

What happened in the **Onion Fund** last year?

Annual Report 2021/22



About Hort Innovation and the Onion Fund

Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australia's horticulture sector. We work closely with industry to invest the onion R&D and marketing levies, together with Australian Government contributions, into key initiatives for growers, through the Onion Fund. We're proud of the work we do to help drive productivity, profitability, and demand for onion growers and the horticulture sector.

Read on for an overview of what Hort Innovation delivered in the Onion Fund during the year.

We also encourage you to download a copy of the overarching Hort Innovation Annual Report 2021/22 at www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal to see how Hort Innovation worked to benefit the horticulture sector during the year.

In this report...

Onion Fund snapshot 1

Some of things delivered for you during the year 2

Here's how your R&D levy was invested over the year 3

Investments 4

Financial operating statement 6

Fund management 7

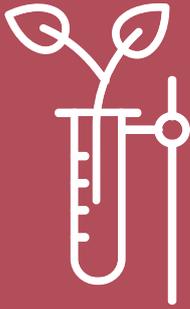
R&D spotlight 8

Marketing spotlight 9

Minor use permits 11



Onion Fund snapshot 2021/22



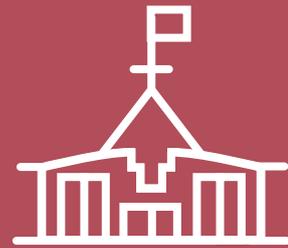
\$832,700

invested in R&D



\$213,529

invested in marketing



\$1.07M

in levies collected

by the Government and passed on to Hort Innovation for investment

Industry facts



79%

Brown onions account for 79 per cent of Australia's onion production and red onions 19 per cent



\$203.2M

In 2020/21, the farmgate value of onion production in Australia was \$203.2 million



28%

28 per cent of onions (domestic and imported) are sent to the foodservice sector

These facts and more can be found in the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook, which is delivered by Hort Innovation each year. The handbook is packed with horticulture statistical information and analysis for some 75 categories. See www.horticulture.com.au/horticulture-statistics-handbook.

Consumer insights



9 million

Nine million Australian households purchased onion in 2021/22

These insights were made available through the Harvest to Home platform (www.harvesttohome.net.au) delivered as part of an investment providing regular consumer behaviour data and insight reporting.

Just some of the things delivered for you during the year



Collaboration between the melon, onion and vegetable industries on a new export program to build export capability and capacity – see hortinn.com/mt21009



Access to consumer insights through multi-industry investments to understand consumer behaviours, attitudes and purchase intentions – see www.horticulture.com.au/onion



Support for the National Bee Pest Surveillance program to help safeguard honey-bee and pollinator-dependent industries in Australia – read more at hortinn.com/mt21008



Delivery of evidence-based information about the health benefits of onions to health and food service professionals in Australia – see hortinn.com/vn20002



The onion Harvest to Home dashboard providing regular household purchase data and insight reporting at www.harvesttohome.net.au



A multi-pronged domestic marketing campaign – read more on [p10](#)



Investments in the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative to address longer-term and often complex issues and opportunities critical to the future of Australian horticulture – see www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers*

