

Maintaining fruit and vegetable crops in the greenhouse

Australia's fruit and vegetable growers will soon be able to determine the viability of their businesses under a changed climate through a research project that will identify critical temperature thresholds for major horticulture crops around Australia.



Credit: ScienceImage/Greg Rinder

The project is a collaborative effort between the Managing Climate Variability research program, Horticulture Australia Limited, Landcare Australia (through Woolworths Sustainable Farming Program funds), Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, and Growcom.

Project leader Peter Deuter, from Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, said his team was investigating how many degrees a given region could warm before heat significantly damaged crops.

‘Temperature is an important factor in horticultural production, as it determines to a great extent where and at what time of the year horticultural crops are grown, and how well they perform,’ said Deuter.

The project team is choosing crops based on their economic value, their spread across Australia’s regions and the information available. They are currently working on lettuce, cauliflower and bananas, and will then focus on apples and tropical fruits. The team hopes to have information for up to 13 crops by the start of 2011.

Managing Climate Variability is a collaborative research and development program between the Grains, Rural Industries and Sugar Research and Development Corporations; the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Dairy Australia; Meat & Livestock Australia; and Land & Water Australia.

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