

GROW NT

NT
FARMERS

A publication from the Northern Territory Farmers Association
PO Box 748, Coolalinga NT 0839 Tel: 08 89833233 www.ntfarmers.org.au

June 2019

NT FARMERS

&



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Office of
Northern
Australia

Proudly presented -

The 2019 Georgetown Regional Roadshow



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Photo credit: Cotton Seed Distributors

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As most members and stakeholders will by now be aware NT Farmers will be welcoming Paul Burke as our new CEO from June 24.

Paul brings a wealth of experience to the position and importantly I believe his leadership style suits the culture of NT Farmers.

Succession planning is crucial for all organisations. NT Farmers recently ran a workshop for members and it has been front of mind for your Board for some time. Smooth and gradual transitions are preferable although not always possible as we saw several years ago when our previous CEO departed at short notice. The selection of a new CEO is arguably the most important decision a Board makes and this one was made with not just the need for a smooth transition but also as a result of rapidly changing circumstances.

When your Board sat down to review our strategic plan in February this year we identified four key focus areas;

1. Research, development, extension and marketing
2. Advocacy, influence and government policy
3. Maintain and grow membership and stakeholder engagement
4. Secure financial future of association

We also identified that our ability to deliver on these will face a major hurdle in July 2020; the cessation of the one off funding for our three NT Government funded I.D.O positions and the planned retirement of Greg Owens. Since February it has become abundantly clear that securing additional NTG funding will be difficult (note: our recurrent base funding through DPIR continues to be cut by 5% annually due to efficiency dividends!... thanks for the compliment but we'd prefer the dollars!!)

We have also seen water issues occupy more and more of Greg's already scarce time. So how do we avoid the financial cliff whilst delivering on member and government expectations?

Speculate to accumulate as they say. We have taken the view that now is the time to utilise some of our financial reserves to bring in a new CEO somewhat earlier than planned whilst retaining Greg and enabling him to focus on water matters and overseeing the delivery of our industry development capacity.

One of Paul's KPI's is to deliver certainty of core funding within his first twelve months. This includes his own position, Greg's new role as Industry Development Manager, our admin support and bookkeeper roles as well as the Katherine and regional industry development position.

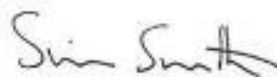


Paul Burke

Paul has a strong track record in raising funds and has an established network not just within the NTG but also various Federal Government departments, along with agencies such as the RDC's, HIA and the CRCNA.

I am very confident that Paul and Greg will form a strong leadership team for NT Farmers. There is clearly mutual respect for the complementary skills they bring to the table and thankfully Greg has already committed to continue in his IDM role passed July 2020.

Regards,



Simon Smith
President



A big welcome to Paul Burke as he joins the NT Farmers Team in the role of CEO. Paul comes with a great range of skills and experience and will be a significant asset to NT Farmers as we continue to drive the development for Agriculture and Horticulture in the NT and across the North. I will be around for a year or two as the Industry Development Manager to support Paul and to get out and about more with our members and stakeholders. It has been a privilege to serve the Association as CEO and I believe it is now on track to add real value to the existing and emerging agricultural and horticultural businesses.

Water is top of the agenda at the moment as it is becoming critical to the Darwin Rural community as well as the horticulture industry due to the incomplete recharge in a lot of aquifers across the North of the Territory. This is an area where I will be spending a lot of effort over the next couple of years. As growers we need to ensure we are getting the most efficient use of our water as possible and NT Farmers is planning a project to help grower benchmark and improve their water efficiency. Climate forecasts don't provide much hope for early rain this Wet Season so it could get very difficult for some growers. Have you had a look at your bore on the NT DENR website? It's worth checking out. They have started their "Help Stop the Drop" campaign to make rural water users aware of the issue.

<https://denr.nt.gov.au/land-resource-management/water/water-resources/help-stop-the-drop>

The draft Water Allocation Plans for Tindal and Ooloo in the Katherine regions are available for comment and can be found on the DENR website. These Water Allocation Plans are critical to the long term investment and development for the NT and any significant changes to existing plans impacts on business confidence and future planning for development.

This also includes working with Government to look at options that could increase the amount of water available for all water users in the NT. Except for Darwin's domestic supply the NT is currently almost totally dependent on ground water resources for stock and domestic, agriculture and horticulture. The AROSS proposal is the sort of concept in smart water capture project NT Farmers has been calling for that allows for the capture of some of the Wet season flood surface flow and impounds it off the main river channel so that the normal passageway of the river is not impeded.

