

Final Report

Dried Grape industry communications program

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Dried Fruits Australia Inc

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Dried Grape industry communications program (DG18001)

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Public summary

Providing clear and concise information on research developments to dried grape producers is a key focus of this project and a major delivery area for Dried Fruits Australia. Following on from the previous Communications project, this continuation of communication outputs included the following:

- *Currant News*, a fortnightly email update
- the well-established quarterly *Vine* magazine published in hard copy and online
- Website updates
- Social media posts
- Video footage of extension workshops, uploaded to YouTube
- Microsoft Teams communications with growers, throughout Covid-19 lockdowns.

This project focused on dried grape research and extension, working collaboratively with prunes and table grapes in terms of material and information provided in the *Vine* magazine. The overall aim remains the important connection with stakeholders across the dried grape value chain, ensuring they receive clear and up-to-date information on research, development, extension and industry best practice for adaption on farm, assisting with industry productivity and efficiency gains.

Since the development of the Hort Innovation Dried Grape Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021, this project has subsequently aligned closely with Outcome 3: *The capacity of industry participants is increased*.

Key communication activities, such as Currant News, social media and YouTube posts along with reports contained in the Vine Magazine reflected field trials and best practice results associated with Hort Innovation DG17001 Dried Grape Production, Adoption and Innovation 2018-2021 and more recently DG21000 Dried Grape Production, Adoption and Innovation Program 2021-2026.

While the primary audience for these communications on technology transfer are dried grape producers, these various mediums, including forums via Microsoft Teams, enabled dried fruit processors the opportunity to provide updated information on quality parameters including maximum residue limits (MRLs) and production volumes required to ensure sustainability of the industry moving forward.

Developing a Communications Plan was key to the successful delivery of this project, ensuring that communication channels were examined to discern key methodologies for the passing on of relevant information to dried grape producers. Dried Fruits Australia, as the project manager responsible for delivery, worked closely with Hort Innovation, horticultural researchers, dried grape producers and processors along with other relevant bodies and organisations, to present, provide and promote the most recent scientific, production and benchmarking information to encourage uptake across the dried grape industry sector.

Overall the outcome of increasing information flow, promoting the goal of increasing quality production has been successfully delivered, with dried grape producers having access to a range of information in hard copy and online, providing them with proven best practice recommendations along with reports on important and innovative research and development initiatives.

There are two key recommendations coming from this project:

1. The dried grape communications role is integral - through its strong linkages to the Dried Grape Industry Adoption and Innovation project - to the uptake of innovative technologies and best practice on farm, including building information that encourages yield improvements, a critical issue for the dried grape industry. The promotion of key R, D & E events for producers is a core part of this project, which has been, and will continue to be, essential across the entire value chain, providing information to processor/marketers, as well as engaging government, government agencies and potential investors.
2. The dried grape communications role must continue to work very closely and collaboratively with the Dried Grape Industry Adoption and Innovation Project Officer and also link strongly with the Peak Industry Body, Dried Fruits Australia and the Research and Development Corporation Hort Innovation to ensure:
 - Messaging to producers on R, D & E is framed within an appropriate context

- Key events are promoted through all appropriate media channels for ease of access by producers
- R, D & E and marketing information is shared via *Currant News*, the *Vine* magazine, and, where needed via media releases, so that this information is communicated to producers, media and the wider community
- Best practice issues focusing on yield are conveyed via all communication mediums for a wide distribution to all networks and stakeholders, including investors
- Video recordings of key R, D & E events are edited, transcribed and uploaded to the DFA YouTube channel to ensure maximum viewing by dried grape producers to assist with increased accessibility.

Keywords

Dried Grapes; Communications: Sultanias; Sunmuscat; Sunglo; Sugra39; Currants; Innovation; Yield; Tonnes; Pruning; Harvest; Mechanisation; Biosecurity; Pest and Disease; Irrigation; Water; MRLs.

Introduction

Communicating important developments in research and showcasing extension workshops to dried grape producers, on issues such as innovative technology; development of new dried vine varieties; yield measurements; pest and disease management; irrigation and farm inputs; has been the focus for this project. Commencing in 2019, communication outputs included Currant News - the fortnightly email update; a quarterly magazine well known to the industry as the Vine; website updates; social media posts; and video posts of extension workshops uploaded to YouTube.

The overall aim of this Communications projects was to ensure that stakeholders across the dried grape value chain received key and concise information on research, development, extension and industry best practice, to encourage on farm adoption and improved industry productivity gains. This project has aligned with Hort Innovation Dried Grape Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021 Outcome 3: *The capacity of industry participants is increased.*

By utilising a variety of communication mediums there has been significant delivery of key R,D & E information including:

- an update to best practice on farm
- benchmarking data
- updated best practice guide – online and hard copy
- building capacity of stakeholders on pest and disease issues
- innovation and mechanisation of pruning
- and ways to enhance productivity and yield.

While there have been some climate challenges occurring over the course of the project - including an extreme heat event and an extreme hail event, both of which caused a severe toll on yield - there has been a greater level of awareness of managing on farm through these conditions, as well as a strong awareness of adoption of best practice on farm, which has enabled quality production to continue. This awareness is in strongly linked to the way in which the communications program effectively provided critical information at key seasonal times to dried grape producers.

Dried Fruits Australia (DFA) has been communicating best practice and research and development projects effectively to dried fruit producers across a number of years, incorporating changes in technology, mechanisation and on farm practices. DFA was formed more than 100 years ago, as the key organisation regulating the flow of dried grape production from growers, processors and marketers, through to buyers. Throughout its history Dried Fruits Australia has remained committed to the objective of seeking to increase the capacity of growers through the provision of key information. With the focus changing over the past 100 years from regulation to representation, DFA has renewed its vision to one of being *'a profitable industry delivering innovative growth and quality dried grapes'*

DFA has excellent networks across the dried vine fruits industry sector, globally and locally, which enabled information exchange and technology transfer articles assisting with the implementation of new innovative practices and methodologies to improve yield and vine performance. DFA also works collaboratively with the Australian Table Grape Association and has strong linkages with the Australian Prune Industry Association and Dried Tree Fruits, which enabled a combined approach to developing and publishing the Vine Magazine.

Over the course of the last three years DFA continued to review and adopt Communications Plans, working in consultation with industry and ensuring that communication strategies developed were best suited to the target audience. By working with industry, DFA has been able to continuously improve the delivery of this Hort Innovation funded communication program over the course of the project.

Methodology

In line with the Dried Grape Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021, DFA prepared a communications strategy that would reach across the geographic region of dried grape production and provide information on research, development, extension and best practice initiatives to dried grape producers and industry stakeholders.

Communication planning took into account preferred engagement strategies with producers, processors and other dried grape industry stakeholders.

