We wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Our office will be closed from 22 December 2018, until 2 January, 2019.
From the NT Farmers CEO

Merry Christmas Everyone!

NT Farmers would like to extend our best wishes to all members for this festive season and hope that growers can find some time away from pruning, spraying, fertilising and other fun activities to spend some much-needed quality time with family and friends.

2018 will be remembered as one of the busiest years ever at NT Farmers. The Association has a staff of 5 full time and 3 part time staff and hosting a full time AMIA mango person. We have expanded at Coolalinga into some of the space next door created when the gun shop moved to Yarrawonga. This gives our Industry Development officers a room to work in. Our staff have a large range of expertise and experience in farming and farming issues. They all have major projects to complete but are also available to discuss issues that affect growers in many areas. NT Farmers acknowledges the exceptional support by NT Government for NT Farmers project and base funding and to Hort Innovation, Territory NRM and Federal Department of Ag and Water for project funding for our other industry projects.

Seasonal and skilled labour remains a critical issue for farmers around Australia and the NT has unique challenges. NT Farmers is now a member of the National Farmers Federation Horticulture Council as well as AUSVEG and is working with this and other National bodies to increase access to appropriate labour for horticulture enterprises. The major push is for an AgVisa, which has almost got there a couple of times this year with commitments from parts of the Coalition Government, before other policy concerns have intervened. NT Farmers will continue working with our National bodies to push for a flexible AgVisa, and to promote the Fair Farms agenda so that all growers can get access to legal and appropriately skilled labour. The Sweetest Job Campaign trial has had some positive results and NT Farmers and RDA NT will be putting out a press release when the final figures are in, but it is clear there are some locals that have found employment in our Horticulture sector through this project.

The NT Farmers Northern Australian Food Futures conference in July was a great success with interest in farming options and diversification on pastoral lease continuing across the North. Investors are looking seriously at the North and existing businesses are looking for other opportunities. There will be a range of demonstration and research plantings at the Katherine and Douglas Daly research stations this Wet which will lead to field days in April/May next year. Keep an eye on our comms for dates and venues for these field days and our Food Futures Roadshows. Our Katherine Industry development officer has been very active across this space and is facilitating parallel trial plantings on existing farms.

Water policy has been an area of great concern for our members and for the prospect of development in the NT. The advent of the “use it or lose it” letters to many of our members across the NT in May this year, has created a great deal of uncertainty on farmers that were just getting ready to make investment decisions in large scale irrigation infrastructure. The responses and subsequent determinations by the Water Controller have not helped the genuine farmers looking to invest money into irrigated agriculture. While NT Farmers does not support water speculators, it feels that some more consideration should be given to long term Territorians who have made their homes and developed businesses in regional NT and have weathered the Live Export ban, Clearing moratoriums and regular Biosecurity incursions. Hay sales to the Eastern States, in this drought year have unlocked some of the potential that the NT has, to provide fodder to other parts of Australia. Irrigated agriculture could be a big part of this.

The 2018 NT Mango season was a mixed affair with reduced volumes, shortened season in Darwin due to the intense heat following a cold Dry, issues with inadequate transport and cold, wet weather in Sydney and Melbourne. Some of this is reminiscent of earlier seasons where an accurate and regularly update crop forecast could give some advanced warning of what is coming. It is critical for the Darwin crop as it is the most volatile around starting and peak production timing that the forecast is continuously fine tuned against actual temperature data. Other regions that follow Darwin have many other considerations that impact of harvest timing so it is not so critical. There will be post- season meetings in the NT to discuss the seasons performance well before the AMIA Mango Conference in May.

2018 saw another plant biosecurity incursion with citrus canker being identified in the Darwin region. This has proved very hard on our smaller lime, kaffir Lime leaf and nursery growers. The provision of interstate market access for citrus fruit has helped a little but is very expensive in the required protocol inspection regimes and no protocol yet for sending kaffir lime leaf interstate. NT Farmers continues to represent our growers and to hold regular industry update meetings but progress in this area is slow. It is disappointing to see back yarders fighting with Biosecurity about host tree removal in the restricted zones. This small inconvenience for them could help the NT citrus and kaffir lime leaf industry move toward area freedom and then resume unrestricted trading.

