



May 2019

# Australian strawberries reputation recovery plan

Prepared for the Department of  
Agriculture and Water Resources

# Contents

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Executive Summary	3
Background	5
Research methodology	7
Stakeholder consultations: key findings	12
Communication strategy	20
Project plan	24
Marketing campaign	41
Strawberries stakeholder perception research – International	46
About SenateSHJ	49

# Executive Summary

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The focus of this document is to inform the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Australia's strawberry export industry, of evidence-based strategies and tactics which can be considered in advance of the 2019 peak buying (July – December) period in the export markets of New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, UAE and Hong Kong.

The catalyst for the preparation of this document was a tampering incident in August 2018, which affected strawberries sold in Australia, and led to widespread social and traditional media coverage in Australia and internationally, affecting sales of Australian strawberries into multiple export markets.

Whilst any longer-term impact to sales – and ultimately the reputation of Australian strawberries, is still to be determined, evidence points to the incident as having left a lasting impression in at least one export market – New Zealand, where social media commentary relating to copycat or hoax needle tampering in strawberries persists.

Broadly speaking, the full reputational impact on Australian strawberries in export markets will not be fully known until engagement with trading partners, to sell them Australian strawberries, commences. What that engagement looks like, and when it takes place, will be contingent upon the circumstances facing the Australian strawberry industry at the time of peak harvest – i.e. the size and quality of the yield, domestic and international market prices, et al.

The prospect of the incident affecting other horticultural products is also something to be mindful of. There is potential for a knock-on reputational impact affecting future exports of other Australian produce.

For instance, media coverage in Thailand during the strawberry tampering incident in 2018 claimed that needles had been found in multiple Australian fruit varieties. The risk of consumers in Thailand (and elsewhere) being uninformed/ misinformed of the facts surrounding the 2018 incident, is real.

It is also worth noting that consumers in the export markets examined for this report come from broad, diverse populations. There will be perceptions among some consumer sections in those markets which are neither quantifiable nor verifiable within the scope of this report.

As an example, although the tampering incident featured widely in Thai traditional and social media, export of Australian strawberries to Thailand continued to grow until the end of 2018, long after the incident had died down.

To prepare this document, SenateSHJ undertook multi-layered research, including a review of existing literature, an audit of traditional and social media in each of the affected markets, and consultation with over 20 stakeholders representing more than a dozen organisations. Insights and data generated through this research has been used to develop the project plan and associated communication strategy which features in this document.

The project plan and communication strategy herein includes recommended actions for implementation both in Australia and in the international markets mentioned above. Wherever possible, our recommendations are evidence-based. We have also drawn from the intuition, expertise and insight of stakeholders we spoke with during the consultation phase, as well as that of our colleagues in each of the affected markets.

Informed by these inputs into the plan, we have included nuanced recommendations to address the following key findings from our research:

- Many in the industry have suffered significant financial loss from the incident in 2018 and some believe there may still be a lag effect that could impact future export sales.

- There are concerns within industry and in government that the extent of anxiety among stakeholders and consumers in export markets, with regards to Australian strawberries, is not fully understood, and there is risk in not proactively addressing this latent anxiety.
- In some markets there is misalignment between the views of in-market Australian trade representatives and the local public reaction to the tampering incident (i.e. evidenced by published comments in traditional and social media).
- In terms of official government communication with export markets covered in this plan, there is low risk for Australia's strawberry and broader horticulture industry, in proactively communicating to trading partners what occurred during the incident and what has taken (or will take) place to ameliorate risk and improve communication. Internationally based stakeholders consulted as part of this report, support this view. It is understood that there are existing recommendations not to reignite the tampering issue by messaging remedial actions. These are noted and understood to relate specifically to consumer communications, as opposed to the official/ government-to-government communication we are recommending.
- In addition to risk management, it is believed that a trade delegation (or official visit) to export markets could also be used to launch proactive communications (e.g. a marketing promotion) that will help retailers of Australian strawberries grow their sales during the peak purchasing/ stocking period (July-December).
- Whilst there is support among stakeholders for a marketing campaign, should that occur, it will be important to tailor communication to each market and not offer a 'cookie-cutter' approach to all.
- In the event a decision is made to activate any of the recommendations contained in this document, that activity should commence as soon as possible given the risk to revenues in the strawberry industry concerns the peak buying period of July-December.

# Background

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Australia's strawberry industry is valued at more than A\$500m annually. Between 2-5% of annual crop production is sold as export with the main purchasers being United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, New Zealand and Thailand.

Whilst Queensland (QLD) and Victoria (VIC) produce the largest yearly crops, the vast majority of Australian strawberry exports are from Western Australia (WA) (\$25.1m<sup>1</sup>). Strawberries are also grown in New South Wales (NSW), South Australia (SA) and Tasmania (TAS). Since strawberry crops are located throughout the country, crops can be susceptible to fire, drought, flood and other, potentially damaging climatic impacts.

For instance, at the time of writing this report, drought and the impact on runner stock is a major concern for growers in Queensland. It is therefore difficult to attribute any fluctuations in strawberry exports to any single, specific event such as the strawberry tampering incident in 2018.

The tampering incident in August 2018 attracted widespread local and international attention. From the outset, heightened public attention regarding the risks of 'strawberry contamination' was driven largely by social media and responses from various authorities and influencers before proper investigation and verification of individual reports was possible.

On 9 September 2018, a Facebook user posted a message that his friend had swallowed part of a needle in strawberries purchased from a major supermarket chain in Moreton Bay, north of Brisbane. Two days later a second consumer contacted the supermarket reporting to have found needles in strawberries.

On 12 September 2018, Queensland Health and Queensland Police announced three cases of 'contaminated strawberries' in two brands from a Queensland grower. Following this announcement, the first in a series of copycat incidents was reported in state and national media.

Initial government intervention was to issue a public statement warning of risks relating to three brands of strawberries. According to stakeholders consulted for this report, this statement was poorly understood and led to confusion over the exact brands which were impacted. At least one authority recommended consumers throw out purchased strawberries if concerned about safety.

In response to the incident, the Queensland Government offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to an arrest, the NSW Police announced a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the prosecution of any individual who contaminates a food source, and food regulatory agencies and the Federal Government announced tougher penalties for food tampering including:

- increasing the maximum imprisonment from 10 to 15 years for people convicted of food tampering, and
- the creation of new offences linked to "reckless" conduct, including hoaxes and social media posts showing fruit being tampered with, attracting penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment.

The Queensland State Government provided the public clear advice to cut up fruit before consumption, and they offered no further comment in relation to incidents that were not confirmed as genuine.

The level of public anxiety and subsequent impact on Australia's strawberry exports, highlighted areas for improvement and raised concerns within the industry about the prospects for strawberry exports in 2019.

In response, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources issued a public tender for the development of a project plan outlining potential activities to support the Australian strawberry industry to regain and retain market share in affected export markets to rebuild international consumer confidence in Australian strawberries. The expectation of the stakeholder-led

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook: Fruit. 2017/18. pg 31.

consultation is that recommendations be evidence-based and scalable to ensure an appropriate return on investment.

Notwithstanding the tampering incident, 2018 was a difficult year for Australia's strawberry industry. Drought and heat affected some growers in Queensland, where some growers in other states experienced high-yield harvests. Growers in some states also faced ongoing challenges in relation to sourcing labour. It is in this context – where different growers/ stakeholders experienced a variety of local challenges, that the project plan in this document has been developed.

# Research methodology

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This plan has been developed using a layered research approach, beginning with an audit of traditional and social media in the affected markets of Thailand, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore, conducted by colleagues and partner agencies of SenateSHJ.

The traditional and social media audit was predicated on the need to identify:

- the extent of public discourse in relation to the tampering issue
- the tone of public commentary (i.e. on traditional and social media) concerning the incident from a reputation management perspective; the audit looked for indicators of blame towards the Australian industry, government, et al, and
- official public comments made by regulators or relevant authorities in response to the tampering incident.

The audit covered all traditional and social media concerning the incident which was published between 1 September and 30 November 2018. In summary this included:

- all traditional media mastheads in each market (both online and print)
- all active social media platforms in each market
- all official regulatory and relevant authority channels in each market.

The goal of the audit was to enable a data-led analysis of each market in terms of the potential reputational damage done to Australian strawberries from the time of initial media reports of the tampering until traditional and social media reportage/ comment in relation to the incident died down.