As part of the communications plan, the following areas were identified and managed in line with the project objectives:

- Project management: The DFA Board, with oversight by the DFA CEO, and delivery by the Communications Manager
- Target audience: Primarily dried fruit producers, dried fruit processors/marketers, and consumers. The project also targeted service providers, R&D institutions, all levels of government and government agencies, investors, and other horticultural and agricultural organisations.
- Project reach: Approximately 98 per cent of dried grape production is from Swan Hill to the Riverland of South Australia, incorporating the Sunraysia region of northwest Victoria and southwest New South Wales. The project focused on meeting the communications requirements of these stakeholders. However, media releases, website hits and social media communications extended nationally and, where appropriate, internationally.
- Project delivery activities:
 - *Vine* magazine
 - At the commencement of the project, the magazine was completely reviewed and redesigned to meet the needs of stakeholders, as evidenced in a previous survey.
 - Each edition of this quarterly magazine was prepared by an editorial committee, comprised of Communications Manager DFA; Communications Manager ATGA; and contracted designer. Further information was sourced from Dried Tree Fruits and Australian Prune Industry Association.
 - Written and visual content was produced by the editorial team (or submitted by researchers, project managers and other stakeholders and edited by the team), and advertisements were arranged to meet the deadlines laid out on the production timeline.
 - An online version of the *Vine* magazine was made available to all stakeholders prior to the printed version being posted out.
 - The print edition was distributed to 562 industry subscribers
 - After publication, DFA was also responsible for depositing the *Vine* magazine to the [National Library of Australia](#).
 - *Currant News*
 - Each edition of DFA's email newsletter [Currant News](#) (at least one every fortnight) was prepared by the Communications Manager with regular contributions on R,D&E from the Industry Development Officer, and other relevant information provided by the CEO.
 - *Currant News* is distributed to 250 dried grape producers and key stakeholders, most of whom are located across the growing region identified.

- MailChimp campaign distribution reports are reviewed by the Communications Manager to ensure the newsletter continues to meet growers' needs and determine ways to improve its reach and engagement levels.
- Social media
 - DFA's Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn pages, as well as the Australian Sultanas Facebook and Instagram, are managed by the Communications Manager
 - Content targeted at growers, consumers and other industry stakeholders living in Australia and overseas is created on a regular basis and communicated in a shorter format and more conversational style than that used on other platforms.
 - DFA responds to comments on social media posts and private messages as soon as possible, and regularly reviews and reports on post reach and engagement in line with DFA's social media policy.
- Media releases
 - News stories on R,D& E initiatives were distributed to local and national media for publication
 - Media releases were also uploaded to the DFA website and shared via social media.
 - A spreadsheet of media contacts, and the MailChimp distribution list, is reviewed regularly to ensure contact information is up to date.
- DFA website
 - Website content was updated weekly by the Communications Manager with news (media releases; Currant News; The Vine), events and other information for dried grape growers, consumers and other industry stakeholders.
 - The website hosts information on best practice; technology initiatives and all R,D&E field walks and trials.
- GrapeInvest
 - Over the last three years, DFA has refined its investment modelling tool and relaunched GrapeInvest. This comprehensive investment tool has been promoted via Currant News and the Vine magazine to potential investors interested in dried vine fruit production.

Outputs

Table 1 Output summary

Output	Description	Detail
<i>Vine</i> magazine	The <i>Vine</i> is the quarterly industry magazine distributed in print and online to dried grape, table grape, dried tree fruit and prune growers. The <i>Vine</i> magazine – produced in partnership with Australian Table Grapes Association – is produced with industry growers, producers and stakeholders as the intended audience, however is also accessible and read by a wider audience. DFA content includes timely dried grape industry news, research, technology, best practice information, biosecurity, technology, water and consumer and industry data insights. Each edition is publicised in <i>Currant News</i>, DFA's website and social media channels. Editions published: 12 (four per project year) Print reach: 1300 per edition Online reach: 740 (average per edition)	The <i>Vine</i> magazine is made available both in print and online. The magazine was redesigned and relaunched in February 2020, when it was first distributed as an online publication. The 2020 Communications Survey showed 70 per cent of respondents sourced information about the dried grape industry in the <i>Vine</i>, growing to 100 per cent in the 2022 survey. Respondents also said stories in the <i>Vine</i> contributed to and impacted how they decided to use a new method, growing technique. For some, the <i>Vine</i> is a way to simply stay informed, while for others it formed the basis for “research into new ways of doing things” and guided them on how to “grow fruit more efficiently”. The <i>Vine</i> magazine digital edition can be accessed online: issuu.com/vine-magazine See Appendix One – magazines on issuu.com Statistics: February 2020: Impressions: 2167 Reads: 726 Ave read time: 7:13 Clicks: 70 May 2020: Impressions: 1831 Reads: 1081 Ave read time: 7:24 Clicks: 85 August 2020: Impressions: 1608 Reads: 596 Ave read time: 7:12 Clicks: 65 November 2020: Impressions: 6685 Reads: 1012 Ave read time: 4:08 Clicks: 40 February 2021: Impressions: 3459 Reads: 1063 Ave read time: 5:05 Clicks: 38 May 2021: Impressions: 3327 Reads: 893 Ave read time: 4:41 Clicks: 33

		August 2021: Impressions: 3312 Reads: 732 Ave read time: 4:58 Clicks: 12 November 2021: Impressions: 4679 Reads: 336 Ave read time: 7:41 Clicks: 26 February 2022: Impressions: 6420 Reads: 439 Ave read time: 7:04 Clicks: 22 May 2022: Impressions: 6591 Reads: 505 Ave read time: 5:47 Clicks: 13
<i>Currant News</i>	<i>Currant News</i> is the industry newsletter distributed fortnightly to growers and other industry stakeholders by email. The <i>Currant News</i> mailing list has 241 subscribers who receive the latest Dried Fruits Australia news by email each fortnight. Content includes details of industry events, best practice information, biosecurity alerts, labour and industrial relations information, Hort Innovation news and links to grants and assistance. In addition to the regular fortnightly <i>Currant News</i>, the communications team also distributed <i>Special Update</i> editions on a needs basis, including timely crop disease management advice, Covid-19 updates and event reminders. 2019-2020 <i>Currant News</i>: 20	The fortnightly <i>Currant News</i> newsletter is distributed by email, and is also shared and made available to read via DFA's social media and website: https://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/news-and-events/news/ Mailchimp data shows <i>Currant News</i> emails are opened by up to 57 per cent of subscribers, well above the industry average of 20 percent. Current News emails are opened by an average of 47 per cent of subscribers, with a 9 per cent in-email click rate. The 2020 Communications Survey showed 70 per cent of respondents sourced information about the dried grape industry from <i>Currant News</i>, rising to 88 per cent in the 2022 survey. See Appendix Two– data and screenshots of example articles

