



## MEDIA RELEASE

### VALUABLE DATA TO BE CAPTURED FROM EAST GIPPSLAND VEGETABLE INNOVATION DAYS

**April 15, 2020 – for immediate release**

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way the East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days (EGVID) will be attended in 2020, the data, the insights and the learnings will certainly not be lost.

The organizing committee, in collaboration with a supportive group of sponsors and industry bodies is busy building a digital engagement plan that will bring people from all over the country into a virtual experience on site, through the creation of videos, webinars and live streaming.

Like many events in these unprecedented disruptive times, EGVID is maximising the opportunity to reach and connect with people and industry online.

An award-winning horticulture event in 2017 that attracted around 650 growers and industry people to the East Gippsland village of Lindenow, it is regarded as one of the best of its kind for showcasing innovative practices, sharing new trends and networking.

But the networking will take on a different vibe in 2020.

EGVID Director Andrew Bulmer said connecting with the grow site from afar via phones and computers is a new field for everyone, but he looks positively at the upside of being able to reach people who might not have ordinarily travelled to the region.

“Whilst nothing can replace the impact of walking onsite, touching the crops and talking face to face, by hosting a wide range of content online, as well as live streaming when those crops are at their planned peak on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of May, ironically, we are likely to reach 1000’s more!”

“This engagement strategy could very well set a new benchmark for how field days like this can create evergreen content that is used as a valuable resource long after the grow site is finished” Mr. Bulmer concluded.

The EGVID event attracts significant support from many of Australia’s leading seed and ag-chem companies, as well as leading industry organisations, and in these unprecedented times of change and disruption, everyone is working together to make it a success.

EGVID Co-Director, Stuart Grigg is confident that the trials will still deliver significant benefit to the industry.

“With planting of long-and-short cycle vegetable crops just about complete and agricultural chemical and fertiliser trials all established, we know that we will have valuable information to share, and we’re working hard on the best way to capture all the data and insights in an easy and engaging video format that can be accessed for many years to come” he said.

“We want to share learnings and innovative practices, as well as showcase the collaboration with key industry stakeholders, including the ten seed companies - South Pacific Seeds, Fairbank Seeds,

Terranova Seeds, HM.Claiuse Pacific, Seminis, BASF Vegetable Seeds (Nunhem's), Rijk Zwaan, Lefroy Valley Seeds, Enza Zaden and Bejo Australia - and nine agricultural chemical companies – Corteva, Syngenta Australia, Incitec Pivot Fertilisers, BioFlora, Biostart, Omnia, Nufarm, Stoller and Sumitomo "Mr Grigg concluded.

More details will be available soon about how to make a virtual connection with the East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days, as the committee works with industry and technology specialists to find the most effective and accessible location to host and be a permanent home for the video resources.

Meanwhile, the Tenth International Spinach Conference planned to be hosted in East Gippsland as part of the EGVID program, was one of the early COVID-19 affected announcements with organisers forced to postpone the event some weeks ago due to international travel bans put in place for a number of its guest speakers.

Fast forward to now, and the outcome would still be the same – in this current pandemic, gatherings like this, are simply not allowed.

The prestigious conference to be delivered in partnership with the University of Arkansas was to be held in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time. There are ongoing discussions about how, where and when the conference can be held, post COVID-19.

The Conference had attracted significant investment from industry via Hort Innovations, as well generous support from gold sponsors Enza Zaden and OneHarvest, silver sponsors: Vilmorin-Mikado, South Pacific Seeds, Terranova Seeds, Omnia, BASF Vegetable Seeds (Nunhem's), Rijk Zwaan, Primo Moratus Fresh and bronze sponsors Sustainable Farming Solutions and Bejo.

Recognising its positive impact on tourism for the region, the Conference was also sponsored by East Gippsland Shire Council.

The Organising Committee extends its appreciation to every organisation that has pledged support to this important industry event and thanks them for their understanding of these unprecedented times of disruption.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT JODY O'BRIEN 0416 222 899**

**Attached images: EGVID Trial site – Lindenow**