

## Agriculture - Australia's fastest growing sector

NT Farmers Association urges farmers and fund managers to invest in the NT Land Corporation's unprecedented agricultural land release. The three exceptional land release sites are ideally positioned to deliver high yield returns to agriculture investors seeking to be part of the North's development.

NT Farmers Association CEO Paul Burke says that these land releases will provide experienced developers and high-quality investors with the opportunity to gain exposure to the Northern Territory's agriculture industry which has been growing at over 10.66% per annum.

*See pages 6 & 7 for full article*

Photo: Forage sorghum - Keep Plains  
Credit: OrdCo



NT LAND  
CORPORATION  
LAND FOR TOMORROW

The logo for NT Farmers, featuring the letters 'NT' in a large, bold, green font with a water droplet effect, and the word 'FARMERS' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it, all set against a dark green background.





Congratulations to returning Chief Minister Michael Gunner and his team for their resounding election victory. A majority government is best placed to provide industry with certainty and confidence and we also welcome a reinvigorated CLP opposition to ensure the good governance vital for responsible decision making in a healthy democracy.

There is, however, legitimate concern that the farming community may be facing four years hard Labor, particularly given most seats with a farming focus returned CLP members. Primary Industry is not the natural habitat of Labor governments and with tough economic times ahead the importance of NT Farmers, and our ability to inform and influence our policy makers, takes on even greater significance.

We worked extremely hard through the first term of this government at ministerial and departmental levels to establish strong working relationships and to bring to the table our challenges and solutions not problems and criticism. We lost some battles (water allocation reduction to Douglas Daly farmers under 'use it or lose it' and the continuation of painfully slow development approvals) but had some important wins (then minister Vowles fighting cabinet for money for three IDO roles, Minister Kirby's strong support to help get the pilot Seasonal Worker Program {SWP} up and his commitment to the cotton industry, genuine collaboration with DPIR on biosecurity, SWP, R&D and with DENR on 2020/21 announced water allocations in Katherine).

Agriculture, in particular plant-based farming, will be one of the key drivers that recover the Territory's post-COVID economy. This was recognised by all three political parties during the campaign and the government's own Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission has Agriculture as one of its five key pillars.

NT Farmers has already called on the Gunner Government to act by elevating the portfolio of Primary Industry and Resources to a senior cabinet position to ensure strategic policy is fast tracked. We are also lobbying hard for Minister Kirby to keep his job. He has actively engaged with and listened to industry and understands the key issues. He also has a farming background and the last thing we, or the Territory economy needs now is two lost years with a new minister on training wheels.

Slashing red and green tape was consistently a top priority for all industry sectors through the election campaign and must be addressed immediately, an almost impossible task if we have a new minister. NT Farmers has consistently argued for a strong, science based regulatory framework around land clearing and water that gives due consideration to environmental, cultural and community needs while providing certainty to growers and financiers.

Some tape is absolutely necessary but too often over the last four years farmers and prospective farmers encountered agencies or individual staff that only had a roll of sticky tape... and they'd lost the end of it!

Without a can-do attitude driven by cabinet to dramatically cut approval times, tens of millions of dollars of development dollars waiting in the wings will go elsewhere and precincts such as Douglas Daly Stage 2, Western Davenport, Keep Plains etc. will not provide the farming land so desperately needed.

The other can-do attitude we need urgently from this government is the redeployment of capital from virtually mothballed research farms that are well staffed but apparently can't even afford seed for trials! Good minds and good money need to be converted into the capacity needed within ministers' offices and elsewhere in departments to cut approvals times and facilitate agriculture and horticulture growth by working with, or in, industry bodies like NT Farmers.

We have shown time and again the benefits of industry driven outcomes. Few would argue that there would be no cotton industry or association without Andrew Philip or that our seasonal worker and other workforce woes could have been solved without Aisla Connolly.

Over the last three years the return on investment from Industry Development Officers based at NT Farmers has been enormous. We need this same investment now for an Aboriginal Engagement Officer to work with the Land Councils and pro-active Indigenous organisations like Centrefarm to open up the boundless possibilities on Traditionally owned land. We need investment to help establish a forestry hub and to assist the buffalo industry develop. With huge budgetary pressures this returning government needs to maximise the bang for its primary industry buck.

NT Farmers released three key documents pre-election. Aisla did an excellent job with the Workforce Development Plan 2020-2025 so to Greg Owen's with our updated industry production stats for 2019. These are significant milestone achievements for NT Farmers and also fed into our major election advocacy paper, the Northern Territory Plant Industry Economic Impact Analysis commissioned by the Board and produced by Price Waterhouse Coopers under the guidance of Andrew, CEO Paul and the Board.

Those who followed the campaigning would have noted all three parties drew much of their primary industries policy and priorities from these documents. Enormous credit and thanks to Paul Burke for his astute lobbying and tireless networking and a huge thank you from the Board to all the staff and stakeholders who contributed.

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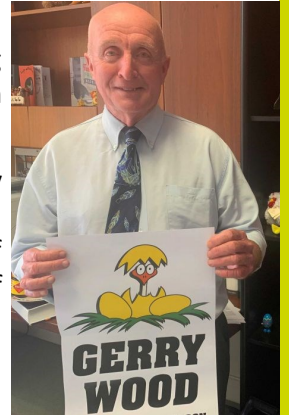
The Environment Centre NT (ECNT) covered itself with ignominy during the election lead up with its 'Cotton Kills Rivers' campaign. Rather than enter this important debate on how we responsibly develop the Territory they chose sensational and false headlines to score some cheap points. Apparently, it's cause for celebration to clear tens of thousands of hectares of pristine Territory bushland for solar farms but for cotton farms "the habitat of millions of native animals would be destroyed. It would lead to large releases of greenhouse gas pollution, when the carbon stored in the bulldozed trees is released into the air after being burnt or rotting. The cleared areas would be highly prone to erosion, sending large volumes of soil and silt into Territory Rivers." These are all valid points that require intelligent debate not the ECNT's current hypocritical stance.

Within the NT Farmers Board there is the very real concern that a future government may amend water legislation. We also want to see the strongest possible legislation to protect our iconic rivers and high value ecosystems.

In the coming weeks we will launch our biggest ever project the Water Productivity, Efficiency and Sustainability Project. We have invited the ECNT to participate on the steering committee, along with The Amateur Fisherman's Association NT. As yet we have received no commitment from ECNT.

In closing I wanted to thank the retiring member for Nelson Gerry Wood for his extraordinary contribution to politics and life in rural Darwin. Gerry is a great friend of NT Farmers and he would always seek out the facts on any farming issue being debated in parliament. He read every piece of legislation in his seventeen years in parliament and had a work ethic others could only dream of (or avoid!)

We wish Gerry and Imelda all the best in retirement. We'll all miss the chooks .



## Looking for Farm Workers?

**The Job Shop** is the Top End provider of the Australian Government's Harvest Labour Service.

We are redeploying seasonal workers throughout Australia to meet growers needs.

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



Seasonal  
Worker  
Programme



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Certified System



Pacific  
Labour  
Scheme



## From the CEO *Paul Burke*



### Seasonal Worker Success

"The Seasonal Worker Pilot program has the potential for more ni-Vanuatu workers to follow." Sounds simple but to get the seasonal worker pilot project up, has taken in excess of 80 formal meetings and hundreds of man hours.

As I write this article, we have 162 seasonal workers at the Howard Springs Quarantine facility undergoing mandatory quarantine. The trial will be welcome news for mango producers, who have been lobbying hard for access to Pacific or Timorese labour to help address a looming labour shortage of between 800 and 1,000 workers, and for Vanuatu which, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was the largest supplier of Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) workers to Australia.

