

Central Australian Food Futures Roadshow 19–21 November, 2019



Northern Territory Farmers Association held a Food Futures Roadshow event in Central Australia, 19 – 21 of November 2019. The event kicked off in Alice Springs with over 65 people in attendance. The welcome function was an enjoyable evening held at Azri Research Station and our hosts, Department of Primary Industries & Resources put on an amazing meal and venue. The topics for the welcome event were hemp and dates. Keynote speaker John Hall from Agrifibre addressed guests on the hemp industry, its opportunities and value to central Australia and future farming operations. John can see terrific opportunity for the hemp industry and the opportunity is very real. There was significant interest in hemp from the range of producers in the room...



As we head into the festive season there is much to celebrate for NT Farmers. The past twelve months have seen a significant increase in membership thanks in large part to the excellent work of our development officers and their high level of commitment to assisting existing and prospective farmers and to our focused and informative communication.

We have recruited an outstanding CEO in Paul Burke whilst retaining the irreplaceable talents and knowledge of Greg Owens to manage our vital IDO team.

We are in a very strong financial position and continue to broaden our funding base. Our relationship with the DPIR finally feels like a partnership and has helped deliver tangible results for members in biosecurity outcomes (citrus canker) and grower focused research (cotton, mango dieback).

Your board is conscious there is still a long way to go before celebrations in relation to water, labour and new land availability and these will be priority focus areas in 2020. As an election year it presents as a unique opportunity to push all parties and independents to support farmer focused policies in these areas. CEO Paul has already begun working on a document that will provide an overview of our industry, a profile of its importance to the economic and social fabric of the Territory and a clear outline of the policy initiatives we are seeking support for.

First Board priority in 2020 is to establish a policy position in relation to new land availability and tenure. It is clear the lack of freehold farming land, particularly of a size needed for broad acre cropping, is hindering development at a time when there is strong interest from experienced interstate and international operators.

Sub leasing and Non Pastoral Use permits present as an obvious pathway to opening up new land on the pastoral estate but as we have seen recently there are significant challenges balancing the rights of Pastoralists and Traditional Owners. Similarly, we have seen very little uptake of leasehold land on Indigenous lands.

There are clearly challenges to financing large projects on leasehold land so we will bring together stakeholders and relevant experts to inform the board's deliberations on improving current options or opening other possible pathways including freeholding on both the Indigenous and pastoral estates.

We will also update our water policy early in the New Year with a particular focus on farm surface water capture and a defined position regarding dams on our iconic rivers.

Gamba grass poses an increasing risk to our environment, to residents and to farms in the Darwin rural area as we saw with the scorching of approximately 2000 Mango trees next to an unmaintained block last dry season. This will be our third policy development agenda item.

Whilst farm labour is a Federal policy area (and haven't they done a great job!) we will be lobbying locally for the on-going resourcing of NT Farmers to assist growers wade through the bureaucratic minefields of seasonal worker programs, the new award etc.

Through our seat on the NFF's Hort. Council we will be front and centre in discussions around the failings of the Modern Award changes of 2019 and we will continue to advocate for an AG Visa pilot program in the NT.

Another initiative of the Board in 2020 will be to reach out to every member and seek their views on what we do, what we could do or shouldn't do. The structure of NT Farmers unfortunately offers limited opportunity for interactions and direct feedback so this will be an opportunity for all members to have their say on how we can improve your organisation.

In relation to water we will be rolling out our Water Efficiency and Sustainability project. We hope to be able to announce early in 2020 a major corporate partner for this four or five year project which will be our largest ever and headed up by Greg Owens. A primary focus will be assisting growers in areas of potential water stress in the Darwin rural areas.

Thankfully we enter 2020 with a stable and experienced Board following only a single change at the 2019 AGM.

Bruce Toohill has replaced the retiring Tou Saramat Ruchkaew.

Bruce brings a wealth of experience particularly in mangoes and Top End agronomy. He has previously served as a director of the NT Horticultural Association and is across many of the issues facing our members. I know Bruce well and look forward to what he will bring to the table.

We will miss Tou's straight talking and business acumen and I want to acknowledge her important contribution as a director over the last two years.

Thank you to my fellow Directors for their support and direction and all the voluntary hours they have given throughout the year. To our tireless staff Paul, Greg, Trish, Robyn, Aisla Laura, Camilla, Andrew and Simone on behalf of the Board and members thank you for always bringing your 'A' game.

As we end the year we need to spare a thought for those farmers elsewhere battling bushfires and drought including many pastoralists across the Territory. Your resilience is being tested beyond belief, and we hope those drought breaking rains come soon for all of you.

I wish all members and friends a safe and enjoyable festive season and a prosperous 2020.

 Merry Christmas



The end of the year is a time for reflection on the year that was, it's successes and disappointments. It is also a time for goal setting for the year to come. 2019 has been a big year for NT Farmers, with Greg Owens moving from the CEO role to Industry Development Management Role. I would like to personally thank Greg for his warm welcome and professional hand over, ensuring I was well briefed on all current issues.

Key advocacy areas of concern in 2019 have been:

Water - with many water plan areas being declared in 2019, sentiment amongst producers was mixed about the level of success of water advisory groups and their role in water planning. The outcomes of the water planning process have been disappointing in some catchments seeing no new water available for development. In some areas there is simply not enough water to allow existing producers to maintain their operations. These issues are being worked through at the highest levels to seek a fair and equitable result.

Labour – The implementation of the Modern Horticulture Award in April 2019 was disappointing for all in the horticulture industry, none more than those horticulture businesses operating in regional and remote locations that already have difficulty recruiting staff due to locality. The additional administrative burden, the complete lack of education for users of the award, and the inflexibility of the award to meet growers needs resulted in higher costs and less productivity. On the flip side, the major casualties of these changes were employees who like to go to remote places and work as many hours as possible in a short period of time, but due to the overtime limitations under the new award this was not possible and employees actually ended up being far worse off.

Visa – The lack of an industry specific visa for the agriculture sector remains a frustration for many in the agriculture industry. The National Party through its branch structure believed they had a pathway to deliver an agricultural visa. It appears that this is not the case and producers remain frustrated that we cannot achieve an outcome in this space. NT Farmers have written to the relevant federal ministers to explore the opportunity of trialing an Agriculture Visa in the Northern Territory. To date the response has been warm at best.

Biosecurity – The Citrus Canker

Response has moved from eradication to proof of freedom. This is very welcome given the emotional and financial strain this has placed on many growers and businesses. It must be noted that the Citrus Canker Response was far superior to previous disease incursions. Dr. Anne Walters, Chief Plant Health Officer and her team have been very open, transparent and with a key focus on getting markets reopened as quickly as possible. Complete area freedom will be achieved when the last of the known commercial crops can be assessed and cleared.

Mango Dieback – Many mango producers in the top end

have reported signs of mango trees experiencing limb and branch death. This appears to be far more evident in the early parts of the season and is far less evident later in the season. NT Farmers have worked hard with Dr. Mila Bristow from DPIR to understand the extent of the dieback issue and spatially map the key areas. This work will allow for informed decisions to be made on what are the best next steps to take to address this issue.

Non-Pastoral Land Permits – This very contentious issue has

received much media and industry interest. It is imperative that the issue of land tenure to allow for development of a broadacre cropping industry on the pastoral estate is addressed to give security for the investment required to realize our full development opportunity. NT Farmers are committed to engaging with all stakeholders to deliver a legislative framework that is workable and fair for all. The board of NT Farmers have committed to a process of engagement, knowledge and advocacy to achieve a more secure land tenure.

Land – NT Farmers have advocated hard with Government, LandCorp and other land holders to free up opportunities for more producers to have access to land for growing our plant-based industry. Some exciting opportunities for land releases is imminent and NT Farmers will continue to seek further land opportunities in 2020.

Continued over page

Continued from previous page

Streamlined Approvals Processes – Water applications, vegetation management and non-pastoral use permits have been a slow and frustrating process for many producers, with the application process taking far too long. NT Farmers have worked closely with the Department of Environment and Resources to streamline this process and have set timelines attached to these processes. This body of work should be finalized early in 2020 and have benefit for all.

NT Farmers are committed to addressing issues affecting our established industries and assisting emerging industries to grow in the immediate future. NT Farmers Board have ratified the updated Plant Industry Strategic Plan with a key pillar of that plan being growing plant-industries from \$260 million value now to \$600 million by 2030.

The Mango industry in the top end has had a record number of trays in 2019. The 3.1 million trays were an outstanding result, this figure will continue to grow with new plantings coming online. With a VHT and cold store logistics store now under construction the opportunity to export mangoes to Asia could become a reality in the coming seasons.

Looking forward to the 2020 year, the opportunities and threats the NT Farmers will be focusing on have come from an extensive conversation had throughout 2019.

The key focus areas will be:

Processing Facilities - NT Farmers have been working hard with the broadacre industries to assist with the delivery of a cotton gin in Katherine in the medium term. NT Farmers with the assistance of Queensland Cotton and Department Trade, Business and Innovation to develop a detailed industry, business and development plan along with a feasibility study. Price Waterhouse Coopers have been engaged to complete this work.

Water Efficiency and Sustainability Project – NT Farmers have partnered with Power and Water, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and corporate partners to deliver a significant water efficiency project. The key focus of this project is to deliver greater productivity and profit whilst maximizing water efficiency. Greg Owens will head up this project.

Work Force Development Plan – NT Farmers have been working on the development of a work force plan for the Northern Territory. This plan will be finalized in the first quarter of 2020 and NT Farmers will advocate hard to deliver the key recommendations from this plan for growers.

Land – NT Farmers are committed to obtaining more suitable land for plant-based industries into production and will be working with all stakeholders to ensure more land is available to grow our industries.

