

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of three sweet potatoes resting on a dark, textured wooden surface. The sweet potatoes are orange-brown with some small dark spots and are arranged diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right.

Sweetpotato Fund

Annual Report 2018/19

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The projects in this report have been funded by Hort Innovation using sources including the sweetpotato levy, Australian Government contributions and, in some instances, co-contributions from a variety of sources.



Just some of the things your fund delivered in 2018/19:

- ✓ The **sweetpotato Harvest to Home dashboard** providing regular consumer behavioural data and insight reporting, at www.harvesttohome.net.au
- ✓ New research and extension activities to support growers in **managing nematodes** (p7)
- ✓ Work to understand how nutrient management can influence **splitting and skinning in sweetpotatoes** (p7)
- ✓ Ongoing projects to support growers in accessing safe and effective chemicals for the management of pests, weeds and diseases (p8)
- ✓ A highly visible and multi-pronged **domestic marketing campaign** (p12)

2018/19 SNAPSHOT

\$391
THOUSAND
INVESTED
IN R&D



\$730
THOUSAND
INVESTED IN
MARKETING



9
ACTIVE R&D
INVESTMENTS



Welcome

Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation (RDC) for Australia's horticulture sector. It's our job to work with industry to invest the sweetpotato R&D and marketing levies, as well as Australian Government contributions, into key initiatives for growers.

The 2018/19 financial year was another great year of growing better, together – with strong investments, closer connections and critical collaborations being forged.

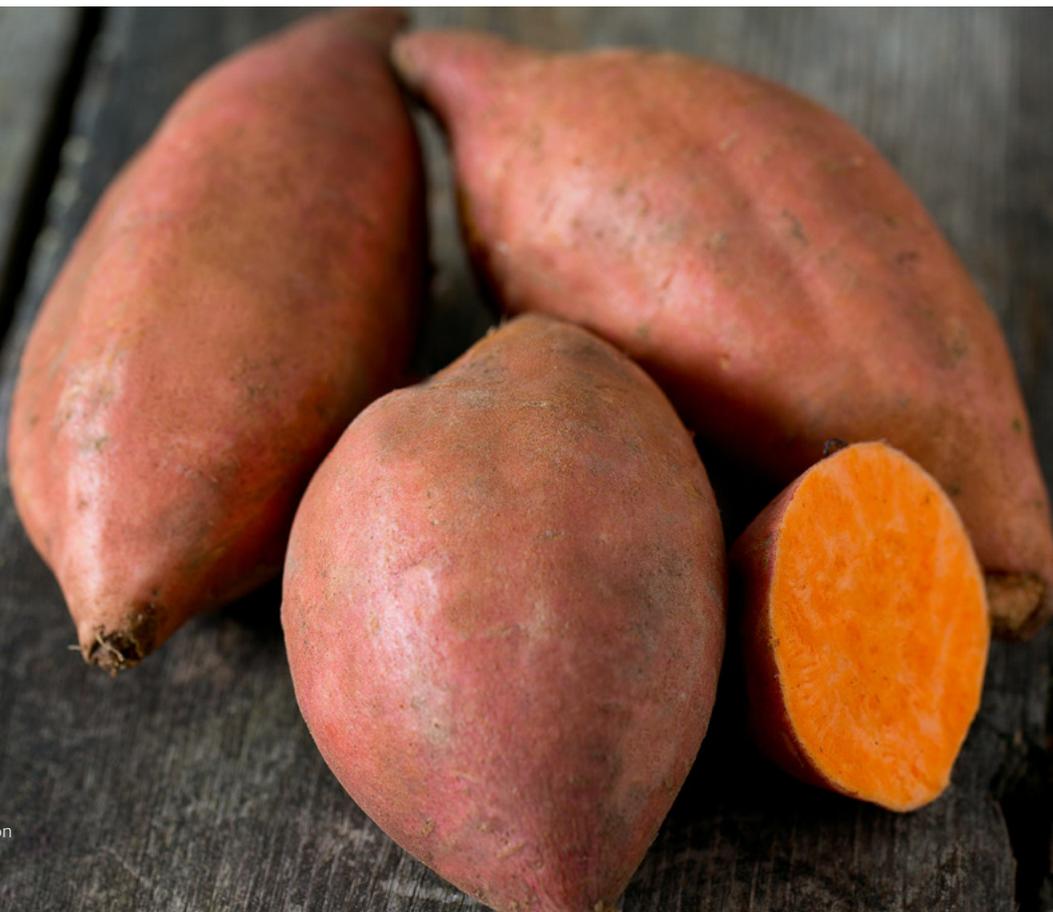
There was close to \$391,000 invested into R&D through the Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund across the year, to support the industry in being as productive and profitable as possible. This included the establishment of several new investments and continuation of ongoing projects addressing important issues and opportunities.

