

# Open for business

Emerging Industries in the Murraylands and Riverland



Regional  
Development  
*Australia*  
MURRAYLANDS & RIVERLAND INC.  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Exotic food crops are an emerging area of untapped potential in the Murraylands and Riverland. Our rich soils and southern hemisphere weather profile provide excellent growing conditions.

New horticulture industries are beginning to establish themselves in our region.

These initiatives are driven by:

- a) the suitability of the particular species to the soils;
- b) environmental industries the region has on offer; and
- c) the market potential of the products, underpinned by Australia's rich and diverse multicultural society and buoyed by exceptional global trade opportunities.

Additionally, the region's seasonality is counter to the northern hemisphere, indicating an untapped demand for the products.





## Pistachios

In 1982 the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) released a new variety of pistachio tree, bred in Australia for Australian conditions. The new high yielding variety, Sirora, was selected for its excellent flavour, bright green kernel colour, easy to open and white shell.

Australian farmers then began commercial pistachio plantings. Most are planted along the Murray River across the borders of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Now, Australian pistachio production is rapidly expanding to satisfy the demands of the domestic market and a prospective export opportunity. SA alone produced about 600 tonnes of pistachios in 2015-16, generating gross revenue of \$6.8 million from growers such as *Mallee Orchards* (the home of almost 70,000 pistachio trees), based just outside of Pinnaroo.

**Pistachio crops in Australia are less troubled by pests, having lower chemical usage and enhancing the clean, green image of this healthy nut.**

The Riverland is ideally suited for pistachio growing, with its hot summers and a dry autumn harvest period. Further, there's access to plenty of water from the Murray River, ideal growing conditions and an industry growth rate of about 10% per annum.



## Jujubes

The jujube is a popular fruit amongst Chinese consumers and its hardy nature makes it an ideal crop for our conditions.

Jujubes have been successfully grown in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

The jujube's drought and salinity tolerance, easy management and multiple uses indicate potential for a niche crop for many areas of Australia, including the Murraylands and Riverland region. This species is also counter seasonal to China.

There is an incredibly large market for Jujubes, and this comes from the local and global market.

Research indicates current jujube production is estimated to be 20 hectares, producing around 200 tonnes - but domestic market forecasts show a potential increase to almost 14,000t, with an area demand equivalent of 418ha. In addition to local demand, there is also huge potential for export. Target markets include China, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Taiwan.



## Date Palms

Date palm is a popular and high-revenue crop, and the consumption of date fruits is no longer limited to Middle Eastern countries. Date fruit has gained interest due to its nutritional value and taste, and date seeds have recently been identified as sources of valuable bioactive ingredients. The Murraylands and Riverland region has excellent agronomic conditions for cultivating date palms.

The harvesting season in the Southern Hemisphere falls conveniently during February and March, which fills the gap in the lowered supply from the Northern Hemisphere.

Australia has the advantage of using good quality control measures and processing techniques to produce dates of good and uniform quality.

The identified competitive advantages of Australia are lower post-harvest costs and use of minimum post-harvest handling operations.

The Riverland's *Gurra Downs* is an enterprise, which has become an industry leader, plus research and development facility, for the production of premium table dates. Thanks to this, several Riverland growers are now reaching the stage of commercial fruit production.



## Avocados

**The avocado industry in Australia has been undergoing substantial growth for more than a decade – doubling its volume in the last 10 years.**

While the majority of production occurs in Queensland, it is also spread across Australia's major States.

There is strong production growth across the tri-state area (Vic/NSW/SA) with national production in the vicinity of 63,500 tonnes. Current Australian industry statistics indicate there are approximately 1,000 commercial growers producing approximately 9 million (5.5 kilograms) trays – or 49,500t (2009/10). Plantings are estimated at 1.6m trees.

The Riverland is home to operators of *The Costa Group*, which is a national horticultural grower, distributor and exporter of fresh fruit and vegetables. *The Costa Group* has significant plantings of avocados and this is supplemented by several smaller producers and packers producing premium quality fruit (including certified organic avocados).



## Aquaculture

Access to saline groundwater, means there is potential in the Murraylands and Riverland region for cultivation of marine fish such as tommy ruff, Murray River cod, snapper, brine shrimp, flounder, King George whiting, yellow tail kingfish and black bream.

South Australia, with its dedicated legislation to manage and protect aquatic resources, has led the way globally in the sustainable development of aquaculture. The State already produces premium produce - including Southern Bluefin tuna, kingfish, mussels, oysters, barramundi, marron

and abalone. This is supported by comprehensive legislation which offers protection of the aquatic environment, environmental monitoring and animal health. SA also has strict zoning requirements, helping provide a sound basis for environmental credentials, which maintains our State's clean and green status.

The Government of South Australia invests significantly in research and innovation in the State's aquaculture industry. The *South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)* is a world-class leader in seafood and

sea species research. SARDI works closely with industry to develop and commercialise new projects. Another State Government body – Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) administers rigorous aquaculture policies which support and protect investment in aquaculture within the State.

This industry is only just emerging in the Murraylands and Riverland region, and to reach commercial scale will require investment.

## We are open for business

There are significant opportunities within the Murraylands and Riverland region. Our products and services are some of the best in the world, and there is no doubt there is substantial demand for them in expanding international markets.

We offer a supportive business environment, with advice and assistance on the development and investment processes, government grants and tax incentives, workforce planning and development and industry networks.

Our team works with investors to connect them with investment-ready businesses, to assess potential development locations and opportunities, and to coordinate government approvals.

**If you are considering importing product from our region or investing, contact us to maximise benefits to your business and to the region.**

## To find out more, contact us today!

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