Water - If we are to truly reach our development potential, we need access to more water in the right locations. NT Farmers will develop a clear policy paper for overland water flow capture to deliver more water. This science-based policy paper will look at industry best practice from across Australia and will form a part of our election strategy for the Territory Election.

Education – NT Farmers will continue to advocate for agriculture to form part of the standard curriculum from an early age and through out levels of the education system.

In terms of Research and Development NT Farmers will partner with various stakeholders to assist in the delivery of CRCNA projects in Broadacre cropping, both cotton and peanuts. NT Farmers will also partner with various organisations to deliver a protected cropping system project. NT Farmers will continue to seek to source funding to understand mango dieback and to provide mango growers with as much information as possible to counter the effects of this issue. NT Farmers are keen to hear from members on what research you would like us to progress in 2020.

Our project team will continue to deliver on our existing projects and seek out new projects that will support our industry to reach its ambitious target of \$600 million of farm gate sales by 2030.

On behalf of the entire NT Farmers team please have a Happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year. We look forward to servicing our industry in 2020.


Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year !



From the Minister

It is always a pleasure to contribute to the NT Farmers GROW NT publication, to not only recognise the great work currently underway in our farming industries but also the important role they have in the future economic potential of the Northern Territory.

Being the last publication of the year I have reflected over the last year.

In my new role as Minister for Primary Industry and Resources I have had the opportunity to travel the Northern Territory and speak with growers from across our great Territory to hear from them about their struggles and successes.

I have heard directly from people who have had their crops severely damaged by bushfire and disease, but also those who have succeeded in having bumper seasons in some of Australia's harshest climates.

In recent times, I had the pleasure of joining more than 60 farmers, brought together by NT Farmers on a Central Australia Regional Food Futures Roadshow.

We had the opportunity to visit several producers throughout the region as well as the Aboriginal Land and Sea Development Agency.

This trip provided valuable insight into how these farming operations are run in Central Australia and it also highlighted the importance of having Traditional Owners involved in the future development of these industries.

The energy, experience and commitment demonstrated by those involved gives me confidence that NT Farmers will be able to realise their goal of having a \$600 million industry by 2030.

The Northern Territory Labor Government backs the vision of NT Farmers, which will see the Northern Territory become the Food Bowl of our region.

Have a safe and merry festive season, I look forward to continuing on the great work we have achieved this year, in 2020.

Best wishes,

Paul



The Hon. Paul Kirby
Minister for Primary Industry and Resources



Vale Kerry Byrnes

Well known Arnhem Nursery owner Kerry Byrnes passed away on Friday 22 November aged 72, after a short illness.

Kerry Byrnes has been in the NT since 1971 in a long, colourful and varied career from selling cars at Sutton Motors, in the oil industry, a caravan park owner, self taught journalist, newspaper tycoon and finally finding his true interest - plants through Arnhem Nursery with his wife Sandra.

Kerry's first big rise to fame in Darwin was The Star newspaper and printing business, which he bought before the cyclone. Kerry printed the first papers after the cyclone before the NT News was able to get back in business. His most famous apprentice was cadet journalist Andy Bruyn who then went on to local fame as Director of Channel 9.

Kerry and Sandra started Arnhem Nursery in 1991. Sandra's passion was plants, which flowed on to Kerry. Kerry was a very active member of the NT Nursery Industry Association in the 1990's, and a frequent visitor to the offices at Coolalinga. He was a key person in organising the National Nursery Industry Conference held in Darwin in 2000.

He was well known as the Talkback Gardener on the ABC Saturday morning Garden Show, along with his long term mate, Darryl South of Darwin Plant Wholesalers. Kerry's daughter Charlotte, has taken over recently on the ABC Garden Show.

He was active in helping establishing the Open Garden Competition in Darwin, and very active in lobbying Darwin Council and NT Government for better landscaping around Darwin. His current project is the large planter boxes that also serve as bollards around the city.

Kerry knew a lot about plants, especially NT plants. He learnt on the job and learnt a lot from Sandra, with Sandra making sure he wasn't bull-shitting too much.

Everyone loved Kerry. He was a great bloke to have a chat to. He was very sensible and very practical. Everyone has good memories of dealing with Kerry. Kerry loved his family and they loved him; his wife Sandra, his kids Charlotte, Glen, Joel and grandkids. Life has been tough recently with his daughter Stacie passing away a few years ago followed a few years later by her husband Paul Albano, with Kerry nursing both through their illnesses. Stacie and Paul's son Dillon, Kerry's grandson, now works in the nursery.

Kerry's daughter Charlotte and grandson Dillon have taken a strong interest in Arnhem Nursery, working along side Sandra and with Joel. The famous Rural Potters sale still went on at Arnhem Nursery over the weekend even though Kerry passed away on the Friday evening before.

Kerry's funeral and wake were held at Darwin Botanic Gardens on Thursday 5 December

What did you do to acknowledge National Agriculture Day on 21 November 2019?

The DPIR National Citrus Canker Eradication Program and Northern Territory Farmers Association teamed up to celebrate and encourage community support for our farmers.

NT Farmers Workforce Planning Coordinator, Aisla Connolly, and DPIR's Community Engagement Officer, Jo Scott, spent the day at Girraween Primary School teaching students about biosecurity threats to our agricultural and horticultural industries.



Girraween students enjoy learning about biosecurity

The school has a wonderful school farm and with most students coming from rural properties, they showed great interest in the topic and asked many well-considered questions.

Students learned about biosecurity activities that are happening all the time to protect people, animals and plants from pests and diseases. They also discussed citrus canker disease and how each of us can help eradicate this disease from the Northern Territory. Students also enjoyed a game of fruit bingo – a fun way to build knowledge of which fruits are citrus.



Students enjoy a game of biosecurity bingo

Girraween Primary School plan to continue student learning in biosecurity with some independent activities in their school garden, and are interested in a biosecurity-themed inquiry learning project next year.

The visit also marked an exciting milestone for community engagement, with delivery of biosecurity education to over 1,000 school students under the National Citrus Canker Eradication Program.



Protected Cropping in the NT

The possibility of extending the growing season year-round has NT growers interested in the potential opportunities shade house structure production could offer to their businesses.

Consumer demand for high quality fresh produce is a daily expectation and may enable Territory farmers to increase their economical viability.

NT growers are wanting to learn more about the opportunities around protected cropping and in some cases conducting their own trials.

VegNet has seen the potential benefits for growers, industry and other stakeholders to provide an economic injection for themselves and for the NT.

The VegNet team have designed an R & D forum to be presented to growers and industry stakeholders on the 27th February 2020. The forum aims to provide support and information to growers who are wanting guidance and direction to enable them to commence trial activities.

Continuation of the VegNet project Phase Two would see a strong focus on helping growers to learn more about the opportunities protected cropping could offer .

The CRCNA's new cooperative research centre for developing Northern Australia is set to assist industry by collaborating with producers, Government and Associations over a two-year R & D project to examine various protected cropping systems, technology and practices while working with targeted growers to scope and develop how they can implement the right system for them.

The scoping project will provide more information to help growers to determine business investment strategies and potential opportunities for higher values market window access interstate and overseas for potentially higher returns.



Eggplant in Carnavon



Cucurbits in the Burdekin



Protected cropping structure in the Burdekin



Brothers Josh and Chris Pirrone with their produce

All photos courtesy CRCNA



NORTHERN AUSTRALIA
FOOD FUTURES
CONFERENCE 2020

**Early bird
registrations
NOW OPEN!**

www.foodfuturesntfarmers.org.au



**We wish our Members and
Industry Stakeholders a
Merry Christmas and
Happy and Prosperous New
year!**

**Our office will be closed from 20 December,
2019 until 2 January, 2020**



Saramat "Tou" Ruchkaew - pic courtesy abc.com.au

Many thanks to retiring NT Farmers Association Board of Directors Member, Saramat "Tou" Ruchkaew.

Tou has spent two years on the Board and has provided invaluable knowledge and support in the running of the Association.

Our Directors are all volunteers and the time they give the Association away from their farms and businesses is considerable.

It shows the willingness of members of the horticulture industry to work together for the collective good of all growers and stakeholders.

We wish Tou all the best with her ongoing farm development and look forward to her future involvement with the industry and NT Farmers.

Replacing Tou on the Board is long term Territorian Bruce Toohill. Bruce first came to the Territory on a school trip in 1968.

In 1972 he moved to the NT and except for a brief period has lived and worked in the NT and WA ever since.

Bruce's horticulture experience includes working for the CSIRO, overseeing farms for the Aboriginal Lands Trust in WA, starting the first tropical tree fruits program in Kununurra with mango as the main crop, growing bananas on Taylor Park Farm on the banks of the Katherine River, Assistant Manager and then Manager of Manbulloo Mangoes including expansion into table grapes, CDU VET Horticulture programs and then private training organisations which involved the establishment of a nursery at Numbulwar in SW Arnhemland. Bruce has also worked at Jabiru Orchards, Arnhem Nursery and operated a small nursery and contract grafted mango tree business. Bruce was also part of the Darwin Banana Growing Co and conducted the ripening and sales of the fruit.

In 2015, Bruce joined Landmark where he dealt with a wide range of farmers and says he developed a great respect as they work in difficult conditions and deserve great credit and support.

Bruce is currently employed by Tou's Garden and is enjoying helping them achieve their productive capacity.

Bruce lives with his partner and two daughters in the rural area.

Bruce looks forward to contributing to the ongoing function of NT Farmers.



Bruce Toohill

Having joined the NT Farmers team in late October, November and December have been action packed with various opportunities to engage with growers and the wider community. I have met many people and very much enjoyed these connections. I have had the opportunity to attend several forums and discussions around biosecurity.

