



PHOTOS © VICTORIA BAKER



# pome update





# contacts

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### Budgeted income 2022–23

Project	\$
General Account Budget (including FFS, Interest, Project Grant Funding)	468,370
Biosecurity Account Budget (FFS, general account transfers & interest)	76,250

### Budgeted expenditure general account for 2022–23

Project	\$
Project Manager including expenses SMW	92,555
Quality Testing Project	35,000
Building Business Capacity Program	20,000
Proposed Grower Study Tour	20,000
RIM Disease modelling support system	10,280
WA Apple Forum 2023	20,000
Promotion and Publicity Project — Fresh Finesse including events with BWEB	37,500
Event Sponsorships	6,000
Annual Meetings and Comms Platforms	15,000
Administration including salaries and office costs	198,000
APC charge @11% of FFS budgeted income	46,200
Transfer to Biosecurity Account	35,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>536,035</b>

### Budgeted expenditure biosecurity account 2022–23

Project	\$
Codling Moth	35,000
On-Farm Preparedness Workshops	10,000
APC charge @11% of FFS budgeted Income	4,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,400</b>

### APC fee-for-service charge

**POME FRUIT** EFFECTIVE FROM 1 JANUARY 2015

Type of fruit	\$/kg
Fresh fruit — apples, pears, Nashi, other	0.015
Processing fruit	0.005
Biosecurity FFS for fresh fruit	0.002
Biosecurity FFS for processing fruit	0.001

# Season update

► POMEWEST: Gold Sponsors of the Donnybrook Long Table Lunch promoting local produce and supporting growers in the region.

Apples and pears featured on the Donnybrook Long Table Lunch.



BY NARDIA STACY  
EXECUTIVE MANAGER,  
POMEWEST

**A**gain, it's the time of the year for reflection, festivities and preparation for the upcoming 2023 harvest period.

In this report, as in previous years, we look to measure the wins and challenges of 2022 and how we are tracking objectives in the second year of the WA Pome Industry 2021–25 Strategic Plan.

In general, we are tracking well against the outcomes of the three objectives of our five-year plan. Yields and pack-outs by all indications are travelling the right direction; Western Australia continues to be the state to beat for pome fruit prices and consumption! We hope that this reflects the improved quality results of our testing program, because good taste profiles keep our customers happy and consistent in their purchasing habits. We have been running a few major marketing campaigns such as 'an apple for everyone', 'an apple a day' and 'good things come in pears' — which has shaped our key messages during recent promotional activities. These messages remind everyone pome fruit is the original and reliable snack choice for good human health.

### Objective 1 and 3 improving productivity and profitability

Two of the key objectives of the plan focus on productivity and profitability for pome growers. Sales based on the information from Harvest to Home from the Hort Innovation website indicate that WA continues to outperform the other states. WA annual household purchases are holding — the value for apples sits at \$78.85, which is in line with Objective 1 (\$75 spend/household/year), and pears are currently at the value of \$20.76 and in line with Objective 3 (\$20 spend/household/year).

### Objective 2 — building exports to 15% of our total production within 5 years

ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> will be the varietal flagship for WA apple export growth. Australian exports for this variety marketed as Bravo<sup>®</sup> have grown by 270% on last year with increased supply to Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and the UAE. This result is boosted with the announcement of the new international trademark Soluna™ for the ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> variety. This variety holds the key to build markets for both local and Australian growers who are licenced to grow this apple and potentially enjoy some export success, as this variety of apple can enter export markets that were not possible under the Bravo<sup>®</sup> brand. We have been creating partnerships generate returns for the local industry with global growth.

### Pomewest is one of the major sponsors of the upcoming WA Apple Variety and Innovation Conference in late March 2023.

We hope this will attract international partners and buyers to the beautiful growing regions in the Southwest of Western Australia to further build export opportunities and promote varieties released by our breeding program. This event will be a celebration of the WA apple industry assisting our global presence.

Other activities, defined by the committee for this year, fit within the tactics in the plan and listed as follows:

#### 1 Promoting commercially available cost-effective new technologies to drive productivity improvements.

Project Manager Susie Murphy White has successfully delivered the WA Future Orchards<sup>®</sup> orchard walks, resulting with tremendous attendance at each walk. She has also introduced, with funding from the Donnybrook Orchard Improvement Group, the Pomewest and WA Stone Fruit the RIMPRO decision support system and weather station to combat disease and pest management.

A Research and Development Plan has been developed to maximise orchard productivity and lower the cost of production for our growers. This also supports the crop load assessment technology in partnership with DPIRD.

