

Vitality newsletter

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Pick the secret location to win a bottle of Tassie wine

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In this issue of **Vitality**, AgVita is proud to announce that we have been awarded 'Preferred Supplier of Laboratory Analysis' status for Protected Cropping Australia (PCA). This allows members of the PCA to submit hydroponic water samples for rapid, accurate analysis for a members-only price. AgVita look forward to working with PCA members through the next 2 years and beyond.

In other news, AgVita is proud to receive recognition from the Devonport Chamber of Commerce & Industry, having been awarded the 2013 Industry Business award recently.

AgVita have participated in several national events over the last month or two - WineTech, the 15th Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference in Sydney, the 2013 Protected Cropping Annual Conference & trade show in Melbourne, Agri-Focus, the SFS field day in western Victoria, the TIA Showcase in Tasmania, and most recently the 2013 Australian Almond Industry Conference held in Adelaide.

Also, in this Vitality issue, we report on a beneficial 2-day workshop for soil technicians held across the ditch in NZ, and we get a sneak peek behind the public face of AgVita as we introduce another staff member, Angela Anderson.

Finally, don't forget our popular competition where you can win an excellent bottle of Tasmanian wine by identifying the location of the AgVita staff member(s) in the photos taken on our recent travels. This editions location will hopefully stop Google snooping.....!

DCCI Industry Business Award

Recently, AgVita Analytical was honoured to be nominated in the Annual DCCI Business Awards. Upon attending the gala dinner, we received the *Industry Business Award*, which was

recognition of our growth and innovation over the last 12 months. Pictured right are AgVita staff members (from L-R) Michael Ruffels, Craig Newman, Angela Anderson and Melinda Wright accepting the award.

Read more about the DCCI awards night [here](#)



AgVita named as Preferred Laboratory for water analysis by Protected Cropping Australia

AgVita is proud to confirm our appointment as the Preferred Laboratory for water analysis for PCA members. This 2-year tender provides discounted hydroponic water analysis to PCA members along with complimentary sample bottles, easy submission procedures and well-designed easy to understand reporting of results.



AgVita's hydroponic water analysis can measure all common nutrients in hydroponic feed, tank, drain and supply solutions. Standard tests also measure pH & EC, Nitrate, ammonium and Chloride, as well as calculating TDS and hardness of water samples. Importantly, results are emailed to clients on the same

day that we receive samples. Posting & packaging is simple, with information available on our website (www.agvita.com.au) or by calling our office (03) 6420 9600.

Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture Showcase:

AgVita was pleased to be invited to attend this prestigious event held at the Tamar Valley Resort near Launceston in mid-August. The focus of the annual open day was to showcase the science behind the 5 key Research Centres: Dairy, Extensive Agriculture, Perennial Horticulture, Vegetables, and Food Systems.

More than 200 attendees enjoyed a full day (and night) of informative presentations, round table discussions, break-out sessions and workshops aimed at further increasing the valuable links between growers, industry, service providers and TIA. Current and

future research projects were presented and discussed, with feedback from industry stakeholders well received by TIA.

Information on the Showcase can be found [here](#) or in more detail on the TIA website (www.tia.tas.edu.au).

ASPAC soil Technicians course in Hamilton, NZ

AgVita analyst Chris Winter has just returned from Hamilton, New Zealand where he attended an ASPAC soil technician's workshop.

Aimed at chemists and technicians who carry out soil extractions and analyses, the workshop aimed to provide training in the basic requirements for high quality soil analyses; cover best practise and problem solving; allow the opportunity to network with other soil technicians. The course was open to all ASPAC members but with a cap on the maximum number of attendees to keep the group to a manageable size.

The two day workshop was held at the Hill Laboratories in Hamilton, New Zealand (see picture below with Chris in the foreground). Hill Laboratories is a privately owned



laboratory employing more than 300 people (<http://www.hill-laboratories.com>). It is a major provider of soil and plant analyses in New Zealand, and has introduced a number of innovations, including robotic soil dispensing and NIR analyses. Attendees saw these innovations and also visited other analytical laboratories during the two day workshop.

By attending such events, AgVita Lab staff return to the Lab with ideas and innovations that are used as part of our continuous improvement strategy to stay at the cutting edge of soil and plant analysis in Australia.

Technical article:

'Evaluation of Mehlich 3 as a Universal Nutrient Extractant for Australian Sugarcane Soils'

ZOFIA A. OSTATEK-BOCZYNSKI AND PEIMANEH LEE-STEERE

BSES Limited, Indooroopilly, Brisbane, Australia

(Communications in Soil Science and Plant Analysis, 43:623–630, 2012)

This study evaluated the suitability of the Mehlich-3 universal extractant as a part of a multielement test to assess the nutrient status of Australian sugarcane soils.