The roundtable meeting held in late October covered a range of discussions over a broad section of industry both plant and animal.

Of recent concern is African Swine Fever (ASF) which was confirmed in Timor Leste in September. ASF is a contagious disease of pigs (that doesn't affect human health), that could devastate the Australian pork industry valued at \$5.3 billion this would have a serious impact on Australian agriculture with significant social and economic impacts.



The spread of ASF has been linked to domestic and feral pigs consuming swill (meat products, or products that have come into contact with meat that is infected with the ASF virus). It can also be transmitted by exposure to contaminated items such as equipment, vehicles, clothing and footwear.

An incident management team (IMT) has been activated to raise awareness and look at preparedness should ASF reach the NT - with Darwin seen as the 'gateway to Asia'.

Remember:

"Biosecurity is everyone's business"

Sniffer dog, Suki, was sent to Darwin Airport as concerns for ASF entering the country were heightened due to the regular flights between Timor and Darwin.

In her first month Suki detected over 69 biosecurity risks highlighting the need to address and inform travellers of the importance of declaring plant and animal materials.

A number of media campaigns, tailored into several different languages, have been launched to engage the wider community about the value of maintaining high levels of biosecurity.

If you have any animals on your property, you are required to have registered for a Property Identification Code (PIC). Currently there are 194 PIC registrations for pigs in the NT. In order to ensure the NT's preparedness for ASF please ensure that your PIC is up to date.

Recent updates on Citrus Canker Disease identified no new detections since June 2019 with the response moving towards the final phases of eradication.

The response plan is to achieve Australia's declaration of freedom from citrus canker disease by the end of 2020 and to reinstate freedom of movements based on strong evidence the disease is absent, namely through ongoing surveillance work on farm, continued engagement with residents, businesses and industry.

Follow up on farm visits for the Area Wide Management Project occurred and thank you to those growers who have engaged over the season with this monitoring.

A large part of success out of projects like these stems from the engagement and participation by the growers.

Regular monitoring of crops during the season allows for better management practices to happen on farm with the flow on effect being greater returns on investments and productivity. A proactive plan is much more powerful than a reactive one.

This season has seen an incidence of POTY viruses around the region infecting mostly cucurbit crops. This virus is transmitted through aphids which can hot spot in crops.

Continued from previous page

Filming for our Biosecurity Champions Project has begun, and the time spent with these champions has been valuable and rewarding. Each of our identified local industry champions understand the importance of biosecurity.

They value the role biosecurity plays in their businesses both on farm and throughout the supply chain and acknowledge the importance of connecting with industry and having working biosecurity plans.

The word 'biosecurity' has positive overtones to them, and they identify the value biosecurity has in securing the future of our industry.

The development of these short films is to highlight biosecurity awareness, engagement and to improve communication between growers and industry.

A launch of our local champions and the important messages they have to share will be happening in the first quarter of 2020 which is very exciting for all.

Last week the Katherine Weed Reference Group held their final meeting for the year of which I was invited to attend as a representative for NT Farmers.

At this meeting discussions were had around the development of a 2020-2025 Regional Weed Strategy which will be rolled out across the NT over the coming months.

It aims to identify and update Weed Risk Assessment on a regional and localised scale with the advocacy being to ultimately assist and support Territorians in minimising the spread and movement of weeds.

It was an opportunity to hear, firsthand, how the emergency response plans are going for recent identification of parthenium weed, rubber vine and siam weed in the NT this year. Decisions for the next phases on each of these incursion sites are currently being considered.

The important take home message here is that in each instance open communication and transparency has occurred with key stakeholders and industry which has allowed for prompt and timely responses.

Remember :

"come clean go clean"

Other areas of discussion were around preparedness for this weed growing season and to highlight the positive regional responses and uptake that has occurred through the Gamba Grass Action Plan.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season, to thank you again for making my transition onto the NT Farmers team such a positive, exciting and engaging one.



Chris Nathaniel (above) and Greg Owens (below) take part in filming the biosecurity films



The Draft Workforce Development Plan is under review by the Board with the aim to publish in early 2020. If recommendations are ratified, work will commence on the workforce strategy and tool kit, first quarter 2020.

Introduced by the Turnbull Government with effect from 1 January 2017, backpackers pay 15% tax on income they earned up to \$37,000. Prior to the change, most backpackers were treated as residents for income tax purposes (if they stayed in Australia for more than 6 months and had the benefit of the tax-free threshold).

The Federal Court ruled the Federal Government's unpopular 15% 'backpacker tax' to be invalid as it applies to some backpackers. Justice John Logan said the tax violated Australia's bilateral treaty on taxation arrangements with the UK. Australia has similar agreements with other countries including US, Germany, Norway, Chile, Japan, Finland. and Turkey.

Following an income tax assessment issued by the Australian Commissioner for Taxation in July 2017, the plaintiff (United Kingdom national who lived in Australia on a working holiday maker visa from August 2015 to May 2017) challenged the assessment on the basis that it was inconsistent with Australia's international treaty obligations. The Commission of the Australian Tax Office has the opportunity to appeal the ruling, and the Federal Government said it will wait for all legal proceeding to conclude before changing any of its policies.

There are still some uncertainties around the ruling, for instance, the decision does not appear to directly affect all backpackers. More significantly, the ATO has yet to issue guidance to employers as to who, if at all, they need to change their payroll arrangements.

The Draft Horticulture Industry Labour Agreement was submitted 19 November 2019, to the Department of Home Affairs and to Minister for Immigration David Coleman and will work to help growers nationwide access the reliable, efficient, competent and skilled workforce it needs to continue to grow and develop, as well as give growers longer term options to employ workers for more than 12 months.

If you believe that some businesses exploit workers deliberately to gain an unfair advantage in the supply chain, join Fair Farms to level up the playing field. Growers and other suppliers who comply with the rules and treat their workers fairly are rewarded with superior access to the fresh produce supply chain.

The Fair Farms Initiative provides growers with support and training on compliance to the Fair Work Act.

Woolworths have been part of the retail consultation on the development of the Fair Farms Standard to ensure it meets our Responsible Sourcing requirements and aligns with stakeholder expectations. Woolworths is one of the founding retail partners of Fair Farms and hopes the certification process will help drive improvements across the horticulture industry. There is already one Woolworths supplier in the NT who holds Fair Farms certification.

For further information please go to <https://www.fairfarms.com.au/>

Expressions Of Interest are open to participate in Fair Farms training in February 2020 please express interest to wpc@ntfarmers.org.au

A welcome Christmas break for all is near. Enjoy the rest and time to catch up with family and friends. I will be contacting you in the new year seeking your input for the annual harvest labour survey.

It is extremely important to provide information to explain the status of NT plant industries harvest workforce to Government and other stakeholders for support with visa's etc.



(L to R) Woolworths Head of Produce, Paul Turner and Responsible Sourcing Manager, Laura McManus join Thomas Hertel, Fair Farms Program Manager at the launch in June 2019. Pic courtesy woolworthsgroup.com.au

Upcoming Migration Changes in November 2019



New Regional Provisional Visas

In March this year the Australian Government announced changes to its Skilled Migration Program to encourage more skilled migrants to settle into regional Australia. Some of the benefits include priority processing of regional applications, a broader range of occupations and increased visa duration. The changes are designed to encourage more migrants to stay in regional areas longer term and build community ties.

New	Replaces	Effective Date
Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) subclass 491 visa	Skilled Regional (Provisional) subclass 489 visa (first provisional stream)	16 November 2019
Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) subclass 494 visa	Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme subclass 187 visa (direct entry stream)	16 November 2019
Permanent Residence (Skilled Regional) subclass 191 visa –PR Pathway	New visa stream will commence in November 2022	16 November 2022

What does it mean to your business?

Fill more job vacancies faster and at lower cost:

- Priority processing of regional applications
- Broader range of occupations available than non-regional pathways
- Only one Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) levy stage (at subclass 494 nomination)
- No nomination application stage for subclass 191 permanent visa

Attract and retain workers to regional areas:

- Visa duration is five years
- Visa conditions mean migrants more likely stay in regional areas longer term
- Visa pathways from provisional visa (subclass 494) to permanent residence (subclass 191 visa) after at least three years
- Strict compliance measures include a requirement for visa holders to report any change of circumstance to the Department within 14 days, and they may be required to attend an interview or provide supporting evidence to demonstrate they are living and working in regional Australia

Detailed information on Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) subclass 494

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 5 years visa grant period- Eligibility to apply for a permanent subclass 191 visa after 3 years- Dependents also have work rights- Cannot apply for most other visas until after completion 3 years in regional area- All visa holders are required to live, work and study only in a regional area and are subject to other conditions- Must work only for the nominating employer and in the nominated occupation
Eligibility	<p>For Employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Approved as a sponsor- No adverse information- Position must be in regional area- Position must be full time and genuine- Labor Market Testing (LMT) undertaken – no International Trade Obligation exemptions- Annual Market Salary Rate requirements met <p>For Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Be under 45 years of age- Competent English (IELTS 6 across each band or equivalent)- Skills assessment in eligible occupation- At least 3 years relevant full-time employment experience
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Employer applies to be a sponsor- RCB certification by MigrationNT- Employer nominates a skilled occupation position- Visa application by worker
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sponsorship fee \$420- Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) Levy<ul style="list-style-type: none">o \$3,000 one-off (annual turnover < \$10m)o \$5,000 one-off (annual turnover ≥ \$10m)

The information above is a guide only as it is based on the most current information available from the Department of Home Affairs. Please visit their website www.homeaffairs.gov.au for more information.

