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The Vine is the official bi-monthly newsletter for Australian sweetpotato growers and forms part of a broader communications project funded by Hort Innovation through the Sweetpotato research and development levy, with contributions from the Australian Government.

Our goal is to keep growers informed, supported and connected, while showcasing the value of levy-funded R&D and extension. We encourage you to read, share and engage with The Vine, and welcome your feedback. Please contact Australian Sweetpotato Growers Inc (ASPG) Executive Officer Bree Watson with suggestions for future editions.

Contact ASPG

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# BIOSECURITY UPDATES

## Guava root-knot nematode

Root-knot nematodes are plant parasites that live inside roots and take nutrients from the plant, causing them to look lumpy or knotted. Similiar to QLD and NSW there are three species of root-knot nematodes in the Northern Territory that can cause problems for horticultural production.

In 2022, an exotic species called the Guava root-knot nematode (Meloidogyne enterolobii or GRKN), was detected in around Darwin, and has more recently been confirmed in Katherine, 300 km south of the original discoveries.

GRKN causes severe galling or knotting of a plant's root system and can cause stunted growth, wilting and the yellowing of leaves Root-knot nematodes do not move very far on their own. Humans are the main mechanisms of spread via machinery, tools, footwear, and plant products.

Although *Meloidogyne enterolobii* has not been detected in commercial sweetpotato production areas to date, on-farm biosecurity measures are your front line of defence to keep GRKN (and many other pests) out of your property. Like other root-knot nematodes, M. enterolobii can be easily spread through infested soil and infected plant material. It is critical that growers are mindful of risk pathways and strive to avoid introduction to their property.

Signage, restricted access (particularly to cropping areas), machinery wash-down and use of clean planting material are all measures which can help to reduce the risk. Simple, low-cost measures can make a big difference in keeping your farm safe.

Additionally, a number of weeds act as reservoirs of GRKN. The below list of weed species are known to harbour root knot nematodes in production systems. Suppressing these weeds is another key management activity.

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Detected species of RKN |
|---|---|---|
| Asthma plant | *Euphorbia hirta* | *M. enterolobii* |
| Flat-top mille | *Oldenlandia corymbosa* | *M. enterolobii* |
| Fig | *Ficus spp.* | *M. enterolobii; Meloidogyne incognita* |
| Gooseberry | *Physalis angulata* | *M. enterolobii* |
| Milkweed | *Euphorbia heterophylla* | *M. enterolobii; M. javanica* |
| Native passion flower | *Passiflora foetida* | *M. incognita* |
| Paddy melon | *Cucumis melo subsp. agrestis* | *M. incognita; M. javanica* |

*Source: Biosecurity and Animal Welfare, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries NT Government.*

In QLD or NSW, if you think your plants may have root-knot nematodes, contact the sweetpotato nematode research team at Agri-Science Qld, led by Dr Wayne O'Neill at wayne.oneill@dpi.qld.gov.au T 07 3708 8451

*This information was compiled by Craig Henderson who is engaged through ASPG to support biosecurity related topics and Bree Watson Executive Officer ASPG using information supplied by the Northern Territory Government.*

Guava root-knot nematode management factsheet

# INDUSTRY UPDATES

## Are you ready for Payday Super?

From 1 July 2026, employers must pay their employees' superannuation contribution each payday instead of at least once every 3 months. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has released new fact sheets, checklists and videos at ato.gov.au/PaydayResources to help you prepare for this change:

- How to get ready for Payday Super
- Key changes to super guarantee, providing a comparison between the old and new super systems
- Qualifying earnings (QE) – the new base for calculating super contributions, replacing ordinary times earnings
- Upgrades to SuperStream – the standards for the way all employers pay super guarantee

Take a look at the Payday Super Checklist for Employers form → HERE

# Hort Innovation Chair announcement

The Board of Hort Innovation has confirmed a planned transition in Board leadership, with Chair Julie Bird to retire from the role of Chair at the 2026 Annual General Meeting in November.

Following the AGM, Deputy Chair John Said has been scheduled to assume the role of Chair, subject to formal appointment by the Board.