	editions 2020-2021 <i>Currant News</i>: 25 editions Special Updates: 13 editions 2021-2022 <i>Currant News</i>: 24 editions Special Updates: 14 editions	
DFA website	Dried Fruits Australia website updated regularly with latest news, events and industry publications including the <i>Vine</i> and <i>Currant News</i>. Resources providing best practice information as well as relevant Covid-19 information and advice were also made available to growers via the website. The website's key target audiences are dried grape growers, industry staff and potential investors.	DFA website: www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au See Appendix Three – DFA Website front page The number of people sourcing information via the website has increased over the course of the communications project. In the 2020 communications survey, 40 per cent of respondents said they sourced information about the dried grape industry from the DFA website compared to 71 per cent of respondents in the 2022 communications survey. (2022 survey still open; results as of 27 June 2022). Unfortunately Google Analytics for the DFA website is unable to be accessed at this time owing to difficulties with the website, so further data is unable to be provided.
Media articles	Four media releases were distributed from July 2019 to June 2020: • New biosecurity levy • 2019 Grower Forum • Sunglo field day • Fundraising for farmers affected by bushfires Three media releases were distributed from July 2020 to June 2021: • We're Growing Live series launch • Australian Sultanas website launch • Dried Fruit Quality Awards winners 2021 Four media releases and	More than 40 articles were published in local, national and industry news publications from July 2019 to June 2020 based on media releases distributed, email pitches to radio and newspapers, and expert commentary from industry representatives. At the height of the pandemic, the media focused largely on Covid-19, while local newspaper publishing schedules and workforce were significantly reduced. Our approach to promoting industry activities and initiatives also had to change, although events were less frequent over this time. Journalists were added to DFA's email list to receive <i>Currant News</i> and event details. News articles were generated regularly this way. Stories were also picked up from the <i>Vine</i>. Local and industry media remained supportive of our efforts to facilitate grower development, promoting and attending field walks and other events. DFA staff and board members are also regularly invited to comment on industry issues and to provide seasonal updates. See Appendix Four – Forum media release

	pitches were distributed from July 2021 to June 2022: • New industry awards • 2022 Grower Forum • Dried Fruit Quality Awards winners 2022 • Harvester field day	
Online learning platform & social media	DFA's online learning platform allows a greater number of growers to access and engage with valuable industry information, events and innovations. A total of 22 videos were posted on YouTube and shared more widely on Facebook, LinkedIn and in <i>Currant News</i>, with supporting information published on the DFA website. Particularly while Covid-19 restrictions were in place, grower webinars, workshops and discussions were also held using Microsoft Teams.	DFA YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCX0YH4NFH8Jxh1pJoMu493A • It has grown from less than 70 subscribers in July 2019 to more than 300 in June 2022. • Its usefulness was particularly evident when Covid-19 restrictions were in place, with webinar recordings each receiving an average of 230 views. • The highest performing video was of a grower-developed pruning machine with 2402 views. DFA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DriedFruitsAustralia • Increase of 186 likes, with 796 likes at the start of July 2019 and 982 likes towards the end of June 2022. • Page followers increased by 283 (from 859 to 1142). See Appendix Five – Online Learning See Appendix Two – Social Media examples DFA LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/driedfruitsaustralia We began recording the number of followers in June 2020. Followers have grown from 359 to 1182 in June 2022 (increase of 823).
Annual Grower Forum	The DFA Grower Forum is usually held each year after the winter pruning season is completed. It provides an opportunity for growers and other industry stakeholders to learn from leading researchers, industry experts and innovators, Hort Innovation representatives and dried grape processors. In 2019, it went ahead as normal on 31 October at the Mildura Working Man's Club. In 2020, it was held online as a series of four	The 2019 forum was attended by about 50 people. The We're Growing Live webinars were attended by growers and industry stakeholders and recorded and uploaded to YouTube to reach those who couldn't attend. They were well received: • Powdery and downy mildew in dried grapes: 264 views • Collaborative farming: 111 views • Harvest 2020 (processor updates): 234 views • New varieties: 283 views The 2022 forum (postponed from 2021) was attended by about 30 people – a lower number than normal with growers unavailable due to the late-finishing harvest. Presentations were recorded and made available on the DFA YouTube channel in June 2022. At the time of reporting, the videos have received about 40 views. See Appendix Six – Forum programs and forum video analytics

	webinars, entitled We're Growing Live, on: • 6 October: Powdery and downy mildew in dried grapes • 14 October: Collaborative farming • 21 October: Harvest 2020 (processor updates) • 27 October: New varieties. The event was postponed in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. It was rescheduled to 28 April at Willow & Ivie in Nichols Point.	
Communications survey	Communications surveys were sent to Dried Fruits Australia's mailing list in 2020 and 2022. The surveys aimed to gather feedback from growers and industry stakeholders on the communications of DFA. The 2020 survey guided the redesign and relaunch of the Vine magazine and acted as a benchmark for communications throughout the remained of the project.	DFA communications surveys were created on Survey Monkey and distributed via Currant News to our mailing list of more than 250 subscribers. The 2020 survey received 11 responses. The 2022 survey remained open at the time of reporting, but had so far received nine responses. A survey was not undertaken in 2021 owing to other issues for growers taking greater precedence, including the many changes to regulations across three states due to Covid-19 lockdowns, border closures, and labour shortages impacting farm and time management. See Appendix Seven - survey questions.

Outcomes

Table 2 Outcome summary

Outcome	Alignment to fund outcome, strategy and KPI	Description	Evidence
Industry participants demonstrating engagement in dried grape best practice and R&D initiatives from promotion, communication and online platform	Aligns with Outcome 2 and 3 of the Dried Grape Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) 2017-2021	Dried grape growers engaged with best practice initiatives by attending field walk events promoted via communications platforms; attendance at R&D Forum in 2021; Grower Forums in each year, online or live; and by viewing videos of events/best practice online via YouTube The majority of growers utilise Currant News to know about upcoming events. This is measured through SurveyMonkey	Field walk evaluation: Demonstrates that Currant News is one of the main communication tools that informs growers on upcoming field and other R&D events or forums with 50–70 per cent of growers learning of these events through this medium. Social media: Evaluation via SurveyMonkey shows that Facebook and Messenger account for 10–15 per cent of notifying growers of best practice initiatives. YouTube: Promotion and views were particularly evident when Covid-19 restrictions were in place, with webinar recordings each receiving an average of 230 views. The highest performing video was of a grower-developed pruning machine with 2402 views. See Appendices Two and Five
Overall capability of dried grape industry participants extended and enhanced via communication platforms, assisting industry productivity gains	Aligns with Outcome 1, 2 and 3 of the Dried Grape SIP 2017-2021	Detailed reports of innovations and productivity improvements were captured in Currant News and the Vine magazine along with being actively demonstrated via YouTube videos	Currant News: https://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/news-and-events/news/ Mailchimp data shows <i>Currant News</i> emails are opened by up to 57 per cent of subscribers, well above the industry average of 20 percent. Current News emails are opened by an average of 47 per cent of subscribers, with a 9 per cent in-email click rate. DFA YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCX0YH4NfH8Jxh1pJoMu493A - It has grown from less than 70 subscribers in July 2019 to more than 300 in June 2022. - Its usefulness was particularly evident when Covid-19 restrictions were in place, with webinar recordings each receiving an average of 230 views. - The highest performing video was of a grower-developed pruning