Continued page 10
The Festive Season can’t come quickly enough for those Territory farmers suffering through record temperatures and rainless skies. It’s been a tough year for many growers and I remain in awe of the resilience and optimism of those who earn a living from the land up here. I’m sure if a researcher somewhere has developed an algorithm for measuring the degree of difficulty of farming we would all rate in the high nines! (should we tell that to the Boundless Possible pilgrims heading here?). In simple terms the main role of your Board is to reduce that degree of difficulty whenever possible and through Greg and his team we have worked hard to do that this year. (Our expanded IDO team and improved communication flow to members has greatly improved grower engagement, we prioritised labour and fought hard for an Ag. Visa, we completed the Plant Industry Strategic Development Plan and have worked closely with the DPIR for grower focused projects, we modernised the constitution and continue to lobby all levels of Government for better farmer outcomes. Unfortunately the Grinch in me sees real challenges stopping it rising over the next few years. We face a huge challenge to maintain our funding from a Territory Government in tough economic times and with a likely Labor victory in Canberra the prospect of a collision between political ideology and farming reality at either or both levels of Government is worryingly high.

An early warning sign may have been the approach by Water Resources to clawing back unused water in the Douglas Daly through the recent water license reviews.

Here, some of our most resilient farmers - those who have seen investment and expansion plans delayed or stymied by clearing moratoriums, the live cattle ban, CGMMV, Banana Freckle and Quintis’ financial woes - have been treated appallingly. Despite assurances to the contrary, long term farming families, the genuine disciples of Boundless Possible, have had up to 70% of their allocation (read financial security) ripped away. Was this an honest attempt to foster development by returning water to the consumptive pool or was it done to serve a greater political need? NT Farmers has and will continue to work with DENR around allocation plans and regulatory reform. We want to be part of the solution to a mess that has been decades and many Governments in the making. We understand our social license and support the need for water for environmental needs, for cultural purposes and the principle of use it or lose it but please let’s sort out allocation plans and the regulatory framework before targeting growers for questionable motives!

With a high likelihood of at least six years of Labor Governments federally and locally (it’s hard to see labour losing in the NT with their huge majority and nationally new Governments historically get 2 terms), pressure on farmers and farming will come from many directions. At a local level, funding Labor’s core social reform agenda whilst managing debt will see funding for Primary Industry come under extreme pressure. Our three new IDO positions were a ‘one off’ package and our level of recurrent funding will be lucky to avoid further ‘efficiency dividend’ cuts. We have a strong and supportive Minister and Department however it will fall to NT Farmers to prove our value and argue the economic case for ongoing funding to a Treasurer and Cabinet with other priorities.

Potentially the larger threat to farmers and farming comes from the conundrum this Government faces pursuing its economic development mantra in the face of mounting internal pressure around social and environmental agendas. We will need to better articulate the case that the two are not mutually exclusive and there is in fact a sensible centre. Farming development and expansion, particularly around water use, clearing permits, diversification on pastoral leases and the potential cotton industry will provide flashpoint and reactive politicians are likely to resort to boundaries probable!

Federally we will undoubtedly see pressure on wages. Low paid workers will be paid more under stated Labor policy whilst penalty rates, casual versus permanent and labour hire arrangements will come under intense scrutiny…. One way or another we will all be paying our staff more. Through our memberships of AUSVEG and the NFF we will fight for the best possible outcome for growers however all of us need to prepare by looking at ways to become more efficient, to automate and work with our teams to increase productivity.

Happy, respected and appropriately paid staff will cost you far less in the long run. “Beatings will continue until morale improves” doesn’t actually work!

Your Board will be reviewing the NT Farmers Strategic Plan early in the New Year. This will undoubtedly see a shift in priorities to counter some of the challenges outlined above.

Continued page 10
Agribusiness is an important economic driver for the NT, and the Territory Labor Government continues to support opportunities for diversity in our agricultural sector to create jobs. The most recent developments are new varieties of mango, international interest in developing a medicinal marijuana industry, and proposed changes to legislation that would permit the growing of industrial hemp.