Soil samples from BSES Soil Exchange Programs, representing all major soil types and geographic sugarcane-growing regions, were analysed using existing BSES, acid-based extraction methods for calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), sodium (Na), potassium (K), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), and phosphorus (P) and the ASPAC 10B3 method for sulfur (S). These were compared with the Mehlich 3 procedure.

Mehlich 3 results for Ca, Mg, Na, S, and Mn correlated highly with the BSES procedures ($R^2 = 0.95, 0.98, 0.99, 0.91, \text{ and } 0.91$, respectively).

Satisfactory correlations were also obtained with 0.1 M HCl-extracted Zn, Cu, and Fe ($R^2 = 0.89, 0.85, \text{ and } 0.85$, respectively) and with the BSES sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4)-extracted P ($R^2 = 0.81$). The poorest correlation ($R^2 = 0.79$) was observed for K.

In conclusion, the Mehlich 3 procedure is suitable as a diagnostic tool to assess the basic nutrient status of Australian sugarcane soils.

More information and/or a full extract of this paper can be obtained from AgVita by phoning (03) 6420 9600 or emailing info@agvita.com.au

15th Australian Almond Conference:

AgVita staff have just returned from this event, held in Adelaide in late October. The conference involved a good mix of technical and educational presentations, while the trade show provided delegates with a large array of exhibitors covering most facets of almond growing, harvesting and processing.

The Australian Almond industry is going from strength to strength. Worldwide consumption has risen by nearly 10% over the last decade, and Australian production has increased significantly to fill this demand, with production heading towards 80,000 tonnes by 2014. Australia currently exports the majority of production to more than 40 countries, with India being the biggest market share.



For more information, please see the link to the conference website [here](#)

AgVita staff member in profile:

In this and subsequent newsletters, we would like to feature an AgVita staff member – focusing on their interests outside the work they do in the Lab Monday to Friday.

We shine the spotlight in this edition of Vitality on Angela Anderson – the face of AgVita. Angela has been with AgVita since even before it was AgVita!. She has seen the company grow from 3 employees to the current 12, the space move from a back room at our parent company to the state of the art building we currently occupy, the analytical capability increase from old AAS and ISE technology to the cutting edge ICP and FIA equipment routinely used today. Angela has seen staff come & go over the years, and the gender balance swing from female dominated to a more even balance today (our owner was heard to comment a few years ago that there was never this much mischief when it was just girls in the Lab!)



On most days all clients are greeted on the phone by Angela. Her account management skills and efficiency are critical to the success of AgVita, and when coupled to the years of experience, make Angela invaluable to the current and future success of AgVita.

Angela's interests outside of AgVita are all about sport and travel. Ange (or as she's known in the local competitions, the *whispering bulldozer*) plays netball and basketball in NW Tasmania. She umpires, coaches and plays in high level rosters a couple of nights a week. International travel is her other passion, no sooner does she return from a week in Malaysia or Dubai when she starts scouring the flight specials for her next trip.

Name that Location (...or “where’s AgVita been now?”):

AgVita staff members have clocked up the kilometres over the last year or two, travelling to meet existing and new clients in every state and Territory. We bring you round 5 of the “**where is AgVita?**” competition!!!

Up for grabs is another quality bottle of Tasmanian wine, and in each newsletter we'll have a new location and a new prize. Get your entries in before **December 10th** by email at info@agvita.com.au

The pictures for this edition of **Vitality** newsletter are designed to foil those of you smart enough to use online picture identification tools.... see if you can identify the location shown in the two pictures below:

The winner will be the best correct identification of the location (as per instructions below). No clues this time, but any funny or embarrassing stories linked to the location may sway the judge's opinion.....!



The fine print.....

- Competition is open to all clients and recipients of the Vitality newsletter.
- Entrants who inadvertently live in the town/vicinity of the location pictured may not be considered for the prize (unless no other correct entries are received!)
- Entries close 7 days after receipt of the newsletter
- Winner will be notified by email at the end of the 7 days, prize will be posted out the following day. Winners details will appear on the AgVita website soon after.
- We probably need to keep it to over-18's, but that shouldn't be a problem
- If multiple correct entries are received, additional "weight" will be given to entries that describe humorous/odd/interesting/embarrassing event which took place at the location (caution, details may appear in the next newsletter!!)
- The judges' decision is final, but we can be quite easily bribed

