

Australian Onion Association CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Douglas Richens
is Chairman of the
Australian Onion
Association.

The overproduction of onions in Australia and its ramifications were accurately predicted by the Australian Onion Association in 1990. It was estimated that 249,000 tonnes would be produced in the 1990/1991 season and our local consumption and export markets would total less than 200,000 tonnes. The pressures on the whole onion industry would be felt from the grower through to the retailer. The decline in overall exports would aggravate the position causing serious losses of income to the majority of people involved in Australian onions.

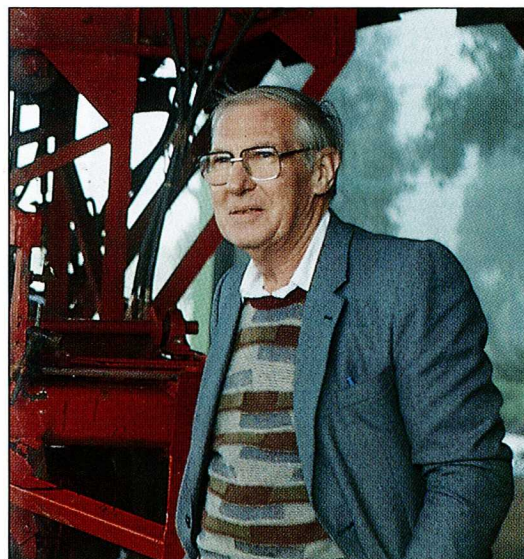
Unfortunately, our predictions were proven completely correct.

But, now I pause as I write this report, with concern that our indications are that again over production will be a problem in 1992. As an industry, our communication and liaison with growers in particular, needs to be improved. We should only be planting for market requirements.

On a positive note our exports to the United Kingdom and Europe outturned well. Competition from New Zealand, South Africa and South America particularly early in the season was strong and market opportunities were restricted, but it improved as the season progressed.

The long awaited micro and macro economic reforms promised by our Federal Government are very slow in arriving, and coupled with the high Australian dollar has a very depressing effect on all Australia's export industries.

I believe that as an Australian Industry we need to communicate more with our close neighbours



New Zealand, despite being in competition with them. It would be beneficial, especially for shippers and exporters.

Our industry is worth usually about \$60 million per annum at the farm gate and almost \$200 million per annum at the retailer level. It is our industry, we belong to it, we have a passion and the highest regard for it and it is worth striving for. We need to be positive, constructive and practical in finding solutions to our problems.

For several years the Australian Onion Association has alluded that the industry should be involved in some form of promotion. It is time that as an industry we agree in principle to the concept of promotion of our onions and secondly instigate the steps for this to eventuate. The decision needs to be made soon.

Again on a positive note, our Association in 1990/91 became members of the Australian United Fresh and the Australian Peak Shippers Association.

My thanks and appreciation go to all our sponsors and guest speakers in 1990/91, their support and presentation throughout the year has been excellent and much appreciated by all.

Our magazine "Onions Australia" continues to be a well recognised publication covering all industry issues. John Salvestrin's continued enthusiasm as editor earns him the thanks of us all.

In closing, thanks to Reg Miller our Secretary and for everybody's support during the year.

I wish you all the best.

DOUGLAS RICHENS



Attending the A.O.A. meeting at Werribee were
Reg Miller (South Australia), Les Giroud (Victoria)
and John Rich (Tasmania).