Using a gravity diversion rather than large pumps as in previous proposals reduces energy demand and the need for massive amounts of power in a short time period. The concept includes water for domestic, agriculture, horticulture and industry which will improve water security for all water users. The funding support to examine the project in detail that was announced last year by Senator Canavan before the federal election will fill in more of the details on what is possible and sustainable.

NT Farmers will also be reminding the new Federal Government on its commitment to the Litchfield Mango Strategic Roads Project and hope that this funding can be rolled out quickly.



The Georgetown Food Futures Roadshow was a great success with over 100 people attending the field day and seminar. The dryland farming that Gulf Farming have demonstrated is possible in the tropical Savanah and the variety trials by QDAF

were an eye opener to those that attended. The discussions by farmers looking north from drought affected areas in the south went on long into the night. Our next roadshow will be in Central Australia in mid to late November this year and put **28 & 29 April 2020 in your diaries for next year's Food Futures Conference in Darwin.**



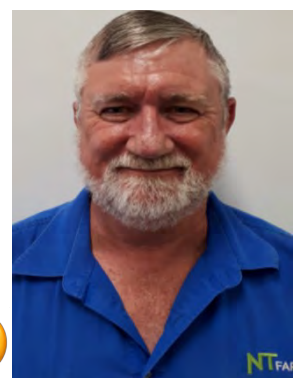
Growers having a yarn in Georgetown

Mango season approaches again, and flowering is a bit spread out, but it will depend on the coming temperatures whether it gets compressed like last year or we have a more normal developmental period. NT Farmers will be working with AMIA to see how we might provide advice on major movement of timing due to weather patterns.

The implementation of the Fair work changes to the Hort Award is not easy. NT Farmers is working with NFF and other grower bodies to assist members but there remains many questions to be answered, as the season rolls out. Please attend the mango pre-season meetings in your area to get the latest information. Check our e-news for dates.

NT Farmers wishes all growers a successful harvest this season.

Greg Owens
Chief Executive Officer
(but soon to be retired)



Welcome to our new CEO

Paul Burke

Greetings All!

As many would be aware, I will be taking over as the Chief Executive Officer at the NT Farmers Association in the coming weeks. A position I am both excited and privileged to hold.

Over the last month I have met with staff and elected representatives to understand the issues that face the industry in both the short and longer term. By spending time prior to commencement it has afforded me an opportunity to better understand the issues that will be coming across my desk when I commence officially on 24 June, 2019.

I grew up in Tasmania, studied Business and then moved on to a career in Tourism and Hospitality. This gave me great opportunity to work all over the world, including the United Kingdom, Europe, Turkey, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Working in these different places, gave me great opportunity to understand people from all backgrounds and cultures and taught me tolerance and understanding.

In 2003 I returned to Australia to manage hotels in Brisbane and eventually located to Townsville as General Manager at Rydges Southbank.

In 2011 I was keen for a career change and took on a role in advocacy within the agriculture industry where I started as Regional Manager, North Queensland for AgForce Queensland. The main areas of focus was cattle, sheep and broad acre cropping, although I soon realised that the key areas of responsibility were in land management, water resources and ensuring that rural people had a voice at the table when dealing with government decisions.

During my time at AgForce Queensland, I became the State Operations Manager looking after both projects and regional staff, a position I really enjoyed. During my tenure at AgForce I dealt with many issues, none more polarising than the Vegetation Management Legislative reforms that were proposed by the government of the day. The industry pulled together and as a group we had the energy and passion to fight these reforms and were ultimately successful.

In 2017 I took up the position as Chief Executive Officer for the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association based in Darwin. Since leaving the NTCA I have been working for the Department of Primary Industries and Resources as Director of Infrastructure Assets and Major Projects.

The key component of the role has been to manage the \$34m redevelopment of the Berrimah Farm into the Berrimah Farm Science Precinct to support industry development through research and development.

As a family, relocating to Darwin, the lifestyle and sense of community has been a wonderful experience. My wife Tali works in the Not for Profit sector for an organisation called GIVIT. Our daughter Kali is 7 and is in grade 2 at Stuart Park Primary and absolutely loves her life in the Territory!

I look forward to meeting everyone over the coming months and am excited by the challenges ahead.

