

# AGARI NEWS

## A Mushroom Statutory Levy Update

December 2005

For further information on any statutory levy issues  
contact the MIAC Secretary, Greg Seymour – [seymour@amga.asn.au](mailto:seymour@amga.asn.au) or 02 4577 6877

### YOUR LEVY AT WORK

Welcome to the four-monthly report of the Australian mushroom industry's statutory levy funded programs. This report is the official communication to mushroom levy payers on the activities your levy is funding in line with the industry's strategic plan and annual investment plan.

### 2006-2011 Strategic Plan Takes Shape

Australian mushroom growers are to be congratulated on their input into the 2006-11 strategic planning process. The regional workshop and national summit format has been an outstanding success, and the quality contributions by members and industry will ensure we have an excellent roadmap for the development of our industry over the next five years.

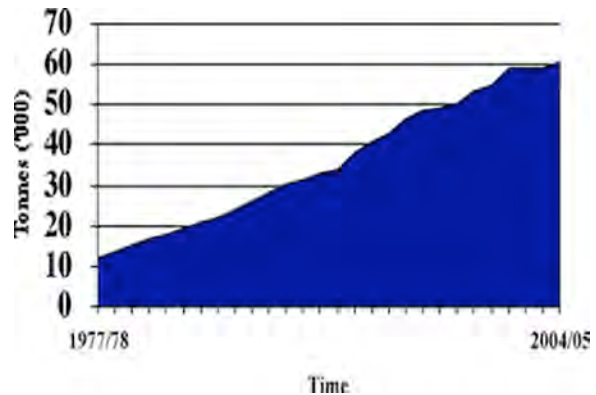
The draft plan from the summit has been tidied up for feedback from the Mushroom Industry Advisory Committee who met in early November. Following any amendments, the plan will be available on the statutory website [www.mushroomlevy.com.au](http://www.mushroomlevy.com.au) in January for further industry feedback before final submission and sign-off by MIAC in February 2006.

The plan will then be submitted to the HAL Board for approval in March 2006. From July 2006 onwards, the plan (which is revised annually), will guide our statutory levy investments from 2006 to 2011.

### State of the Australian Mushroom Industry – 2004-2005 Statistics Report

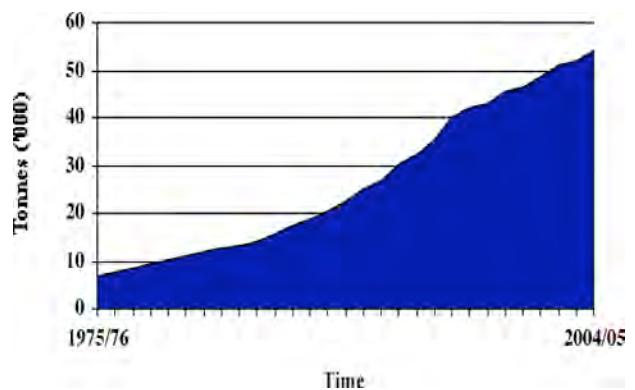
- Mushrooms are the second most valuable fresh vegetable crop in Australia, after potatoes. (Source: ABS). Most mushrooms produced in Australia are the common white mushrooms (*Agaricus bisporus*).
- The mushroom industry has been identified as one of the three fastest growing crop industries established in Australia since the 1950's. Domestic production expanded at an average annual rate of 10% pa from the mid 70's to the mid 90's and the industry still continues to grow. In 2004-2005 the rate of expansion was 3.0%. Growth rates of between 3-5% are expected over the next five years.

### Total Mushroom Market (includes domestic production and imports)



- The total mushroom industry in Australia is made up of domestic and imported *Agaricus*, domestic and imported exotic mushrooms, dried and in-liquid value-added products. The total market is 60,750 tonnes with a farm gate value of \$260million; a GVP at first point of sale of \$280 million; a retail value of almost \$0.5 billion retail.
- Industry expansion is likely to be from existing growers utilizing new technology and advanced management to achieve the increased production capacity and productivity. Because of the complexity and capital requirements of the business, new entrants are unlikely to contribute significantly to immediate growth.

