Hort Innovation

media release

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Hort closes decade with big wins for growers

The last 12 months has seen unprecedented growth across the horticulture industry with the grower-owned rural research and development corporation, Hort Innovation, kicking big goals for industry.

In the last year Hort Innovation managed more than 600 active R&D projects, invested more than $122 million across new innovative agricultural technology, continuous improvement projects, breeding and integrated disease and pest management.

Around 24 levy industries ran dedicated marketing programs to drive awareness and domestic consumption, and Hort Innovation's signature trade marketing initiative, Taste Australia, continued to showcase fresh, clean and green Aussie produce in key Asian markets, and helped local businesses navigate the complexities of the export market.

Hort Innovation CEO Matt Brand said the level of funding available from co-investors, particularly through the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative had also increased this year, with more than $44 million worth of projects now funded through outside sources under strategic levy fund programs.

"We are proud to have delivered extra value for the sector by securing additional government funding through competitive grants, including those under the Australian Government's Rural R&D for Profit program, the Improved Access to AgVet Chemicals initiative, and the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper," he said.

"Out of up to $2 million available across the country's 15 RDCs in 2018/19, Hort Innovation received close to $930,000, with the funding being used for data generation activities that will ultimately support label registration and minor use permit applications.

"Through four rounds of funding to date, Hort Innovation was awarded a total of 88 grants of 146 available to the value of some $4.32 million."

Mr Brand said the RDC successfully tendered for and won two more Rural R&D for Profit project grants valued at over $10 million this year and reached $27 million in investment through the Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative after just 18-months of operation.

"We also developed our Statement of Commitment to Mutual Purpose and Respect which helps us come together with industry bodies that look after statutory or voluntary levy industries to mutually define, acknowledge and cement agreed roles, responsibilities, shared objectives and engagement expectations," he said.

"This has already been embraced by Avocados Australia, the Almond Board of Australia, the Australian Macadamia Society, the Australian Mango Industry Association and the Australian Banana Growers' Council."

Mr Brand said two new industry funds were formally established this year for Blueberries and Nashi; and under the Hort Innovation Banana Fund marketing program, the first-ever National Banana Day took place on May 1.

For more information on Hort Innovation projects, download our Annual Report here.

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