Regards,



Paul Burke





From the Minister

Firstly I want to thank outgoing CEO Greg Owen and wish him all the best for the future. Greg has done a wonderful job in his role at NT Farmers and leaves a long-lasting legacy. It's been a pleasure to be able to work closely with Greg in the short time I've been Minister. Greg has always been approachable and a passionate advocate. I want to welcome Paul Burke into the role and look forward to working with him in supporting growth in your industries. I know Paul is extremely well respected and it will be a pleasure benefiting from his experience.

Recently I introduced a Bill into Parliament allowing for the development and operation of an industrial hemp industry in the Northern Territory. Both the economic analysis and biophysical research to date indicates that industrial hemp may indeed be a viable rotational crop in farming systems in the NT.

Industrial hemp is grown for fibres found on its stalk as well as for seed and grain. Typically, hemp fibre is used for industrial purposes such as for the manufacturing of textiles, ropes and lines, as well as for paper and building materials. Hemp grain itself is a highly nutritious food source, either as a whole grain, as an emulsified cake or a flour, or if processed into oil. It contains sizable amounts of protein, polyunsaturated fats and dietary fibre.

It has been good to get out and about over the past couple of months to see the outstanding work that is being undertaken across the Territory in the Agricultural sector.

The Katherine and Douglas Daly Field Days were both well attended and I also recently had the opportunity to visit Berrimah Farm and see first-hand the great work going on there as well as progress on the site's redevelopment.

Another highlight was attending the Australian Mango Conference last month. It was pleasing to see so many growers from not only the Northern Territory, but from Queensland and Western Australia as well. The Northern Territory mango industry is the NT's largest plant industry. An estimated 39,700 tonnes valued at \$112.8 million was harvested in 2017/18. This represents 47 per cent of Australia's mango production. My Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) is continuing to work with industry bodies, growers, exporters and logistics providers with research and development to support the continued growth of the NT mango industry.

The Hon. Paul Kirby
Minister for Primary Industry and Resources



The G-Dot system is a modern visual version of the G-Bug Soil Moisture Monitoring System. In these times when the water is going to be very precious it is a very useful tool to ensure that vegetable growers are using just the right amount of water for their irrigation.

It consists of a sensor block, cable and display unit. The sensor block fits into the end of a 20mm PVC pipe and can be cut to any length required.



G-Dot sensors should be installed at 20 cm and 50cm in a vegetable crop. This will show what the moisture levels are in the top and bottom of the root zones. It is a good idea to label the display units clearly.



The ideal soil moisture is for the top of the root-zone to have a high moisture content which is shown by all 6 yellow dots appearing on the 20cm display. The 50cm sensors should be registering just moist soil, 3 or 4 dots showing, which means some small amount of water and fertiliser is just making it to the bottom of the root-zone of most vegetables.

Small irrigations, at least 2 times a day is needed on sandy soils to achieve this. Heavier clay soils may only need an irrigation every couple of days once the soil is wet enough.

What that looks like on the G-Dot displays



Too Wet down deep

The top of the root zone is showing 5 dots so is still damp but drying out a little.

The 50cm sensor is showing the deep soil is very damp which means a lot of water and fertiliser is going past the roots into the ground.

Irrigate more often with less water and check the reading after 2 days

Just Right

The soil in the top of the root-zone is quite damp with all 6 dots showing. The soil at 50cm is just slightly damp with 3 dots showing.

This means the irrigation water is just getting to the bottom of the root-zone, so the water and fertiliser are staying in the root-zone.

Keep this irrigation pattern and maintain the monitoring.

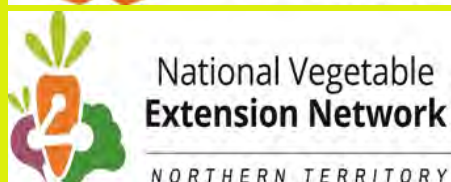


Too Dry, poor connection or a flat battery.

When the soil is completely dry no dots will show. This is because there is no conductivity in the sensor.

It could also be a poor or broken connection or a flat battery that needs to be checked. Place the sensor in a bucket of water for 10 mins to check. All 6 dots should show quite quickly.

If the sensor works, check your irrigation, it's not working!



June 2019! Where has the last six months gone?

I have been busy facilitating the collaborated on-farm survey with NT Department of Primary Industry and Resources and the Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy. This collaborated approach was made possible through feedback from growers to minimise the disruption of the grower's day to day business and for the departments from different jurisdictions to share data. This surveillance is a part of the Area-wide management of insect-vectored viral and bacterial disease. The purpose of this is to help prevent and minimise the development of insecticide resistance in vector populations. Also, to improve the efficiency of biological agents released for control of vectors.