Meanwhile in marketing, the Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund saw some \$730,000 invested in 2018/19 into a range of activities to raise the profile and consumption of Australian sweetpotatoes.

Read on to learn more about all of this work. And remember to take advantage of the Hort Innovation website at www.horticulture.com.au/sweetpotato, where you can search and find information relating to investments, past and present, at any time. The new site and its Sweetpotato Fund section were launched in 2018/19.

Finally, during the year there were many opportunities for Hort Innovation to connect with you, the growers. A big thank you in particular to everyone who came to our early-2019 regional roadshows to feed into the development of the new Hort Innovation Strategy 2019-2023 (read more at www.horticulture.com.au/strategy-2019-2023).

You can reach out to us at any time to learn more about our work, to submit ideas for investments, or to simply have a chat about your industry. You'll find details of specific staff at www.horticulture.com.au/get-in-touch, or can otherwise email communications@horticulture.com.au or call our general line on 02 8295 2300.



Additional value in the year

During 2018/19, Hort Innovation was proud to deliver extra value to the sweetpotato industry, outside of levy-funded initiatives within the Sweetpotato Fund. Here's a quick look at just some examples.



The new Hort Innovation website, with dedicated Sweetpotato Fund section

You can now visit www.horticulture.com.au/sweetpotato to quickly search and find sweetpotato investment information and updates, project resources, and growing tips and advice from Hort Innovation's R&D work. You can also download full final research reports direct from the site, access key contact information, share your ideas and feedback, and so much more.



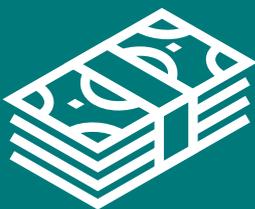
The Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook

Each year Hort Innovation delivers an *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* packed with horticulture statistical information and analysis for use by specific industries and the wider sector. The handbook combines all available data on production, international trade, processing volumes and fresh market distribution for some 75 categories. The 2017/18 edition, released in early 2019, is available from www.horticulture.com.au/horticulture-statistics-handbook.



Hort Frontiers projects

With seven investment areas, Hort Innovation's Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative is about collaborative, cross-industry work to address longer-term, complex issues and opportunities identified as critical for the future of Australian horticulture. While industry levies can be invested into Hort Frontiers projects upon the advice of the relevant Strategic Investment Advisory Panels, the bulk of funding comes from broad-reaching funding relationships that are secured by Hort Innovation, plus support from the Australian Government. Learn about all of the projects and what they're delivering for you at www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers.



Grant funding

In 2018/19, Hort Innovation delivered \$6.7 million worth of investments involving grant funding across the horticulture sector. To do so, we applied for and secured a range of competitive grants on behalf of industry, including through the Australian Government's Rural R&D for Profit program, Improved Access to AgVet Chemicals initiative, and Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. With projects across everything from biosecurity to agri-technology, there's plenty in there to directly and indirectly benefit the sweetpotato industry.

Making investments in 2018/19

Hort Innovation is dedicated to making the right investments at the right time and in the right areas, in line with identified priorities for the industry.