MigrationNT

Phone: 08 8999 5264

Email: Migration@nt.gov.au

Disclaimer

Subject to any terms implied by law which cannot be excluded, in no event shall the Northern Territory Government be liable for any losses or damages, including incidental or consequential damages, resulting from use of the published material. While care has been taken to ensure that the information contained is true and correct at the time of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. Northern Territory Government gives no warranty or assurance, and makes no representation as to the accuracy of any information or advice contained, or that it is suitable for your intended use.



Continued from front page

Stuart Smith, Regional Director of Department of Primary Industries and Resources then facilitated a guided field walk to discuss the opportunities of the date industry in central Australia. It was interesting to be able to see the date trial plots at AZRI firsthand and to be able to discuss the history of these plantings and the future of the date industry. Several date growers were present to discuss their operations and the opportunities they see for the industry.

Food Futures is giving locals a voice in Northern Development and an opportunity in the development prospects as well as the chance to see firsthand what other local producers are already doing.

Local landholders and participants had the opportunity to mix with potential investors, Department of Primary Industries & Resources and Environment & Natural Resources, a range of consultants, industry experts and businesses. The focus was on:

- Farming future in Central Australia
- Links across the north
- Diversification options
- Horticultural cropping developments for Alice Springs, Ti Tree and Western Davenport regions
- Fodder and broadacre opportunities

The roadshow included visits to Roy and Janet Chisholm's farms at Ti Tree to see fodder production, the grape harvest at Ti Tree's Marciano Table Grapes operation as well as Paul Mc Laughlin's melon operation on Indigenous land at Ali-Curung.

There was considerable interest in Central Australia from a number of businesses wanting to diversify their supply base or utilise Central Australia for its seasonal and climatic advantages, with a number of these businesses attending.

Paul McLaughlin's farm is a great example not only of the quality of produce that can be produced in Central Australia, but also on how partnerships with Traditional Owners can succeed. Paul has been producing melons on land leased from the Warrabri Land Trust for the last six years and has made a successful niche in the supply of high-quality melons to the Australasian market.

NT Farmers can see great opportunities for horticultural developments in the central region, with potential crops including grapes, citrus, mangoes, lychees, pomegranates, dates, stone fruits, tree nuts, melons and vegetables (including tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers and onions).

There is a great market advantage to Central Australia that is only just starting to be recognized, the fact that a number of potential investors attending this event is a testament to the strong interest. With the changes to the Pastoral Land Act, Pastoralists can now sub lease sections of their properties to potential investors which opens up a great opportunity to assist businesses to diversify.

NT Farmers could not put these events on without the generous sponsorship from our supporters. NT Farmers would like to extend our sincere thanks to Office of North Australia, EcOz, Department of Primary Industries & Resources, Rivulus, Fortune Group, Vanderfield and Rabobank.

Food Futures Roadshows will be held in Katherine and Broom in 2020. The main Food Futures Conference will be held in Darwin between the 27th to 30th April 2020, this years theme will be balancing agri-development and the environment and with a great line up of speakers this is an event not to be missed.



Centre Pivot at Napperby Station

Achieving Sustainable Development

By Paul Burke

The goal of sustainable agriculture is to meet society's food and textile needs in the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Practitioners of sustainable agriculture seek to integrate three main objectives into their work: a healthy environment, economic profitability, and social and economic equity.

Every person involved in the food system — growers, food processors, distributors, retailers, consumers, and waste managers — can play a role in ensuring a sustainable agricultural system. One of the keyways the supply chain can achieve true sustainability, is by paying a premium to growers that produce food and fibre whilst achieving strong environmental outcomes.

There are many practices commonly used by people working in sustainable agriculture and sustainable food systems. Growers may use methods to promote soil health, minimize water use, and their carbon footprint on farm.

Consumers and retailers concerned with sustainability can look for “values-based” foods that are grown using methods promoting farmworker wellbeing, that are environmentally friendly, or that strengthen the local economy.

Researchers in sustainable agriculture often cross disciplinary lines with their work, combining biology, economics, engineering, chemistry, community development, and many others.

However, sustainable agriculture is more than a collection of practices. It is also a process of negotiation: a push and pull between the sometimes competing interests of an individual farmer or of people in a community as they work to solve complex problems about how we grow our food and fiber.

Recognition that climate variability could have negative consequences for agriculture production has generated a desire to build resilience into agricultural systems.

One rational and cost-effective method may be the implementation of increased agricultural crop diversification.

Crop diversification can improve resilience in a variety of ways by engendering a greater ability to suppress pest outbreaks and reduce pathogen transmission.

Crop diversification can be implemented in a variety of forms and scales, allowing farmers to choose a strategy that both increases resilience and provides economic benefits for all.

Diversification is seen as crucial for Northern Australia to reach its full potential in the agricultural sector.

The recent changes by the NT Government to its Pastoral Land Act has made the process of diversification possible and with the right government settings this should further encourage land to transition to a higher value of production.

The Monsoonal North covers 20% of Australia's land surface across the tropical savannas. It shares a monsoonal climate, extensive intact ecological systems, some good soils and limited development. Its river systems carry nearly half of the runoff.

The region has a large Indigenous population; most land is either under Indigenous ownership or subject to Native Title; and the highest proportion of Indigenous people live in the region's north and north-west.

The region also faces a number of shared issues, particularly the challenges of intensifying climatic extremes and pressure to exploit Asia's growing demand for agricultural produce, which is placing pressure on land and water resources.

Cattle production is northern Australia's largest agricultural industry. Two-thirds of the Monsoonal North is currently used for extensive cattle grazing. Through most of the region, cattle are grazed at low stocking rates on native pastures. With the development of a broadacre industry the cattle industry has significant opportunity to capitalize on greater amounts of higher protein sources without the extensive transportation costs.

High export demand from Asia and drought destocking has seen the region's cattle numbers fall. With the emergence of cotton, hemp, and record mango production and growth in melons and vegetables, areas of land with good soils and access to water will naturally move towards a higher value production system.

Continued over page

Continued from previous page

NT Farmers have taken an approach of supporting research and development opportunities to create clear information pathways for producers to mitigate some of the risks.

NT Farmers are a major partner with DPIR to deliver the Broadacre trials for cotton and peanuts across the Territory from the Centre to the Top End.

Additionally, NT Farmers are also a partner in the CRCNA project into protected cropping in the tropics. These two projects will invest more than \$3 million dollars into R & D to assist farmers in making informed decisions.

NT Farmers are working with government, LandCorp, Centrefarm, Traditional Owners and Pastoralists to assist with accessing lands for development. To date these negotiations have been positive and lands will be released early in 2020.

NT Farmers are in the final stages of set time frames for the environmental approvals processes for Non-Pastoral Use Permits, Vegetation Management and water licensing. These streamlined processes will assist applicants with set time limits for assessment processes.

NT Farmers will continue to advocate for diversification opportunities on all territory lands that are suitable for development and that protect the values, both culturally and environmentally all Territorians expect all industries to abide by.



Diversity – the way forward

National Ag Day 21 November 2019

NT Farmers celebrated National Ag Day by giving away mangoes in Todd Mall Alice Springs.

It was a wonderful event with many Centralians enjoying the tropical treat and it had many people talking about agriculture and horticulture throughout the NT.

Thank you to Minister for Primary Industry & Resources, Mr Paul Kirby for helping to distribute the fruit .

Thank you to Acacia Hills Farm and Foxalicious Fruit for donating the delicious mangoes and thanks to Central Fruit & Veg for transport and storage.



Alice Springs residents enjoying the mangoes!



NT Farmers President & DPIR Minister Paul Kirby

The importance of managing safety in agriculture

Agriculture is recognised by Safe Work Australia as being the most dangerous industry to work in due to the combination of hazards as well as the fact many farmers work alone or in remote locations. More than one in five workers who died at work, worked in Agriculture. It has the highest fatality rate of any Australian industry (14.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers).

What is being done about this?

Sadly, statistics show that a very low percentage of Australian agribusinesses have a current safety management system in place, but this is changing. By becoming more aware of the risks and penalties associated with not having a safety system, business owners are starting to change their attitudes and increase acceptance when it comes to safety.

What is a safety management system?

A safety management system is a process that is put in place by an employer to minimise the risk of injury and illness. When implemented correctly, it becomes part of the culture and impacts the way people carry out their jobs.

Why do I need a safety system?

As a business owner, there are legal requirements that you must comply with to ensure your workplace meets WHS obligations. This may include the health and safety of your customers, employees, visitors, contractors, volunteers and suppliers.

The principal WHS law in the Northern Territory consists of the Work Health and Safety (National Uniform

Legislation) Act, supported by the Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations.

Do I need a safety system if I don't employ anyone?

WHS legislation does not differentiate between an employee, contractor or a family member working on your farm. If you have any worker coming onto your farm, you hold the same legal obligations to provide them with a safe work environment and safe systems of work as you would an employee.

What happens in an investigation?

Record keeping is the key to protecting your business against any unfair claims or disputes. If a regulator was to come onto your property, they will request to see your safety management system. They are likely to:

- conduct interviews with any person who was present or who may know about the incident/workplace
- take photographs
- ask to see appropriate documentation such as inductions, maintenance records, training records, safe work procedures and policies as well as any other evidence that demonstrates the business has an active attitude to safety in the workplace
- any associated Contractor and Partners will be contacted related to the investigation.

What can I do?