DPIR On farm survey being undertaken

The engagement from growers so far has been excellent. Thank you to the growers for cooperating with the teams and allowing the surveillance to take place. I also want to thank the Department staff for their cooperation in following and respecting the growers on farm biosecurity. All vehicles were parked at the gate and foot baths were used before and after farm visits.

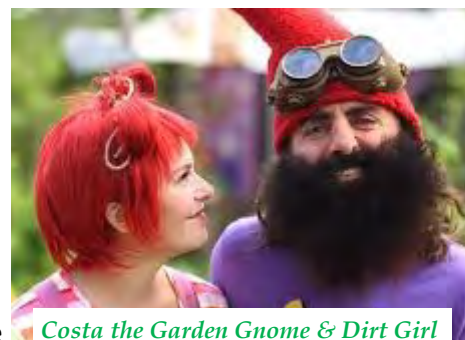
The 2019 mango season is fast approaching, there have been some changes in quarantine requirements relating to fruit fly for mango exports last season.



*Oriental Fruit Fly
Courtesy Mango Matters*

I would like to remind all growers to check their ICA accreditations are up to date and current. For assistance with ICA accreditations or for more information please do not hesitate to call me on 0488 466 007.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has released a series of videos called (Country- Handle with care) encouraging locals and visitors to do their part in protecting the Northern part of Australia from biosecurity pest and disease. These videos feature Scientist, Biosecurity officers and the Indigenous Rangers who play a big role in protecting our country from pest and disease risk. Also featured in the videos is the household favourite COSTA the Garden Gnome and Dirt Girl!



Costa the Garden Gnome & Dirt Girl

The seven part series is available online <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/australia/northern-biosecurity/costa-and-dirtgirl>

As part of this project the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has granted NT Farmers Association to identify Biosecurity champions in the Northern Territory to produce biosecurity tools for educational purposes. Our Biosecurity Liaison officer will take the lead in producing these videos in the coming months.



As you are reading this the first cotton commercial trials will have been harvested and at the time of writing, the yields and quality look very promising. There's been a lot of learning for the growers and we see plenty of upside for next year. The push is now on to expand the cotton industry to head towards the critical mass to allow for the development of a Gin (cotton processing plant) in the Top End.

Next planting season will see more farmers put in demonstration/commercial plots to see how it performs on their farms and learn how the plant grows and target yield growth each year as they expand their production. The NT DPIR and NT Farmers have received funding from the CRCNA for the development of cropping models for a range of broadacre crops across the NT. NT Farmers are also very interested in assisting growers' trial new crops, such as cotton, peanuts, rice, mung beans, soybean and grains. If farmers are interested, NT Farmers may be able to assist with connections to agronomic support and even the subsidisation of gaining access to precision planting contractors.



Rain fed cotton crop Edith Springs Stn, near Katherine

Starting a venture of growing new crops such as cotton doesn't have to be done in isolation, there is plenty of support to assist in the development of these new industries for the NT. Landholders and farmers that have interest in trialling cotton and other crops that may fit in to a cropping system are encouraged to contact myself well in advance of next seasons planting window, (Wet season 2020), to get the information on best management practices required to give the best results.

There is a growing pool of expertise developing, with existing growers (both local and interstate) prepared to share their experiences.

There are strong plans to develop the peanut Industry in the NT, especially on the back of strong demand from Bega (who have recently acquired Kraft in Australia) to expand their peanut butter product production with Australian peanuts. Planting will take place in the Central Australian region (Western Davenport, Ti Tree and Alice Springs), with opportunities for Northern farmers to also trial this year.

Even if Landholders may not be interested in farming development themselves, there are plenty of investors that are looking for land and water assets to utilise on a lease, share farming or joint venture arrangement. I am happy to discuss options and opportunities.

In recent weeks we have had a major delegation from the Brazilian State of Matto Grosso, investors from Vietnam, and a steady flow of southern farmers all looking at the cropping opportunities in the NT. There have also been significant tracks of land in the Katherine/Mataranka area that has been contracted with the focus to develop broadacre agricultural production.



NT Farmers consultant Ian Baker, showing potential investors some NT hospitality

NT Farmers are still working with the NT Government to streamline the development process for clearing, Non Pastural Lease agreements and water development (both underground and surface supplies) which will allow for the development of scale that is required to build and maintain new industries and the further development/intensification of existing industries.

