

# Australian MUSHROOMS JOURNAL

Edition 3 - 2018



**Hort  
Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**MUSHROOM  
FUND**



# Australian Mushrooms Journal

ISSUE: EDITION 3 - 2018

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MUSHROOM INDUSTRY JOURNAL is a levy funded publication, compiled on behalf of the Australian mushroom industry.

#### EDITORIAL

Chris Rowley - Editor 0415 140 253

Judy Allan - Editorial Consultant - 02 6767 1057

PUBLICATION DATES: Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn

COPY DEADLINE: Six weeks prior to the cover date

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

This project Communication program for the Australian Mushroom Industry 2016-19 [MU15001] has been funded by Hort Innovation using the mushroom 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. The Journal is available to levy payers and others involved in the Australian Industry. The Journal is distributed as an electronic copy only. Requests to be included on the distribution list should be directed to the Editor.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor from readers on subjects of interest to the mushroom industry are welcomed and encouraged. All contributions should be emailed to the Editor - [chrisrowley@optusnet.com.au](mailto:chrisrowley@optusnet.com.au)

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AMGA CONTACT Phone: 02 4577 6877. Mail: Locked Bag 3, Windsor NSW 2756

# EDITORIAL



I like mushroom industry conferences, and if you are involved in the industry, you should like them as well. For me, they are a great opportunity to listen and learn and to be updated on what is happening, from the very people who know.

So, in case you have not heard the news [and I sincerely hope that is not the case] the Australian Mushroom Growers Conference is on from 11-13 October in Sydney. In putting together this Journal, I have touched base with many of the speakers and gathered together a bit of a "tease" on the topics covered. Please take the time to read through the story, which provides a good appetiser for the upcoming conference.

Another great thing about the conference is the opportunity to not only hear from the speakers but to sit and talk with industry participants. From my perspective, this gives me a feel for what is happening on-farm and how the Communication Project can work to keep you informed throughout the year.

As always, we have packed the Journal with plenty of information that is relevant to your business. As I have said before – to stay up to date, read on...

The new television campaign has commenced and Hort Innovation Marketing Manager, Samantha Ferguson reports on changes to the campaign, and the research underpinning those changes. There is also a detailed report covering marketing activities conducted in the second quarter of the year.

Ultimately it is all about encouraging more people to eat more mushrooms.

The Pest and Disease Management and Research Service project has been on the road, delivering workshops in Adelaide in June and Melbourne in July. With further workshops now being planned for New South Wales in mid September and Queensland in 2019, the Journal covers what you can expect to learn by attending these events. There are separate articles covering the issue of fungicides and the availability of up-to-date resources on pest and disease issues.

There is also a story on the development of the new compost facility at White Prince, an update on the new benchmarking project, an update on Hort Innovation activities and information and links on many other activities of interest.

If you have any feedback on the articles or would like to make some suggestions for future editions, please let me know.

Chris Rowley  
Editor

Chris

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**Hort**  
**Innovation**





Tim Adlington, Chairman, Australian Mushroom Growers Association

# AMGA Chairman's Report

**D**ear levy payers and AMGA members,  
While plenty is happening at the moment, I am pleased to say the good news is that markets remain relatively stable at the time of writing, with plenty of positives for our industry.

The AMGA Strategic Plan is one of these positives, establishing a clear direction for industry activities undertaken on your behalf. In this column I would like to not only share what is currently happening but also reflect on one of the critical elements of the Strategic plan, covering the issue of communication. Strategy four is straight to the point: "The AMGA wants to flow out information to our members."

Great achievement is pointless if members are unaware of the outcome or how they can gain benefit from it. Your levy dollars are hard at work on many fronts, and when it comes to communications, this means finding your needs and delivering appropriately.

The AMGA General Manager, Sally Heukers speaks with and visits many of you on a regular basis to provide information and listen to any feedback on industry issues. In addition, a new and improved digital platform is underway designed to maintain strong and relevant links with industry

participants. The site will provide updates on a range of information including scholarship opportunities from the Frontier Fund.

Also, at a project level, there is plenty of activity directed at keeping you informed and spreading the mushroom message. This activity includes Judy Allan and Warwick Gill who are in direct contact with many farms and provide continual updates on pest and disease management. In the area of marketing and public relations, there are many agencies including Bite, Ikon and D2C who are coordinated through Hort Innovation and are responsible for delivering mushroom information to consumers.

This Journal, managed by Chris Rowley as part of the Communication project acts as a central point of focus, gathering together the cross-section of work undertaken on your behalf. The publication has a high level of mushroom information and has become a "Must Read" for everyone in the industry.

In the area of research and development, our opportunities are progressing well, with the members of the Marsh Lawson Centre and the Strategic Advisory panel working to develop some exciting projects through to the tender process. The process of initiating proposals and progressing them to projects is working smoothly, and Hort Innovation is showing great leadership on these committees. I am personally pleased that research projects developed through the Marsh Lawson Centre and presented to the SIAP for recommendation were largely accepted.

At our most recent Marsh Lawson R&D meeting, the committee met with project research providers. It seemed a watershed moment as the energy in the room built as researchers identified

areas of overlap and saw how they could help each other to deliver industry outcomes.

AMGA works cooperatively with the research providers to represent the broader interests of the industry. Through a funded project [MU17000] the AMGA provides consultation around, and input into, industry projects including food safety and QA Risk Management [MU16000], Pest and Disease Management and Research Services [MU16003] and Communication program for the Australian Mushroom Industry 2016-2019 [MU15001]. This project-based approach is instrumental in representing the best interests of our industry.

In May, the SIAP used independent reviewers to ensure accountability and a clear understanding of the progress and payback from the marketing investment. The review and analysis of the results provide continual refinement, improving the use of levy dollars.

The marketing future looks bright on a couple of fronts. We are now investing in a foodservice outreach program to tap into trends like "blending" and the increased use of mushrooms in burgers and other dining out meals. A project to communicate the benefits of mushrooms to health providers in the expectation that they extend the information to their clients will also shortly be in place.

The energy of Samantha Ferguson [Hort Innovation Marketing Manager] and John Vatikiotis [Industry Relationship Manager] should be acknowledged as every month we gain momentum.

Until next time.

*Tim Adlington*

Update from



# Sally Heukers

## AMGA General Manager Report



**D**ear industry members,

The industry is gaining momentum, with projects and activities that are

building a solid foundation for future growth. AMGA continues to work closely with industry stakeholders and representing the broader interests of the industry. AMGA has established projects which continue to strengthen the industry and increase consumer confidence and awareness.

### AMGA Industry Conference

This is one not to be missed. It will be an opportunity to learn from several world-leading experts, hear about innovative research and technology, visit leading farms, and network with peers, local and international businesses, delegates and industry leaders.

The conference will provide a chance to get many of your industry questions answered with experienced delegates and subject matter experts covering a wide range of topics.

There will also be many opportunities to relax with colleagues at any of the numerous social breaks and dinners throughout the event.

AMGA has also secured a post-conference visit to Adelaide with two farm visits. A very special rate is offered to AMGA members and conference delegates. Register via the AMGA conference website.

Early bird rates to the conference are open until Friday 24th August. If you have not attended an industry conference for a while this is one for you. You can view the program and register online via the AMGA industry conference website here:

<https://amgaconference.mushrooms.net.au>

### Food Safety Project - Compliance Survey

Food safety is crucial to ensure consumer confidence with our industry and AMGA continues to drive investment in projects such as Food Safety and QA Risk Management [MU16000]. One of the activities being undertaken is an industry survey to establish a 'snap shot' of compliance enabling better targeting of resources to support you. Please take a few minutes of your time and fill out the survey. If you would like to know more, need assistance or haven't seen the survey please give me a call.

### Member Service - Quality Assurance Testing

A gentle reminder that AMGA continues to provide access to on-farm QA testing. Test kits can be ordered by Beryl via email [admin@amga.asn.au].

### Benchmarking Project

The Mushroom Industry Data Collection Project [MU16006] is another example of a data project investigating ways to improve business operations and build confidence in the industry. The AMGA has played a pivotal role to establish this project and is working

with RMCG to ensure the project delivers the best outcome for our industry. We encourage you to participate, and with participation you will be given a series of performance benchmarks for use in your business. The production benchmarks include energy, water and labour inputs, and identify potential areas for improvement. To get involved, read more about the project in this Journal or give me a call to discuss. Your feedback is important to us.

### Coming up:

AMGA has a busy few months coming up with key events on the agenda including the next Strategic Industry Advisory Panel [SIAP], the MLMRU R&D Steering Committee, development of new R&D project proposals, the final activities associated with delivering the upcoming AMGA industry conference and preparation for the Association's AGM.

If you have any questions or feedback about the R&D program, marketing program, the industry conference, member's services or anything else please get in touch.

I look forward to seeing you at the AMGA conference!

Please contact me on 0472 599 135 or email me at [sally.heukers@amga.au](mailto:sally.heukers@amga.au).

Regards,

*Sally Heukers*

# MUCH MUCH EASIER



## Marketing review highlights **positive opportunities**

In any business, the key to long-term success is continual improvement. The same approach is used in marketing Australian Mushrooms, with the marketing team and lead agencies all striving to examine current activities with a view to the future.

### Further information:

Hort Innovation Marketing Manager –  
Samantha Ferguson

Samantha.Ferguson@horticulture.com.au  
02 8295 2328

Since 2015, two independent reviews into the marketing program for Australian Mushrooms have been undertaken. The most recent review, undertaken earlier this year with input from a range of stakeholders, was conducted to review the effectiveness of the program and to identify opportunities for improvement.

The review found that stakeholders were happy with the campaign and felt it has been effectively delivered in a professional manner. From a creative viewpoint, the review found the campaign had performed well, and highlighted opportunities to further reach the core target market of disengaged cooks, who want to know how to include more mushrooms in their everyday meals.

The seasonal timing was acknowledged as being a valued approach [with activity shouldering the summer months and heavier through the middle of the year], and will continue over the next three-year campaign.

The review also highlighted foodservice as a growing area of demand, and further attention will focus on ways to tap into this growth and encourage the wider use of mushrooms in meals prepared outside of the home.

An analysis of Nielsen Homescan and consumer research data indicated that the campaign activities had successfully impacted consumers over the 2015-18 period.

The Nielsen Homescan data shows that over the past three years Australian households are shopping more frequently for mushrooms, buying more mushrooms per trip [up 3.38%] and overall buying more mushrooms each year [up 7.16%].

