



Science For A Better Life



Shared
commitment
to sustainable
farming

food chain partnership



How it all started

In Australia, lettuce and brassica vegetables – broccoli and cauliflower – are grown in places such as Werribee South, Bairnsdale (Victoria) and Gatton, Lockyer Valley (Queensland). These vegetable crops are mainly produced for local consumption with only limited exports to South-East Asia – lettuce to Singapore, broccoli and cauliflower to Singapore and Brunei. Approx. 6,000 ha of lettuce and 10,000 ha of broccoli and cauliflower are under cultivation.

Farmers supplying Australian supermarkets are seeing increasing demands for production information and often have to comply with three different kinds of requirements: the quality standards laid down by the supermarket chains, the food quality and environmental standards demanded for Freshcare certification, and the food safety management system's requirements.

Fresh Select, a leading vegetable grower and wholesaler, approached Bayer to discuss the company's sustainability initiative after seeing the committed and leading role Bayer was playing in sustainable agriculture. Together, the partners discussed how Fresh Select could go beyond quality and safety compliance programs to demonstrate its sustainability leadership to its key customers. The starting points for this project were Fresh Select's involvement in Bayer's integrated pest management (IPM) project and the company's own "Nurture" sustainability initiatives.

What we aimed to achieve

This Food Chain Partnership project aims to clearly measure and demonstrate improvements in the level of sustainable activities carried out by Fresh Select under its own Nurture program, and to meet the requirements of the Freshcare Environmental certification scheme.



Who is involved

Fresh Select is a vegetable grower and wholesaler, managing a number of contract growers, and is a key supplier to large Australian supermarkets. It operates farms in both Southern Victoria and Queensland, ensuring year round supply for its customers. Fresh Select is driven by the desire to provide the highest quality and freshest produce through developing enduring relationships with local growers.

The contract growers involved in this Food Chain Partnership project do not only sell their produce to Fresh Select, they also receive active support from Fresh Select through shared quality assurance systems, sustainable farming techniques, and the latest industry information.

Bayer CropScience Australia's commitment to sustainability was demonstrated by two projects in this partnership. The first was to develop a truly sustainable pest management solution based on its own (and even competitors') products, biological controls, and cultural practices. Bayer brought together various stakeholders to develop and deliver these innovative approaches. Finally, the Bayer Sustainability Radar, a tool developed by Bayer CropScience to measure sustainability performance of the farming practises implemented in Food Chain Partnership, was used; as the means of enhancing agricultural sustainability, measuring progress, and communicating the work being done by its partners. The commitment to sustainable farming shared by Fresh Select and Bayer brought the two businesses together to work on sustainability initiatives.



The integrated crop solution

Bayer CropScience's technical experts teamed up with Fresh Select and an independent agronomist to tailor the integrated crop solution on lettuce and brassica vegetables according to the needs of Fresh Select and its contract growers. Needs addressed have been the IPM-driven control of pests occurring on these crops as well as developing support in product storage, sprayer filling and cleaning, and managing waste.

In 2011 and 2012, the Belt®/Diadegma wasp IPM program was developed and implemented on Fresh Select's farms. This system incorporates biological methods with the highly selective insecticides Belt® and Movento® to control both diamond-back moth and currant-lettuce aphid in field vegetables. This successful IPM program resulted in the number of spray treatments being reduced and the control effectiveness increased. Furthermore, Bayer is helping to establish a stepwise plan to satisfy Fresh Select's storage and sprayer filling and cleaning needs.

In order to plan and demonstrate progress in these and other sustainability initiatives, the Bayer Sustainability Radar (BSR) was used to coincide with Fresh Select's undergoing Fresh-care Environmental certification. The BSR was introduced to assist Fresh Select in identifying and improving the selected sustainability indicators. The linked measures implemented in close cooperation between Fresh Select and Bayer include biodiversity planning, spray drift reduction, IPM, chemical container management, energy use, and employee training with respect to GAP requirements and personal protection equipment.



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Richard Dickmann
Head of New Business Development of
Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd.

