considerable transport costs and time delays for local growers. "The current process of transporting fruit to Shepparton to lower its temperature and kill any pests can now take place on site, saving the 130 farmers who will use the facility \$460,000 a year."

Construction is due to begin shortly with the new facility expected to be operational by late May.

(Source: http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2013/02/28/561787_horticulture.html)