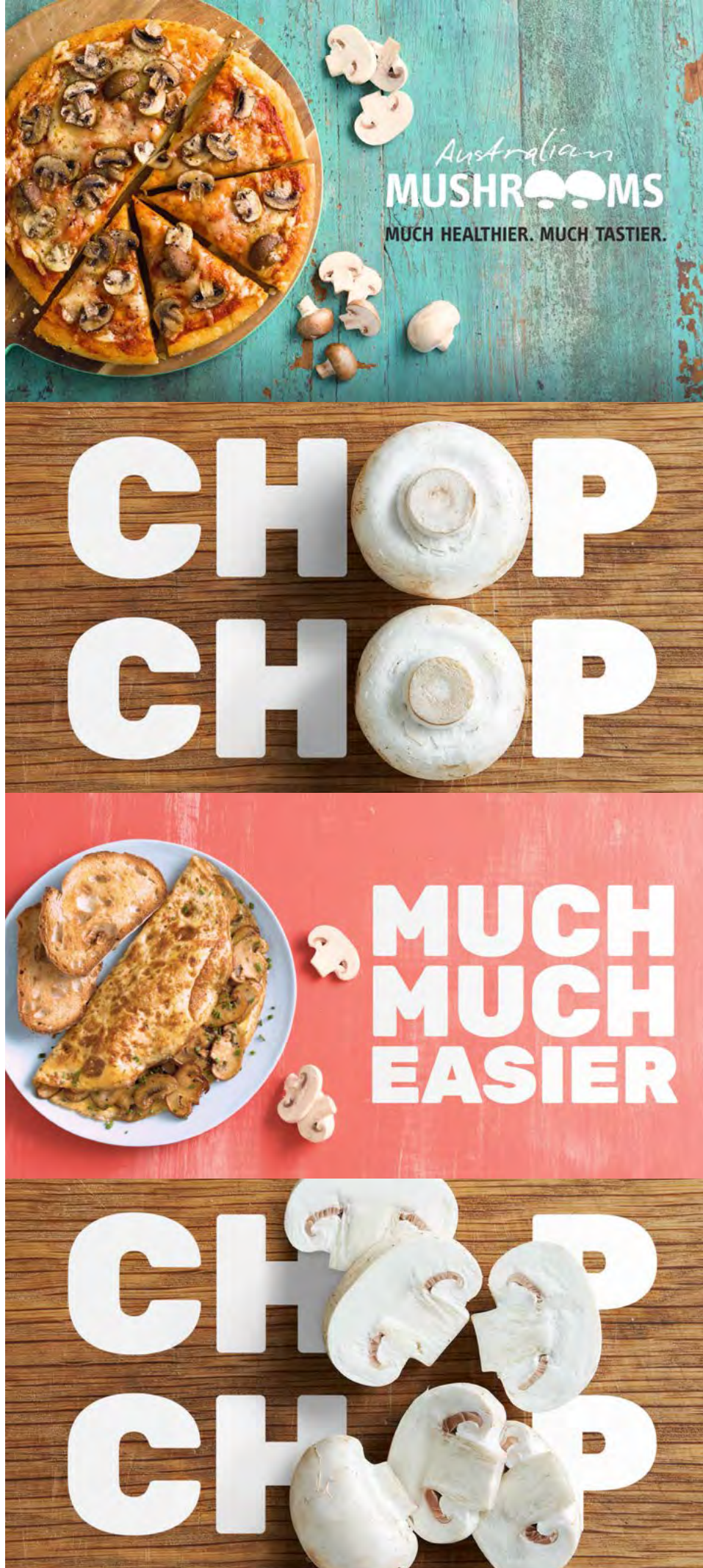
The review was all about understanding how the campaign is working for Australian Mushrooms, and identifying opportunities to continue talking to our core target market. Over the next three years, the campaign will place more emphasis on disengaged cooks, and provide them with even more opportunities to engage with mushrooms.

What was also evident from the consumer research is that there has been a real lift in consumption among those people who are already using mushrooms. In terms of the campaign, the diverse range of communication activities has successfully increased awareness of Australian Mushrooms, with television and radio advertising contributing most to the reach of the campaign.

The core campaign messages that centre around the "Much Healthier, Much Tastier" positioning continue to come through clearly in advertising, inspiring positive action - with the television commercial particularly effective at increasing mushroom usage in existing meals.

The Australian Mushrooms Ambassador, Miguel Maestre is recognised, liked and trusted by a large proportion of the Australian population, and most importantly has a positive effect on mushroom consumption for those that associate him with Australian mushrooms.

The images shown on Pages 6-7 highlight the refreshed approach for Australian Mushrooms. Click on the images to view the television ads.





*Above: You can't have the Grand Finale of Masterchef without mushrooms! With over 1 million viewers it was the perfect ad placement to reach the core target market.*

## Updating the campaign approach

The 2018-2021 strategy builds on the consumer research, independent marketing review and overall campaign results. Knowing that the current approach is resonating more with confident cooks and heavy mushroom users, there is now an even greater emphasis on targeting the less confident, disengaged, medium mushrooms users. The campaign creative has been refreshed (see Pages 6-7) to make it more 'disruptive', specifically targeting this group of consumers, with a strong 'ease' message that brings mushrooms and 'simple cooking' to the forefront. The look and feel has also been evolved to give the ads a fun and bright feel. Colourful textured backgrounds and the introduction of messages like 'Chop Chop and its done' are used to help Australian Mushrooms stand out from the crowd while signalling ease, speed and 'an anyone can do it' mentality. The ads are designed to really showcase how easy it is to add mushrooms to every meal (and that they are delicious). Naturally enough the new creative will

be rolled out across all the Australian Mushrooms communication channels, with consumers scheduled to see the new campaign from early August. Between now and the end of 2018, Australian Mushrooms advertising will take place through the following channels: television, static and digital billboards (roadside and shopping centre), paid social media, digital and programmatic (including Spotify).

### Television

A total of three different creatives will appear in the television advertising, which commenced in the week starting 5 August. The ads will screen over a total of five weeks in two-week blocks, with one week off between the two periods. The ads will appear on free to air and subscription metropolitan television throughout Australia and on regional television in North and South New South Wales. Some of the programs in which the ads will appear include The Block, Talking About Your Generation, Family Food Fight, The Bachelor, Survivor Australia, and Russell Coight's All Aussie Adventures.

Australian Mushrooms will also be a proud broadcast sponsor for the next series of Gogglebox Australia on Foxtel! Season 8 will continue to share the

reactions of ordinary Australians as they watch the nightly news, argue over politics, cheer on their favourite sporting teams and digest documentaries. It's the program that unites and excites us all, and places Australian Mushrooms at the top of mind of grocery buyers across the country. Gogglebox Australia will be aired on Foxtel's Lifestyle Main channel, and is projected to reach 228,000 people per episode. Our sponsorship will last for four weeks, starting early September.

**Details: Gogglebox airs on Wednesdays, so this will begin on 5 September.**

### Masterchef opportunity

Excitingly, Australian Mushrooms secured ad placement in the 2018 MasterChef Grand Finale on Wed 21 July 2018. With over one million viewers, over half of which are the main grocery buyers in their household, this was the perfect place to remind our core target market that adding mushrooms to everyday meals is easy, healthy and tasty!



*Above: Australian Mushrooms are the broadcast sponsor for Googlebox Season 8.*

## Billboards

Static and digital billboards will be used in metropolitan and regional areas in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. These will be live for between one and four weeks duration, in shopping centres and on high traffic road/motorway billboards, commencing from mid-August.

## Social media

Paid social media advertising will also be undertaken as part of the campaign activities, commencing in August and running through until mid-December. This advertising will be similar to the television advertising and consist of 6-second and 15-second video clips, carefully targeted to reach the core audience. The targeted approach will allow the ads to appear directly in the newsfeed of selected consumers, with direct links to relevant recipes on the Australian Mushrooms website.

## Digital media

Digital media advertising will be undertaken on a range of top websites and through YouTube and Spotify. The websites include major catch up sites [plus7, 9Now, 10Play, SBS on Demand] plus the big news and entertainment sites [news.com, SMH.com, dailytelegraph, 9honey, MSN.com and all their subsidiaries]. These ads will run from mid-August until mid-December.



*Above: Static and digital billboards will be updated with the new creative.*

## Events

With the 2018-2021 strategy, the number of events attended will be refined to take into account the target audience of less confident cooks. As a result, Australian Mushrooms will attend the 2019 Royal Easter Show in Sydney and the Brisbane Ekka. Other event opportunities will also be investigated.

## Mushroom Ambassador

Miguel Maestre is set to continue as the Australian Mushrooms Ambassador, providing support for the new program approach and initiatives. During his time in the role, Miguel has proved a very popular figure with consumers, attracting a rock star following at events. His popular following and his ability to deliver inspirational recipe and meal ideas offer an ideal

opportunity to spread the mushroom messaging. Work is now planned to build on the relationship as a means of encouraging consumers to add more mushrooms to more meals.

## Other communication channels

In addition to the activities outlined above that will feature the updated approach, updates will be made to existing resources to ensure consistency across the campaign. As a result, the Australian Mushrooms website will be updated and videos added to YouTube. The refreshed messaging will also appear across the Australian Mushrooms social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) and through the electronic direct mail newsletter distributed on a regular basis.

## Foodservice

Within the new program, greater emphasis will be placed on foodservice, with a range of activities planned for the coming period to build on opportunities in this sector.

The first year of the Foodservice Farm Tour program delivered positive feedback and increased the understanding of the requirements of participants. Targeted at foodservice professionals, the tours provide attendees with the opportunity to learn more about the mushroom industry at a hands-on, farm level. Pleasingly all respondents would recommend this type of tour to other chefs in the network and agreed that the tour had improved their knowledge of Australian Mushrooms. From an Australian Mushrooms perspective, the tours are also valuable in not only building relationships but also a deeper understanding of the requirements of the foodservice sector. The use of the

tours as a means of building relationships can help bring forward potential opportunities to get more mushrooms on more menus, which is a win-win situation for growers and foodservice operators.

Building on the success of this approach, a tender process for the next farm visits which will happen in the first half of 2019.

Over the longer term, the intention is to build a comprehensive strategic plan directed at maximising the use of mushrooms in the foodservice sector. Part of this process is undertaking research to understand the foodservice channel better, to establish a benchmark of how mushrooms are used and where they appear on the menu. A custom research study has now been scoped to establish this benchmark. To reduce the cost of the study, Australian Mushrooms will work in a funding partnership with the avocado and onion industries.

The study will allow opportunities to be identified and allow future work in this area to be specifically targeted to address these opportunities.

The second research component within the foodservice area is for a two-year subscription to a syndicated marketing report of the wider Australian foodservice industry. This report will provide a range of information about the various components of the foodservice sector including café's, pubs, hotels, and restaurants and identify food trends across the sector. In combination, these two components will allow a greater understanding of product usage, barriers, volumes and value and identify potential opportunities for Australian Mushrooms. This information will then be used to help shape a carefully targeted industry strategy, with the objective of increasing overall consumption for mushrooms in the foodservice setting.



**Foodservice is often at the forefront of food trends, and this focus provides an opportunity to be a part of emerging trends. The inclusion of mushrooms in more dining out meals helps to inspire consumers, many of whom then feel confident to replicate the experience when cooking at home. The increased focus on foodservice represents an exciting opportunity for Australian Mushrooms.**

# Extending the Australian Mushrooms message to consumers



*Above: Australian Mushrooms Ambassador, Miguel Maestre attracted plenty of interest at the Good Food & Wine Show in Sydney.*

While the 2018-21 marketing strategy will see some tweaks to both

the focus and the delivery, it is important to remember that the Australian Mushrooms approach has always relied on strong, consistent messaging to encourage high consumption. As outlined in the previous story, an independent review has found the campaign has been effectively delivered, helping to drive increased consumption of Australian Mushrooms.