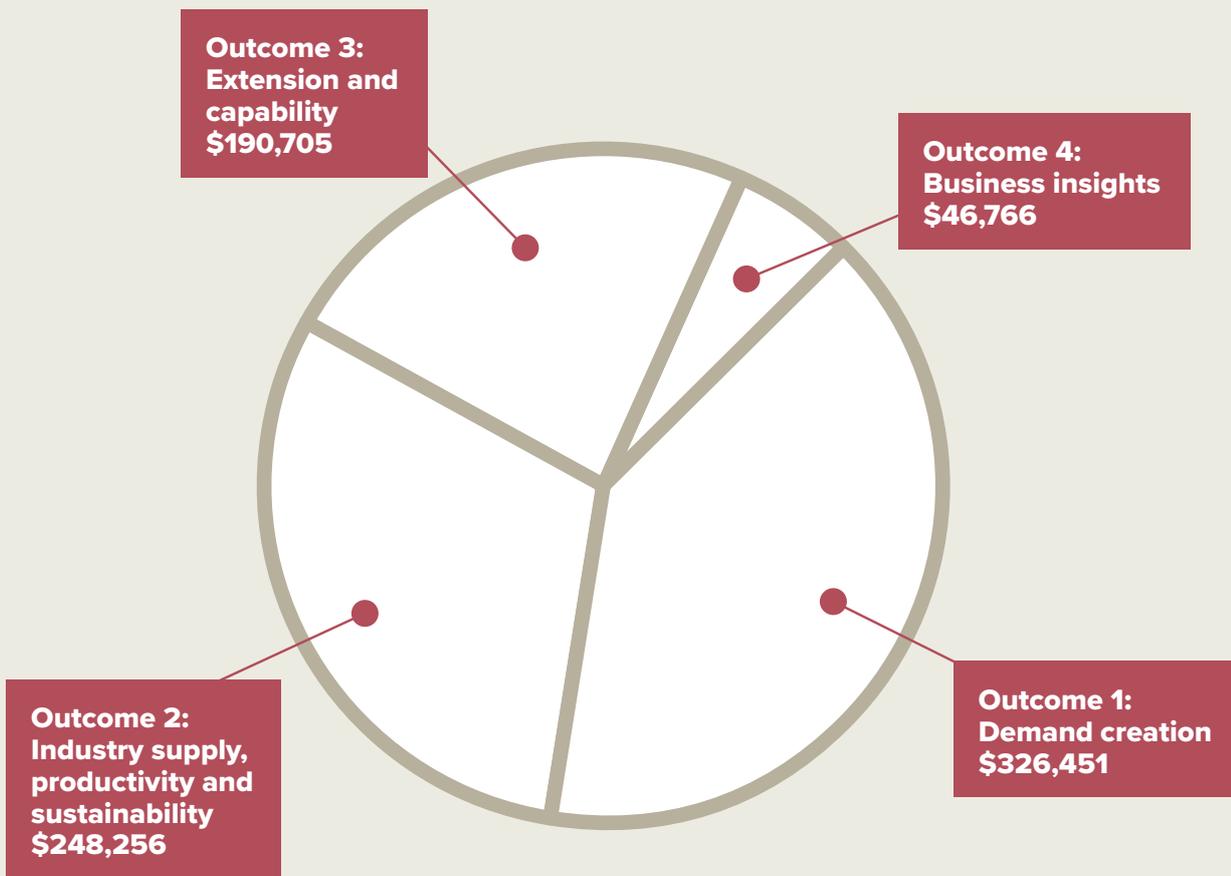


Projects supported by grants secured by Hort Innovation, ranging from cross-sector Rural R&D for Profit initiatives to horticulture-specific work to aid in access to crop protection products – see the Hort Innovation Annual Report 2021/22 for more details*

You can visit www.horticulture.com.au/onion at any time to access information on new, ongoing and completed projects, and to download resources produced by your levy investments.

*These initiatives were delivered outside of the Hort Innovation Onion Fund and, in most instances, did not involve the industry levy

Here's how your R&D levy was invested over the year



The onion Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) guides investments specific to the Hort Innovation Onion Fund. The SIP features priority outcome areas identified and agreed upon by the industry. Hort Innovation works to invest in R&D and marketing initiatives aligned to these.

The above chart shows how project expenditure in the Onion Fund during 2021/22 was aligned to the SIP. We have allocated each project to a SIP outcome based on its primary objective.

Which projects were in each of the SIP outcome areas?

Outcome 1: Demand creation

Demand creation supports the Australian onion industry to develop existing and future domestic and international markets.

Marketing activities during 2021/22 also contributed towards the demand creation outcome. You can read more about this year's onion marketing campaign on [p10](#).

