

Australian vegetable industry grows to \$3.8 billion

The gross value of Australia's vegetable industry production has jumped \$500 million in just 12 months according to new data released today from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The data shows that in 2012-13, Australia's vegetable industry generated around \$3.8 billion for the Australian economy and played a critically important role in contributing to both regional and state economies.

"This increase in growth is significant, especially considering that the gross value of Australia's vegetable industry from the previous year was approximately \$3.3 billion. That's around a half-a-billion dollar increase in one year," said AUSVEG Economist, Mr Shaun Muscat. "This data clearly shows that the vegetable industry has never been more valuable to the national economy,"

"However, whilst it is imperative that the Australian vegetable industry continues to grow, we must ensure that this translates to growers receiving better returns and improving their profitability," said Mr Muscat.

Potatoes continued to be Australia's largest contributor to the economy providing \$690 million of value in 2012-13. Other crops doing the heavy lifting were tomatoes (\$439 million), mushrooms (\$285 million), melons (\$234 million), onions (\$200 million) and carrots (\$194 million).

"The volume of vegetables produced also increased compared to the previous year, according to the ABS data. Vegetables that increased in production included lettuce (43 per cent), melons (36 per cent) and tomatoes (23 per cent)," said Mr Muscat.

However, certain commodities also experienced falls in production, such as carrots (15 per cent), onions (13 per cent) and capsicums (8 per cent).

"Continued growth is essential, particularly since, despite the best efforts of industry, rising production costs such as electricity, fuel, fertiliser and labour, mean many growers are being squeezed," said Mr Muscat. "The vegetable industry must remain resilient and continuously explore opportunities to improve returns, by reducing operating costs and improving productivity levels."

Source : [http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9052/Australian-vegetable-industry-grows-to-\\$3.8-billion](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9052/Australian-vegetable-industry-grows-to-$3.8-billion) (30/05/2014)