Where the funding comes from

The sweetpotato industry's grower-raised statutory R&D and marketing levies are collected by the Australian Government and entrusted to Hort Innovation as the RDC for Australian horticulture. It's then our responsibility to work with the industry to invest these levies – together with Australian Government contributions in the case of R&D – into strategic initiatives for the benefit of growers.

Additional funding streams can also come into play, such as co-investment dollars from sources including project partners, and grant funding that Hort Innovation secures on behalf of industry.

How decisions are made

Towards the tail end of 2018/19, a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for the Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund was finalised. Due for publishing in the first half of 2019/20, this document was developed through consultation with growers and other industry stakeholders, and outlines specific investment priorities, strategies and themes.

When released, the document will be available for download from www.horticulture.com.au/sweetpotato, and will be available for use like a 'roadmap' by the sweetpotato Strategic Investment Advisory Panel (SIAP) – a panel made up of growers and other industry representatives that's tasked with providing advice to Hort Innovation on potential levy investments.

Turning ideas into investments

Great investments start with great ideas, and Hort Innovation encourages all growers and other industry participants to share their thoughts and suggestions for the work they want to see. Ideas can be submitted any time via Hort Innovation's investment idea form at www.bit.ly/concept-form.

Ideas that are selected for investment are worked into project proposals by Hort Innovation. These are then made public for potential delivery partners to submit responses. Current opportunities are always listed at www.horticulture.com.au/delivery-partners.

Responses are assessed, often with the assistance of industry, and the best delivery partner for the work is chosen. A contract is then issued and the work begins.

Keeping track of investments

All investments in the Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund are detailed on the 'Your investments' page at www.horticulture.com.au/sweetpotato. We also send news and alerts to Hort Innovation members and contacts – if you haven't already, you can sign up for free at www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up.



R&D project list 2018/19

NEW INVESTMENTS IN 2018/19

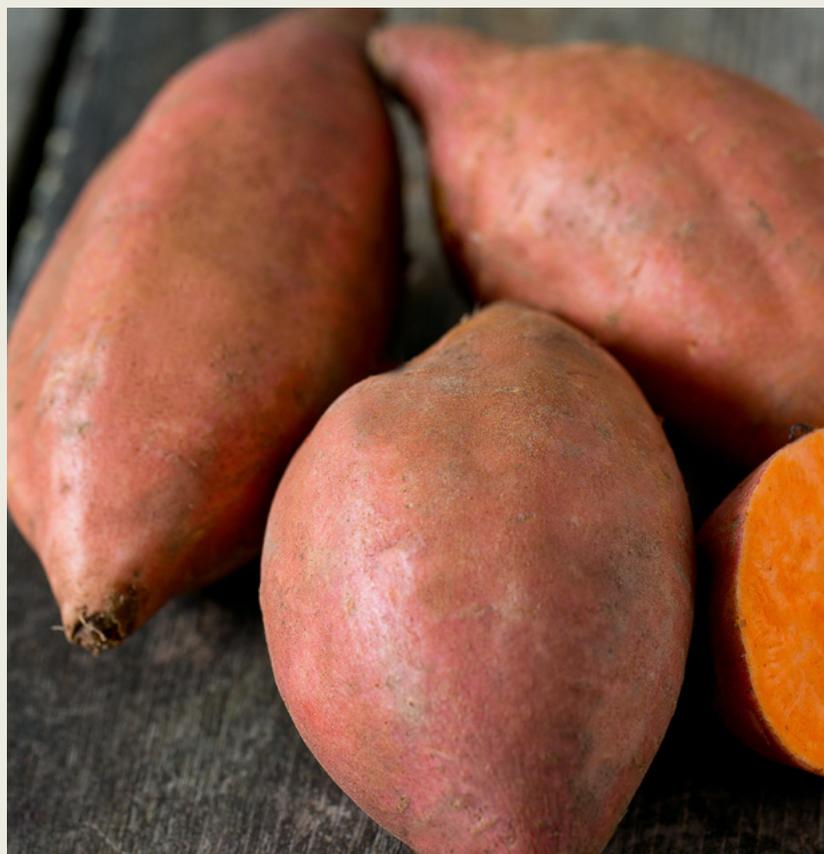
PW17001	Integrated pest management of nematodes in sweetpotatoes
PW18001	Investigation of skin hardening and splitting disorders in sweetpotatoes
PW18002	Sweetpotato industry minor use program
PW18003	Australian sweetpotato consumer insights research
MT18011	Ex-post impact assessment*