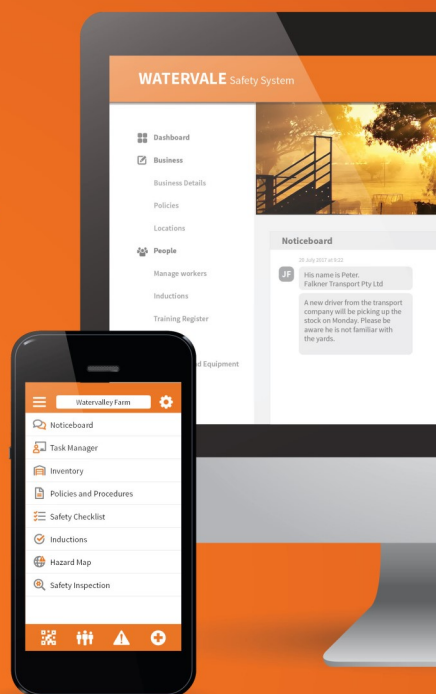
Agribusiness owners are urged to improve their processes to help make their workplaces safer and their businesses prosper. We understand this task can seem unattainable when faced with a hefty workload and an insurmountable amount of paperwork.

Being prepared without compromising productivity can be achieved by using a system that meets your obligations and is tailored to your specific needs.

Forget the paperwork – go digital.

A digital safety system for your agribusiness.

For businesses that want to get rid of the paperwork, improve efficiencies and keep their workers safe.



T: (08) 8490 0939 | safeagsystems.com

Charles Darwin University/NT Farmers Association

Sustainable Farming study tour and ideas exchange to the Punjab, hosted by Punjab Agricultural University and Central University at Bathinda.

By Greg Owens

The Charles Darwin University /NT Farmers 10 day, sustainable farming study tour and knowledge exchange of the Punjab region in India was a fascinating experience. Six Top End organic and sustainable farmers, Kamaljit Sangha from CDU, Greg Owens from NT Farmers and Jacob Betros of TNRM visited some of the increasing number of sustainable/organic/ zero input farmers in the region. The Punjab, (5 Rivers), is situated 5 hrs to the North West of New Delhi toward the Pakistani Border and is the Grain Bowl for the 1.4 billion people in India. The area has extremely fertile soils with a basic continuous cropping rotation of rice in summer and wheat or potatoes in winter.



Manpreet Singh and Sidhwan Khurad, Sikh farmers, discussing a mint crop as an alternative to the basic rice/ wheat rotation with farmers from the Top End.

Since the Green Revolution of the 1960's when India became self-sufficient in food production these farmers have been reliant on high mineral fertiliser and pesticide inputs. The flat fields are furrow irrigated with ground water in most of the Punjab. These practices have been very successful in feeding the huge population of India but are starting to raise concerns on the long term sustainability for the farms and the health of the region. There is a strong movement to adopt more sustainable practices and to look more closely at the traditional farming practices that were in place historically.



Furrow irrigated potatoes on the fertile soils of the Punjab

The area faces some major environmental challenges that have developed from these practices which sustainable farming has the capacity to reduce. The highest priority for all is the stopping of burning of the rice stubble which is estimated at contributing about 40% to the air pollution in the North of the country. Rice stubble is very thick and difficult to manage. The "Happy Seeder", which has flails to smash the rice stubble before direct drilling the wheat, has been developed by the agricultural researchers and been taken up by approximately 25% of the farmers .



The Happy Seeder allows farmer to direct drill the wheat into the smashed rice stubble

The dropping water table in the region. Farmers have open access to ground water and irrigate with either flood or furrow irrigation. There is an associated decline in soil fertility which is starting to become noticeable to some farmers and researchers.



Preparation of cattle manure and urine to send to the digester. This will be added to the irrigation water to fertilise the fields.

Increasing soil organics matter and improving water use efficiency can be achieved with sustainable techniques such as understory planting, row cropping between sugar cane, recycling cattle waste through digesters and then added the resultant brew to the irrigation water.

Continued from previous page

The group saw a number of variations of this practice. Cattle waste is a major resource in India where cattle are kept on farm for dairy products and are housed in sheds where the faeces and urine can be easily collected.

The group visited many different farms and business including citrus (Kinnow) orchards, zero input farms, organic fruit and vegetable growers and retailers, a rice miller, a wholesale vegetable and flower seed producer, some conventional village and larger farmers, and consultants that have interest in looking at farming options in the Top End. The cultural experiences of the trip were many and varied. We got to see the Sikh Golden Temple, shop on the main street of Ludiana and enjoy traffic that was truly next level.



The spiritual farmer and his organic Kinnow (citrus) crop with outstanding quality and productivity was one of the many farms visited.

The knowledge exchange workshop was held at the Central University of the Punjab at Bathinda on Day 8 of the trip. The workshop was well attended with over 100 people from the university and surrounding farming area attending including about 40 farmers. Representatives from Australia and India gave presentations and the content was questioned by the audience. Further discussions continued over lunch.



Knowledge exchange workshop



Greg Owens presents at the knowledge exchange workshop

In the next episodes I will go into more detail on some of the farms and businesses we visited and the great cultural experience we all enjoyed. There will be a group of these Punjabi farmers coming to the NT next year, probably in May/June, who are looking to engage with NT growers to broaden their perspective and knowledge of farming systems.



Transporting cotton crop to market



Sacks of rice ready for distribution

As we approach Christmas, many of our farmers are preparing their farms to make use of the imminent wet season.

A number of these farmers are looking at planting new crops such as cotton, or planting high quality fodder crops, to make hay and silage at the start of the dry season.

The momentum of the development of sustainable broadacre cropping systems in the Northern Territory is continuing on the back of successful cotton crops in the Katherine and Douglas Daly region last year.

There is at least another 10 farmers planning to trial cotton on a commercial scale to further develop the local cropping knowledge and to develop a cropping system that will be robust and sustainable in the wide range of NT environmental conditions.

These farmers and the wider community are buoyed by the momentum of getting a cotton gin built in Katherine.



NT Grown Cotton

The further development of the pastoral estate is essential for these industries to establish, and now with the options to sublease pastoral leases, there is a mechanism to allow high quality farming land to be developed.

Non pastoral lease permits still need to be applied for, so contact the Pastoral Lands Board for information on the application process.

NT Farmers, with the support of the wider service industry is keen to assist new farmers with the information they need to have confidence to trial new crops.

NT Farmers is working with the Department of Primary Industries and Resources in the roll out of the CRCNA Northern Territory cropping program, working with crops including cotton, peanuts, rainfed rice, hemp, grains and pulses.

NT Farmers has also secured some funding to assist in the transport of precision planters to farmers looking to plant commercial demonstration plantings.



Roadshow attendees

November saw another successful Food Futures Roadshow, this time in Central Australia. The format certainly took the roadshow definition to a new level with over 60 local and interstate participants hitting the road from Alice Springs, through Ti Tree to the Western Davenport regions and returning.

The program opened people's eyes on what is already happening in the Central Australian region as well as new possibilities.

It was great to listen to local landholders and the ALSEDA project on their plans as well as the interaction with potential investors and marketers looking for supply to capitalise on the unique climatic opportunities of the region.

Major developments discussed and likely to move forward include: peanuts, hemp, tomatoes, baby Leaf salad lines such as baby spinach, potatoes, onions, mangoes, citrus and further expansion of the grape industry.



Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM, followed by some festive drinks. I hope you enjoy the photos!

A huge thank you to our Board of Directors who are all volunteers and give up many hours of their time to support the Association.

Special thanks to retiring Director Tou Saramat Ruchkaew and a warm welcome to new Director Bruce Toohill.

All other Directors whose terms were due, re-nominated for their positions and as the number of nominees was the same as the positions vacant, no election was required.

Members of the 2019/20 Board of Directors are: Simon Smith, Paul McLaughlin, Kate Peake, Martina Matzner, Brett Gill, Frank Miller, Gavin Scurr, Andrew Dalglish, Han Siah, Vin Lange, Dave Gray and Bruce Toohill.



National Citrus Canker Eradication Program Update

Program achievements as Australia moves towards citrus canker free status

The National Citrus Canker Eradication Program is on track for eradication and pest freedom from this disease by the end of 2020.

Removal of the restricted area in Katherine

The restricted area (RA) in Katherine was removed on 20 November 2019. The RA was established following the detection of a plant with citrus canker in Cossack (Katherine) in June 2018, and all citrus canker host plants were removed from the RA by late 2018. The area has remained free of citrus canker host plants for the required time period to enable follow-up surveillance. This surveillance has not found any evidence of the disease. As a result, the restrictions have been lifted in Katherine and residents are now able to plant and grow citrus again.

Darwin restricted areas

Currently, 12 RAs remain in the greater Darwin regional area, including RAs in the northern suburbs, Palmerston, Humpty Doo, Howard Springs and Lambells Lagoon. Citrus canker host plants cannot be grown in the RAs and cannot be moved into or from the RAs. Affected residents will be advised when these restrictions are removed.

Darwin and Katherine control areas

Two control areas (CAs) remain in place in the Northern Territory – one in the greater Darwin area, extending south to Adelaide River, east to Kakadu and west to Dundee, and one covering the Katherine local government area. Citrus fruit, leaves and plants cannot be moved outside of these CAs without a permit.

Lifting of restrictions for moving citrus fruit and juice into RAs

Citrus fruit and juice for human consumption which is produced within the Darwin CA can now be moved into RAs in the Darwin region for sale. The restrictions on moving local citrus fruit, juice and kaffir lime leaves into an RA were lifted on 20 November 2019 and all affected growers and suppliers have been informed of the changes. Citrus trees still cannot be moved into RAs.

This allows growers within the Darwin CA to sell their produce at retail outlets, fruit wholesalers and markets located within an RA. Citrus fruit and juice produced within the CA cannot be taken out of either CA without a permit. Applications for a permit can be submitted on the NT Department of Primary Industry and Resources website, <https://dpiir.nt.gov.au/citrus-canker-dpir/application-for-permit>

Quarantine restrictions for citrus lifted in Kununurra and Wyndham

Western Australia (WA) was declared free of citrus canker on 22 November 2019, 18 months after the disease was detected. Quarantine restrictions were removed for Kununurra and Wyndham, allowing free movement of citrus plants and fruit in WA.

