

Final Report

Australian lychee industry communication programme

Project leader:

Nick Morenos

Delivery partner:

Fruit Tree Media

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LY16005

Project:

Australian lychee industry communications programme LY16005

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Level 7

141 Walker Street

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Telephone: (02) 8295 2300

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Content

Content	3
Summary	4
Public summary	4
Keywords	5
Introduction	6
Methodology	7
Outputs	8
Outcomes	9
Monitoring and evaluation	10
Recommendations	11
Refereed scientific publications	12
References	13
Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality	14
Acknowledgements	15
Appendices	16

Summary

The communication program is responsible for making growers aware of industry R&D and marketing programs, and in disseminating information that facilitates the uptake of improved management practices. It does this utilising the industry journal *Living Lychee* and the industry website australianlychee.com.au.

The industry journal is published in July, October and March. Each issue includes reports from the ALGA president and executive officer, and regional representatives. It also features articles sourced from researchers to keep growers up to date with the latest findings; and articles sourced from Hort Innovation to make growers aware of industry marketing activities, projects and outcomes.

As a result of publishing *Living Lychee*, growers are more aware/have a greater understanding of:

- The Australian lychee industry
- Industry activities and programs, including the strategic plan
- R&D projects and results
- Industry promotions and marketing programs
- How and where the lychee industry levy is being spent
- The relationship between ALGA, Hort Innovation and the Australian government

Greater awareness of industry projects has contributed to growers implementing research findings (e.g. high-pressure washing of fruit for export) and to participating in export programs (e.g. export to the USA).

The industry website has a section for casual visitors and one for growers.

The visitors' pages introduce the industry, describe varieties, has recipes, and covers fruit handling and storage. A contact form is often used by visitors and stakeholders.

The website also has a 'News' section where articles of interest to growers and visitors is regularly published.

In the growers-only section, growers can log-in to download research reports, publications, documents and selected articles from *Living Lychee*.

As a result of the industry website:

- Visitors are more aware of the Australian lychee industry and of lychees, and how to store, use and buy them.
- Growers have a reference point for current information about the lychee industry
- Growers have ready and timely access to the summaries of the latest R&D and marketing information
- Growers have access (via log-in) to complete R&D and marketing reports and other relevant industry information.

Keywords

Lychee; Living Lychee; lychee journal; lychee website; Australian lychee; lychee research; lychee magazine; lychee projects; lychee marketing

Introduction

The lychee industry has relied on its trade journal, *Living Lychee*, to communicate with its members and levy payers.

In 2007 Fruit Tree Media was contracted to redesign, refocus and reinvigorate grower interest in the journal.

Fruit Tree Media created a new, visually appealing, modern magazine aimed at generating greater reader interest; and focused on presenting topics of (potential financial) value to growers including R&D projects and outcomes, the industry's domestic and export marketing programs (and strategic plan), and regional issues.

These core topics are complemented with articles about growers and marketers, news, and other industry-related and cross-industry related issues and research.

The industry website also needed updating to better promote the industry and lychees to the public, and to attract growers wanting to know more about the industry.

The website was updated in 2015 after a review of the old site and feedback from ALGA of what was needed in the new site.

The new site utilises the latest content management system and web technologies. It presents industry information in clear, easy to follow pages, and complements the industry's marketing and promotional program by re-purposing existing marketing material.

The website now allows ALGA the opportunity to publish relevant and timely information for growers via a 'News' section found on the Home page. News items and any photos are sent to the editor and immediately uploaded to the site.

The website also has a grower-only section (needs log-in) which presents relevant and timely information to ALGA members and levy payers; and where the industry journal can be downloaded as a digital file.

Methodology

Industry Journal

The lychee industry journal, *Living Lychee*, is published three times a year, March July and October.

It is a professionally designed, and edited to suit a grower audience. Each issue has 20 colour pages.

It is mailed to ALGA members and levy payers (about 250 – mainly in Queensland and northern NSW). The mailing list is maintained by ALGA and captures most of the commercial lychee growers in Australia.

The content for the journal is sourced by the editor primarily from researchers (for lychee and cross-industry projects), Hort Innovation (for lychee PR and marketing), lychee regional representatives, ALGA president and executive officer, and from growers (case studies).

Other content sources include Biosecurity Australia, Plant Health Australia, Growcom, NSW and Qld departments of Agriculture, local and international experts.

All material is presented to the ALGA president and EO for comment/feedback and approval before publication.

The journal focuses on:

- Industry and relevant cross-industry R&D projects - objectives, updates, reports, conclusions
- Industry marketing & PR programs – objectives, updates, reports, effectiveness
- ALGA's programs - e.g. export information, market access, biosecurity issues, chemical registration, climate change
- Industry news - e.g. meetings, field days, season updates, crop forecasts, regional updates
- Grower orchard practices – via interviews with growers.