### Historical Agaricus Production



- The Australian mushroom industry is dominated by domestic *Agaricus* mushroom production. 2004-2005 annual *Agaricus* production was 54,000 tonnes valued at \$230 million at farm gate.
- There are 103 commercial *Agaricus* growers in Australia. Three companies grow 50% of Australia's production, a total of five produce 60%, and a total of 13 companies grow 75% of production. The industry directly employs 3,000 people around Australia
- There is growing demand for exotic, nutraceutical and wild mushrooms (eg shiitake, oyster, straw etc). However, this niche market is very small (1000 tonnes p.a.) and will only grow slowly unless there is significant investment in promoting the segment to consumers. Over the next 5 years growth will be slow at about 1-2% with an estimated value of \$6-\$7million.
- About 98% of domestic production is eaten as fresh mushrooms, with only small quantities going to processing.
- Australian annual per capita mushroom consumption jumped from 0.6 kg in 1974 to almost 3.0 kg in 2004-2005. *Agaricus* consumption is 2.7 kg/head, which is over double US levels.
- Imports have fallen from approximately 50% of the market in the mid-1970's to 11% in 2004-2005. The industry is continuing to replace fresh imports with domestic product but imports of processed products have increased significantly in the past couple of years. There appears to be significant opportunities for Australian's to develop value-added products using Australian mushrooms to compete with imported products if a level playing field can be established. The initial success of the dumping application against Chinese canned mushrooms is an important step in the right direction.
- 75% of fresh *Agaricus* domestic production is sold through retail outlets with 23% going to food service market and 2% going to processing.

## **MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS PROGRAM UPDATE**

### **Highlights**

National Mushroom Mania Menu Competition. To increase the consumption of mushrooms in the food service sector, a campaign was developed, to encourage chefs to include more mushrooms on the menu and keep them there. One of the tactics is to conduct a menu competition each year as a catalyst for food service establishments to include more mushrooms on their menu with creative flair.

Winners of the 2006 competition were acknowledged at the National Mushroom Mania Awards Presentation held in September and attended by key food service media, chefs and industry guests. The resulting media coverage from this event reached approximately 200,000 consumers.

The winner of the National Mushroom Mania Menu Award, Jason Camillo, went on to represent Australia at the First World Mushroom Cooking Competition in Chengde, China in early September. Jason performed brilliantly and was rewarded with a gold medal for his efforts. We have been able to achieve some good publicity for mushrooms already with this initiative but hope to get plenty more as the competition gains momentum on a world scale over the coming years. Hopefully Australia will get the opportunity to host the competition in future years and really capitalize on the media attention such an event would afford us.

### **Mushroom Retailer of the Year**

Work has commenced in identifying a Mushroom Retailer of the Year in each state. Mystery shoppers will be visiting each of the participating stores and the winners will be announced in February/March next year. Details will be provided in the next issue of Agari News.

### **BBQ Mushroom Promotion**

From September through to February an on-line bbq competition ([www.bbqmushrooms.com](http://www.bbqmushrooms.com)) is conducted. The competition is promoted on the back of the recipe leaflets and on posters, which are distributed to a limited number of greengrocers.

To date there have been over 3,000 entries and 154,609 hits. When consumers visit the website to enter the competition, they are provided with quick and easy ideas for cooking mushrooms on the bbq.

### **NSW Promotional Activity Highlights**

In addition to radio advertising on 2WS and MixFM, radio 2UE, 2CH and 2GB ran radio promotions during September in conjunction with Mushroom Month advertising to offer listeners the chance to win dinner vouchers provided by participating Mushroom Mania restaurants. This activity extended the consumer reach and increased free media time.

In August, mushrooms were a feature at the ABC Garden Show held at the Sydney Exhibition Centre at Homebush. This is a premier event attended by 70,000 potential mushroom consumers. Over 5,000 mushroom recipe leaflets and 3,500 mushroom tastings were distributed.