In February 2019 we commenced the consultation phase of our research. This involved us speaking directly with a mix of locally and internationally based stakeholders, seeking their insights on the incident in order to help shape our recommendations.

To ensure we received open and honest feedback from stakeholders during the interviews, anonymity was offered to all. As such the identity of each interviewee has been kept confidential in this document.

A list of the organisations we interviewed can be found on page 9. A copy of the questionnaire used during the interviews can be found in the Appendix of this document.

Whilst we were conducting our consultation phase, we were also provided with raw export data from the previous three financial years, which we reviewed in relation to the market insights we gained during the media audit and consultation phases of the project. A literature review was also conducted to inform this plan. That included analysis of two existing reports which were produced in the wake of the tampering incident:

- Strawberry tampering incident, Report to Government, October 2018, by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
- Issues Management: Needles in Strawberries Crisis, September 2018, by SDA Strategic

The recommendations published in these reports focus on initiatives to address crisis management in the event of future tampering incidents, measures to improve food security within the supply chain, and stronger collaboration between state and federal jurisdictions with respect to publishing fake/ hoax tampering news on social media. Recommendations in this report are designed to build on recommendations for local initiatives detailed in the SDA Strategic and FSANZ reports, particularly with regards to improving management of traditional and social media in any future food tampering incidents. This report builds on this existing research and also looks beyond Australia towards recommendations that will help local strawberry growers manage and build reputation in the key export markets of New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE and Hong Kong. The full recommendations from the SDA Strategic and FSANZ reports are as follows:



Strawberry tampering incident, Report to Government (FSANZ)	Issues Management: Needles in Strawberries Crisis (SDA Strategic)
1. All jurisdictions should review their food incident response protocols - in particular ensuring that formal linkages between regulators, health departments and police are in place for incidents involving intentional contamination.	1. A new national framework and protocols need to be developed collaboratively across jurisdictions to specifically deal with food terrorism, sabotage or tampering incidents.
2. When a food tampering incident occurs across jurisdictions, a central agency should be engaged to ensure national coordination of messaging and information associated with the incident.	2. The new crisis management system for such events should be distinct from normal food safety recall procedures for contamination during production or handling.
3. Police should be included in national food incident debriefs when intentional food tampering is involved.	3. It should be standard initial procedure to appoint an experienced crisis manager who can advise on communication strategy, messaging, stakeholder management and community outreach to help safely contain the situation while reducing reputation risk.
4. Triggers for activation and management of intentional contamination of food under the National Food Incident Response Protocol (NFIRP) should be reviewed by the food regulatory system.	4. All jurisdictions should collaborate on a united approach to measures which limit social media as a channel for exacerbating future food product crisis events, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- penalties for first publicly reporting a tampering incident via social media instead of contacting appropriate authorities (usually police)</li> <li>- formal request to Facebook to put in place procedures for blocking such messaging (extending their existing filtering procedures preventing crime and terrorism posts)</li> <li>- agreement by mainstream media regarding publication of any unconfirmed reports posted on social media.</li> </ul>
5. A representative body for the horticulture industry is required to support crisis preparedness and response in the sector.	5. A national program of crisis management familiarisation and counselling should be implemented to support crisis preparedness and response across Australian horticulture.
6. Traceability measures within the horticulture sector need to be strengthened. Government and industry should work together to map the current state of play and identify options and tools for enhancing traceability.	6. Work on improving product traceability and/or any new security measures implemented in the supply chain should not be publicised, to prevent triggering inappropriate responses from malicious individuals.
7. Traceability measures within the horticulture sector need to be strengthened. Government and industry should work together to map the current state of play and identify options and tools for enhancing traceability.	7. Research should be initiated into the behaviours behind food terrorism and tampering and the steps for countering this pattern before it further escalates and undermines our existing proven food safety and product recall systems.
	8. A simple guide should be collaboratively developed on agreed public language to be used in food sabotage situations by all jurisdictions, including situation descriptions and terminology of aspects of the issue/s



In addition, we reviewed publicly available market analysis published by AUSTRADE concerning each of the markets covered in this report.

In terms of stakeholder consultations, we spoke with 28 individuals from a range of local and international based organisations, as follows:

Segment	Organisation
National Bodies	Strawberries Australia
	Berries Australia
	Horticulture Innovation Australia
State Grower Associations	Queensland Strawberry Growers Association
	Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee
	WA Strawberry Growers
	Fruit Growers Tasmania
	Growcom
Federal Government (domestic focus)	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
	Food Standards Australia New Zealand
Federal Government (international focus)	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
	Austrade
New Zealand Government Department	Confidential
State Government Departments	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
	Primary Industries and South Regions SA
End Buyers (international)	New Zealand fresh food business owner

Interviews were also sought with representatives of the following organisations:

- NSW Department of Trade and Industry
- Agriculture Victoria
- South Australia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.
- Countdown Supermarkets, New Zealand

Follow-up contact was made with selected stakeholders to test and validate the strategic recommendations which feature in this document. Those local and international stakeholders are as follows:

- Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Austrade representatives in Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and UAE
- Public Relations Organisation International (PROI) partners in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong
- SenateSHJ colleagues in Auckland and Wellington.



## Findings from stakeholder consultations

# Stakeholder consultations: key findings

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In the pages which follow we summarise the key findings from our interviews with local and international stakeholders who were likely to have been impacted by the Australian strawberry tampering incident. They included growers, brand leads, delegates responsible for single and multiple international markets and representatives of national bodies.

## Australian stakeholders

We spoke with 18 Australian-based stakeholders representing growers, state and federal government. All stakeholders interviewed were aware of the strawberry tampering incident and its cause, with some holding strong views about how it was initially handled.

The following is a summary of the key points raised by local stakeholders during the consultations.

### Factors which played a part in the incident and its impact

Findings from stakeholders on their understanding of the issue as it first arose, are as follows:

- The lack of clarity on the source of the tampering contributed to public concern/ panic.
- Some stakeholders felt that the incident was blown out of proportion by police, and that the public attention fueled copycat behaviour/ hoaxes.
- The response was neither proportionate nor evidence-based. Before the facts were known, agents and buyers had made up their minds not to buy strawberries; Police named brands and Coles and Woolworths removed strawberries from supermarket shelves.
- Supermarkets removing product from shelves was perceived as having a substantially negative impact on the industry.
- The incident came towards the end of the season when prices were already low, however an economic impact was still felt by many growers. Growers experienced significant loss of income in the winter market.
- Growers noted broadly strong support on social media.
- In October – November growers were struggling to pay bills with Landmark etc. Credit defaults increased as a result of lost revenues stemming from the tampering incident.
- Copycats made the biggest impact and the industry is very conscious of that not happening again.
- Disproportionate response due to social media.

### Factors outside the incident which impacted sales

- Seasonal issues – lack of volume due to the end of winter production.
- Supply aspect – production had been increasing at a great rate. It peaked about two years ago and that's affected the price.

### The response from industry to the incident

- The main challenge was thought to be that the industry wasn't united behind the issue. It would have been helpful if the industry had a single, united voice.
- The recent rockmelon listeria outbreak was recalled as an example of an incident which was handled well by the relevant authorities.

## The response from government to the incident

From our interviews, stakeholders have suggested that communication during the tampering incident could have been handled better. This is reflected in **'poorly'** being the most common rating for "overall satisfaction with communication about the issue".

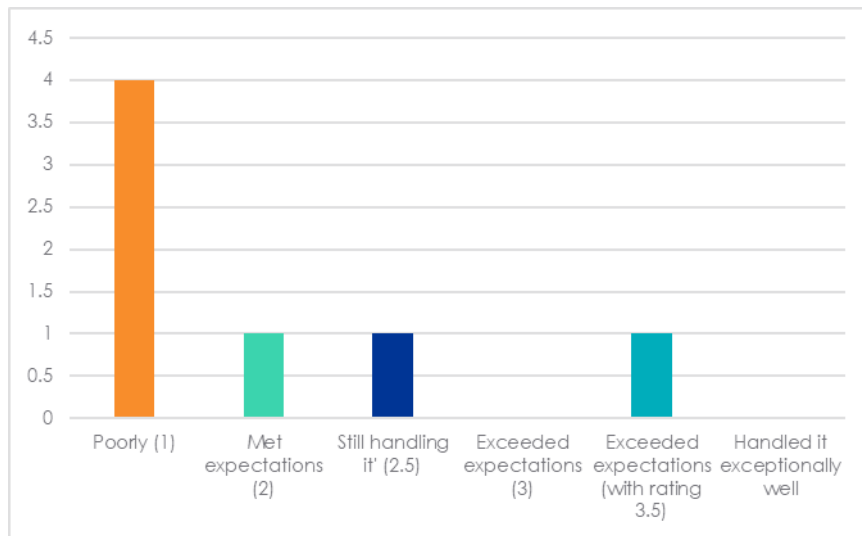


Figure 1: Overall rankings of how well stakeholders' contacts handled the strawberry tampering issue with them.

