



SUMMARY

LYCHEE INDUSTRY GROWERS MEETING

AUSTRALIAN LYCHEE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Wednesday 11th September 2024

Craig & Barbara Van Rooyen









Sweet Sensations Orchard

417 Walker Road

South Bingera Q 4670

Meeting commenced: 12.00pm

Attendees & Apologies:

ATTENDEES LYCHEE GROWERS	MEETING SPONSORS
<p>Derek Foley Jill Houser Ian & Sandi Groves Chris Salta Craig & Barbara Van Rooyen Devon Van Rooyen Brian & Fiona Pocock Stephan & Marianne Vorster Ric Haydock John & Karen Francis Jack Cowie Eddie Cowie Robert & Karen Martin Alan & Heather Fuller Peter Schloss & Gillian Wardner Adam & Kobi McCarthy & Myah Mladen & Anna Bosnic Ben & Kylie Jarvis Lawrence Masasso Peter Masasso Lorraine Stopford Jim Randell & Jen Wilson Stephen Groves Paul & Krystal Caton Aria, Sienna & Wyatt Caton Bruce & Lyn Benson Norm Pringle & Jared Pringle Shaun Mills Trent Slater Ben Bartlett Paul & Letita Taylor Chris Illguth Paula Murphy Dylan Murphy Murray Van Rooyen Jamie & Sue Hansen</p>	<p>Lunch & Gelato Cart sponsored by:  Romeos Marketing</p> <p>Afternoon Tea sponsored by:  Opal Fibre Packaging</p> <p>Door Prize sponsored by:  RDO Machinery</p> <p>Antipasto pre-dinner sponsored by:  GreenlifeGRO</p> <p>Dinner sponsored by:  Ten Farms</p> <p>Desserts sponsored by:  Steritech</p> <p>Drinks/Refreshments sponsored by:  Express Fruit</p> <p>Equipment Hire sponsored by:  Formatt Machinery</p>
ATTENDEES PRESENTERS	ATTENDEES AGENTS & INDUSTRY RELATED ENTITIES
<p>Matt Donovan – Barrister Gibbs Chambers Chris Themsen – Agreco Yan Diczbalis – ex Dept of Agriculture (DAF) Callum McCluskey – AgriSmart Simon Clark – GreenlifeGRO Paul Walters – RDO Equipment Prof Andrew Robson – Uni of New England (remote) Krystal Caton – Lush Lychee (Nuffield Scholar) Sarah Strutt – Hort Innovation Dr Theunis Smit – OmenAg</p>	<p>Yan & Heather Diczbalis Brendon & Tamara McConnell – Express Fruit Joe & Fina Brancatisano – Ten Farms John & Debbie Trimboli – Romeos Marketing Michael Weisenberger – KW Automation Adam Kennedy – Carter & Spencer Monica Minuzzo – Carter & Spencer Brendon Lai – Fresh Produce Group Nick & Josie Morenos - Fruit Tree Media Sarah Strutt - Hort Innovation Dave Crowhurst – Arbour Grove Nursery Scott Rub & Zac Shepherd – Opal Fibre Packaging Matthew James – Ireland 53 Richard Valentine – Dept of Agriculture (RAM's) Ross Stanley – Approved Packaging Paul Walters, Pat Harden, Mark Lemm–RDO Equip Eddy & Eleanor & Laura Dunn Kylie Jackson – BFGV Nathan Attard – Formatt Machinery</p>
	<p>GUESTS</p> <p>Kate Giles – Bundaberg Regional Council Carl Robinson Michelle Haase – QFVGA Michael Piercy & Clancy Barton</p> <p>Apologies as noted on AGM Minutes</p>

Welcome and Introduction:

Derek Foley (President of ALGA) welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the Australian Lychee Growers Association 2024 Growers Meeting. He addressed the Van Rooyen Group (VRG) Work Health & Safety procedure manual, copies of which were available for reading at the sign in table and by signing the attendance sheets all attendees acknowledged and accepted the requirements which had been implemented by the VRG.

Derek also acknowledged and thanked the Van Rooyen Group, particularly Craig, Barbara and the boys for getting the farm in tip-top shape and remodelling the shed so that we could have an audience of people. He continued, saying that lot of effort goes into these events as well as the work put into yesterday's farm visits. Thanks were also extended to both Derek (by himself) & Jim for their 'farm ready' visits and Derek thanked Jim for giving such a comprehensive overview of his farm and farm practices. He also commented that interesting feedback was received after visits to the three different sized orchards and that we should be aware of having this balance as it is good for the industry. Small-medium sized farms/growers are just as important as the bigger ones as our whole industry was built on a lot of small farms back in the early '80's, so having come from that era it is good to be respectful of smaller family owned farms.

The sponsors of the meetings were acknowledged and thanked with Derek commenting that it was terrific to see the 'repeat offenders' back again this year:

- Romeos Marketing, John & Debbie Trimboli sponsoring lunch & the gelato cart
- Opal Fibre Packaging, Scott Rub sponsoring afternoon tea
- GreenlifeGRO, Simon Clark sponsoring antipasto (pre-dinner nibbles)
- Ten Farms, Joe & Fina Brancatisano sponsoring dinner
- Steritech, Ben Reilly sponsoring desserts
- Express Fruit, Brendon & Tamara McConnell sponsoring drinks & refreshments
- RDO Equipment, Paul Walters sponsoring the door prize
- Formatt Machinery, Nathan Attard sponsoring equipment hire

GROWERS MEETING PRESENTATIONS

All presentations have been uploaded onto the ALGA website and can be viewed & listened to by clicking on the presentations link:

[2024 GROWER MEETING PRESENTATIONS](#)

Presentation

Changes to water charges

Presented by Matt Donovan, Barrister and member of Gibbs Chambers.