			machine with 2402 views. Vine magazine: Has 562 subscribers with it also being available in digital format. Industry productivity information is captured in the Project Officer's column as well as including articles on specific R&D issues for dried grapes. See Appendices One and Two
Dried grape industry stakeholders gaining greater understanding of strategic objectives, role, research and development investments, and accessibility of Hort Innovation and the levy system via communication activities	Aligns with Outcome 3 of the Dried Grape SIP 2017-2021	R&D Forum held in Jan 2021 which was promoted via Currant News and reported on in the Vine Magazine. This framed the strategic R&D goals that the dried grape industry requires. Annual Grower Forums promoted and reported on - held in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Grower Forums were delivered online in 2020 and 2021 owing to Covid19 lockdowns and border closures. Presentations were uploaded to website and YouTube where available.	Currant News again promoted all these activities to growers and reports on these forums, and the information that came from them, is available in the Vine Magazine. This information is also available from the DFA Website https://issuu.com/vine-magazine/docs/17_2_vinemag_fin/s/12281815 Unfortunately Analytics for the DFA Website Google is unable to be accessed at this time owing to difficulties with the website, so numbers of views is unable to be provided. YouTube – Annual Forum videos Views average around 120 per video however this does tend to increase over time. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX0YH4NfH8Jxh1pJoMu493A/videos See Appendices One, Two and Five
Communication of relevant training opportunities in areas such as information technology; business practices; leadership; and social media to extend capacity and productivity of industry	Aligns with Outcome 3 of the Dried Grape SIP 2017-2021	Promotion of training events via Currant News, website and social media platforms.	Training events that can assist growers in other areas, such as business development or leadership forums have been communicated to growers via Currant News and the DFA Facebook site. Currant News: The fortnightly <i>Currant News</i> newsletter is distributed by email, and is also shared and made available to read via DFA's social media and website: https://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/news-and-events/news/ Mailchimp data shows <i>Currant News</i> emails are opened by up to 57 per cent of subscribers, well above the industry average of 20 percent. Current News emails are opened by an average of 47 per cent of subscribers, with a 9 per cent in-email click rate. The 2020 Communications Survey showed 70 per cent of respondents sourced information about the dried grape industry from <i>Currant News</i>,

participants			rising to 88 per cent in the 2022 survey. DFA Facebook site: DFA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DriedFruitsAustralia • Increase of 186 likes, with 796 likes at the start of July 2019 and 982 likes towards the end of June 2022. • Page followers increased by 283 (from 859 to 1142). See Appendix Two
Facilitation and maintenance of online learning platform where producers can access and share relevant information on production techniques	Aligns with Outcome 3 of the Dried Grape SIP 2017-2021	DFA website and YouTube site updated regularly with key information on dried grape industry productivity and other best practice information. Messenger app also updated with key information and enabling producers to communicate with each other	DFA Website: Best practice guides have been updated and promoted to growers via Currant News and are also available on the DFA website at the link below https://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/producer-resources/ DFA Messenger app: Growers utilise this app to communicate on innovation and productivity issues between each other, as well as it's utilized to promote events and learning where possible. See Appendix Two – screenshot of messenger group YouTube: Views average around 120 per video however this does tend to increase over time. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX0YH4NFH8Jxh1pJoMu493A/videos See Appendix Five

Monitoring and evaluation

Table 3 Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Question	Project performance	Continuous improvement opportunities
To what extent has the project achieved its outcomes	The project has provided a comprehensive communications framework over the last three years, through provision of information by email; quarterly magazine; special email updates as required; Messenger notifications; YouTube videos of field walks and extension information; and through the utilization, during Covid-19 lockdowns of Microsoft Teams. DFA YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX0YH4NFH8Jxh1pJoMu493A Dried grape industry stakeholders accessed information via all of these platforms, however Currant News (fortnightly email) remains a very popular communications tool https://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/news-and-events/news/ https://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/news-and-events/news/the-vine/ Industry information and awareness of key projects is considerable, particularly on issues such as mechanised winter pruning; yield data and inputs; and market information such as imports and exports	Further opportunities for communication to stakeholders includes the utilization of further video technology of R&D forums and field extension work for DFAs YouTube channel to lessen travel to field activities; and the introduction of podcasts on important R&D or marketing information that can be listened to by producers/stakeholders in their own time.
How relevant was the project to the needs of intended beneficiaries	This communications program is crucial to ensure that dried grape producers have the opportunity to learn about and participate in R&D extension activities. Notifications on these events via Currant News and the Vine Magazine, along with information and updates on biosecurity issues; news from Hort Innov; data and intelligence on imports, exports and quality parameters for markets is highly valued and required by dried grape industry stakeholders	Ensuring that both Currant News and the Vine Magazine continue to remain easy to access and relevant to stakeholders is a priority.
How well have intended beneficiaries been engaged in the project	Dried grape producers and industry stakeholders have strong engagement through being sent Currant News on a fortnightly basis with SurveyMonkey showing that 50-70% of growers utilize this format for awareness of field and other dried grape events. Special News updates are also utilized as required for major announcements that impact the dried grape industry. The Vine Magazine, YouTube channel and Messenger app are also utilized by growers in terms of their engagement with industry developments and improvements to best practice.	Continue to ensure information in Currant News is relevant and links strongly with the Industry Innovation and Adoption Program.
To what extent were engagement processes appropriate to the target audience/s of the project	The 2020 Communications Survey demonstrated that the communication strategies in place were quite appropriate to the target audience, with 70% accessing information via Currant News, and the Vine Magazine, and then another 40% accessing information via the DFA website. 70% of respondents accessed information via their Smartphone.	Ensuring that information is easy to read via Smartphones and able to be downloaded via Smartphone systems, will continue to be important.
What efforts did	At the commencement of the project both the Vine Magazine and	Further work is being

the project make to improve efficiency	Current News were reviewed and refreshed in terms of style and content, taking into account feedback received from dried grape producers and industry stakeholders. The MailChimp database was also reviewed to ensure capture of stakeholders so that the majority of levy payers were receiving communications on dried grape issues. During this project, information and data was also uploaded to the DFA website for levy payers and industry stakeholders to access as required.	undertaken to the DFA website so that it becomes a much more efficient process to upload information and data for access by dried grape industry stakeholders.
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Recommendations

1. The dried grape communications role is integral- through its strong linkages to the Dried Grape Industry Adoption and Innovation project - to the uptake of innovative technologies and best practice on farm, including building information that encourages yield improvements, a critical issue for the dried grape industry. The promotion of key R,D&E events for producers is a core part of this project, which has been, and will continue to be, essential across the entire value chain, providing information to processor/marketers, as well as engaging government, government agencies and potential investors.
2. The dried grape communications role must continue to work very closely and collaboratively with the Dried Grape Industry Adoption and Innovation Project Officer and also link strongly with the Peak Industry Body, Dried Fruits Australia and the Research and Development Corporation Hort Innovation to ensure:
 - Messaging to producers on R,D & E is framed within an appropriate context;
 - Key events are promoted through all appropriate media channels for ease of access by producers;
 - R,D&E and marketing information is shared via Currant News, the Vine Magazine, and, where needed via media releases, so that this information is communicated to producers, media and the wider community;
 - Best practice issues focusing on yield are interpreted and promoted via all communication mediums for a wide distribution to all networks and stakeholders, including investors.
 - Video recordings of key R,D&E events are edited, transcribed and uploaded to the DFA YouTube channel to ensure maximum viewing by dried grape producers to assist with increased accessibility.