Key themes on how stakeholders viewed the communication around the incident were as follows:

- Initially a poor response which improved as time went on.
- Specific brands shouldn't have been mentioned in the media.
- The government responded in a public way that negatively impacted consumer sentiment towards strawberries. It wasn't a biological issue, it was tampering.
- Stakeholders were appreciative of the Prime Minister's involvement/support.
- When asked what action Australian food authorities could take to prevent this sort of incident happening in the future, the advice from stakeholders was to learn from what happened and look to improve the systems currently in place.

## The impact to sales volume

All stakeholders who gave a definitive answer to the question: "Are you aware of any drop in the volume of Australian strawberry sales since September 2018?" reported a drop in the Australian strawberry sales.

The underlying reasons for this drop in sales, as communicated during consultations, were reported as:

- Community concern and doubt about the safety of strawberries.
- Poorly handled communication by calling it a "contamination" issue which inferred a health risk.
- Reputational issue among consumers domestically which spread internationally.
- International purchasers were not as forgiving as the Australian public.
- Prices were low prior to the tampering incident as it occurred during peak production. The tampering incident pushed many growers to the brink financially.

Stakeholder suggestions to increase sales volumes were as follows:

- To increase public support maintain consumer momentum.
- A need to understand who won't plant in mid-March and the numbers there as that will impact sales volume/ availability.
- Whilst growers would like to see export prices increase, they recognised that creating new markets will be challenging as strawberries are a perishable product.
- Need to stand out among berry competition e.g. blueberries. Berries are driven by the big players in the sector. The big players are significant agricultural entities that have created greater volume in the market and put pressure on family farming operations.

## The impact to perceptions of Australian produce and safety

### Safety of Australian fresh produce

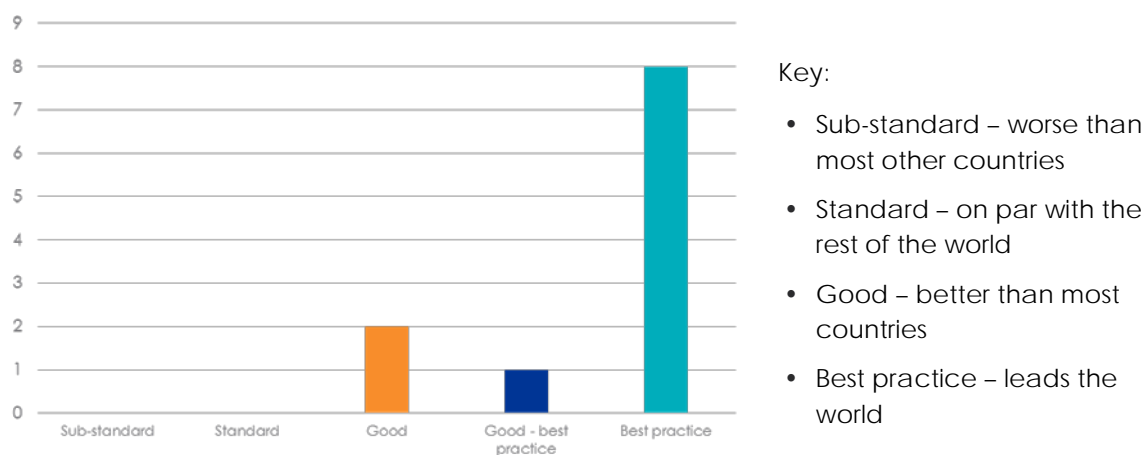


Figure 2: Stakeholder views on the safety of Australian fresh produce

- Stakeholders had an optimistic view overall of the safety and quality of Australian fresh produce, despite the tampering incident.
- Hort Innovation undertook its own qualitative and quantitative research to understand perceptions of the tampering issue. That research showed that consumers were supportive of farmers and saw the issue as 'food terrorism' rather than a quality issue<sup>2</sup>.
- The incident did not cause stakeholders concern about food safety standards.
- When asked to rate the quality of Australian fresh produce supplies compared to other markets, stakeholders tended to view Australian fresh produce favourably with the majority giving the rating of 'excellent'. This question was asked in order to gain perspectives on how stakeholders believe Australia's horticulture industry compares, in terms of quality, safety, et al, with that of other nations.

### A lag effect

All definitive responses to the question: "Has there been any kind of lag effect – purchase volumes not returning to normal levels, anything else?" were 'no'.

Feedback on the presence of a lag effect was as follows:

- There were other factors at play in 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Whilst Hort Innovation research was cited by a stakeholder during consultation, it should be noted that this was internal research conducted for the Apple & Pear and Avocado industries. While the research was conducted following the strawberry tampering incidents, care needs to be taken in extrapolating the outcomes of the research specifically to the strawberry industry.



- Oversupply and resultant low prices were a factor. The tampering incident provided a reason to dump uneconomic fruit onto the market.

### Stakeholder recommendations for improving reputation

Stakeholders were asked for their recommendations for how to improve reputation following the incident. The following is a selection of the more common responses.

- Greater consumer understanding of the complex and lengthy supply chain to reduce impact on farmers.
- Improve management of social media – the naming of individual brands was very damaging and perpetuated the issue.
- Need to liaise with Facebook to suggest adding moderation on posts (similar to inappropriate content) because of the damage it can cause.
- Introduction of tamper proof packaging<sup>3</sup>.

### The international response to the incident

Responses to the question *“Did any other countries try and capitalise on the Australian strawberry issue and, if so, what did they do and were they successful?”* were as follows:

- Some countries banned Australian strawberries.
- The U.S. took up the slack when Australian strawberries were out of Singapore and Dubai.
- We missed our New Zealand target because they couldn’t get back in there before the season finished.
- Russia advised its citizens not to buy Australian strawberries.

## International stakeholders

We spoke with 10 internationally based stakeholders representing local retailers, consumers and government, as well as representatives of Australian government agencies and departments. All stakeholders interviewed were aware of the strawberry tampering incident and its cause, with some holding strong views about how it was initially handled.

### Factors which played a part in the incident and its impact

- Singapore’s reaction was the “quickest and possibly strongest” particularly with regards social media (high presence/ activity in Singapore).
- Context of following on from the Listeria outbreak in rockmelons heightened sensitivities.
- Copycat incidents further inflamed the issue.

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<sup>3</sup> Whilst this was suggested as a possible remedial measure by more than one interviewee it was also balanced by counter argument concerning cost.



## Government department's response to the incident

International stakeholders were, on the whole, impressed with the level and type of communication received about the incident.

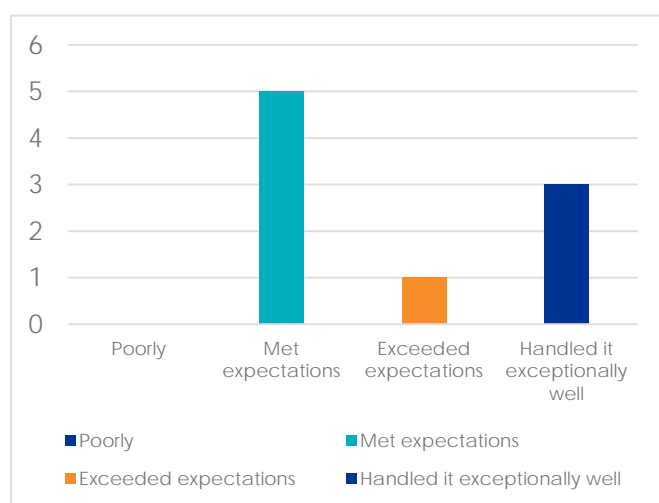


Figure 3: All stakeholders rated communication received as Met expectations, Exceeded expectations or Handled it exceptionally well.

