

Ensuring and protecting prosperity



Biosecurity is part of our everyday lives.

Encompassing livestock, plant, human and maritime spheres, its existence protects the economy and environment from the indiscriminate and devastating nature of pests and disease.

The fallout of contamination from incursions can be devastating.

In both Australia and New Zealand, governments across all levels work directly with sectors, industries and communities in providing strict controls and measures to prevent, respond and recover from pests and diseases.

Peracto continues to play an important role in helping to protect the agricultural industry.

Over the years, the company has been on hand to quickly respond to major pest concerns and disease outbreaks across a wide range of crops.

Its offices throughout Australia and New Zealand have worked in helping to develop risk management strategies and worked with the relevant stakeholders ensuring outbreaks are efficiently managed.

“The importance of biosecurity can never be underestimated,” Peracto New Zealand Research Officer Jarrod Harvey said.

“Because as soon as pests and diseases arrive in a country, it’s very hard to control and can have a devastating effect on crops and ultimately export markets.”

In recent years, Australian crops have been effected by systemic downy mildew and Russian wheat aphid while New Zealand industries have had to respond to velvet leaf and pea weevil incursions.

“It’s always hard to pinpoint when and where a pest or disease makes its way into a country, for example when velvet leaf entered New Zealand, it was more than likely from contaminated seeds from Europe,” Jarrod said.

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Editorial...

Ian Macleod
Managing Director

A lot more can be gleaned from the 2017 AFL (Australian Rules Football) Grand Final than just a trophy and community accolade and praise.

As a life-long supporter of the Richmond Tigers, I watched with much interest and enthusiasm as they made their march to the winner's podium for the first time in 37 years.

While the victory is resounding, for me there have been a lot more lessons learnt than just on-field game tactics and strategies.

The way the team interact with one another, bond and support each other, while embracing their diversity and encouraging each other's individual talent, is truly commendable.

For me, it's this approach to team dynamics that goes beyond a football field.

I have always been a big believer in supporting staff and their future career aspirations.

I have always led with the view that encouraging your staff to reach their full potential is through focussing on their successes, not failures or missed opportunities.

Staff have always been my top priority.

Investing in their career ambitions through inter-office transfers and development training opportunities, through to welcoming new recruits to the industry through our Graduate Development Program have been fundamental to the business' ongoing success and expansion.

As Peracto continues to grow its global operations, it's imperative that focus on ensuring staff are supported and encouraged in their work environment is upheld. 



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“Others like myrtle rust can travel great distances on wind currents.”

Jarrold said the ongoing work Peracto carries out including trials to manage new pests and diseases is complemented by its ability to work alongside industry in helping to detect new outbreaks.

“In both Australia and New Zealand, we work on commercial farms with growers and agronomists in key production areas which helps to ensure we are across the latest incursions,” he said.

“We play a really important role in providing the link between growers and agronomists, to crop protection companies,” he said.

AUSVEG Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Officer Dr Jessica Lye said the recent incursion of Tomato Potato Psyllid in Western Australia, and the continued infestation of Cape York Peninsula with Vegetable Leafminer highlights the importance of farm biosecurity planning.

“Quarantined production and trade restrictions occur when all other biosecurity measures in the system fail,” Dr Lye said.

“It is therefore crucial that we, as an industry, strive to support the system where we can with good farm hygiene procedures and regular monitoring for exotic or trade sensitive pests.

“As globalisation continues, our biosecurity system will come under increasing pressure.”

In 2015-16, Australia's vegetable industry was valued at \$3.8 billion (farm gate). International exports are up 8% from 2015 and valued at approximately \$246 million.

“Further, the industry is investing significant R&D funds into development of international markets,” Dr Lye said.

“It is therefore important that biosecurity at the farm, region, state and country level is maintained in order to support access to current and future markets.”



Dr Lye said recent research by the CSIRO indicated Australia is on the right track with plant pest response.

“While we have a relatively high likelihood of plant pest arrival, overall economic impact is low due to strong prevention and management systems and a diverse economy,” she said.

“This is cause to celebrate, but also provides incentive to maintain the system we have, and improve it where we can in order to maintain our excellent reputation.”

Dr Lye said there are hundreds, and sometimes thousands of pest interceptions at Australian ports and other high-risk entry sites every year.

“However, while our biosecurity system can reduce risk of pest incursion, or catch pests at the border, some pests are not identified before they can enter and establish in Australia,” she said.

“This is where early detection becomes critical.

“One example of effective early detection is varroa mite, which if established could affect 1,700 commercial honey bee businesses, 20,000 crop industry businesses and 10,000 hobby beekeepers.”

Dr Lye said government and agricultural industries represented the two biggest players in Australia's biosecurity system.

“However, there are other players (and beneficiaries) – for example, bushwalkers and natural resource management groups have an important role to play in maintaining the health of our natural environments, and travellers can have significant impacts on spreading harmful pests if proper biosecurity precautions are not followed,” she said.

Dr Lye said the best form of defence is promoting a culture of investment in preparedness and education, rather than reaction and response.

“Primary Industries are stepping up where biosecurity is concerned,” she said.

“AUSVEG, in conjunction with Plant Health Australia, is currently operating a Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Program.

“This initiative aims to unite vegetable and potato growers with government departments and industry groups with the goal of raising biosecurity awareness.

“Apart from national extension activities, the biosecurity program aims to produce practical biosecurity resources for growing operations.

“One product developed by the program has been the vegetable and potato industry guidance booklet, DIY Biosecurity.

