



# Lessons from the Field

## Wallace Vegetable Farm - David Wallace



National Vegetable  
Extension Network

VICTORIA - NORTHERN,  
WESTERN & SOUTH EASTERN

Third generation vegetable grower, David Wallace runs Wallace Vegetable Farm with his wife Robin and son Matt. The family business originally grew cauliflowers, tomatoes, onions, carrots, pumpkin, lettuce and cabbage on their 30 acre property at Keilor. The threat of insufficient irrigation water during the early 1990's, however, triggered David to make the decision to move to hydroponic capsicum production.

### Lessons from overseas experience

Traveling to New Zealand, David spent time learning and gaining experience of hydroponic farming to become the first grower in Victoria to produce commercial hydroponic capsicums.

David currently specialises in a production of a range of coloured capsicums in his 4,000 square metre glasshouse holding over 12,000 plants.

### Adoption of IPM

Within his production system, David has reduced chemical use to almost zero through embracing an integrated pest management (IPM) program. David also has also achieved good energy efficiency, heating his glasshouse hydroponically with LPG gas. Experience has also seen changes in David's selection of substrate media, with David moving away from saw dust to coco fibre, finding the coco fibre more convenient, stable and environmentally sound.

### Industry participation

David, who has held a number of industry leadership positions including the AUSVEG Victoria chairman, attributes his success to being actively involved in industry activities, issues and learning groups.

### Key lessons

- Threat of lack of irrigation water triggered change to hydroponic production
- Learnt about hydroponic farming from time spent in New Zealand
- Adopted an integrated pest management (IPM) program to reduce chemical use to near zero
- Efficiency gains are possible in protected cropping farming through energy savings and substrate selection
- David has held a number of industry leadership positions, which has exposed him to new ideas



David Wallace, Wallace Vegetable Farm

Photo Credit: Weekly Times