#### 2 The management of our increasingly complex biosecurity issues.

This year our team has completed a comprehensive WA Pome Industry Biosecurity Strategic Plan, which updated the WA priority pest list. We contributed to the BAM Act review submission and continue to develop our relationships with the regional biosecurity groups and DPIRD. In early 2023 we will be rolling out on-farm biosecurity workshops, which will include farm packs, to develop a robust method of preparedness measures for future pest or disease outbreaks.

#### 3 Market development — working with stakeholders to develop exports.

We have attended and facilitated Apple Project Reference Groups and export preparedness workshops, which defines opportunities for levy-based funding to support apple co-promotion activities in early 2023.

#### 4 Engagement with the Apple Breeding Program.

We have been involved with demonstrations at the Nannup Food Bowl Careers Day, to support the new varieties coming out of the program. This will be ongoing in 2023 with industry support for new varietal considerations for commercialisation.

#### 5 Working with stakeholders across the supply chain to ensure consumers consistently receive quality fruit.

Our quality program is tracking well. We have excellent results, particularly in retail, with only 4% fails of 246 samples. This indicates the picking/storing practices in 2022 have been good. As a further example, at the time of writing this report, overall percentage of fails in wholesale/retail this year is 4% after 396 samples being tested — compared to 2019 16% fail rate with 330 samples.

Western Australia continues to be the state to beat for pome fruit prices and consumption!



► 1: Event hosts Vanessa and Sam Licciardello. 2: Guests getting into the spirit of the day. 3: Host Committee member Sam Licciardello, Nardia Stacy, Susie Murphy White and Chair Jason Jarvis, Pomewest.



As well as being proactive in raising awareness in industry issues and supporting growers to access assistance, we have managed to disseminate this information via communication platforms to growers on a very regular basis via newsletters, SMS messaging and publications. This year the Pomewest website was updated to include a specialised grower information tab for closed industry information.

**This edition**

We feature articles which report the results Susie’s Future Orchards® trial comparing harvest picking systems, the outcomes from our biggest promotional activity at the Perth Royal Show by Noelene Swain of Fresh Finesse and the launch of the new international trademark for the WA bred ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> variety — Soluna™.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and bright and prosperous 2023. I know I speak on behalf of our Chair Jason, Committee, Susie and myself in saying it been a pleasure to serve the industry in 2022, and we look forward to achieving even more positive outcomes in the new year. 🍎

**MORE INFORMATION ►**

Contact Nardia Stacy, Executive Manager, 0411 138 103 or [nardia@pomewest.net.au](mailto:nardia@pomewest.net.au)

**6 Cultivating more production relationships with key stakeholders.** Pomewest staff and Committee representatives now hold positions on most of key stakeholder’s boards, and strategic investment panels for R&D and marketing. This strategy has been orchestrated to ensure that WA has a strong and loud voice in the national arena. We have been proactive in representing WA pome growers at all the national industry updates, conferences and field days. Once again, facilitating the annual state and national dinners with updates and field activities to support the industry. We continue to support the Agricultural Produce Commission in its endeavours to enable industries to secure grow prosperity through ongoing value for fee for service investment.

**7 Events and industry representation.** Since the last edition, we supported two events to promote local produce to consumers. The Donnybrook Long Table Lunch, organised by the Donnybrook Food and Wine Committee, and the Perth Royal Show. Both events were extremely successful in providing a platform to promote and educate the consumer about the WA industry, our growers, and our WA varieties.

Pomewest are keen to continue and build our support of the regions and growers of the industry in 2023 as well as value added products, by being a proud silver sponsor, guest speaker and assistant of the Auscider 2023 Conference in the Perth Hills, and our involvement in the upcoming Donnybrook Apple Easter Festival in April 2023.





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# WA Apples at the Perth Royal Show



BY NOELENE SWAIN  
POMEWEST  
PROMOTIONS  
CO-ORDINATOR

The WA apple and pear industry has been active at the Perth Royal Show for many years — evolving through a myriad of locations, exhibition themes and formats. One thing is for sure — people flock to enjoy the Perth Royal Show and this provides an opportunity for the local apple and pear producers to showcase their industry.

Being part of the Perth Royal Show is an excellent opportunity to engage children on a family food discovery — tasting the very best on offer from WA.

Strategically positioned in the Farm 2 Food pavilion located in the Centenary Pavilion, the apple stand was amongst displays designed to engage children to become more aware of where and how their food is produced.

