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New data to unlock growth for veggie growers

A major boost to productivity and profitability could be on the horizon for Aussie vegetable growers following the launch of a new \$6.1M data initiative. The five-year benchmarking program will enable growers to identify opportunities to transform their enterprises and bolster the nation's food supply.

Delivered through Hort Innovation and led by agricultural consulting firms Planfarm and RMCG, the program will provide vegetable and onion growers with the ability to benchmark their business against national and regional benchmarking data. This will enable growers to track their own performance against industry averages and 'best-in-class' performance, providing the catalyst for positive practice change and farm business growth.

Hort Innovation chief executive officer Brett Fifield said the program would work with growers and industry to deliver a program that addressed the notion that 'you can't manage what you can't measure'.

"This exciting initiative will build an unparalleled level of farm data to give growers more confidence to make changes and improvements within their operations," Mr Fifield said. "Providing aggregated national benchmarks will enhance the financial and business literacy of vegetable and onion growers across the country."

Heralding a new chapter in the strategic thinking and efficiency of Australian horticulture, Mr Fifield said the program would involve benchmarking experts working closely with growers to track their production and map out opportunities for improvement in their businesses.

AUSVEG chief executive officer Michael Coote said the initiative would enhance the resilience of the vegetable industry by providing clear and effective measures of success.

"This program is going to help the vegetable industry focus on how they conduct their business" Mr Coote said.

"Growers currently do not have access to holistic data which gives them meaningful insights into how they are performing in comparison with others. This initiative will give growers a mechanism to evaluate their business's performance compared to others based on their specific crop type and location."

"The data will also provide insights to the industry as a whole, so that we can identify areas to invest more heavily in to enhance our competitiveness and unlock a more prosperous future."

Growers will have the tools to identify areas for improvement and enhance their competitiveness in the industry, unlocking the potential for a more prosperous future."

Planfarm horticulture director Paul Omodei said the national program would build on the experience, expertise, and momentum from previous Hort Innovation investments in which Planfarm was a central delivery partner.

"Six years of benchmarking work for the vegetable industry in Western Australia has provided us with key relationships and invaluable production data that form the foundation of this initiative," Mr Omodei said.

"The benefits of this in-depth consultative approach extend beyond individual growers and supports a more robust and resilient horticulture industry, equipping growers with a financially sophisticated level of understanding of their business."

"Access to a robust set of industry benchmarks brings clarity to decision-making across industry, including business owners, peak industry bodies, research and development organisations, and financial institutions."

Media contact: Lauren Jones | 0427 140 765 | lauren.jones@horticulture.com.au