The two new mango varieties have been developed by the Department of Primary Industry and Resources, and recently underwent trials to see how well they stand up to disinfestation treatment, which most overseas markets require for biosecurity reasons.

The new varieties, which are higher yielding than many of the mangoes grown in the NT, have undergone irradiation, vapour heat treatment and hot water treatment. The results will determine how suitable they are for export. One of the varieties also has a different production time, which could extend the Territory’s growing season.

Medicinal marijuana has garnered a huge amount of interest after Canadian company Wayland Group signed a multi-million dollar agreement with new Darwin company Tropicann. I met with representatives from both companies recently and, subject to the Federal Government approving their licence to cultivate cannabis, they have plans to set up a huge production operation here, as they have in Canada, Germany and Switzerland. This is a very real and exciting opportunity for the Territory to enter and participate in a new growth sector in the global economy. It also offers the possibility of creating value-added products through processing right here in the NT.

An industrial hemp industry is also on the horizon, with my department in the process of drafting the NT Industrial Hemp Bill. I hope to introduce this Bill to Parliament in March next year. If passed, this could be another new crop for our agricultural industry that will create jobs for Territorians.

These new opportunities are in line with the NT Farmers’ impressive plan to double the value of the NT’s plant industries over the next 10 years, to $600 million, which I heard all about at the recent AGM. Last year the NT Government granted NT Farmers $1.55 million to fund three new industry development positions, and the organisation is really making the most of this investment.

I look forward to seeing this 10-year vision become reality, and congratulate Simon Smith on retaining his position as President of NT Farmers.
Northern Territory Water Regulatory Reform

Directions Paper

We’ve released a Water Regulatory Reform Directions Paper which provides an overview of the existing regulatory framework, the case for change and the proposed areas for improvement.

And that’s where you come in. We need your ideas to build the roadmap. Have a look at the Directions Paper and give us your feedback – you’ve got until the end of March 2019 – don’t leave it to the last minute!

www.haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/waterreform

NT Farmers encourages all stakeholders to have their say.

Please provide feedback directly via www.haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/waterreform or, via NT Farmers,

for inclusion in the NT Farmers submission - admin@ntfarmers.org.au

www.nt.gov.au/water
Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM in November. Special thanks to Minister Vowles for attending and for his ongoing support of our Association and the Horticulture Industry.

We had a great turn out and are very pleased to advise that we now have a new constitution! If you would like a copy, please contact the NT Farmers office on admin@ntfarmers.org.au.

We are pleased to welcome new Directors, Gavin Scurr, Dave Gray and Frank Miller to the Board. They join our returning Directors Simon Smith, Paul McLaughlin, Kate Peake, Martina Matzner, Han Shiong Siah, Brett Gill, Andrew Dalglish, Tou Saramat Ruchkaew and Vin Lange.

We would like to thank and acknowledge the hard work of retiring Directors Leo Skliros, Wayne Quach and Ruth Cormack.
Welcome to our new NT Farmers Directors

Gavin Scurr, Dave Gray and Frank Millar

Dave Gray - Owner Manager NT Quality Hay

Originally from Far North Queensland, Dave is a long term Top Ender and previously held a position on the Board with NT Agriculture Association before the merger with NT Horticulture Association to form NT Farmers.

Dave grew hay at Gunn Point and Lake Bennett until consolidating his business at the Lake Bennett property and expanding into mangoes and cattle.

NT Farmers look forward to utilising Dave’s expertise and local knowledge to help us develop and expand horticulture across northern Australia.

Frank Miller M. Bus, B. App. Sc. - CEO, African Mahogany Australia Pty Ltd

Frank is a professional forester who supports sustainable and efficient land management and development.

He believes there are many opportunities to further develop agriculture, horticulture and forestry in the Northern Territory.

Frank has had over 20 years’ experience in the forest industry. He has previously worked in Tasmania for several forest growers prior to heading operations for African Mahogany Australia in 2011. He has managed large plantation land acquisition, establishment and maintenance projects, and currently runs a significant fodder cropping operation near Katherine. Frank has been recently awarded a Nuffield Scholarship and has obtained a Bachelor of Applied Science (Forestry) and a Masters of Business.

