



E-Bulletin

Welcome to the June edition of the E-Bulletin. **Stay informed** on upcoming events, industry news, services, new publications, and professional development opportunities. If you would like to comment on something you have received, send an email to denyse.corner@dpi.qld.gov.au

FAQI News

Current Projects

FAQI continues to work for its members. The total project value of the listed projects is in excess of \$2 mil.

Horticulture Australia Limited Supported Projects

- Qld Cut Flower Industry Development Unit
Enhancing the uptake of Sustainable Cut Flower Production through the adoption of Farm Management Systems.
- *Australian Flower Industry* magazine
- Flower Industry Study Tour to Amsterdam & HortiFair 2008
- Flower Industry Study Tour to IFEX Japan 2008

Pending:

- Cost & Profit Calculator for Cut Flower Growers

Natural Resources & Water Supported Projects

- South East Queensland - Irrigation Futures
- Rural Water Use Efficiency (3)
- Purchase of Equipment – Shared Equipment Purchase
- Purchase of Equipment – Water Meters – NRW

Pending:

- Using mulch to improve water use efficiency and productivity of in-ground native flower production

DPI&F Supported Projects

- Industry Development Officer
- Property Management System Officer

RIRDC / DPI&F Research & Development Supported Projects

- Optimisation of Irrigation for Key Wildflower/Native crops

Pending:

- Energy Efficiency in Australian Glasshouse Horticulture – Aim: to improve profitability by offsetting rising fuel prices through energy savings.

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Other

- Woolworths Sustainable Farming Program – Grant to develop a case study demonstration farm
- Dilmah Tea - Landcare Australia

Recently completed projects

- Smart Management Training Program - FarmBis
- Identification of a Farm Management System model for the cut flower and foliage industry – 8 workshops completed – LandCare Australia
- Native Flower Seminar – Gympie 13/14th June

South East Queensland – Irrigation Futures Projects – Sam Plant

- Undertaking training using GIS software and our GPS unit to identify where growers are located in SEQ and to create farm maps. The maps will be provided to farms for use in the development of their Farm Management Systems.

RIRDC - The funding has been approved for the “Optimisation of Irrigation for Key Wildflower/Native crops.” Equipment has been purchased/ordered and trials will commence shortly. The project is designed to improve the quality and yield of key wildflower crops through a more targeted and efficient application of irrigation at key growing times. This will be achieved by comparing current water usage (irrigation rates, timing and application technologies) with two other treatment types (irrigation according to need and no irrigation at all) in order to identify areas where practices may be modified to improve overall water use efficiency, while also achieving optimum product quality and yield.

- Cal-Clear Trial - Cal Clear are going to fund the testing of their equipment by FAQI and DPI. The aim is to determine if CalClear treated irrigation lines can maintain performance of irrigation systems better than untreated irrigation lines. Maintaining a uniform irrigation system is one of the biggest challenges for growers with hard water due to calcification of drippers, causing blockages.
- Disinfestation Trial - Trial has been planned, and we plan to test the following technologies... UV system (by UVTA), O-Zone (by Noble Water), Copper Ionisation (by OzAqua), Silver Ionisation (by Silver Water Technology) and Chlorine, to determine for each technology the best way maximize water treatment, and do a cost/benefit analysis of the differing technologies available.
- Mulch Trial - Still waiting on application approval from HAL. The plan is to set up the trial at DPI–Redlands to evaluate different mulches used by the industry and to look at the soil temperature, soil moisture, plant growth and other issues such as cost of mulch under each treatment.
- Woolworths Grant - The funding will enable us to install a technology showcase irrigation system at a grower’s property north of Brisbane. It will be a soil moisture based irrigation that will initiate and manage irrigation according to preset parameters. Flower growers and industry stakeholders will be able to visit the farm to view the operation and look at the benefits of using advanced irrigation scheduling tools to improve crop performance by reducing crop stress periods.