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
Multi-industry export program (Vegetables, Onions and Melons) (MT21009)	\$115,517	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21009
Australian horticulture international demand creation (ST21007)	\$2,438	Ongoing	hortinn.com/st21007
Onion nutrition education program for health professionals and the food service industry (VN20002)	\$66,889	Ongoing	hortinn.com/vn20002
Australian onion industry export strategy (VN20003)	\$23,617	Completed	hortinn.com/vn20003
Australian onions export market intelligence (VN20004)	\$65,491	Completed	hortinn.com/vn20004
Onion-specific Phenomenom resource creation (VN20008)	\$52,500	Completed	hortinn.com/vn20008

Outcome 2: Industry supply, productivity and sustainability

The Australian onion industry has increased profitability, efficiency and sustainability through innovative R&D and sustainable best management practices (BMPs).

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative – Phase 2 (HA19007)	\$912	Ongoing	
An IPM extension program for the potato and onion industries (MT16009)	\$37,536	Completed	hortinn.com/mt16009
Across horticulture support for export MRL compliance (MT19006)	\$3,388	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt19006
Management strategy for serpentine leafminer, <i>Liriomyza huidobrensis</i> (MT20005)	\$50,000	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt20005
Regulatory support and coordination (pesticides) (MT20007)	\$4,159	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt20007

Continued

Investments

Outcome 2: Industry supply, productivity and sustainability (continued)

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
National Bee Pest Surveillance Program: Transition program (MT21008)	\$31,175	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21008
Epidemiology and management of fusarium basal rot in onions (VN20006)	\$102,745	Ongoing	hortinn.com/vn20006
Optimising chemical and cultural control of onion white rot (VN20007)	\$18,340	Ongoing	hortinn.com/vn20007

Outcome 3: Extension and capability

Improved capability and an innovative culture in the Australian onion industry maximises investments in productivity and demand.

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
Australian onion industry communications program (VN18003)	\$173,805	Completed	hortinn.com/vn18003
Risk and crisis management planning for the onion industry (VN20001)	\$16,900	Ongoing	hortinn.com/vn20001

Outcome 4: Business insights

The Australian onion industry is more profitable through informed decision-making using consumer knowledge and tracking, trade data, production statistics, benchmarking and forecasting, and independent reviews.

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
Vegetable cluster consumer insights program (MT17017)	\$15,416	Completed	hortinn.com/mt17017-onion
Horticulture trade data (MT19005)	\$4,076	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt19005
Consumer demand spaces for horticulture (MT21003)	\$2,797	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21003
Consumer behavioural data program (MT21004)	\$10,336	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21004
Seasonal horticulture labour accommodation study (MT21007)	\$981	Ongoing	
Economic contribution of Australian horticulture (MT21010)	\$2,990	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21010
Foodservice foundational market insights (MT21011)	\$7,195	Completed	hortinn.com/mt21011
Pilot program: Consumer usage, attitude and brand tracking (MT21201)	\$668	Completed	hortinn.com/mt21201
Consumer usage and attitude tracking 2022/23 (MT21202)	\$2,309	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21202

Financial operating statement

Onion Fund Financial operating statement 2021/22

	R&D (\$)	Marketing (\$)	Total (\$)
	2021/22 July – June	2021/22 July – June	2021/22 July – June
OPENING BALANCE	2,055,981	105,618	2,161,598
Levies from growers	795,710	274,383	1,070,093
Australian Government money	493,366	–	493,366
Other income*	3,960	297	4,257
TOTAL INCOME	1,293,036	274,680	1,567,717
Project funding	832,700	213,529	1,046,229
Consultation with and advice from growers	6,023	2,565	8,588
Service delivery	148,010	45,345	193,355
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	986,733	261,438	1,248,171
CLOSING BALANCE	2,341,466	111,560	2,453,026
Levy collection costs	20,819	7,299	28,118

*Interest, royalties

Levy collection costs – These are the costs associated with the collection of levies from industry charged by Levy Revenue Services (LRS)

Service delivery – Also known as Corporate Cost Recovery (CCR), this is the total cost of managing the investment portfolio charged by Hort Innovation

Making sure that levy investment decisions align with industry priorities

What will be the Onion Fund's focus over the next five years?