This story takes a look back over the marketing activities delivered in the second quarter of 2018 [April-June 2018]. Through the rest of 2018, many of these activities will continue, with the refreshed creative. As outlined in previous reports, while the components are covered separately, it should be noted that the individual elements and channels form a coordinated approach with activities in one area being supported by those in another. Multiple channels are used throughout the year, with the aim of covering as much of

the year with live advertising and promotional activity as possible – this is then underpinned with an always on approach to social media and targeted PR activity.

## Digital Video

The great thing about digital media is the opportunity it provides for extending a campaign message, through a variety of channels. In the second quarter of 2018 digital video picked up where the television campaign [which concluded in March] left off, featuring advertisements on the major catch-up TV apps, including plus7, 9Now, Tenplay and SBS on Demand. This approach provided direct access into popular television shows such as My Kitchen Rules, Bachelor in Paradise and Married at First Sight. In addition to these popular TV shows, the Australian Mushrooms ad was also shown to consumers viewing videos in the food, health and nutrition environment online.

The digital media approach has worked well achieving some 8.35 million impressions across the campaign. Pleasingly almost 90% of

these impressions were watched to completion, which is well above the industry benchmark of 70%.

As outlined in a previous report, Australian Mushrooms has used the new six-second 'bumper ad' format on the YouTube network as another means of driving home the campaign message. These ads have been viewed over 2.5 million times across key target audiences with a similarly high completion rate of over 90%.

## Spotify

A change to Spotify [the digital music streaming service providing access to millions of songs, podcasts and videos from artists all over the world] has opened up further opportunity for Australian Mushrooms. A change to their ad-supported free product, dubbed 'Active Media' allows listeners to choose whether they see, hear or skip ads.

From a listener viewpoint, the benefit is in viewing/hearing only those ads that are of interest, while advertisers benefit by only paying for a fully completed listen or view. Australian Mushrooms is now looking at adopting smart creative to adapt to the new structure and take advantage of the improved user experience to encourage music lovers to become mushroom lovers.



## Events

The distinctive Australian Mushrooms caravan has been on the go again, attending the Good Food and Wine Shows in Melbourne (1-3 June) and Sydney (22-24 June), achieving a total reach of 61,158 show goers. Experience has refined the process at these types of events with the visual impact of the stand attracting customers, who are then entertained with cooking demonstrations and samples.

Brand Ambassador Miguel Maestre attracted widespread attention with his two cooking demonstrations at the Sydney Good Food and Wine Show, cooking his delicious new recipe "Mushroomroni 'N' Cheese", and taking photos with his fans.

To reinforce the mushroom message a combined total of 20,700 samples and 24,700 brochures were handed out to attendees at the event.

## In-store

Starting in April, Australian Mushrooms increased its in-store presence, with a syndicated merchandising campaign in 100 Independent stores across Australia. The stores were visited to deploy point of sale materials and educate staff on handling, sorting and other best practices for mushrooms merchandising.

The Australian Mushrooms Winter 2018 in-store sampling campaign kicked off in mid-June. The campaign, which concluded in early August, was conducted across 370 sampling sessions in Coles, Woolworths and Independent stores in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. An average of 78 samples and 70 brochures were distributed per session, resulting in sales of 23 prepacks and 7.7kg per session.

## Public Relations

With recipe inspiration acting as a primary means to attract consumers, Australian Mushroom recipes continued to flood mainstream media. This approach gained significant coverage including BW Magazine (lift-out in Saturday's Daily Telegraph), popular food website Best Recipes and syndications through regional newspaper networks.



*Above: Customers of all ages have enjoyed the in-store sampling of Australian Mushrooms.*



### Zoodle and mushroom salad

serves / 4 prep / 15 min cook / 10 min



**STORY**  
Lemon and herb mushroom salad



### Barbecuing without a steak



*Above and right: New mushroom recipes have gained solid media coverage.*

## New recipes

To boost the current recipe collection and add further interest, a new series of recipes by Australian Mushrooms Ambassador, Miguel Maestre was commissioned. Australian Mushrooms PR agency, Bite Communication innovatively launched the new recipes, undertaking a publishing house tour on 6 August, to share the materials and cooking demonstrations with key publications. The tour with Miguel will develop stronger and strengthen existing relationships with key media, ensuring mushrooms are top of mind and cementing Miguel as the face of Australian Mushrooms. Another benefit is that the tour was time friendly for media representatives, allowing them to access mushroom information (and Miguel's delicious cooking) without having to leave their office.

As part of the new recipe creation, new images and videos have been produced to be seeded with media and shared via the Australian Mushrooms social media channels. The recipes have put a mushroom spin on classic Aussie dishes, with Miguel's 'mushroomroni 'n' cheese muffins', a 'garlic mushroom chicken kiev' and 'Miguel's funguy chicken pie'. To further extend the reach of the campaign and the concept of adding mushrooms to favourite everyday meals, three micro-influencers have also been engaged. These influencers will share dishes that they have made-over with mushrooms and then shared on their social media channels, reaching thousands more consumers with the mushroom message. They will focus on ease, taste and health – aligning with our campaign key messaging but in their own individual, authentic and engaging way.

## Additional PR activities

For winter, the Australian Mushrooms website was updated with a new theme and focus, featuring Miguel and his popular Funguy chicken pie recipe. This recipe is among the most popular on the site and taps into 'pie' as a key trending search term for consumers. The Mushroom Lovers Club direct mail has continued, reaching a database of 27,000 subscribers. Content has included sharing Miguel's secret for getting kids cooking in the kitchen, some must-try mushroom pie recipes, and Miguel's tips for healthier and tastier meatballs.



*Above: One of the new series of recipes is Miguel's fun-guy chicken pie. The recipes have put a mushroom spin on classic Aussie dishes. Another series of recipes will be commissioned in early 2019 for the Winter campaign.*

*Below: One pot wonders were the focus of the recent Mushroom Lovers Club newsletter.*



Chicken & Mushroom Risotto  
Prep: 15 mins Cook: 45 mins



Lamb Shanks with Mushrooms  
Prep: 5 mins Cook: 3hr 10 mins



Asian Style Slow Cooked Beef Cheek  
Prep: 5 mins Cook: 3hr 5 mins



Chicken & Mushroom Casserole  
Prep: 20 mins Cook: 45 mins

## Social Media

Social media is one of the “always on” components of the marketing program, providing the opportunity to communicate regularly with fans and followers. Over the last quarter, the social media program has continued to inspire with delicious recipes created by Miguel, supported by recipes curated from influencers.

This engaging content saw impressions rise an impressive 59% over the quarter, compared to the first three months of 2018. The engagement rate also increased to 5%, demonstrating that the content is resonating with fans. Miguel's role with Australian Mushrooms was leveraged via a Facebook Live video covering his cooking demonstration at the Sydney Good Food and Wine Show. The ever-popular Miguel impressed fans by cooking up one of his newly created recipes – his ‘mushroomroni ‘n’ cheese’ pasta. Organically, the video reached almost 10,000 people with 85 comments.

Social media is more than just a channel to share the Australian Mushroom message, it's also a great way for fans to communicate directly with us – it's an excellent tool for building that two-way dialogue and gauging how consumers feel and think. It is always impressive to see the photos from fans sharing their cooking using the Australian Mushroom recipes, it's a real community – that's true engagement and brand love!

## MyFoodBook.com.au

MyFoodbook is a recipe and cookbook destination where users can create personalised digital cookbooks using recipes from Australia's leading cooking & food brands, combined with their own ideas and recipes... all for free. The Australian Mushrooms' subscription to the MyFoodBook platform includes a landing page, links to the Australian Mushrooms website, profiles on social media, mushroom recipe showcases, editorial features and inclusion in 20+ eNewsletters to 80,000 subscribers as well as features in digital and printed seasonal cookbooks. More than 33,500 Australian Mushroom recipes were saved to user profiles, over 750,000 video engagements and more than 36,000 digital cookbook downloads including mushroom recipes and education. In total just over 1 million direct consumer actions/engagements with Australian Mushrooms branded content were achieved.

## Social Media by Numbers

When it comes to social media, it is all about providing fans or followers with the type of information that they want to receive and share with others. Put simply, it is about content that interests and engages with people, and that is the approach adopted for the Australian Mushrooms Facebook and Instagram pages. The figures below provide a snapshot of how these pages have performed from April to June 2018.

### Facebook results (April - June 2018)

- Fans: 141,416, 1,200 new fans, 9% page growth
- Total impressions: 13,192,838
- Average engagement rate: 5%
- Number of comments, likes and shares: 22,206 comments, 107,742 likes and 16,610 shares [146,558 total actions]

### Instagram results (April - June 2018)

- Followers: 14,145 total fans, 3,591 new fans, 34% page growth
- People reached: 309,542
- Average engagement rate: 11%
- Number of comments and likes: 1,043 comments and 34,343 likes [35,386 total actions]



Left:

#### Top post - Facebook

- Likes: 5,762
- Comments: 2,108
- Shares: 1,238
- Reach: 373,117
- Engagement: 8%

Below:

#### Top post - Instagram

- Likes: 2,373
- Comments: 107
- Reach: 65,767
- Engagement: 25%





# DES-O-GERM™ SP

Your complete sanitiser for mushroom farming.

**A BROAD SPECTRUM BACTERICIDE, FUNGICIDE, VIRUCIDE AND ALGAECIDE**

Totally environmentally friendly, non-toxic to humans and animals, biodegradable, non-corrosive, manufactured to HACCP & ISO 14000 standards.

**DES-O-GERM™ SP can be used for:**

- ✓ General sanitation.
- ✓ Air conditioning units.
- ✓ Foot baths.
- ✓ Spraying down of walls, floors & machinery.
- ✓ Washing of hands, crates, picking equipment.



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# Workshops aimed at developing knowledge

Part of the grower engagement mechanism budgeted for in project MU16003: *Pest and Disease Management and Research Services* is two workshops per year. The workshops are aimed at providing updates on new developments and increasing the capacity of the mushroom industry to minimise the impact of existing and new diseases.

The first series of foundational workshops was delivered in Adelaide in June and Melbourne in July.

The promotional flyer identified how the relevance was viewed. It said:

*"If your farm is currently disease free, then this workshop will benefit you by getting your staff up to speed with disease symptom recognition and vector management."*

*"If disease is a constant presence on your farm, then this workshop will benefit you by updating your staff with current disease management practices and preparing them for new diseases."*

Topics covered included:

- New and emerging diseases.
- Symptom recognition and description.
- Identifying and managing disease vectors.
- Sampling techniques for different situations.
- Identifying disease reservoirs with specific reference to Cobweb and bubble.
- Spot treatment techniques.
- Where to get help.

## Further information:

Project leader – Warwick Gill  
Warwick.gill@utas.edu.au  
0417 766 588

Pest and Disease Service –  
Judy Allan  
judyallan@bigpond.com  
02 6767 1057

Question	Score (average)
How would you rate the workshop overall on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent?	8.9
How would you rate the relevancy of the workshop on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent?	8.9

During the workshops the emphasis was that the biology of the causal organisms is foundational to the control measures of mushroom diseases. The disease organisms causing dry bubble and cobweb were used as case studies to demonstrate this.