The transition reflects strong governance and deliberate succession planning, ensuring a smooth transition in board leadership as the organisation completes the current phase of its strategy and prepares for the next.

After what will be six years as Chair, Ms Bird has overseen a period of strengthened governance, strategic clarity and organisational maturity, helping position Hort Innovation to deliver with confidence now and into the future.

Read more here.

# Zero Interest Loans

Zero interest loans have opened under the Economic Resilience Program. It supports logistics and manufacturing businesses in areas such as food, freight, fuel, plastics and fertiliser who are impacted by market disruptions related to the conflict in the Middle Ease and global price rises of key inputs.

There are two parts to the program:

- Zero interest loans **administered directly by a participating bank** to a customer who has annual turnover of up to $100 million and seeks a loan of up to $5 million.
- Zero interest loans **administered by the NRFC** for companies with turnover in excess of $100 million or who are seeking a loan of more than $5 million.

Read more here.

# GRANTS & OPPORTUNITIES

HORT CONNECTIONS 1 - 4 June 2026 Adelaide Convention Centre

AUSVEG INTERNATIONAL FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION

Hort Connections returns this June in Adelaide—bringing together growers, researchers and industry leaders for one of the most valuable events on the horticulture calendar.

Register for one or all the wrap-around events!

1 June - Farm Tours, Impact Innovation Event
2 June - Cross Vegetable Cluster Session, Conference, Welcome Event
3 June - Hort Connections Breakfast, Conference
4 June - Conference, Gala Dinner

**Funding is available for growers to attend,** including conference tickets and support for travel and accommodation, making it easier to get involved. You can apply for a reimbursement of up to

$1,250 for interstate growers, to assist with attendance, flights and accommodation.

Funding is limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Please get in touch with the ASPG Executive Officer Bree Watson if you need help accessing the available funding.

Grower Funding Information

# MARKET PRICES

The Brisbane Markets Price Report provides a snapshot of current wholesale market conditions, highlighting price movements, supply trends and demand signals relevant to growers.