The African mahogany estate in the Northern Territory is the largest of its kind in the world and the Katherine based hay operation is one of the largest in the NT. Frank sees opportunities for further development in the NT through Sound land use policy development; Stronger linkages with primary producers and R&D and market development; Smart land use management; integrating beef and timber production; and Supporting large scale sustainable development in all agricultural disciplines to help realise the potential for the NT.

African Mahogany is a beautiful timber that is well adapted to the Northern Australian climate and cattle love grazing underneath the plantations AMA manage. African mahogany is a non-irrigated crop, produces beautiful timber and sequesters and stores carbon.

Gavin Scurr—Managing Director Pinata Farms Pty Ltd

Gavin, is a seasoned fresh produce grower and industry representative with experience spanning some 30 years in Australian horticulture.

Established by brothers Gavin and Stephen Scurr at Wamuran in 1992, Piñata Farms has some 1,010 hectares under cultivation around Australia. It produces pineapples, strawberries and specialty mangoes on its own farms and contracts third-party growers around Australia to produce fruit under licence.

Under Gavin’s leadership, Piñata Farms is Australia’s largest pineapple grower producing pineapples and strawberries year ‘round and specialty Honey Gold mangoes in five states. Piñata Farms owns the breeding rights to the Honey Gold variety.

Gavin is also managing director of BerryWorld Australia, a joint venture, which produces specialty strawberries and raspberries for Australian consumption.

A hands-on visionary, Gavin heads a management team and board of directors. He is former chairman of the Australian Mango Industry Association, served two terms as a director and represents the Northern Territory on the board.
Within the last four months I have been working on the NT Farmers Workforce Development Plan, to promote and improve the pathway to a career in NT horticulture and increase access to staff.

⇒ Ag Inspirations a school-based program
⇒ Territory Legends apprenticeship
⇒ Investigation into scholarships
⇒ Investigation into a leadership program

Advocacy for a National Agriculture Visa continues after the following changes announced by the Prime Minister 5 November 2018

Working Holiday Maker visas:

• Introduction of a third-year visa option for WHM (subclasses 417 and 462), who from 1 July 2019 onwards complete six months of regional work in the second year.
• Increase the number of places available for Work and Holiday Maker program (subclass 462) by lifting annual caps available to a number of countries participating in the subclass 462 visa program.
• These additional changes do not affect the NT as the NT had these exemptions.
• Work and Holiday makers (subclass 462) will be able to undertake regional plant and animal cultivation work in additional priority areas to become eligible for a second visa.
• Extension of the period a WHM (subclass 417 and 462) may work with the same agricultural employer from six to 12 months.

Seasonal Worker Program:

• Increase work period in Australia to nine months for all workers (currently six months for some countries).
• Increase validity of labour market testing prior to recruiting workers from three to six months.
• Reduce out of pocket expenses for employers (workers repay their full travel costs except for the first $300; a reduction from the previous $500).


Horticulture Award modern award review.

If you do not have a certified (by the Fair Work Commission) enterprise agreement in place, which sets out all wages, terms and conditions you must adhere to the Horticulture Award for farm employees in the horticulture industry.

We wait for further changes to the Horticulture award as part of the modern award review. It is predicted that the following changes may commence in 2019, date unknown.

**Potential** changes to the Award include an overtime provision for casual employees. Under the current award provisions, casuals are excluded from overtime. This hasn’t meant that casual workers cannot undertake additional hours where needed/desired; only that those additional hours have been paid at the base casual rate (where permanent/fulltime workers have penalty rates for OT). Casuals are entitled to public holiday rates.

The **proposal** contains a “span of hours” for casuals, outside of which a rate of 150% will be paid (excepting public holidays which are paid at 200% for all worker). This span includes the following:

• A span of hours of 304 hours over 8 weeks [38-hour week]
• Daily, a span of hours 5am to 8.30pm or 4pm to 7.30pm for non-daylight-saving states
• Outside daily span, rates payable at 150%
• Once 304 hours done **within** the 8-week span, overtime is payable at 150% applies until the end of 8-week period. E.g. 50-hour week for 8-week season = 304 hrs @ ordinary rates PLUS 96 hrs @ 150%.


