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*Poppies:
A Proud Tasmanian Industry*

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Welcome to the February 2021 edition of In A Capsule!

We commence on a sad note with the recent passing of Wayne Smith.

Vale: Wayne Rupert Smith
18th July 1950 to 12th January 2021

Wayne was a well known farmer and businessman from Abbotsham near Ulverstone on the North West Coast.

He was the third and to date longest serving President of Poppy Growers Tasmania from 1986 to 2001.

Wayne was awarded Life Membership of PGT in 2011 with the citation reading "In recognition and sincere appreciation of outstanding leadership, loyalty and dedication to Tasmanian Poppy Growers and the Tasmanian poppy industry."

At his farewell memorial our Chief Executive, Keith Rice provided an historical, humorous and at times emotional account of Wayne's dedication to the poppy industry and of their 35 year friendship.

Keith focussed on Wayne's enquiring mind always looking to enhance growers contract conditions and wanting growers to have a greater understanding of the market.

Wayne represented growers at the US Judiciary Committee hearings in respect of the 80/20 Import Rule held in Washington in 1991.

He was also the principal driver of the push for growers to attend the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs meetings to better understand the international regulations governing the production of opiate pain management medicines.

PGT first attended the UNCND meeting in 1994 and attended every year since.

Keith advised those gathered that the words of Dr Mike Doyle former Head of Tasmanian operations for Glaxo/Sun Pharma now retired in Adelaide, summoned up Wayne to a T.

"Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words about Wayne."

For around 20 years, we had numerous interactions on a range of topics as Wayne undertook his role as President of the Poppy Growers Tasmania.



He was a passionate advocate for Tasmanian poppy growers, strongly representing their financial requirements. Price negotiations with Wayne and his team were often lengthy, and at times even a little heated, but at the end we would all shake hands on the outcome. While one party was often unhappy with the result, there were no hard feelings as we were all simply doing our job.

Wayne proudly promoted the Tasmanian industry at a local, national and international level. I am sure the larrikin from Abbotsham occasionally ruffled a few feathers in the corridors of Hobart, Canberra, Washington and Vienna as he fearlessly sought a way to improve the profile and viability of the industry.

He was a fair and dedicated man.

Thank you Wayne, rest easy now."

Our sincere sympathy and condolences to Wayne's wife Lindy, his children Penelope and Richard and their families.

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Crop Security

Thank you to growers and others who have taken the time to report strange/suspicious behaviour in and or about poppy crops. Your vigilance and support is greatly appreciated and is of enormous assistance in maintaining the high security profile of the industry.

After Harvest Clean Up

With harvest well underway, a timely reminder in respect of after harvest clean up and management of paddock residue. Growers are reminded of their after harvest clean up obligations imposed as a condition of their licence to grow poppies.

Each poppy paddock must be cleared of all poppy material within 7 days of the crop being harvested.

Post Harvest Clean Up for the Prevention of Disease carry-over in Poppies

Harvest will shortly conclude. As you can appreciate, mildew disease present in some crops can establish itself in the next crop through being seed borne or through spores in material that might be infected, even if it looks healthy. This means that post harvest paddock clean up is very much in your long term interests.

At this time it is critical that growers make every effort to break the disease cycle for future poppy crops in the paddock. Please consider the post harvest paddock management regime recommended by your Field Officer.

Resting spores (oospores) of systemic downy mildew survive on poppy trash and can re-infect subsequent poppy crops in future years. It is important to try and break this part of the disease cycle for future poppy crops in the paddock.

Aim:

To reduce poppy stubble quickly after harvest to break the disease cycle of Systemic Downy Mildew

- Destroy trash by burning/or shallow incorporation.
- Three things increase the rate of trash breakdown in the soil, these are - temperature, moisture and nitrogen.
- Incorporate poppy trash to enable good soil contact and allow microbial action to take place.
- Supplying additional nitrogen by way of Urea will drive microbial activity and increase the rate of breakdown.

- Sufficient moisture is also required to allow breakdown to occur, either rainfall or irrigation will help.
- Temperature is critical, early action during the warmer months will allow time for rapid trash breakdown.
- Germinate poppy seed on top of the ground before deep soil cultivation to limit any regrowth contamination of future crops.

Preferred Options for Stubble Management

Rake and burn stubble (fire permit may be required), allow time for poppy seed to germinate on the soil surface before further cultivations which may bury the seed (this is the preferred option).

If burning is not your preference:

- Incorporate stubble into soil using a shallow implement so as not to bury seed.
- Slash/mulch stubble and spray with nitrogen (10 kg Urea dissolved in 200 L water per Ha) or use similar products designed to speed up trash decomposition then either shallow cultivate or direct drill next crop into stubble, try to allow seed germination and control regrowth poppies with herbicides. Applying nitrogen will promote quicker stubble decomposition.
- Irrigate if moisture levels are insufficient to allow breakdown to occur.

Plan for longer rotations, minimum of 4 years or greater between crops to maximise time for oospores to degrade reducing future systemic downy mildew infections. Control regrowth promptly in other crop rotations.

As you can appreciate, this is straightforward, practical advice but each point is vital in the management of this disease.

Systemic mildew is under continuing investigation and research and we will have more information for you as this progresses.

Your field officer will be able to advise the best procedure to adopt in specific situations.

New Harvester

Congratulations to Mark Pearton on the completion of a two-year project which culminated with the introduction of a brand new poppy harvester at the beginning of this season.

Mark is very quick to point out that he could not have undertaken such an ambitious project and achieved the professional result he did without the assistance and input of his great friend and fellow contractor Merv Adams.



Mark advised that Merv came out of retirement to assist with the development of what is a very professional and versatile piece of machinery. Between them they have almost 70 years poppy harvesting experience.

The tractor/prime mover was purchased brand new in cab/chassis format. It is a 435 HP Claas Xerion Saddle Trac 4000.



At that stage a brand new front, chopper box and bin were designed, fabricated and fitted by Mark and Merv. We are advised some new and innovative technology has been introduced regarding the placement of the chopper box.

The finished product is state of the art and is fitted with the latest technology. It is an absolute credit to Mark and Merv.

I feel sure Claas would also be delighted that one of their tractors has been purpose built and fitted out in such a professional manner.

The harvester has been working in the Ross, Conara, Cressy area and by seasons end will have been tested and trialled by all three poppy companies.

PGT hosted Primary Industry Minister Guy Barnett last week on a harvest inspection tour. The Minister was very impressed with harvesting operations and crop security measures. He was able to view the new machine at work and congratulated Merv Adams who was operating the harvester at that time for his and Marks confidence in Tasmanian agriculture. The introduction of this new state of the art machine that also has the capacity to be fitted with drilling and spraying equipment demonstrates a huge investment (and no doubt some sleepless nights) and the confidence that Mark has in the Tasmanian poppy industry.



We believe that confidence is well founded.

Well done Mark!

Welcome—New PACB Field Officer

We extend a warm welcome to Jonathon Doust who was recently appointed as PACB Field Officer for the Southern Region.

Jon comes to the position with extensive knowledge of the poppy industry and the Southern Region, having previously worked for Extractas, SunPharma and Palla Pharma via Elders.

Jon fills the position which became vacant following the untimely passing of highly respected PACB Field Officer Tony Paul in October 2020.

Jon can be contacted on 0417 048 083.

Red/Wild Poppies

A number of growers have made contact regarding the high incidence of wild/red poppies this season.

This matter will be followed up with each company at the conclusion of harvest.



Philip Leane

President, Poppy Growers Tasmania Inc



Vale: Wayne Rupert Smith
18th July 1950 to 12th January 2021



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