

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$5M investment to bolster Aussie nut production

Horticulture Innovation Australia today announced it had been successful in securing a \$5 million Federal Government Rural Research and Development for Profit program grant, which will go a long way toward increasing the nation's nut production capacity.

The funding – which complements a further \$9.8 million from Hort Innovation, the Almond Board of Australia and the South Australian, Victoria and New South Wales governments – will facilitate a four-year program that will result in higher density, shorter nut trees, with high, quality yields.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive Officer John Lloyd said the Corporation worked closely with industry on the project scope, which involves advanced water and nutrient management techniques, applied through trials on almond and walnut crops.

“Hort Innovation is excited to be successful in obtaining this \$5 million grant today,” he said. “It’s a big boost for the Australian nut growers who will benefit from the time and cost efficiencies that arise through this project, and increased sustainability for the industry as a whole.”

“There will also be positive flow-on effects to local nut consumers and the potential for an increased Australian nut presence in world trade export markets.”

Mr Lloyd said the project will investigate the whole gamut of crop production techniques – from the beginning of the crop planting process, through to production to harvesting with economic modelling and continuous communication to industry.

Key areas of research include:

- Identification of the ideal soil in which to establish a crop
- Improved water and fertiliser regimes
- Advanced tree architecture for light interception as a function of tree density
- Orchard floor and husk waste management technologies
- Efficiency of ‘shake and catch’ harvesting technologies, and possible alternatives
- Climate change risk and reduced impacts of extreme weather events
- Establishment and demonstration of the research with ultra-high density plantings of all temperate nut crops.

Horticulture Innovation Australia delivers more than \$100 million in research, development and marketing activities across the horticulture industry each year with funding from the Australian Government, grower levies and other sources.

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