

# CONSUMERS

## Policy statement

### The issues

The future of fruit and vegetable growing enterprises and their partners in the value chain depends on the timely provision of products and services to consumers.

Consumers demand fruit and vegetables that meet their expectations in terms of freshness, appearance, taste, price and convenience. Consumers need to know that the food they eat is safe from contamination by chemicals or pathogens. As consumers are not homogenous, growers have the opportunity to adapt to more diverse market segments and requirements to ensure that demands are met and opportunities identified.

Increasingly, consumers are interested in other food-related issues such as organic production, being able to purchase speciality fruits and vegetables, the potential environmental impact of farming and fair trade practices.

### Our position

It is in the horticulture industry's best interests to be able to:

- Assess and respond to consumer preferences and lifestyle changes.
- Quickly respond to consumer concerns and influence consumers' perceptions of fruit and vegetables and the horticulture industry.
- Emphasise differentiated products and services.
- Utilise high levels of knowledge and skills within the industry.
- Remove impediments to accessing key markets.
- Continually research consumer needs and market segments.
- Operate in more transparent value chains.
- Ensure that their produce is clean and safe to consume.

### Our commitment

Growcom will support initiatives that identify and create new opportunities based around fruit and vegetables. These may include:

- Improving the production and marketing of food that is tasty, safe, performs well, is high yielding and consistent in quality.
- Supplying fresh produce in portion sizes that best suits consumers.
- Finding ways to value add produce before it gets to the retail shelf.
- Fast responding and transparent value chains.
- Meeting new and emerging consumer trends.

## **Our expectations**

Growcom expects that:

- There be will transparent value chains to enable producers to obtain and adhere to clear market signals.
- Fresh produce should sold separately according to country or origin and not labelled as a 'mix of imported and domestic produce.'
- Government and value chain participants work together to meet consumer needs and anticipate future trends in food issues.
- Innovative producers will adapt to meet changing consumer preferences and lifestyles.
- The horticulture industry will be able to service a range of selected market segments around the world.
- Controversial issues relating to food should be evidence based and presented in a balanced light, giving consumers the opportunity to make informed choices about produce.

## ***Our agenda items***

Issues to be considered within the broader consumer policy heading include:

- Increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Future trends in consumer demand and expectations.
- Ensuring a two-way flow of communication between consumers and growers.
- Perceptions of the industry as a clean and safe green producer.
- Communication and the provision of advice between industry stakeholders and consumers on food and nutrition issues.
- Food safety and quality.
- Monitoring and response of food safety issues in the media.
- Product innovation and range extension to meet trends in meal preparation, packaging and value adding.
- Increasing consumers' awareness of the nutritional value, uses and food safety issues regarding fresh produce.
- Country of Origin and Australian Grown labeling.