“This booklet includes checklists, and risk assessment templates to aid in development of an on-farm biosecurity plan.” 

Staphyt services cover field to fork

The merger between the European-based Staphyt and Peracto in June last year signalled a new era in global operations for the two organisations.

The move created a worldwide group specialising in agrosiences and offering clients an unparalleled array of agricultural research and consultation services.

With 70 sites across Europe, Staphyt provides continuity in testing through conducting trials in laboratories, greenhouses and fields.

Its strength is having station facilities, as well as large field plots for full-scale tests, across different production areas.

Staphyt works with industry professionals involved in plant protection, nutrition and breeding.

The company assesses crop protection products (including insecticides, fungicides and herbicides), soil improvers (fertilising

products) and fertilisers (plant nutrition supplements).

Furthermore, the Staphyt Bioteam specialises in the testing, evaluation and registration of biological products across Europe.

After trial testing, Staphyt also lends its expertise to processing studies and regulations including research on food processing harvested products and taste tests.

One example of taste tests is the making and tasting of wines created from grapes treated in the previous year.

Staphyt is also able to manage processing studies, sensorial analysis and taint tests on cereals, potatoes and fruit.

The company then oversees the preparation and submission of marketing authorisation applications.

All phases of the company's activities are subjected to continuous improvements, supported and coordinated by the Innovation

Department including research and development projects.

Staphyt's business activities are strictly governed by legislation to safeguard human life and the environment throughout Europe, with the company adhering to national approvals and regular official controls to ensure that both GEP (Good Experimental Practice) and GLP (Good Laboratory Practice) guidelines are being met.

Staphyt has been the leading contract research organisation in agrosiences in Europe since 1989 and has continued to expand operations.

Two years ago, the company branched out into areas related to offering the authorisation and marketing of chemical products including biocides, cosmetics, pharmaceutical and veterinary products.

The service has since expanded through a team across Europe, with contracted services covering research through to registration. 

Staphyt offices Inchy en Artois





No two days the same

Situated between the Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley regions in Queensland, Peracto's Toowoomba office provides plenty of crop variety and scope for site manager Dale Parker.

What is your current role at Peracto? What does your role entail?

I am the site manager at the Toowoomba office. We look after clients in the Lockyer Valley and Darling Downs through to northern New South Wales. Our office takes care of quite a large foot print. I conduct a lot of field trials for clients. We cover a broad range of crops including

lettuce, brassicas and cucurbits, through to broadacre crops, cotton and mungbeans. The trials we conduct include herbicide, fungicide and insecticide trials as well as residue and plant nutrition trials. The Toowoomba office currently consists of two staff members, myself and Eugene Chau.

What attracted you to the industry? How has your career progressed?

I've been part of the industry all my life, having grown up on a beef/cattle farm in Victoria. After working for several years at a hydroponic tomato farm I decided I wanted to learn more about the industry and enrolled in an agricultural science degree. After university I worked on dairy farms for a couple of years, then spent six months

working as a hay inspector before getting offered a position as a graduate research officer at Peracto.

What is the agricultural landscape best known for in your region?

The entire region is home to a huge range of crops. Toowoomba is located between the Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley regions. The Darling Downs is known for its high fertility black cracking clay soils which are used to grow a large range of crops including cotton, mungbean, chickpea, sunflowers, wheat and barley. The Lockyer Valley is considered to be among the top 10 most fertile farming areas in the world and a large range of crops are grown including lettuce, brassicas, cucurbits, tomatoes, onions, carrots and lucerne.



What do you enjoy most about your role?

The variability of what I do every day has played a huge part in maintaining my interest in agriculture. Every day is different and I find the opportunity to learn new aspects about my role and the industry has also been a bonus. Technology too has transformed how we do our jobs, having created greater efficiencies and streamlined processes. Being able to use smartphones to capture and store data has saved on double handling and has provided more timely results too. 🌿





Toasting global success

The wine industry is an ever-growing global market and Peracto is helping to maintain the home-grown commodity's momentum across Australia and New Zealand.

As Australia continues to feature in the top 10 wine-producing countries in the world, it's essential the industry is supported to ensure local and global standards are met.

"The wine industry is one of our major agricultural exports," Peracto Technical Director Phil Frost said.

"Australian growers need the latest management tools for pests and diseases and also to ensure their final product (the wine) meets strict import requirements of overseas countries."

Australia produces all major wine types includes reds, whites, sweet wines and sparkling.

The main wine-producing regions are located in the cooler south-east of the country, with about 60 wine-producing regions including South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and southwest Western Australia.

Peracto works directly with the industry to ensure the quality and standard of Australia's reputation is upheld through best practices across pest and disease management and quality control.

"The work we do ensures the management strategies are safe to the vines; that they control the pest and disease; they don't affect the wine-making processes or sensory aspects of the wine; and also that they don't result in residues in wine," Mr Frost said.

Similarly New Zealand is highly regarded for its wine-producing regions with Marlborough and Hawke's Bay two premium wine-growing areas.

Best known for its sauvignon blanc, New Zealand continues to grow its reputation through pinot noir, pinot gris and chardonnay.

Year-on-year, the industry experiences growth where it contributes more than \$1.5 billion (NZ) annually to the national economy.

ABOVE: Staphyt staff preparing samples in the laboratory at Marsillargues (Southern France)

"Our New Zealand team are conducting a number of wine-making studies on a range of new products they are testing," Mr Frost said.

"We are committed to providing the very best in management strategies which result in the upmost of quality wines for domestic and international markets." 