May and June have once again been busy. As part of the Arafua Games Business Engagement Week during May, I presented at the Asia Business Forum on horticultural export opportunities that exist currently and the prospects in the future for direct export out of the Northern Territory. An engaging audience and it was excellent to be involved in the conversations afterwards with the international guests that attended. There is great interest for NT products to be directly exported out of Darwin, however, there needs to be capacity to remain competitive against the southern states. A situation that we all know so well, but until we start utilising this opportunity, product will just continue along the status quo.

The Bi-Annual Australian Mango Conference was held in Darwin recently. It is always a great event having all sectors of industry come together to collaborate, engage and share industry expertise and knowledge. We were also very thrilled to have three major industry peers recognised for their commitment and the development of mangoes in the Northern Territory. Peter and Dianne Marks were acknowledged for their outstanding commitment and contribution to the industry, Ken Rayner for his ongoing dedication of mango breeding over the last 30 years and Rob Vennard (QLD based) for his vision behind Manbulloo and involvement in the development of mango exporting.



Pictured L-R AMIA CEO Robert Grey, Peter Marks, Dianne Marks, Robert Vennard, Ken Rayner & AMIA President Ben Martin

Last week we had a delegation of Brazilian's from the Agricultural Federation from the State of Matto Grosso, exploring and learning about potential opportunities in the Northern Territory. A jammed packed few days. Site visits were arranged for Tipperary, African Mahogany Plantation, Katherine Research Station, Red Dirt, Foxalicious, Australian Feed and Cubing plant, Carbeene Park and Mount Kepler Station. The program was designed to showcase a selection of industries that we have in the Northern Territory and prospective opportunities.



Camilla Philip, Octavio Celidonio (part of the Brazilian delegation) and NT Farmers Director, Frank Miller

The mango season has started for some of the Asian green eating varieties out of the Darwin region with Sydney markets reporting \$10-\$12/kg. Flowering of other varieties has been slow with approximately 30-40% of flowering occurring at this stage with furthermore to come. There are also trees that have developing fruit and are pushing new flowers. This will no doubt reflect down the track, having gaps in production which may assist in keeping prices on the higher side. By all accounts the next two weeks will be very significant to how the coming season will play out. Will the 2019 be bigger than 2018, time will only tell!!

Green mango ready for picking



Australian mango visionaries honoured for decades of service to

Three key major contributors to the development of the Australian mango industry were recognised for their outstanding commitment, at the Australian Mango Conference in Darwin earlier this month.

Peter Marks, together with his wife Dianne, set up one of the first horticultural operations in Katherine and were committed to the mango industry for the last 30 years.

As well as having served on both the Australian Mango Industry Association (AMIA) and Northern Territory Mango Industry Association boards, Mr Marks was an industry leader, producing high quality produce for domestic and export markets. He was also a strong advocate for the mango industry quality standards, in particular the flavour standards, measured by dry matter testing with near infrared (NIR) machines.

"I am a bit overwhelmed by this award, because it is not something that you expect," Mr Marks said. "I have always had a passion that the consumer had to be the one who made the rules, and if you didn't have a consumer, you didn't have an industry. I got a bit disillusioned and walked away for a bit, and I was so over-pleased when the industry decided to take the hard road and put some standards in place and publicise them. It has become such a good thing. We are growing 10 million trays now - that's exceptional - and if you keep giving people good mangoes, they are going to buy more and more. I congratulate everyone in the industry for taking that road and I think it will keep growing - it's nowhere near its potential."



NT Farmers CEO Greg Owens & Director, Andrew Dalglish took great pleasure in presenting life membership to Peter & Dianne Marks



Ken Rayner was also recognised for his ongoing contribution to mango breeding. He has been cross-pollinating mango trees for over three decades; with the aim of producing advanced mango rootstocks and creating new varieties. Two new varieties have recently been commercialised; Lady Jane and Lady Grace.



Ken Rayner

"One of my passions has been rootstocks, and over a period of 30 years, I haven't found a really good rootstock yet," Mr Rayner quipped. "I have also been involved in breeding fruit varieties over the last 30 years, and a few of them have been propagated and put into commercial production. It's not only in Australia but we are taking them overseas into Spain, South Africa, we are making applications to take them into Brazil, Mexico, United States (trees currently in quarantine), Egypt is interested, and we have trees in Morocco. That's something that I am proud of, and sometimes get a bit emotional."