Hort Innovation developed the onion Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) in 2021 to reflect current priorities for the onion industry, involving extensive consultation with onion growers and industry stakeholders, including Onions Australia. The SIP is the roadmap that helps guide Hort Innovation's oversight and management of individual levy industry investment programs.

The onion SIP lays the foundation for decision-making in levy investments and represents the balanced interests of the onion industry. The most important function of the SIP is to make sure that levy investment decisions align with industry priorities.

The onion SIP identifies four outcome areas that will contribute to the productivity and profitability of the sector. They are:

- Industry supply, productivity and sustainability
- Demand creation
- Extension and capability
- Business insights.

What projects will the Fund be investing in next year?

The onion Annual Investment Plan (AIP) 2022/23 details how Hort Innovation spends levy funds over 12 months. The onion industry SIP guides investment decisions, and our consultation process prioritises investments based on potential impact and levy fund availability.

Hort Innovation publishes Annual Investment Plans each year over the lifespan of the SIP and advises industry stakeholders via various communication channels.

Hort Innovation will continue to report on fund performance regularly, focusing on outcomes and the impact of investments.



Visit www.horticulture.com.au/onion-fund-management to view both documents and better understand how Hort Innovation invests your levy.

Optimising chemical and cultural control of onion white rot (VN20007)

The Hort Innovation Onion Fund is investing in a project to develop a more effective integrated disease management strategy for control of onion white rot. Onion white rot is a highly destructive fungal disease of commercial onion crops. This project seeks to improve current control methods for the disease, as well as identify new methods that can be used to combat onion white rot.

Delivered by Arvensis in collaboration with SARDI, the research involves:

- Developing a pre-plant soil DNA test to identify disease risk prior to planting
- Identifying and developing natural germination stimulants to reduce disease inoculum levels prior to planting
- Optimising spray timing and dose rates of current fungicides
- Identifying new fungicides and biological controls for onion white rot.

The project team is working closely with the onion industry to extend any new findings to onion growers. Regular updates will be provided to industry, as well as trial sites visits later on in the project to demonstrate the integrated onion white rot management program developed.

Project update: July 2022

The research team report progress in the following areas:

- Identifying disease risk prior to planting.
- Evaluating sclerotia germination stimulants to reduce disease inoculum levels prior to planting.
- Improving understanding and efficacy of current fungicides (tebuconazole and triadimenol) in relation to disease epidemiology and fungicide behaviour in soil.
- Identifying new fungicides and biologicals for disease control during the crop.

The soil DNA test methodology, based on extracting PCR quality DNA from soil samples for testing by PCR for specific detection of *sclerotium cepivorum*, has been developed. The project is now focused on validating the test to determine sampling procedures and disease thresholds.

A detailed study protocol for two fungicide efficacy and crop safety trials has been prepared with input from Hort Innovation and the product manufacturers to evaluate new products for disease efficacy and crop safety.

The two trials from the first season have identified a range of new fungicides with new modes of action for control of onion white rot.

The data is being used to develop the protocols for the second season of fungicide trials. Two of the new fungicides included in the trials are currently being assessed by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) for potential registration for control of onion white rot in Australia.

Another field trial was also completed to look at the factors effecting the efficacy of triadimenol, which is currently used for post-crop emergence for control of onion white rot.

Sclerotia have been produced in the laboratory and a methodology has been developed to evaluate sclerotia germination stimulants, which will commence this year.



Getting more Aussies eating more onions, more often

Hort Innovation is responsible for investing the onion marketing levy into a range of activities to drive awareness and consideration. Here's a quick look at some of the activities and achievements in 2021/22.

In 2021/22, the Australian Onions marketing program was aimed at improving consumer knowledge, attitudes and purchase intent towards onions. The campaign activities were geared towards driving category volume growth for onions by shifting consumer perception of onions from being a base ingredient to a central part of dishes.