Conclusion

The Communications Project has been well received by dried grape industry stakeholders with Currant News being a stand out for promotion of events and the Vine Magazine being a great resource for content on Research and Development initiatives. Social media has contributed by directing stakeholders to this content and the new online learning platform has records of field walks, presentations and events for stakeholders to view and review in their own time.

The dried grape communications role needs to be strongly linked and networked to the Dried Grape Industry Innovation and Adoption Program along with the Hort Innovation Dried Grape Strategic Investment Advisory Panel and the peak industry body- Dried Fruits Australia - to fully appreciate the nuances of dried grape production and processing. Understanding and communicating the strategic objectives and best practice initiatives of the dried grape industry is critical in terms of industry sustainability, efficiency and overall productivity.

Intellectual property

No project IP or commercialisation to report

Appendices – attached.

Appendix One:
The Vine Magazine_issu (online)

Appendix Two:
Currant News & Social Media Examples

Appendix Three:
Dried Fruits Australia website

Appendix Four:
Media Release example

Appendix Five:
YouTube – online learning platform

Appendix Six:
Grower Forums

Appendix Seven:
Grower Survey Questions



Vine magazine

AU

Quarterly news for the table grape and dried fruits industries.

EDIT PROFILE

PUBLICATIONS (10)

STACKS (0)

FOLLOWERS (3)

☐ Show Stories inside

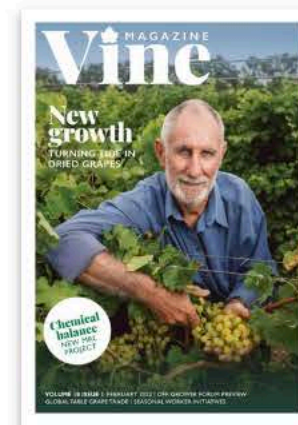
NEW



Vine magazine May 2022

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 2 months ago



Vine magazine February 2022

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 4 months ago



Vine magazine November 2021

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 8 months ago



Vine magazine August 2021

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 11 months ago



Vine magazine May 2021 edition

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 1 year ago



Vine magazine February 2021

by [Vine magazine](#)

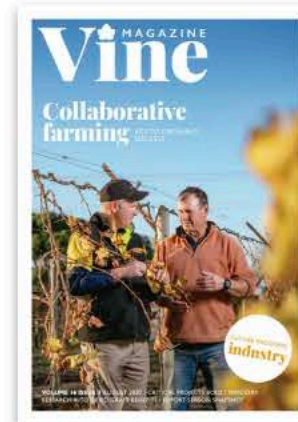
Published 1 year ago



Vine magazine November 2020

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 2 years ago



Vine magazine August 2020

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 2 years ago



Vine magazine May 2020

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 2 years ago



Vine magazine February 2020

by [Vine magazine](#)

Published 2 years ago



2022 Grower Forum presentations

If you missed this year's grower forum or would like to rewatch a presentation, the speaker videos are now up on our YouTube channel.

You can use the following links to navigate to the individual presentations or click on the green button below to see the full presentation playlist.

- Kevin Bodnaruk, keynote speaker: [Pesticide regulation and assessment](#)
- Stuart Putland, DFA: [10 Tonne Project update](#)
- Scott Gillett, Ceres Imaging: [10 Tonne Project Ceres Imaging data](#)
- Adam Briggs, Hort Innovation: [Horticulture Sustainability Framework](#)
- Tyson Milne, MDBA: [River operations update](#)

You can also download PDFs of the speakers' PowerPoint presentations from the [DFA website](#).

Watch now



Mechanised pruning field day

This month we begin a larger scale trial of our mechanical pruning system as a final shake down for our prototype.

If you want to have a look at the system, please join us at the Lloyds' property – 835 Benetook Avenue, Irymple – on 30 June at 10am.

You'll also be able to chat with one of the La Trobe University engineers developing the system, discuss what you might need to implement it at your property, and look at similar systems being developed by other growers.

The information from this longer trial will be used to produce a final design later this year for interested growers to build their own units.

Please email us at projects@driedfruitsaustralia.org.au to register for the event.



Currant News

Dried Fruits Australia newsletter • 17 June 2022

<< Test First Name >>, welcome to your 12th *Currant News* for 2022.

You might have seen this week's announcement from the Fair Work Commission that from 1 July, [minimum award wages](#) will increase by 4.6 per cent. This is subject to a minimum increase of \$40 per week and based on a 38-hour week for a full-time employee. Changes to superannuation will also come into effect from the start of the new financial year. The details are [available here](#).