Rob Vennard was the visionary behind Manbulloo's plantation in Katherine. At the time there was no other operation in existence like it and he is essentially responsible for transforming the Northern Territory (NT) mango industry. Mr Vennard also contributed to the development of exporting Australian mangoes, through his involvement in the grower marketing group Australian Mango Exports. He recalled stories of his early days in the industry at the Gala Dinner.

"I bought a property when I was 18 and started clearing it, and started planting mango trees," Mr Vennard said. "I always thought there was a bit of an outlet because we didn't have Victoria. Nothing about Singapore or Europe or anything like that, we didn't have Victoria. So we were going to create one there. But transport was the big thing back in those days. We sent our first cold transport out in 1971 - that was before there was any refrigerated containers. We took the fruit down to five degrees, and put it on the back of a flat top semitrailer, wrap it up in sisalation, double tarp it and hope you could get to Sydney on time. It took 3-6 days but they would get there in good condition."

Australian Mangoes CEO, Robert Gray, said Peter Marks, Ken Rayner and Rob Vennard were great visionaries who contributed enormously to making the Australian mango industry what it is today.

"It was a great conference and it was pleasing to see so many of our industry stakeholders in attendance. There truly was a great turn out from everyone in our industry, across the supply chain," he said.

One of the Key Performance Indicators of the Workforce Planning Project is to:

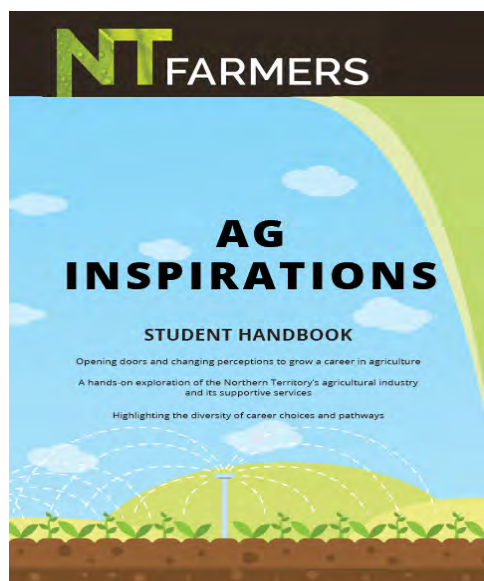
“Undertake activities that attract Territorians and others including youth and indigenous Territorians to consider and embark on a career in horticulture or agriculture.”

here are some actions:

Primary Industry Education Foundation of Australia has a **NT Food & Fibre Education Network** who will be holding a teacher’s event later in the year. If you know anyone who may like to be included in this network to support a coordinated approach in the Northern Territory to educating school students about Australian Food and Fibre production and the career opportunities available, please ask them to contact me.

The **Ag Inspirations school-based program** will be piloted in the Greater Darwin area this July, with a group of 15 interested students from Taminmin College. The aim is to offer this program in other regions of the NT annually.

The Ag Inspirations Workbook was launched on 5 June at the Coolalinga office. Teachers were provided with the resource to encourage students at Year 9 (prior to committing to subjects and courses) to consider agriculture as a career.



The industry led **Territory Legends Traineeship Program** has been funded by the NT Government Department of Trade Business & Innovation. More information may be found by going to their website - www.australianapprenticeshipsnt.com.au

The **Sweetest Job Campaign** recruited, trained and inducted 24 Territorians into mango harvest roles in August 2018.

The Workforce Planning Coordinator will participate in CONASTA 68 (<https://asta.edu.au/conasta>) the annual science education conference in July 2019 and Career Expos in Alice Springs and Darwin in August 2019.



The NT Young Farmers Group meeting held in Katherine on 2 May.

The **NT Young Farmers Group** shares information on numerous opportunities e.g. training, scholarships and awards via their Facebook group and regular meetings.

WATCH THIS SPACE - More projects in the planning!

- A Teacher resource for the Ag Inspirations program
- Teacher excursion in September to Katherine
- Future Hosting of International delegation from Vietnam
- Vietnamese Student placement

Congratulations to Linda Lee, Director of Agribusiness Development for the Department of Primary Industries and Resources NT Government in Berrimah NT who has been selected to take part in the 2019 Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program. Linda was selected in the top 10 aspiring female leaders from more than 140 applications nationally.

If you require further information please contact Aisla Connolly, Workforce Planning Coordinator phone 0400 416 558 or email wpc@ntfarmers.org.au

NT producers encouraged to utilise free online toolkit to better manage business and wellbeing

Northern Territorian producers are being encouraged to utilise and provide feedback on new online toolkit ifarmwell to help fellow producers better look after their wellbeing and cope effectively with life's challenges.