* This multi-industry project was a key monitoring and evaluation investment during 2018/19 – we encourage you to find the full details at www.horticulture.com.au/mt18011

ONGOING INVESTMENTS IN 2018/19

PW17000	Review of the biosecurity plan for the sweetpotato industry
MT17017	Vegetable cluster consumer insights program
ST16008	AgVet collaborative forum
ST17000	Generation of data for pesticide applications in horticulture crops 2018

During the 2018/19 financial year, all levy paying horticulture industries also contributed to a small selection of across-industry projects addressing issues that affect horticulture as a whole. Details of all investments that Hort Innovation manages can be found at www.horticulture.com.au.



But wait, there's more. To see what Hort Innovation delivered across the entire horticulture sector in 2018/19, download the full Hort Innovation Annual Report 2018/19 from www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal.

R&D report

Take a closer look at some of the key investments in the Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund during 2018/19. Any resources from these and other levy-funded projects – such as fact sheets, guides and more – are published on your grower page at www.horticulture.com.au/sweetpotato as they become available.

Integrated pest management of nematodes in sweetpotatoes (PW17001)

NEW IN 2018/19

Key research provider: The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

This investment is tasked with bringing current and new information on nematode management and soil health to Australian sweetpotato growers.

Beginning in late 2018, it is facilitating a series of masterclasses and other extension activities to bring the most up-to-date knowledge to industry, while conducting a range of field work to develop new knowledge. This field work includes surveys to identify region-specific nematode species and issues facing the Australian sweetpotato industry; the investigation of management approaches including cover crops, soil amendments, tillage options and more; and the evaluation of new nematicide technologies.

Investigation of skin hardening and splitting disorders in sweetpotatoes (PW18001)

NEW IN 2018/19

Key research provider: The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Beginning in April 2019, this investment represents a collaboration between Australian and US researchers to better understand the causes behind splitting and skinning in sweetpotato crops, and how they can be reduced.

Splitting can occur during storage, but in cooler weather the main nematode-resistant sweetpotato cultivar grown in Australia is prone to splitting on-farm at harvest, with reported losses as high as 30 per cent. Meanwhile, other cultivars are susceptible to skinning damage during harvest and post-harvest operations, leading to sunken, darkened areas on the skin surface.

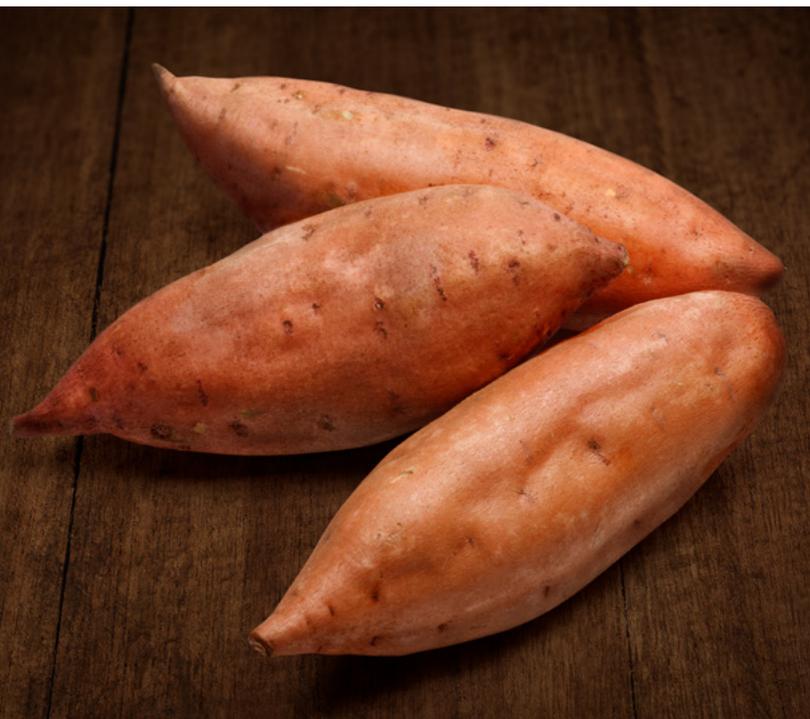
Initial research in the US has drawn a link between cultivar, crop nutrition and skin hardening, which this investment is delving deeper into. Specifically, the researchers are looking at the effect of nutrients and whether their manipulation can influence skin hardening in different varieties, in turn influencing the rates of splitting and skinning in sweetpotato.

