

FGV Conference Program

- 8.00 am **Registration opens & Trade Exhibition Opens**
Our coffee van will be open so come along and grab a brew and see what our exhibitors have on offer.
- 8.45 am **Welcome by MC, FGV Chairman and Shepparton Mayor**
- 9.00 am **Dan Papacek, Entomologist, Bugs for Bugs.**
Integrated Pest Management: Dan's presentation will offer an overview of the elements that make up an IPM package with emphasis on biological control, including conservation biological control. He also gives perspective on how pesticides do or don't fit in this imperfect pest management world.
- 9.30 am **Jack Bartels, Sumitomo Chemical.**
Jack will present an overview of Accede, a new plant growth regulator for thinning apples and stone fruit. His presentation will cover the latest trial insights, application strategies, and practical considerations for using Accede, providing growers and advisers with an understanding of how this innovative technology can support improved crop management and fruit production outcomes.
- 9.40 am **Don Thorp, Horticultural Spraying Specialists.**
Spraying Smarter: Reducing Costs Through Better Spray Application: As input costs continue to rise, improving spray efficiency has never been more important. In the presentation, the goal is to demonstrate how small improvements in sprayer setup, calibration and application techniques can reduce waste, improve spray coverage and maximise the effectiveness and value of every spray application.
- 10.00 am **Outdoor Demonstration by The Haeuslers Group.**
You know every spray pass needs to count and so do we. Come and see our SmartApply demonstration - a precision spray system installed on blast sprayers to help target product only where it's needed. Using LiDAR technology, SmartApply scans the crop canopy in real time and adjusts spray output to suit tree or vine size, shape and density. This helps reduce waste, drift and runoff while making better use of every tank. In-field trials have shown SmartApply can reduce water and chemical costs by up to 67%. It also automatically collects data to support analysis, compliance and future planning.
- 10.30 am **Morning Tea & Trade Exhibition**
- 11.00 am **Jeremy Griffith, APAL General Manager, Apple and Pears Australia Ltd (APAL).**
Gain valuable insights from Jeremy Griffiths, General Manager of APAL, as he provides a national perspective on the Australian apple and pear industry. Jeremy will share the latest developments, key challenges and emerging opportunities, along with APAL's current priorities and initiatives shaping the future of the industry.
- 11.10 am **Jessica Fearnley-Pattison, Development Officer (Temperate Fruits), NSW DPIRD.**
Protecting your crop - A guide to bird deterrents in orchards: Bird damage remains one of the most persistent and costly challenges for temperate fruit growers, and the search for reliable deterrents is ongoing. This presentation explores a range of bird-management tools, from traditional scare tactics to future technologies.
- 11.30 am **Dr Lee Kalcsits, Professor of tree fruit physiology Washington State University Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center.**
Horticultural practices that produce high-quality fruit in apple and pear: Growers make decisions every week during the growing season that contribute to the final crop yield and quality. Here, Professor Kalcsits will highlight research-based options that growers have to control crop load, optimize fruit growth, and improve colour development in their orchards.
- 12.10 pm **Azaneo Outdoor Demonstration.**
Azaneo will demonstrate their pulsed electric field technology for weed control. The unit is mounted on the rear of a tractor and is powered by a generator connected to the tractor's PTO.

They will demonstrate the operation of their beta product currently being used on a farm in Victoria for inter-row weed control. The system will be operated to kill a small patch of grass in the outside demonstration area. This will show how the product works, and Liam and Jason, the co-founders, will be on site to take your questions.

12.40pm Lunch & Trade Exhibition

2.00 pm Mike Casey, Cherry Orchardist, Central Otago, New Zealand.

Electric Cherries?!: Mike is going to talk through electrifying everything on his cherry in Central Otago, New Zealand. How much he spent, how much he saves and then answer all your questions because diesel is affecting horticulture across New Zealand and Australia, and there is a lot we can do now to run off energy we can create ourselves. No questions are too hard; he looks forward to a decent and honest chat about the good and the bad.

2.45 pm Monré Meyer, Commercial Beekeeper and Co-Founder, Pure Pollination.

Pollination Risk Management in the Varroa Era: Understanding how growers can minimise pollination risks through early planning, selecting reliable commercial beekeepers, assessing hive quality, diversifying pollination providers, and implementing practical risk mitigation strategies to ensure strong pollination services, protect crop yields, and maintain production as Australia adapts to endemic Varroa mite.

3.05 pm Peter Henry, Agronomist, Netafim Australia.

Low Flow Drip Irrigation: Low Flow, High Impact: Join Netafim Agronomist Peter Henry for a practical 10-minute session exploring the fundamentals of low flow drip irrigation and how it differs from traditional irrigation approaches. Learn how applying water and fertiliser at lower flow rates can help deliver resources more precisely to the crop root zone. Peter will also discuss how low flow systems can contribute to improved irrigation uniformity and overall system efficiency, helping growers achieve more consistent water distribution and make the most of every irrigation event.

3.15pm Afternoon Tea & Trade Exhibition

3.45pm Owen McCarron, Managing Director, Sonic Essentials.

Sonic Essentials™ has become internationally known and regarded advocate for improved crop nutrition to impact crop quality and yield and improve human health outcomes. Established in 2007, Sonic Essentials™ is Australian-owned and manufactures all products in Australia, they deliver innovative crop nutrition solutions to growers across Australia, Asia, Central and South America. Sonic Essentials™ develops sustainable solutions that support growers and backed by expert knowledge in agronomy, chemistry, research, and manufacturing.

3.55pm Dr Patrick Brown, Distinguished Professor, University of California, Davis (USA).

Biostimulants and Biofertilizers: Their Function and Effective Use in Modern Agriculture: Biostimulants can help growers protect yields and reduce nutrient losses during brief, damaging heat, drought, frost, and cold events. This presentation explains how biological mechanisms, targeted stress testing, crop phenology, product persistence, field sensing, and weather forecasts can replace inconsistent claims with reliable, precisely timed tools for crop resilience.

4.45 pm Conference Close

6.30pm – 10.30pm Gala Dinner - The Woolshed @ Emerald Park, Kialla – Sponsored by Premier Fresh Australia (guests make their own way to the dinner).

Dinner Sponsor & Guest Speaker Frank Frappa, EGM-International Sales, Premier Farms. Frank will provide an introduction to Premier Fresh Australia and Premier Farms International, highlighting the company's integrated approach to farming, marketing and distribution. He will also explore the performance of Australian grown pears in Canada, including the demand that has been created over the last few years through strategic counter-seasonal supply & promotional activity and the opportunities that exist to drive continued growth in the pear category.