

Australia invests \$130M in trade alliance program to advance Aussie horticulture exports

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Australia's largest and most ambitious horticulture trade initiative has been given the go-ahead, with a host of partners committing \$130 million to the Fresh and Secure Trade Alliance (FASTA).

In an eight-year program, key Aussie export stakeholders and officials will join forces to protect and grow Australia's horticultural exports through the federal Hort Innovation Corporation, delivered by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

As part of the program, FASTA will also boost biosecurity initiatives to solidify Australia's strong reputation in pest-management and as a responsible trading partner for years to come.

Insect pests are a major challenge for Australia's horticultural producers as they impact production and domestic and international trade. Australia's trading partners require evidence that Australian horticulture exports are insect pest free.

FASTA's research program is focused on two areas:

- **Delivering robust and timely datasets to underpin market access negotiations** State and Territory governments will work together to standardise their approach to collecting phytosanitary, or pest and disease management data. This data demonstrates that Australia's produce is pest-free while also ensuring the impact of phytosanitary treatments on fruit quality will be minimised. These datasets will be used to open new export markets for Australian

produce and improve access to existing ones.

- **Increasing understanding about fruit fly and other key pests:** A multi-discipline, multi-organisational research team of over 70 scientists from across Australia will test new technologies for tracking pests, trapping pests and reducing pest pressure. The eight-year program will increase Australia's research capabilities in pest management research and facilitate world-class research.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt said the research will be able to be used by Australia's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in international trade negotiations or by states and territories in supporting domestic trade.

"This initiative will reduce the impact of endemic pests on sustainable horticulture crop production, improve Australia's preparedness for future exotic pest incursions and facilitate a national, industry-driven and coordinated approach to research activity supporting horticultural market access and improvements," Minister Watt said.

The latest Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook reveals progressive data on Australian Horticulture,

- The total value of horticulture exports grew by 2.4% from Dec 2021 to Dec 2022.
- In 2022, fruit accounted for \$1.2B of export value, followed by nuts with \$1.1B and vegetables at \$262M.
- In 2022, Australia's top three export commodities were almonds (30 % share), table grapes (18 per cent) and citrus (18 %).
- Australia's top export destination is China (28.4 %) followed by Japan (7.4 %) and Vietnam (6.6 %).
- Australia's top 10 export markets have changed over the past few years – in particular, over the past six years exports to Vietnam have increased by 266%.
- Victoria accounts for the largest share of export value – 49% of total export value.