The National Management Group (NMG) overseeing the National Citrus Canker Eradication Program approved declaration of freedom for all states and territories, except the Northern Territory, in November 2019. The national plan to enable the Northern Territory (NT) to achieve freedom in 2020 has been approved by NMG.

Plant removal and re-growth surveillance in restricted areas

The surveillance of all 3,922 premises in RAs and removal of all citrus canker host plants from declared RAs in the Northern Territory will be completed this month. The program has removed 6,163 host plants from premises thanks to the support and cooperation of residents and owners.

Two rounds of surveillance to check for plant regrowth (when the plant regrows or has new shoots after the adult plants have been removed) in RAs has also progressed steadily with 99 per cent of first round regrowth surveillance and 94 per cent of second round regrowth surveillance now completed. Checking for plant regrowth where citrus canker host plants have been removed in RAs ensures areas remain free of host plants. No detection of citrus canker during regrowth surveillance builds evidence that citrus canker has not become established in the RAs.

Continued from previous page: citrus canker eradication

Regrowth has been found on 11 per cent of premises during the first round and on 8 per cent of premises during the second round. All regrowth found to date has been non-symptomatic and has been removed.

The RAs need to be free of citrus canker host plants with no evidence of the disease for a minimum of six months to enable the RA restrictions to be lifted.

In the media

- NT Country Hour, ABC Radio, 20 November 2019: Matt Brann interviews Claire Morton, Program Manager, on the lifting of some citrus canker restrictions near Katherine: https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/radio/local_darwin/audio/201911/acl-2019-11-20.mp3
- NT Government media release: Easing of restrictions for control of citrus canker, 21 November 2019: <http://mediareleases.nt.gov.au/mediaRelease/31780>
- A media campaign is underway, with radio, television, print and online ads, and a digital screen at Darwin airport.

Going to Uni in 2020?

Ask us about our
Scholarship Program for
rural and regional students.



Community Enterprise
Foundation™



Follow NT Farmers on Social Media



The last couple of months have been extremely busy for NT Farmers.

With the mango season looking like the largest haul on record, especially in the Darwin region with 3.1 million trays and at time of writing Katherine is currently sitting at around 1.4 million trays, however, some mango farms in Katherine still have harvest underway so the Katherine and overall figure is still yet to be fully known.

This mango season also has seen the release of the new Lady Jane mangoes that have been bred in the Northern Territory and are now in commercial production.

Only small volumes at selected retail stores were available this season, however, we are looking forward to the increase of volume over the coming years. It is always exciting to see the achievements that can come out of the NT and ultimately giving consumers more choice in their selection of mangoes.



Photo courtesy Fresh Plaza

As part of the Free Trade Agreement – Market Entry Grant that was awarded to NT Farmers this year, there has been significant effort made in working with the Darwin Airport, Darwin Port and other supply chain partners in trying to gauge the true costs of product going directly out of Darwin versus going out of the southern ports.

We have spent substantial time in understanding all the challenges that are potential barriers to trade and how these can be overcome whilst remaining competitive and maintaining efficiencies within the supply chain.

The Darwin Airport has started work on the new 'Export Hub' including a new Vapour Heat Treatment facility which is the treatment protocol for mangoes going in to China, Japan and South Korea.

This will allow for mangoes next season to go directly out of Darwin International Airport to protocol markets and also provide significant opportunity for other produce as well to go directly into Singapore via air and or sea freight.

This will have a major impact for the NT mango and melon industries to have greater capacity in channelling product onto the international stage, having significant reduction in transit times and allowing for a fresher and more premium eating experience for the end consumer.

During the last month I visited Wellcamp Airport in Toowoomba Queensland to view the Cathay Pacific Cargo plane being loaded with the Darwin freight. All freight options are being looked into to see how we can attract extra freight capacity coming into Darwin during certain times of the year.



May this season of celebrations bring you nothing but fond memories, happiness and laughter.

AGROFARM SERIES

AGROFARM 100DT



96HP

AGROFARM 115GS



NEW MODEL

110HP

AGROFARM 100GS



96HP

4E SERIES

4090.4E ROPS



85HP

4100.4E CAB



95HP

6G SERIES

6135G POWERVISION



141HP

40 KM/H & 50 KM/H VERSIONS AVAILABLE

4065E CAB



62HP

4080.4E CAB



80HP

6155G POWERVISION



163HP



www.rgmdarwin.com.au

Pacific Labour Scheme

Seasonal Worker Programme

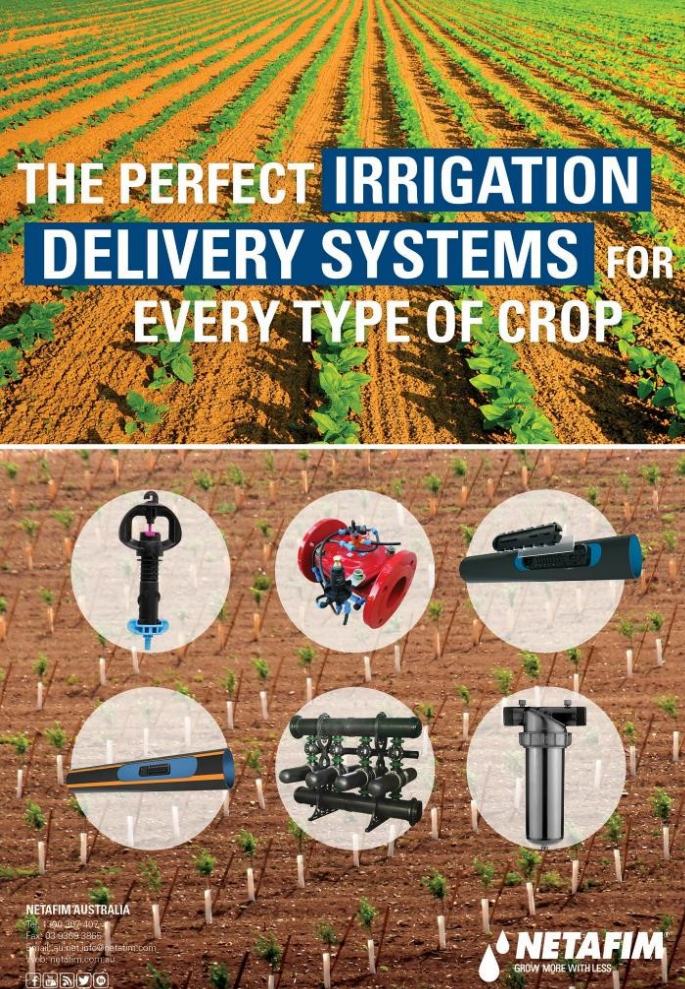
DO YOU EXPERIENCE LABOUR SHORTAGES?

CONTACT RONAN MACKEY NOW!

TEL- 0487 777 433
Rmackey@chamberntf.com.au

Chamber of Commerce NORTHERN TERRITORY

THE PERFECT IRRIGATION DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR EVERY TYPE OF CROP



NETAFIM AUSTRALIA
180 222 4472
Fax: 08 9399 4300
info@netfim.com.au
www.netfim.com.au

NETAFIM
GROW MORE WITH LESS

THE JOB SHOP

www.thejobshop.com.au

providing the people you need,
to get the results you want

Looking for Farm Workers?

The Job Shop is the Top End provider of the Australian Government's Harvest Labour Service. It is a **free** service to growers in the NT where we provide workers who have been screened to ensure they are eligible to work in Australia.

Get ready this mango season and contact Carol in Darwin on 0448 101 477 or Mel in Katherine on 0437 041 606 so that we can have workers ready for you.



Seasonal
Worker
Programme



**Pacific
Labour
Scheme**



**ISO 9001 QUALITY
Certified System**

ARNHEM MANGOES

The Lucky Ones

Darwin mango growers celebrate successful harvest

Despite the threat of disaster at their doorsteps, Arnhem Mangoes has come out the other side of harvest season completely unscathed.

The mango production in Darwin is lucky to still be standing after bushfires and gusty winds wiped out millions of dollars' worth of mangoes in the Northern Territory just weeks before picking.

Owner Barry Albrecht said he could feel the fires on the outskirts of his property. "That day we had extremely hot and dry winds. They were unreal and hard to control," he said. "We had to turn the water up on our irrigation system. Good thing we're pretty well protected. We burn off around our farm in our dry season just to keep our orchards safe."

Admittedly, he's one of the lucky ones who's been able to properly enjoy the dry season.



"The weather has been good to us. No rain," he said. "And a longer harvest season meant we had cooler mornings than usual – perfect for picking."

Arnhem mangoes wrapped up an eight week harvest season in November with more than 180,000 trays of mangoes. Give or take 6 million pieces of fruit this year alone. Barry gave thanks to the region's climate for preparing his fruit for an early harvest.

"The Northern Territory is the best place to farm mangoes because we're first to the market and get better prices," he said. "Our fruit started ripening in September way before our Queensland competitors."

Barry said between his orchards in Lambells Lagoon, Berry Springs and Mary River, he has somewhere near 30,000 mango trees spanning three different varieties.

"We grow KPs for the Domestic Market, R2E2s for the export market, and Keo Savoy for the Asian market," he said. "Woolworths get the first chop of the cherry. About 80 per cent of our fresh produce. What's leftover goes to our agents and that could go to Aldi, Coles, markets, anywhere really." "About 25 per cent of what we pick isn't good enough to be packed so it gets juiced."

Barry said he's proud Arnhem Mangoes has kept a strong working relationship with Woolworths for nearly ten years, having taken part in a commercial for the supermarket's Road Trip campaign in 2018.

"Woolworths have been a great supporter of ours," he said. "We're prouder than anything to supply our top-quality mangoes to stores across the country. Knowing our mangoes get enjoyed by so many Australians is satisfying. "Our national distributor Primary Connect has been great at providing transport services to all major cities."