The following changes have come into effect from 1 October 2018

• All casuals must be engaged and paid for at least 2 consecutive hours of work on each occasion they are required to attend work.
• Regular Casual Employees have the right to request that their employment be converted to full time or part time (permanent) employment. The request must be in writing to the Employer. The Employer may agree to or refuse the request, but the request may only be refused on reasonable grounds and after there has been consultation with the Employee.


From 1 December 2018 modern awards will include new rules about requests for flexible work arrangements.

Before responding to a request from an eligible employee, an employer must first discuss the request with them to try to reach an agreement about a change to their working arrangements.

Requests can only be refused on reasonable business grounds and if a request is refused the employer must provide the employee with a written response.

Updated awards are available through the list of awards. For further information read the Fair Work Commission’s decision. 
The **Sweetest Job Campaign** ran from 13 August to 30 November 2018. Various media outlets were used to promote the campaign; TV, radio, print and online. A three-step pre-employment campaign included an Information Session, an online mango induction and an on farm trial. Out of the 116 NT residents that applied, 24 were successful in gaining employment during the 2018 mango harvest with 6 of the 24 being employed in ongoing roles. 75% of the applicants were aged 24-35, 62% were male. Four Employers in the Litchfield area accessed this campaign to fill the vacant labour roles, whereas the Katherine Employers did not utilise the campaign as the positions had been filled utilising mostly the Seasonal Worker Program.

**Thai Young Smart Farmers**

The Pilot Cooperation on Thai Young Smart Farmer Development on Tropical Fruit Production, Management and Marketing Project is targeted at increasing the knowledge and skills of Australian and Thai tropical fruit growers by sharing information of the production, management and marketing of like tropical fruit tree crops such as mangoes, rambutan, durian and jackfruit.

The last quarter of 2018 saw Phase 2 progress with six Thai Young Smart Farmers gaining practical experience during mango harvest on some Greater Darwin and Pine Creek farms including post-harvest activities. They have also undertaken accreditation training and farm excursions to see other tropical fruit production facilities and processes.

NT Farmers hosted two Officials from the Australian Thailand Embassy and a representative from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on Thursday 8 November 2018 to hear about the projects progress and discuss benefits it has to the NT and wider relationships with Thailand.

Members who would like to see tropical fruit production in Asia should consider participating in the program which includes a visit to Thailand in March/April 2019.

The **Fair Farms Initiative** supports horticulture growers with information to ensure your employment practices comply fully with workplace relations laws. It also offers tools to demonstrate this to your customers and the wider community. Also announced by the Prime Minister 5 November 2018 the Fair Farms Initiative will receive:

- An additional $1.5 million will be invested to rollout the Fair Farms Initiative to all of horticulture and other agriculture sectors.
- An Industry Workforce Coordinator will be engaged at Growcom for two years.
- An additional $9.9 million will be provided to the Fair Work Ombudsman to ensure that workers affected by the changes are not exploited.

The program has five key elements:

- Supporting horticulture employers to achieve compliance with Fair Work laws
  - Workplace Essentials Workshops, Hort 360*, Qld Ag Workforce Network

Building awareness of fair employment practices amongst employers and workers

- Articles/information in industry magazines and media
- Field days
- Conferences

Certification / Market recognition – Pilot program underway in consultation with stakeholders

Showcasing and celebrating good practice

- Fair Farms Employer of the Year Award – launch 2019
- Tailored Qualifications
- Cert IV in on farm Human Resources Management
- Cert/Diploma in Rural Operations, Agricultural Business

**Work Place Essentials** early 2019 at Coolalinga, Katherine, Alice Springs & Kununurra.

**Session 1 - Fair Work compliance workshop**

- “health check” of your business compliance with Fair Work laws
- outline all latest changes to the Award via the award review process
- Review how piecework agreements should operate (including template)
- Working with labour hire operators (including template agreement)

(approx. 2.5 hours) and/or.....

**Session 2 - The importance of ‘on the ground supervision’**

- day to day staff management for Supervisors/Leading Hands – setting performance and conduct expectations is the key - communication and co-operation are vital
- handling disputes quickly and efficiently
- Key roles of management and supervisory staff  

(approx. 2.5 hours) and/or ....