Fruit Tree Media is engaged to:

- Produce a 20 page colour journal, three times a year.
- Source all material
- Edit all material
- Design each journal (including manipulate photography, graphs, diagrams etc.)
- Prepare proofs (as PDF) for approval by ALGA president and executive officer
- Prepare print-ready PDFs

Industry website

Fruit Tree Media is responsible for designing and maintaining the site (with feedback from ALGA on what is needed for the site).

FTM is also responsible for keeping the information up to date and relevant. This applies to the visitors' section and the growers' section.

For the visitors' section of the website Fruit Tree Media:

- Edits/updates page information (text, images, graphs, tables etc.)
- Adds new material to existing pages (e.g. new varieties)
- Creates new menu items and pages (e.g. 'News', and 'Links for growers')

For the growers' section of website, Fruit Tree Media:

- Adds News articles
- Adds research reports
- Uploads *Living Lychee* and makes issues available for download
- Updates ALGA committee members section
- Extracts practical information from past and future issues of *Living Lychee* and makes it available as PDF files for growers to download.
- For the administrative end of the website, Fruit Tree Media:
 - Registers site name, maintains site hosting
 - Updates and maintains the content management system (Joomla)
 - Updates extensions
 - Maintains site security
 - Backs-up and archives site
 - Troubleshoots issues.

Outputs

Industry journal, *Living Lychee*

Industry journal (20 colour pages each) produced and distributed in:

2017 – July and October

2018 – March, July and October

2019 – March, July and October

2020 – March, July and October

Each issue contained:

- ALGA presidents report; ALGA EO report
- Regional Reports from S-E Qld, Tablelands and Nth Qld, Bundaberg and Childers area, Central Qld, Far North Qld. Northern NSW.
- Research and other reports as they became available including:
 - Protecting Aussie bees/Pollination project/stingless bees as pollinators
 - Lychee minor use permits list
 - Lychee industry grading guide; Lychee field guide
 - HARPS
 - Mite disinfestation for improved market access
 - Lychee tree slow decline
 - ALGA grower meeting presentation highlights
 - Communication program evaluation results
- ALGA/ Hort Innovation reports as they became available including:
 - Lychee marketing programs, updates and results
 - Lychee export market development strategy
 - Across industry project summaries (COVID-19 & consumer behaviour; Consumer behaviour and retail data; pollination fund projects)

Living Lychee October 2020 cover



Industry website:

See here: australianlychee.com.au

For visitors

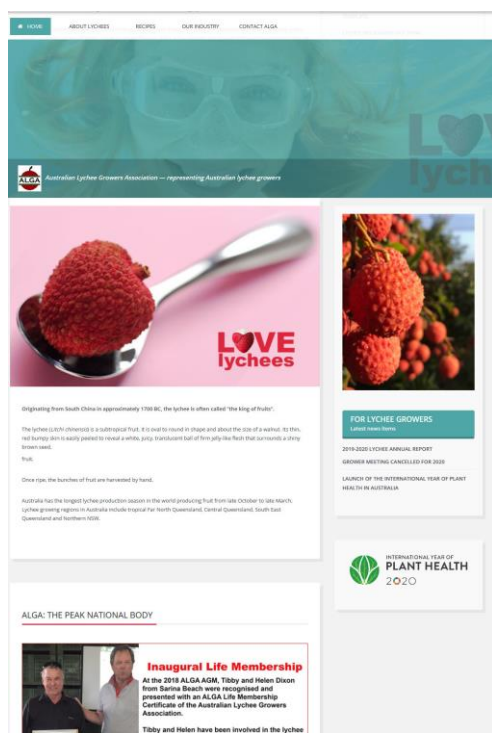
- Modern, colourful website, incorporating the latest web technology – including scalability to suit tablets and phones.
- Attractive and informative (for visitors and growers).
- Incorporated re-purposed lychee marketing and PR information and images.
- Site linked to lychee Facebook (facebook.com/AussieLychees) and and Instagram pages (instagram.com/aussielychees).

For growers (grower-only section)

‘ALGA’ menu containing:

- R&D: Reports, List of chemicals from APVMA, Industry Biosecurity Plan
- SIP and Export plans
- Various Final Reports
- *Living Lychee* (as PDF)

australianlychee.com.au Home page



Outcomes

The lychee industry communication program is responsible for making growers aware of industry research and marketing programs, and in effectively disseminating information to facilitate the uptake of improved practices.

To achieve this, the industry relies on two delivery formats:

- its printed journal *Living Lychee* and
- its website australianlychee.com.au, which provides information for visitors and growers about the industry.

Survey form

A survey form was developed to help evaluate the industry communication program.

The form was made available on the industry website. It was promoted in *Living Lychee*, and reminders to complete the form were emailed to all growers on the ALGA email list. There are about 200 growers on the list. Thirty growers completed the survey form. (Results are presented here as x/30.)

