



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW DPI ROLES TO MAXIMISE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF FRUIT & VEGIES

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson today announced two new research horticulturists had been appointed to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to maximise the quality and safety of NSW fruit and vegetables available to consumers.

“The specialist food safety and sensory science skills of the two new horticulture researchers Dr Sukhvinder Pal Singh and Dr Roberto Marques will broaden the scope of the DPI postharvest research team based at the Central Coast Primary Industries Centre, Ourimbah near Gosford,” said Minister Hodgkinson.

“Their work will help contribute to better taste, texture and quality of fruit and vegetables.

“They will evaluate new varieties of fruit and develop better on-farm practices and ripening and storage techniques to improve safety and consumer enjoyment of food.”

Dr Singh’s previous research has focussed on tools for the discovery and validation of genetic biomarkers in fresh fruits for quality and safety.

“In the new role, Dr Singh will develop science-based strategies to mitigate the food safety risks associated with preharvest and postharvest practices of fresh horticultural produce,” said Dr Deborah Hailstones, DPI Manager Horticulture.

“Adapting to a food safety culture in our horticultural industries is an emerging challenge to meet regulatory and consumer expectations.”

Dr Marques will conduct research in sensory evaluation and consumer preferences to determine which fruit and vegetable traits consumers value and want, as well as examining supply chain impacts on these traits.

Dr Hailstones said the two researchers will work closely with the State’s horticultural industries to help ensure their profitability and sustainability, and the delivery of fresh, nutritious and safe produce to the consumers.

“The DPI Postharvest Team at Ourimbah conducts research into factors that impact on horticultural product quality,” she said.

“The team works with farmers, market agents and retailers to identify production and postharvest practices that optimise product quality at all stages of the supply chain including harvest, packaging, transport storage and retail display.

“Across DPI there are more than eighty staff specifically dedicated to research and development in horticulture.

“Each year DPI attracts more than \$4 million in external co-investment and works on more than 50 active projects that benefit the horticultural industries of NSW.”