

# *Passionfruit Field Days*

## Passionfruit Events

### *Wide Bay–Burnett | 16 August 2024* Regional Field Day, Workshop & AGM

The Wide Bay–Burnett regional field day was held on Friday 16 August 2024, at Beenham Valley Passions, Beenham Valley.

Our hosts Brad and Hanna Millard provided a lovely morning tea of homemade passionfruit slice and then took guests for a stroll through the fields!

Aaron Mears, from [Lulu's Perch Permaculture](#) shared some ideas on preparing the soil for fungal issues, making large scale fertilisers and brought along his famous inoculated bio char for growers to try.

It was great to see both familiar industry faces on the day as well as several new growers to the passionfruit industry.

The PAI Annual General Meeting was also held on the day, where key industry issues were identified and potential solutions were explored.



Brad Millard showcases the internals of fruit from one of the trial vines

*Photo credit: Hanna Millard*

## Atherton Workshop & Field Day | 21-22 October 2024

### Passionfruit Farmers Working Together to Improve Water Quality

In 2023, Passionfruit Australia secured funding from the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program. On 21-22 October 2024, Passionfruit Australia held a workshop and field day in Atherton, and it was fantastic! We had around 30 attendees, with a few growers travelling from afar to join us. We even had two of our wonderful growers travel six hours just to attend the event!

Attendees were blown away when Graeme Sait from Nutri-Tech Solutions spent the whole day presenting on regenerative farming to improve water quality on the Great Barrier Reef. We had Paula Ibell from Growcom present on ways farmers can reduce run off to improve water quality and save themselves money. We also had a representative from a local agriculture store, Tableland Fertilizers, present on how they can assist with putting reef protection methods into place on farms.

The next day was filled with field walks in the area. We were lucky to spend the morning at Joe Ferraro's farm in Tolga, where Graeme Sait conducted some leaf testing and morning tea was enjoyed by all. Next, we drove down the road to Chris and Liane Newman's Tolga farm for lunch and soil testing. Then it was off to the last farm of the day, Alex and Alicia Bertola's farm in Kairi to see some of Graeme Sait's methods in action. It was great to see how they had put their learning from Graeme's course into play on their farm.

The project continued with a catch-up event held in Mareeba on 6 June 2025 where attendees from the workshop got together and discussed what they have been working on since the workshop. Graeme Sait joined the catch up via Zoom and was delighted to see how the farmers had implemented several of the ideas discussed at the workshop.

**We would like to thank everyone who attended. It was a great event! We would also like to thank the Integrated Engagement and Capacity Building project through the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program, who funded the project.**



Graeme Sait conducting soil tests  
*Photo credit: Passionfruit Australia*



Some of our event attendees in the field  
*Photo credit: Passionfruit Australia*





Graeme presenting at our workshop  
Photo credit: Passionfruit Australia



Time for some morning tea and networking  
Photo credit: Passionfruit Australia



Attendees enjoying the cool of the canopy at one of our farm visits  
Photo credit: Passionfruit Australia

## PASSIONFRUIT FARMERS

Working Together to Improve Water Quality



This project has been funded by the Integrated Engagement and Capacity Building project through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program





## *Taste of the Tropics Conference 2025*

### **6-7 February 2025**

Passionfruit Australia Inc. (PAI) joined forces with Custard Apples Australia (CAA) in early February to bring to life the Taste of the Tropics Conference! Wow! What a spectacular couple of days we had! Seventy passionfruit, custard apple and industry stakeholders attended the event at Tropical Fruit World, Duranbah NSW.

The first day was a workshop which opened with PAI president Dennis Chant and CAA president Brian Keating setting the scene. The workshop goal was to set priorities for custard apple and passionfruit industry development. Attendees broke up into small groups and mind mapped their industry's priorities, returning to the group and sharing their ideas. There were updates from Hort Innovation and Hort Frontiers. After morning tea, there were presentations on pest and disease management.

After lunch, participants took part in a workshop on interpreting soil and plant test results, which included case studies from growers' farms and was well received. In the afternoon, a second workshop focused on the on-farm variety testing program and its protocols. The day was finished with CAA and PAI members separating and visiting a local farm. Passionfruit attendees were lucky to venture through the fields at Frank and Jan Julius's Farm in Cudgen. What a fantastic tour we had of the Julius's abundant and vibrant vines.

On the second day, we all jumped on board the tractors and toured Tropical Fruit World, with a special look at the custard apple orchards and the passionfruit vines and a drone demonstration from JDS Drone Pasture Solutions.

It was great to be able to work with Custard Apples for this event and we hope it's the first of many to come!

**We would like to thank the event sponsors: Hort Innovation, Tropical Fruit World, TenFarms, Jetbest Group and JDS Drone Pasture Solutions.**







All photos credit: Passionfruit Australia



## *Bundaberg Field Day* | 23 May 2025

# Growers Connect, Learn, and Look to the Future

Bundaberg recently played host to a successful Passionfruit Field Day, drawing over 40 attendees—primarily growers, along with several industry representatives. The event kicked off at the North Bucca property of Dean and Chendra Cameron who welcomed us to their Panama passionfruit farm.

Dean's farm, located just 30km west of Bundaberg, has 3,000 vines and has been established for nearly five years. He shared valuable insights into the challenges and triumphs of passionfruit production and interesting discussions around farm management and productivity strategies with growers. There was some interesting discussion about Dean's bee hives and the current impact of Varroa mite on growers. Some growers shared that in the absence of bees, other pollinators - such as ants - had proven to be just as effective.

In the afternoon, we made our way to the Young Australian Hotel for presentations and updates. Passionfruit Australia President Dennis Chant delivered his report, outlining the organisation's latest projects and current initiatives.

Dr. Mo Alam from the University of Queensland followed with an exciting update on breeding program developments. From the first-stage progeny of his research, 20 promising new passionfruit varieties have been identified. Dr. Alam is now seeking growers to participate in trialling these selections on their farms. Interested growers are encouraged to get in touch directly with him on [m.alam@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.alam@uq.edu.au)

Liam Reidy from Metagen also spoke, sharing cutting-edge insights into soil DNA profiling. His presentation highlighted the importance of understanding soil microbiomes, and he offered practical advice for enhancing soil health and productivity.

The day wrapped up with a marketing update from Holly Jackson of Hort Innovation. She shared plans for the upcoming winter passionfruit flush, which will be promoted via digital platforms including websites, Facebook, and Instagram health influencers. Keep an eye out for the fresh seasonal slogan: “**Burst of Flavour in Every Bite.**”

**This Field Day proved a valuable opportunity for growers to network, learn, and stay informed about the future of passionfruit growing in Australia.**



Attendees heard from farm owner Dean Cameron pictured above with wife Chandra



(L-R) Rod Griffith, Brad Millard and Dennis Chant

*All photos credit: Passionfruit Australia*