The content and delivery mechanisms of the workshops have proven to be robust and relevant to the diversity of the personnel who have attended thus far. The diversity of roles represented by participants has included production staff, HR staff, harvesters, supervisors, growers, maintenance staff, quality control personnel, box collectors, packroom staff and management. The

Project Team recognise that every staff member plays a vital role in maintaining a disease-free mushroom farm. It is also recognised that every staff member plays a vital role in ensuring the farm successfully works through times of high diseases pressure and the concept of developing the scope of knowledge was endorsed by farms because they invested in their staff attending.

Feedback forms were completed by 59 of the 64 people participating in the two sessions delivered in Adelaide in June and the four sessions delivered in Melbourne in July. The sessions were ranked highly by participants.

## Forward Planning

The project budget for MU 16003 covers the cost of preparation and delivery travel/accommodation of the presenters, but not venue costs. We are planning to deliver a workshop in New South Wales in mid September and in Queensland in early 2019, and are seeking expressions of interest to both host a workshop and/or to participate in a workshop.

The venue requirements are a suitable room to fit a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 participants, be equipped with appropriate AV equipment and, be willing to have people from other farms attend if they apply. Because the duration of the workshop is four hours (9 am to 1 pm), the Project Team also requests the hosting farm to provide a light lunch for all participants. Should a meeting venue need to be hired then, depending on the venue, there could be a minimal charge to participants to cover the venue cost.

Organising these workshops is a process and we simply take it step by step until the final details are in place.

**Contact Warwick Gill or Judy Allan for more information.**



One of the workshops in Adelaide was hosted by Nic Femia of SA Mushrooms. While there is no obligation for a workshop host to do a farm walk these participants enjoyed the chance to see some crops and meet international consultants Eric De Groot and Bart Driessen who were in Adelaide at the time.

## Training Aid Bag Bubble and Cover cobweb



Spot treatment methods 'Bag Bubble' and 'Cover Cobweb' were practically explored utilising artificial mushrooms that with imagination represented diseased areas. This exercise and relatively cheap set of props was promoted to farms as a useful hands-on method to initially train people about how to treat disease spots. It can also be used to compare how different 'more experienced' people approach the task and calibrate everyone to the same farm standard operating procedure.



The farm roles represented by participants at Parwan Mushrooms included production staff, HR staff, harvesters, supervisors, growers, maintenance staff, quality control personnel, box collectors, packroom staff and management. Having participants from multiple farms added to the discussion at the final session at the Parwan Mushroom Farm.





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# Legal and Effective Use of Fungicides

**By Judy Allan**

Managing fungal diseases in the mushroom crop is not simple – the use of fungicides does not guarantee disease control. Fungicides are only one of the tools available; the disease needs to be managed holistically with a hygiene program that has strict attention to small details at EVERY step.

The mushroom industry only has legal access to a small number of fungicide active ingredients, so it is essential they are used as effectively as possible. Registered fungicide products need to be used at the correct rate in the registered use pattern to avoid any toxicity to the crop or unacceptable residues being detected. They also need to be used effectively to help control the disease present and not waste money unnecessarily.

## What are the legally registered Fungicides?

A screenshot from a search of the PUBCRIS section of the registration body APVMA [www.apvma.gov.au] for fungicides registered on mushrooms reveals the following:

69707	CAMPBELL STANZA WP FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	PROCHLORAZ AS THE MANGANESE CHLORIDE COMPLEX
69604	EUROCHEM EZY-TIP FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	PROPICONAZOLE
67446	KDPC RAVE WP FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	PROCHLORAZ AS THE MANGANESE CHLORIDE COMPLEX
65757	MACPHERSONS PROCHLORAZ WP FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	PROCHLORAZ AS THE MANGANESE CHLORIDE COMPLEX
61789	CAMPBELL VORLON 500SC FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	THIABENDAZOLE
58550	STORITE FLOWABLE SC FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	THIABENDAZOLE
51681	SAFETRAY P FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	PROPICONAZOLE
49910	TECTO FLOWABLE SC FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	THIABENDAZOLE
30485	OCTAVE WP FUNGICIDE	FUNGICIDE	Registered	PROCHLORAZ AS THE MANGANESE CHLORIDE COMPLEX

Fungicides containing the active ingredient carbendazim are not REGISTERED for use on the mushroom crop, BUT they are ALLOWED via PERMIT 14949. This permit is held by the AMGA on behalf of the industry and is current until February 2019.

The AMGA also holds PERMIT 12645 on behalf of the industry for products containing prochloraz [as the manganese chloride complex] for the split application use pattern against Cobweb [current until 31 March 2022].

In addition, the AMGA holds PERMIT 12965 for a spawn treatment against green mould using products with imazalil as their active ingredient [current until 31 July 2022].

A screenshot of the list of permits for mushrooms listed on the APVMA website is inserted below:

Permit No. ▼	Type	Description	Status	Issued date	Expiry date	Details
PER14765	AG	Hexythiazox (Calibre 100 EC miticide) / Cucurbit vegetables, Fruiting vegetables, potatoes, snow and sugar snap peas / Tomato spider mite, Twospotted mite, Broad mite, Tomato russet mite	CURRENT	21-Feb-2015	01-Oct-2019	<a href="#">View</a>
PER12782	AG	David Grays Thermal Fogging & ULV Insecticide Concentrate / Operation Halls / Mushroom Flies/Mosquitos (Phorids & Sciarids)	CURRENT	07-Aug-2013	30-Sep-2020	<a href="#">View</a>
PER12172	AG	Pestigas / Mushrooms / Mushroom Flies	CURRENT	01-Jul-2010	30-Sep-2022	<a href="#">View</a>
PER12965	AG	Imazalil / Mushrooms / Green mould	CURRENT	31-Jul-2012	31-Jul-2022	<a href="#">View</a>
PER12847	AG	Abamectin / Cultivated Mushrooms / Mushroom Mites and Nematodes	CURRENT	15-Apr-2014	30-Jun-2022	<a href="#">View</a>
PER12645	AG	Prochloraz / Mushrooms / Cobweb disease	CURRENT	01-Apr-2012	31-Mar-2022	<a href="#">View</a>
PER81876	AG	ABAMECTIN / BRASSICA VEGETABLES, BULB VEGETABLES, FRUITING VEGETABLES / LEAF MINER	CURRENT	24-Jun-2016	30-Apr-2019	<a href="#">View</a>
PER14949	AG	Carbendazim / Mushrooms / Dry Bubble, Wet Bubble & Green Mould	CURRENT	16-Mar-2016	28-Feb-2019	<a href="#">View</a>
PER14694	AG	VectoBac WG Biological Larvicide / Protected cropping - capsicum, cucumber, eggplant, herbs & lettuce	CURRENT	01-Jun-2014	30-Jun-2019	<a href="#">View</a>
PER14350	AG	VectoBac WG Biological Larvicide / Mushrooms / Fungus gnats and Sciarids	CURRENT	27-Aug-2013	31-May-2019	<a href="#">View</a>

## What are the rates and use patterns?

Registered rates and use patterns can be found on the product label, and there is a legal requirement to read the label and follow the instructions.

Below is what the label for one of the prochloraz products, namely Octave<sup>®</sup> specifies for mushrooms.

Mushrooms	Dry bubble ( <i>Verticillium fungicola</i> var. <i>fungicola</i> ), wet bubble ( <i>Mycogone perniciosa</i> ), cobweb disease ( <i>Hypomyces rosellus</i> )	All States	24 g/0.3 m <sup>3</sup> of peat  <b>OR</b>  3 g/m <sup>2</sup> of casing surface	-	<b>Incorporation</b> Mix with the water used to wet the peat and incorporate with the peat prior to casing.  <b>Spray application following harvest of first flush</b> If Octave has not been incorporated in the peat and disease becomes a problem, spray the casing immediately after harvest of first flush. Use adequate water to thoroughly wet the casing.
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The wording for the permit for the split application is below:

### Directions for Use:

Crop	Disease	Rate
MUSHROOMS.	COBWEB DISEASE ( <i>Hypomyces rosellus</i> )	Apply at a maximum rate of 1.5 grams product per square metre of casing, after the first or later flushes.

### Critical Use Comments:

If prochloraz has not been incorporated in the peat and disease becomes a problem, spray the casing immediately after the first or later flushes in which disease is anticipated. This treatment may not be undertaken if prochloraz has already been incorporated into the casing material.

DO NOT apply more than 2 applications per crop.

### Withholding Period:

NOT REQUIRED WHEN USED AS DIRECTED.

In essence, the total rate for both use patterns is the same (3 grams per square metre), but the split application permit allows the 3 grams to be applied in 2 applications using 1.5 grams per square metre each time.

It is important to note that when watering on a fungicide it is essential to achieve even coverage. As a guide use 1 litre of water per square metre of growing surface on the last water of the day. Work in the UK has identified that this precise quantity of water provides a more even application than higher and lower rates.

Prochloraz products are the only products that can be legally watered on during the flushes. It is recommended that when watering the fungicide onto the beds between flushes, you wait for most of the pins for the flush to form before you water the fungicide on.

If the distribution of water being applied is not precise, the distribution of the fungicide applied will not be precise, so general watering technique is important as well. Aspects of watering technique that need to be addressed include:

- Minimizing the quantity of water that goes onto the floor.
- Having the watering tree adjusted so that each level receives the same amount of water.
- The water used to apply the fungicide should be fresh water [i.e. without hypochlorite or stabilised chlorine dioxide added].

- The drum containing the fungicide solution should be agitated so that the fungicide stays in solution and doesn't settle out.
- Personal Protective Equipment [PPE] should be used as specified on the product safety data sheet.

If you are currently using a carbendazim product, please take the time to click on this link for the Carbendazim permit to compare how you use the fungicide on your farm against the critical use comments. For farms using a carbendazim product, please note that carbendazim is regularly detected during routine QA testing but so far we have not seen a test result that exceeds the MRL [maximum residue limit], and that is exactly how we want to continue!

On a number of occasions, farms have advised that they are using 'x' fungicide, but still have 'y' disease'; the inference being that the disease has developed resistance. It is true that resistance can develop, and it is also true that fungicides degrade over time. Some farms choose to mix the fungicide IN the casing, but under severe disease pressure, it can be necessary to water ONTO the casing so that the fungicide is targeted to the spores that land on the casing.

In my experience when working more closely with these farms with persistent disease problems, it is not simply a case of just looking at fungicide selection and use. Addressing the other disease management procedures, particularly spot treatment and picker training and management eventually leads to disease control.

**For further information on fungicide use in the mushroom industry, please contact Judy Allan.**

### Further information:

Project Leader – Warwick Gill  
Warwick.gill@utas.edu.au  
0417 766 588

Pest and Disease Service –  
Judy Allan  
judyallan@bigpond.com  
02 6767 1057

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The information in this article has been provided as part of project MU16003 – Pest and Disease Management and Research Services. This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the mushroom 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.

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# Up to date resources a key component in the fight against pest and disease

**Mushroom yield and quality are the first casualties of pest and disease. However, the risk can be reduced through access to resources highlighting correct management. This approach is a key component of the project pest and Disease Management and Research Services, managed by Warwick Gill and Judy Allan.**

In the first six months of the project, a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to engage with growers at a farm level to provide technical expertise. This expertise is then reinforced with access to relevant and up-to-date resources on mushroom pests and disease and their management.