Key responses to the tampering incidents in export markets are highlighted below. Additional feedback provided during consultations with stakeholders in each of the markets covered by this report is summarised on the following pages.

### Key responses to the strawberry tampering incidents

- The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) provided regular updates on the strawberry tampering incidents to overseas Posts in strawberry export markets, who in turn communicated the information provided to trading partners.
- On 19 September 2018, DAWR implemented new measures under the *Export Control Act 1982* and *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Order 2011*, requiring strawberry exporters to provide an assurance that consignments were free from metal contaminants through measures such as effective screening.
- These changes were communicated to industry, relevant state and territory authorities and overseas Posts, with guidance on how to comply with the new export requirements provided to industry.

### Singapore

- DAWR was in touch with Singapore food regulators which helped.

### Thailand

- Austrade provided general advice on the steps DAWR was taking in Australia to counter the issue and informed the local market of the credibility of checking systems in Australia.
- The government is primarily responsible for handling crises of this nature.
- DFAT, DAWR, Austrade – all have a role to play.
- Regulators need to be transparent and be seen to be responsive – they carry a lot of the weight.
- Because produce lands in these countries with an Australian government certificate, the importing countries will hold the Australian government responsible.

## Media response to the incident

### Thailand

- Awareness was via Australian media and through DAWR people in Thailand, not Thai media.

### Singapore

- There was a bit of local Singaporean media coverage off the back of the Australian media. The Singaporean media follow Australian media closely.
- The coverage of expanded use of metal detectors helped reassure the Singaporean market.
- One case was discovered in Singapore where Australian strawberries were found with a metal object in them. This received considerable media coverage in Singapore. Media coverage was sufficient for regulators to offer advice to local retailers. The advice was to provide additional advice to consumers to cut up strawberries prior to consumption (as was the advice to Australian consumers).
- The decision on whether Australian strawberries could continue to be stocked was left to individual retailers. This resulted in a number of retail outlets stopping importation of Australian strawberries.

### Hong Kong

- Heard that there had been intentional tampering.

## The impact to sales volume

The majority of stakeholders agreed that there would likely have been some negative impact on sales volumes:

### Hong Kong

- Order volumes have stayed the same.

### Malaysia

- The incident led to people cutting open their strawberries. As there were no local reports of contaminants the crisis did not escalate. There were consequences, in terms of impact to local sales, but these were not significant.

### UAE

- Strawberries were banned quite quickly<sup>4</sup>.
- UAE is one of the biggest markets for Australian strawberries – that's a big loss.
- 80-90% of food must be imported, so when they rely so heavily on imports they have a very acute sense of food safety and food security.

### Singapore

- The strawberry tampering incident came on the back of the rockmelon listeria outbreak. There was already heightened sensitivity regarding regulation of fruit imports and Singapore regulators were already looking very closely at Australia.
- There was an immediate drop in Australian imports into Singapore, with an effective ban by the retail outlets.
- The shutdown by importers not wanting to stock Australian produce had a big impact with South African and American suppliers quickly stepping up to fill the gap in the market. That left little time for Australia to fight back and regain market share.

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<sup>4</sup> The stakeholder consulted in this interview could not recall the exact timing of the ban imposed on Australian strawberries.

- Singapore is a highly competitive market. You can compete on price or quality. Australia couldn't compete on quality at the time and we can't compete on price to some extent.
- Stakeholders interviewed believed that Australian strawberry sales have started to recover some market share, but volumes remain lower than those prior to September 2018<sup>5</sup>.
- While one person was arrested, there has not been any answer to the question of whether the tampering could happen again.

#### **Thailand**

- At the time concern among major retail groups was raised.
- Different retail groups were sourcing from different states in Australia. The groups not sourcing from Queensland were less concerned.
- Thailand: not aware of any long term effect on other produce. Not sure about strawberries because 2019 season has not arrived yet.
- Western Australia had metal detection so there was much less concern from groups sourcing WA strawberries.

#### **Stakeholder recommendations for improving reputation**

Stakeholders interviewed provided their own recommendations for how the industry's reputation could be improved:

- Media monitoring (consider international implications) and building media relations at export and source (i.e. in Australia) markets.
- Marketing suggested as useful, as well as things that are "more on the commercial side – e.g. cooking shows".
- Contracting someone like a MasterChef to use strawberries.
- Increased work with government.

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<sup>5</sup> The stakeholder who offered this feedback was expressing an opinion not supported by evidence.



## Strawberries reputation rebuild plan

# Communication strategy

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## Risk analysis: export markets

Based on the evidence we have gathered, it is our assessment that export sales of Australian strawberries in the upcoming 2019 peak period (July – December) face a range of reputational risks that could adversely impact export revenues to the sector.

Our research also points to opportunities to grow sales in markets where overall market share is low relative to competitors.

The identified risk is not uniform across all affected export markets. We have categorised low, medium and high-risk markets based on the available evidence.

The summary of those risks follows.

Market	Risk Level	Rationale
New Zealand	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quantifiable negative impact on sales in 2018 immediately following the tampering incident</li><li>• Australian strawberries were pulled from supermarket shelves in 2018</li><li>• Local New Zealand strawberry growers compete with the Australian export product</li><li>• Anecdotal evidence of shoppers avoiding Australian strawberries as recently as January 2019</li><li>• Anecdotal evidence of high sensitivity among New Zealand retailers concerning Australian strawberries</li><li>• Widespread media coverage on the tampering incident</li><li>• Widespread social media commentary of the tampering incident</li><li>• The incident can easily be viewed through the prism of Australia – New Zealand rivalries</li></ul>
Singapore	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quantifiable negative impact on sales in 2018 immediately following the tampering incident</li><li>• Highly sensitive to issues concerning food security given over 90% of food in Singapore is imported</li><li>• Australian strawberries were pulled from supermarket shelves in 2018</li><li>• Widespread media coverage of the tampering incident</li><li>• Widespread social media commentary concerning the tampering incident</li></ul>

Market	Risk Level	Rationale
UAE	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantifiable negative impact to sales in 2018 immediately following the tampering incident</li> <li>• Highly sensitive to issues concerning food security given over 90% of food in UAE is imported</li> <li>• Australian strawberries were pulled from supermarket shelves in 2018</li> <li>• Widespread media coverage of the tampering incident</li> <li>• Widespread social media commentary concerning the tampering incident</li> </ul>
Thailand	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent strong growth in sales to Thailand suggests downside risk, if 2019 harvest sales are low</li> <li>• Overall annual sales are nearly double those of Malaysia</li> <li>• Thai media was interested in the tampering incident as a criminal act but coverage of a suspect having been caught has been limited; i.e. Thai consumers may still believe the crisis is ongoing and unresolved</li> <li>• Public comment on social media focussed on who was responsible for the tampering; this also could be seen as being unresolved given the limited coverage in traditional media of the suspect arrest</li> </ul>
Malaysia	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales over the past three financial years have been relatively stable and predictable</li> <li>• Low number of 'local source' news stories published about the tampering incident</li> <li>• Low strawberry consumption relative to other markets</li> <li>• High competition for relatively small market</li> <li>• Some local produce also in competitive mix</li> </ul>
Hong Kong	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual sales low compared with other key export markets</li> <li>• There is a high potential upside were Australia to take a proactive marketing approach to grow annual sales into Hong Kong</li> <li>• Traditional and social media coverage was balanced and neutral in tone</li> </ul>



## **Risk analysis: Australia**

A further risk we have identified concerns Australia.

Research, which we and other organisations (i.e. FSANZ and SDA Strategic) have conducted, points to the need for activity to bolster Australia's capability to deliver coordinated, national communications in the event of a food security crisis that involves criminal activity.

Were Australia not to implement any lasting changes following the tampering incident, there is a risk our trading partners may form the view that we have not learnt from the 2018 incident and our strawberries are less safe as a result.

Whilst measures to strengthen the security of the supply chain have been deployed in some jurisdictions (and suggested in others), these measures are viewed by the industry as punitive and/or prohibitively expensive.

If our risk analysis of exports above is accepted, implementation of remedial activity to support Australia's strawberry exports in 2019 is justified.

Should our recommended remedial activities be approved, there is a need to develop a reactive narrative (i.e. to be used only if asked) concerning what Australia has learnt and subsequently implemented, to address the possibility of future incidents.