The Perth Royal Show attracted outstanding crowds over the long weekend, with daily attendance of up to 70,000 being reached as families enjoyed the perfect spring weather. Attendance numbers trailed off through the week despite the beautiful weather.

The Royal Show is a popular tradition for West Australians to celebrate the production of agriculture in the state and many who visited the apple stand voiced their delight making apples part of their personal show tradition.

Many commented that they noticed the change of location and were delighted to still find the apple stand as buying an apple slinky at the show is now a family tradition.

“An apple slinky promoting ‘an apple a day’ at the show is now a family tradition.”

The Royal Show is a popular tradition for West Australians to celebrate agriculture.

Armed with Apple Slinky machines, our apple team managed to swirl and twirl their way through over 4000 apples and pears — **1750 BRAVO® apples** and over **2,100 Pink Lady™ and Granny Smith apples** and **500 Corella pears**. The slightly lower numbers than last year are likely to be a result of reduced gate numbers, possibly as a result of financial pressures on families with rising fuel prices and interest rates making their mark.



▶ OFFERING a range of apple and pear varieties is an important aspect of the promotion.

► OUR apple team managed to swirl and twirl their way through over 4000 apples and pears.



There can be a different favourite apple or pear for everyone!



Speaking with consumers provides an excellent opportunity to understand shopping preferences and people's understanding of apples and pears. Many people commented about their delight in being introduced to the Bravo® at a previous show and becoming committed fans since. There were also more people who were aware of the new variety, and very keen to buy a Bravo® apple slinky as a way of trying the variety.

Offering a range of varieties is an important aspect of the promotion. Everyone has their personal favourite. Whilst some people are unsure of the varietal names, it was very clear that there is an apple or pear to suit everyone, and they know how to select on colour to achieve their preferred

fruit. Many parents seem to know exactly what each member of the family would choose. Varietal choice is certainly an asset for the apple industry to extend consumer reach. There can be a different favourite apple or pear for everyone!

**Key message — no matter what's your favourite — make an apple your go-to daily snack.**

Background signage of apple varieties, supply maps and general orchard lifestyle images, proved ideal for engagement with individuals, families and children interested in discovering more about local food. With the input of Nardia Stacey and Susie Murphy White from Pomewest and Rebecca Blackman from WA Farm Direct, the stand was a

valuable way to share the importance of eating locally produced fruit, the health benefits and supporting local growers and the apple industry.

Thanks to all involved who assisted during the show promotion as it is a key opportunity and important to gain direct feedback from the public. Further thanks go to Fruit West Co-operative and WA Farm Direct Ltd for their help cofounding and logistically in the supply and delivery of apples. 🍏

**MORE INFORMATION ►**

Contact Nardia Stacy, Executive Manager, 0411 138 103 or [nardia@pomewest.net.au](mailto:nardia@pomewest.net.au)



# the new international trademark for the ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> variety

launched at Asia Fruit Logistica 2022

The new name Soluna<sup>TM</sup> represents the moon and the sun.



BY REBECCA  
BLACKMAN  
WA FARM DIRECT

**T**he new name represents the moon and the sun, reflecting the apple's striking dark skin and creamy yet crisp, white flesh.

► **INTERNATIONAL**  
demand for the ANABP 01<sup>®</sup>  
variety is growing  
exponentially.



Licensed commercialisation managers Fruit West Co-operative and marketers WA Farm Direct were proud to launch Soluna™ at this premium fresh produce global event and on the worldwide stage on 2 November. Re-introducing to the world the attributes and originality of this truly wonderful Australian apple.

With this announcement, Australian ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> growers now can enter more export markets, that before were not possible under the Bravo<sup>®</sup> apple brand, such as Europe and the Americas.

International demand for the ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> variety is growing exponentially with a 250 per cent increase in exports in 2022 to Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and the United Arab Emirates.

Chair of the Fruit West Co-operative Ann Lyster is excited: "This announcement literally brings a world of opportunity to Australian ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> growers, and as varietal managers we are very excited to start this journey with Soluna™".

**This next step opens the door for the apple variety to be grown in other countries and its fruit sold under the Soluna™ brand, building supply and scale opportunities to capture major markets.**

WA growers are well placed to capitalise on this opportunity with the returns invested back into WA horticulture research, like the National Apple Breeding Program, at the State's Manjimup Research Station.

To develop and execute this global strategy, TopStar, [a co-venture arrangement between Starfruits (France) and TopFruit (South Africa)], will work with the Australian commercial license holder Fruit West and marketer WA Farm Direct.