Australian sweetpotato consumer insights research (PW18003)

NEW IN 2018/19

Key research provider: Edentify

Beginning in mid-2019, this investment is undertaking research on Australian consumer perceptions and attitudes towards sweetpotatoes. The insights and recommendations it delivers will be available for growers to use in their individual businesses, while also feeding into future Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund initiatives in both marketing and R&D.





Vegetable cluster consumer insights program (MT17017)

Key research provider: Nielsen

This ongoing multi-industry investment is tasked with providing regular consumer behaviour data and insight reporting to a range of industries, through the Harvest to Home platform (www.harvesttohome.net.au).

The platform has a dedicated dashboard for sweetpotatoes, making data and reporting easily accessible for industry participants. The information is intended to assist growers and supply chain partners in decision-making for their businesses and, for the wider industry, the data and insights are available to support strategic activities, as well as Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund marketing plans.

Review of the biosecurity plan for the sweetpotato industry (PW17000)

Key research provider: Plant Health Australia

Beginning in early 2018, this five-year investment is tasked with reviewing and updating the industry's biosecurity plan. The plan is a top-level document that identifies high-priority endemic and exotic pests, diseases and weeds, along with the risk mitigation activities required to reduce their biosecurity threat, plus surveillance and diagnostic activities. It provides a strategic framework for industry and government to work together to improve preparedness for and response to these potential threats.

To enhance the approach to implementing biosecurity, the project has also established a Biosecurity Implementation Group.

The current sweetpotato biosecurity plan is available from Plant Health Australia at www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/industries/sweet-potatoes.

Sweetpotato industry minor use program (PW18002)

NEW IN 2018/19

Key research provider: Hort Innovation

Through this project, levy funds and Australian Government contributions are used to submit renewals and applications for minor use permits for the sweetpotato industry as required. These submissions are prepared and submitted to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

For more on minor use permits, including a list of permits, see p10.

All current minor use permits for the industry are searchable at portal.apvma.gov.au/permits. Permit updates are also circulated in Hort Innovation's *Growing Innovation* e-newsletter, which you can sign up for at www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up.

Generation of data for pesticide applications in horticulture crops 2018 (ST17000)

Key research provider: Peracto

The generation of pesticide residue, efficacy and crop safety data is required to support label registration and minor use permit applications made to APVMA which, when approved, provide access to safe and effective chemicals for the management of pests, weeds and diseases.

In 2018, Hort Innovation secured more than \$1 million in assistance grants under the Australian Government's Access to Industry Uses of Agricultural and Veterinary (AgVet) Chemicals program. This funding is being used, along with levy contributions, to generate the data required for a range of registration and minor use applications across a variety of horticulture crops.

For the sweetpotato industry, this project will ultimately support a Bayer DC-163 label registration application for the control of sweetpotato weevil and whitefringe weevil. Separate to the grant funding, it will also support a Syngenta label registration application for Tervigo (abamectin + iron chelate) for the control of root knot nematodes.