Therefore, this document includes recommendations for remedial activities here in Australia (as well as export markets) with the dual purpose of:

- enabling better crisis communication processes and outcomes for future incidents of a similar nature, and
- giving the Australian strawberry industry an effective narrative to take to export markets to address any concerns which may be raised once remedial activity commences.

## **Balancing proactive and reactive communication**

We recognise the view that suggests commencing proactive activities could risk reminding people of the incident with potential negative consequences.

In recognition of this, our recommended strategy of proactive communication is predicated as much on what is unknown, as what is known.

We know specific actions by authorities and regulators in certain export markets, coupled with the quantity and tone of traditional and social media commentary, create an environment that could be a HIGH risk to sales of Australian strawberries.

What is not known is whether the actions and comment from 2018 will impact sales in 2019. This requires a judgment call which weighs the risk associated with doing nothing versus those of being proactive.

To ensure proactive communication is commensurate to the level of risk in each market, we are proposing remedial activities that are scalable and bespoke to each.

We are not recommending high-visibility above the line communications. What we are recommending is targeted activities in each market supported by the risk analysis of each and the overarching strategy of *proactive communication* in the lead up to the 2019 peak buying period.

## **Right-sizing the narrative**

In order to balance communication in each market, it will be important to design and deliver a narrative that is framed around positive key messages concerning Australian strawberries. This is how we propose stakeholders within export markets – including in some instances consumers – can be engaged in discussions about Australian strawberries without drawing attention back to the tampering incident of 2018.



On page 41 of this document we detail our recommendations for a creative marketing campaign. This includes two suggested creative taglines which will frame consumer marketing activity in selected markets.

### **Resourcing against risk**

Pages 20-21 detail the risk analysis completed for each export market. That analysis informs the recommended remedial activities and necessary resources required to implement those activities. It follows that the financial and human resources that are applied to address reputational risks to Australia's strawberry exports be distributed to those markets where the risks are deemed to be high.

However, decisions about allocation of resources – i.e. financial and human – need to be made in line with the recommended communication strategies at the individual market level. For instance, whilst New Zealand is identified as a high-risk market, it is not recommended more costly 'above-the-line' resources (i.e. advertising, marketing) be deployed in that market given the level of sensitivity towards Australian strawberries which is known to be still present.

In contrast, whilst Hong Kong has been identified as a low-risk market, we have identified opportunity for upside growth should the strawberry industry, either through, or independent from, government, seek to market its product more aggressively in that market.

### **Recommended key messages**

The communication strategy we are recommending is one of proactive communication to export markets, building from the base.

The base refers to Australia and we recommend the actions are implemented as a matter of urgency. Delivering these measures will provide proof points in a suite of key messages which would be available to officials joining the trade delegation to export markets.

Those messages should include, but not be limited to, those listed below. The selection of messages should be bespoke to each market, mindful of the level of risk, local sensitivities, et al.

Should recommended activities be put in place, further messaging will be developed to communicate these activities accordingly.

#### *Messages about the marketing campaign*

- The upcoming 2019 strawberry harvest should be supported by a marketing campaign.
- The marketing campaign should incorporate Australian strawberries in some of your world-famous national dishes.
- Australia wants people in [e.g. Singapore] to think about using Australian strawberries as a delicious accompaniment to traditional meals.
- People in [e.g. Thailand] should also know more about the positive health benefits of Australian strawberries and how they can help alleviate some of the most important health issues affecting them, such as [e.g hypertension].

#### *Messages about the incident*

- The tampering incident of 2018 was a criminal act; a suspect has been charged in relation to the offence and is currently awaiting trial.
- The level of media coverage of the incident was disproportionate to the scale of tampering which occurred; only four punnets from one facility were tampered with.
- Social media was used by hoaxers to make the incident appear more widespread than it was.

# Project plan

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## AUSTRALIA

The following initiatives are recommended to be conducted in advance of the peak purchasing and harvest period for Australian strawberries.

**1. Review and improve approach to food crisis management of incidents where criminality is involved.**

Informed by learnings from the recent strawberry tampering incident, review current crisis communications protocols to ensure they are appropriately designed to manage incidents of a criminal nature. This review will investigate the need for a new or revised framework that adequately includes Police and relevant security authorities as key stakeholders in the management of criminal incidents affecting strawberries.

Using the strawberries tampering incident to pilot this revised approach could be also be useful for other horticultural produce.

### **Rationale**

Existing reviews of crisis communications protocols enacted during the tampering incident of 2018 have pointed to a gap in the existing process which was not designed to communicate incidents involving criminal activity.

As the coordinating agency for national food crisis management, we recommend FSANZ continue to coordinate the crisis management framework. FSANZ should work closely with DAWR on the review/ revision and resulting training of the existing incident communication framework.

**2. Create a social media crisis plan as an addendum to the new/revised crisis communications framework.**

A further output of the review detailed in #1 above will be the development of a strategy for managing social media during a food crisis, predicated on the need to avoid unwitting public escalation of crises through public social media channels.

The social media strategy will be supported by a resource plan in the case of activation. Key stakeholders and their respective internal and external staff/ support are expected to be part of that resource plan.

Part of the social media strategy will include ongoing monitoring or 'flagging' of content published on social media that could foreshadow a crisis for Australia's strawberry industry.

### **Rationale**

Reviews of the tampering incident have pointed to social media as having unnecessarily escalated the crisis through publication of hoax/ copycat incidents. In some cases, those hoaxes were reported in traditional media without proper fact checking, creating the impression that the crisis was far worse and more widespread than it really was.

Also, since traditional and social media news coverage of food security events is 'borderless' and not confined to national or state jurisdictions, it will be important to implement national social media monitoring to watch for any issues that may be raised outside of official reporting channels.

As the coordinating agency for national food crisis management, FSANZ should be the ongoing 'owner' of social media monitoring tool(s). At SenateSHJ we support the Australian-owned STREEM monitoring service. Many similar services are available.

**3. Test the revised crisis management plan and social media strategy against a simulation scenario involving criminal activity affecting Australian strawberries.**

Put all relevant stakeholders and support staff through a simulated crisis to test the effectiveness of both the revised crisis management plan and social media strategy. Key learnings from the simulation will inform final refinements to the plan and strategy before final approval.

This approach will test the effectiveness of communication interfaces between Federal and State Government departments and Police, and will enable all stakeholders to both proactively and reactively address a 'live' crisis as it plays out in traditional and social media.

**Rationale**

The best crisis plans are only as solid as the people responsible for implementing them. Investment to review and refine the existing crisis framework and add a social media strategy warrants further investment to test (and if necessary train) staff in their usage. Ideally, training simulations would be run annually.

**4. Open lines of communication with executives at leading social media publishers.**

DAWR and the Australian strawberry industry to host senior executives of global social media channels for a roundtable discussion on balancing the need for open/ free public discourse on social media with the interests of Australian strawberry growers.

The roundtable will include presentations delivered by strawberry grower industry representatives to inform social media publishers of the impact of the crisis and the role social media played in escalating (and, to a certain extent, neutralising) it.

Engagement with social media publishers will aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Open communication between crisis coordinator (FSANZ) and social media publishers for the purposes of publishing official crisis communication messaging (i.e. directly from the publisher to users in relevant geographies).
- Agreement to expand content fact-checking efforts to include hoax food tampering content published on their platforms.

**Rationale**

There is considerable public support for greater accountability by social media publishers in relation to content published on their platforms. This is now becoming an issue which Governments are willing to address, particularly where issues of public safety are concerned. In this current climate there is potential for social media platforms to become an important part of the solution in how information concerning future food tampering incidents is shared and disseminated.

Whilst the 2018 strawberry tampering incident will be the central case study that informs the discussion, the overall benefit of closer alignment between social media publishers and relevant authorities during times of crisis is a much larger conversation. We believe it is large enough and important enough to get the attention of social media publishers and, should they agree to enact the outcomes detailed above, provide a new global benchmark.

**5. Open lines of communication with senior editors at leading national and state-based mastheads.**

Host senior journalists of leading national and state mastheads in a roundtable discussion during which key stakeholders inform the media of recent initiatives to safeguard current and future strawberry crops. Talking points delivered by strawberry grower representatives concerning grower expectations for the upcoming harvest would be included.