Also in August, the mushroom industry participated in the Woolworths Expo held at Darling Harbour Exhibition Centre. Over 1,000 key Woolworth's personnel attended the Expo.

September saw mushrooms at the Sydney Fine Food Fair and Sydney Food and Wine Festival in Hyde Park. Combined audience numbers were in the vicinity of 160,000 food lovers. At the Sydney Fine Food Fair, co-promotional opportunities were identified with mushrooms being supplied to Phillips Seafood, Kikkoman's and Auntie Betty's Fine Food exhibitions.

From north to south and from east to west, over 19 cooking demonstrations were also conducted in shopping centres and greengrocer stores during September. Locations included:-

Wetherill Park, East Gardens, Carlingford Court, North Strathfield, Engadine, North Ryde, Castle Hill, Burwood, Bankstown, Parramatta, Miranda, Penrith, Roselands, Epping, Marrickville, Brookvale, Willoughby and St Ives.

It is estimated that approximately 10,000 consumers participated in the demonstrations.

### **Queensland Promotional Highlights**

From Lismore to Mackay, over 120 mushroom food fairs and cooking shows were held near Coles, Woolworths and independent greengrocer stores in located in major shopping centres during September, October, November and December.

Highlights from the Queensland program, include mushroom cooking demonstrations at:-

- METCASH Expo at the Gold Coast Convention Centre;
- Australian Medical Association Health and Lifestyle Expo in Brisbane;
- "A la carte in the Park", Gold Coast;
- Gold Coast Show;
- Brisbane Seniors Expo at the Brisbane Convention Centre;
- The EKKA at Brisbane Showgrounds;
- "Tastes of Broadbeach" with celebrity chef Peter Howard; and
- sponsorship of the Harvey Norman State of Origin game.

### **South Australian Promotional Highlights**

Highlights from the South Australian program included:-

Mushroom displays at the Adelaide Royal Show at Wayville in conjunction with APML. South Australian Promotions Co-ordinator, Pam Tobin and a number of celebrity chefs, hosted a cooking presentation. Over 12,000 recipe leaflets were distributed.

The Show also saw the release of a new cookbook, which includes some great mushroom recipes, by Food SA in conjunction with the Heart Foundation.

An exiting Mushroom Mania awards night was held in Adelaide, which was attended by 78 guests including key media personnel. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal created by National Mushroom Mania Menu Winner, Jason Camillo. Channel 9 and Five aa media personality, Michael Keelan, hosted the event.

Another media event was held at Worlds End Hotel with an excellent mushroom menu prepared by the South Australian winner of the Mania Menu competition, Grant Schooling.

Mushrooms continue to be promoted on radio with radio 5aa's Michael Keelan and Phil Sheldon regularly promoting the versatility of mushrooms. Mushrooms were also talked about during ABC's Carol Whitelock during a live broadcast at the Royal Adelaide Show.

In the print media, mushrooms were featured in the SA Hospitality Magazine, "Rip it Up", Hotel SA Magazine, The Advertiser's "Food and Wine" section; and the Growers Rural Newspaper.

The further promote the health benefits of mushrooms, mushrooms were featured at the Men's' Health Expo held at the Enfield Community Health Service. Over 3000 consumers attended the event.

The 2-day Health Expo for Far North Community for indigenous and non-indigenous school children also enjoyed learning about the health benefits of mushrooms.

October saw the start of Australia's premier food event, Tasting Australia of which the Australian Mushroom Growers was one of the major sponsors. This event provided many opportunities to promote mushrooms, including:-

- The Hot Wok Competition held in conjunction with Australian Women's' Weekly Magazine at the Adelaide Railway Station.
- The National Cook-off Competition that saw contestants from each state presenting their best wok dishes which included mushrooms. The cook-off, which was hosted by Lyndey Milan, Food Editor of the AWW, saw a number of well-known local and international chefs acting as mentors to the contestants.
- The Food Summit. International mushroom chef, Antonio Carluccio and our own Mania Ambassador, Serge Dansereau gave an insight into why they are passionate about mushrooms.
- Fungi and Us! Enzo's Restaurant, Hyatt Regency and Riverside Restaurant all featured mushrooms extensively on their menus during Tasting Australia.

