

fresh matters

WINTER 2025



A message from the Managing Director



We're excited to launch the first edition of Fresh Matters – a new quarterly report offering insights, case studies and data from across Australia and New Zealand's vibrant fresh produce sector.

As part of a global association serving the entire fresh produce and floral supply chain, IFPA ANZ has access to valuable international research.

In this first edition, we've outlined the findings of research conducted by IFPA last November across seven countries, including Australia. In the next edition, we'll bring you New Zealand insights.

Pleasingly, our research shows Aussie parents are actively involving their children in food preparation and decision-making from an early age – a promising foundation for healthy habits.

That's why we're thrilled to partner with The Wiggles in a major new national campaign to inspire children to eat more fruit and vegetables – and ask for them at the supermarket.

It's an unprecedented campaign that brings the entire Australian fresh produce sector together and harnesses the power of Australia's most trusted family brand to create fun, positive food experiences for the next generation.

The campaign wouldn't be possible without the support of Hort Innovation, AUSVEG, Perfection Fresh, Flavorite, Mitolo Family Farms and banana growers Premier Fresh and MacKays — all of whom have united behind IFPA ANZ to drive this important initiative.

Together, we hope to nurture a lifelong love of fresh fruit and veg in children across the country.

Belinda Wilson | Managing Director

International Fresh Produce Association Australia and New Zealand





The Wiggles join national push to get children eating more fruit and veg

Australia's fresh produce industry has teamed up with beloved children's entertainers, The Wiggles, in an unprecedented national campaign to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables.

The campaign was launched in Brisbane by the International Fresh Produce Association Australia and New Zealand (IFPA ANZ) at *Hort Connections* - the industry's annual flagship conference attended by over 4,000 growers and industry leaders.

It comes as new research conducted by IFPA found that while two-thirds of Aussie parents say it's very important that their children eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables, less than half say that fruit and veg actually make up most of their child's snacks.

With the catchy tagline "Fruit and Veggies Yummy Yummy" tying in with The Wiggles' hit song, "Fruit Salad Yummy Yummy", the campaign will roll out nationally across digital, social and retail channels, at concerts and through colourful resources to promote fruit and vegetables in an age-appropriate, educational and positive way.

The industry's peak organisations have united to back the campaign, with IFPA ANZ, AUSVEG and Hort Innovation financially contributing to the campaign along with Perfection Fresh, Flavorite Group, Mitolo Family Farms and banana growers Premier Fresh and Mackays.

“ We're so excited to be part of this campaign and to support the mission of helping children eat more fruits and vegetables. With more than 30 years of singing songs like 'Fruit Salad YummyYummy' and 'Hot Potato', this partnership takes our commitment even further, really showing children just how fun and delicious healthy eating can be.

—Anthony Field, Blue Wiggle

OG Blue Wiggle Anthony Field said the collaboration was a natural fit, given The Wiggles' long-standing relationship with Australia's fruit and vegetable industry with their iconic songs for children that celebrate fresh food.

Research also found that almost all (91%) Australians believe it is at least somewhat important that the fresh produce industry promotes public health.



What consumers tell us

IFPA Global Survey, November 2024



CONSUMPTION AND SHOPPING HABITS

Australians value fresh produce and many say their intake is increasing despite cost-of-living pressures.

Fresh intake on the rise

29% of Australians (1 in 3) say they are eating more fruit and vegetables than last year.

Snacking gets a healthy twist

93% of adults are at least somewhat likely to choose fruit or vegetables (74%) as a snack.

Fresh over frozen

Australians say most of their fruit (62.8%) and vegetables (63.4%) are bought and consumed fresh (i.e. not frozen or canned).

Fresh comes first

Fresh fruit (7%) and vegetables (6%) are among the items Australians were **least likely** to be willing to give up if prices increased further.



GLOBAL INSIGHT

Australians are, however, **less likely** than the global average to eat fruit (-2%) or vegetables (-10%) as a snack or eat more fruit and vegetables than last year (-8%).



THE ROLE OF FRUIT AND VEG IN HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Most Australians care about healthy eating and choose fruit and vegetables to support a healthy lifestyle but many fall short of consistently meeting recommended intake goals.

Why fruit and veg?

77% eat fruit and veg to support a healthy lifestyle.

63% say it's simply part of their routine.

Nutrition counts at the checkout

54% of Australians think about specific nutritional needs at least sometimes when purchasing fruit and vegetables.

Good intentions, inconsistent habits

45% of Australians say they "try to eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables but don't always".





CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT WITH FOOD

Australian parents actively involve their children in food preparation and decisions from a young age.

Children have a big influence

96% of Australian parents say their children have at least a little influence on their grocery selection.

Kids in the kitchen

51% of Australian parents allow their children to cook with them by the age of 8.

Shopping together is the norm

56% of Australian parents take their children with them when grocery shopping most or all of the time.



GLOBAL INSIGHT

Australians are **more likely** than the global average to involve their kids in cooking early — 51% do so by age 8, compared to 37% worldwide.



CHILDREN AND HEALTHY EATING HABITS

While most Australian parents believe it's very important for children to eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables, fewer ensure that fruit and veg make up the majority of their kids' snacks.

Parents prioritise produce

66% of Australian parents believe it is very important that children eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables every day.

Snack times fall short

44% (less than half) of Australian parents say 'most' (51% or more) of their child/ren's snacks are fruit and vegetables.



GLOBAL INSIGHT

Australian parents are **less likely** than the average parent in other countries to believe it is very important that children eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables every day (-4%).



Sam Kisvarda
Chief Marketing Officer
Flavorite Group



Can you tell us about Flavorite Group and your own background in the vegetable industry?