The roundtable would provide the opportunity to learn from the invited guests how the industry might better communicate as one voice with the Australian media in the event of future food security incidents. Dovetailing this roundtable with sign-off of the revised crisis communication framework mentioned above will provide an additional area for dialogue.

Engagement with journalists will aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Journalists understand the correct line of communication for factual information during a food tampering crisis – i.e. the crisis coordinator (FSANZ).
- Journalists understand the potential impacts the 2018 food tampering incident could have on Australia's strawberry growing industry.

**Rationale**

Australian journalists will benefit from learning first-hand the fears and expectations of Australian strawberry growers as they look towards the upcoming harvest season. They will also benefit from a deeper understanding of how communication works during times of food security crises.

## EXPORT MARKETS

It is recommended the following initiatives be conducted advance of the peak purchasing and harvest period for Australian strawberries. These initiatives should be conducted following the completion of the activities listed previously with respect to the Australian market.

### 1. Engage trade partners via official channels.

In addition to ongoing trade work in export markets, run a trade delegation of representatives of Federal departments and industry to meet with trading partner representatives in New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and UAE.

Nature abhors a vacuum. In the absence of proactive communication to trading partners Australia runs the risk of potential questions regarding the safety of our strawberries going unanswered. A trade delegation would be predicated on the belief that it is better to be proactive, in terms of communication, with trading partners in affected markets. It is the view of SenateSHJ and our PROI partners that taking this approach will build greater trust both in our strawberry industry supply chain and in Australia more generally as a trading partner.

Content presented by the trade delegation should cover:

- Outcome of recent gap analysis of the crisis management framework, with respect to incidents of a criminal nature – i.e. What's changed/improved? What do the improvements mean for trading partners in terms of lines of communication during food security incidents?
- Update on the police investigation into the tampering incident to reaffirm the incident was one of a criminal nature.
- Reinforcement of Australia's world leading food safety standards – i.e. how we do it for all horticultural products.
- Expectations for the upcoming strawberry harvest.
- Introduction of creative marketing campaign (see below) and presentation of related marketing toolkit.

Communication will support speakers attending the trade delegation by creating presentation packs, marketing toolkit and key messages/ lines to take, including a robust Q&A document. In person support for the delegation could also be provided, if needs be.

### Rationale

Looking towards the main 2019 harvest and peak export buying period, the full extent of damage to the reputation of Australian strawberries in export markets is unknown. The recommendation for proactive communications at the official level is therefore made on the basis of managing potential risks.

It is the view of SenateSHJ and our PROI partners in each of the affected markets, that it is better for the industry to proactively engage our trading partners directly than sit back and hope they have forgotten the 2018 tampering incident. This view is also shared by the strawberry industry spokespeople we engaged during the consultation process in developing this plan.

## **2. Deploy a marketing campaign in selected markets to support Australian strawberry exports.**

The marketing campaign should be designed to 'own the conversation' about Australian strawberries in export markets and be fully scalable.

Predicated on the idea to re-introduce Australia's strawberry industry to consumers in export markets, the campaign could be delivered through the following channels:

- As part of communication delivered during the trade delegation presentations.
- As part of one in-store marketing promotion in each of Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Wellington, Hong Kong, Dubai (or Abu Dhabi).
- As collateral (e.g. posters) and file content (i.e. advertorial, photography, infographics, video animation) provided to retailers and consumers in each market.

### **Rationale**

The rationale to support Australia's strawberry industry with an export marketing campaign aligns with the proactive strategy detailed on page 20. The marketing campaign we have designed to deliver this strategy is based on the following objectives:

1. Give trading partners in export markets confidence in the Australian Government's desire to see Australian strawberries succeed in their markets.
2. Align stories about Australian strawberries with local desires, needs and issues in export markets.
3. Give retailers and consumers in export markets opportunities to engage with Australian strawberries in new ways.

## NEW ZEALAND

### STRAWBERRY EXPORT FIGURES (Kgs)

2016-2017: 574,301

2017-2018: 770,125

Risk Analysis: HIGH

Australian food and beverage products are well respected. Packaging differences – the use of 'proudly made in Australia' can have negative perceptions in New Zealand, given the competitive relationship of both countries.

[AUSTRADE website: New Zealand food and beverage](#)

### Remedial activities for New Zealand

1. Send a trade delegation to New Zealand as both a listening tour (i.e. to listen to and address any lingering concerns in that market) and to offer assistance, by way of the marketing campaign, to support sales of Australian strawberries.

Ensure the trade delegation includes an audience with representatives of the Ministry of Primary Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and potentially representatives of the local horticultural industry such as Horticulture NZ, T&G Global and the two major supermarket chains Progressive (from Australia) and Foodstuffs (NZ).

2. Hold an in-store activation during a busy period in a selected store which receives high consumer footfall.
3. Purchase native advertising articles (i.e. advertorials) in widely read online/ print publications with links to social media content including animation video, recipes, et al.
4. Reactively manage media around court proceedings in Australia concerning the person charged with the strawberry tampering incident. Put simply, this means managing, at the local New Zealand level, any media that may be published following a court decision in Australia. Managing means ensuring key messages reinforcing the facts about the case are included in media reportage. The alternative will be to allow New Zealand media to write its own story about the incident. This may not align with the facts as they are known to the Australian strawberry industry.

### New Zealand positioning

Messaging and positioning in New Zealand should focus on the positive attributes of strawberries, as a high source of potassium, in helping to manage hypertension (high blood pressure), one of the six most common chronic health issues affecting New Zealanders.

### Analysis

New Zealand is deemed to be a market at high risk of negative market impact in FY2020. Cessation of purchases immediately following the tampering incident would have had an impact on the sale of Australian strawberries in 2018.

Media coverage in New Zealand was widespread, as was social media commentary throughout the weeks during and following the tampering incident. In addition, one of New Zealand's major supermarket chains removed Australian strawberries from sale and no further strawberries were ordered following the incident.



The results of a recent media audit are also informative:

- 122 unique articles online from Stuff, Newshub, Radio New Zealand, New Zealand Herald, Otago Daily Times, TVNZ, Newstalk ZB, Scoop and The Spinoff.
  - Of these stories, 43 were regarding two isolated cases in which needles were found in a single punnet of strawberries and a capsicum in New Zealand, but also mentioned the Australian incident.
  - Another 15 were focused on criminal action being taken against the alleged perpetrator after DNA was found on one of the needles.
  - There were also several articles that mentioned apples, bananas and mangoes that were also tampered with.
  - The most recent traditional media article was published on November 27 2018.
  - As detailed in the Executive Summary, social media commentary and hoax copycat incidents, have continued in New Zealand to be published as recently as March 2019.

In terms of stakeholder activity during the tampering incident, several stakeholder organisations provided official comment to the New Zealand media reports. They included Australian Government representatives, the New Zealand Prime Minister, New Zealand Minister for Primary Industries, New Zealand Police, Australian Police, growers from both countries, Foodstuffs and Woolworths (trading as Countdown in New Zealand).

Several articles which featured quotes from New Zealand farmers saying that this was an Australian problem, kept the story running. While none of the articles directly discouraged readers from buying Australian strawberries, they emphasised the safety of the New Zealand strawberry industry.

Media concern pivoted quickly to how/ whether the Australian tampering incident might affect New Zealand strawberry growers.

Unlike the other priority export markets for Australian strawberries, New Zealand is a grower and exporter of strawberries in its own right, albeit not at the same scale as Australia. Given New Zealand produces strawberries that are consumed domestically, that market is sensitive to crises affecting Australian producers since they could also turn consumers away from purchasing New Zealand strawberries.

# HONG KONG

## STRAWBERRY EXPORT FIGURES (Kgs)

2016-2017: 366,033

2017-2018: 491,026

Risk Analysis: MEDIUM

*"...international engagement and communication ... needs to be considered, noting export markets and potential trade impacts."*

Recommendation from Strawberry Tampering Incident Report to Government  
October 2018, FSANZ.

