

TOMATO TOPICS

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**PROCESSING
TOMATO FUND**



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Boort Crop Inspection and Dinner - Quality over Quantity

By Matthew Stewart

On Friday 16th December, the APTRC hosted the Boort and Boga Crop Inspection day. There were 11 industry members in attendance, which was lower than ideal. However this was not unexpected given the disturbance of the October floods and November rainfall events that significantly delayed broad acre crop harvest and the tomato planting schedule. If anything, the lower group number seemed to intensify the discussion and become more of a 'round table' affair.



The first stop on the tour was Chirnside's farm, where David discussed his strategies for getting enough fertiliser to the plants under saturated soil conditions. The group discussed the pros and cons of fertigating in wet soil, early weed control and the various challenges ahead and how best to meet them.

The tour then progressed to one of GoFarms Lake Boga properties, where we met the new farm General Manager, Tom Farmer and leading farm hand, Josh Trainor. Here, Tom and Josh got to hear from Graeme Lawrence, Graeme Lehmann and Stuart McColl on their experiences in early crop agronomy in the processing tomato industry.



The day ended with dinner at the Royal hotel in Kerang, where Sam North met up with the group and kept the conversation on point for ideas to research in the coming season.

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Vale Simon Mills

On the 28th of December 2022 the fruit industry lost one of its finest when Simon Mills passed away after a brief but spirited battle with cancer. Simon was 65.

Simon was well known to many in the processing tomato industry through his role as Crop Supply Manager with SPC, a position he held for 24 years between 1996 - 2020. Simon was also chairman of the Canned Fruits Industry Council of Australia for much of that time whilst also representing SPC on the APTRC for a brief period.

Simon's role was a difficult one at times, always the meat in the sandwich between processor and growers. He rode every bump throughout his tenure experiencing the highs of the early 2000s when SPC processed over 230,000 tonnes of fruit to the lows of 2013-14 when SPC was forced to shed both tonnes and growers. Through it all, Simon maintained a positive, optimistic demeanour, never losing sight of the bigger picture, that of ensuring a sustainable future for both growers and processors.

Simon witnessed much change in the processing fruit industry throughout his time at SPC, with the company changing from public ownership to merging with Ardmona Foods Ltd to corporate ownership with CCA, to being privately owned by Shepparton Partners Collective and the inevitable personnel and structural alterations associated with such changes.

Simon was well respected by growers and industry personnel, working tirelessly throughout his time at SPC, with his attention to detail, humility, friendly nature and strong character traits that he carried throughout his working and personal life. Simon will be remembered for his dedication to his growers, his family, his basketball and his spreadsheets (he was mad for a good spreadsheet!).

He will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

Simon is survived by his wife Sally, his son Nick, his daughter-in-law Natalie, and his granddaughter Harriet.