Rural Business Support (RBS) has announced its backing of the online service by partnering with ifarmwell.com.au and the University of South Australia (UniSA) to support the further development of the unique farmer-focused tool kit.

Founder, clinical psychologist and research fellow at UniSA Dr Kate Gunn and her team are now seeking up to 50 farmers to provide further input into shaping the site. The partnership with RBS will enable further extension of the project into the future using the RBS Farm Business Strategic Review and the established Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) network as promotional vehicles.

Dr Gunn, who has seen first-hand how adverse events including drought can erode wellbeing and confidence, said the ifarmwell team had received highly positive feedback from farmers who had signed up and started testing the site.

"While these are encouraging findings, we have recently made some changes based on this feedback to make the website more user-friendly, so we are keen to see how farmers find the new version," Dr Gunn said. "This will also help us ensure we make meaningful conclusions about the impact of the website and can secure funding for the next phase of the project."

www.rural.businesssupport.org.au

FREECALL 1800836211

ifarmwell.com.au was launched as a pilot with funding from UniSA, National Australia Bank (NAB), the Freemasons' Foundation and the Freemasons' Foundation Centre for Men's Health, in February 2018.

RBS Chief Executive Officer Brett Smith said teaming up with ifarmwell aligned with the organisation's commitment to partnering with likeminded groups to support the development of a competitive, profitable and resilient primary industry sector.

"RBS welcomes the opportunity to work more closely with Dr Gunn and her team to explore how tools like ifarmwell can provide tailored, relatable wellbeing support – support that works – for farmers in distress and their families," Mr Smith said.

"Our farm business management programs are founded on the principles of building preparedness and resilience in rural businesses. We know that addressing mental health challenges can ultimately help farmers and their families be better positioned to address and manage challenges to their business as well."

To register head to www.ifarmwell.com.au. You do not need to be experiencing poor mental health to benefit – ifarmwell has been designed to help improve the wellbeing of all farmers regardless of their circumstances. RBS representatives visit the NT up to eight times each year to assist rural businesses and meet with stakeholders. Charlie Goode will return to the Territory for the week of the Katherine Show (July 19-20). To find out when Charlie will be in your area please call 1800 836 211



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Office: 08) 8971 3012

www.rgmdarwin.com.au



NORTHERN AUSTRALIA FOOD FUTURES CONFERENCE 2020

DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SAVE THE DATE

4th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
27 - 30 APRIL 2020
DARWIN, NT

Hosted jointly by:



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



Information the key to assist a growing industry

Within the Darwin region there are many people growing a wide range of fruit and vegetables.

NT Farmers are working to develop a better profile of the fruit crops grown throughout northern Australia. The principal focus is on the tropical fruit crops, such as rambutan, durian, jackfruit and dragon fruit, but information on other tropical species will be gathered where it is available.

To gather this information, and then provide it to the people that really matter, that is, tropical fruit growers, NT Farmers are working jointly with NT Department of Primary Industries and Resources, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Plant Health Australia, as well as several key growers.

Greg Owens, CEO of NT Farmers said that this project could have a real impact on the ability of government and industry to better service these growers. 'The information we gather through this project will allow us to work together to build profitable and sustainable industries. Growers will benefit through all sectors having a better understanding of the needs of tropical fruit growers and the services which may assist them. It is critical that when we approach funding bodies for support for R, D & E projects we can state with confidence the size and scope of our tropical fruit industries'.

Greg will be working with his team to collect as much information as possible over the next few months

Greg said 'We often need to communicate with growers, whether it is about a pest or disease threat, changes to labour laws or changes to water regulations. If we have accurate contact information and know what each business grows, we can ensure we get the right information to the right people, quickly and efficiently. We are also in a much better position to represent their interests to government.'

Once the report is complete, a summary will be provided to the growers who have contributed information.

If you would like to provide information to this project, or discuss it further, please contact NT Farmers.

Contact details:

Greg Owens

NT Farmers Association

P. 0437 092 551

E. greg@ntfarmers.org.au



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Contact Ronan - Details below



Ronan Mackey, Business Development Manager
Phone: +61 487 777 433
Email: rmackey@chambernt.com.au



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Xin chao! (Hello!) My name is Diem Nguyen Harris and I am honoured to share the story about my family's background with you.