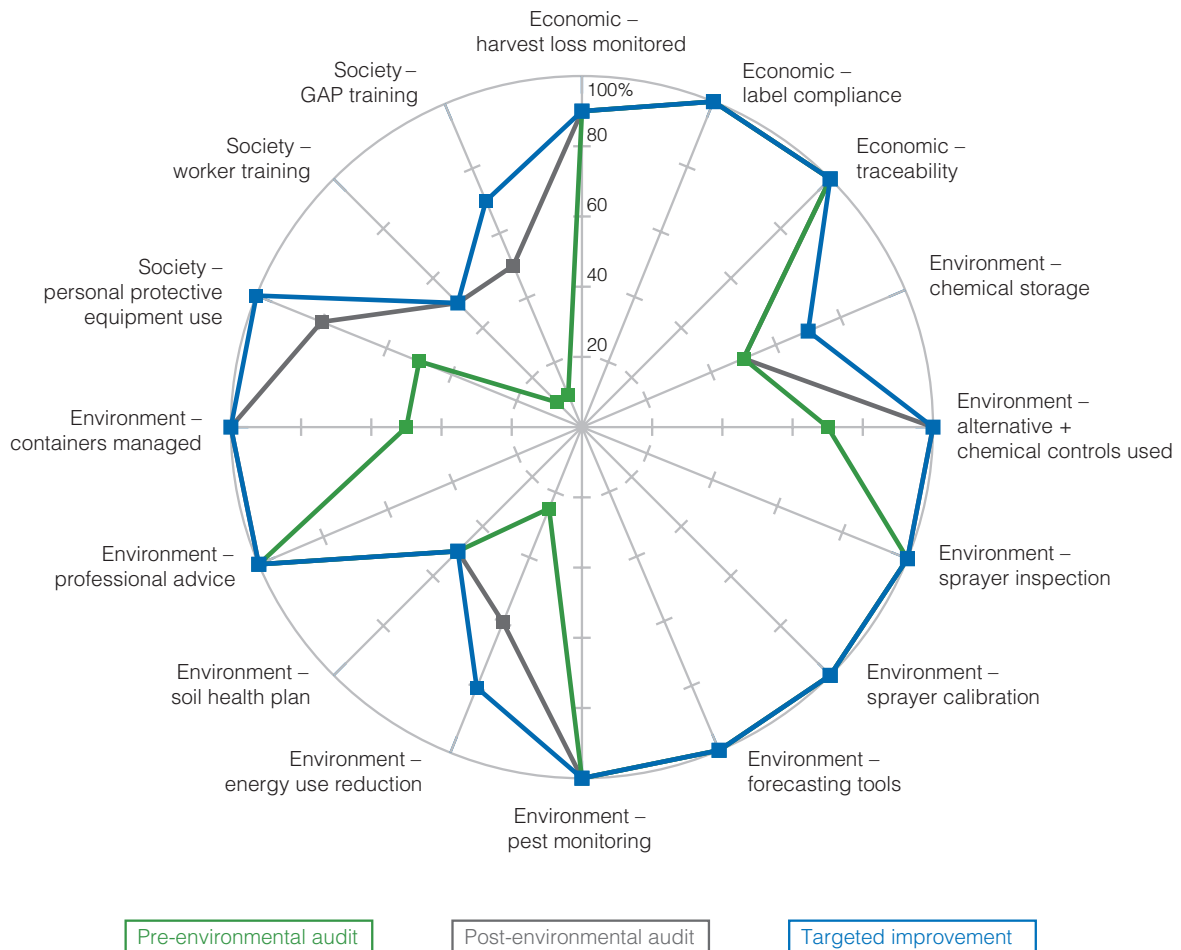
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John Said
CEO of Fresh Select

What we achieved

Fresh Select identified Bayer as the preferred partner in its sustainability initiative and for the first time in Australia, implemented the Bayer Sustainability Radar. Throughout the project Fresh Select and Bayer worked closely together to adapt the program to Australian needs. By working through the BSR sustainability indicators, all three aspects of sustainability – social, economic, and environmental factors – were assessed. From this assessment, 16 indicators were selected to help Fresh Select focus work on the key sustainability factors critical to both its own needs and those of its customers. The results clearly showed a significant improvement in sustainability performance. The partnership and the BSR results were presented to the entire vegetable industry at the 2014 AUSVEG National Convention, generating a great deal of favorable comments from growers, stakeholders and the retail chain.

Next steps

With the Bayer Sustainability Radar now initiated, the future collaboration between Fresh Select and Bayer involves implementing the planned improvements the BSR identified. The areas targeted include chemical storage, filling and disposal, personal protective equipment, and good agricultural practice training programs, energy use reduction, and expanding the use of the Bayer Sustainability Radar across Fresh Select’s supplier network. Furthermore, it will be used by Fresh Select in its communication program to promote its sustainability leadership to its key customers and eventually to the local and broader community.



Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food Chain Partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



Bayer CropScience

For more information contact:

**Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd
Food Chain Team Australia
391–393 Tooronga Road
Hawthorn East, VIC 3123
Australia**

**Phone: +61 3 9248 6874
Fax: +61 3 9248 6802
Email: scott.ward@bayer.com
Internet: www.bayercropscience.com.au**

**Bayer CropScience AG
Food Chain Management
Alfred-Nobel-Str. 50
40789 Monheim
Germany**

**Phone: +49 2173 38 4828
Fax: +49 2173 38 3383
Email: foodchainpartnership@bayer.com
Internet: www.foodchainpartnership.com**



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**Fresh Select
610 Duncans Road
Werribee South, VIC 3030
Australia**

**Phone: +61 3 9749 9200
Fax: +61 3 9742 1529
Internet: www.freshselect.com.au**