At a farm level, two pest and disease workshops have been presented in South Australia and four in Victoria. The workshops provide a detailed insight into correct disease treatment as well as outlining how disease is spread around the farm and the correct way to sample and monitor farm hygiene. feedback from the workshops [see Page 17 for further details] has been extremely positive, and further events will assist in building industry capacity to minimise the impact of new and emerging diseases.

In addition to the workshops, the project has also implemented two separate formats of direct communication. The first is a Growers Alert, delivered via email to respond quickly to industry issues. The second is a Fact Sheet, designed to provide targeted and detailed information on specific topics giving farm personnel information that can be used in a practical way on-farm. The first Fact Sheet was released recently and covers the topic of *Syzygites megalocarpus* or Troll doll. The Fact Sheet details the appearance of the pathogen on the bed and the symptomology which develops on mushrooms. If you want to know more, a copy of the Fact Sheet can be downloaded [HERE](#).

Backing up this information are regular articles published in the Australian Mushrooms Journal. While these articles are written in an easy to understand style, links are also provided to technical

reports providing additional information that may be of interest to some growers and farm principles.

Growers also have access to a detailed online resource library – AGORA - accessed through the Australian Mushrooms website.

## Stay up-to-date

To make the most of this project, there are a few simple steps that you can follow:

- Read the project related materials featured in every edition of the Journal.
- Check your emails to ensure you receive the Growers Alert and Fact Sheet materials.
- Visit the AGORA website to read about a particular pest or disease or treatment option.
- Pick up the telephone and talk to the project leaders, who would be happy to discuss the issue on a confidential basis and provide advice on the next steps.

If you feel you are not receiving any of the materials outlined in this story and would like to check you are on the email list or registered to use AGORA, please feel free to contact either Judy Allan or Warwick Gill using the details below.

### Further information:

Project Leader – Warwick Gill  
Warwick.gill@utas.edu.au  
0417 766 588

Pest and Disease Service –  
Judy Allan  
judyallan@bigpond.com  
02 6767 1057





# MUSHROOM PEST & DISEASE

fact sheet #1

## *Syzygites megalocarpus* – Troll doll

### GROWERS' NOTES

- Troll doll is caused by *Syzygites megalocarpus*
- *Syzygites* may develop post-harvest symptoms
- Treat infection as for Cobweb – cover with moist paper towel, salt edges then the middle
- Do not water over areas of infection
- Prevent the spread of airborne spores
- Cookout is an effective control measure against *Syzygites*
- Sanitizers are effective against *Syzygites* spores and mycelium
- Keep beds and floors clear of dead tissue, stumps and knock downs

### INTRODUCTION

Troll doll (Fig. 1) is caused by *Syzygites megalocarpus* a Zygomycete which is ubiquitous in nature, colonizing a diverse variety of dead or moribund fleshy mushrooms. *Syzygites* (pronounced "size-a-guy-tees") was initially observed on cultivated mushrooms between 2004 and 2007 in crops of *Agaricus blazei* (Sun mushroom) in Brazil. It was first recorded in Pennsylvania in August 2011 and has since become widespread on commercial beds throughout North America.



Figure 1 A portobello mushroom fully colonized by *S. megalocarpus*. Photograph: Courtesy Mark Spear

Confined initially to late flushes of brown portobello stains of *Agaricus bisporus*, *Syzygites* has since been observed on earlier flushes and on white strains of *Agaricus bisporus*. Due to the mould's tolerance to low temperatures, it has also been observed in post-harvest packaged product, the mould appearing while on the store shelf.

*Syzygites* produces two types of spore. The first type is Cobweb-like, large and light weight which, once dislodged, is likely to be spread by air currents within the grow room. The second type, the zygospor, is dark and large with a thick sculptured wall and is thought to be a resting structure enabling the mould to persist through unfavourable conditions.

*Syzygites* has become an integral part of growing for many North American mushroom farmers. While losses caused by *Syzygites* are an annoyance rather than devastating, spore reservoirs are building up on mushroom farms and the mould is adapting to its new environment.

### SYMPTOMS

Fast growing *Syzygites* mycelium is initially white, subsequently becomes yellow to golden brown (Fig. 2) then finally greyish as it sporulates (Fig. 3). In addition to overgrowing *Syzygites* mycelium, colonized mushrooms show pitting, discolouration and areas of necrosis.



Figure 2 Yellowing mycelium of maturing *S. megalocarpus* colonizing a portobello mushroom. Photograph: Courtesy Kerry O'Donnell

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*Detailed fact Sheets will be made available throughout the life of the project to keep industry up to date with the latest information.*



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# White Prince invests in continual improvement



*An overhead view of construction as the new compost tunnels take shape.*

Over the last fifty years, the Australian mushroom industry has undergone serious rationalisation, with the number of commercial growers dropping from 73 in 2011 to just 44 in 2015.

Lower grower numbers do not, however, point to an industry in decline. Far from it. Those that remain in place are part of an industry producing mushrooms with a wholesale value in excess of \$420 million and with plans in place to expand and benefit from increased scale of production.

Run by members of the Tolson family, the combined entity of White Prince is the biggest privately-owned mushroom producer in Australia and has come through decades of evolution and growth, building mushroom production around the themes of innovation and efficiency.

A multi-generational family-owned company, White Prince has invested strongly in keeping its network of

independently owned and operated farms running in the most efficient manner possible. The farms operating under the White Prince banner, include Regal, Elf and Premier Mushrooms – and are all supplied with compost through a state-of-the-art facility developed by Elf Farm Supplies, owned and operated by Rob and Norah Tolson. And it is this new indoor facility which is turning heads, with the increased capacity and the improved odour management system placing it as a world leader, in terms of technology and productivity.

Construction of the new facilities commenced in September 2016 and are now in the final stages of completion. By September 2018 the facility is expected to produce 1,600t of Phase 1 Compost per week with the capacity to go over 3,000t per week.

The expanded output is timely, with plans well underway for the upgrading of production facilities to take advantage of the increase of available compost.



*Above:  
David Tolson (Elf Mushrooms)  
explains the development to  
Samantha Ferguson (Hort Innovation  
Marketing Manager) and John  
Vatikiotis (Hort Innovation Industry  
Relationship Manager).*



*Top Right:  
The scale of the new compost  
tunnels is certainly impressive.*

Over the longer term the combination of additional compost and expanded production facilities is likely to see a doubling of production of mushrooms to around 400t per week.

Speaking on behalf of Elf Farm Supplies Rob Tolson said the new odour management system and other compost facility upgrades were an investment in the future that would set the company up for many decades to come.

Mr Tolson said he was proud of the fact that the company was leading the way, as the first producer in Australia to install this innovative technology.

He said that by working with world leading engineering specialists, the company now has in place a biofilter that uses the latest advances in odour science, and importantly is adapted to Australian conditions.

Visitors to the new composting facilities cannot help but be impressed with the sheer scale of the development, with the operations enclosed entirely and with each of the ten tunnels capable of holding 800t of compost. As the compost progresses, any odour is contained within the structure before passing through exhaust scrubbers and then finally being filtered through a two-metre-high barrier of dampened Australian hardwood. This process

virtually takes away any of the odours generally associated with the composting process, to the point where even standing on this barrier there is certainly no smell emanating from the facility.

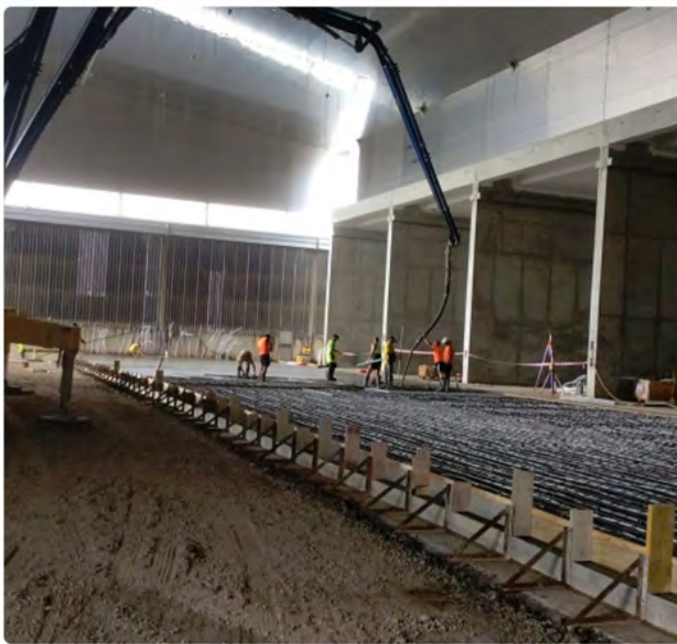
The company pride in the facility is very evident. What they now have in place is a modern, innovative facility that can meet the demands of not only their farms but the other businesses to which they supply compost, in an environmentally friendly manner.

"We take our role in the community very seriously, and we see the development as a valuable commitment to grow our business in a way that is compatible with the needs of residents to be able to enjoy the lifestyle that the surrounding area provides."

"For four generations we have focused on knowing everything about growing quality mushrooms. As a company, we are continually looking at new technology and new ways to deliver quality products to consumers. The new composting facility provides us with a solid base to further develop the farms operating under the White Prince banner," Mr Tolson said.



**The development of the new facilities represents a significant investment in time and commitment.**



The sheer scale of the building works is impressive and highlights the long-term commitment to the future of the farming group.

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## Contact:

Gordon Rogers - [gordon@ahr.com.au](mailto:gordon@ahr.com.au) - (02) 8627 1040

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# The Importance of a Good Pre-Wet

by: Erik de Groot, GLAGS Global Agriculture Services

Pre-wet is extremely important in composting and is often not done in an optimal manner. The time of the process varies, depending of course on the type of straw, but more so on the effectiveness of the pre-wet process. The following explains the importance of a good pre-wet.



The purpose of pre-wetting is softening the straw. Straw is surrounded by a waxy layer and that needs to be removed. The harder the straw is, the more wax that needs to be removed. Once the waxy layer is removed, the straw breaks open and it can absorb the water and build inbound moisture.



The straw needs to get dunked in water to start the process. After that it needs to reach a temperature of between 40 and 60 degrees, and to do this it needs air and then to be sprinkled regularly. A really good set-up will be able to add air through the bales once the temperature is too low, and water when the temperature goes over 60 degrees. That way the straw will be at the correct temperature all the time and the pre-wet time will be very effective.

However, there are situations where the conditions are not ideal and where the process is far from optimal. This can happen later in the bunker process and can be visible in the way the compost absorbs the water. In the situation where it is a struggle to get the water in the compost it is very well possible that the pre-wet was too short and the straw not soft enough, causing water to run off through the compost. The different issues, and ways to address them are outlined on the next page.

