Australian Truffle Industry Association

"The National Voice for the Australian Truffle Industry"

2022 Harvest - A Challenging Season

Dear growers, if you are experiencing some unusual harvest phenomena this season, you are not alone. In terms of ripening, aromatics, quality and volume, reports from around Australia are extremely varied this season.

Reports to date include everything from bumper harvests to unusually poor yield results; and in some cases, virtually no harvest at all. In some regions, the onset of cold winter temperatures were extremely late and created issues with ripening, particularly in the early part of the season. Another widely reported issue this season, has been that of poor aroma from truffles that present as perfectly ripe in terms of peridium and gleba colour. In other feedback, the size of truffles has been unusually small.

The La Niña weather pattern appears to have again created waterlogged soils in certain areas, and heavy autumn rain events, exacerbating incidence of truffle rot. Each season, largely due to the vast environmental differences between growing regions in a country of this size, we experience a diverse range of results for growers. Anecdotally however, this season seems to reflect a much larger proportion of poorer results than is normal.
When growers have had more time to reflect in the immediate post season period we will learn more about the range of issues experienced this season. We will also then be able to hypothesise the reasons for some of the experiences growers have had this season.

The state representatives reports at the annual conference will also give greater insight.

Pictured above: Example of truffle with healthy peridium, yet lack of maturity in the gleba.

Climate Change

Over the past few seasons, there appears to be tangible evidence of the changing climate negatively affecting certain growing regions. This has been evident in many forms and in a broad range of environments; including but not exclusive to, excess rainfall, drought conditions, mild winter temperatures, extreme winter temperatures and warmer summer temperatures.

As an industry, it is clear that we must become more selective about the environments in which we establish new farming projects. We must also focus research on ways in which we may mitigate the effects of the changing climate on established farming environments.

Information available to those considering entering the industry should reflect the potential effects of a changing climate. Closer consideration to appropriate climate, water security, key soil properties, irrigation methods, including soil moisture monitoring, are imperative to the success of a project, sand cannot be understated when having discussions with potential new industry entrants.

Industry Growth

The industry continues to grow reasonably steadily in terms of new plantations being established. Yield increases exponentially as many young plantations begin to produce. Prior to this season, the expectation was that Australia would collectively harvest in the vicinity of 20 ton. Given the vast range of environmental and production issues reported from all growing regions this season, this figure is likely to be much less than the forecast.

Congratulations to all growers achieving first harvests this year. The financial and time commitment to a project is substantial, and the experience of unearthing your first truffles from your project cannot be overstated.

The industry continues growth at a steady pace

ATIA Committee News

Your ATIA Committee is made up of 12 people, with at least one representing each state where truffles are produced. Committee members all volunteer their time and expertise in an effort to lead and develop a sustainable Australian Truffle industry.

The committee meets on a regular basis to discuss a broad range of industry issues, including local and export growth, Research and Development opportunities, Biosecurity threats, and liaising with government departments regarding support for our projects.

Current areas of focus include:

Industry Protection - Biosecurity and Plant Health Australia

Industry Development - Research, Development and Education opportunity with AgriFutures

Industry Branding, Quality and Uniformity - Code of Best Practice for the Truffle Industry

Industry Growth

- Developing a closer collaboration with the Australian Culinary Federation and its members
- New program hosting Chefs on truffle farms for educational purposes
- Educating consumers on seasonal timing and truffle quality through chef's social media
- Supporting state grower networking groups to meet on a regular basis

The committee will report fully on these initiatives at the AGM and Conference in November.

Conference 2022 - Saturday 12th November

Following feedback from a range of members on continuing Covid concerns, and a reticence to travel and attend large indoor events, it has been decided to again hold this year's annual AGM and Conference online.

We acknowledge the disappointment that many members will feel about this decision, however when considering the most equitable outcome, an online event will give all members the opportunity to be involved, no matter where they reside.

Whilst the program is still being finalised, it is guaranteed to be relevant to all growers. Further details of all sessions will be released to the website shortly.

2022 Conference International Speaker - Claude Murat

Claude is the lead researcher in the group that has now successfully produced *Tuber magnatum* in an experimental plantation.

An article published via The Guardian can be found here - *Tuber magnatum* production. The official research paper will be in the members area on the ATIA website.

We reached out to Claude to ask him if he would join us as one of this year's International speakers. Claude accepted our offer and will share his work on *Tuber magnatum*, as well as other important up to date research with ATIA members.