Similarly, it is good news for the other parts of Australia that participate in the SWP, as the pilot raises the prospect of additional seasonal work opportunities in the future.

In addition our neighbors across the 'ditch' in New Zealand will be watching closely, as they have a similar SWP, and are yet to open up any pathways for Pacific seasonal workers to re-enter the country.

The Vanuatu Commissioner of Labour has welcomed the pilot as a great opportunity for Vanuatu, while emphasizing that protecting workers' health and well being in Australia is paramount.

### Quarantine on arrival

Stringent health and safety conditions will be in place from the outset. The ni-Vanuatu workers will be kept in a 'biosecurity bubble' on the flight from Vanuatu to Darwin, via Cairns, and will not disembark the plane during transit. On arrival in Darwin, the workers will go into a mandatory 14-day quarantine period in a managed facility – the Howard Springs Facility.

NT Farmers President with the endorsement of the Board agreed to under write this pilot to de-risk the program for growers and government.

The upfront costs of participation are significant; workers' return airfares from Vanuatu to Darwin are significant and the cost of two weeks in quarantine is AUD\$2,500 per worker.

These costs are being absorbed by growers and shows the level of insecurity around workforce.

The Northern Territory mango season is relatively short, with peak harvest from October to December. Approved Employers are keen to engage the ni-Vanuatu workers for nine months (the maximum allowed on the SWP visa), potentially moving them interstate for other horticultural work once the mango season has finished. It is critical that if this happens the costs incurred by growers whom have paid upfront is fairly apportioned, it would be unfair for the original growers to be left with all the incurred costs.

### Workers' health and safety

For the ni-Vanuatu workers there is minimal risk of contracting COVID-19, with no reported clusters of cases among SWP workers in Australia.

The Northern Territory has no active cases of COVID-19 as of 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2020, no evidence of community transmission, and has quarantine requirements for travellers from Victoria and parts of New South Wales where there are increasing numbers of new COVID-19 cases.

For the ni-Vanuatu workers coming for the mango harvest, the risk of infection is extremely low. Nonetheless, the communal aspect of seasonal work, where workers tend to live and work in close proximity, could make seasonal workers susceptible to a viral illness that is spread through close contact. To manage this risk, various health and safety measures are being implemented.

All growers involved in the pilot have an individual COVID-19 management plan which has been approved by the Northern Territory Chief Health Officer.

The plan covers arrangements in workers' accommodation, transport to/from work and the worksite, and outlines social distancing and hygiene measures, as well as criteria for monitoring, identifying, reporting and managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the unlikely event a worker becomes unwell.

Management plans include keeping the ni-Vanuatu workers separate from other work teams in the orchard, and visitors are not allowed at the workers' accommodation.



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The ni-Vanuatu workers will be provided with extensive pre-departure and on-arrival training on what to expect when travelling to/from the worksite and working in Australia during current COVID-19 restrictions.

Training includes information on how the virus spreads, hygiene, social distancing measures in the workplace and outside of work, and what to do if workers feel unwell.

There is no dispute that the Northern Territory trial is good news for the Australian mango industry and for Vanuatu.

Depending on the experiences with the trial, it is also possible other states may look to follow suit with their own initiatives.

The success of this trial will be measured largely by the extent to which it protects the health and wellbeing of the ni-Vanuatu workers. While the risks are extremely low, there is no room for complacency.

#### Next Steps

The most critical component now is to get the next groups of Vanuatuan workers ready for subsequent flights.

It is hoped that these flights could arrive in mid to late September and will be welcome news for growers.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Farmers Association I am immensely proud that the industry here in the Territory have led the way nationally to make this a reality.

The significant efforts of many others must also be acknowledged; including Minister Kirby and the entire Department of Primary Industries and Resources, Andrew Colbeck, from The Job Shop, numerous federal departments, Senator Sam McMahon and so may others - thank you, your efforts are appreciated.

In closing, whilst we celebrate this outcome, our workforce issues are not resolved and we need to ensure that governments at all levels are working towards a solution that will provide the agriculture sector with a mobile and skilled workforce, now and into the future.

## Big Rivers/Katherine Regional Roadshow

8 - 10 September, 2020



NT Farmers Association invite you to attend the Food Futures Roadshow in Katherine. The Roadshow features a wide range of subjects including, innovation in the industry, new cropping opportunities and cotton development in the region.

### Roadshow Highlights

#### Tuesday 8 September

Welcome networking function from 5:30pm at  
Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts & Culture Centre -  
Katherine

#### Wednesday 9 September

Half day farming Development Seminars at Katherine  
Research Station. Followed by a bus tour of Katherine  
farming operations and then an evening BBQ

#### Thursday 10 September

In depth workshops and farmers panels

**Numbers limited - RSVP by clicking the link below:**

<https://aaevents.eventsair.com/food-futures-roadshows/roadshow-sept/Site/Register>

**For further information email:**

**kido@ntfarmers.org.au or call 0428798014**

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# Agriculture - Australia's fastest growing sector

NT Farmers Association urges farmers and fund managers to invest in the NT Land Corporation's unprecedented agricultural land release. The three exceptional land release sites are ideally positioned to deliver high yield returns to agricultural investors seeking to be part of the North's development.

NT Farmers Association CEO Paul Burke says that these land releases will provide experienced developers and high-quality investors with the opportunity to gain exposure to the Northern Territory's agricultural industry which has been growing at over 10.66% per annum.

"This is the largest land release in the history of the Northern Territory. With nearly a 100,000 hectares of prime land on offer and our proximity to key Asian export markets, the agricultural opportunities are exceptional" said Mr Burke.

NT Land Corporation in collaboration with NT Farmers Association has worked closely with Government agencies including the Department of Primary Industry and Resources and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to identify and ensure that these parcels of land are suitable and ready for release to the market.

The 67,500 hectares Keep Plains Agricultural Development has been long awaited by farmers in northern Australia and is only available under a long-term lease arrangement to one entity that has experience in developing large scale productive agricultural sites. This outstanding agricultural land is the largest single land release for agricultural development in the Northern Territory to date.



Wildman Agricultural Precinct is a 26,000 hectares large-scale agricultural precinct which offers investors the option to generate yields from multiple agricultural and horticultural crops. Diversification can be created with the ability to develop rain fed forestry and fruit plantations.



Larrimah Agricultural Precinct offers investors the potential to develop a market advantage by extending the Northern Territory season of fruit and citrus.

The 5,712 hectares site's strategic location on the Stuart Highway make it well positioned to seamlessly deliver crops to market. Farmers will be able to take advantage of the high volume of trucks utilising the highway to send produce either four hours to Darwin or directly to the rest of Australia.

"These sites were identified based not only on their impressive soil and climatic features but also on their proximity to enabling infrastructure. Investors in the Keep Plains site will have the outstanding possibility of tapping into the Ord River irrigation system, with irrigation channels within just 6 kilometres of the development area" said Mr Burke.

Mr Burke said that these large-scale land release sites offer enormous agricultural possibilities to suit each investor and portfolio.

The Wildman Agricultural Precinct is located just 135 kms east of Darwin on the sealed Point Stuart Road. The precinct's excellent location facilitates agricultural output to be quickly and easily exported to Asia via Darwin's port or sent to southern states via the Stuart Highway.

Exciting opportunities exist to develop broadacre farming, forestry or horticultural crops using a variety of irrigated and non-irrigated techniques.