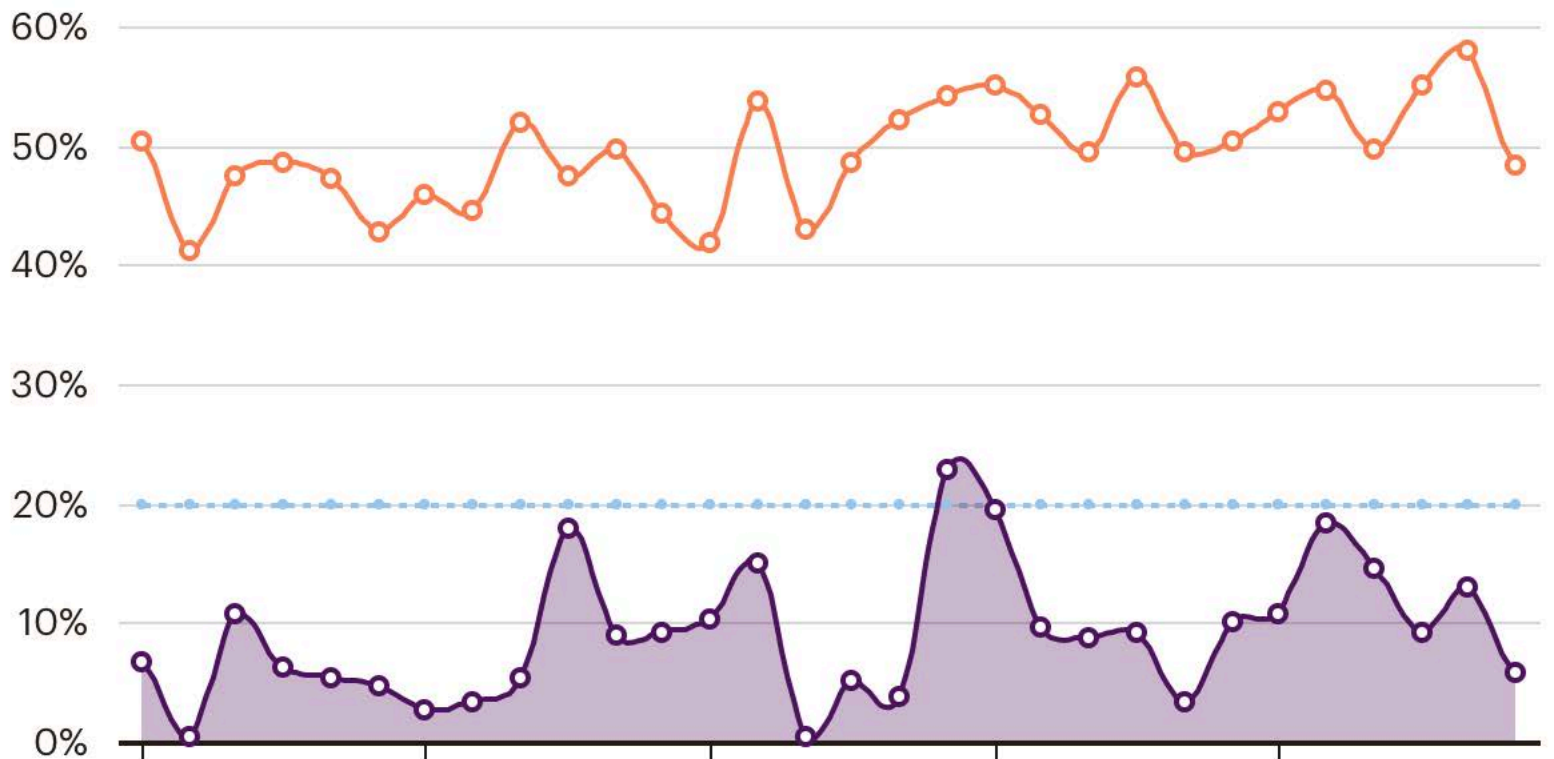
New permanent trade and operating rules for the Goulburn to Murray have also been [announced](#). Coming into effect from 1 July, the new rules will keep flows lower over summer and autumn, while not increasing delivery risk for irrigators. Download a fact sheet [here](#) for details.

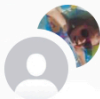
Keep reading for more *Currant News*!

Overview

Revenue

Open rate Click rate Industry avg. open rate



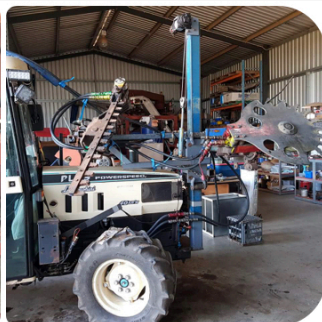
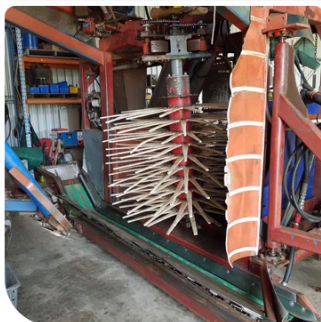


Dried Fruit Growers Gr...



David

Hi, just e reminder for Harvester and Double Cutter Fieldday on Wednesday 15th at my place.



David

Time: 12.30pm start (with BBQ lunch), 3.30pm finish
Location: 71 Dacelo Avenue, Red Cliffs
RSVP: Phone DFA on (03) 5023 5174 or email project@driedfruitsaustralia.org.au

Activities:

Look at a new twin cutting head system for summer pruning
Operators' overview of the pros and cons of five different harvester designs and their operation



Discussion on planning better



Aa



Overview

- Results
- Audience
- Feedback
- Content
- Overview
- Content

Results

Facebook Page reach ⓘ

19,592



See results report

Content ⓘ

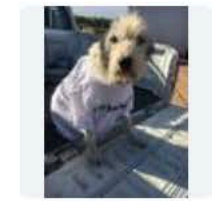
Sort by: Reach ▼



Dec 20, 2021
DFA has hosted its final ...
Post
Reach 7,907



Sep 19, 2020
The start of a new growi...
Post
Reach 4,180



Nov 19, 2020
Happy National Agricult...
Post
Reach 2,068



Aug 6, 2020
Your August Vine maga...
Post
Reach 1,450



Aug 15, 2021
The August edition of th...
Post
Reach 1,162



Dec 9, 2021
REMINDER: DFA 10 Ton...
Post
Reach 1,090

See content report

Audience ⓘ

Facebook Page likes ⓘ

985



Dried Fruits Australia

The voice of the Australian dried grape industry.

Farming · Mildura, Victoria · 1,181 followers



Anne & 1 other connection work here · 4 employees

✓ Following

Visit website ↗

More

Home

About

Posts

Jobs

People

Videos

Overview

Dried Fruits Australia is the national industry body representing the interests of dried vine fruit growers. With grower, processor and marketer members, our vision is for a sustainable and innovative horticultural industry consistently supplying superior quality dried grapes to consumers.

