

JULY 2020

# IN A NUTSHELL



Dear Valued Grower,

This edition comes to you as we finalise the harvest and delivery of the 2019/20 season. PCA/Bega has unfortunately recorded its lowest intake on record across both plants due to drought conditions, but we look towards the 2020/21 season with a newfound optimism.

A great attendance to the grower meetings held across Kingaroy, Bundaberg, Tolga and the Burdekin as well as individual grower meetings has provided a positive outlook and a return to a much higher production year. The Farming Services Team will be active over the coming months to ensure you have all the information required to make that all-important decision to plant peanuts this coming season.

As you will see throughout the newsletter, we have had some key changes to staff within Bega/PCA. These changes will provide a newfound sense of energy and hold the company in great stead moving forward.

**We thank you for the support and hard work you have had to endure through the 2019/20 season and wish you well for a bigger, better and brighter 2020/21 season.**

## Seed

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### Seed Ordering

Seed requirement forms will be available to growers in early August 2020. These will be emailed out by our grower's clerk, Janine Baikaloff, and our agronomists Pablo Ubilla, Tjaart Myburgh and Stuart Hart will be available to assist with any queries.

The low intake across all our growing areas in 2019/20, due to drought conditions, reduced the capacity to grow seed for all varieties. Seed was stored from the previous season to ensure all our varietal requirements for 2020/21 will be catered for. Seed germination testing on all seed lots will commence in August 2020. Certain seed sizes in specific varieties may be challenging to supply and we ask that you get your seed orders in as soon as you can, to ensure we can manage this issue the best way possible for all our growers.

## New Varieties

Demonstration trials on several new varieties were harvested in three regions this season, Bundaberg/Childers, Atherton Tablelands and Kingaroy. Analysis on these trials revealed varieties progressing through the breeding and seed program are performing well against existing varieties, providing increased yield, improved foliar and soil borne disease tolerance and excellent kernel quality. These results were presented in our July grower meetings across these regions.

Thanks to our grower partners, Cayley Nominees, Isabella Farming and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, for their efforts this season in ensuring all trials were successful, providing valuable information that will be utilised in decisions about variety releases in the coming seasons.

## Grower Meetings Snapshot



Great attendance to the grower meetings held across Kingaroy, Bundaberg, Tolga and the Burdekin

## Corporate / Market Update

### SIMPLY NUTS RANGE ADDS THREE NEW PRODUCTS



**Tall, Dark AND Handsome**, the Bega Simply Nuts range has launched 3 more delicious peanut butter products. After the successful launch of Bega Simply Nuts just over a year ago, we are excited to announce that consumers can now enjoy over 7 Bega Simply Nuts SKU's including our three new additions: **Smooth 650g**, **Crunchy 650g** and **Crunchy Dark Roast 315g**. All with 100% Aussie Peanuts and a pinch of sea salt for Simply Nutty Goodness. The products are now available in Woolworths nationally, followed by Coles in September.

## Corporate / Market Update Cont...

### OUR SEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA'S MOST ENTHUSIASTIC PEANUT BUTTER LOVER!



To find Australia's best peanut butter creation, we ran a 4-week competition through Instagram asking Aussie's to share a picture of their best and most creative Bega Peanut Butter creation – something to get the whole family involved! We had over 200 amazing entries, with the final prize being awarded to the Peanut Butter Parfait pictured above.

### SIMPLY NUTS ON TV!



To support the ongoing success of our Bega Simply Nuts range, we will once again be taking Aussie viewers to Peter Howlett's beautiful peanut farm to showcase our great Aussie peanuts.

The campaign will be live across all major networks until September and will be supported with ads on Facebook and Instagram.

## Spotlight on Silica

### Silica Boosts Soil Health and Peanut Production

Growing peanuts is increasingly being adopted by sugar cane farmers to create an additional revenue stream and improve soil health for improved yields and reclamation of marginal land. While peanuts are considered a "tremendous companion" for successful cane growing, Australian grown peanuts are in extremely short supply, with Bega Company's, Peanut Company of Australia actively supporting increased production.

### Soil health is the key

Third generation Bundaberg farmer Dean Cayley said, "My grandfather started farming here in 1947 and the first crop grown was peanuts, and here we are again seventy year later growing peanuts once again. Maintaining soil health has always been a priority which is why we have rotated crops and incorporated green manure crops/trash back into the soil. We are looking for new ways to improve soil carbon and structure."

Dean jumped at the chance to trial the new Queensland Organics Silica Booster organic fertiliser in his 2019 peanut plantings. "I was impressed by how easy the product was to handle, its consistency of application and the ability to add plant available silica in combination with carbon and beneficial microbiology".

