

## survey of Australian vegetable growers

- » In 2005-06, Australia had around 2822 commercial vegetable enterprises. Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria accounted for around two-thirds of vegetable growers in Australia.
- » Growers in Victoria recorded the highest average farm business profit in 2005-06, estimated at nearly \$138 000 a farm.
- » Around half of the vegetable growers across all states reported a farm business loss in 2005-06. Growers in Tasmania recorded the largest farm business loss of nearly \$73 000 a farm.
- » The average rate of return to capital *excluding* capital appreciation among vegetable growers was 3.2 per cent in 2005-06, compared with 0.6 per cent for broadacre (wool, beef and cropping) farms.
- » With the growth in land values in 2005-06, average return to capital *including* capital appreciation was 9.2 per cent.
- » Reflecting widespread drought conditions in 2006-07, the average area of vegetable crops sown and harvested per farm was lower than in 2005-06. And average yields were generally lower, reducing average production per farm.

### survey of growers

- » In 2007, ABARE held face to face interviews with 266 vegetable growers across Australia. Farms with an estimated value of agricultural operations greater than \$40 000 were surveyed.
- » The survey collected information not just on the physical and financial characteristics of farms in 2005-06 but on water and chemical use, pests and diseases, farm production and sale points, sources of information, future intentions, constraints to growth and relationship of growers with their main buyers.
- » The Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group commissioned ABARE to collect and disseminate data on the physical and financial performance of Australian vegetable growing farms in 2005-06 and 2006-07.

## survey results

### financial performance of vegetable growers, by state, 2005-06

average per farm

	total cash receipts \$	total cash costs \$	farm cash income \$	farm business profit \$	rate of return <sup>a</sup> %
New South Wales	499 030	359 810	139 210	53 760	2.5
Victoria	878 270	641 420	236 850	137 740	5.0
Queensland	843 280	681 260	162 020	71 140	3.2
South Australia	512 630	396 910	115 720	44 670	4.2
Western Australia	495 180	280 880	214 300	130 970	4.3
Tasmania	289 970	284 620	5 350	-72 930	-1.7
Northern Territory	503 330	342 220	161 110	105 570	7.5
Australia	638 170	485 210	152 960	66 410	3.2

<sup>a</sup> Excluding capital appreciation.

### chemical use

- » Over two-thirds of vegetable growers indicated that they had undertaken a course on the use of chemicals in the past three years. Participation rates were highest in New South Wales and Victoria, and lowest in Tasmania and the Northern Territory. The majority of growers had made an effort to reduce overall chemical use per hectare in the past three years.

### production methods

- » An estimated 18 per cent of vegetable growers produced their vegetable crop under some form of protection – such as glass, poly, plastic or shade cloth structures. For these growers, around 80 per cent of their total vegetable revenue per farm came from crops produced under protective covering.

### research and development priorities

- » When asked to indicate the priorities on various areas of research and development, growers indicated that pest and disease management had the highest priority.

### future in vegetable growing

- » Vegetable growers generally had a positive outlook about their future in the industry, with an estimated 62 per cent indicating that they expected to remain involved in vegetable production within the next five years. In addition, around 32 per cent of growers expected to expand their area of vegetable crops in the next three to five years, primarily within the existing farm area.