“The Keep Plains Agricultural Development offers the unique opportunity for investors to gain exposure to cotton. Dryland cotton trials grown during the driest wet season on record produced encouraging yields and has driven significant interest for growing the crop in the Territory” said Mr Burke.

Plans are underway to establish a cotton processing gin in the Territory thanks to commitments from farmers, investors and the Commonwealth Government.



Once established a gin will drive the industry forward, and investors in the Keep Plains Development will be well positioned to profit from the crop. Not only can cotton investors take full advantage of selling the cotton lint but the cotton seed, which is a by-product of the lint, is an excellent protein rich fodder for cattle. Investors can hedge their cotton price exposure by also selling the seed to the NT’s large cattle industry.

“The sites offer possibilities to grow a wide variety of high yielding fruits, melons, sorghum, soybeans and oil seed crops. Forestry plantations on the sites provide the chance for investors to build exposure in their portfolios to a sustainable and potentially ‘green’ investment.

Plantations that are given access to the Emissions Reduction Fund or the Carbon Farming Initiative will be eligible to sell Carbon Credits to generate investor returns while being an environmentally friendly asset to investors. Further income from forestry plantations can be generated through cattle grazing in the plantations or fodder farming” said Mr Burke.

Farming depends on water, fortunately the Northern Territory’s average annual wet seasons deliver a high volume of water. Investors and farmers have the option of utilising dryland/rain fed or irrigated farming approaches on the sites. A water licence is available for part of the Wildman Precinct, while a consumptive pool water licence has been sought for the Larrimah Precinct site.

Western Australia is keen to explore infrastructure sharing options with the Northern Territory on the Keep Plains site. The land release sites offer investors a range of options to suit their investment needs in respect to leases and land parcels.

Agriculture in the Northern Territory has generated enormous growth and high returns for the industry.

In 1980 the industry was almost non-existent, now it is approaching nearly half a billion dollars per annum in revenue. The industry’s strong growth trajectory is predicted to continue due to the almost insatiable global demand for food and agricultural produce.

The Northern Territory’s location and conditions enable the agricultural industry to capitalise on the global demand for food.

Northern Territory fresh produce is harvested when other sources are out of season which means it can extend the produce availability in southern and export markets and has the potential to attract a premium price.

Mr Burke said that COVID-19 demonstrates that unlike other commodities, agricultural products will always be in demand.

“The need for food and agricultural resources simply cannot diminish. In these uncertain times where investment returns are no longer guaranteed, agriculture may provide growth and security to your portfolios, as well as food security and economic and social development” said Mr Burke.



# Agriculture is key to Australia's Economic Recovery

## National Farmers Federation - Tony Maher



The National Farmers Federation is pleased to support the NT Farmers Association and the NT Land Corporation's release of almost 100,000 hectares for agricultural use. Northern Australia is the last frontier of agricultural development and offers rich opportunities for investors.

National Farmers Federation CEO Tony Maher says that the land release will significantly contribute towards the industry's vision of achieving \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030.

"The agricultural development of the soon to be released land will strengthen Australia's position as an agricultural powerhouse that exports outstanding produce to the world. Currently the gross value of Australian agriculture sits at roughly \$62 billion and nearly 70% of our production is exported generating considerable foreign income for the country. In Australia there are roughly 85,483 agricultural businesses which employ roughly 318,600 Australians or 2.5% of the workforce. Agriculture in the Northern Territory already significantly contributes to the local and national economy, last year the sector generated nearly half a billion dollars in gross value. The value of the Northern Territory's agriculture output will continue to grow with innovative Territory farmers and these upcoming land releases" said Mr Mahar.

A strong agriculture industry in the Northern Territory will create synergies and lead to new innovations across the nation as farmers from around Australia share their knowledge and expertise to drive the industry forward.

As the industry grows, logistics and transport will become further integrated and fine-tuned to reduce costs and transportation bottlenecks. Not only do lower transportation costs benefit farmers but also consumers around Australia and especially in regional towns.

"Farmers on the Northern Territory's new land releases should be able to utilise the almost limitless potential of technology in their operations to make their farms more efficient and productive. Real time data collection and drone observations will provide farmers with unique insights into their operations and allow them to make informed decisions about irrigation and harvesting. The Northern Territory can take the lead by utilising these technologies and sharing their expertise with their southern contemporaries. In order to fully take advantage of real time data collection and sharing, some investment in telecommunications may be required in the region.

However, the outlay is likely to be recouped via the creation of skilled and technical jobs in addition to increasing connectivity to remote parts of the Northern Territory" said Mr Mahar.

Mr Mahar said that key to the success of the upcoming land releases will be the selection of crops to suit the environment and Australian market conditions.

"The Keep Plains land release site has the potential to grow cotton. This comes at a time when Australian farmers and investors are looking to acquire new cotton holdings. Trials of cotton in the Northern Territory have proved remarkably successful and have sparked investor interest in the region.

The genetically modified cotton variety tested are hardier, consume significantly less water than other varieties and are resistant to a wide variety of pests. Cotton can prove itself to be an ecologically friendly and sustainable crop in the Northern Territory" he said.

The establishment of a cotton processing gin in the Northern Territory will add to Australia's processing capacity and it will lead to the further development of cotton related jobs throughout Australia.

The Northern Territory is renowned for its mangoes, and the release of these agricultural land developments provides the potential to increase the region's output of the crop. The Northern Territory already grows over half of Australia's mango crop, with the produce being sent interstate and overseas. Internationally, Northern Territory mangoes are a prized fruit that can attract high prices.

The Northern Territory's infrastructure and proximity to Asia allow farmers to supply quality produce including mangoes faster than other Australian states.

The Northern Territory is in a unique position to significantly contribute and build upon Australia's rich farming legacy.

Australian agriculture has an international brand recognition for producing the world's best quality and safest agriculture products. By investing in these agricultural land releases, developers and farmers can continue to build and benefit from Australia's market leading reputation.

Mr Mahar said the future of agriculture in the Northern Territory and Australia in general looks bright, and the increase in agricultural land in the Territory will only strengthen and support the wider industry.

"Together the Australian and Northern Territory agriculture industry can easily achieve \$100 billion by 2030 and create sustainable development and economic opportunities for all Australians" said Mr Mahar.



# Agriculture is key to our food security and to Australia's economic recovery.

**Agriculture is Australia's fastest growing sector - contributing around \$63 billion per annum to the national economy.**

The Northern Territory has diverse and well-established agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, with plant-based industries alone worth over \$350 million (2019) and over 135,000 tonnes of produce grown annually. The Northern Territory is a recognised producer and supplier of high quality mangoes, melons and Asian vegetables to domestic and international markets.

With abundant land, suitable water and soil resources and significant opportunity for development and growth, the Northern Territory is the land of opportunity! Darwin is Australia's closest capital city to Asia providing a strategic connection with key trading markets via well-established supply chains by road, rail, air and sea.

**NT Land Corporation, working in partnership with NT Farmers Association, will soon be calling for expressions of interests for three exciting and unique large-scale agricultural land developments.**

The release of these highly prospective large-scale agricultural land developments will see the Northern Territory capitalise on the increasing demand for quality Australian produce, ensure sustainable continuity of food supply for national and export markets, create employment, and enhance the economic resilience of the region.

Experienced developers are invited to register their interest at [ntlandcorp.com.au/expressions-of-interest/](http://ntlandcorp.com.au/expressions-of-interest/) to receive upcoming agricultural land release information, briefing dates and when EOIs will open.



## Keep Plains Agricultural Development

Earmarked for agricultural development since the 1990s the Keep Plains Agricultural Development will be the largest land release for agricultural development in the Northern Territory to date.