When it comes to the labour force, Barry has no trouble sourcing hands for harvest. Arnhem's good name means workers practically line up to get a job. Once made up mostly of backpackers, in recent years, Arnhem's workforce has shifted to accommodate seasonal workers. This year was their third season of using the Seasonal Worker Programme through which they employed 108 pickers and packers from Vanuatu. Barry said the whole business has seen an influx in productivity as a result.

Continued over page

Continued from previous page

"Everyone's said it's the best move we've ever made," he said. "They're the loveliest people to work and they don't whinge. People say you don't even know the shed's running it's so quiet. They're just heads down."

Barry takes additional measures to ensure the farm is an attractive place for his workers by supplying them with clean accommodation and a full time chef.

"Their beds are made every day. Their linen is changed every week. Their uniforms are washed and ready with their names on them everyday," he said. "I asked them 'what's the main thing you like about being here?' Number one they said, 'the money', number two they said, 'the food', and number three they said 'the beds'."



Barry continues to employ a handful of backpackers but said the Backpacker Tax made things more complicated.

"There's a lot of silly things that don't make sense, like they want to charge them superannuation. Why? They're here to make a few dollars and you want them to spend that money while they're here in Australia," Barry said. "And now they've brought in a 38 hour week. Otherwise penalties will fly. "As far as I'm concerned it tarnishes our relationship with backpackers and seasonal workers. These blokes don't want a 38-hour week, they want to work every hour they can get. "And our mangoes don't wait for anyone. If they're left on the tree too long, they'll rot. "Three per cent of people in Australia are farmers. People putting these laws in, they've never owned a farm. No one has put any thought into this. It's actually destroying the industry." "Most farmers treat their workers right but we can't afford to pay time and a half or double time. There's not that much money in mangoes."

To prove their commitment to fair employment practices, Arnhem Mangoes recently become certified with Fair Farms, an industry-led Training and Certification Program by Growcom with support from the Fair Work Ombudsman, The Federal Department of Agriculture and AUSVEG. The program aims to stamp

out workplace non-compliance and worker exploitation by rewarding growers who are doing the right thing and using market forces to drive out unethical and unlawful employment practices. Barry said they passed the certification process with flying colours.

"When the auditor saw our shed – he was gobsmacked," he said. "I mean this place is schmick. It's cleaner than a restaurant. You can eat off the floor it's that spotless."

For Barry, becoming Fair Farms certified was a no-brainer. Especially between the choice of doing compliance assessments through SEDEX, an English program, or Fair Farms which was specifically designed for the Australian horticulture industry.

"I'd rather do Fair Farms. It's a lot easier," he said. Over the forty years he's been in business, Barry's become somewhat of an expert at growing mangoes. "A lot of people come to me and ask me what to do," he said. "There's a lot of things you read in the book that aren't right." "I may not have a great formal education but I've learnt a lot. And a lot of it has cost me a lot of money. The mistakes I've made I won't do them again. That's life. You learn from your mistakes. "If you get knocked out once. You don't get up to get knocked out twice."

Written by Sam Allen-Ankins

Photography by Primary Connect

Arnhem Mangoes is featured in the December 2019 / January 2020 edition of Fruit and Vegetable News.



2020 AgriFutures™ Rural Women's Award Applications open

Learn more
agrifutures.com.au/rwa

@Westpac
@AgriFuturesAU

Platinum Sponsor



State Sponsor



Local Sponsors



AgriFutures™
Rural Women's
Award

The AgriFutures™ Rural Women's Award is Australia's leading award acknowledging and supporting the essential role women play in rural industries, businesses and communities. The Award provides a platform to inspire and support Australian women to use and develop their skills to benefit their industries and communities.

Over the past two decades, the Award has gained a significant profile, and is recognised as a program of influence among parliamentarians, industry, media and Award alumni. Each state and territory winner receives a \$10,000 bursary for innovative ideas and projects, access to professional development opportunities and alumni networks.

- The Award is open to all women involved in rural industries, rural and regional businesses and rural and regional communities
- Location is no barrier. If you want to create impact, innovate and make a difference and/or contribute to enhancing the prosperity of rural and regional Australia, then we want to hear from you
- Women must be over the age of 18, and Australian citizens or permanent residents
- No formal qualifications are required
- If you know someone who should apply for the AgriFutures™ Rural Women's Award, please email their name, contact details, and project area to rwa@agrifutures.com.au

Need someone who knows farm insurance? You need to know Dave.



Hi, I'm Dave, your local WFI farm insurance specialist. Because I take the time to get to know my clients I can help them protect everything that matters. I'm available to meet with you face-to-face to discuss your insurance requirements. That's just one of the reasons why I'm a good person to know for insurance.

Dave Rawlinson

Need an insurance quote?

Call Dave Rawlinson, WFI Area Manager
0439 935 733 or 1300 934 934
david.rawlinson@wfi.com.au
wfi.com.au/DavidRawlinson

WFI Rural Plan consists of a range of different policies, covering a wide variety of risks. This approach gives you greater flexibility, and if circumstances change it is easy for you to add another policy.

WFI Rural Plan policies you can choose from:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  Farm Property Damage |  Farm Loss of Income |  Farm General Property |
|  Farm Transit |  Farm Legal Liability |  Farm Machinery Breakdown |
|  Farm Electronic Equipment |  Farm Burglary and Theft |  Motor Vehicle |
|  Personal Legal Liability |  Domestic Workers (WA only) |  Classic Home |
|  Standard Home |  Personal Valuables |  Pleasure Boat |
|  Personal Accident and Illness | | |

backed by 

Insurance Australia Limited ABN 11 000 016 722 AFSL 227681 trading as WFI is the issuer of our policies. This flyer doesn't take into account your objectives, financial situation and needs. You should consider these matters and the relevant Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) before you act on any advice. You can get a copy of our PDSs from our website at www.wfi.com.au or by calling 1300 934 934. Under the Privacy Act we are required to make you aware of how we will collect and use the personal information that you provide to us. This information is contained in our privacy statement which is available online at www.wfi.com.au or by contacting WFI on 1300 934 934 or emailing privacy@wfi.com.au.

wfi
farm insurance

Providing trusted property solutions to the N.T. and Kimberley region.



Australia's largest independent property valuation and advisory group can provide you with the information and advice you need to make informed property decisions.

- ▶ Cattle stations, medium & small scale grazing properties
- ▶ Horticultural properties
- ▶ Mortgage Security
- ▶ Pre-purchase & pre-sale valuations
- ▶ Stamp Duty & Financial Reporting (Capital Gains Tax)
- ▶ Tax Depreciation Schedules
- ▶ Portfolios
- ▶ Asset apportionment
- ▶ Rental Assessment & determinations
- ▶ Compulsory acquisitions & compensation
- ▶ Expert witness
- ▶ Market research
- ▶ Plant & Equipment valuations



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PROPERTY VALUATION AND ADVISORY SPECIALISTS TODAY.

Terry Roth 0428 723 606 / Frank Peacocke 0439 950 997 / Will Johnson 0422 896 480
Herron Todd White Northern Territory p. 08 8941 4833 e. darwin@htw.com.au w. htw.com.au

MMS CALCI FLOUR

High Quality fine ground Calcium Carbonate with Neutralisation Value more than 99%

MMS GYP FLOUR

High-quality fine ground Gypsum with superior levels of soluble Calcium & Sulphur

MMS HYDRO GYP-B

High Quality Gypsum liquid suspension with Boron, Nitrogen and Phosphorus. Can be applied as Foliar and Fertigation

MMS HYDRO CAL-B

High Quality Calcium liquid suspension with Boron, Nitrogen and Phosphorus. Can be applied as Foliar and Fertigation

MMS DOLIMITE

High-quality fine ground product ideally suited for aerial spraying & provides rapid uptake for crops, fruits & pastures

SOIL TESTING & SPREADING SERVICES AVAILABLE



Micronised Minerals own Twin Vertical Roller Mills for extracting product sizes down to 2.3 to 18 microns with annual Capacity of 100,000 tonnes production. Product packaging - Bulker Bags 500 - 1200 kgs and Bulk tankers. Purpose-built tipping containers for large scale delivery requirements.



10, Champion Road, East Arm NT 0828
+61 8 8947 1872 / 8947 3264
www.micronisedminerals.com.au



Water Use Efficiency

By Laura Cunningham

Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth. We are amongst the highest consumers of water per capita in the world.

This includes commercial, stock and domestic use.

As climate change evolves, rainfall is becoming less predictable with lower averages and more intense weather events occurring in many cases.



Mary Ann Dam near Tennant Creek reached record low levels in March 2019. Photo courtesy ABC Katherine – Carmen Brown

Saving water where we can has become a major focus for many industries including the agricultural sector. Water is essential to food production, so maximising our water use as efficiently as possible is crucial.

Whether through surface capture, storage options, recycling or new and existing product ranges used on farm, we need to be seen to be leading the way in water use efficiency on farm for the sustainability of our industry long into the future.

On the 15th of November VegNet and NT Farmers presented a workshop for producers on water use efficiency practices they could implement on farm with the help of agronomists from EE Muirs and irrigation product supply companies Think Water and Water Dynamic's.

The workshop provided producers with water efficiency options such as new moisture probes, metering and bore set up options which can maximise water use.



Attendees at the VegNet and NT Farmers Water efficiency workshop

Research shows that good water use efficiency comes from farming management decisions made prior to planting, not just varietal choices, chemical, machinery and product changes and adoption.

There are numerous techniques which can be used to greatly improve the potential to improve yields and help maximise profit, such as cover crops which leave ground cover which improves soil health and moisture retention.

