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Aussie horticulture spotlights responsible farming

Limiting food waste, packaging, and boosting water and energy efficiency are just some of the opportunities captured in a new Australian-Grown Horticulture Sustainability Framework that has been developed with input from industry.

Created with input from more than 600 industry participants, the Framework details 17 focus areas that align with existing business measures and initiatives, as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Hort Innovation chief executive Matt Brand said the Framework has been developed for Australian horticulture industry participants at a time when consumers and investors are increasingly asking for evidence of ethical and sustainable practices from their food producers.

"The aim of this Sustainability Framework is to acknowledge the significant contribution Aussie fresh produce growers make to the nation's families and environment through the provision of fresh and nutritious food," he said.

"It also promotes sustainable and responsible care for our natural environment and provides a vital roadmap for a stronger Australian farming future."

Mr Brand said the initiative aligns with a range of research efforts being delivered by Hort Innovation, in line with the target to grow agriculture to \$100 billion by 2030.

Shane Quinn, from vegetable producer Mulgowie Farming Company, said the Framework is a useful resource for industry.

"The Mulgowie Farming team is proud to use ethical sustainable practices when producing nutritious produce from our healthy soils," he said. "We look forward to the Sustainability Framework providing the means to demonstrate positive environmental impacts and industry issues of concern to a wide range of stakeholders."

Joseph Ebbage, Market Development Manager at the Almond Board of Australia, said sustainability is important to customers both domestically and internationally.

"Our trade partners in Europe and in the UK are looking for suppliers that can meet sustainability metrics. Our ability to communicate sustainability credentials is vital to maintaining and growing these relationships," said Ebbage.

"The framework provides an invaluable foundation document for our industry. The Australian almond industry is looking to leverage this rich body of insights to create a program specific to growing and processing almonds in Australia."

The Horticulture Sustainability Framework was developed over more than 12 months and involved input from producers, employees, industry peak bodies, service and input suppliers,



and researchers. Financers and investors, marketers and exporters, retailers, governments and consumers also had input.

Mr Brand said all groups shared very similar sustainability priorities with topics such as limiting produce waste, food safety and energy use being some of the most important issues.

“The next step is to measure the sectors current performance against each indicator identified in the Framework”.

For more information, see the Horticulture Sustainability Framework on the [Hort Innovation website](#). An audio file is also available.

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