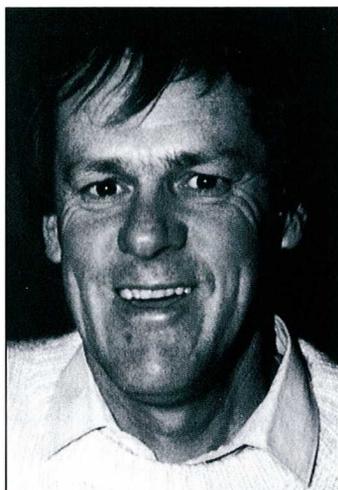


Australian Onion Association

CHAIRMAN'S

REPORT



Trevor Twigden
is Chairman of
the Australian
Onion
Association

Great changes have occurred within the Australian Onion Association over the past year. The greatest of these has been the resignation of Reg Miller as secretary, due to ill health. Unfortunately, Reg's health deteriorated after his resignation, and he died in September. Reg's dedication and commitment to the Australian Onion Association will be sadly missed by the Australian onion industry in which he believed and for which he campaigned fearlessly.

Reg leaves us on the threshold of some exciting new developments. We have this year participated in the National Residue Survey - the first horticultural industry in Australia to do so. This has been done in the belief that our consumers, both at home and overseas deserve to know that we produce clean wholesome onions for them. There is a benefit to us all in having documented proof that we are achieving that aim.

I believe we should continue to support that program - but with continued pressure on the Government to share in the cost because of the significant public health benefit that results.

Bag importers have supported the removal of the tariff on imported bags, given the cessation of local manufacture. This will result in significant cost saving to the industry. I support the notion that some of this saving should be diverted into an industry promotion fund. Discussions have been held with the Australian Horticultural Corporation on the options available to maintain industry control and to ensure sound management of such funds.

Once we have achieved industry wide funding of promotional activities I believe we need to address the changing face of research and development funding in Australian agriculture and horticulture. These changes were clearly identified in last year's "Onions Australia".

Our industry faces on-going research and development needs and opportunities - but nothing will be done unless we decide what needs doing, and when. In this day and age that means putting our money where our mouth is.

The Australian Onion Association has always espoused the value of a self-supporting, non-protected industry in Australian. I believe we now have to work towards generating the funds that we can direct towards the research and development needs of our industry. Thus we can continue to directly influence our destiny and remain a highly successful industry within the Australian horticultural scene.

Following the "First International Symposium on Edible Alliaceae" in Mendoza, Argentina, the Australian Onion Association has been invited by the International Society of Horticultural Science to convene the Second International Symposium on Edible Alliaceae. This will be held in Adelaide in 1997. Given that many members have indicated their willingness to participate in the planning and staging of this event, I'm sure we have the expertise and commitment to stage a worthwhile event.

I look forward to working towards satisfactory outcomes from each of these challenges - outcomes that will help ensure a sound future for all members.

TREVOR TWIGDEN, CHAIRMAN