- Food Writers Festival – Master Class. The topic was “Mystical, Medicinal and Marvellous and was presented by the AMG. Antonio Carluccio, Lyndey Milan and food nutritionist, Glenn Cardwell delighted the general public with their insights.
- Mushroom displays and mushrooms on the menu were the feature of the World Food Media Awards held at the Hyatt Regency Adelaide. These awards generated significant publicity, marketing opportunities and kudos for the winners and the sponsors.
- Feast of the Senses. Over 35,000 members of the public attended the event, which was held in conjunction with Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA). There were mushroom displays, recipe leaflets distributed and Mighty Mushroom was in attendance.

November saw mushroom cooking demonstrations and food and wine events in major shopping centres and co promotions.

## Victorian Promotional Highlights

### Fresh Mushrooms into Schools Program

From September through to December the Melbourne Markets fresh produce team presented mushrooms for tasting with other fresh produce to school students, teachers and parents and provided mushroom recipes for parents, teachers and students to take home. Over 26 public schools participated in the program.

Approximately 7,170 school students and primary purchasers (parents and teachers) enjoyed the presentations.

### Regular Farmers Markets

Gourmet wood fired mushroom pizzas piping hot from the oven were on offer at Owen's Oven the Veg Out St Kilda Farmers' Market. While waiting for their pizzas to cook, customers checked out mushroom recipe leaflets displayed at the stand. Fresh mushrooms were for sale so shoppers could cook up their mushroom recipes at home.

Collingwood Children's Farm Farmers' Market (Saturdays 10<sup>th</sup> September, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 12<sup>th</sup> November and 10<sup>th</sup> December)  
Veg Out St Kilda Farmers Market (Saturdays 24<sup>th</sup> September, 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 26<sup>th</sup> November and 24<sup>th</sup> December)

14,800 genuine food shoppers attended the markets.

### Chefs Of The Future Competition, and Awards Lunch

In August, chefs from the Sunraysia district competed for acclaim and great prizes including the Australian Mushroom

Growers' sponsored category of mushroom themed prize packs for the winner and runner up.

The competition was held at Sunraysia TAFE, Mildura.

### Mushroom Month Comes to Kerrimuir

This was a 'micro precinct event' to trial the involvement of a variety of retailers in Mushroom Month. Kerrimuir Shopping Centre. Retailers - including Nick's Fruit Shop, Kerrimuir Fruit Supply, QFP Gourmet Pasta and Pizza Heart - made a fuss over mushrooms in their own unique way. Even the local butcher shop - Kerrimuir Quality Butchers - promoted mushroom recipes using beef and lamb, and Kerrimuir Newsagency sold mushroom cookbooks to enthuse shoppers. And of course, Mighty Mushroom was there to delight kids of all ages.

### Mushroom Madness Cooking Shows

Approximately 9,000 Shoppers at Eastland Centro Keilor Downs, Southland and Bayside Shopping Centres celebrated Mushroom Month with our Mushroom Madness Cooking Shows consisting of fun, entertaining and informative ongoing mushroom cooking demonstrations including tastings and recipes to take home.

### Mushroom Month Media Launch

Sensational mushroom dishes were created by the Masani Restaurant Team and matched to boutique beers from Gippsland's Grand Ridge Brewery and wines from Cleveland Winery at this event to thank the media and co-promotional partners for their support. The Victorian chef winners of our Mushroom Mania Menu Competition were announced at this event. 55 guests attended. Radio 3AW and 3MP provided follow up media coverage.

### Mushroom Brekky Packs to Radio Stations

Mushroom Brekky Packs were sent to the Mix Brekky and Gold 104.4 Teams who **chatted about delicious** mushroom dishes as they enjoyed their breakfast.