This much anticipated land release is a rare opportunity to acquire significant land holdings under long-term lease arrangements, in a fertile agricultural area recognised as having some of Australia's best climate, access to water and ideal productive soils.

Adjoining WA's iconic Ord River agricultural developments, on the NT side of the border, the 67,500 hectares Keep Plains Agricultural Development site is accessible via the recently upgraded Keep River Road and comprises NT Portion 3221 (6,600 ha) and NT Portion 1584 (60,900 ha).



The close proximity of the Keep Plains area to Western Australia's Ord developments is considered an important advantage with its significant infrastructure including irrigation channels within just 6 kms of the Northern Territory border.

The Keep Plains Agricultural Development offers the potential to further establish a variety of commercial broadacre crops, as well as demonstrate how thriving agricultural precincts can be developed where good soil and water resources co-exist, across jurisdictional boundaries.

Keep Plains Agricultural Development provides exciting investment opportunities for emerging agribusiness in the Northern Territory and will consolidate the region's already strong reputation as a premium quality food producer for global markets. It will enhance the development of sustainable industries in the region whilst developing regional and remote economies and creating jobs, training and business opportunities.



## Wildman Agricultural Precinct

Wildman Agricultural Precinct encompasses approximately 26,000 hectares of land and is located 135 kms east of Darwin, north of the Arnhem Highway along the Point Stuart Road.

The large-scale agricultural precinct comprises four areas of land. NT Portions 2623, 2624 and 3611 which are available on long-term lease, and NT Portion 5088 which is being offered for freehold sale as part of the development.

This high value site is available to one entity with a proven track record who can demonstrate the necessary experience and capability to develop the Wildman Agricultural Precinct to its full potential.

The site experiences high wet season rainfall and is in a low risk cyclone area, as evidenced by the surrounding wooded vegetation, and has a large percentage of deep sandy soils suitable for cultivation.

A water licence of 8,021ML is also available for NT Portion 5088 as part of the Wildman Agricultural Precinct.

The Wildman Agricultural Precinct has the capacity to accommodate multiple agricultural and horticultural activities and high yield crops such as bananas, and including rain fed forestry such as mahogany as well as cattle production.



## Larrimah Agricultural Precinct

Larrimah Agricultural Precinct, within the Big Rivers Region, is a 5,712 hectares area of land surrounding the township of Larrimah, with direct access to logistics routes both north and south along the Stuart Highway.

Larrimah is located about 431 kms southeast of Darwin, the NT's capital city and approximately 200 kms from Katherine.

The Larrimah area has a unique seasonal advantage, extending the season for crops such as the Territory staples of mangoes, citrus and melons as well as presenting opportunities for a range of dryland and irrigated crops and the development of intensified beef operations.

Land suitability assessment of the site has reported that soils suitable for irrigated agriculture within NT Portions 4478 and 4663 are predominantly deep, well drained sandy surfaced red earths.

A water licence allocation with a consumptive pool has been sought from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the development of the Larrimah Agricultural Precinct.

The land consists of four agricultural areas which are available to suitably experienced and capable developers on long term leases. Interested developers may register their interest in one or all four areas.



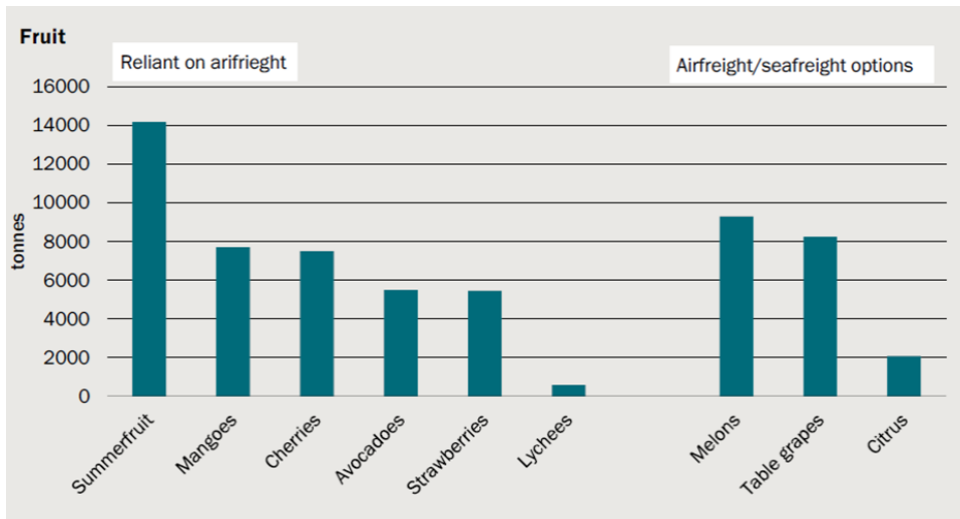
The Northern Territory agricultural industry, particularly our mango growers have not been spared the damaging flow on effects of COVID-19. The reduction of air travel and freight has significantly affected the industry's ability to hire staff and export produce.

NT Farmers, growers, exporters and freight forwarders are already making plans on how to deliver fresh produce to markets and customers for the upcoming 2020 season.

Our planning and recent industry developments will assist the industry to quickly deliver produce to markets in the future. The recently launched fresh produce export facility at Darwin Airport will easily enable Territory produce to be delivered to key Asian markets. In addition, special charter flights and sea freight consignments will strengthen the industry and improve grower access to domestic and international markets. The industry's enhanced access to markets will continue to drive interest and investment in the NT's horticulture sector.

The Chart to the right shows the crops that can benefit from the Territory's improved air and sea freight options.

New Free Trade Agreements will significantly assist the NT agriculture industry to expand.



Export focused producers of citrus, grapes, melons, pumpkins, potatoes, onions and tropical fruits will greatly benefit from improved accesses to FTA markets.

New land releases, such as the Western Davenport, could potentially be utilised for export orientated horticulture. A 7000 to 10,000ha portion of the Western Davenport is likely to produce \$200 million in high value crops per year. A combination of both large and small horticultural developments will enable the Territory to export produce to interstate and international markets. The land releases will generate significant long term economic growth and valuable employment opportunities for regional areas. Remote towns across the Territory can grow and prosper with the agriculture industry.

The upcoming **Big Rivers Katherine Food Futures Roadshow** from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of September will be the agriculture industry's highlight event of the year. The roadshow is a unique opportunity to network with industry and investors and explore potentially profitable agriculture opportunities. The event will discuss activities in the region and also provide an insight into developments across the North. Workshops and forums will cover the following topics:

- Industry innovation
- Cotton in the region
- Land releases
- Water, non-pastoral use and clearing permits
- Horticultural developments in the region
- Diversification avenues
- Government policy and research
- The future of avocados, tree nuts, mango season extension, citrus and grapes in the NT.

Numbers are limited, RSVP by contacting [kido@ntfarmers.org.au](mailto:kido@ntfarmers.org.au) or 0428798014. Free entry for NT Farmers members, and \$100 for non members.





## Pickers, packers, stackers and everything in between!

Toll People is excited to be partnering with the NT Farmers Association to provide its members with a discounted local workforce and reliable logistical support.

Toll People has been operating in the NT since 2004 and is Australia's largest supplier of blue-collar workforce services, supplying its clients with over 7000 temporary staff across Australia daily.

Toll People has an extensive existing labour pool of pickers, packers, forklift drivers, machine operators, multi skilled warehouse and logistics staff.

Toll People delivers fully screened candidates with the right skills for the required job and looks after all of your recruitment and labour hire needs. Toll People also provides workforce training to enable staff to build on their skills and become skilled workers.