**Session 3 - Work Health and Safety compliance workshop**

“checklist” of WHS compliance with 2 key topics:

- Compliance Requirements – what you MUST do under the legislation
- Resources, templates, information and guidance to help you get there

(approx. 2 hours)

Register NOW to ensure a spot!
President report Continued from page 3

I am also very conscious of our need to engage more with individual growers and provide opportunities to receive feedback both good and bad on our performance and that of NT Farmers overall. To this end we will hold at least two general meetings in the first half of 2019. The first is likely to be in conjunction with a mango post season forum in March and the second will be in Katherine in April or May to coincide with a field day NT Farmers is organising with the Katherine Research Station.

The year ahead will be particularly crucial to the future of NT Farmers. We need to continue to explore new funding options to maintain and increase our capacity whilst promoting our value to the economy, voters and politicians of the Territory. In these tough times we will be under scrutiny and a poor report card will put our IDO project in jeopardy and could see our annual funding slashed. I urge all of you to support our IDO’s, attend workshops, field days, Food Futures roadshows, come to our functions and engage on line through social media or by completing surveys. Remind poli- lies of all persuasions the benefits we bring and please retain your membership whilst encouraging others to join. I think Greg and his team have lowered the degree of difficulty for all of us who farm in the NT and only by retaining this capaci- ty can we continue to deliver.

On behalf of the Board I’d like to thank Greg, Robyn, Trish, Aisla, Laura, Camilla, Andrew, Sarah and Chris for the dedication, passion and commitment they brought to their roles every day. I also want to acknowledge the hardwork of all my fellow Directors and in particular the contribution of retiring Board members Leo Skliros, Ruth Cormack and Wayne Quach who have sacrificed a very considerable amount of their own time over the last two years to help improve the lot of all farmers across the NT

Finally I want to thank everyone who has contributed to NT Farmers throughout the year and wish all members, friends and their families an enjoyable festive season and a safe and prosperous 2019.

Simon Smith
NT Farmers
President

CEO report continued from page 2

NT Farmers continues to deliver on the Industry service pro-
jects like Drummuster, Farm Chemical Safety, Freshcare, Fair
work training. Make sure you check the calender of events on
the front of our e-news for dates, times and venues. Our com-
munications through the newsletter, e-news, facebook and
twitter are reaching more people involved in Northern Agri-
business.

A big thanks to the all the NT Farmers board, especially the out-
going members of Leo Skliros, Wayne Quach and Ruth Cor-
mack, and welcome to the new members Dave Grey, Frank Mil-
lar and Gavin Scurr. Thanks also to the awesome NT Farmers
staff and all the hard work they have contributed to this year,
especially Robyn and Trish who are the backbone of the Associ-
atation.

We are looking forward to lots more delivering of services to
our members and helping drive the development of Plant In-
dustries in the NT and across Northern Australia.

Cheers and Merry Christmas

Greg Owens
Chief Executive Officer
Are you experiencing issues with labour shortages?
If your answer is ‘yes’, then the Seasonal Worker or Pacific Labour Scheme may be an option for you!

Both programs allow people from Pacific island countries to work in low and semi-skilled jobs in rural and regional Australia.

- Season Worker Program 9 months
- Pacific Labour Scheme 3 years

The Schemes focus on sectors with projected employment growth in Australia and which match Pacific island skill sets.

Contact Ronan Mackey, business Development Manager
Phone: +61487777433
Email: rmackey@chambernt.com.au

WHITTO’S NURSERY
Grafted Mango Trees
Highly reliable wholesale supplier
Small and large quantities available
Specialising in R2E2 and KP varieties but can graft any variety on to rootstock
In the Mango Industry for over 20 years and provide high quality trees for all orders

Feel free to call for pricing and availability!

BOWEN 4805 MATT AND KELLY WHITFIELD PH 0400 953 313
The success of the Kununurra cotton crops this year has led to a lot of positive coverage and a renewed interest in production in the NT. There has been significant interest by local growers as well as many southern growers.

At this stage there will be commercial crops of cotton planting early in the New Year, both irrigated and rain-fed at a few sites around Katherine and the Douglas Daly region, as well as at the Katherine research station.