### Prahan Market Celebrates Mushroom Month

Celebrity Chef Bart Beek featured mushrooms at Gabriel Gate's regular cooking show in the market courtyard with mushroom cookbooks and mushroom shopping bag prize give-aways for the 5,000 strong audience. Mighty Mushroom delighted the kids and all the mushroom retailers displayed mushroom posters and gave mushroom recipes to their customers.

### **Central Geelong Farmers' Market**

Each month the market features a different theme, which is reflected in the recipes presented and demonstrated by resident chef Chez Jo. Mushrooms were the chosen theme to celebrate Mushroom Month and approximately 1,500 shoppers could collect their mushroom recipes and be in the running to win a mushroom cookbook.

### **Mushrooms into TAFE**

Fresh mushrooms, "Guide to Mushrooms" posters and mushroom recipe leaflets were provided for professional cookery students at Victorian institutes of TAFE to enthuse them about including mushrooms in their menus.

### **3AW Live Interview**

Live interview and live talkback about mushrooms and mushroom dishes matched to beer - with Darren James & Jane Edmanson interviewing Victorian Promotions Co-ordinator, Vikki Leng and Eric Walters from Grand Ridge Brewery.

### **Williamstown Farmers' Market, and The Incinerator Arts Complex Farmers' & Arts Market**

Special mushroom promotion for Mushroom Month with Breakfast BBQ with mushrooms, mushrooms for sale, mushroom cookbook prize draws and mushroom recipes to take home. Approximately 2,000 shoppers attended the market.

### **ABC Gardening Australia Festival**

Our cooking team whipped up a succession of tantalising mushroom dishes, sold fresh mushrooms and gave out mushroom recipe leaflet to enthuse festival visitors to try new recipes at home and The Mushroom Kit Company sold 'grow your own mushroom kits' to mushroom enthusiasts. Over 35,000 visitors attended the event held at Caulfield Racecourse.

### **Celebrate Asparagus Festival**

Our cooking team whipped up fresh & feisty spring recipes with mushrooms and asparagus at the Asparagus Cooking Stage and tasting marquee. Fresh mushrooms were on sale and mushroom recipes were available for shoppers to take home. Over 3,500 food shoppers attended the festival.

### **Good Morning Australia Segment**

Two George Foreman Grill advertorials featuring mushrooms were filmed on the Ten Network's Good Morning Australia show courtesy of Ann Creber.

### **King Island Cheese Co-Promotion by Ann Creber**

Ann Creber created mushroom and King Island Cheese dishes for tasting at Melbourne metropolitan and Victorian regional shopping centres.

### **Mushrooms at Harvest Hall, Mildura Show**

Victorian Promotions Co-ordinator, Vikki Leng, worked closely with Linda and Ros at Merbein Mushrooms to showcase mushrooms in a fresh marquee assembled in the popular Harvest Hall section of the show. Regular cooking demonstrations on stage by talented local chef Glenn Jankowitz, ABC and local FM radio interviews with Glenn and Vikki, cooking by Sunraysia TAFE trainee chefs, tastings presented by the chefs, fresh mushrooms for sale and recipes to take home. 40,000 people attended the show.

### **Italian Festival**

BBQ Mushroom Promotion at St John's School, Koo Wee Rup with mushrooms cooking on the BBQ, two boxes of fresh mushroom for prize draws and recipes to take home.

### **Take Off Weight Naturally (TOWN) Club in Geelong**

Ann Creber featured mushrooms as a delicious and nutritious ingredient in her cooking demonstrations.

### **Swinburne TAFE Apprentice of the Year Competition**

Chefs were challenged to come up with the Best Entree Using Mushrooms following a class featuring mushrooms earlier in the year.

### **Today Show Filming**

A select number of Spring Harvest Picnic Exhibitors, including Australian Mushroom Growers, were invited to mock up Spring Harvest Picnic at Werribee Mansion for various Live Crosses to Channel Nine's 'Today Show'.