"Part of the Toll Group family, Toll People is a one stop shop which can service anything from needing a truck to the people to drive it. If you need it, the Toll Group has your covered and we can quickly draw support from Toll's national resources including access to its extensive intermodal transport freight logistic networks" said Errol Kadir, NT Branch Manager with Toll People.

The local farming sector is Toll People's priority and it has a ready workforce of 150 people available for NT farmers, and is currently processing another 70 people, on average 15 to 20 per week, for farm work to follow the NT season.

With mango picking due to commence in 2-3 weeks around Darwin, followed by Katherine a month later, plus other crops such as melon as required, Toll People is seeking to work with local people to support NT Farmers Association and its members.





# Cotton in the Northern Territory

*By Bruce Connolly - President, Northern Cottongrowers Association*

Successful cotton trials in the Top End demonstrate that cotton can drive economic growth while having a minimal impact on the Top End's spectacular environment. Cotton can be at the forefront of the Northern Territory's economic recovery.

Trials of cotton during two of the Territory's driest wet seasons on record have produced encouraging yields from both dryland and irrigated crops. The genetically modified crops are especially well suited to our conditions. The crops require 40% less water than previous varieties and are extraordinarily pest resistant.

The successful crop trials have sparked an influx of interest in growing cotton and investing in the Territory. The original cotton trial started in 2019 With just 3 participants, this year 7 farmers were involved and next year at least 12 growers are expected to trial cotton.

I have had numerous conversations with interstate farmers looking to potentially secure land and grow cotton in the Territory. Potential growers are particularly interested in growing dryland/rain fed cotton. Rain fed cotton requires less capital commitment and farmers don't have to depend on water licences.

A cotton processing gin is central to the expansion of the industry. Once established in Katherine, the gin will stimulate further cotton developments. The Katherine region can become a cotton growing and processing hub for the North.

Already, large private investors are ready and willing to invest in a cotton gin once government commits itself to the industry. The gin is expected to generate 424 FTE jobs, provide \$29.6 million in wages per annum and drive \$732 million in investment into the struggling Katherine region.

I would like to recognise the significant work NT Farmers Association have undertaken to promote cotton and to push for a processing gin. NT Farmers have organised numerous cotton field days to demonstrate the possibilities of the crop to farmers and investors. Their efforts have greatly assisted to generate interest and support for the crop in the NT.

Despite the enormous efforts undertaken to promote and develop the future of cotton in the NT, major threats face the industry.

Fearmongering and false information about cotton is being spread by community groups with an agenda to kill the industry. Their scare tactics are not based on the reality of growing cotton in the Territory. Historic examples of individual rogue farming practices should not be applied to the Territory's modern industry.

Claims that cotton will 'kill' the Daly river are extremely irresponsible and hurtful to myself and the wider communities who depend on the Territory's river systems. As President of the Northern Cottongrowers association, I find it abhorrent that these groups of people will bully and harass the family farmers who are driving the post COVID economic and social recovery in the NT. On a personal level, I spend a lot of my recreation time fishing on the Daly and other rivers in NT. The last thing we want to do is 'kill' our region's greatest assets. I fish and I vote.

Cotton can bring significant opportunities and economic growth to the Territory however, its future in the NT is being threatened by misinformation. Cotton is an environmentally friendly and sustainable crop that will drive the economic recovery of the Territory. The action we take now will create a dynamic farming industry that benefits all Territorians.

I look forward to the day when we will be wearing branded Northern Territory cotton!

*Rain fed cotton grown in Douglas Daly 2020*



# AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS SPECIALIST AGRICULTURE VISA DIVISION AUSTRALIAN REGISTERED MIGRATION AGENTS MARN 0957639

We act on behalf of FARMERS from various regions within Australia and South Africa and across diverse FARMING sectors.

With law firms in BOTH Australia and South Africa we are ideally structured to provide a professional Australian visa service to Australian FARMERS to sponsor applicants to fill skill shortages.

We have made a commitment to offering the best Australian migration advice and service possible to assist Australian FARMERS who are seeking experienced and COMMITTED applicants.

We assist overseas clients to acquire farms and seek suitable farming employment opportunities in Australia.



**Phillip Silver  
& Associates**

[www.phillipsilver.com.au](http://www.phillipsilver.com.au) | [www.immigrationlawfirm.co.za](http://www.immigrationlawfirm.co.za)

P: 02 9708 5954 | E: [lawyer@phillipsilver.com.au](mailto:lawyer@phillipsilver.com.au)

## Where are the workers? - Sponsoring skilled farmers

*By Phillip Silver, Solicitor Registered Migration Agent (MARN 0957639). Phillip has 25 years of experience as a lawyer in Australia and South Africa. Phillip represents Australian Farming enterprises to sponsor skilled farmers from South Africa to work on Australian farms.*

An article in the GROW NT June 2020 magazine highlights the crucial issue of Agricultural skill shortages in the Northern Territory.

One solution is to employ South African farmers who enjoy working in remote regions, (many have worked on family farms since leaving school) and have the expertise, loyalty and enthusiasm to assist in resolving the skill shortage issue by working in Australia.

I have matched many South African farmers with Australian farm owners who sponsored them on temporary and permanent visas for up to 4 years at a time and in some cases permanently. We assess potential employees' for their suitability and they must show their commitment up front by meeting visa threshold requirements.

In 2019 the Department of Home Affairs received 35,000 applications for Australian business sponsorships, however only 880 sponsorships were from the agricultural sector.

The opportunities for Australian farming businesses to sponsor skilled immigrants to work in regional areas has been made more attractive by the recent introduction of Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA). DAMA enables Australian employers in designated regional areas, including NT to sponsor skilled and semi-skilled workers.

For more information on sponsoring skilled South African farmers, contact:

**Phillip Silver | Solicitor & Migration Agent (MARN 0957639) | Australia and South Africa**  
**T: +61 2 9708 5954 | M: 0406 115 895**





In July this year, the NT Forestry Industry reached a significant milestone with the establishment of the Forestry Industry Association of the Northern Territory (FIANT).

After years of development and investment in forestry, the association will support the burgeoning industry in the NT.

Frank Miller, President of FIAN, stated that “The industry will benefit from the formation of a representative body that will advocate for members and grow the sector into the future”.

Forestry in the NT has enormous growth potential that will provide significant long term economic and social benefits to the industry and Territorians. The NT’s unique climate and soil conditions suit a range of forestry plantations and our prime location enables the industry to export to rapidly growing Asian markets.

FIANT has already been working hard to push the industry forward, the association has identified six industry areas that once addressed will drive the industry into the future. As a priority the association will focus its efforts on achieving:

- Federal Government support of a Forestry Hub in the Northern Territory

- The inclusion of all NT plantation timbers to be recognised in national carbon trading markets
- The creation of a forest policy and development manager to assist the industry to fully develop
- The development of an indigenous forestry education and training program to assist in facilitating community industry development
- Forestry to be included in primary and secondary school education in the NT
- The sealing of the Fleming and Cadel Roads in the Douglas Daly to guarantee year round timber supply.

FIANT have made progress on reaching out to stakeholders and politicians to generate support for an NT forestry hub.

The hub will play a vital role in attracting investment, undertaking research and advocating on behalf of the industry.

A priority of the hub will be to establish a taskforce to analyse the factors that are limiting productivity and efficiency in the sector. The hub will act as a centre of excellence by providing detailed information to investors and growers about the industry, conditions and crops. It is hoped that a forestry hub will be secured by January 2021, a forestry hub will be essential to fully grow the industry in the Territory.