## Remedial activities for Hong Kong

1. Send a trade delegation to Hong Kong as both a listening tour (i.e. to listen to and address any lingering concerns in that market) and relationship building exercise, as well as to offer assistance, by way of the marketing campaign, to support local sales of Australian strawberries. Ensure trade delegation includes an audience with representatives of relevant authorities and distributors.
2. Hold an in-store activation during a busy period in a selected store or shopping mall which receives high consumer footfall. Include PR/ earned media to promote the in-store activation and supporting marketing campaign.
3. Purchase native advertising articles (i.e. advertorials) in widely read online publications with links to social media content including animation video, recipes, et al.
4. Purchase social media promotion to push campaign content (i.e. animation video, recipes, et al, to targeted consumers (e.g. mothers).
5. Reactively manage media around court proceedings in Australia concerning the person charged with the strawberry tampering incident. Put simply, this means managing, at the local Hong Kong level, any media that may be published following a court decision in Australia. Managing means ensuring key messages reinforcing the facts about the case are included in media reportage. The alternative will be to allow Hong Kong media to write its own story about the incident. This may not align with the facts as they are known to the Australian strawberry industry.

## Hong Kong positioning

Messaging and positioning in Hong Kong should focus on the positive attributes of strawberries, as a high source of potassium, in helping to manage three of the six most common health issues for men in Hong Kong – heart disease, hypertension and depression.

A second area of positioning should cover the beauty benefits eating strawberries can bring. The vitamin C in strawberries contributes to skin and hair health and their natural fibre aids digestion and even helps in weight loss.

## Analysis

Hong Kong is deemed to be a market at medium risk of negative market impact in FY2020.

It is noted that in-market stakeholders do not believe there will be any residual negative impact to sales of Australian strawberries in FY2020.

It is also noted that Australian fruit and vegetables enjoy a good reputation among local consumers for their consistent quality and food safety standards. Australia's fresh fruit and vegetable export to this market were valued at A\$129 million and A\$15.7 million respectively in 2016/2017.

Nevertheless, sales of Australian strawberries over the past three financial years suggests high market volatility and also opportunity. If Australia's strawberry industry is to recapture (or better) the level of sales achieved in FY2017 it will benefit from a proactive marketing campaign.

Media research from September – November 2018 reveals the extent (and tone) of information which reached the public during the tampering incident:

- Hong Kong media published 20 news stories concerning the needle tampering between 13 September and 13 November.
- The story appeared in major mastheads *The South China Morning Post* and *Apple Daily*, among others.
- Media coverage was neutral, objective, and covered all major moments in the crisis with equal impartiality.
- Media coverage included stories about Australian strawberry farmers who were struggling as a result of the crisis.

In terms of stakeholder activity in Hong Kong, there was no official comment made by the Hong Kong Government or major distributors concerning Australian strawberries during the crisis.

No key influencers in Hong Kong spoke about the crisis, and there were no official warnings published by any government agencies in Hong Kong.

On social media the incident generated significant chatter, albeit relatively benign:

- 767 comments were detected in relation to the tampering of Australian strawberries between 13 September and 13 November.
- Commentary on social media was largely rational and neutral and focused mainly on the arrest of the suspect.
- Some commentary linked the crisis to recent incidents of needles being planted on bus seats in Hong Kong.

## MALAYSIA

### STRAWBERRY EXPORT FIGURES (Kgs)

2016-2017: 278,123

2017-2018: 355,870

Risk Analysis: LOW

Malaysians tend to favour imported fresh produce. Australia's fresh and safe credentials makes it an attractive choice for sourcing fruit and vegetables. In 2015, Malaysia consumed A\$1.1 billion worth of imported fruit and vegetables, with Australia contributing approximately A\$7 million. [AUSTRADE website: Malaysia food & beverage](#)

### Remedial activities for Malaysia

1. Send a trade delegation to Malaysia as both a listening tour (i.e. to listen to and address any lingering concerns in that market) and relationship building exercise, as well as to offer assistance, by way of the marketing campaign, to support local sales of Australian strawberries. Ensure trade delegation includes an audience with representatives of relevant authorities and distributors.
2. Hold an in-store activation during a busy period in a selected store or shopping mall which receives high consumer footfall. Include PR/ earned media to promote the in-store activation and supporting marketing campaign.
3. Purchase native advertising articles (i.e. advertorials) in widely read online publications with links to social media content including animation video, recipes, et al.
4. Purchase social media promotion to push campaign content (i.e. animation video, recipes, et al) to targeted consumers (e.g. mothers).
5. Reactively manage media around court proceedings in Australia concerning the person charged with the strawberry tampering incident. Put simply, this means managing, at the local Malaysian level, any media that may be published following a court decision in Australia. Managing means ensuring key messages reinforcing the facts about the case are included in media reportage. The alternative will be to allow Malaysian media to write its own story about the incident. This may not align with the facts as they are known to the Australian strawberry industry.

### Malaysia positioning

Messaging and positioning in Malaysia should focus on consuming strawberries as an alternative to high-caloric foods which are known to be increasing Malaysia's growing obesity crisis, a leading indicator of [major health issues](#) affecting Malaysia's increasingly urbanised population. These include coronary disease, type II diabetes mellitus, cancer, and mental illness.

A second area of positioning should cover the [beauty benefits](#) eating strawberries can bring. Vitamin C in strawberries contributes to skin and hair health and their natural fibre aids digestion and even helps in weight loss.

### Analysis

Based on preliminary research, the level of reputational damage to Australian strawberries in Malaysia is deemed to be low.

Strawberry consumption in Malaysia is low relative to other regional markets, and Australian strawberries compete for that market share against Japanese and Korean strawberries which are considered to be of better quality. Malaysian strawberries, harvested in the cooler climate of the Cameron Highlands, also compete against the Australian exports.

Media research from September – November 2018 reveals that very few ‘local source’ stories were published on the crisis, with only 15% of media articles reporting the story from a local angle.

- Over 100 articles concerning the tampering were published in Malaysian media across online, print and broadcast media.
- Many of these stories were re-runs through syndicated media outlets and were often re-posts of Reuters and AP stories.
- The majority of stories ran as objective reportage and were free from commentary or local angle.
- The lack of a local angle influenced how the story ran in Malaysian media. This can be attributed to the fact that Malaysians generally are not large consumers of strawberries.

Aside from the statements by the Malaysian Health Ministry, no key influencers or stakeholders were quoted speaking about the issue. At the height of the crisis, the Malaysian Health Ministry ordered all Australian strawberries to be thoroughly checked for needles upon entry to Malaysia; this was reported in Malaysian media.

On social media, the incident did not lead to any widespread concern or criticism of Australian strawberries or Australian food produce in general:

- Public responses to the crisis were largely disbelief at the perpetrator’s actions and concern over accidental needle consumption.
- No comments were found that were disparaging of the reputation of Australian strawberries or Australian food produce in general.
- Some comments showed compassion towards Australian farmers and any affected businesses which could suffer if Malaysian consumers chose to boycott the industry.
- Malaysian netizens also urged caution when eating Australian strawberries by cutting them up before consuming.

## THAILAND

### STRAWBERRY EXPORT FIGURES (Kgs)

2016-2017: 449,981

2017-2018: 616,814

Risk Analysis: MEDIUM

Quality and health considerations, rather than price, are becoming key purchasing factors. Thai consumers are paying more attention to a healthy diet and view Australia as a reliable, reputable supplier of clean, healthy and high-quality products. [AUSTRADE website: Thailand industries food](#)

### Remedial activities for Thailand

1. Send a trade delegation to Thailand as both a listening tour (i.e. to listen to and address any lingering concerns in that market) and relationship building exercise, as well as to offer assistance, by way of the marketing campaign, to support local sales of Australian strawberries. Ensure trade delegation includes an audience with representatives of relevant authorities and distributors.
2. Hold an in-store activation during a busy period in a selected store or shopping mall which receives high consumer footfall. Include PR/ earned media to promote the in-store activation and supporting marketing campaign.
3. Purchase native advertising articles (i.e. advertorials) in widely read online publications with links to social media content including animation video, recipes, et al.
4. Purchase social media promotion to push campaign content (i.e. animation video, recipes, et al) to targeted consumers (e.g. mothers).
5. Reactively manage media around court proceedings in Australia concerning the person charged with the strawberry tampering incident. Put simply, this means managing, at the local Thai level, any media that may be published following a court decision in Australia. Managing means ensuring key messages reinforcing the facts about the case are included in media reportage. The alternative will be to allow Thai media to write its own story about the incident. This may not align with the facts as they are known to the Australian strawberry industry.