Established by the Nichol and Millis families in 1993 with 3,000m² of plastic hot houses, Flavorite is now Australia's largest glasshouse producer of fresh fruit and vegetables with over 80 hectares of production under glass. Flavorite is family-owned, with three generations of experience growing and supplying premium, fresh produce both nationally and internationally. I began my career in the fresh produce industry in 2001 and joined Flavorite in 2005.

Why did Flavorite start producing a snacking range for customers?

As part of our consumer research approach, the team visits trade shows like The Global Produce & Floral Show in Orlando and Fruit Logistica in Berlin to better understand consumers and technology in other markets. Around 2018, we noticed a trend toward packs of smaller, sweet-tasting products such as tomatoes, capsicums and cucumbers to appeal to time-poor consumers and for lunch boxes. We know consumers are looking for healthy and convenient options that fit easily into their lives and so we decided to start looking at options for our own business.

How did you choose which vegetables to include in the range?

For the range to work, it not only had to be unique and different but also had to solve a consumer need. We reviewed the categories we already play in and the global insights we had gathered to explore different options. At first, we examined the available smaller varieties of sweet snacking capsicums, their taste profiles, and brix (sugar) levels. We decided to go with a small snacking capsicum with increased flavour to grow in glasshouses. We then examined tomatoes and saw that the micro-segment was gaining momentum overseas, with tomatoes the size of blueberries. We then worked with our seed partners to develop the tiny tomato variants we have in Coles, Woolworths and Aldi today, as well as a tiny cucumber variant that's the size of your pinky finger.

How did you scale up production?

We started with smaller trials to learn about the plant habit, labour requirements, quality and consumer demand. As demand from consumers grew for these lines, we began increasing the growing area and working with the supermarkets to develop this range.



How are consumers responding to your new snacking varieties?

It's still early in the piece, and we're still encouraging consumers to try snacking varieties rather than choose conventional tomatoes and cucumbers. We're finding consumers are embracing the novelty of these products and the higher taste profile. We're in a very price-conscious environment at the moment, but we're seeing repeat purchases because it's a great-tasting product that can be used every day and in multiple ways. We expect demand to continue growing.

Do you market the snacking range differently to your traditional, loose vegetable lines?

Yes, we developed a new Flavorite sub-brand called "tiny..." for the group of tiny products, introducing friendly and approachable fonts, and new wording on packs to appeal to customers e.g. teeny, crunchy and burst. The supermarkets group them on the shelf so it's one dedicated spot for customers looking for snacking varieties.

What advice would you give other growers about responding to consumer preferences?

My advice to other growers is to conduct thorough research, attend trade shows and learn from overseas markets to stay ahead of shifting consumer preferences. If you have a product you want to try, test it first with a consumer panel to find out if customers like the colour, taste, size and shape. After customer feedback, you can then come up with a plan for the variety you're going to grow, how you're going to grow it and what it's going to be packed into.



John Simonetta
Chief Commercial Officer
Perfection Fresh



Can you tell us about Perfection Fresh and how you started out in the fresh produce industry?

My father Tony started the business in 1978 as a market wholesaler in the Sydney Markets, predominantly selling commodity products like lettuce, broccoli and cauliflowers. In the late '90s, we started our journey on proprietary products. We were the first to bring Grape Tomatoes into Australia in 1997 and then Broccolini® quickly followed in 1999. We've grown from a small family operation to a team of more than 1,500 people working across Australia and now the world with a comprehensive approach to farming, product variety, and product marketing. My father always wanted us to study and have a qualification and I was practicing law before joining my two brothers and my sister in the business in 1997.

What led Perfection Fresh to adopt snacking products like Qukes® baby cucumbers?

When we launched Qukes® in 2007, we were actually the first in the world to commercialise baby cucumbers. The variety was developed by an International seed company - Rijk Zwaan - who had featured the variety in its catalogue and then approached us. We saw it as a clear opportunity - we wanted something snackable, with great flavour and broad appeal for both kids and adults. Qukes® really fit into a wonderful window in terms of size, price, flavour and convenience of eating.

How long does it take for a new product to be successful?

When we introduced grape tomatoes and Broccolini in the late '90s, they were completely new to Australian consumers. It used to take more than 12-18 months just to get people to try something unfamiliar. Today, thanks to social media and rapidly shifting food trends, consumers are much more open to trying new things and they adopt them faster. That means for a new product we're launching in a few months - a long stem bunching cauliflower - we expect to achieve the same sales growth as Broccolini® in a five to seven-year period compared to the 20-year period it's taken for Broccolini®.

What advice would you give to other producers about innovation?

My initial advice would be to ensure you understand the market opportunity. Understand it from a growing, supply chain perspective as well as the consumer of course. You can't bring something to market and it not being both marketable and profitable across the supply chain. Do growing trials and do them properly - it's not just about yield but about grower-friendly varieties that perform consistently and respond to different temperatures and conditions. We trial hundreds of varieties to find the right one.

What's the biggest challenge for the fresh produce industry?

We need to talk more about the health and vitality of fruit and vegetables. We assume consumers know about the health benefits, but they don't whilst FMCG companies make their products more popular than produce through clever marketing and insight. To increase fruit and vegetable consumption, we need to make them more accessible, convenient and consistent, whilst inspiring consumers to try new flavours.

How important are snacking lines to increasing fruit and vegetable consumption?

Snacking varieties are crucial for increasing consumption. We're not competing against other tomatoes or strawberries or cucumbers - we're competing against chocolate and other processed snack foods.

One in ten Australian children meet the daily recommended intake of both fruits and vegetables, and a staggering 55% of kids struggle to identify common vegetables. Adults are also falling short in meeting the recommended daily intake of both fruits and vegetables.

That's why making fruit and vegetables more convenient, appealing and accessible to consumers - particularly children - is so important.



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