The industry in the NT currently has a gross value in excess of \$10 Billion, harvests \$115 million worth of products per annum for domestic and international markets and employs over 170 full time equivalent staff. The establishment of FIAN will drive industry forward and help generate long term economic growth for Territorians.



*Forestry Plantation in the Douglas Daly*



The NT Farmers Association in conjunction with Regional Development Australia NT, would like to thank everyone who attended our event *'Growing the Territory - a synopsis of Agriculture Opportunity'* held 6 August, 2020 at Aboriginal Bush Traders on the Esplanade.

The following documents, that will assist in driving the industry forward were launched on the night by NT Farmers Association President Simon Smith:

- NT Plant Industries Economic Impact Analysis
- Indigenous Agriculture Development Project
- NT Plant Industries Workforce Development Plan and
- Growing Irrigated Agriculture in The Darwin Catchments
- 

The event was a culmination of years of hard work by staff of NT Farmers and RDANT in developing the extensive documents.

Guests heard first hand from speakers about the challenges and the massive opportunities for agriculture across the Territory.

Industry speakers included:

- Frank Miller – Forestry Industry Association NT
- Leo Skliros – NT Mango Industry Association
- Kate Peake – Regional Development Australia NT and
- Louise Bilato – NT Buffalo Industry Council.
- Andrew Philip - NT Farmers Association

The event was an excellent opportunity for the industry stakeholders who attended to network and meet NT Farmers and RDANT staff.



Kate Peake  
RDANT



Leo Skliros - NTMIA



Paul Burke - NT Farmers



Andrew Philip - NT Farmers



Simon Smith - NT Farmers



Frank Miller - FIANT



Louise Bilato - NTBIC



**NORTHERN  
TERRITORY**  
GOVERNMENT

Department of  
**Primary Industry and Resources**

## Mango Picking Season

### NT farmers need your support to get produce off to market

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, farmers are expecting a shortfall of up to 1,000 workers.

Fruit picking season starts from mid-August. Pickers are needed to ensure Northern Territory mangoes do not go to waste.

The NT is Australia's largest grower of mangoes.

Learn new skills, make great friends, work hard, earn good money and experience iconic Territory locations. You will be working right next door to some of the greatest parts of the Territory including Katherine Gorge, Edith Falls, Mataranka Thermal Pools and breath taking scenery of Kakadu and Litchfield National Parks.

Picking is a great way to get your foot in the door, with opportunities for ongoing work, training and further career opportunities.

For more information go to the Harvest Trail: <https://jobsearch.gov.au/harvest/workers/find-jobs>

Or the Territory Jobs Hub: <https://nt.gov.au/industry/support-for-business/programs-and-initiatives/territory-jobs-hub>



<https://youtu.be/tdzb87RtQRU>



<https://youtu.be/x010Rbcdq0I>

## Be the pick of the bunch

Fruit pickers are needed by Northern Territory farmers.

Become a Territory hero! Find out more about fruit picking jobs at [dpir.nt.gov.au/fruitpicking](https://dpir.nt.gov.au/fruitpicking)



NT pre-season mango roadshows were held in Darwin on 11 August and Katherine on 13 August. It was great to see the roadshows received strong interest with over 70 attendees in Darwin and 40 in Katherine. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, most attendees were local growers and stakeholders



Both the meetings were hosted by Australian Mangoes Industry Development Officer, Sarah Hain.

*Sarah Hain & NTMIA President Leo Skliros at the Roadshow*

The Darwin roadshow was held at the newly built Darwin Export Hub and attendees enjoyed a tour of the cold storage facilities and the new Vapour Heat Treatment plant (VHT).

Robert Hall from PakFresh gave an update about the facility's progress and the services that will be available this season and into the future for horticulture growers.



*Part of the cold storage facilities at the new VHT*

Paul Burke, CEO of NT Farmers Association, discussed key work the association has been undertaking involving the Seasonal Workers Program pilot, COVID-19 related assistance as well as strategic planning into the future for mangoes and other plant industries in the Northern Territory.

Kerry Walsh from Central Queensland University (CQU) discussed some of the positive results of the multiscale monitoring project (forecasting from satellite imagery and in-field machine vision) from last season's work in Darwin and caught up with the grower sites in Katherine for this season.

Geoff Dickinson and Dale Bennett from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries discussed the CRCNA Transforming Mango Futures high density trials and the economic analysis of high-density mango production systems.

While in Katherine, QDAF, CQU, NT Farmers and Australian Mangoes staff visited the trial site at Manbulloo to begin training the trees onto the trellis.

Sarah Hain, discussed the importance of forecasting and ensuring great eating quality through free on farm dry matter testing services for the challenging season ahead. Also discussed was the continuing mango industry exotic biosecurity surveillance program in orchards and packhouses. The Escavox project will continue again this season and allows growers free access to real time temperature data to follow their fruit throughout the supply chain. There will be a national Mango Marketing webinar discussing the extension of the marketing plan this season and include a panel discussion with the major retailers which will be via Zoom on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September (more details still to come).

Thanks to NT Airports and PakFresh in Darwin and the Nutrano Produce Group for hosting the roadshows in these challenging environments and their continuing support of the NT mango industry. A big thanks to the NT Farmers team for their support in organising and running these events.

If you were not able to attend these events and are interested in any of the information from these meetings, please contact Sarah Hain on [sarah@mangoes.net.au](mailto:sarah@mangoes.net.au) or 0457 555 939.

*NT Farmers President, Simon Smith; Hon Warren Snowdon MP and NT Farmers CEO Paul Burke enjoyed the Roadshow*



NT Farmers staff have been productively busy achieving outcomes for our members;

Gaining approval to run a **pilot programme to access seasonal workers for the 2020 mango harvest**. This trial will see approximately 170 Ni-Vans (people from Vanuatu) enter the NT in August, undergo 2 weeks quarantine prior to working on farms who are Approved Employers of the Seasonal Worker Programme and have COVID-19 Management Plans. If the trial is successful more seasonal workers may enter the NT for the mango harvest.

As well as accessing staff from this programme, we are

- aiming to **streamline backpacker entry** to the NT
- **promoting harvest opportunities** to Territorians with the help of the Department of Primary Industries and Resources. The "be a Territory hero" campaign includes videos and quotes which are currently being aired on social media. <https://dpir.nt.gov.au/primary-industry/agriculture/fruit-picking-season>
- engaging with International Students and registered training organisations in relation to employment in the industry
- engaging with the migrant community
- Engaging with job active service providers
- Engaging with Community Development Program service providers. Resulting in the Harvest Labour Service Provider receiving applications from new migrants and locals.

A reminder for all Growers seeking workers to utilise the [Territory Jobs Hub](#) talent pool to access potential candidates. If you require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Filming promotional videos at Acacia Hills Farm**



The NT Plant Industries Workforce Development Plan 2020-2025 was launched on 6 August. As an output of the three year Workforce Planning Project the plan was created with engagement from industry and steered by a reference group. Thanks goes to the NT Farmers Board, Joe Clarke, Centrefarm, Leeanne Kruss Far North Queensland Agriculture Workforce

Network, Rod Attwood, Facilitator and Sally Clayton, Consultant, MintKey. Copies are available on the NTFA website. The recommendations require action by Growers, Government and the NT Farmers Association.

Other tasks have included assisting with COVID-19 Management Plans and exemption applications to get Growers, staff and machinery into the NT for essential service.