1. The bales get put away in a situation where there is not a lot of air going through, delaying the process. The bales might be a week in pre-wet but if they stay too cold, the straw will not become soft enough. A solution is to space the bales more and ideally on an aerated floor to get air flow through the bales. Don't stack them higher than two bales after pre-wet.
2. The bales get too wet. Some compost plants sprinkle continuously on the bales for the first 24 to 96 hours. The idea is to get the water in, but because the bales stay cold nothing happens and the water will just run off, directly back into the drains. The straw should not be submerged in water that long as it will prevent the temperature from rising. Dunk the bales thoroughly at the start to make sure the water is in the middle of the bales, and sprinkle more water only if the temperature of the bales allows it.
3. Another scenario is where there is no dunking process in place and where bales get only sprinkled with water. The water struggles to go completely into the bales, leaving dry areas. for optimum results, every blade of straw should be wet, if not it will stay yellow through the entire process. In this scenario a good dunking facility can make a big improvement. This can be easily done with an old shipping container and a big pump [as shown in the example right].

Setting up a good pre-wet system is vital, and it is important to make sure all conditions are right, otherwise the time spent is enough in theory, but it will not be fully effective. The time it takes to open up the straw varies. for older straw from irrigated land it can be three days, where newer straw in dryer climates needs up to two weeks. Of course, leaving the straw too long in pre-wet is not good either, as the straw will become too soft causing structural loss for your compost.

Using other straw than the wheat straw referred to above is different again. For example, rye and rice straw decompose faster so the process needs less time and when horse manure is used the fermentation process has already started in the stables.



*Above: Don't stack bales higher than two bales after pre-wet.  
Below: Dunking the bales with an old shipping container and a big pump.*



Record the pre-wet process every week and follow this closely. Follow the temperatures, check if the bales are wet into the middle after dunking and follow up where improvements are needed. Remember that making a good compost starts with the pre-wet process, so start off right!

**Erik de Groot**  
GLAGS Global Agricultural Services  
glags.spain@gmail.com



# Benchmarking - A key to Industry Profitability

The Mushroom Industry Data Collection Project [MU16006], is a new project that will ensure Australian mushroom growers have easy access to clear, relevant industry benchmarking information around productivity, quality and profitability. This information will assist new and experienced producers to assess the performance of their businesses against the wider industry, and identify areas for action and improvement.

**P**roducers focussed on improving the key drivers of productivity, quality and profitability are set to benefit from a new national benchmarking project.

The levy-funded Mushroom Industry Data Collection Project, has just commenced and will provide mushroom producers with the opportunity to quantify how much it actually costs them to produce mushrooms on a kilo by kilo basis. This will include measuring the strengths and weaknesses of their businesses and setting industry benchmarks in relation to key areas of production, including energy, water and labour inputs.

The project, to be delivered by RM Consulting Group [RMCG], will use a combination of two years of information

on production and financial data from participating growers to measure the performance of individual businesses and the industry as a whole.

Participation in the project will allow producers to connect the dots between their own business, and identify potential activities, practices or innovations that may provide opportunities for their business profitability.

RMCG will use the 'BizCheck' method developed from economic and financial farm surveys carried out in other agricultural and horticultural industries. BizCheck has been used to provide performance indicators for the citrus, dried grapes, wine grapes, olive, apple, pear and stone fruit industries.

Participating growers will be given a

two-page report summarising their own business benchmarks, and a summary of the de-identified industry-wide benchmarks will be made available to the wider mushroom industry.

Information on how to participate in this new project will be made available to growers soon.

In the meantime, for further information or to express interest now in participating, contact Clinton Muller from RMCG on [clintonm@rmcg.com.au](mailto:clintonm@rmcg.com.au) or 0498 192 596.



**Hort Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**MUSHROOM FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the mushroom research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit [horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)



## AUSTRALIAN MUSHROOM GROWERS' ASSOCIATION 2018 CONFERENCE

InterContinental Sydney, 11-13 October Sydney

REGISTER

# Agenda holds wide interest

## Act Now

- Visit the conference website and register NOW.
- Talk to other industry participants and spread the news.
- Stay informed by reading this Journal and the Industry Update e-newsletter.

October is conference time. And if you are a mushroom grower or someone involved in the industry and have not yet booked, you still have time to take the opportunity to attend a conference that has been put together to meet your interests.

Developed by the Australian Mushrooms Growers Association under the theme – The Bridge to Success – the conference will be held at the InterContinental Hotel in Sydney from 11-13 October, 2018.

In addition to a strong panel of international and Australian speakers, there are updates on the industry levy investment in marketing, and research and development. The conference also includes an on-farm component, and social events offering the opportunity to connect with other delegates.

For further information, please visit the conference website, where you can register, read the speakers program and biographies, and find details about the sponsors and social events.

The following is a snapshot of what you can expect to hear from some of the speakers who will be presenting at the event.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHINESE AGARICUS MUSHROOM INDUSTRY - *Bill Chen - China - Former General Manager Sylvan China*

The annual production of *Agaricus bisporus* in China has reached three million tonnes. The large size of the Chinese *Agaricus* mushroom industry has impressed the world's mushroom community. In China modern farms are being built as traditional farming is gradually disappearing.

The expansion of the mushroom industry relies greatly on the market size of the country. However, from being traditional to modern, the Chinese mushroom industry has a long way to go in terms of culture, equipment, technology, marketing, experience, management and raw materials. There is a lot to be done as the understanding of the basics is incomplete, and we need to slow down to do a better job. This approach involves cultural changes and continuous training for people throughout the industry. All these provide an opportunity because as costs in China gets higher, the country might start importing fresh mushrooms!

#### **Implications for industry:**

Western technology and professionals have played an important role in the development of the industry, and their involvement will increase as time goes. Will the Chinese mushroom industry be a threat or an opportunity to the world?

## **THE SUCCESS OF THE EUROPEAN MUSHROOM INDUSTRY - Mel O'Rourke - Ireland - Managing Director Sylvan Europe**

What does success mean in the European Mushroom Industry?

By looking back over 30 years, the key influences and success factors can be identified. Accelerated technological advances have substantially improved productivity and have allowed an unprecedented expansion of product offerings. The result is commoditisation of mushroom products, increasing price wars and shrinking profit margins. What will shape the industry in the next 30 years?

Recruitment and retention of skilled labour at all levels will be the most significant influence on the future development of our industry.

Who will develop the first robotic picker that can harvest and present the product to the exacting standards of the fresh market?

To success industry also needs to study and understand more of the science in substrate production.

### **Implications for industry:**

The Australian industry shares many of the issues found in the European experience. The shared knowledge will allow industry to consider potential solutions to common problems and encourage discussion on issues that impact on the future development of the industry in Australia.

## **MYCELIAL MEANDER AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT - Mel Meyer - South Africa - Dig It Mushroom Consultancy**

An informative glance at the mushroom industry across the vast African continent is filled with the passion and dedication of people trying to build African 'Bridges to Success', within the mushroom sector.

This look at the mushroom industry will stretch from the arid semi-desert plains of Namibia and through Zimbabwe to the shores of Lake Malawi and then northward into Tanzania, Kenya and the vast hillsides, volcanoes and home of the world-famous Gorillas in Rwanda.

The lives and challenges faced by mushroom growers across the African continent share a will to succeed as mushroom farmers. Mycelial Meander explores and shares the realities of setting up mushroom growing facilities in an often very challenging situation, with limited resources. From raw material procurement to setting the mushrooms correctly on the beds, this 'Meander' promises to share an intriguing view of the mushroom world on this colourful continent.

### **Implications for industry:**

While Australian growers operate as part of a modern high-tech industry, they share an enthusiasm to grow the best possible product with the available resources. A look at the African approach highlights the will to succeed and the ability to make the most of production challenges.

## **THE ART OF SUPPLEMENTATION - Eric Vernooij - Netherlands - Supplement & Casing Expert Champ Food International**

In growing mushrooms, supplementation has become a significant pathway to increasing the bio-efficiency of the substrate, the compost. Because the use of supplements has become standard practice to maximise yields and improve mushroom quality, it is essential to get it right.

From a growing perspective, there is a difference in the qualities of supplements and the usability of the proteins in the product, with a higher concentration product delivering an increased percentage of protein. So, it becomes a question of price and quality and how

the supplements work in a particular growing system. Because the supplements are imported to Australia, it is important to use the right product and at the right rate of application.

This presentation highlights the benefits of supplements and how they can be used by growers to maximise yields and improve mushroom quality.

### **Implications for industry:**

With supplements, a source of protein is added to help lift yield and quality. This approach makes supplements one of the better investments regarding what is put in and what the product delivers.

Understanding the art of supplementation, and considering current supplementation practices against this knowledge, provides the opportunity to refine and modify activities to get the best possible outcome from this activity.

## **GROWING QUALITY MUSHROOMS – EASIER SAID THAN DONE - Erik de Groot - United States - International Mushroom Consultant**

In a relatively small market, like the Australian market, quality is key. The industry has created a very high-quality standard, resulting in what would be close to demanding the best quality mushrooms worldwide.

There are however a number of areas where growers can make the difference. Growers often ask questions – how can quality be improved without losing yield? As a consultant, my role is making growers aware of the key points and help them realise where on-farm improvements are possible. From casing up to harvest, growing techniques and climate systems, it all makes a difference.

### **Implications for industry:**

While it is easier said than done, delivering quality mushrooms consistently must be the objective of each and every grower. Tips on where and how to achieve this outcome offer real value to Australian growers.

## PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT - *Judy Allan and Warwick Gill - AUSTRALIA* - Pest and Disease Management and Research Services

For growers, pest and disease management is something that can impact greatly on the quality, yield and profitability of the farm. When it comes to effective pest and disease management, it is all about timing and managing change in the way farms operate.

Specific reference will be made to disinfectants, pest life cycles and symptom expression to aid effective farm hygiene and to reduce the impact of disease.

The key to effective pest and disease management is to "look closely and act quickly", but to apply this approach requires knowledge and understanding to identify issues before they become problems.

### Implications for industry:

Pests and diseases have always had major implications for industry, and effective management is all about minimising their impact. The Pest and Disease Management project offers farms the opportunity to access information and expertise to build capacity to deal with pest and disease issues promptly.

A timely and relevant approach to meet the challenges of modern mushroom farming.

## 'THE REALITY OF RISK - A FOCUS ON FOOD SAFETY AND OTHER CHALLENGES' - *Clare Hamilton-Bate -* *AUSTRALIA - Food Safety & Quality* *Assurance - Freshcare and Patrick* *McClelland -AUSTRALIA – Porter Novelli*

As shown in recent months, in both in Australia and overseas, the failure to manage food safety risk can have a catastrophic impact on an entire industry; Australian rock melon sales are still significantly impacted by the recent Listeria outbreak, while sales of frozen berries and vegetables continue to be affected by international product contamination issues.

### Implications for industry:

Effective risk management is critical both at an individual business level and for an industry as a whole. To manage risk proactively and effectively there is a need to both understand the potential risks, identify the opportunities to control and develop the strategies to manage. By starting from the position that 'things are going to happen', this discussion explores effective risk management in the mushroom industry.

### Your levy at work

Through investment in R&D and marketing, Hort Innovation works to improve productivity, farm gate profitability and global competitiveness of Australian horticultural industries. Hear first hand how your levy is being put to work.