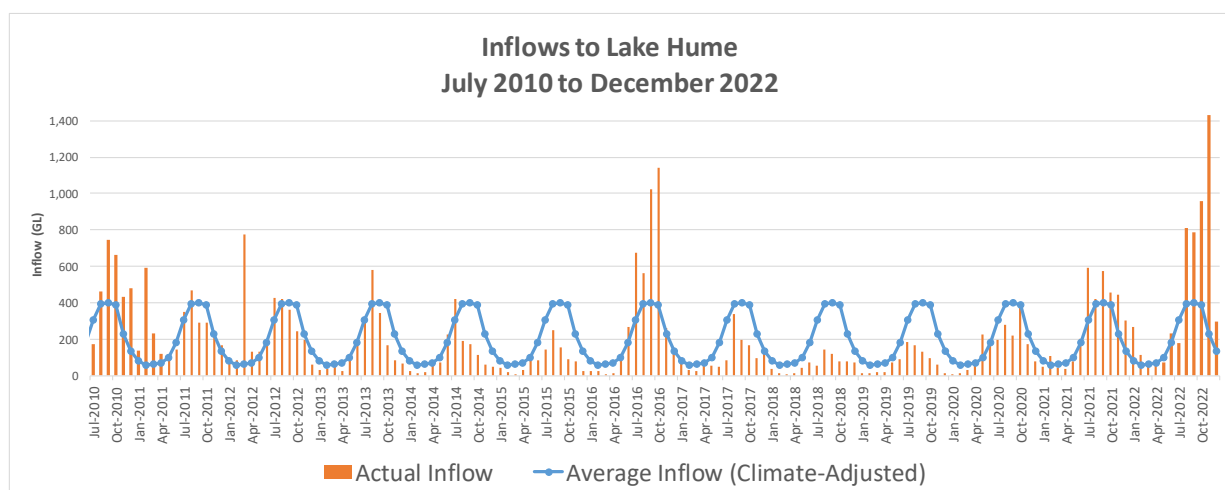
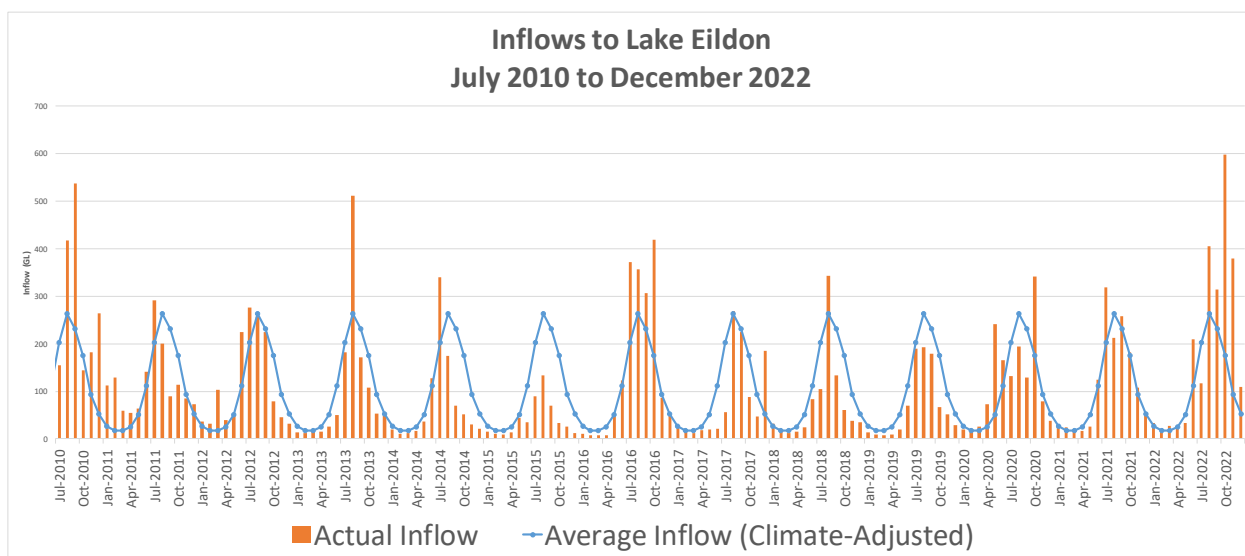
Climate Outlook

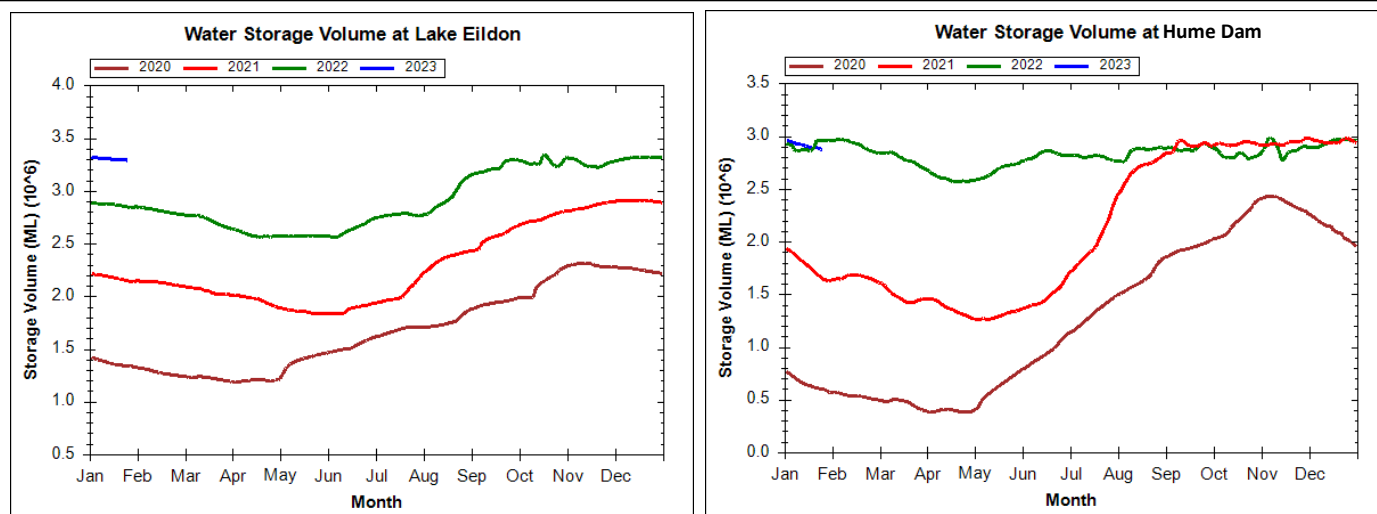
With the very late planting season, it will come as welcome news that the current La Niña weather event, which brings wetter conditions to eastern Australia, continues to ease. Hopefully this will produce favourable weather for a late harvest.

