



# P.I. News



## PISTACHIO INDUSTRY

January 2013

Volume 3, Issue 1



**Pistachio Growers  
Association Inc.**

27 Ludgate Hill Road

ALDGATE SA 5154

Mob: 0417 809 172

Web: [www.pgai.com.au](http://www.pgai.com.au)

### 2013 Season Harvest on the Horizon

**It is almost time to excite Australian consumers with the *fresh taste of Australian pistachios*. Let us ensure that we deliver to them an exciting product of the highest quality.**

The last three seasons have produced poor quality Australian pistachios. The major cause of this poor quality was totally out of the control of growers. *La Nina* gave us a bucketing for three consecutive harvests and introduced most Australian orchards to fungal problems. It is unlikely that these fungal problems have actually gone away.

These adverse conditions increased the staining of Australian pistachios, not all of which could be removed by the sorters. The near absence of Australian pistachios from the market (the 2011 disaster plus the two off-crops of 2010 and 2012) has allowed consumers to become accustomed to the white shells and larger size of Californian pistachios.

**The 2013 crop is looking good.** We are looking forward to regaining the domestic market. The indication is that there is good support from Australian retailers for the Australian product. BUT, we need to ensure that the Australian consumer is equally enthusiastic. If we deliver the stained, small nuts of the last three seasons, we could find retailer support disappearing quite quickly.

We have been achieving price premiums of 10% to 30% above the price of imported product. We can only continue to achieve these premiums if we actually provide consumers with a premium product.

We cannot control *La Nina*, but there are many things that growers can do to ensure we present to Australian consumers an exciting, great product.



Know-how for Horticulture™



Pistachio Growers Association Inc.



Cooperative Extension



**The size of the nuts is now fixed.** The time to improve nut size was in spring before shell hardness, with optimal water and fertilizer. There is still time to minimise closed shell nuts and hence maximize the more valuable split nuts.

**Nut fill is now well under way.** The tree is using maximum water and nutrients to fill and mature the kernels, and, split the shells. Optimal irrigation and nutrition is now critical especially with the hot weather.

There is time for growers to minimise shell staining. In fact, the remaining weeks are absolutely critical to achieve a clean shell delivery.

**The fungicide programs should be maintained.** Despite this being a very dry season, so far, there is the high risk of residual spores from 2011 and 2012. Anthracnose and *botryosphaeria* both express symptoms well after infection. The trees could already be infected and unless the trees have fungicide protection, the crop damage may only emerge during harvest. It is then too late.

The other major cause of light staining is slow delivery to the huller after harvest. **It is critical that the grower coordinate with the huller the harvest and the delivery.** Pistachios will stain unless hulled within 24 hours of harvest, perhaps even less time if harvested in hot conditions.

**Pistachio prices internationally are very high.** Even with the high Australian dollar, it is highly likely that returns for 2013 Australian pistachios will be very good. To ensure optimal quality may cost a few more dollars in water, fertilizer and effort. At least for 2013 pistachios, growers are highly likely to be rewarded for this extra input.

The good winter chill and good weather in spring suggests that harvest will be earlier rather than later this season. The PGAI is working on several maturity models that will provide, by the end of January, a better estimate of the likely harvest commencement period.

If you have some spare time, the full lectures and slides from the recent University of California Pistachio Short Course is now available on the web. Each lecture is about 45 minutes. The topic list is shown on home web page so you can choose the ones of interest. You can skip the one on vertebrate pests unless you find squirrels and gophers particularly cute.

[http://ucanr.edu/sites/Nov2012ShortCourse/Program\\_Itinerary](http://ucanr.edu/sites/Nov2012ShortCourse/Program_Itinerary)

Details are available on the PGAI recommended fungicide program and also the irrigation and fertigation suggestions for the on-crop

Chris Joyce

For and on behalf of the PGAI Research & Development Committee

January 2013

# PISTACHIO/ALMOND SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

Pistachio Growers' Association Inc has been fortunate to be able to access one of the leading International Plant Pathologists.

**Themis Michailides** an eminent plant pathologist from the University of California will be in Australia from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

Themis will visit the major pistachio and almond growing regions and meet with growers and discuss aspects of managing major diseases in pistachios and almonds.

Themis Michailides has been a valuable contributor to the Australian nut industry and has assisted the pistachio industry in identifying and solving the most recent fungal disease problem of Anthracnose.

**Special grower forums will be held on**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at the Berri Hotel, BERRI, SA**

And

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at the Euston Club, EUSTON, NSW.**

**The guest presenter will be Themis Michailides.**

**Themis J. Michailides** was born in Greece. After receiving his first M.S. degree in agriculture development and irrigation from the Agricultural University in Athens, Greece, he obtained M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in plant pathology from the University of California (UC), Davis. From 1984 to 1988, he was a post-doctoral research associate, first at Oregon State University at Hood River, and later at UC Davis. He is currently a plant pathologist at the Kearney Research and Extension Center with research responsibilities in fruit and nut crop diseases.

Themis Michailides is a leading authority in fungal fruit tree pathology and is nationally and internationally recognized for his innovative ecological, epidemiological, and disease management studies of devastating diseases of fruit and nut crops, such as brown rot in stone fruit (pre-harvest and postharvest), Botrytis gray mold of kiwifruit and pistachio, fig endosepsis and smut of figs, Botryosphaeria blight of pistachio and almond, and aflatoxin contamination and reduction of contamination of nut crops and figs.