**Saturday 13 October 2018**  
***Hort Innovation : How your mushroom***  
***levy money is working to benefit the***  
***industry [1:30 pm - 2:00 pm]***

***Hort Innovation : Marketing update***  
***[2:00 pm - 2:30 pm]***

## SOLAR POWER FOR THE MUSHROOM INDUSTRY – *Dr John* *Lasich – Australia – Director and founder* *of RayGen Resources*

For every Australian mushroom grower, the issue of production costs is a major concern with rising power prices an escalating issue. In a bid to reduce this cost some farms have turned to alternate power sources incorporating the use of solar panels into farming operations.

Changing technology is, however, opening up new possibilities with companies like RayGen Resources Pty Ltd setting new benchmarks for power efficiency. The company has already established a World Record for Solar System Efficiency with UNSW and has ongoing investment and support from many private and public investors including the Australian Renewable Energy Agency [ARENA]. RayGen pioneers PV Ultra, an innovative, next-generation combination of high-efficiency solar cells and low-cost mirrors. The Australian designed and manufactured technology heralds the future of solar power, combining unprecedented efficiency, lower costs, the ability to produce both electricity and heat, and the option to manufacture the majority of the components locally.

### Implications for industry:

PV Ultra is able to meet the needs for both electricity and climate conditioning in the mushroom farming process by delivering low-cost heat and electricity. PV Ultra has demonstrated its suitability to the mushroom farming industry, and has been helping a Victorian mushroom agribusiness lower their electricity and gas costs for over 30 months. PV Ultra is a versatile, Australian manufactured co-generation solar technology with a smaller footprint than typical solar farms and the possibility for dual-land use.

## STOP PRESS!

A post-conference tour to Adelaide incorporating visits to SA Mushrooms and P&L Rogers is also being proposed. Please register your interest at the following LINK.



43rd Australian Mushroom  
Growers Association  
**2018 Conference**

11-13 October 2018 InterContinental Sydney

**THE BRIDGE TO SUCCESS**



Topic	Speaker
<b>Development of the Chinese Agaricus mushroom industry</b>	<p>Mr Bill Chen – China – former General Manager Sylvan China</p> 
<b>The success of the European mushroom industry</b>	<p>Mr Mel O' Rourke – Ireland – Managing Director Sylvan europe</p> 
<b>Mycelial Meander and Development on the African Continent</b>	<p>Mr Mel Meyer – South Africa – Dig It Mushroom Consultancy</p> 
<b>The art of supplementation</b>	<p>Mr Eric Vernooij – Netherlands – Supplement &amp; Casing expert Champ food International</p> 
<b>Growing quality mushrooms - easier said than done</b>	<p>Mr Erik de Groot – United States – International Mushroom Consultant</p> 
<b>Pest and Disease Management</b>	<p>Judy Allan and Warwick Gill - Australia - Pest and Disease Management and Research Services</p>  
<b>The reality of risk - A focus on Food Safety and other challenges</b>	<p>Clare Hamilton-bate - Australia - Food Safety &amp; Quality Assurance - Freshcare and Patrick McClelland - Australia – Porter Novelli</p>  
<b>Solar power for the mushroom industry</b>	<p>Dr John Lasich – Australia – Director and founder of RayGen Resources</p> 

# Sponsors and Exhibitors

The 2018 Australian Mushroom Growers Association conference has been well supported by sponsors and exhibitors. While the conference has a comprehensive speaking program and agenda, there is plenty of time to catch up with industry friends and partners. During the breaks you are encouraged to speak with representatives of the sponsors and exhibitors that help to make this conference such a great event. These representatives are international experts with access to the latest information and are pleased to talk with you about how they can help your business.



## AMYCEL

Amycel / Spawn Mate are the premier spawn and supplement supplier in North America. Both companies joined together in the mid-1980s as part of Monterey Mushrooms. Together they represent the most integrated mushroom company in the world.



## Christiaens Group

Christiaens Group is a global leader in setting up turnkey solutions for mushroom farms and composting yards. The company started with making machinery for the mushroom industry in 1971 and expanded their expertise over the years in all areas related to mushroom cultivation. Our company assures quality in the design and realisation of turnkey projects or parts of our expertise. The wide range of knowledge guarantees a seamless coverage of all relevant areas of expertise.



## ASCHL Management Systems

Aschl Management Systems provides specialized software for substrate production for mushroom growers and compost manufacturers. The software covers: production management; business Control; Compliance. The system is fully modular and is integrated for fast information and quick reports, connecting with other systems and equipment such as weigh bridges and other measuring instruments.



## Global Axis

Global Axis Import Solutions are a proud family owned business in operation since 1988. Their product range includes mushroom casing, sphagnum peat moss, mushroom growing supplement, mushroom spawn, machinery/ equipment and many other sundry products including growing nets, lights and picking knives.



## BVB Euroveen

BVB Euroveen is an international partner specialised in mushroom growing, greenhouse horticulture, landscaping, the hobby market, soft fruits and tree nursery. BVB Euroveen casing oil contains well selected raw materials and is produced in an hygienic and appropriate environment. Our casing soil is tested constantly in our new BVM Mushroom Research Centre and because of this BVB Euroveen can guarantee trustworthy, high quality product.



## GTL - Europe

GTL- Europe offers a wide product range for composting and mushroom growing farms: ranging from climate control systems, machinery and automation systems to the construction of aerated composting bunkers and tunnels as well as growing rooms. Right from the start of the project, GTL-Europe is closely involved in developing solutions for individual components, existing situations and complete new-build projects.



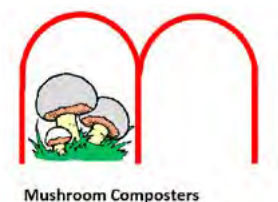
### Harte Peat

Harte Peat it is recognised as one of the market leaders in the mushroom casing industry and has been producing casing soil mixes since 1987. The success of Harte's business has been built on meeting customers' expectations in relation to product quality, mixed quality and freedom from disease.



### Legro Australia

Legro Australia is the sales offices of the Legro group and sells the Topterra and Legro product in Australia and New Zealand. Topterra specialise in the production of casing for the professional mushroom culture. Legro processes and mixes raw materials to obtain optimum substrates, customised to meet the specific needs of, in particular, soft fruit growers, tree nurseries and young plant growers.



### Mushroom Composters

Mushroom Composters was formed as a growers' co-operative in 1976, based in the Hawkesbury. The company has been producing Phase 1 compost from the Hunter valley operation since 1985. Mushroom Composters motto is 'Grow with Confidence' and the compost is so good it almost doesn't need spawn!



### Hort Innovation

"Hort Innovation is the link between the needs of industry, the capabilities of science, and the potential of marketing. Hort Innovation's primary function is creating value for horticulture growers and those across the horticulture supply chain.

Through investment in Research and Development and marketing, Hort Innovation works to improve productivity, farm gate profitability and global competitiveness of Australian horticultural industries.

Funded by grower levies, Australian Government contributions, industry contributions and co-investment, Hort Innovation is owned by growers with investments made on behalf of their levy industries. Together we're growing innovation for the Australian horticulture industry – now and into the future."



### Sylvan Australia

Sylvan is the global leader in fungal technology in the world largest producer and distributor of mushroom spawn, with facilities in 17 locations and serving 65 countries.



### Hoving Holland

Hoving Holland was founded in 1930 and for the past 20 years has produced agricultural conveyors. Hoving Holland was involved in the early development of the mechanisation of mushroom-cultivation and in the 1970s commenced the export of mushroom machinery. Since then the company has developed many innovations in mushroom machinery and compost systems.

Hoving Holland has long been recognized as one of the leading suppliers to global turnkey projects, providing installations that are innovative and manufactured with impeccable quality standards.

Hoving Holland partners with your business at all stages from concept to manufacturing to installation and service, providing a wide range of support, as well in mushroom machinery, compost systems and waste disposal equipment.



### Viscon Australia/Hortraco

Viscon is a Dutch manufacturer, making automation equipment for the wider horti and agricultural and related industries since 1967. Viscon has been operating in Australia since the early 2000's, providing PRODUCT and MATERIAL HANDLING SOLUTIONS. We engineer, manufacture, deliver and install plus provide after sale service, ranging from standalone machines to turn key projects. We write our own software and can integrate third party machinery.



# Hort Innovation ROUNDUP

A range of information is available through Hort Innovation to keep you updated on relevant mushroom industry activities. The mushroom pages of the Hort Innovation website are a good place to start, providing information on new, ongoing and recently completed projects; timely updates on the activities of the Strategic Investment Advisory panel; as well as financial statements and project summaries.

## Stay connected

Levy payers and business owners (or nominated representatives) are encouraged to become members of Hort Innovation. Growers and others in the supply chain can stay updated by subscribing to receive regular news and communications.

## Mushroom Industry SIAP

The Mushroom Industry Strategic Investment Advisory Panel continues to play a key role in providing advice to Hort Innovation on a wide range of levy investments, undertaken on behalf of the industry. The SIAP meets regularly, and meeting summaries are made available to keep industry informed.

If you have any questions relating to the operations of the SIAP please contact Hort Innovation Industry Relationship Manager, John Vatikiotis either by phone - 0429 022 637 or via email – John.vatikiotis@horticulture.com.au

## Upcoming projects

The mushroom industry, through Hort Innovation, undertakes a range of levy based investments. Proposals for the following projects are currently being assessed, following a public tender process. Once contracted, further information will be made available through this Journal and the Industry Update newsletter.

## *MU17002 - Educating health professionals about mushrooms*

The objectives of the project are to:

- provide credibility and amplification of consumer messages delivered through the mushroom marketing campaign by educating health professionals about the health benefits of mushrooms.
- Develop and provide resources for health professionals to encourage and motivate clients to include mushrooms in their diet.

## *MU18002 - Agri-technology investment opportunity in the mushroom industry*

The objectives of this project are to help Hort Innovation and the mushroom industry:

- Document global mushroom industry agri-tech initiatives/opportunities and identify issues needing RD&E investment or collaboration.
- Develop an action plan with industry on how to approach these investment/opportunities and investment/collaboration opportunities.

## Understanding how Hort Innovation works

Do you want to know more about the levy system? Or why levies exist in the first place? What about how Hort Innovation is funded? Find out more about your Research and Development Corporation, by following this LINK or visiting the Hort Innovation website.

## Save the date

Hort Innovation's Annual General Meeting this year will be held in Brisbane on Friday, November 23, 2018. More information will be published when details are confirmed.

## Voting Rights

All levy payers have been invited to complete the 2017/18 Annual Levy Return to secure voting rights for the following 12 months. Voting rights can be secured in the following ways:

- Complete the Annual Levy Return form online by Friday 28 September 2018 by visiting <https://events.miraql.com/HortInnovation/>. You will need to enter your Member Number and Member Pin, which you should have received via email.
- Complete the hard copy Annual Levy Return form, which has been sent to all levy payers by mail. Please note this form must be received by Friday 28 September 2018.

If you have any questions, please call Link Market Services on 1800 660 083 or email [hort@linkmarketservices.com.au](mailto:hort@linkmarketservices.com.au)

# Hort Innovation Review of Performance Released

The independent Review of Performance on Hort Innovation has now been released. Hort Innovation has responded to, and accepted, all 14 recommendations of review.



## Background to the Review

In December 2017, following a competitive tender process, GHD was contracted to carry out the four-yearly independent Review of Performance on Hort Innovation.