Brief Bio: Claude Murat received a PhD from university of Nancy (France) and university of Turin (Italy) in 2004 on the truffle genetic diversity. He spent four years of post-doctoral fellow at the university of Turin (2004-2008) analysing truffle phylogeny, evolution and barcoding. He joined the INRA-Lorrain UMR "Interaction Arbres-Microorganismes" in 2008 to take in charge the truffle programs in the UMR. He has particular skills in population genetic and genomic, barcoding, and next generation sequencing.

Membership Drive - Until September 30

ATIA cannot exist and continue to carry out the important work it does without significant membership numbers and support.

ATIA has recently launched a new website. As a consequence of the changeover, membership renewals were not generated in some cases. We sincerely apologise for this, and in future, your membership will renew on the anniversary of your joining, not January 1st as in the past.

You will be sent a reminder at 30 and 7 days prior to the anniversary of your renewal.

We are currently running a membership drive for new and past members to re-join the association. As an incentive, we are offering a 'one-off' annual membership offer of $198.00 (incl. GST). This represents a discount of $77.00. The offer will be valid from today, August 6th, until September 30th.

Joining before September 30th will ensure that new or renewing members will be able to join this year’s conference.

Please note that this year’s conference will be open to members only.

Join or Renew Your Membership Here

If you have previously been a member please use your original login details. This will take you to a page where you can renew your membership with the association.

If you have trouble logging in or remembering your details, please email webfixer@truffleindustry.com.au

---

Biosecurity Issues

Biosecurity issues in Australia are topical at this point in time. Our industry is not immune to risk as we have recently seen with the WA incursion of Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB).

Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (*Euwallacea fornicatus)*

As we have discussed previously, the PSHB (ambrosia beetle - *Euwallacea fornicatus*) and associated *fusarium* fungus were detected for the first time in Australia in East Fremantle in September 2021.

This plant pest complex has been identified as an Emergency Plant Pest by Plant Health Australia (PHA) and international incursions have indicated that the host trees that the Australian truffle industry uses have been identified as potential hosts for this pest complex.

The latest news is that after many months of excellent monitoring, detection, containment, and where necessary, destruction of infected trees, the West Australian Ag department (DPIRD) has provided sufficient information that the state and Commonwealth agencies and the possibly affected industries (including the truffle industry) have agreed that it is potentially technically feasible to eradicate this pest complex.

Phytophthora plurivora

The truffle industry has also been notified that one *Quecus robur* (English oak) has been identified with *Phytophthora plurivora* in the soil. The location is the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens. The oak tree was a healthy specimen and the soil was taken as part of another project. There is no previous record of *Phytophthora plurivora* being detected in Australia.

This incursion is not presently being treated as an emergency plant pest (EPP) and there is no proposed course of action. A Preliminary Information Data Sheet (PIDS) has been issued, however, this detection does indicate that *P. plurivora* is present in NSW.

P. plurivora is a significant plant pathogen, associated with the decline of *Fagus sylvatica* (European beech) and *Quercus* (Oak) species forests in Europe. If a significant population of *P. plurivora* was present, it would be evident with the decline and dieback of susceptible host species in the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden and across the surrounding Blue Mountains.

Following this detection, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Forest Science Unit carried out *Phytophthora* surveys from Sydney to the Blue Mountains, collecting samples from symptomatic, asymptomatic and random host trees. These surveys included the surveillance of 125 *Q. robur* (English oak) and 65 *Q. palustris* (Pin oak) trees. No *P. plurivora* specimens were detected by the NSW DPI Plant Health Diagnostic Service (PHDS) in any of the 12 samples from these surveys.

P. plurivora is not a vector or associated with any vector. It is spread by the movement of infected plants, soil or water. While this identified issue is not presently a threat to our industry, our recommendation is for all truffle growers to have a biosecurity plan and procedures in place for your farm and orchard.

There are online courses provided by PHA that we encourage growers to participate in.

We urge growers to keep biosecurity issues top of mind.

Please visit the link below to learn more.

Biosecurity Courses

Member Feedback

We welcome member feedback, research suggestions, and input on all industry matters. Please feel free to contact myself at president@trufflegrowers.com.au ; or your state representative (email addresses on the website) to discuss your thoughts and ideas on improving industry sustainability.

Regards,
Noel Fitzpatrick
President
Australian Truffle Industry Association

Australian Truffle Industry Association

Our mailing address is:

P.O. Box 325, Oberon NSW 2787, Australia