

MEDIA RELEASE

November 6, 2009

Loxton almond producer wins Phil Watters Award

The inaugural Australian Almond Industry Phil Watters Award was awarded to Loxton almond grower Craig Spilsbury at this year's Australian Almond Conference held on Thursday, 29 October in the Barossa Valley, SA.

The Phil Watters Award recognises service to the Australian almond industry, in particular a dedication to research, development and the improvement of almond production, adoption of best practice and promotion of horticulture to the community.

Craig feels privileged to be the 2009 recipient of this prestigious industry Award.

"It is a great honour to receive an Award dedicated in the memory of a man who contributed so much to the Australian almond industry," said Craig.

41 year old Craig Spilsbury has long been associated with the Australian almond industry with his family being one of the earlier almond producers in Willunga, south of Adelaide.

"My family began farming almonds in 1935, so almond farming is well and truly in my blood. I've grown up working on the family orchards and always loved what I do. The Australian almond industry is such an interesting and dynamic industry to be a part of," he added.

Craig began his career as an almond grower buying his first orchard in 1991 at Loxton.

Since then, Craig has been a valuable contributor to the Australian almond industry. Over the last eight years, he has been one of the original growers to adopt and refine some of the research and best practice coming out of the industry's R&D project known as the CT Optimisation Trial.

Using expertise from Israel, the CT Optimisation Trial looked at a new management program for irrigating and fertilising almonds. Craig was in close contact with the research project and quickly recognised the benefits and results it was producing. He has since helped many almond growers to adopt these techniques.

The Australian Almond industry's Phil Watters Award is dedicated to the memory of Phil Watters (1974 – 2007), a widely respected individual and dedicated technical officer in the almond industry who became a role model for young and upcoming horticultural students.

The Award is organised by the Almond Board of Australia (ABA), a non-profit, membership-based organisation representing the interests of Australian almond growers, processors and marketers.

For further information contact:

Julie Haslett, Almond Board of Australia CEO on 0418 958 187 or 08 8582 2055

The Almond Board of Australia (ABA) is a non profit, membership based organisation representing the interests of Australian almond growers, processors and marketers.

As the Australian almond industry's peak industry body, the ABA facilitates further growth of the industry, seeks to maximise its profitability and ensure its sustainability, by providing a platform for industry members to collectively respond to industry-wide issues, invest in research and marketing, share knowledge and interact with government and other stakeholders.

The Australian Almond Industry currently produces 36,000 tonnes of almonds on an annual basis, with a related farm gate value of \$250 million dollars. Production is expected to double by 2015 as new plantings reach full maturity, with a related value of \$500 million dollars.

Key almond growing areas are located in Sunraysia (Victoria), the Riverland and Adelaide (South Australia) and the Riverina region (New South Wales).

For more information visit www.australianalmonds.com.au or email: admin@australianalmonds.com.au