

Final report

Project title:

Finding opportunities to strengthen innovation in the Australian vegetable industry

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VG2300

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190

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Public summary

This project aims to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the innovation system in the Vegetable industry through examining how current functions and structures enable or hinder effective innovation. Through a process of co-design, we will use these findings to make recommendations to enhance the Vegetable innovation system over the coming years. This progress report provides an update on work on this project to date.

Our research to has consisted of

- An online survey (n=25),
- Interviews (n=12),
- Focus & Co-design group meetings (n=2)
- Document analysis (n=15).

The online survey link was distributed to 50+ people identified by Hort Innovation program managers as being active in various dimensions of the Australian vegetable innovation system. The first cluster of responses (n=6) are active or identify as an extension professional/advisor. The second cluster (n=5) were small (less than 20ha) and large growers (more than 70ha). The survey was not completed by any medium sized grower. The third cluster (n=3) were R&D personnel. The fourth cluster (n=2) were input suppliers. The fifth cluster (n=1) included one packer/distributor, one processor and one retailer. The 'other' category (n=5) included respondents who described themselves as active in transport, investment management, industry services and delivery, grower-packer-distributor and grower-advisor. One respondent did not indicate their main activity in the vegetable industry.

Follow up interviews were conducted with 12 survey respondents. Interviews were designed to build off survey responses and provide opportunities for deepening discussion around key points. Interviews were conducted via zoom, transcribed and then coded using NVivo 14. Documents reviewed and analysed to date include industry reports, strategies and investment plans (n=15). Detail on documents will be provided in the final report.

The VegNet focus group was one hour in duration and engaged delivery partners within the VegNet program (n=12). Three questions formed the basis of the focus group: Who owns the Vegetables Innovation system? What is the objective of innovation in the vegetable industry? And, What limits innovation in the vegetable industry? Our co-design group consists of 10 Vegetable industry leaders, spanning all elements of the supply chain and innovation system. They have been tasked with interpreting findings from the research and refining recommendations for action. An initial meeting has been held with another planned to review data collected to date.

Initial findings from this research highlight significant weaknesses in most of the seven functions of innovation systems central to effective innovation. Future work with the co-design group will help to understand the structural dimensions of these weaknesses and recommend actions to address these. As apart of this process we will conduct a similar analysis of relevant sectors within the Netherlands Vegetable industry to compare and contrast innovation systems that are stronger in these seven functional areas.

Achievements

Table 1. Achievements

Achievement criteria	Delivery partner assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved• Partially achieved• Not achieved	Justification
Report with progress on research to date, co-design workshop outputs and planned work for remainder of the project.	Achieved	Data collection complete Co-design process established Progress report complete Planned next steps described

Outputs

Table 2. Output summary

Output	Listed in M&E Plan: • Yes • No	Description	Evidence and data
Co-design workshop	N/A	Co-design workshop with industry leaders to review project	W-shop recording and notes
VegNet Focus Group	N/A	Engagement process with key innovation system partners	Written notes
Online Survey and Interviews	N/A	Data collection process engaging key stakeholders across the supply chain	Survey data and interview transcripts

Outcomes

Table 3. Outcome summary

Outcome as listed in M&E Plan	Progress to achieving outcome	Evidence and data	Progress: • On track • Off track
Improved capability and an innovative culture that maximises investments in productivity and demand and builds a resilient Australian vegetable industry	As per table 1 and 2 description	As per table 1 and 2 description	On-track

Refereed scientific publications

N/A

Intellectual property

'No project IP or commercialisation to report'

Issues and risks

N/A

Other information

No additional information to report

Appendices