On the back of the interest in Cotton, NTFA has organised (with the support of the Cotton CRC) a Cotton Development tour to Southern Queensland and Northern NSW in the last week of February for interested farmers to learn more about the cotton production system.

There will be field days at Katherine Research Station (9th April 2019) and the Douglas Daly Research Station (10th April 2019) to not only look at cotton demonstrations, but also a range of broadacre and fodder crops and cropping systems.

There is a strong renewed interest in southern farmers looking for land and water to expand their cotton production. These producers (as well international investors) will be looking for land and water resources to develop, either on a lease, purchase or Joint venture basis.

The critical factors in the development going forward is to secure land tenure (gain a Non Pastural Use permit for Pastoral Leases) and irrigation development opportunities that exist with surface/wet season capture of water.

Other broad acre development opportunities that are being worked on include the development of high-quality fodder and feeds that can not only provide a good return for producers but also be profitable for both local and national livestock industry.

In a horticultural development context there has been some interest from national supply chains in a few winter vegetables such as tomatoes, eggplant and cucurbits as well as sweet potatoes and ginger. With tree crop development we are looking for interested farmers to host/look after demonstration plots of new tree crop plantings of potential new varieties of Avocado, Citrus, Macadamia, Pecan, Almond, Pomegranate, Grapes, Passion Fruit and Coconut.
Northern Australia Cotton Development Tour February 2019

NT Farmers would like to invite farmers interested in production of cotton in the North to attend a development tour of Southern Queensland and Northern NSW. The tour will cover all aspects of cotton production including:

- Getting Started
- Production Methods
- Crop Rotation
- Best Management Practices
- Machinery
- Irrigation Methods and Development
- Latest Dryland Technology
- Ginning and Marketing

Dates: 24th February – 2nd March 2019

Visits including: Farms, Research facilities, Cotton Gin and consultants as we travel from Brisbane through: Darling Downs, Bonshaw/Texas, Goondiwindi, Moree, Narrabri and Liverpool Plains

For more information contact
Andrew Philip – NT Farmers
P: 0428798014
E: kido@ntfarmers.org.au
Mango madness has finally settled down, for some a season with mixed results and hopefully some understanding of what can be improved on for the coming season. The bulk of the volume for Darwin that hit the wholesale markets was between 21 September to 12 October saw a back log of mangoes in the market and pricing decrease dramatically. This has indicated the need for producers to keep their forecasting updated on a weekly basis so wholesalers and retailers have an understanding of the potential volumes and can put marketing activities into action prior to any influx. Overall volumes for the season have not been finalised at the time of writing but as it stands between Darwin and Katherine volumes are sitting at 4.5 million trays. During September I had the opportunity to attend “Reaching South to the Territory” in Shenzhen China led by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory showcased NT businesses and industry representatives a unique opportunity to connect with key business people and decision makers in the regions. As a participant I developed a first-hand understanding of the Chinese market with a specific focus on Shenzhen, met potential customers and import contacts, B2B Agribusiness session on trade and investment and established key business contacts with existing Northern Territory businesses and industries.

NT Farmers is a firm believer in the importance of ongoing development of increasing value within the farming sector. With the unending advancements in our industry it is critical that our producers harness the importance of engaging and continually keeping abreast of what is occurring in the ‘state of our industry’. The landscape of horticulture in general is significantly changing not only in production but also technology and innovation, retail, consumer trends, packaging trends, cool chain management, value added and new export opportunities just to name a few. With these ever-evolving platforms it is essential that we understand how these changes will affect the industry.

During October I attended the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit Congress in Florida. It was a great opportunity to gain a further understanding of international trends and some great learnings to bring back to Australia. The main 5 areas that are on the global radar are:

- Online Opportunities
- Robotics and Automation
- Industry Talent
- Sustainability Surges
- Culture of Food Safety

As part of NT Farmers strategic planning efforts, I have been involved in an ACIAR Mango Agribusiness Research Program – Development opportunities for tropical fruit processing (major focus on mangoes) in the Asia-Pacific region. Fruit processing has a number of important roles, from meeting consumer demand for a wide variety of innovative processed fruit products, to creating added economic value in fresh fruit markets.