Silica Booster was applied in two different blocks at different application rates (one-ton/ha and two-ton/ha) for comparison with standard conditions.



*Stronger, healthier plants despite dry conditions*

## Improved Plant Performance

Even under dry conditions, the crop has responded well with healthy, vibrant plants. “It was obvious the crop was flourishing, with deeper roots, thicker leaves and stronger stems. Healthier plants meant I had no disease in this year’s crop, even in the new variety trials; so much so I ceased fungicide spraying 6-7 weeks prior to harvesting”.

“Stronger kernels meant fewer split shells and less rejected product, ultimately its what you put in the bin that counts. I will be repeating the trial this year and look forward to assessing its performance with other crops.”



*It's what you put in the bin that counts  
(Photo: Bega Cheese Peanuts are Big Business in Bundaberg)*

## Universal Applications

Riaan Breedt, Principal Agronomist, Queensland Organics said, “Increased levels of soil health deliver results like this. Trials continue to demonstrate the value of increased carbon, beneficial microbiology and plant available silica to plant performance and yield.”

“Improved soil health enables greater nutrient availability and uptake, enhanced disease and pest resilience and higher levels of moisture retention. The importance of silica in strengthening plant cells, disease suppression and buffering environmental conditions is becoming better understood.”

“Silica Booster has a high cation exchange (CEC), making it equally beneficial in Kingaroy’s red soils as the sandy soils of the Alloway trial.”

### For more information :

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## 5 Minutes with Grower – Scott Fasano

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### Family?

My father Glen and brother Michael

### Interests/Hobbies?

Work, work and more work. The peanuts have been keeping us busy and with crushing starting we're back at it again.

### Favorite Food?

Gotta be Mum's secret dish, chicken and polenta with her special sauce. Probably comes around a couple of times a year.

### Why Farming/Agriculture?

After working here there and everywhere for a bit it was time to come back home. I enjoy the stability as well, not traveling has been good for the family. No doubt there is more work involved on the farm though.

### Why Peanuts?

We knew that we needed a rotation for our fallow blocks and due to the close proximity of the market and the fact other coastal growers have grown peanuts successfully we thought we should give them a go on our suitable soils. We also knew of the benefits peanuts have on your soil health, but they have turned out to be quite a good cash crop for our fallow land.



### How long have you grown peanuts?

This season just passed was our second season. Hopefully with the right land we will carry on growing many more.

### What is the most pressing issue facing agriculture in general?

We haven't seen the full effect of the new Reef Regulations yet, but they have started putting new controls in. The time spent on record keeping and changing our farming practices can be expensive. Currently we've changed our row spacing and the way we work the ground but we aren't sure just yet where it ends.

### What is the most pressing issue facing farming in your region?

Currently there is a lot of uncertainty around our regions Sugar Mill. We know it is open for this season and the next but there is no guarantees past that. The Mill is working to diversity into other products as it can't survive on making just sugar. If the Mill does close, we'll be looking at higher transport costs as we look to other Mill's to take our product. It's just another reason we looked at peanuts.

### If you were down to your last \$50 what would you spend it on?

Probably take the kids for an ice cream and a beer at the pub.



## Welcome to the Team!

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### Shona Wood – Research Officer (Peanut Breeding)



We are pleased to announce that Shona Wood is joining the team as a Research Officer in the Peanut Breeding Program in Kingaroy.

Shona has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and has been completing her PhD in Molecular Plant Pathology and Breeding.

Shona has spent the past three years enjoying killing peanut plants in the hope to identify disease resistant varieties as part of her Plant Breeding and Pathology PhD. She never knew how excited she would be to kill peanuts and how hard it would be to do! They are a tough little nuts (legumes).

## New Appointments

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### Daniel O'Connor – Manager Peanut Breeding & Seed

We are pleased to announce that Dan O'Connor has been appointed to the Manager – Peanut Breeding & Seed in Kingaroy.

Dan first joined the PCA Peanut Breeding Program on a university placement in 2008, while studying a Bachelor of Applied Science as a mature aged student. This commenced a few years of studying, working part-time and being a stay at home Dad to two young boys. Dan continued in the research field, under Dr Graeme Wright, looking at a range of topics including; speed breeding, blanch ability, near infrared spectroscopy, moisture meters, seed dressing and foliar disease screening.



Dan transferred to Farming Services as Seed Agronomist and Harvest Co-ordinator in 2016. In addition to these roles, Dan also mentors Year 12 Kingaroy State High School Biology students who participate in a student science study during the first half of each year.

When not chasing peanuts Dan can be found chasing cricket balls with Nanango & District Cricket Club as player, junior coach and Secretary.



## Farewell to Lionel Wieck from the PCA / Bega team

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## Key Contacts at PCA

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