

Kingsley Site (*D. asper*)

For the fertiliser experiments the increase in yield from the 25% treatment through to the 200% treatment is evident mainly in the second half of the shoot season. Early shooting associated with the 200% rate at the other sites has not occurred at this site. With irrigation at this site the higher yield of the 100% watering is clear and earlier shooting is very evident compared to the 50% treatment. As with the Vivian site, the 222 thinning treatment has yielded more shoots than the higher culm density treatments. Only the continuation of these treatments over several dry season thinning operations will fully test their effects on shoot yield.

General Comments on Experiments

The 100% irrigation treatment failed to provide the VSWC that was expected. This could be a result of unusually high evaporation in 2002 or the bamboo water requirement was underestimated in evaporation replacement calculations.

The yields from the 25% fertiliser treatment are obviously low and not likely to increase with continuation of that rate.

High rates of pre – shooting fertiliser seems to promote earlier shooting, a higher percentage of larger shoots and higher shoot number. Application as early as September could be worthwhile.

Studies of bamboo root distribution and seasonal activity would help with irrigation and fertiliser management.

Acknowledgements:

This research is partially funded by ACIAR and commissioned by the Plant Sciences Group at Central Queensland University. Thanks to commercial collaborators Richard Kingsley, (Bamboo Planet Earth) and Phil Vivian, (PAL Enterprises), the DBIRD Chemistry Laboratory for leaf nutrient analyses and the DBIRD biometrician, Mark Hearnden.

PROJECT:	Asian Vegetables – Industry Development
Project Officers:	G. Walduck, M. Traynor, J. Thomas, G. Owens, K. Bui (Industry based IDO) and Dr. B. Thistelton (Entomology)
Location:	CPHRF

Objective:

Support the Asian vegetable industry and its organisation.

Introduction:

This industry is centred near Darwin with 50+ small growers producing a range of Asian vegetables for local and capital city markets. The main thrust of work in this area this year has been in supporting the grower organisation and the Industry Development Officer (IDO) and supplying information on better practice farming techniques through growers meetings, field days and printed material.

Major Activities and Outcomes

Assist industry and NTHA with preparation of a funding application for HAL/industry funded IDO. The application was successful and Kim Bui was appointed as vegetable IDO and is operating very effectively. DBIRD Horticulture staff are on the Management Committee together with industry representatives.

Prepare, print and distribute an English/Vietnamese publication of all current DBIRD printed information on Asian vegetables. This was a joint DBIRD/IDO project and has been distributed to NT

growers and interstate vegetable IDOs. Feedback indicates that it has been well received by growers and interstate recipients as well.

Prepare colour posters of pest and diseases of Asian vegetables in Northern Australia. This project involved Horticulture and Resource Protection staff and the results will be released in October.

Prepare and present current information sets on agricultural pesticides for use in the NT, at a series of evening meetings in conjunction with the Asian Vegetable Growers Association. This was supported by best-practice information and spray technology field days on growers' properties. Current feedback indicates a raised awareness of pesticide issues, especially IPM and residues. There has even been a request for the information from the Victorian Asian vegetable producers for the information.

Conduct a *Fertigation Field Day* at CPHRF supported by evening sessions at the Asian Vegetable Growers Association monthly meetings. This ongoing program appears to have improved understanding of basic fertiliser practices and reduced reports of nutrition related problems.

Distribution of planting material of Japanese taro (small corm taro) to interested growers to test under commercial conditions. Small-scale trials conducted at CPHRF as part of a national project on Japanese taro indicated the best quality was produced in the NT. As a result, small quantities have been released to interested commercial growers for commercial testing.

Organise meeting of researchers on Asian vegetables at Gosford NSW. This is a RIRDC sponsored project and brings together all workers currently working on RIRDC funded projects once a year to improve communication and exchange ideas and results. Horticulture NT organised the 2002-03 meeting which was held at Gosford NSW and was attended by workers from most States and Territories. Proceedings of the meeting will be distributed soon.

Conduct pilot business skills workshop to improve bookkeeping skills of Asian vegetable growers. This was organised and run in conjunction with Horticulture DBIRD, the vegetable IDO and a private bookkeeper. It was funded by BU\$LINK. Participation was below expectation due in part to other unexpected commitments of members at that time of the year. There is still interest and another school may be conducted at a different time and in a different format.