A close-up photograph of several sweet potatoes on a dark wooden surface. One sweet potato in the foreground is cut in half, revealing its bright orange interior. The other sweet potatoes are whole and have a reddish-orange skin. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the wood.

Keep up to date!

To keep up to date with the latest information on new, ongoing and recently completed R&D investments throughout the year – and to search and find resources and reports from these investments – visit www.horticulture.com.au/sweetpotato

Minor use permits

The Hort Innovation Sweetpotato 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 for the management of pests, weeds and diseases.

For full details on these activities and links to relevant information, visit www.bit.ly/minor-use-sweetpotato.

Current permits

Below is a list of minor use permits for the sweetpotato industry, current as of 17 September 2019.

PERMIT ID	DESCRIPTION	STATES	DATE ISSUED	EXPIRY DATE	PERMIT HOLDER
PER81876 Version 3	Abamectin / Root and tuber vegetables / Vegetable leafminer (suppression only)	All, excluding VIC	24-Jun-16	30-Apr-24	Hort Innovation
PER84249	Abamectin, bifenthrin / Sweetpotato / Tomato potato psyllid	All, excluding VIC	16-Jun-17	31-Jul-20	NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI)
PER14583 Version 3	Chlorpyrifos / Various vegetables including sweetpotato / Sweetpotato weevil and wireworm	All, excluding VIC	01-Apr-14	31-Oct-19	Hort Innovation
PER84805	Cytraniliprole / Sweetpotato / Tomato potato psyllid	All, excluding VIC	06-Dec-17	31-Dec-22	Hort Innovation
PER13153 Version 3	Fipronil / Sweetpotato / White fringed weevil and wireworms	NSW, QLD, NT, WA	14-Dec-11	31-Dec-21	Hort Innovation
PER82556	Fluazifop-P / Sweetpotato / Various grass weeds	ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, WA, NT	16-Apr-14	31-Jan-23	Hort Innovation
PER82428 Version 4	Methomyl (Marlin) / Sweetpotato / Helicoverpa, cucumber moth, cluster caterpillar, loopers, webworm, Rutherglen bug, thrips (including western flower thrip)	All	22-Apr-16	31-Mar-24	Hort Innovation
PER13902 Version 2	Phorate (Thimet) / Sweetpotato / Aphids, thrips, jassids and organophosphate susceptible two-spotted mite and wireworm	All, excluding VIC	02-Jan-13	31-Mar-23	Hort Innovation
PER86443	Pirimicarb (Primore) / Sweetpotato / Aphids including green peach aphid and onion aphid	All, excluding VIC	19-Jun-18	30-Jun-23	Hort Innovation

Continued >>



PERMIT ID	DESCRIPTION	STATES	DATE ISSUED	EXPIRY DATE	PERMIT HOLDER
PER84757	Spinetoram (Success Neo) / Root and tuber vegetables / Tomato potato psyllid	All, excluding VIC	28-Nov-17	30-Nov-20	Hort Innovation
PER84245	Spirotetramat / Sweetpotato / Tomato potato psyllid	All	07-Apr-17	28-Feb-20	NSW DPI
PER84743	Sulfoxaflor / Root and tuber vegetables including sweetpotato / Tomato potato psyllid	All, excluding VIC	24-Oct-17	31-Oct-22	Hort Innovation
PER12047	Thiabendazole / Sweetpotato seed roots / Field rots caused by scurf and root rot	All, excluding VIC	29-Jun-11	30-Sep-21	Hort Innovation
PER13151 Version 3	Zinc phosphide (RattOff) / Sweetpotato / House mice and introduced rats	NSW, QLD	14-Dec-11	31-Mar-22	Hort Innovation
PER87051	Thiamethoxam + chlorantraniliprole (Durivo) / Various specified crops including sweetpotato / Various specified pests including corn earworm, native budworm, cabbage aphid, green peach aphid, silverleaf whitefly, greenhouse whitefly, western flower thrips and onion thrips	Specifically Wide Bay Burnett, QLD	25-Feb-19	28-Feb-24	Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers

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.

