



Horticulture

Industry Network

Vegetable IDO Update



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Mallee Growers prepare for Locusts



Mallee vegetable growers have been briefed on the latest preparations for what is likely to be the worst locust outbreak in 75 years.

The grower briefing was organised by Vegetable Industry Development Officer, **Helena Whitman**.

With plague locusts already hatching west of Mildura, local growers are advised to prepare to spray about two weeks after the locusts hatch, when the hoppers form dense, slow-moving bands on the ground and before they can fly.

Growers spoke of their concern that locust swarms would fly in from NSW and QLD, as this caused major crop losses in April this year.

Crops in southern Victoria may also be at risk from flying locust swarms from late October onwards. Locusts can travel several hundred kilometres overnight on high altitude winds.

Growers were also reminded to check the withholding periods on any chemicals they use to control locusts. Residue testing of vegetable produce will be increased this year.

**The latest information on locusts
can be found at...**

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/locusts

Report hatchings on **1300 135 559**

VGA President **Luis Gazzola** and IDO-West **Helena Whitman**, took the opportunity to visit local growers and suppliers.

The region includes some of the states largest and most productive vegetable farms with about fifty family businesses producing capsicum, eggplant, zucchini, asparagus and melons.



Mildura growers, **Ange and Carlo Morello** have 60ac of capsicum, eggplant and zucchini. The crops are started in plastic tunnels, which are opened up as the plants mature.

The brothers are confident the region will bounce back and that there is a future in vegetable production in the Mallee.

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