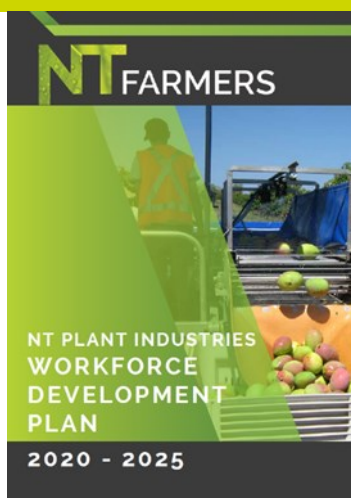
Upcoming events include promoting the job opportunities to students at career expo's and registration events in Darwin and Katherine. Growers assistance at these events are appreciated to educate the potential candidates about the industry and Employers expectations.

There are various Labour Hire Agencies offering to supply staff. Employers are reminded to perform risk mitigation by checking the credentials of these Agencies. There are various ways to do this, the accreditation options include being a member of [Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Australia](#) or The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) or holding ISO 9001 quality management certification ask around other Growers, do a [Google](#) search of the business and check the [Australian Business Register Look Up](#). If you use labour hire agents from the following states; South Australia, Queensland & Victoria they must be licensed in those states, it is your responsibility to adhere to these laws.

Note current COVID-19 restrictions (changing regularly) prevents access to workers from various declared hotspots. Keep up to date on the NT Government website <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>

### Hort Award annual increase set for November

Fair Work Commission has announced a 1.75% increase to minimum wages. This will apply to the Horticultural Award from the first full pay period starting on or after 1 November 2020.





## Welcome to the Team...

We are pleased to welcome Darwin born and bred, Iain Forrest to the NT Farmers Team. Iain joins us in the capacity of Policy and Communications officer.

After graduating with a bachelor of Arts and Communications from Charles Darwin University, he has had a number of diverse roles, starting his career as a photographer to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. This required Iain to network with a range of stakeholders and work closely with the media team.

In 2014 Iain left his Darwin home to work in Europe and South America for three years. Highlights of this period included photographing holiday apartments in Portugal, publishing two ebooks and working for an NGO in Colombia.

After arriving back in Australia in 2017, Iain worked for a photographic agency and also established his own real estate photography business. This period developed his skills in marketing and building customer relationships.

In 2019 he left the uncertain world of freelance photography and joined the Commonwealth Public Service in Canberra.

Iain said he is extremely proud to be working for NT Farmers and that he finds agriculture hugely interesting and is excited to be part of the industry.



*Iain Forrest. Photo credit I Forrest*



*Anna Day. Photo credit R Purtil*

Another warm welcome is extended to Anna Day who joins the Team as our Education Development Officer.

Anna's aim is to encourage young Australians to pursue a career in agriculture.

Her role will support a more profitable, resilient and sustainable agriculture sector by increasing understanding of where our food and fibre comes from and the contribution farming makes to Australia.

It is part of the Educating Kids about Agriculture Project funded by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment running until June 2022.

Anna has a degree in Education and has worked in the Education and Finance sectors previously in New South Wales.

Growing up on a sheep and cropping property in Central NSW, Anna is passionate about agriculture and is keen to promote it to future generations.

Anna is new to the NT and is looking forward to exploring all the amazing sites and regions the Territory has to offer!

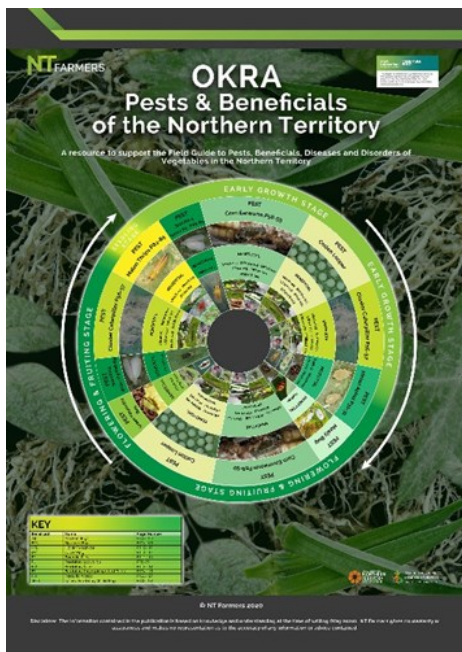


It has been a busy July and August with many wonderful opportunities to engage with our valued members as well as extending those opportunities within our wider community. With the productive dry season in full swing our horticultural growers are harvesting daily the delicious varieties of seasonal produce such as melons, okra, asparagus, pumpkins, zucchini, eggplants, Asian greens, tomatoes, basil and more. The Northern Territory horticultural industry is essential for our national markets and has an important role to play not only locally but as a major contributor to our national food security. NT Farmers commends all our dedicated producers and are proud to provide ongoing support and assistance to them.



The development of support material for the NTG Field Guide on Pests, Beneficials, Diseases and Disorders of Vegetables in northern Australia was been finalised.

These new materials include an infield wheel chart that can be used to identify pests and beneficials in field and A2 posters that can be placed in packing sheds and service areas on farm for employees to become familiar with infield identifications of pests, disease and beneficials.



Earlier this year NT Farmers purchased an autobaler to improve the collections and logistics for the DrumMUSTER program. The baler is powered using a small diesel engine and can bale press up to 14T of pressure. The unit is fully portable and designed ultimately to assist with our regional and remote DrumMUSTER collections. The first cab off the rank was the full cage at the Katherine Waste Facility Management site. A total of 1793 drums were baled, each bale taking approximately 60 drums and weighing around 100kg. The cage is now empty ready to take more drums. If you have any drums that are suitable for the program, please call the Katherine Town Council 89725500 to organise an appointment and suitable time to have your drums inspected. Remember all drums should display the drumMUSTER logo and be triple rinsed, clean and the lid removed. If you have any further questions around the drumMUSTER program or are interested to know more about the Autobaler please contact your NT DrumMUSTER Consultant, Simone Cameron 0413 308 335.



Regional vegetable producers of Katherine recently had an opportunity to participate in a pro bono discussion about the challenges, problems and opportunities they believe are forefront to their production systems.

This timely quorum of local Katherine producers is in line with the commencement of Hort Innovations VegNET Program Phase II focusing on the development and implementation of a Regional Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. It aimed to identify and prioritise key regional issues and to support our vegetable growers to grow healthy crops and to develop successful and profitable businesses.

The focus group was held at the Food Ladder in town, a point of interest for many locals in the region.



Scott MacDonald, Food Ladder, Horticulture and Training Manager NT was pleased to offer the site for the session commenting,

*"It's great to have and to see industry collaboration in the region".*

It was an opportunity for Food Ladder to showcase their hub as a source of locally grown, sustainable and valuable products and is a key reminder and driver to everyone how fresh locally grown produce is a value add to any community.



FOOD LADDER

Growers were very interested in the climatically controlled greenhouse system on site, highlighting the potential for a protected cropping development in the north.

Other key areas discussed were around water and water efficiency practices, understanding and improving soil health to assist with productivity, the implementation of IPM practices to reduce the amount and reliance on conventional pest, disease and weed management practices as well as establishing better supply connections between growers, local and remote community stores and the hospitality industry in the Top End.



National Vegetable  
Extension Network

NORTHERN TERRITORY



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Australian Government

## Media Release

25 August, 2020

### **NT vegetable and mango grower Mitchael Curtis joins the AUSVEG Board**

AUSVEG, Australia's peak industry body for the vegetable and potato industries, has announced the appointment of Mitchael Curtis, mango, melon and vegetable grower from the Northern Territory as a Grower Director on its Board.