The campaign targeted 'main grocery buyers' aged 25-54 years old through a mix of media relations, influencers, content creation (including videos) and an 'always-on' approach to social media.

The new campaign positioning, "*there's more to onions*" aimed to inspire and encourage Australian consumers to use more onions, in different ways in their cooking. "*There's more to onions*" refers to the flavour, nutritional and variety of cooking options that this vegetable can be used for (such as baking, sizzling and caramelising.) The messaging for this campaign included: "more tang", "more bake", "more sizzle", "more caramelize", "more flavour" and "more nutrition".

Media relations

For the media campaign, new recipe content was leveraged to third-party media outlets. Coverage was secured with top tier media outlets including *The Daily Telegraph*, *New Idea*, *Nourish Magazine*, *Body + Soul* and *Woman's Day*. Over 24 million opportunities to see the onion-inspired content were secured through this activity.

Media and influencer hampers were delivered, to keep onions at the front of the content distributors' minds and featured the ingredients to make one of Hort Innovation's recently created recipes, the 'Vegetable and Red Onion Pasta Bake.' The onion hampers resulted in over 700,000 opportunities for Australians to see the content via social media.



Influencer relations

To help engage fans on the Australian Onions social channels, inspire Australian families to use more onions in their cooking and drive purchasing frequency, work was undertaken with Sneh Roy of Cook Republic, chef Tom Walton and recipe developer Lisa Holmen. The aim of bringing these food experts together was to create a suite of new recipes, imagery and assets for sharing on the Australian Onions social channels and promoting to media outlets.

Continued

Marketing spotlight



To further develop “*there’s more to onions*” positioning and appeal to the ‘main grocery buyers’ target audience, a range of assets were created. Some highlights of the influencer campaign were:

- The top performing post on Australian Onion’s Instagram channel was Sneh Roy’s [Whole Red Onions recipe](#). The post generated 904 engagements alongside a reach of over 7,500 people.
- The top performing post on Australian Onion’s Facebook page was Lisa Holmen’s [Roasted Onions with Parmesan Breadcrumbs](#). The post reached over 27,000 people and had over 3,400 engagements (likes and comments).

Videos

Two short videos were produced to highlight the ‘*there’s more to onions*’ messaging and they were promoted online and shared on the Australian Onions social media channels. The first video was watched over 7,000 times (4,900 on Facebook and 2,200 on Instagram). The second video was watched over 7,800 times (3,900 on Facebook and 3,800 on Instagram).

Social media

The ‘always-on’ approach to social media was to inspire Australian families to include more onions in their everyday shop. This was achieved by educating, demonstrating, and inspiring Australians to eat more onions every day, by showcasing that onions have a diverse range of culinary experiences to offer.

The strategy consisted of posting twice a week on both Facebook and Instagram with a mix of content that sat under the umbrella of three content pillars: “more than a sizzle (50 per cent)”, “pantry staple (30 per cent)” and “healthy hero (20 per cent)”.

A social media competition was executed in May to encourage user generated content and engagement on the Australian Onions social media channels. Audiences were given the opportunity to win a Baccarat Air-Fryer by sharing their most-loved onion dish or recipe on either Facebook or Instagram. The competition achieved 200 entries (85 more than the previous year) and reached 11,920 people.

Some highlights of the social media campaign were:

- More than 5.6 million impressions (opportunities to see the content)
- More than 132,000 engagements (likes and comments)
- Average engagement rate on Facebook of 14 per cent
- The top performing Facebook post was a [French Onion Beef Sliders](#) recipe, achieving 946 engagements and an engagement rate of 8 per cent
- The top performing Instagram post was a [Sour Cream & Onion Chicken](#) recipe, achieving 2,396 engagements and a high engagement rate of 16 per cent.

In 2021/22 the Hort Innovation Marketing function underwent a significant shift in their approach to investing marketing levies. You can read more about this in the 2021/22 Hort Innovation Company Annual Report at www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal.