- BWEP - FAQI sent a letter to Anna Bligh, and Amanda Knolworthy regarding the BWEP fund. We highlighted that incentives such as this were by far the best way to encourage change in the industry, and that 6 growers in SEQ-C have invested significant money and now saving huge amounts of water. 3 growers at the time of drafting the letter were told that funding would not likely be given to them due to the \$40million being exhausted by other industries, however, all three have been give the green light for funding if they can complete their works by June 30, 2008.
- We have been very fortunate in securing further funding to purchase state-of-the-art technology from overseas. LeafSen controllers have been purchased from an Israel company, as has new Phytomonitoring equipment. The equipment will be used to finetune irrigation and climate control systems to maximize plant growth for rose and gerbras and other traditional crops.
- Survey forms – When visiting growers, I am now handing out survey forms in the hope that we can collate some grower information. Unfortunately, the previous mailout was not successful in capturing this information. We are looking to improve our knowledge of grower enterprises and industry size/value which in turn will be helpful when writing applications to the funding bodies for grants.
- We have set up a trial using DPI&F soil moisture sensors at Lockyer flowers to evaluate the drinking pattern of roses (and other different varieties) in the slab. Two soil moisture sensors have been placed in each of the rows, with one sensor in the top 3rd of the profile and other sensor in the bottom 3rd of the profile.
- Having spent time with the Native Flower sector, I am now using enviroscans on inground greenhouse rose production in the Lockyer Valley. The aim is to identify rooting depth, improve irrigation application quantity and improve scheduling.

Rural Water Use Efficiency 3 (RWUE3) – Duncan McGregor

Industry Workshops - Soil Properties and Water Quality

The focus for the Jan-March 2008 period has been the setting up and delivery of Soil and Water Workshops. These were conducted throughout Queensland in combination with QTPA. The aim was to provide “hands on” training to growers on soil texture irrigation water quality. There was good attendance at the workshops (>50% of in-ground growers) and feedback from the growers indicated they would like to see more of this type of activity.

Soil moisture monitoring using Enviroscans

Enviroscans remain the major tool being used for monitoring of crop water use and Tensiometers are also being used, to a lesser extent.

The following table contains the status of the crop monitoring with enviroscan equipment:

Crop	District or Town	Current Status
Christmas Bush	Bundaberg	In use at site; Significant differences between soil moisture status between the 2 probes.
Pink Ice	Dagun	In use but will be shifted very soon to

Protea		another farm. Root depth found to be at least 90cm – refer to report DM0207
Christmas Bush	Gympie	In use – one probe recently moved and will remain here until December Refer to report DM0107
Eucalyptus	Warwick/Allora	Removed and will be relocated in the Ingelwood area next month.
Christmas bush and Forest Lace	Nambour /Palmwoods	In use – will remain here for another few months until crop growth of forest lace is established.
Okra and Rosella	Gin Gin	Recently removed – expected to be installed in roses at Bundaberg. Crop water use of 20mm/day. Changes (increased irrigation) were made as a result of this equipment.
Forest Lace	Yungaburra /Atherton	In use – will be moved in June to another forest lace site
Roses	Tolga/Atherton	Equipment returned to Hydrotech Monitoring

Four reports have been completed as follows:

DM0107 – Christmas Bush at Gympie

DM0207 – Protea at Dagun

DM307 – Protea at Childers

DM0607.- Christmas Bush at Nambour

Copies of these reports can be obtained from Duncan McGregor

duncan@flowersqueensland.asn.au

Roses

I have made arrangements for the purchase of phytomonitoring equipment that will measure crop responses to changes in irrigation management. The intention is to monitor the crop for a period, make changes to irrigation and measure the impact of these changes on crop growth. This equipment can be used for hydroponic and in-ground flower production. The initial trials will be conducted in roses at Bundaberg. Light Meters – These are being investigated with a plan to purchase both an on the spot light meter and a logging light meter. These will allow measurement of the light in greenhouses and this has a significant impact on the irrigation requirements.

RIDIC funding for irrigation trials in Protea and Christmas Bush have been approved, sites selected and crop growth measurements have commenced.

