

SA Productivity Commission
GPO Box 2343
ADELAIDE SA 5001



ABN: 98 512 933 456

PO Box 1211,
Kensington Gardens
South Australia 5068

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Research and Development Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

The Horticulture Coalition of SA is made up of fourteen member groups:

Almond Board of Australia

Apple and Pear Growers Association of SA

AUSVEG SA

Citrus SA

HortEx Alliance

Australian Mushroom Growers Association

Nursery and Garden Industry of SA

Olives South Australia

Onions Australia

Pistachio Growers' Association

SA Produce Market

South Australian Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable
Industries

Summerfruit SA

Women in Horticulture

Food, wine and agribusiness has been identified as a key growth sector in the SA Government's Growth State initiative. This needs to be underpinned by a long term commitment to industry led and/or controlled research, development and extension with a focus on adoption, reducing industry risks and costs and exploiting industry opportunities.

Some key points we'd like to emphasise, in relation to this critical foundation, are:

- The need for a holistic, long term vision for research, development, extension and adoption (R,D&E or R,D,E&A) with longer term, bipartisan commitments over 10-30 years; including to potentially align with the 2030 national target for \$100 billion in farmgate output. Shorter term (e.g. electoral cycle) trends and changes in direction don't serve R,D&E, industry or SA well.
- The importance of industry setting directions and preferably having some or all control of R,D&E (local/SA industry control), as well as the need for close engagement between industry and SARDI and the universities. This is needed to maximise adoption and economic value of R,D&E.
 - Extension and adoption are critical elements which need to be supported.
 - Succession in organisations like SARDI needs to be addressed (e.g. in areas such as plant pathology and entomology which are vital to industry).
 - We have the largest region of protected horticultural cropping in Australia and should be taking more of a leadership role in related areas.

- Any R,D&E planning needs to recognise existing extension in place funded by industry (future orchards, levy projects) which could be bolstered with additional investment. Much of the R&D and extension knowledge is now vested within industry groups rather than government.
- There is an opportunity to develop strategic funds for on-ground practice trials and international technology adoption.
- We recommend that a horticulture industry roundtable be held to review the adequacy of current R,D,E&A, identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities (including potential cross-sector work or synergies); aiming to ensure that the required partnerships are in place and functioning effectively, reverse reductions in resourcing in key areas and improve access to national funding. This would need to be coordinated in partnership with industry.
 - The development of a value chain roadmap (identifying the necessary industry led and controlled R&D capabilities) could form part of this process.
- We need to invest in R,D,E&A across the whole value chain, through to marketing (including market research, brand development, traceability, export capacity building, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as areas like biosecurity and waste management).

There also needs to be investment in our capacity across the whole life cycle of technology. This means ability to adapt technology and conduct repairs and maintenance (particularly on imported technology).
- It is critical to recognise the diversity of agribusinesses and their capacity to conduct, fund or adopt R,D&E – in particular, the many smaller to medium sized family businesses which tend to be more limited in their ability to conduct or fund R&E, relative to larger businesses (and need to be considered as part of extension and adoption strategies).

Examples of work already completed, underway or proposed:

- Cross-sectoral – the Riverland fruit fly coordinator, a joint initiative between citrus, summerfruit and winegrape groups
- Citrus SA has jointly developed a traceability project proposal to be jointly funded across multiple sources
- For citrus gall wasp Citrus SA has invested in independent research with Flinders University and is taking a gall wasp trap to market with a well-known company (market announcements shortly)
- Onions Australia is developing an export plan and there is a need to fund the implementation of that type of work
- The Almond Centre of Excellence, a partnership between industry and the SA Government; with incentives or cadet programs suggested to encourage new/young researchers to undertake regional placements in the Riverland to ensure research capacity into the future
- Where groups have had difficulty accessing national levy funds, they have sometimes accessed other sources (e.g. the National Landcare Program, AgriFutures Australia grants)
- The Northern Adelaide Plains Food Cluster includes the Uni of Adelaide and UniSA, providing an opportunity for both universities to engage in discussions and projects that address an industry need or opportunity

The five pillar model utilised in the Netherlands is also put forward as an example of an overarching strategy which puts the focus on key strategic areas (i.e. production issues, biosecurity, efficiency and new product development).

Most horticultural growers would pay a national Hort Innovation¹ levy for R,D&E (excluding asparagus, garlic, herbs other than fresh culinary shallots and parsley, seed sprouts and tomatoes) as well as a smaller Plant Health Australia levy, and in some cases an Emergency Plant Pest Response levy and/or a marketing levy

¹ www.horticulture.com.au

and/or residue testing levies. There's a useful summary table outlining national levies for the horticulture sector at www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates#horticulture. While some South Australian horticultural groups have been successful in accessing Hort Innovation funds, others have found it very difficult to access the levy funds to which they contribute.

State based levies are paid in SA by citrus growers (under the *Primary Industry Funding Schemes Act 1998*, "PIFS") and there is a voluntary levy for potatoes – in contrast with sector wide PIFS levies for livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs and goats), grains and winegrapes.

The recommendation to hold a horticulture sector roundtable on R,D,E&A builds upon recommendations made in the R,D&E section of our 2017 *South Australian Horticulture Industry Blueprint*:

Key Recommendations

- Work in partnership with industry to review the adequacy of current horticulture R, D & E in South Australia under the National R, D & E Framework - identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities to develop new programs to best address the needs of horticulture in SA (e.g. developing a centre for excellence in biosecurity to build on the current investment, establishing SA as a leader in covered cropping).
- Reverse the current trend of reduction in resources - people, funds and facilities - that is reducing the R, D & E capacity and service to horticulture within South Australia.
- Advocate greater access to R, D & E funds for horticulture projects in SA and associated opportunities.
- Identify the R, D & E capacity required and build the appropriate programs, including a succession plan and program for scientists, researchers and extension personnel.
- Review any future amendments to the National R, D & E Framework for Horticulture in partnership with the horticulture industry before any sign-off by government, industry and the research community.
- Horticulture research facilities and activities should focus holistically on industry needs and not just ebb and wane with current growth trends.

The blueprint is available at www.hortcoalitionsa.org.au

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Angelo Demasi

President

Horticulture Coalition of South Australia

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angelode@saproducemarket.com.au