In 1987, my parents, Van Thao Nguyen and Thi Tuyet Le were living in Vietnam. When my mother was pregnant with me, they found out that my father had been conscripted into the military.

Due to this, they immediately planned their escape from Vietnam as they wanted a better future for themselves and their family.

They set off with a small wooden boat, a few days' worth of food and just the clothes on their back. They were out at sea for many months and one night, a storm damaged their boat. They were lucky enough to be picked up by some fishermen who took them to shore on the coast of Thailand.

For many years, they took refuge in Chon Buri refugee camp in Thailand and that is where my brother Phuc and I were born. One day, we received the good news that a kind lady in Australia wanted to sponsor us - and my family has never looked back!

We arrived in Perth and Mum and Dad picked strawberries for a living and Dad went to night school to study English as a second language. My brothers Ray and Bill were born while we were living in WA.

In 1996 we moved to Darwin and leased farming land with another Vietnamese family in Lambells Lagoon.

In Vietnam, Mum had not worked outside the home and Dad had collected and sold fire wood in the market, so apart from picking strawberries, they had no horticulture background at all!



Snake bean grown on Diem's farm

Being very keen to provide for their growing family and embrace their new life in NT, they worked very hard and learned "on the job". They grew mainly Asian vegetables and this is still what the farm produces today.

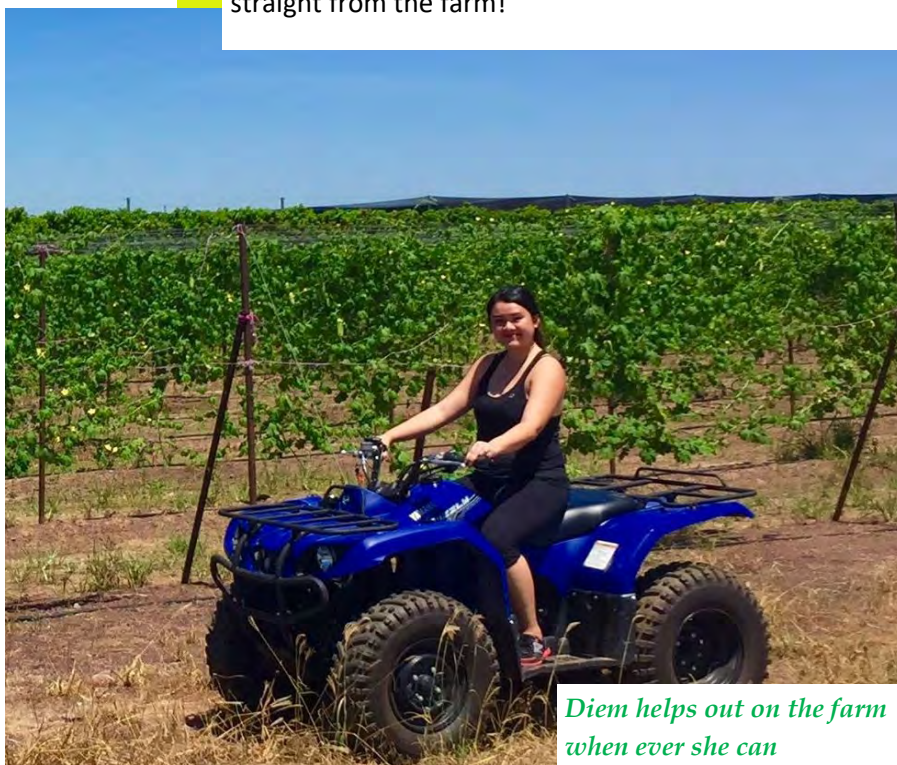
My youngest brother Tommy was born in Darwin. Five young kids and a farm to run with no farming background - I don't know how they did it!

As my parents did not have the opportunity of a good education, their wish was for all of us to have the opportunity they didn't have.

We went to Humpty Doo Primary School and then Taminmin High School. I went on to complete my Bachelor of Business Degree at Charles Darwin University.

I really love going back to my parents' hometown which is a few hours from Ho Chi Minh City and this has inspired me to learn how to cook Vietnamese traditional food. I'm so glad we grow Vietnamese ingredients at home!

I worked in the Insurance, Finance and Education Sectors until moving to Melbourne with my husband David and starting our own family with our beautiful baby boy Liam. I'm grateful for the Asian markets in Melbourne but it's not the same as eating the veg straight from the farm!



Diem helps out on the farm when ever she can

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