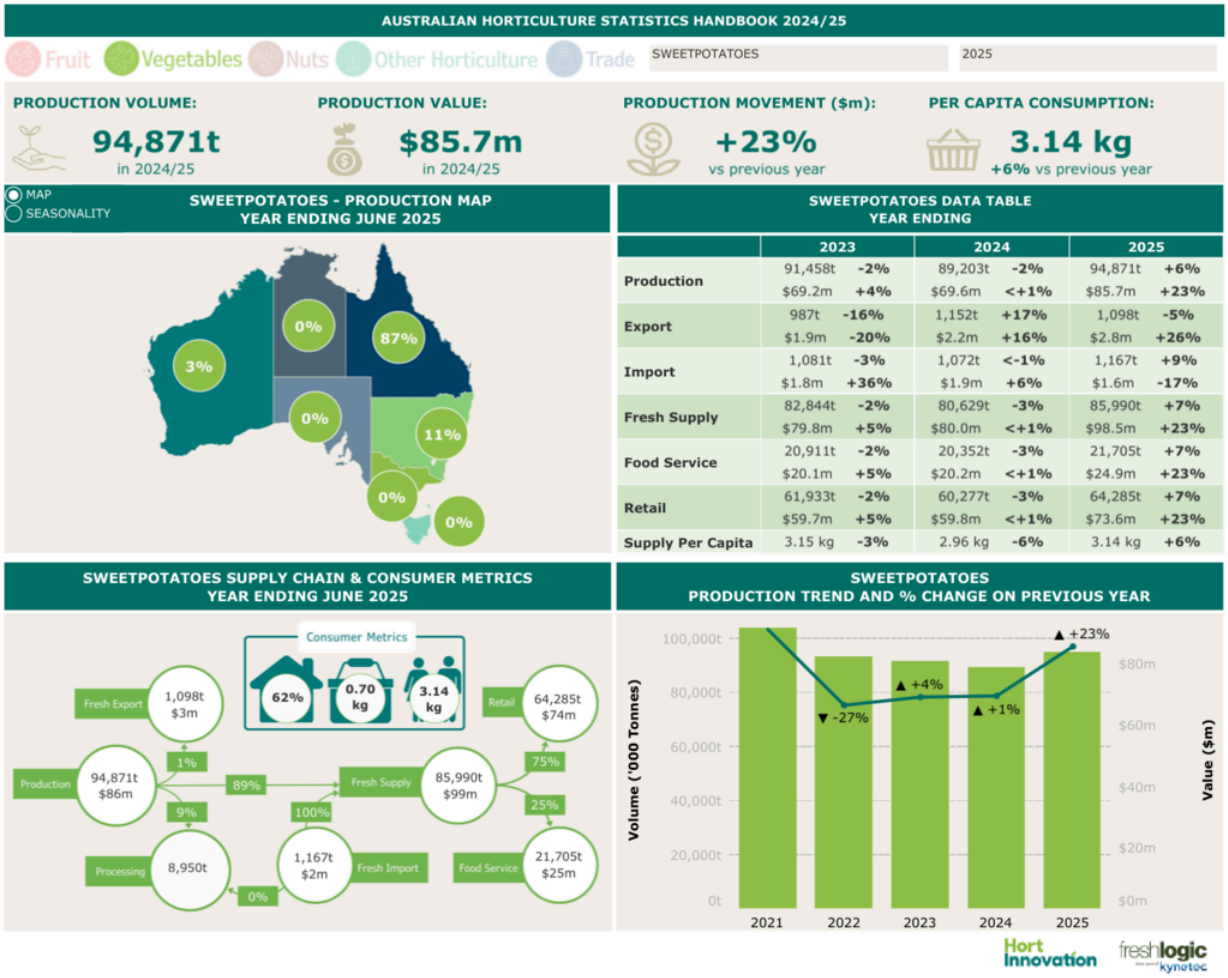
This update is provided with thanks to the strategic partnership between Australian Sweetpotato Growers Inc. (ASPG) and Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers (BFVG), supporting informed marketing and production decisions as the season progresses.

# SEASONAL OUTLOOK

## Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2024/25

The Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook is an annual publication that offers the most comprehensive available data on Australia's horticulture industry.

According to the Handbook, **the sweetpotato industry** has experienced strong growth in 2024/25, with production increasing to 94,871 tonnes and a total value of $85.7 million. Production movement rose by 23 per cent compared to the previous year, while per-capita consumption increased by 6 per cent to 3.14 kg. Queensland remains the dominant production state, accounting for 87 per cent of national supply.




# FOR SALE

Need to buy or sell something? Growers can place a free advert here. Please contact aspg.sec@gmail.com to be listed in the next e-newsletter.

## Toyota Hilux for sale

This trusty workhorse had taken many ASPG extension officers on farm and around the regions!

- Toyoto Hilux Dual cab
- Diesel
- 4 cylinders
- White 5 seater
- Manual drive
- 2780kg GVM
- Odometer 209,033
- Current Safety Certificate
- Taking offers over $8000

Please contact aspg.sec@gmail.com or phone Bree Watson 0403 616 702 to place your bid or to view the car which is located in Bundaberg.

# SHOWCASING SWEETPOTATOES

**Viral Sweetpotatoes!**
In late 2025 a teacher called Courtney posted a TikTok video of whole baked sweetpotato with cheese stuffed inside. Sounds simple enough!

Almost immediately, this two-ingredient recipe was everywhere. Turns out, nearly 10 million people have now seen that video — but instead of scrolling on, they went into their kitchens to make it. And they are raving about it!

Now that's a trend we can get behind! Try it out today and send us a photo!

View receipe here

## Follow us on socials

As the 2026 Marketing campaign rolls out we're calling on everyone to like and share our socials to extend our reach and maximise your levy investment. Click the below icons to follow our journey.

Hort Innovation Strategic levy investment | SWEETPOTATO FUND

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the sweetpotato research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

AUSTRALIAN SWEETPOTATO GROWERS INC.

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