Mango is a particularly good candidate for processing since the characteristic flavour ‘top-notes’ withstand the essential steps taken during preservation (dependent on technology used).

The project will continue into the early part of next year with an Australian focused workshop looking at the opportunities and issues of mango value added processes and how we can extract the maximum value from these opportunities.

A whirlwind national tour of the wholesale markets has recently been completed, a good opportunity to scope out how the NT season has been viewed across the markets. Cold chain management and lack of forecasted volumes were the main issues that gave great concern to the wholesale market as the flow on effect lasted for several weeks, so once again the major take out is for growers to keep their forecasted volume up to date.

The last major event for the year was the Mango Mess-tival and the mango grower wholesale and retail tour. AMIA did an outstanding job of showcasing to the group a range of retailers and the marketing activities and effort that these stores are putting in with their mango displays and the range of mango varieties was excellent.

Other major events and meetings during the last 3 months have included:

- NAB Community discussions for regional and rural Australia
- Mango Best Practice project meetings
- Draft NT Environment Protection Act consultation including environmental protection declarations
- NT Climate Change Strategy and consultation
- Draft Actions for the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy – Industry consultation
- Isolation inspires Innovation Workshop – Second stage of the FIAL Agribusiness workshops
- Farm/packing shed visits – Darwin and Katherine
- Power and water advisory council
- Women in International Business workshop
- Thai Smart Young Farmers tours – Darwin and Katherine
On the 30th of October and 1st of November I was involved with the survey of a few commercial vegetable properties in the Darwin rural area.

As part of my role in engaging with the Vietnamese and Cambodian growers in Biosecurity, I had to arrange access for the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and NT Department Primary Industries and Resources (NT Biosecurity) for these properties.

In total five farms were surveyed. Three in Marrakai and two in Humpty Doo. The three farms surveyed in Marrakai were a success with nothing being found as suspect.

On day two, the team found a suspect plant on one of the surveyed properties. NT Biosecurity made the call to discontinue with the surveys on that day to reduce the risk of contaminating another property and spreading the suspect disease/virus.

NT Biosecurity took samples of the suspect plant and it came back as a common potyvirus.

We continued with the survey the next day. The overall result of the survey was a success with no foreign pest or disease found. The next survey has been scheduled for April/May 2019.

Thank you to the growers for their participation and patience throughout the process.

A reminder to all growers for the upcoming 2019 season, please use clean seeds from certified suppliers and do not bring any plant material in from overseas without being quarantined.

Wishing all growers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Biosecurity matters and it’s everyone’s business!
The Fitzgerald Diversity Award

NT Farmers Association congratulate Martina Matzner, General Manager of Acacia Hills Mango Farm for her nomination for the Fitzgerald Diversity Award.

This award is for individuals or organisations whose activities focus on promoting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights and equal opportunity of diverse communities in the NT.

Martina has a passion for people! And this evidenced by the opportunities she gives to programs and individuals to achieve job satisfaction and a quality standard of living.

She has been involved in the ‘NT Sentenced to a Job’ program, The Sweetest Job campaign and she supports the employment of people with additional needs.

Well done Martina - we are proud of you!

Chris was born in Perth and moved to Humpty Doo in 1996. He grew up on his families Asian Vegetable farm and went to school at Taminmin College.

In 2002 his family moved to a bigger block of land in Marrakai, so they could expand the business.

In 2009 Chris moved to Melbourne to pursue a career in the finance industry and start his family.

The pull of the Top End is strong! And Chris relocated his wife Bovina and two boys back to Darwin in 2015 to continue growing Asian vegetables.

He is now working for NT Farmers as a Biosecurity officer with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) to engage with the non-English speaking Vietnamese and Cambodian growers.

Chris is very passionate about helping people and is keen to further develop his knowledge and skills to progress in the horticulture industry.
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The Job Shop is also an Approved Employer for the Seasonal Worker Programme which allows employers in the agriculture sector to access a reliable, returning workforce when there is not enough local Australian labour to meet seasonal demand.

To find out more or to advertise any upcoming vacancies contact your closest regional office -
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