

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DENNIS CHANT



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Autumn edition of The Passion Vine. Five months in my role as President of PAI has brought the realisation of how effectively your secretariat of Amanda and Jane and the Management Committee under previous president, Tina, have utilised the limited resources available to them to bring meaningful services to our members. It has also brought the realisation that, as with other horticultural industries, we face many challenges that we must actively address as an industry united and engaged.

While it is imperative that the new Management Committee provides leadership, to achieve the desired outcomes for our industry, we need the engagement of our members. In this edition of your magazine you will be informed of the many forums through which you can participate in and contribute to the sustainability and profitability of producing and marketing of our crop.

In the last edition I touched on the need to focus on resilience in the face of drought and fires. Since then we have been blessed with generous falls of rain. In my own area near Murwillumbah NSW we have had substantially more rain in the first two months of 2020 than in the whole of last year. This has brought with it a whole new set of challenges.

The Market Report in February's Passiflora News highlights some of the supply and quality issues resulting from these highly variable growing conditions. As producers we all learn from our experiences and adapt our farming practices to meet environmental and market circumstances. It is in all of our interests that we learn from and share our experiences and fully exploit all of the very useful information channels we have available to us.

PAI's publications, website and online forums provide much useful information or links to information sources which can assist your development of resilient and sustainable farm management plans. Most importantly, the regional field days offer an opportunity for growers and associated industry representatives to meet face-to-face and share their valuable experiences. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions placed on us all by the spread of Covid-19 we have to postpone the Regional Field Day program for this year for the time-being.

We will still be providing all growers with access to the Australian Passionfruit Postharvest Best Practice Guide by posting a copy to all growers on our database. If you have not received your copy by the end of April, please contact Amanda on admin@passionfruitaustralia.org.au and we will get you a copy.



You can also assist in defining your needs and priorities in a range of subjects important to your business by participating in grower surveys. Important ones have been shared recently include;

- Passionfruit Industry Strategic Agrochemical Review Process (SARP)
- Improving Horticulture Supply Chains
- CQU/Growcom Interest in Exporting Horticultural Products

Other key areas where the Committee/Secretariat/Members are acting in your interest include;

- Advising on the Fall Armyworm threat
- Farm Design Standards under Reef Regulations (QLD only)
- Implementing the 2018 AGM resolution to become a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed
- Plant Health Australia's Tropical Plant Industries Biosecurity Surveillance Strategy
- Passionfruit Breeding Program (Ends in its current form on 30 June 2020).

In closing, I would like to highlight important initiatives of PAI to provide ongoing learning and development opportunities. Wayne Dellaway was awarded the Noel Day Scholarship for the Certificate in Nutritional Farming at Nutri-Tech Solutions beginning in March and Ross Baker of Ayr was awarded the Samsons sponsored distance education course.

We also have a Masters student commencing at Southern Cross University with Peter Bundock on the plant breeding project from 16 March.

Please enjoy this edition of The Passion Vine. On behalf of your Committee and Secretariat I would like to wish you well for this year and look forward to engaging with you further in the future.

Best regards,
Dennis Chant