Website

<http://www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au>

Industry

Farming

Company size

11-50 employees

4 on LinkedIn ⓘ

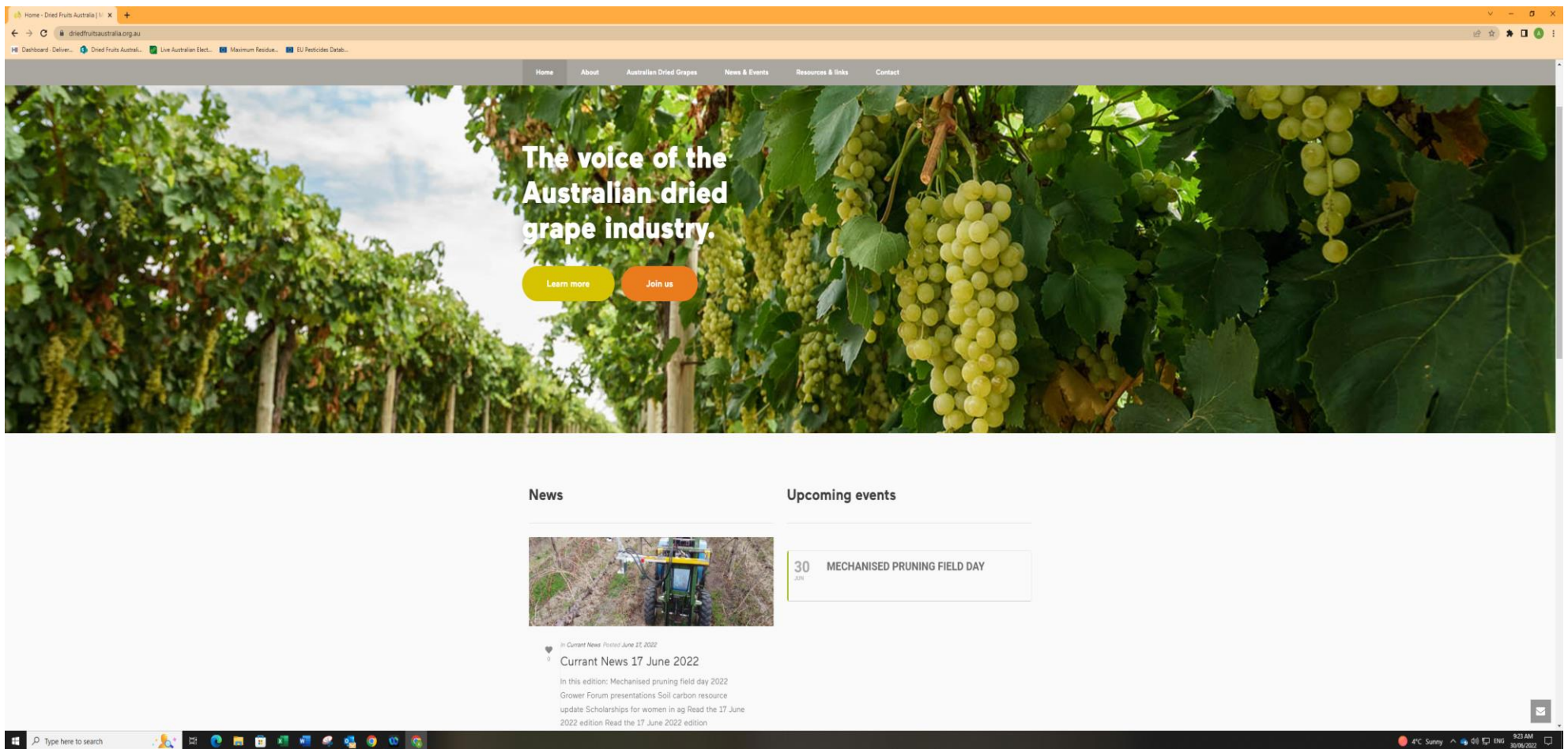
Headquarters

Mildura, Victoria

Founded

1907

Appendix Three – DFA Website





Appendix Five



Dried Fruits Australia

320 subscribers

CUSTOMIZE CHANNEL

MANAGE VIDEOS

HOME

VIDEOS

PLAYLISTS

CHANNELS

ABOUT



Australian dried grapes



0:06 / 6:00



Australian dried grapes

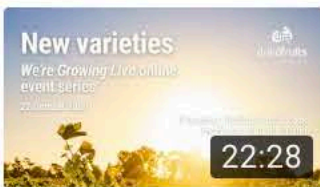
22,755 views • 5 years ago

Australia's dried grape industry is centred along the red soil plains of the inland, and irrigated by Australia's longest river.

The success of the industry was built on the ideal combination of hot weather, access to a good water supply from the Murray River, and fertile soils.

...

READ MORE



New dried grape varieties

Rachael McClintock from Sheehan Genetics talks new dried grape varieties. This is the...



Public

None

Nov 4, 2020

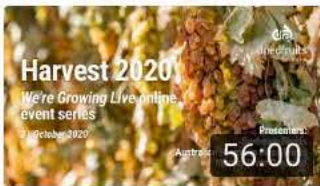
Published

284

1

85.7%

6 likes



2020 harvest & marketing update

Dried fruit processors Sunbeam Foods, Australian Premium Dried Fruits and Murra...



Public

None

Oct 22, 2020

Published

234

0

100.0%

5 likes



Collaborative farming

John Gladigau from Bulla Burra – a collaborative family farm in the northern...



Public

None

Oct 17, 2020

Published

111

0

100.0%

2 likes



Powdery and downy mildew in dried gra...

Pest and disease expert Peter Magarey discusses downy and powdery mildew and...



Public

None

Oct 11, 2020

Published

264

0

100.0%

5 likes



news release



Date: April 19, 2022

Dried grape industry to come together for 2022 forum

Irrigation technology, the impact of chemical residues, South Africa's dried grape industry, sustainable farming, water, and local projects will be explored at Dried Fruits Australia's 2022 Grower Forum this month.

Sponsored by Hort Innovation, the event will be held on Thursday 28 April from 1pm at Willow & Ivie in Nichols Point.

DFA chair Mark King said the forum would be an opportunity for growers, processors and other industry stakeholders to connect at the end of harvest and hear the latest information from experts from both within and outside the industry.

"This year's keynote speaker is Kevin Bodnaruk, who has more than 35 years' experience in the areas of pesticide development, use and regulation," Mark said.

"Kevin is an expert on MRLs (maximum residue limits) and will discuss the impact of chemical residues in markets, particularly Europe, which is one of our top export markets.

"Given the changing nature of market regulations, there is a need for more awareness by growers and all stakeholders along the supply chain."

Mark said attendees would also be lucky to hear from the general manager of Raisins South Africa, Ferdie Botha.

"While our other speakers will be in the room with us, Ferdie will be presenting remotely from South Africa and sharing his knowledge from an industry outside of Australia."

Forum attendees will have a chance to ask questions after all the presentations and talk to guest speakers and each other over drinks and nibbles at the end of the forum.

To register for the event, please contact DFA on 03 5023 5174 or at admin@driedfruitsaustralia.org.au.

ENDS

Media contacts

Lauren Roden, Communications Manager
T: 0438 262 242

Mark King, Chair
T: 0427 272 207



Program – 2019 Grower Forum

Thursday 31 October, Mildura Working Man's Club

- 2.00 pm **Welcome & program outline**
Anne Mansell – CEO, Dried Fruits Australia
- 2.05 pm **Overview of DFA activities & major issues**
Mark King – Chair, Dried Fruits Australia
- Guest speakers**
- 2.15 pm Sue Argus – Manager, SunRISE Mapping & Research
- 2.30pm Anthony Couroupis – Managing Director, Lower Murray Water
- 2.50pm Judith Damiani – CEO, Western Murray Irrigation
- 3.10pm Questions
- 3.20pm Warren Lloyd – Project Manager, SuniTAFE Smart Farm
- 3.30 pm **Market situation & outlook**
- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Australian Premium Dried Fruits | Craig Greenwood, CEO
Michael Scalzo, Managing Director |
| Murray River Organics | Valentina Tripp, CEO |
| Sunbeam Foods | Grant Leyden, General Manager
David Swain, Supply Manager |
- 4.40 pm **Sponsor presentation**
MADEC (Harvest Labour Services)
- 4.45 pm **Research projects update**
Stuart Putland – Consultant Field Officer, DFA
- 5.00pm **Close**
Mark King
- Drinks & nibbles**



Dried fruit forum goes online

Posted October 2, 2020 In Media Releases

Growers will learn more about collaborative farming and a new disease prediction system as part of Dried Fruits Australia's (DFA) new online event series.