The Indian Ocean Dipole has returned to neutral (although it has little influence on our climate at this time of year). However, while ocean temperatures have warmed in recent weeks, atmospheric indicators are largely unchanged, remaining at La Niña levels. Long-range forecasts suggest that tropical Pacific Ocean temperatures and atmospheric patterns will move towards more ENSO*-neutral levels over coming weeks. As long-range forecast accuracy is generally lower at this time of year, ENSO outlooks that extend through autumn should be viewed with caution.

It should also be noted that the Southern Annular Mode (SAM) is strongly positive and is likely to remain positive until at least mid-January. During summer, a positive SAM increases the chance of above average rainfall for eastern New South Wales and eastern Victoria.

***ENSO : El Niño-Southern Oscillation climatic system**
Source: The Bureau of Meteorology





Source: Goulburn-Murray Water

The following articles were sourced through Tomato News

Jason Fritsch elected as President of the WPTC

During its meeting in Parma on 25 October, the board of the World Processing Tomato Council elected Jason Fritsch, who is the CEO of Kagome Australia, as the new WPTC President. A trained agronomist, Jason joined the processing tomato industry in 2005 as General Manager Field Operations for Cedenco, prior to Kagome acquiring the business in 2011. He was promoted to CEO of Kagome Australia in July 2016.

The other members of the WPTC board are:

- Vice-President: Manuel Vazquez (CONESA, Spain)
- Vice-President: Nick Kastle (Boswell, USA)
- Past-President: Mike Montna (CTGA, USA)
- Treasurer: Robert Giovinazzo (SONITO, France)
- President of the Exchange of Information Commission: Mike Montna (CTGA, USA)
- President of the Research Commission: Cosme Argerich (Tomate 2000, Argentina)
- President of the Health & Generic Promotion Commission: Luca Sandei (SSICA, Italy)
- President of the International Legislation Commission: Carlos Gervas (AGRUCON, Spain)



A new logo was also adopted for WPTC to coincide with the launch a new website at www.wptc.to

Prioritizing harvester sanitation to limit spread of pests and disease in Californian crops

Researchers are actively working to develop best management practices for harvester sanitation in California. Extension Specialist at UC Davis, Dr. Cassandra Swett said they have been working in processing tomatoes and found that harvesters present the biggest risk for spreading pests and disease. Motivated by the threat that branched broomrape presents to the industry, Swett noted that they have been working closely with the California Tomato Research Institute (CTRI) in the development of [informational resources for industry members](#)

One of the challenges that will need to be overcome to achieve effective harvester sanitation throughout the industry is finding enough time within the busy harvest season to do what needs to be done to minimize your risk. Feedback from the industry has already been positive based on the work that has been presented and the information exhibited during field days.

While harvesters present the biggest risk, other pieces of equipment, such as trailers, are also evaluated for their propensity for moving pests between fields. Dr. Swett said they are also working with industry members to look at improving trailer sanitation practices.

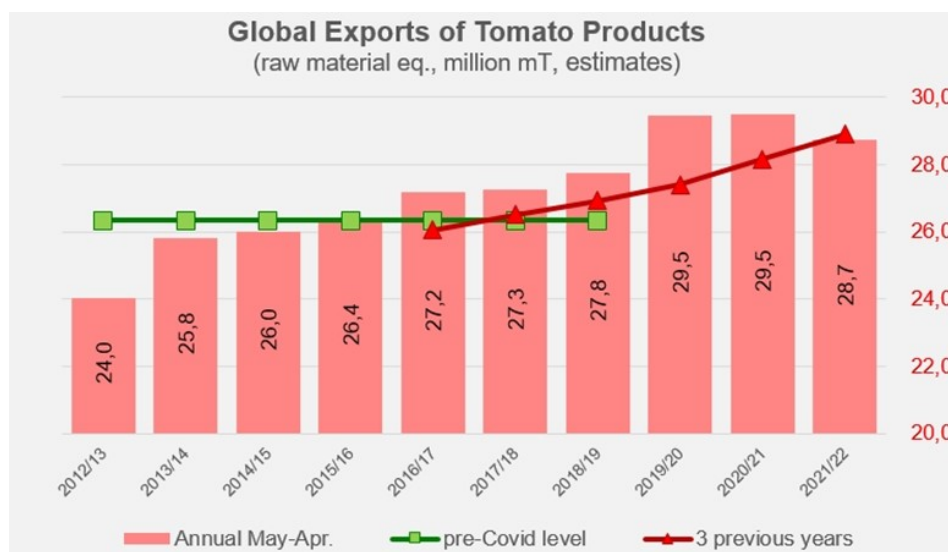
Swett said there are still several questions that will need to be answered as the research continues to move forward. *“What do we know about which sanitizers are effective? What conditions are needed for those sanitizers to be effective? What are high-risk areas that are critical control points that are not being effectively cleaned?”* said Swett. *“And what can we do about it?”*

World trade 2021/2022 (May-April): Covid continues to have an impact

Despite a slight annual decline, the quantities of tomato products traded remain significantly higher than pre-Covid activity levels.