Minor use permit updates are circulated in Hort Innovation's e-newsletter, *Growing Innovation*. Don't yet receive it? Sign up for free at www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up.

Marketing report

Hort Innovation is responsible for investing the sweetpotato marketing levy into a range of activities to drive frequency of purchase and consumption, under the Hort Innovation Sweetpotato Fund. Read on for a snapshot of activities and results from 2018/19.

The activities of the sweetpotato marketing program for the period were designed to drive demand by demonstrating the ease, tastiness and versatility of sweetpotatoes, while highlighting health and nutritional benefits. This included building awareness of sweetpotatoes as not just a winter vegetable, but an all-year-round product that can be used across a variety of meals.

Events

Ekka Royal Show

Australian sweetpotatoes were featured at the Ekka Royal Show in Brisbane during August 2018, with exposure to over 400,000 attendees. The exhibit was located in the Woolworths Fresh Food Pavilion, arguably the busiest pavilion at the Ekka. It included the 'Kids' Kitchen' which involved a hands-on experience of the versatility of sweetpotatoes and samples of sweetpotato fries and frittatas. The response to sampling was overwhelmingly positive.

Approximately 25,000 samples were distributed over the 10 days of the show, in addition to 30,000 brochures (including recipes). Some 1500 kids participated in the 150 sessions held.

Parenting expos

Australian sweetpotato recipe sampling also took place through two Sydney events – The Essential Baby & Toddler Show in September 2018, and the Pregnancy, Babies & Children's Expo in May 2019. The 'Kids' Kitchen' saw approximately 7000 samples distributed over the three days of the Essential Baby & Toddler Show, with 12,500 recipe and health brochures distributed and 300 children attending the cooking sessions. The Pregnancy, Babies & Children's Expo included 29 sessions in total with 200 kids involved, along with more than 5800 samples and 12,000 brochures distributed. Both events received positive feedback, with parents and kids alike enjoying the recipes and the opportunity for a hands-on experience.





In-store demonstrations

To promote and encourage trial and purchase of sweetpotatoes, a national in-store sampling campaign was conducted with 115 sessions in both Coles and Woolworths across July 2018, and again in September to October. Brand ambassadors prepared and cooked sweetpotato fries and offered samples to shoppers along with a recipe brochure. Over the course of the activity, 35,000 interactions occurred, with 25,800 samples given out. There was a trial-to-purchase rate of 37 per cent.

Media

Bauer partnership

A partnership with Bauer Media resulted in several paid and bonus magazine inclusions across some of the biggest Bauer titles, including the *Australian Women's Weekly*, *Good Health* and *Australian Women's Weekly Food*. This also resulted in articles across their online network, including on Now to Love and Australian Women's Weekly Food. Online digital display ads were promoted across the entire Bauer network of websites, which provided more than 1.76 million opportunities for people to see the campaign, and generated over 4300 clicks on sweetpotato content.



The Parent Brand partnership

A partnership with the Parent Brand, a digital media company that produces parent-related written, video and audio content, aimed to highlight how nutritious, economical, abundant and versatile sweetpotatoes are. This was delivered through video content hosted by former *MasterChef* contestant Aaron Harvie, whose approach to cooking is based on a holistic family menu.

These videos were supported by recipe editorial which was amplified on the parenting website Babyology's social media channels. Each recipe housed the co-branded videos and were published to the Babyology website each month. These recipes also

featured in the Babyology e-newsletter (100,000 subscribers) and included a content post written by the Babyology editorial team with an accompanying motion graphic video.

Video campaign

A strong focus on digital channels was taken to drive consumer awareness. This saw Australian sweetpotato advertising shown across catch-up TV, YouTube and premium websites such as Taste.com.au, Mammamia and News.com.au. This involved activity in pre-roll, 15-second videos and six-second bumper ads. The activity resulted in more than 2.6 million opportunities to see the content and 88 per cent of viewers watching until the end.