Launching on Tuesday 6 October, the *We're Growing Live* series will be held over several weeks in place of DFA's annual grower forum.

The first presentation will be delivered by long-time plant pathologist and GrowCare's directing co-founder, Peter Magarey, who is the brains behind DFA's new downy mildew and bunch rot alert system.

At the second event on 14 October, John Gladigau from Bulla Burra in South Australia will talk about his experience with running a collaborative family farm.

Mr Gladigau said there were many opportunities for collaboration in horticulture, and setting up the right model offered "great potential to increase efficiency and profitability".

"Collaboration is a really sexy topic, but it's one thing to talk about it and another to take the big step do it," he said.

"We believe it's been well worth it, and others who've done it would say the same. But it's the perception of what you're giving up – the perception that you're giving up your freedom, your independence and your flexibility

“But the things people believe constrain us or see as negatives, we’d actually say are the biggest positives – we have created more flexibility and freedom for ourselves.”

As well as the benefits and challenges of collaborative farming, Mr Gladigau will advise growers on what to consider before going into business with someone else.

DFA chair Mark King said a forum for dried fruit growers had been held every year since the organisation was formed more than 100 years ago.

“The forum has evolved into different formats over the years, but I can’t remember a time where everyone wasn’t in the same room – it’s certainly the first time the event will be held online,” Mr King said.

“But even though it will look a bit different this year, we will still be providing some really valuable presentations that I know growers will learn a lot from.

“As we come to the end of a tough year and look forward to a better one, it’s important that we still offer a forum for our growers and other industry members and update them on the projects we’ve been working on that will drive our industry forward.

“Anyone who joins us live will be able to ask questions of the presenters, and we’ll be recording each event to make sure that people who can’t make it on the day can watch at a time that suits them.”

To find out more about the *We’re Growing Live* series and how to join the events, visit the [news and events page](#)

. –



Program | 2022 Grower Forum

Thursday 28 April – Willow & Ivie, Nichols Point

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1.00pm | Welcome & program outline/recognition of sponsorship
Mark King – Chair, Dried Fruits Australia |
| 1.05pm | Keynote speaker – Kevin Bodnaruk , Pesticide regulation and assessment
15-minute presentation, questions (10 minutes) |
| 1.30pm | Hort Innovation, Adam Briggs – Sustainability framework
15-minute presentation, questions (10 minutes) |
| 2.00pm | MDBA, Tyson Milne , Water
15-minute presentation, questions (10 minutes) |
| 2.30pm | CERES Imaging, Scott Gillett – 10 Tonne Project and other projects
15-minute presentation, questions (10 minutes) |
| 3.00pm | 10 Tonne Project, Stuart Putland , Consultant Field Officer
10-minute presentation, questions (5 minutes) |
| 3.15pm | 10–15-minute break for tea/coffee |
| 3.30pm | Sunbeam Foods
Grant Leyden, General Manager
David Swain, Supply Manager |
| 3.45pm | Australian Premium Dried Fruits
Craig Greenwood, CEO
Michael Scalzo, Managing Director |
| 4pm | Keynote Speaker, Ferdie Botha , CEO (video link), South African Raisins
15-minute presentation, questions (10 minutes) |
| 4.30 pm | Thank you presentations to guest speakers
Anne Mansell, CEO |
- Drinks and nibbles**

DFA 2022 Grower Forum sponsor:



Date: April 19, 2022

Dried grape industry to come together for 2022 forum

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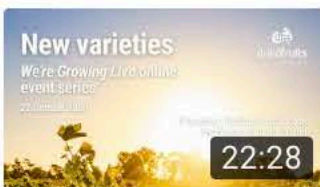
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New dried grape varieties

Rachael McClintock from Sheehan Genetics talks new dried grape varieties. This is the...



Public

None

Nov 4, 2020

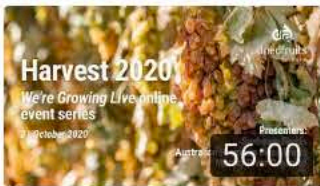
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2020 harvest & marketing update

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Public

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Oct 11, 2020

Published

264

0

100.0%

5 likes



Dried Grape Communications Survey 2020 and 2022

1. Which of the following best describes you?

- Dried grape grower
- Grower (other than dried grapes)
- Processor/marketer
- Agronomist
- Government
- Researcher
- Other (please specify)

2. How do you source information about the dried grape industry? Please select all that apply.

- Vine magazine
- DFA website
- DFA newsletter Currant News
- DFA Facebook page
- DFA YouTube channel
- Dried fruit processors
- Newspapers
- Radio
- Other (please specify)

3. When accessing news online, what device/s do you prefer to use?

- Computer
- Tablet
- Phone
- I don't read news online

4. Do you receive a print copy of the Vine?

- Yes
- No
- I used to

5. Do you read the Vine online (digital edition)?

- Yes
- No

6. On a scale of 1 to 13, which topics are of most interest to you (1 being the most important, 13 being the least important)?

- Grower profiles
- Research and development
- New technology
- Best practice information
- Marketing updates
- Biosecurity
- CEO/Chair reports
- Processor reports
- Import/export data

Water
Labour
Climate
Historical information

7. What other topics would you like to see featured in the Vine?

8. As a grower, how do the stories in the magazine contribute to and impact how you decide to use a new method, growing technique or idea?

9. How else can we improve the magazine for you?

10. Do you receive Currant News via email?

Yes

No

11. Do you access Currant News via the DFA website?

Yes

No

12. What industry information should be included in Currant News? Please select all that apply.

Industry events

Best practice information

Biosecurity alerts/information

Water news

Labour/industrial relations updates

Grants/assistance

Hort Innovation news

Other (please specify)

13. How else can we improve Currant News for you? You might like to comment on the content, frequency and format.

14. Do you use social media?

Yes

No

15. Which industry social media pages do you access?

DFA Facebook

DFA YouTube

DFA LinkedIn

Australian Sultanas Facebook

Australian Sultanas Instagram

Hort Innovation Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

National Farmers' Federation Facebook/Twitter

Australian Farmers Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

Other (please specify)

16. What information do you access via DFA's Facebook page? Please select all that apply. 0

Industry event alerts

Videos of field walks/presentations

Grants/assistance

Vine magazine digital edition

Hort Innovation news

News/events from other industry organisations

Other (please specify)

17. How can we improve on Facebook?

18. How helpful is DFA's YouTube channel in providing information and material on dried grape production?

Extremely helpful

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not so helpful

Not at all helpful

19. How can we improve on YouTube? You might like to comment on video length, clarity and content.

20. What else would you like us to know? If you have any other feedback regarding dried grape industry communications, please leave us a comment.

21. Please enter your postcode