This is the natural progression for this WA-owned apple, bred by the late John Cripps and having the same pedigree as the iconic Pink Lady apple, with its own desirable qualities to capture a whole new following of fruit lovers. The success of these apples is testament to the work of WA researchers and the National Apple Breeding Program at the Manjimup Research Station, which continues to create high quality, unique and delicious varieties for consumers around the world to enjoy.



► ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> growers  
Harvey Giblett, Newton  
Orchards and Johnny  
Radevski, Radevski Orchards.

► REBECCA Blackman  
showcasing the benefits  
of Soluna™ at Asia Fruit  
Logistica.

From 2–4 November 2022, among hundreds of exhibitors from 42 countries across the globe, including 18 national and group pavilions, Asia Fruit Logistica allowed us to speak to our current customers and make important connections with new ones after a 2 year break due to COVID-19. We were delighted to have ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> growers; Harvey Giblett, Newton Orchards and Johnny Radevski, Radevski Orchards join the team in Bangkok to launch the new brand.

On 3 November the Soluna™ Australian team with Austrade and APAL in the Australia Pavilion, showcased the benefits of Soluna™ via a cooking demonstration. Hort Innovation together with the Australian Food and Wine Collaboration Group delivered the 'Taste the Wonders of Australia'

event, showcasing Australia's finest produce with local celebrity chef, Ksynn Detcharoen, of Bangkok Private Chef Dining and MasterChef Thailand. Soluna™ featured in the cooking demonstration showcasing a smoothie, salad and appetiser.



**MORE INFORMATION ►**

If you are interested in becoming an ANABP 01<sup>®</sup> grower and would like to see firsthand how an exciting and innovative apple is taking over the world, please attend

Western Australian Apple Variety and Innovation Conference 28–31 March 2023. More details with ticket information will be released shortly.

Contact Fruit West Cooperative at:  
[fruitwest@wafarmdirect.com.au](mailto:fruitwest@wafarmdirect.com.au)

Platforms have the potential of keeping costs down and broadening the pool of workers.

► HARVESTING from a Revo™ platform.

# Future Orchards® trial compares different harvest picking systems



**BY SUSIE MURPHY WHITE**  
PROJECT MANAGER,  
POMEWEST

**P**latforms not only broaden the pool of available workers but also have the potential to keep costs down when compared to the traditional bags and ladders picking method.

With increasing costs and reduced availability of harvest labour, the potential for platforms to reduce costs has attracted plenty of interest.

But with a raft of variables ranging from orchard planting systems and terrain to labour demographics all influencing cost and efficiency, it has been near impossible to forecast potential savings with any certainty.

To better understand the cost effectiveness and labour benefits, six Western Australian growers led by Pomewest Project Manager Susie Murphy White tracked costs, picking times and worker demographics of harvesting a block of high colour Pink Lady apples with both platforms and bag and ladders over two years in a Future Orchards® trial, funded by APAL's Pink Lady business.

Yield, pack-out and cost data, as well as grower surveys were used to compare the different picking methods across blocks varying in size and tree-training systems ranging from vase-shaped to 2D.

### Picking systems — Platforms vs Bag and Ladder

In the 2021 season, all but one orchard in the group used a bag and ladder or squirrel for picking (Figure 1). While older style platforms had been in use over many years, the 2022 season saw the introduction of the Revo™ picking platform in WA. The orchards blocks studied varied in their size and tree training systems.

In 2022, trial data shows most orchards used ground crews with ladders or stools, two used the Revo™ picking platforms, two used squirrels, and one an older style platform. No orchard used a platform exclusively.

A varying mix of labour sources — backpackers, locals and Pacific seasonal workers — was used in most orchards, including the two where the platforms were introduced. Number of picks also varied between orchards and seasons.

### Cost of picking apples

The lowest cost to pick a bin in 2022 was Orchard F, who employed male Pacific Seasonal Workers using bags and ladders at \$43 per bin, closely followed by Orchard A at \$44 per bin using platform plus the bag and ladder.