Mitchael will replace vegetable grower Michael Quach, based outside of Darwin, who is stepping down after serving over three years on the Board.

Mitchael owns and runs Katherine-based family business King's Farms, which is one of the Northern Territory's biggest horticulture businesses, producing more than 5 million mangoes every year. King's Farms began in 1989 and was one of the first mango growers in the Katherine region. The business has diversified into other melon and vegetable crops, including watermelon, pumpkin and eggplant, as well as an expansive apiary for pollination and honey production.

AUSVEG Chair Bill Bulmer has welcomed Mitchael onto the AUSVEG Board, saying the Northern Territory vegetable industry was lucky to have a strong and passionate local advocate with a wealth of on-farm experience that will greatly benefit the national industry.

"The Northern Territory is becoming an increasingly important sector in the national agriculture industry, with its horticulture growers contributing a great deal to this growth," said Mr Bulmer.

"Growers in the Northern Territory are facing significant issues in sourcing labour, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. But despite the challenges growers in this part of the country face, the industry is resilient and will continue to produce high-quality fruits and vegetables for local and international markets."

"King's Farms is a successful business with a long history of producing high-quality fruits and vegetables. Mitchael has proven himself to be a highly effective business owner and has a strong track record of industry advocacy for growers in the Katherine region. Mitchael will be a perfect addition to the AUSVEG Board. On behalf of the Board and the AUSVEG team, I congratulate Mitchael on his appointment and look forward to working closely with him to advocate for the Northern Territory vegetable and horticulture sectors."

"I would also like to thank Michael Quach for his contribution to the industry during his time on the AUSVEG Board."

"The Australian vegetable industry is an important contributor to Australian horticulture, which is Australian agriculture's highest growing sector by value. Our industry's growers are at the forefront of new innovations and technologies that are continually improving productivity and competitiveness. I look forward to working with Mitchael and the rest of the AUSVEG Board to ensure we continue to represent the best interests of vegetable and potato growers for the future."

For more information:

Shaun Lindhe

AUSVEG

Tel: +61 3 9882 0277

Email: [shaun.lindhe@ausveg.com.au](mailto:shaun.lindhe@ausveg.com.au)

*Right: Mitchael Curtis. Photo credit Katherine Times*



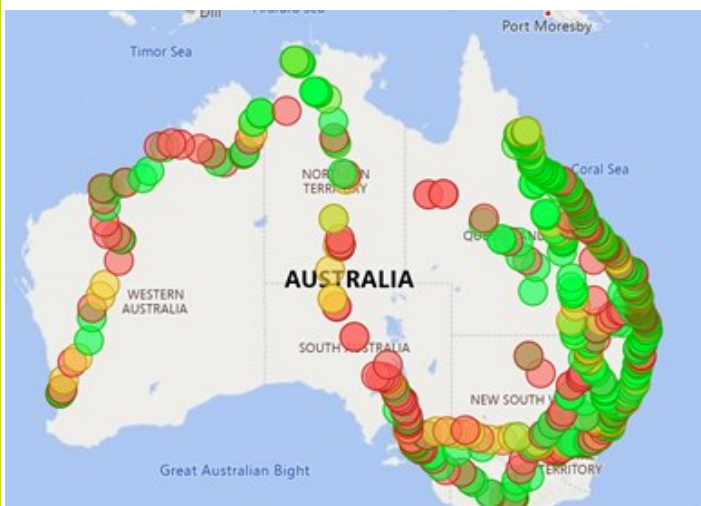


## Temperature management throughout the supply chain – How is the Industry tracking?

Last season Australian Mangoes, with the assistance of Escavox, tracked mango consignments to gain a better understanding of the conditions in which mangoes travel on their journey from the packhouse to the main markets across Australia. Last season was the first in a three-season initiative which seeks to improve overall supply chain performance of the industry.

### Locations and transit dwell time

A number of growers from Darwin, Katherine and Kununurra participated last season. As expected, the average transit dwell time from packhouse to ripening was the highest at 4.1 days for Darwin, followed by Katherine at 3 days and Kununurra sitting at 1.7.



**Overall heat map of all tracks**

**Green dot: Optimum condition**

**Orange & red: Outside recommended temperature range**

### Temperature Performance

Each track was assessed against the industry recommended temperature range for the three key legs in the supply chain:

- At packhouse: minimum 12°C
- Packhouse to ripener (via transport): 12°C-18°C
- At ripener (storage and ripening process): 12°C-22°C.

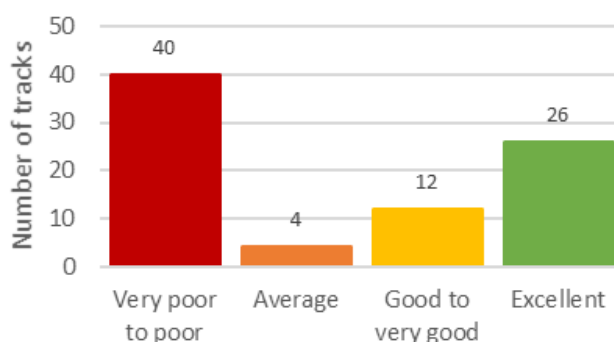
Only 15% of consignments stayed within the recommended temperature range throughout the whole journey. More than three quarters of all tracks experienced temperature issues that were inconsistent with best practice.

Lack of pre-cooling of fruit was identified as a key imperative to poor temperature performance; with almost half of all loads not pre-cooled sufficiently. For a couple of growers, pre-cooling was taking place at the transporter's depot.

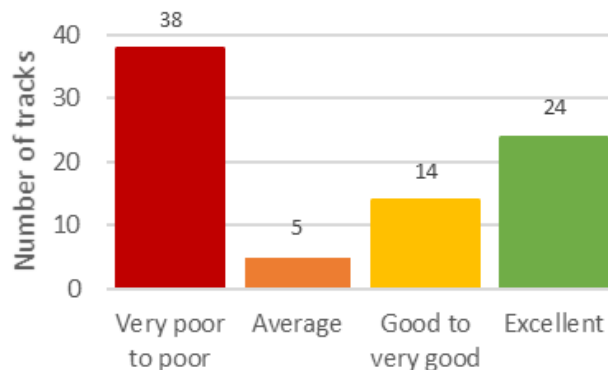
Pre-cooling is critical to help preserve quality and prolong shelf life. Even if fruit is to be partially ripened in-transit, it should be cooled down to 18°C.

Consignments during transport (Graph 1) and ripening (Graph 2) performed similarly with almost half of all tracks performing poorly to very poorly. Industry needs to get a greater understanding of what the impact and ultimately what the cost of this non-compliance is on growers' bottom line.

**Graph 1: Performance during transport**



**Graph 2: Performance during ripening**



There are procedures in place to protect your data, knowing that some data is commercially sensitive.

**This season's project will provide the following benefits to growers:**

- Up to 10 free tracks per grower, with the option for an additional 28 tracks at discounted rates from Escavox
- Real time temperature, location and acceleration data
- Logins for individual growers to access their data in real time
- Alerts when loads outside of the optimal temperature ranges

**For more information or if you would like to be involved in this season, please contact Sarah Hain, Australian Mangoes Industry Development Officer (NT/WA) on 0457 555 939 or [sarah@mangoes.net.au](mailto:sarah@mangoes.net.au)**

*This activity is being undertaken as part of MG1700 Building Best Management Practice Capacity for the Australian Mango Industry which is being funded by Hort Innovation, using the mango industry research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture.*



# 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:

Simone Cameron  
M: 0413308335

[drummuster.org.au](http://drummuster.org.au)