Woolworths Grant

We have been successful in our application under the Landcare Australia's partnership with Woolworths Program. The grant of \$11,000 will allow us to develop a demonstration site showing that through the investment in soil moisture controlled irrigation scheduling technology, water use efficiency can be improved by minimizing crop stress and maximizing water application efficiency through precision scheduling. This technology should maintain yield and plant health through times of climactic variation, and maintain (and even increase) crop yield and quality. This will show

growers that there can be substantial financial returns as a result of growers managing water on-site. Additionally, the trial site will become a case study farm and a cost/benefit comparison will be undertaken to build a case for growers to invest in irrigation efficiency in their enterprises.

European Study Tour Amsterdam 2008

Register your interest in the Study Tour to Amsterdam 2008 by emailing denyse.corner@dpi.qld.gov.au. Currently finalising arrangements with travel agent. Full details of the trip will be available next week.

Japan Study Tour 2008

Native & Wildflower growers will also have the opportunity to participate in a Study Tour to IFEX2008 Japan in late October. FAQI and WildFlowers Australia have been successful in obtaining funding to assist with this tour. Interested people to contact denyse.corner@dpi.qld.gov.au or Lodi Pameijer, [management@wildflowersaustralia.com.au]

Workshops and Seminars

Native & Wildflower Seminar & Field Tour – “Solutions for a Better Future”

Another very successful seminar was held at Gympie on the 13/14th June with record attendances this year. Thanks to our sponsors for supporting the event: The *Australian Flower Industry* magazine, DPI&F, NRW, ICT and Organic Crop Protectants. The objective of the seminar was to discuss new products, production technologies, water efficiencies, export opportunities and current research. While there is always room for improvement the feedback suggests that the 2008 seminar was a huge success.

Dr Audrey Gerber from Victoria kindly accepted our invitation to be the key note speaker, and in her inimitable style, with secateurs in hand, lived up to her reputation as the ‘master’ in the industry. I had every intention of reporting on the Native Flower Seminar in the E-Bulletin but instead will print some of the feedback we have received which only reinforces the high value people place on these industry events.

Following is an extract from the report on the Queensland Native Flower Seminar by Harry Kibbler, President, Native Flower Growers’ Association (Mid North Coast) Inc. – Floral Focus

Gympie, Queensland 13th and 14th June 2008. “For me these functions are similar to an injection of adrenalin. I always come away with renewed enthusiasm and a desire to implement the new ideas and information passed on by other participants. The format and some of the presentations were similar to the NSW conference in Feb.08. The following information is a selection of information and ideas from the seminar and farm tour that were of interest to me as a grower. Craig Scott (East Coast Wildflowers) from Sydney Markets: The best trading days are Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Bunching of flowers is often insufficient or too loose. Flowers/foilage with long stems need to be tied at two places in order to prevent bunches falling apart. Binding machines are frequently set too loose. When sending *Banksia plagiocarpa* ensure there is a balance between the head (inflorescence) size and the stem length. This applies to all flowers but is often overlooked. The ideal time to harvest *B. plagiocarpa* is when they are fully developed (not green) but before the flowers begins to open near the base of the

inflorescence. Stems with yellowing leaves can be cut down to 50cm and sent as seconds.

Don Biffin (Crop Science-Bayer): The popular insecticide against psyllids in Christmas bush 'Confidor' is weakly translocated. Although systemic it does not readily translocate through the phloem. Therefore, plants need a good coverage to maximise their effect on psyllids. Bayer has developed forms of Confidor that improve control when applied through the fertigation or as a soil drench. The chemical is readily taken up by the roots and rapidly moves through the plant via the xylem. Control of psyllids should last for 6 weeks. To convert ml/Ha to ml/L divide by 1,000. For example: 500ml/Ha is equivalent to 0.5ml/L (50ml/100L).

Audrey Gerber (Floriculture advisor from Victoria). The knowledgeable Audrey gave a professional talk and demonstration on pruning. Proteas require a minimum length and diameter before they flower. They grow in bursts interspersed with periods of rest. The rest periods can be identified by the rings of short leaf like bracts. These areas of bracts do not have auxiliary buds and should be avoided when pruning. The terminal bud contains a complete growth cycle, leaves, internodes and buds. The bud grows out and rests before forming a terminal flower or continues with the next cycle of growth. The priorities in the allocation of resources in plants are: Seed>flowers>leaves>stems>roots. For example; if you cut the flowers off, the plant will direct resources first to the leaves then the stem and lastly the roots.