Minor use permits

The Hort Innovation Onion Fund supports the submission of applications for new and renewed minor use permits for the industry, as well as data generation activities to support chemical permits and registrations, and strategic agrichemical reviews.

Together these efforts provide industry access to safe, relevant and effective chemicals to manage pests, weeds and diseases.

For full details on these activities and links to relevant information, visit hortinn.com/onion-minor-use.



Minor use permits

Current permits

Below is a list of minor use permits for the onion industry, current as of 15 August 2022.

Permit ID	Description	Date issued	Expiry date	Permit holder
PER13119 Version 5	Diazinon / Onions / Onion thrips (TAS only)	06-Mar-12	31-May-23	Hort Innovation
PER14602 Version 4	Boscalid (Filan), Iprodione (Rovral Aquaflo) and Chlorothalonil (Bravo) / Onion seed and onions / Neck rot (<i>Botrytis allii</i>)	24-Jul-14	30-Sep-23	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER13698 Version 3	Phosphorous acid / Lettuce (leaf and hydroponic), fennel and bulb (Alliums) vegetables – bulb onion, garlic, leek, shallot, spring onion and tree onion / Downy mildew	01-Oct-12	30-Sep-22	Hort Innovation
PER14773 Version 3	Bentazone-sodium (Basagran) /Onions / Broadleaf weeds	16-Apr-14	31-Jan-23	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER80282 Version 3	Alpha-Cypermethrin / Onions / Onion thrips	16-Dec-14	30-Nov-25	Hort Innovation
PER84734 Version 2	Haloxypop (Verdict) / Bulb onions / Storksbill and various weeds	19-Dec-17	31-Dec-24	Hort Innovation
PER84808	Ethofumesate (Tramat) / Bulb onions / Broadleaf and grass weeds as per product label	20-Feb-18	28-Feb-23	AOIA C/Hort Innovation
PER81876 Version 3	Abamectin / Various Vegetables including Bulb onions / Vegetable leafminer (suppression only)	24-Jun-16	30-Apr-24	Hort Innovation
PER89331	Spinetoram (Success Neo insecticide) / Bulb onions / Fall armyworm (<i>Spodoptera frugiperda</i>)	23-Mar-20	31-Mar-23	Hort Innovation
PER89293	Methomyl / Bulb onions / Fall armyworm (<i>Spodoptera frugiperda</i>)	10-Apr-20	30-Apr-23	Hort Innovation
PER89185	Fonicamid (Mainman) / Bulb vegetables (onions, shallots, chives, leeks, fennel (bulb) and spring onions) / Suppression only of onion thrips and western flower thrips	06-Aug-20	31-Aug-23	Hort Innovation
PER89991	Dimethenamid-P (Outlook herbicide) / Onions / Annual ryegrass	05-Feb-21	28-Feb-24	Hort Innovation
PER89720	Abamectin (Tervigo nematicide) / Bulb onions / Root lesion nematode, root knot nematode and stubby root nematode (All States and Territories)	15-Sep-21	30-Sep-23	Onions Australia

All efforts have been made to provide the most current, complete and accurate information on these permits, however you should always confirm all details on the APVMA website at portal.apvma.gov.au/permits. Details of the conditions of use associated with these permits can also be found on the APVMA site.