No till and crop sequences, that include legumes and early sowing can also complement improved water use efficiency.



Pastoralists in the Barkly Tablelands are dealing with drought fall out. Photo courtesy ABC Katherine – Carmen Brown

Throughout the course of 2019, the Northern Territory (NT) Government undertook a project to engage with and develop further awareness of the Biosecure HACCP program across production nurseries in northern Australia.

This forms part of an increasing effort by the NT Government to partner with industry to enhance biosecurity efforts to protect NT industries from exotic pests and diseases which have the capacity to seriously affect productivity and the viability of businesses.

The devastating effects of pests has been recently observed through the citrus canker and banana freckle eradication programs.

Preventing future incursions will be critical for supporting the continued growth of existing industries and promoting the development of new enterprises in the NT.

Regular contact with the participating businesses (four local NT businesses participated for the full duration of the project) was an integral part of the project. This was made possible through a dedicated project officer appointed to help manage the project, and meet with businesses on a regular basis.

As part of this project, an audit was carried out at the onset and completion of activities, gaining valuable insight into the perceptions of nursery businesses within the NT. The importance of gaining this pre- and post-project perception has been critical to guiding relevant discussions for businesses and focusing of key areas of concern.

Further to these audits and regular visits, a major component of the project was the delivery of a training program across northern Australia, delivered through Greenlife Australia (GIA).

The workshops that took place as part of the training program explored integrated pest management (IPM), the availability of resources through the farm management system website run by GIA, and practical skills associated with monitoring for a pest and weed species in the nursery. This training was conducted in the NT, Queensland and Western Australia.

The project has been successful in improving biosecurity awareness and surveillance in a number of production nurseries in northern Australia. While the project funding has now finished, the NT Government will continue to provide support for local businesses to continue to uptake and improve their biosecurity practices. This will assist with capacity building for businesses and their individual staff.

The NT Government would like to thank all participating nurseries for their time and efforts during this project, and look forward to seeing the biosecurity awareness expand further into the future.



Photos courtesy DPIR: Greenlife Industries Australia rep discuss Biosecure HACCP concepts with local nursery staff including weed management and biosecurity practices



HANSEN CUSTOM

For Guns call: Greg Hansen: 0409 693 475 Email: gregory.hansen@internode.on.net
Photography call: Jed Hansen: 0421 556 168 Email: info@hcphotography.biz
Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hansencustomcoatings>

"FULL GUNSMITHING & CERAKOTE COATING SERVICES"

Hansen Custom is a local family business and is NT proud!

With over 30 years experience we can help you with specialist Gunsmithing Services and a range of protective coatings, such as; Bluing, Parkerizing and Cerakote Ceramic Coatings by our industry qualified applicator.

Our services extend all over the NT and interstate. Full care is taken with your pride and joy, as we understand the value you place on your guns, whether for sporting use or as a work tool.

Our services include:

- **Gun Repairs and Servicing, ALL categories** - Including rebuilds, new builds, custom guns, restorations & modifications.
- **Ceramic Coatings & more** - Protective coatings to preserve not only your gun, but for any surface that requires rust resistance and protection against undue wear & tear. Keeping your gun, your motorbike and vehicle/machinery/engine parts, looking and working at their best. We can even do your golf clubs! See link: <https://www.nicindustries.com>
- **Feral Pest Deterrent & Eradication** - Agents for Noy Industries. Protecting your crops from unwanted visitors. See link: <https://www.noyindustries.com>
- **Ammunition Sales** – Complete range available.
- **Storage and Decommissioning** - Long and short term storage as per the NT Firearms Act. We can arrange the decommissioning and destruction of unwanted guns.
- **Photography Services** - We offer complete photography services for your event as well as photographic restoration services, bringing you old and yellowed or damaged photographs back to life in digital format. Historical family photos a speciality.

Our business is to help you with your business. Discounts apply for NT Farmers members. We are more than happy to have a chat to answer any of your questions, and to discuss practical and viable solutions to your needs. So give us a call!



WHITTO'S
NURSERY



0400 953 313



whittosnursery@gmail.com



<https://goo.gl/RL7hTY>

GRAFTED MANGO TREES

- Highly reliable wholesale supplier 20 years experience
- Small and large quantities available.
- Specialising in R2E2 and Kensington Pride
- DAF certified for interstate delivery.



Hospitality NT's Chef's Profile

In order to better connect Members of Hospitality NT – restaurants, hotels, pubs, clubs, wayside inns and casinos, with Members of NT Farmers, Hospitality NT will feature a local Chef in each edition of 'Grow NT'. NT Farmers will also be featuring the latest news and industry updates in Hospitality NT's magazine 'Hospitality Outlook.'

First up, is not only the Group Executive Chef BevCo (includes Hot Tamale), but current President of the Culinary Federation NT Branch, Martin Bouchier.

The Australian Culinary Federation is a not-for-profit organisation comprised of chefs, apprentices and culinary students. The Culinary Federation organises competitions throughout Australia and the world, and also focuses on the well-being of the industry, including mental and physical health.

When asked what the future plans are for the Culinary Federation NT Branch, Martin explains that first it's getting through his AGM on 3 December, but more broadly is wanting to better promote the use of NT produce around Australia. 2020 plans also include sending a NT Chef Team to two of the biggest industry events, being Fine Foods Australia and Food Services Australia.

Chef Profile

Q: How long have you been a Chef?

I started to become a Chef when I was about 17, but with 5 generations of hospitality in my family, it is sort of in the blood. The industry has got me around the world, and I've been very lucky to eat and drink some awesome products with some great people on the way.

Q: Experience in the NT?

I got invited for a 2-week trial by the Dowling family at their Raging Bull Steakhouse restaurant a few years ago. Since then I have moved around town a little, including stints at PM Eat and Drink and Viva La Vida and now currently at Hot Tamale. We have been lucky enough to win local, national and international awards, most of which has been all down to using local produce & the provenance it brings

Q: Best thing you like about being a Chef in the NT?

The best thing is the camaraderie of chefs. The hospo scene here is very close knit. Way better than say Sydney or Melbourne. My phone rings if a colleague is in need and I know I can pick up the phone if I am having a bad time. The superb produce we have is awesome too and also great local producers, who we all know deal on a personal basis.

Q: Most challenging thing about being a Chef in the NT?

I've been lucky and built a tight team, but it's taken a while and a fair bit of blood, sweat & tears. Another challenge is getting product that you know is local but having to source from suppliers in the other capitals because of distribution issues. We are continuing to chip away at this issue and make better connections and relationship with more local farmers and distributors, in order to make having NT produce consistently available on menus easier.



Martin Bouchier

For more information on Hospitality go to <http://hospitalitynt.com.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=page&p=128>

DESIGNED FOR THE NARROW SPACES

SHAPING AUSTRALIA

To work in the narrow confines of orchards and vineyards, you need a special kind of tractor, one that's narrow, with high ground clearance and excellent stability. The M5001N Series are just that kind of tractor. Just 48" wide, the M5001N Series can go where standard-width tractors can't, letting you work with spreaders, sprayers, trimmers, leaf removers, and more in the tight spaces between rows of trees and vines.

M5001N

THE SPECIALIST



AIRPOWER

AIRPOWER DARWIN

880 Stuart Highway, Pinelands

08 8939 0250

www.airpower.com.au

Kubota

HUMPTY DOO HOSTEL

9 Waters Street, Humpty Doo, NT, 0836

Located in the Humpty Doo commercial precinct overlooking natural bushland, the Humpty Doo Hostel is worker friendly accommodation and perfect for short or long stays.



- Air-conditioned rooms
- Modern communal kitchen
- Communal gym area
- Washing facilities
- Secure off-street parking

Free Wi-Fi

There is an on site manager and with reasonable room rates. We welcome you to come and stay with us.

Call us to get a quote on
08 8988 2095 or 0488 002 839

Email- admin@gfhmail.com





AGVET CONTAINER RECYCLING IN THE NT



Important information for NT farmers and agvet chemical users.

Dumping of containers at unmanned waste facilities is illegal and contravenes the NT EPA guidelines as containers holding chemical are classified as hazardous waste.

Most product labels state not to bury or burn containers. This activity is also illegal. **drumMUSTER** endeavours to provide a service to all levy payers and in the case of larger corporate operations can, if possible, provide an on farm collection service*.

**Minimum numbers of containers would be required to access this service.*

Every container counts!



Visit the **drumMUSTER** website for more information about locations.

Services available through drumMUSTER.

KATHERINE WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY:

Ongoing collections during opening hours.
Monday to Friday between 7:30am - 5.30pm.
For more information on collection times and deliveries please contact the Waste Transfer Station on 08 8971 2014.

HUMPTY DOO TRANSFER STATION

Collections by appointment.
Please call 08 8983 0652 to arrange a time for delivery or for any further information.

DOUGLAS DALY RESEARCH FARM

Collections held by appointment
call 8978 2442 for more information.

For more information contact NT Farmers:

Laura Cunningham
E: ido@ntfarmers.org.au
T: (08) 8983 3233

drummuster.org.au



REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN!



NORTHERN AUSTRALIA FOOD FUTURES CONFERENCE 2020

Balancing Agri-Development and the Environment

2020 Program Highlights

- Over 50 speakers
- 3-day Conference program
- Industry showcase and exhibition
- Field trips / farm visits
- Welcome reception
- Barramundi Adventures experience
- Gala Dinner and awards
- Industry workshops
- Networking and business matching

Industry sessions on;

Cotton, grains, horticulture, fodder, rice, agroforestry and peanuts accross NT, WA and North QLD

Early Bird Registrations NOW OPEN

>> CLICK HERE <<



27 - 30 April 2020

Darwin Convention Centre, NT

www.foodfuturesntfarmers.org.au