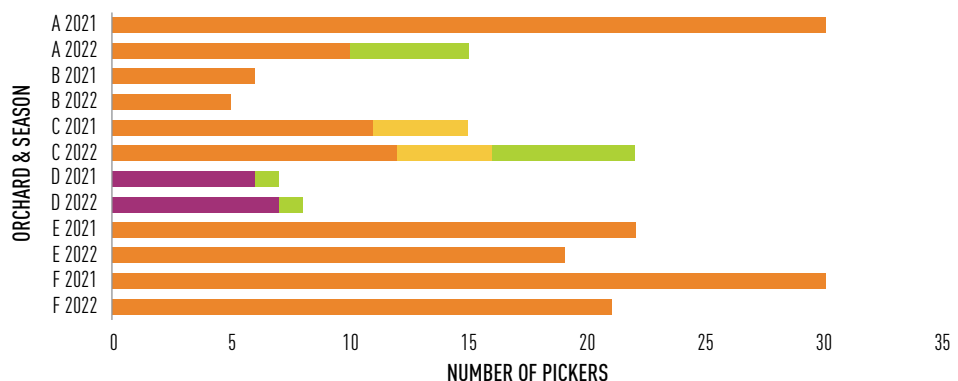
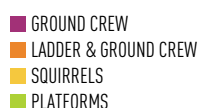


► BAG and ladder picking.

Orchard E was the lowest cost per bin in 2021 at \$42 per bin with a mix of locals and backpackers picking using bags and ladders achieving an 80% class one pack out.

In all orchards the more picks required resulted in a higher cost to pick the bin with the average cost to pick a bin at \$52 for both seasons.

The fastest picking crew were using the bag and ladder system in Orchard F taking an hour per bin, closely followed by Orchard A using the platform along with the ground crew and Orchard E, which were using the bag and ladders at an hour and half.



**FIGURE 1.**  
PICKING SYSTEM OF THE SIX ORCHARDS IN THE STUDY FOR 2022 SEASON.



The most common age range for pickers was the 18–35 age group.

### Who was picking apples in 2022

In the 2022 season, many orchards were male dominated with Pacific Seasonal Workers and not many females picking apples. Orchard F employed all male Pacific Seasonal Workers. This was the third year in a row of using Pacific Seasonal Workers, while two other orchards had taken on the Pacific Seasonal Workers for the first time in 2022.

The most common age range for pickers was the 18–35 age group with a few in the next age group 35–55 years. Orchard D employed someone over 55 and another picker under 18.

When planning the study, the expectation was that using a picking platform would improve the age range of pickers that could be employed so that the range of staff was more diverse, and more people would want to do the job.

Growers were asked: Did using a platform change who you could employ?

- Yeah, it was good for our girls, so they didn't have a bag
- It meant my 70-year-old neighbour could continue to pick fruit in our orchard
- Girls found it easier on the platform
- I think using the platform allows for people with a lower fitness level to pick more consistently. In the past we have generally relied on young, strong and fit people to pick our crop, but using the platform definitely allows older workers or people with a lower fitness level to continually pick at a decent rate.

### Future picking systems

Most growers had no plans to change their picking systems, with one planning on improving tree structure, controlling vigour to make picking with the platform easier.

Most orchards were planning to invest in Pacific workers through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) program and in new robot-ready



▶ LEFT: Picking the tops with a squirrel.

planting systems in the future. Only two growers said they planned investment into picking platforms.

The increased number of Pacific seasonal workers in WA orchards has delivered a reduction in the cost per bin, due to the willingness and capacity of the islanders to pick at pace. There is more interest from growers in investing in PALM scheme workers than in platforms.

While the implementation of the picking platform into the pome orchard has opened up who can be employed to pick fruit, the uptake of platforms in WA to date is limited. We are not able to draw strong conclusions as the two platform orchards also used 'bag and ladders' to supplement the platform over harvest.

Platforms increase the number of people that can pick fruit as the need to be physically very fit and strong is eliminated.

Unlike a ladder and bag system where each labour unit can be incentivised with a piece rate, platform picking requires the staff to work as a team paid at an hourly rate. The culture and training of the team is critical to ensure individual worker output is optimised.

The two orchards in this study that used the new platforms were able to harvest the crop at a lower bin rate than the trial average, which shows that platform picking does have the potential to not only increase the labour demographic, but also keep costs down.

At the time of writing, the packouts for the 2022 crop are unknown. Based on other experience, platforms that are well set up could cause less picking damage than a bag and ladder.

Many growers who use platforms state that the real efficiency gains occur at pruning, training, and thinning times, with harvest being a bonus.

What is unclear is whether there are other workers capable of picking fruit and able to reduce the cost per bin. A more diverse employee demographic in a future season may see the economics swing more in favour of the use of platforms. 🍏

### MORE INFORMATION ▶

Contact Susie Murphy White, at: [susan.murphy-white@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:susan.murphy-white@dpird.wa.gov.au)