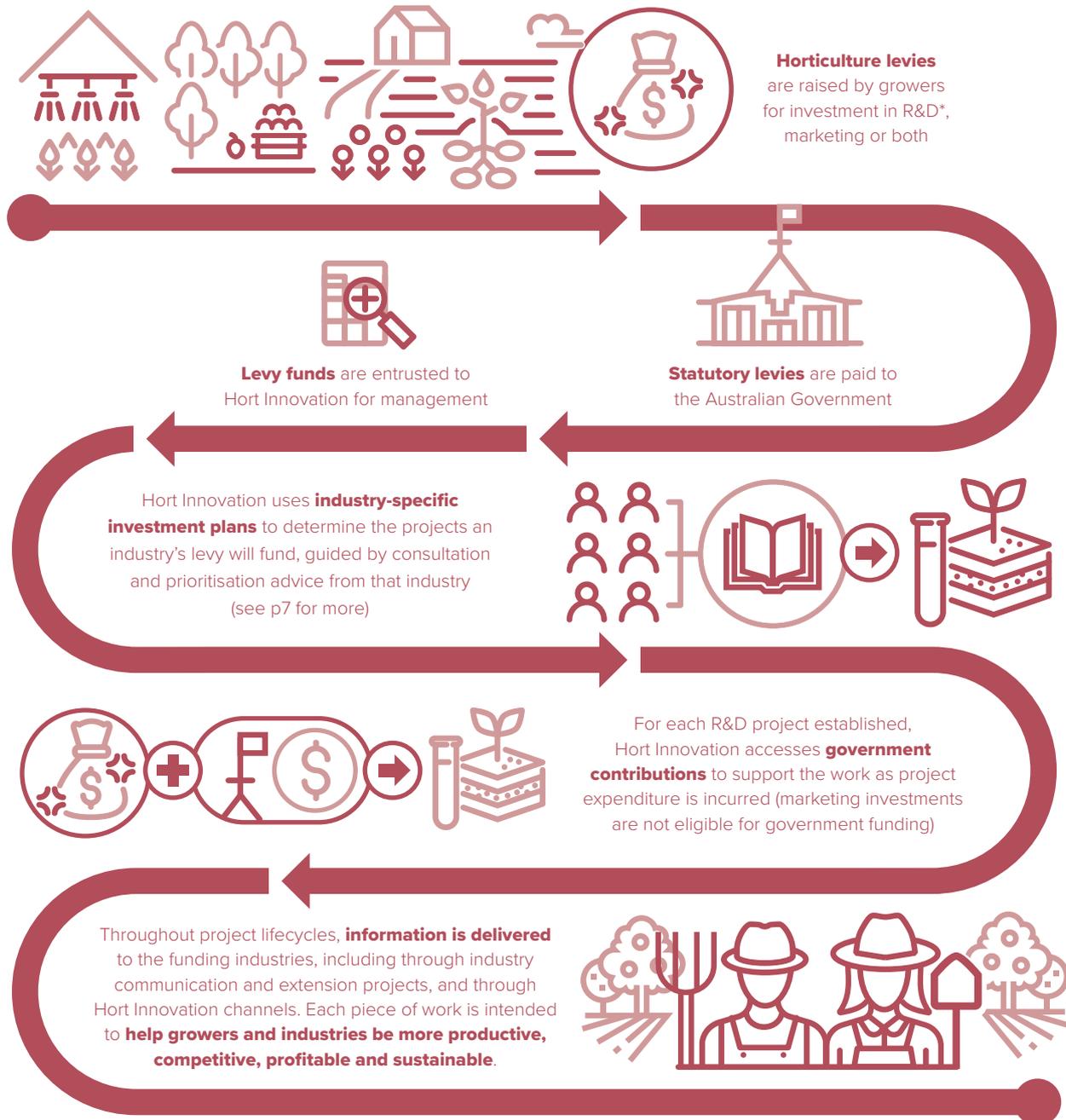
Keep up to date!

Find monthly minor use permit updates in our *Growing Innovation* e-newsletter.

Sign up for free at www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up.

How strategic levy investments are made in the Onion Fund

The below diagram shows how Hort Innovation makes strategic levy investments on behalf of horticulture industries. The onion R&D and marketing levies were invested this way during the year, guided by the onion Strategic Investment Plan 2022-2026 and advice from the industry’s investment advisory panel.



* Encapsulating extension and international trade

To learn more about funding specific to the Hort Innovation Onion Fund, visit www.horticulture.com.au/onion. During the year, other sources of funding were also used to support activities for the benefit of Australian horticulture, including grant funding secured by Hort Innovation, co-investment dollars brokered through our Hort Frontiers initiative and centralised strategic levy reserve.

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