Out of home

Outdoor activity was used to reach grocery buyers nationally through visual placements at retail and on the path to purchase. 'Shopper media' such as banners outside major retailers saw a reach of 2.02 million, while digital screens reached 1.8 million consumers near retail outlets.

Public relations (PR) and social media

PR and social media were used throughout the campaign to drive awareness of sweetpotatoes' versatility across seasons.

Social media activities reached 28.3 million Australians across Australian Sweetpotato social media channels as well as other placements.

Facebook performed exceptionally well this year, with a 10 per cent increase in followers and delivery of more than 5.3 million opportunities for people to see sweetpotato content. Instagram saw an increase of 6000 followers over the course of the year, which was a growth rate of more than 100 per cent, and achieved more than 1.8 million opportunities for people to see the content.

PR engagement was also a focus this year, with distribution of a media release, recipes and health fact sheets to popular outlets. This was coupled with activity from social media influencers Leah Itsines and Jacqueline Alwill, who promoted sweetpotato content through their own channels.

An existing partnership with lifestyle influencer Dani Stevens continued in 2018/19. Dani shared several of her recipes on her own social media channels as well as visiting a sweetpotato farm where content was captured and shared through social media channels. The aim of the visit was to raise the profile of sweetpotato growers and saw Dani visit a property in



@danistevens365
Facebook fans: 232,000
Instagram followers: 131,000



@healthylittlefoodies
Facebook fans: 90,000
Instagram followers: 40,200



Cudgen, New South Wales, to see what a day in the life of a sweetpotato grower is really like. The video content that was captured from this visit performed well in social media channels, collectively reaching more than 59,000 people with a strong engagement rate of 12.5 per cent.

In 2018/19, a partnership with influencer Amy Whiteford aka *Healthy Little Foodies* was also continued, with the creation of a series of family-friendly sweetpotato dishes that were shared through social media.

Meanwhile, in October 2018, a media event was hosted in Sydney to build key relationships with media and influencers

and showcase sweetpotatoes for all seasons. Attendees from top tier publications were able to interact with growers to learn how sweetpotatoes are grown and see firsthand the many ways to use them, including grilling which was achieved through a partnership with Weber. Coverage from the event resulted in 31 media mentions.

Aligned with the event, a user-generated competition was held to find out how sweetpotato fans enjoyed sweetpotatoes over the summer months, and extended the partnership with Weber. The results of the competition were strong, with a 15 per cent engagement rate on Instagram and 18 per cent on Facebook.

Financial statement

Financial operating statement 2018/19

	R&D (\$)	MARKETING (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
	2018/19 July – June	2018/19 July – June	2018/19 July – June
OPENING BALANCE	758,297	838,692	1,596,988
Levies from growers (net of collection costs)	405,105	840,053	1,245,158
Australian Government money	247,874	–	247,874
Other income*	18,412	21,123	39,534
TOTAL INCOME	671,390	861,175	1,532,566
Project funding	390,756	730,411	1,121,167
Consultation with and advice from growers	13,887	6,202	20,089
Service delivery – base	17,351	31,512	48,863
Service delivery – shared	28,753	52,220	80,973
Service delivery – fund specific	45,000	80,000	125,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	495,747	900,345	1,396,092
Levy contribution to across-industry activity	11,192	–	11,192
CLOSING BALANCE	922,747	799,522	1,722,269
Levy collection costs	8,965	13,701	22,667

* Interest, royalties

A close-up photograph of several purple sweet potatoes resting on a dark wooden surface. The potatoes are the central focus, with their textured, reddish-purple skin clearly visible. Some small, light-colored spots and imperfections are scattered across the surface of the potatoes. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the same potatoes and the wood grain.

Connect with your levy!

**Visit www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up
to sign up for free Hort Innovation communications,
including industry-specific alerts, opportunities
and general horticulture news**

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