Leyland Minter (Organic Crop Protectants); The presentation on Azamax the IPM friendly broad spectrum insect control product was informative. Leyland has an excellent understanding of the chemistry behind his products.

Nancy DeLoosa (CEO Austem Group). This presentation created considerable interest and speculation. Nancy described the company's role as supply chain managers. The company have hired Audrey Gerber (although since the seminar this situation, I believe has changed) and another expert on wildflowers from Israel. They believe a breeding program is the key to success. Their initial selections for breeding are grevillea, riceflower, and flannel flower. Nancy reported that they have entered into an agreement with Kings Park in Western Australia to undertake a breeding programme with grevillea. No doubt we will learn more in the future.

David Mathieson (Chairman NFG Co-operative); David's talk proved very popular and a number of growers have approached him to either join the Co-op or seek further information. Unfortunately, most of the growers are too far away to have any benefit from joining a co-operative in the mid north coast of NSW area. However, growers in the Gympie area could benefit greatly from a structured association. I am sure we could support David in his offer to help the Queensland growers in forming some form of grower co-operative.

Keith Lamberton from Nambour gave an insightful account of the auction system in Japan. Keith was part of a tour organised by Brian Freeman to Osaka and Tokyo in April.

The dinner following the seminar proved a great success for our table in that we won the quiz on the Olympic Games. As the majority of delegates on our table came from NSW, it was a brief relief from the numerous jibes we suffered over the recent loss of the NSW blues at the hands of Queensland.

We returned home enthused, more informed and with a number of contacts well worth maintaining.”

NB: from the E-Bulletin Editor – Sorry Harry, another origin match has taken place since the Native Flower Seminar and may I remind you ... yet again... Queensland rocks!!

Farm Management System Development

As part of the milestone obligations for SEQ-IF and RWUE(3) we are required to undertake the development of a Farm Management System (FMS) for growers focusing on best management practices, irrigation management and the environment. The system will be a useful tool for managing business improvement and sustainability. The following list of activities have been prioritised by growers for inclusion in a Farm Management System for cut flower and foliage growers.

- Farm Planning/Design Layout
- Land & Soil Management (In ground Growers)
- Substrate Management (Hydroponic Grower)
- Planting
- Water & Irrigation Management
- Chemical Management
- Nutrient Management
- Managing Waste
- Managing native Vegetation, Animals & Ecosystems
- Efficient Energy use
- Harvesting
- Post Harvest
- Integrated Pest Management

New Member of Staff - Claire Ellis has recently been employed by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and in her role as Farm Management Systems Officer, Lifestyle Products and Services will be assisting FAQI and Qld Turf Producers Assoc. in their Farm Management System Projects. The objective of the FAQI project is to develop a Farm Management System based on best practice guidelines which address key components of production management including water and environmental best practice tailored to the cut flower and foliage industry.

Claire has worked for DPI in northern Victoria, with dairy, broadacre and horticulture farmers. Here she delivered the Sustainable Agriculture Program and Drought Recovery Packages. Claire will soon be out and about visiting growers to find out about the various methods of flower production. Please make her welcome.

Australian Flower Industry – magazine Issue 19 out now!

Are you a subscriber? If not, please sign the Subscription form that can be found in the new edition of the magazine. Secure your copy by subscribing today.

Email faq@flowersqueensland.asn.au. Subscription Rates: One Year \$28.00 (Australia); Two Years \$56.00 (Australia). Outside Australia – POA

Contributions: Send a letter to the AFI magazine and tell us what you would like to see in future issues, what you do or don't like about the magazine or send in a pest, marketing or promotion tip. We will endeavour to print as many letters as possible

and will have prizes for the best letters in each issue. Post your letters to:

amanda@flowersqueensland.asn.au.

Good quality images are also very welcome!

WildFlowers Australia Ltd

- For more information visit the WFA website www.wildflowersaustralia.com.au

FAQI Website

- Apologies for the FAQI website – it is currently undergoing some maintenance and will shortly be fully restored.

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