**More details will be circulated to members in the coming week**

FROM  
**LITTLE THINGS**  
**BIG GROW**  
THINGS



**Australian Nut Conference**  
Melbourne Australia 19th & 20th March 2013

### **SPRAY DRIFT MANAGEMENT:**

If you are spraying chemicals you need to be aware of your responsibilities in relation to eliminating/managing spray drift.

Here is a link to the OECD managing pesticide Spray Drift site

<http://www.oecd.org/site/envmpsd/>

### **India: Pistachio prices up in New Delhi**

Pistachio prices rose by Rs10 (\$0.10 US) per kg in New Delhi largely on the back of fresh buying by retailers and stockists due to seasonal demand.

Declining imports also encouraged the price rises.

Pistachio hairati and peshwari rose by Rs 10 each to conclude at Rs 760-860 and Rs 1,010-1,040 per kg, respectively.

*Source: [financialexpress.com](http://www.financialexpress.com)*

### **CSIRO said national soil databases can now be accessed through a new iPad app. [Full text]**

Australia's national soil databases can now be accessed in real time online through a new iPad app called SoilMapp.

The new app provides open access to the best and most up-to-date information for soil at any location in the country within a matter of seconds.

Information such as soil depth, acidity, salinity, soil carbon, soil water holding capacity and other attributes will help land managers, farmers and rural advisors make on-the-spot, decisions about how to more effectively manage their land.

The app has been developed by the Australian Collaborative Land Evaluation Program (ACLEP) and CSIRO, with funding from the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), because understanding soils is essential for sustaining healthy, natural environments and productive agricultural landscapes.



## USA (California): Nut growers hope for cold spell

In contrast to the state's citrus growers, walnuts and pistachio growers in California are hoping that the recent cold temperatures prevail for a while.

"In walnuts, we need approximately 800 hours of chilling to put them in a good dormancy to where they leaf out properly in the spring," said walnut farmer Paul Stanfield.

He said that the trees are not yet getting the rest they need, as the Winter started so late.

"It's a big concern because we only have 6 weeks left approximately to reach that goal of 800 hours."

Currently the state's nut growers have only experienced half of the chill hours they need to ensure a successful flowering time in the Spring.

"It's just like a bear that hibernates, so if the tree doesn't get enough rest - like a bear that gets woken up prematurely. The tree wakes up cranky and it does not leaf out and bloom properly, which in turn can affect the trees production and cut into a grower's income," said Bob Beede, University of California Farm Advisor.

**Source:** [abclocal.go.com](http://abclocal.go.com)

## New resources available to assist with fitness for duty assessments for commercial drivers

The [Austroads website](#) now has forms available as a resource to assist with 'fitness for duty' assessments for commercial vehicle drivers, such as those performed under schemes such as TruckSafe and the National Heavy Vehicle Assessment Scheme (NHVAS).

The forms were developed by the NTC in consultation with industry stakeholders to reflect the guidelines within the latest edition of *Assessing Fitness to Drive*, and are provided in a format which allows for organizations to make their own modifications to fit in with their own requirements.

The forms are: the *Driver Health Questionnaire*, the *Clinical Assessment Record* and the *Fitness to Drive Report*.

**The *Fitness to Drive Report* form is not to be used for licencing related assessments** – health professionals should continue to use the forms provided by driver licensing authorities and the medical condition notification form provided within *Assessing Fitness to Drive* for this purpose.

There is no such restriction on the use of the *Driver Health Questionnaire* and *Clinical Assessment Record* forms.

For more information and to download the forms, please visit the [Austroads website](#).

## **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 2012 (SA)**

From 1 January 2013, South Australia's work health and safety legislation which includes the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) and the work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA) supported by Codes of Practice take effect.

As required by section 274 (6) of the Act, I advise that the following approved Codes of Practice will operate from 1 January 2013.

- How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks
- Hazardous Manual Tasks
- Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplaces
- Labelling of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals
- Preparation of Safety Data Sheets for Hazardous Chemicals
- Confined Spaces
- Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing loss at Work
- Managing the Work Environment and Facilities
- Work Health and safety Consultation Cooperation and Coordination
- How to Safely Remove Asbestos
- How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace
- First Aid in the Workplace
- Construction Work
- Preventing Falls in Housing Construction
- Managing Risks of Plant in the Workplace
- Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace
- Safe design of structures
- Managing Electrical Risks at the Workplace
- Demolition Work
- Excavation Work
- Welding Processes
- Spray Painting and Powder Coating
- Abrasive Blasting

For more information about work health and safety visit [www.safework.sa.gov.au](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au) or call the SafeWork SA Help Centre 1300 365 255.

### ***Editors Comment:***

***The new Work Health and Safety Legislation and the Codes of Practice referred to above are specific to South Australia and South Australian businesses.***

***Members in other States should be aware of the new nationally harmonized Work Health and Safety legislation that exist within their State. The Victorian Parliament has not yet passed their legislation.***

***If members are working across different State borders they should be aware of the relevant Sate Work Health & Safety Legislation.***