Introduction:

Matthew practices in state taxes, trusts and is an expert in water law. He is one of the few lawyers with water law exposure and works closely with mining, agri-business and banking clients solving complex legal issues pertaining to the access to water rights in both surface and ground water schemes, as well as advising on the long term and commercial aspects of water and water law.

Presentation

IPM in Lychee – Current best practices

Presented by Chris Themsen - Agreco

Introduction:

Agreco Australia is an independent agronomic research and consultancy firm located in Bundaberg and the Lockyer Valley, Queensland, Australia. With over 30 years of experience, the Agreco Australia team places a strong emphasis on confidentiality, technical agronomic advice and practical solutions with the aim of improving the profitability and sustainability of our clients businesses.

Presentation

Update on Taiwanese lychee varieties

Presented by Yan Diczbalis - in limbo between Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and farming

Introduction:

Yan Diczbalis has been working as a research and extension Horticulturist at Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, South Johnstone for the past 24 years until late last year when he commenced long service leave. Yan is heading to full retirement by early 2025. In the meantime, he has been working full time on the family palm farm and enjoying life at home in tropical north Queensland. Yan is no stranger to the Australian Lychee industry and for the past 8 years, along with his many and varied roles, he became involved with the research & uptake of the Taiwanese lychee varieties.

Presentation

Accurately track labour costs on the farm and output valuable insights: Comparing costing on a block-by-block level

Presented by Callum McCluskey - AgriSmart

Introduction:

Callum has recently opened up AgriSmart's Australia office in Melbourne. Coming from a legal background, having practised law in New Zealand, he now works closely with Australian growers to enhance their businesses by providing a compliant software solution that saves time and ultimately makes operations more profitable by digitising archaic paper-based and outdated on-farm/orchard processes. AgriSmart is an all-in-one solution for horticulture, offering features such as Employee Onboarding, Time and Attendance for Horticulture, Block Costing, Block and Row Management, Bin Ticketing, and Health and Safety.

Presentation

Next generation netting structures and drape over nets

Presented by Simon Clark - GreenlifeGRO

Introduction:

Simon is Business Development Manager with GreenlifeGRO and has a proven track record in the Agricultural and Construction sectors.

Presentation

RDO door prizes x 2

Presented by Paul Walters – RDO Equipment

Introduction:

Paul is the Bundaberg Branch Manager of RDO Equipment.

Door prize 1 x female RDO jacket and cap

- Won by Letita Taylor from North Isis

Door prize 1 x male RDO jacket and cap

- Won by Chris Salta from Sunshine Coast

Presentation

Tree Crop Mapping

Presented by Professor Andrew Robson - University of New England

Introduction:

Professor Robson is Director of the University of New England's Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre (AARSC). He has been involved in agricultural research since 1996, with the majority of that time developing spatial applications (remote sensing/GIS) across many agricultural and horticultural farming systems both nationally and internationally.

Talk overview:

Of relevance to lychee, the AARSC currently map the location of horticultural tree crops across Australia and South Africa to assist the respective industry bodies better understand industry size, annual growth, forward estimates, traceability, biosecurity and natural disaster response. AARSC also provide yield forecasting of tree crops across many countries. The following presentation will include some of these examples

Presentation

Nuffield Scholarship

Presented by Krystal Caton – Lush Lychees

Introduction:

Krystal & husband Paul along with their 3 children own and operator a lychee orchard in Yaamba Central Qld, 35 minutes north-west of Rockhampton. They purchased their orchard approx. 8 years ago and after planting more lychee trees the orchard now has 9000 trees consisting of 6 varieties. Both Krystal & Paul are passionate lychee growers, and to make their busy life even busier, Krystal applied & was awarded a 2025 Nuffield Scholarship.

Presentation

Industry Development planning and audience participation

Presented by Sarah Strutt – Hort Innovation

Introduction:

Sarah is Hort Innovation's *Industry Service and Delivery Manager* for the lychee, banana, mango and papaya industries. Her role is to work closely with our industry to understand our needs, issues and opportunities and get good value from our levy investments.

Presentation

Rooted in resilience: Unlocking orchard potential through soil health and holistic management

Presented by Dr Theunis Smith - OmenAg

Introduction:

Dr Theunis Smit is an Agricultural Specialist with over a decade of experience in plant physiology, water, and nutrient management. With a Ph.D. in Horticulture, he has advised some of the industry's largest growers across multiple countries. Dr. Smit is known for his innovative approaches to enhancing orchard productivity and sustainability, with a special interest in mycology and microbiology.

Talk Overview:

This talk will explore the vital role that soil health plays in the overall productivity and sustainability of orchards. It will dive into the interconnectedness of soil biology, nutrient management, and orchard practices, offering growers practical strategies to enhance soil vitality. By integrating holistic management techniques, attendees will learn how to foster a resilient orchard ecosystem that supports long-term tree health, improves yield quality, and maximizes the orchard's potential from the roots up. The session will also highlight innovative approaches to soil management, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a balanced and thriving soil environment for sustained orchard success.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Derek thanked all presenters, the sponsors, the growers and the audience for attending the 2024 ALGA Meetings and it was hoped that the topics and information presented at the meetings were of interest to all or most attendees.

All presentations have been uploaded onto the ALGA website and can be viewed & listened to by clicking on the presentations link:

[2024 GROWER MEETING PRESENTATIONS](#)

Other business:

2025 Growers Meeting: North Qld Coast growing region, September date, time & venue to be advised

Meeting closed: 5.15pm