The review is a requirement under the company's Statutory Funding Agreement [SFA] with the Australian Government, and also an opportunity to gain important feedback on progress and delivery over the four years since the incorporation of Hort Innovation.

The initiatives outlined in the Company response to the review will form an ongoing program of work for Hort Innovation and help to inform the negotiations around the next SFA between the Australian Government and Hort Innovation, in the continued effort to support the productivity, profitability, and competitiveness of Australian horticulture.

The purpose of the Review was to provide an independent assessment of Hort Innovation's performance, particularly with regards to:

- Transitioning from the previous governance arrangements of Horticulture Australia Limited [HAL].
- Delivering against Strategic and Operational Plans.
- Delivering benefits to Australian horticulture industries.

The review has provided another solid bank of evidence around what Hort Innovation is doing well, and what could continue to improve. It was also an additional opportunity for stakeholders

to give considered feedback around how the organisation is performing and what opportunities there are to work better together for the future of Australian horticulture.

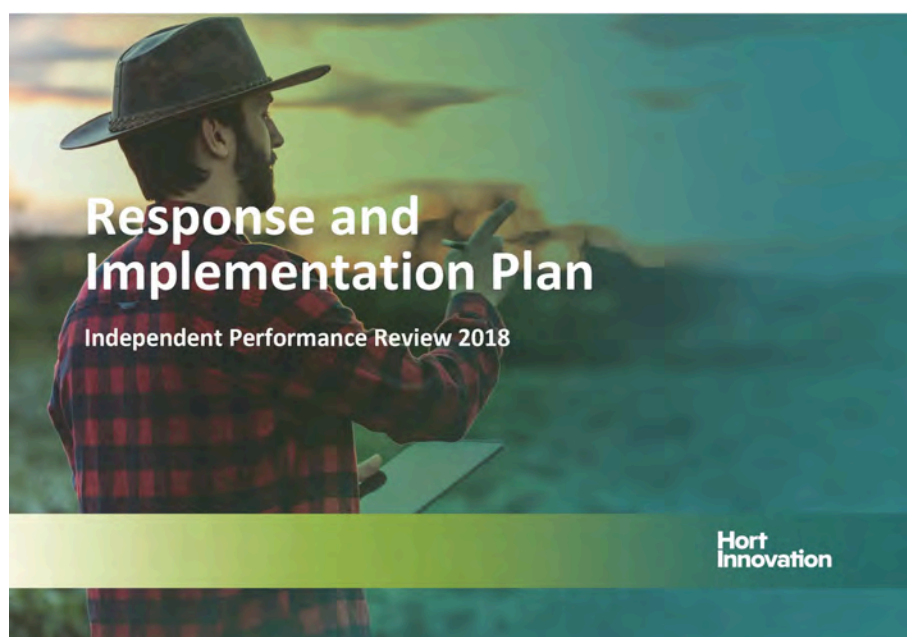
Hort Innovation would like to thank everyone who gave their time, insight and critique of the organisation's performance, helping shape the review.

You can find a copy of both the review and Hort Innovation's response to the recommendations on the Hort innovation website here.

Anyone with any questions is encouraged to contact Hort Innovation at [communications@horticulture.com.au](mailto:communications@horticulture.com.au).

*The Hort Innovation Board would like to make special thanks to the growers, industry representative bodies and supply chain stakeholders who took the time to share their thoughts, ideas and assessment of the Company's performance, both constructive and positive. It is this critical and honest feedback that allows Hort Innovation to continue to grow in a direction that is supported by industry.*

*The independent investigation of performance is a valuable component of continuous improvement for the Company and is a requirement mandated under the Company's Funding Agreement with the Australian Government as a Research and Development Corporation [RDC].*





**Let's talk  
about your  
industry**

**John Vatikiotis**  
Relationship Management Lead  
Hort Innovation

## **Meet the mushroom industry Relationship Manager and see how he can support you.**

John is keen to chat with you. He is your link to the latest R&D and marketing developments and how these can help your business grow. It's easy to request a phone call – just go to the 'Contact Me' form at [horticulture.com.au/contact-me](http://horticulture.com.au/contact-me). Alternatively, call 02 8295 2300 or email [membership@horticulture.com.au](mailto:membership@horticulture.com.au) and let us know you would like John to call you.

**[horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)**

**Hort  
Innovation**

# Repeal of WHS Regulations and what it means to you!

## The WHS Regulation 2011 has been repealed and replaced with the new WHS Regulation 2017.

There has been some confusion regarding the new Legislation and how it affects businesses.

On the surface and as described on the SafeWork Information Webpage, it appeared that the only changes were cosmetic, minor and had little effect on businesses, other than change all the documents to reflect the date change to 2017.

I have had a deluge of incidents with clients this year and have had first hand dealings with the Regulators [SafeWork NSW] because of incidents resulting in injury, as well as several industrial relations issues like unfair dismissal, attempted Workers Compensation Claims for non-work-related injury and "too stressed to work."

It was interesting to observe the Regulators process. The SafeWork focus appears to more vigorous, with substantial expectations of workplace performance, by the person in control.

### What you are likely to be asked to produce, if an inspector calls?

Including, but not limited to the following:

- Training Registers, both for the individual worker and the company.
- Detailed "Activities Register" which incorporates "live" registers.
- Evidence of your consultation and worker participation process.
- Updated Policy Statement [change the date of the Regulation].
- Emergency Evacuation Plan and evidence of regular drills. [to A3 size].
- Electrical tag and testing.
- Fire safety tagging.
- Compressor registration and testing. [5-year licence from SafeWork, cost approx.\$65] Check the size of your compressor.
- Maintenance Registers for all plant and equipment. [Vehicles, Forklifts, trucks overhead cranes, plant and equipment, etc.]
- Competency Register which includes all licences, [High Risk, Forklift] Certificates of Competency for all plant and equipment where licenses are no longer recognised, like Excavator, Bobcat, Tractor, and many more.
- Consider creating a detailed Workers Handbook designed to minimise the exposure to the PCBU [employers] regarding Fairwork and Industrial Relations issues and ensure the worker is fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Consider individual worker employment contracts.
- Look at your Safe Operating Procedures for all plant and equipment and ensure there are no "pinch points." [where a worker can stick in their finger or get clothing caught].
- Ensure the operators are competent to perform the expected task. [Signed off by a competent person].
- SafeWork are revisiting chemical use in Mushroom Farms, focusing once again on those of you who use formaldehyde [formalin] as well as the safe use, storage, handling and labelling of all chemicals on site.



## Mushroom Fly Control

*Biological Control using Entomopathogenic Nematodes (ENs)*

**Targets the larvae to stop the breeding cycle**

- Effective control of larval stage of sciarid fly lifecycle
- Seek out prey
- Safe to use, with no withholding period
- Combat chemical resistance
- Curative and preventative solutions available
- Available all year round with next day delivery

**Ecogrow Environment Pty Ltd**  
Ph: (02) 6284 3844  
[www.ecogrow.com.au](http://www.ecogrow.com.au)



Born in Nature. Grow in Nature. Harvest in Nature.

**The following is a copy of the post on the SafeWork Web Page and you should take heed!**

The State's workplace safety regulator is cracking down on dangerous worksites as part of an ongoing forklift safety blitz, SafeWork NSW Acting Executive Director Tony Williams said.

Mr Williams said that SafeWork inspectors visited 180 businesses in March this year and found significant safety breaches, leading to more than 90 notices. Four NSW businesses were prosecuted and fined a total of \$835,000.

"I'm seriously concerned by the industry's lack of compliance with forklift safety, so I've directed our inspectors to come down hard on businesses that aren't following the rules," Mr Williams said.

"The recent inspections found the most common breaches included faulty

and unsafe forklifts, drivers not wearing seatbelts, and poor traffic management.

"Forklift incidents are largely preventable, and I'm committed to ensuring worker safety is front of mind for everyone on worksites." From July 2014 to July 2016, more than 1,300 workers were injured in forklift incidents, and sadly, this included three fatalities. These tragic incidents also cost the NSW workers compensation system more than \$30 million.

Additional blitz operations are continuing next month as part of SafeWork's 'Take forking safety seriously' program, aimed at reducing deaths and injuries from the use of forklifts.

**I suggest you review your safety operations, documentation, workers understanding of roles responsibilities and be ready if an inspector calls on you also.**

**Yours in Safety,  
Phil Martin CEO**

**Further information:**

Phil Martin  
CEO Workplace Health & Safety  
Australia  
Tel: 02 4504 94342 [ 24 hour  
helpline ]  
Email: phil@whsa.co or info@whsa.co

## WORK HEALTH & SAFETY AUSTRALIA

Tired of having to deal with different organisations for all your WHS, HR, IR, Environmental, Chemical Courses, Forklift Trainings, Competency Training, Safety Management Plans, Safe Operating Procedures, Unfair Dismissal Claims & Workers Compensation Claims?

### WE CAN HELP!

WH&SA have been servicing the Mushroom Industry for many years, providing products and services to individual farms, as well as magazine articles and advice to the whole industry!

### DO YOU NEED HELP WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

- General WHS issues and frustrations?
- Unfair dismissal claims?
- Is getting quality staff a challenge?
- Is getting a "buy in" to your WHS and HR programs a problem with staff?
- Need help with Safe Operating Policies and Procedures?
- Risk Management training?
- Forklift training?
- Environmental issues?
- Industrial Relations?
- Chemical training/courses?
- Workers Compensation problems?
- Need Drug and Alcohol testing?

Our programs, systems and training are provided by internationally recognised qualified and ASQA accredited trainers.

### OPERATING SINCE 2003 AND NEVER HAD A CLIENT PROSECUTED!

Call us to set up your obligation free consultation!

Or email us at:

**(02) 4504 9432**

**INFO@WHS.A.CO**

Sydney Office  
2 Forbes Street  
Windsor NSW 2756

# How to proceed in a crisis

AMSAFE safeguarding our future!

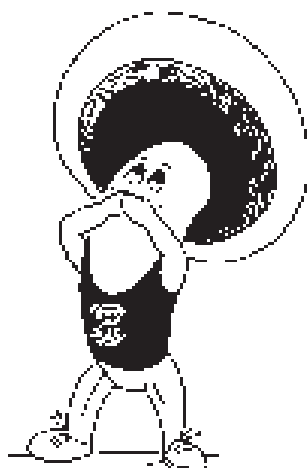
1



**Phone 02 4577 6877**

- If you suspect a possible crisis
- If you are experiencing difficulties that may become a wider crisis
- If you aren't coping with a crisis

2



**Say nothing**

- Refer all enquiries to AMSafe
- Refer the media to AMSafe

3



**Follow the leader**

- Wait for AMSafe to issue you with the 'one message'

## Australian Mushrooms Journal - 2018 Edition 3

The strategic levy investment project *Communication program for the Australian Mushroom Industry 2016-2019* is part of the Hort Innovation Mushroom Fund.

The project has been funded by Hort Innovation, using the mushroom 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.

### ADVERTISING

Advertising within this publication is maintained by the Australian Mushroom Growers Association under an agreement with Hort Innovation.

This Association welcomes advertising within the Journal.  
The booking deadline is 6 weeks prior to the publication date.

For further information, please contact Sally Heukers on 0472 599 135 or via email using the following [LINK](#).