Living Lychee

The survey results show that the industry journal, *Living Lychee* met its intermediate and end of project project outcomes: that growers are more aware or have a greater understanding of:

- the Australian lychee industry, its activities and programs (29/30)
- R&D projects and results (27/30)
- industry promotions and marketing programs (23/30).

These objectives are primarily met through certain sections of the magazine:

- from reports by the ALGA president, secretary and the regions; and from articles on industry research projects (30/30)
- from articles on the lychee industry marketing program (24/30).
- From News and Views (30/30), Grower orchard practices (29/30); and Product information (24/30).

Influential

The survey also shows that *Living Lychee* is an effective means of communication and that it is influential. This is borne out from responses to the question on how *Living Lychee* has helped improve productivity or profitability; and how it has raised awareness (see Monitoring and Evaluation for details).

Industry website

Visitors

The industry website receives about 4000 visits each month. That would suggest that the website is meeting its objective to make visitors aware of the Australian lychee industry; and how to store, use and buy lychees.

Growers—public access

Most growers have visited the website (24/30). Reasons are mainly for information about lychees, the industry and industry news.

Site stats

The site received 54,000 visits in 2019 with 131,000 page views. From Jan 2020 to Oct 2020 the site received 51,000 visits and 156,000 page views.

Top five articles (since site update):

<i>Popular varieties</i>	(66,500 hits)	<i>Helpful hints for retailers</i>	(38,000 hits)
<i>Buying and storing lychees</i>	(34,000 hits)	<i>Preparing to eat</i>	(33,500 hits)
<i>Industry background</i>	(15,000 hits)		

Monitoring and evaluation

The ‘end of project outcomes’ is that *Growers will be more aware of their industry, of their industry R&D and marketing programs, and of better management practices, and as a result, will have implemented practices to improve yield and fruit quality.*

Answers to the key evaluation question referring to this: *To what extent has the project achieved its expected outcomes;* is best answered by growers, via the survey .

Survey

The form was made available on the industry website. It was promoted in *Living Lychee*, and reminders to complete the form were emailed to all growers on the ALGA email list. There are about 200 growers on the list. Thirty growers completed the survey form. (Results are presented here as x/30.)

The survey results show that the industry journal, *Living Lychee* met its key objectives—that growers are more aware or have a greater understanding of:

- the Australian lychee industry, its activities and programs (29/30)
- R&D projects and results (27/30)
- industry promotions and marketing programs (23/30).

These objectives are primarily met through certain sections of the magazine:

- from reports by the ALGA president, secretary and the regions; and from articles on industry research projects (30/30)
- from articles on the lychee industry marketing program (24/30).
- from grower orchard practices (29/30)

And that ... *as a result [growers], will have implemented practices to improve yield and fruit quality* – below are brief responses from growers to the question, *Information in Living Lychee has helped me improve productivity or profitability.* (There were 17 YES responses to this question.)

- New to the industry so all information has been valuable
- Improved flowering and fruit production in Fay Zee Siu variety
- More efficient use of resources. Overheads managed better
- Articles of farm practices and management from growers
- Types and application rates of sprays, fertilisers, pruning
- R&D pruning, varieties • Marketing, packaging, tree management.

The project’s success in meeting its key objectives is mirrored in the industry website, where growers said they visited the growers section of the site:

- for information that would assist the harvest and growing
- To read the latest information that had been installed onto the site
- Trying to keep up to date • Research.

Answers to the other key evaluation question, *How relevant was the project to the needs of intended beneficiaries,* is best approached through ALGA’s involvement in the project – as they represent the interests of Australia’s lychee growers.

To ensure that the project maintained its relevance, ALGA feedback was sought for each issue of *Living Lychee* before publication; ALGA reviewed and added questions to the survey form; ALGA provided the relevant industry reports and news/updates for the industry website; ALGA provided feedback about website design and content.

The project maintained its relevance as a result of ALGA’s direct and consistent involvement with the project.

Recommendations

This has been a very successful project as shown from the survey results for the journal, the number of hits for the website, the significant involvement and positive feedback from ALGA, and the positive feedback from growers directly to the project leader.

The recommendation would be to continue the project with a few changes:

- Journal – incorporate content suggestions identified in the survey (e.g more about IPM).
- Website – utilise the 'News' section more, to keep growers up to date with developments and to provide reasons for them to visit the site regularly.
Perhaps upload News items to the website first and then reference (and link to) the News section in any ALGA emails to growers
Promote the grower 'log-in' section more, for growers to access this resource and download reports, journals, articles etc.

Refereed scientific publications

None to report.

Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

No project IP, project outputs, commercialisation or confidentiality issues to report.

Appendices

Living-Lychee-October-2020.pdf

LycheeSurvey-2019-results.pdf

Link to website: <https://australianlychee.com.au/>