

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Policy Statement

The issues

Growcom has strategic goals for a number of key policy areas covering natural resources management, industry development, biosecurity, food safety, economics, human resources, and workplace health and safety to name just a few. All of these areas require investment in targeted, relevant research to maximise the opportunities for the horticulture industry.

Queensland horticulture is a dynamic industry offering opportunities for growth and making essential contributions to the Australian economy. It is recognised that through research and development, steps are being taken to ensure that the sector continues to contribute to the nation's prosperity and regional communities, whilst maintaining its commitment to sustainable agriculture.

Research and development activities have returned significant outcomes to the industry in terms of commercialised products and methods. Examples include the introduction of more vigorous root stocks and high yielding varieties, extensive breeding of disease resistant varieties, more efficient irrigation practices, integrated biological and chemical pest control, automated planting and harvesting, consumer research and improved human resource management and workplace health and safety practices. In addition, new packaging methods and post-harvest technology have improved the quality of the product reaching the consumer.

The sector's growth during a time of increasingly difficult economic, environmental and social conditions is evidence of the effectiveness of primary industries research and development programs. However, there has been a decreasing level of research and development investment by government agencies compared to an increase in demand from industry for research and development on a broad range of issues.

Our position

We believe that research and development focussed on achieving commercial outcomes is essential to our industry if it is to meet future technical, environmental and market challenges.

Commercially focussed, innovative research and development in new and advanced technology as well as productivity, marketing, economic, environmental and social aspects of the industry are critical to industry development. A high level of industry capability and performance are essential to move to the initiation, management and delivery of research and development programs.

Our commitment

Growcom is committed to ensuring that properly targeted and conducted research and development for the sector continues in order to securing its future economic performance and sustainability.

Our expectations

Growcom expects that stakeholders recognise the industry's contribution to the economy, along with the potential for greater productivity and sustainability. We expect that Government and industry investment in R&D, research facilities, knowledge development and skills are maintained as they are vital to the continued development of both the Queensland and Australian horticulture industries, along with the provision of services to a broader R&D marketplace.

Our agenda items

Issues to be considered within the broader research and development policy heading include:

- Developing effective partnerships throughout the value chain to identify priority issues and effective, relevant response strategies.
- Commercialising the results of R&D for optimal outcomes.
- Ensuring access to research and development funding and information.
- Developing and promoting adoption of technology, information and management practices needed by industry to be internationally competitive.
- Creating new market opportunities and meeting market requirements.
- Developing strategies to minimise losses and trade risks due to pests and diseases.
- Decreasing barriers to market access and export markets.
- Developing production and post harvest practices to meet community expectations for food safety and protection of the environment.
- Promoting research into the link between management practices and NRM outcomes and benchmarking current levels of recommended practice uptake.
- Continued commitment of the Queensland Government to research and extension activities through DEEDI.
- Maintaining Federal Government commitment to public funding of R&D and dollar for dollar matching.
- R&D projects supported by effective communications, extension and adoption mechanisms.
- Recognition of funding sources such as industry contributions.
- Maintaining government commitment and investment in R&D projects and initiatives.
- Matching funding through R&D corporations