Figures on world trade in tomato products over the period from May 2021-April 2022 showed that despite the slight increase in processed quantities (+2%) recorded between 2020 and 2021, available volumes have not fuelled an increase in supply flows.

After two years marked by an exceptional acceleration of global exchanges, in a context of extreme tension in the area of inventories (the two phenomena being closely linked and consequential to the Covid pandemic), trade seems to have begun a gradual return to "normal levels", while remaining at a level clearly higher than those of the "pre-Covid" years.



[The following articles were sourced through AUSVEG](#)

Through the Soil Wealth project, AUSVEG has released a range of information that could be of value to tomato growers.

What you need to know about soil microbiology

Soil health is closely linked to soil microbiology. This fact sheet outlines information on a broad group of soil microbes including fungi, bacteria and pseudomonas, and explains how different levels, numbers and ratios of these microbes can impact the overall health of your soil and crops.

The fact sheet also provides an overview of ways to change your soil microbiology through manipulation of the soil biomass, and shares the results from a case study on soil microbiology testing in Tasmania. You can read the fact sheet [here](#).

How do you know your soil is healthy? Top tips for vegetable growers

A healthy soil is productive, sustainable and profitable. But what exactly does 'soil health' mean for vegetable growers?

This Soil Wealth ICP [fact sheet](#) discusses how a soil health status or soil condition can provide insights into a soil's capacity to fulfill all soil functions. It also outlines how soil organic matter and soil organic carbon can indicate the physical, chemical and biological benefits associated with soil health.

Video series: Soil Biology Masterclass

Become a master in soil biology by revisiting the full suite of presentations from the Soil Wealth ICP Soil Biology in Vegetable Production Masterclass. Nine videos are available which cover key topics as well as panel discussions and grower experiences.

[Part 1: Introduction and basic principles of soil biology](#)

[Part 2: Breakdown of plant biomass and agrichemicals](#)

[Part 3: Nitrogen availability](#)

[Part 4: Soil structure](#)

[Part 5: Soil fumigation – chemical and biological](#)

[Part 6: Disease suppression](#)

[Part 7: Biological products](#)

[Part 8: Panel discussion on soil biology testing](#)

[Part 9: Grower success story: Andrew Braham, SA capsicum grower.](#)

A practical guide to soil testing and interpretation

You can't manage what you don't measure – and soil testing can provide useful information about biological and physical soil properties. This [handy guide](#) from the Soil Wealth ICP project was developed to help growers and agronomists interpret conventional 'chemical' soil tests, identify soil chemical constraints and guide site-specific decisions on nutrition management for vegetable production in Australia.

Annual Industry Magazine - Printed & Ready for Distribution

Our 2022 'Australian Processing Tomato Grower' industry magazine is now finished, printed and available for distribution.

If you haven't yet received a copy, but would like to, please send your postal address to: aptrc.idm@outlook.com and we'll send one to you ASAP.

Contained in the magazine you'll find an account of our RD&E Program and major events as well as our comprehensive 'Annual Industry Survey'.



HORT CONNECTIONS
5-7 June 2023
Adelaide Convention Centre
Knowledge for growth



Why attend Hort Connections 2023?

Professional Development: Hear from world-class experts on a range of topics including transformative research, global innovations, consumption trends and export development.

Networking: Interact with the largest cohort of industry stakeholders in the horticulture sector.

Recognition: Celebrate the outstanding achievements of

horticulture's National Awards for Excellence 2023.

Trade Show: Grow your connections and supply contacts at the largest trade show in Australian and New Zealand horticulture, with exhibitors from more than 200 industry-leading companies showcasing the latest products and services.

[Registration](#) | [Horticulture Conference & Trade Show](#) | [Hort Connections](#)

WPTC Crop Update

The world processing tomato council has released its latest crop update, including the revised Australian update, indicating 1,631 ha planted for an estimated 139,400 tonnes. The update can be read in full by

UPCOMING EVENTS

APTRC Annual Industry Forum - Friday 16th June 2023

- All day event - Moama Bowling Club - Dinner to follow - Junction Restaurant

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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Opinions expressed in "Tomato Topics" are not necessarily those of the APTRC unless otherwise stated.