### **Spring Harvest Picnic**

Our mushroom cooking shows were held in an award winning fresh produce marquee alongside the Melbourne Avocado Committee, Parilla Fresh and Australian Asparagus Council. Our special guest chef cooked delicious entrees, which were served to lucky winners who got to enjoy the dish matched to wine from Bellarine Estate. Ongoing mushroom cooking demonstrations and tastings were held throughout the day and fresh mushrooms were on sale so shoppers could try our quick and easy recipes at home. Due to popular demand, the Mushroom

Kit Company sold 'grow your own mushroom kits' to mushroom enthusiasts. 8,000 genuine food and wine shoppers who stayed at the event for an average of 1.5 - 2 hours thus enabling repeat exposure.

### **Greek Festival at Oakleigh Central Shopping Centre**

Oakleigh Fresh joined in the festival fun with mushroom promotion, recipes for shoppers, mushroom cookbooks and mushroom shopping bags for prize draws.

### **WA Promotional Highlights**

Educating our up and coming chefs was the feature activity during September. Product and information about mushrooms was provided to TAFE and hospitality training colleges in Carine, Bentley and Fremantle. High school children were also supplied with mushrooms, recipe resources that were used to develop mushroom dishes for presentation at the Perth Royal Show.

Participation in the Catering Institute Expo at the Perth Convention Centre also provided an opportunity to promote the virtues of mushrooms. The Expo culminated in a competition for the title of Chef of the Year. The AMG was a sponsor of the competition.

Advertising on radios 94.5, 96.1, 6PR and 6IX was also a major promotional activity during September. The AMG was able to extend its consumer reach during this period through additional activities such as restaurant voucher giveaways and mushroom gift-packs, which were promoted during September.

The Perth Royal Show continues to provide excellent opportunities for promoting mushrooms. Over 30,000 members of the public were treated to samples of BBQ mushrooms, which reinforced the message that mushrooms were ideal for cooking on the BBQ.

AMG was also able to take advantage of co-promotional opportunities with MLA and Phillips Seafood in promoting mushrooms at a minimum cost throughout the reporting period.

The "Be Active – Have a Go" presented an opportunity promote the health benefits of mushrooms. Over 1,000 senior citizens who were provided with mushroom samples and recipe leaflets attended the event.

November saw the start of the "Mushrooms on the BBQ" campaign. This is a national campaign designed to encourage consumers to put more mushrooms on the bbq. A consumer competition, which is promoted on the back of the recipe leaflet, is a key strategy in promoting the campaign.

In keeping with the BBQ theme, the AMG has joined forces with Radio 94.5 in promoting the "Mushrooms on the Gourmet Grill BBQ" promotion during December.

### **UPCOMING PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Details about upcoming promotional activities, visit: [www.mushroomlevy.com.au](http://www.mushroomlevy.com.au).

### **Dumping Case Success**

I am pleased to report that the dumping case brought against imported Chinese canned mushrooms has been successful up to this point. An interim duty of up to 23% has been imposed and will remain in place at least until the conclusion of the case sometime in the middle of next year.

### **AMsafe Bird Flu Strategy**

The AMsafe Committee met recently to consider how the industry will respond if a bird flu pandemic is declared in Australia. Discussions with government authorities are currently occurring and guidelines for our industry will be developed and released early in the New Year.

### **Packaging Update**

The Mushroom Industry Packaging Task Force met recently to review the current packaging situation with respect to cartons and returnable plastic crates (RPCs). The key outcomes of the meeting are summarized below.

RPCs for mushrooms are still on the agenda at Coles and are the focus of an ongoing research project with industry to determine if they could spread mushroom diseases between farms. Work on the effectiveness of proposed washing and disinfecting facilities in eliminating mushroom diseases is currently in progress although an answer is not expected until early in the New Year.

Several reports were received that packing 3kg of flats into the 4kg carton was proving difficult at times. The task force advised both major supermarkets that the industry needed to do more work on suitable packaging before a standard pack for flats could be recommended.

### **AMSAFE – Safeguarding our Future!**

#### **HOW TO PROCEED IN A CRISIS**

*If you suspect a possible crisis:*

*Refer all enquiries to the AMSafe Committee –  
02 45776877*