### Thailand positioning

The economic growth and urbanisation in Thailand over the last few decades has contributed to growing demand for higher-value fresh and processed products amongst a well-educated, middle and upper-income population. Messaging and positioning in Thailand should therefore focus on the health benefits of strawberries, being rich in antioxidants, vitamins and fibre, and the role of fresh fruit as part of a healthy diet. In addition, messaging on the high quality of Australian strawberries should meet the key considerations for consumers when purchasing produce.

Another area of positioning should cover the beauty benefits eating strawberries can bring. Vitamin C in strawberries contributes to skin and hair health and their natural fibre aids digestion and even helps in weight loss.

### Analysis

Based on traditional and social media research, the level of concern towards Australian strawberry products in Thailand can be estimated as MEDIUM.

Traditional media coverage was mostly focused on the effects of the crisis on Australia's strawberry industry and on bans which were imposed by other affected countries:

- News of the needle tampering was reported in Thailand in 18 outlets across print, broadcast and online media.
- No media coverage carried warnings about Australian produce or consumer recommendations in their reportage.
- Interest among Thai media during the crisis centred on the mystery surrounding the perpetrator and his/ her motives. Relatively few media outlets (8) actually reported the arrest of the alleged perpetrator.
- Since the arrest of a suspect received relatively low coverage in Thai media, it is reasonable to conclude that many Thai consumers may still believe the crisis is ongoing and unresolved.

In terms of stakeholder activity there was no official public notices given by government or distributor networks in Thailand in response to the crisis.

There was low level engagement around the incident on social media, and the conversation was focussed on the perpetrator and how to make sure what you were eating was safe. Public comment focussed mostly on who was responsible for the tampering.

Some people shared recommendations to cut up strawberries before consuming to ensure their safety.



## UAE

### STRAWBERRY EXPORT FIGURES (Kgs)

2016-2017: 757,335

2017-2018: 797,311

Risk Analysis: HIGH

Relationships are key to doing business in the UAE, with a strong emphasis on mutual respect and building trust. Regular visits, stop overs and attendance at exhibitions would help reinforce to customers your interest in their market and commitment to a strong partnership. [AUSTRADE website: UAE food and beverage](#)

### Remedial activities for UAE

1. Send a trade delegation to UAE as both a listening tour (i.e. to listen to and address any lingering concerns in that market) and relationship building exercise, as well as to offer assistance, by way of the marketing campaign, to support local sales of Australian strawberries. Ensure trade delegation includes an audience with representatives of relevant authorities and distributors. Implement trade delegation in advance of the peak purchasing period.
2. Hold an in-store activation during a busy period in a selected store or shopping mall which receives high consumer footfall. Include PR/ earned media to promote the in-store activation and supporting marketing campaign.
3. Purchase native advertising articles (i.e. advertorials) in widely read online publications with links to social media content including animation video, recipes, et al.
4. Purchase social media promotion to push campaign content (i.e. animation video, recipes, et al) to targeted consumers (e.g. mothers).
5. Host select UAE journalists on a familiarisation trip to visit Australian strawberry farms; content opportunities to be created include but are not limited to cultivation, harvest, export and consumption, as well as briefings from senior spokespeople from government and industry.
6. Reactively manage media around court proceedings in Australia concerning the person charged with the strawberry tampering incident. Put simply, this means managing, at the local UAE level, any media that may be published following a court decision in Australia. Managing means ensuring key messages reinforcing the facts about the case are included in media reportage. The alternative will be to allow UAE media to write its own story about the incident. This may not align with the facts as they are known to the Australian strawberry industry.

### UAE positioning

Messaging and positioning in the UAE should focus on the positive [health benefits](#) of strawberries, being rich in antioxidants, vitamins and fibre, and the role of fresh fruit as part of a healthy diet. With cardiovascular disease the [biggest public health issue](#) in the UAE, messaging on the [positive effects of strawberries on heart health](#) will be impactful. In addition, messaging on the high quality of Australian strawberries will meet the key considerations for consumers when purchasing produce.

Another area of positioning should cover the [beauty benefits](#) eating strawberries can bring. Vitamin C in strawberries contributes to skin and hair health and their natural fibre aids digestion and even helps in weight loss.

## Analysis

A review of media activity showed the 2018 Australian strawberry tampering was heavily reported by UAE and Pan-Arab media outlets between September – November 2018.

- Overall, a total of 113 press clippings were published across key print, online and broadcast media outlets, with 81% of the clippings appearing in Arabic language while 19% were in English.
- The needle tampering was covered by tier one media outlets including *Sky News Arabia* TV, *Al Jazeera* TV, *Reuters Arabic* and *BBC Arabic* TV. This ensures other neighboring Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) markets will also have been informed of the crisis.
- The story also ran in government-owned media outlets including *The National* (UAE), *Emarat Al Youm* (UAE), *Al Hayat* (Pan-Arab), *Asharq Al Awsat* (Pan-Arab).
- A number of local media outlets informed readers/ viewers to beware of Australian strawberries.
- A number of local media outlets reported that needles had also been found in Australian bananas, pears and apples.

In terms of stakeholder activity there was no official comment from any UAE government agency or food distributor throughout the crisis.

As a market which necessarily imports 90% of its food, the UAE is particularly sensitive to food safety issues emerging in supplier countries. Food safety in supplier countries is a food security issue for the UAE and GCC nations. The fact that no government agency or food distributor is yet to comment on the crisis should not be taken as a sign of 'business as usual'.

The political and governance structures of the UAE and its companies are opaque relative to the Australian experience, and the true nature of concern towards Australian strawberries may not be fully understood for some months following the crisis.

At a minimum, further analysis of the real depth of concern within the UAE Government should be undertaken.

The nature of media coverage of the crisis should also concern Australian fruit exporters, given the UAE's close proximity to all other GCC nations, which are also export markets for Australian fruit and vegetables.

GCC nations look to the UAE's example when responding to food safety issues in imported food, and when gauging the level of risk the issue poses. In other food safety cases, GCC nations have enacted enhanced border measures (including bans), following the UAE's example, and have continued those measures after the UAE had lifted its own. Providing prompt and consistent information to the UAE on food safety responses will help mitigate negative impacts to Australian trade across the GCC region.

## SINGAPORE

### STRAWBERRY EXPORT FIGURES (Kgs)

2016-2017: 939,978

2017-2018: 733,812

Risk Analysis: HIGH

Singapore has a highly developed open and trade-oriented market economy, due to relatively easy market access and minimal trade barriers. Australia's competitive advantages in Singapore include strong brand recognition and position and a high level of familiarity amongst consumers. [AUSTRADE website: Food and agribusiness to Singapore](#)

### Remedial activities for Singapore

1. Send a trade delegation to Singapore as both a listening tour (i.e. to listen to and address any lingering concerns in that market) and relationship building exercise, as well as to offer assistance, by way of the marketing campaign, to support local sales of Australian strawberries. Ensure trade delegation includes an audience with representatives of relevant authorities and distributors.
2. Hold an in-store activation during a busy period in a selected store or shopping mall which receives high consumer footfall. Include PR/ earned media to promote the in-store activation and supporting marketing campaign.
3. Purchase native advertising articles (i.e. advertorials) in widely read online publications with links to social media content including animation video, recipes, et al.
4. Purchase social media promotion to push campaign content (i.e. animation video, recipes, et al) to targeted consumers (e.g. mothers).
5. Reactively manage media around court proceedings in Australia concerning the person charged with the strawberry tampering incident. Put simply, this means managing, at the local Singaporean level, any media that may be published following a court decision in Australia. Managing means ensuring key messages reinforcing the facts about the case are included in media reportage. The alternative will be to allow Singaporean media to write its own story about the incident. This may not align with the facts as they are known to the Australian strawberry industry.

### Singapore positioning

Messaging and positioning in Singapore should focus on highlighting Australia's competitive advantages, including strong recognition and seasonal alignment. As Singapore increasingly faces health problems including obesity, heart disease and diabetes, messaging which positions strawberries as an alternative to high-calorie foods and as a source rich in antioxidants, vitamins and fibre will be important.

A second area of positioning should cover the beauty benefits eating strawberries can bring. Vitamin C in strawberries contributes to skin and hair health and their natural fibre aids digestion and even helps in weight loss.

### Analysis

Given its geography as a small island nation, over 90% of Singapore's food supply is sourced as imported product. As a result, the country is highly sensitive to issues affecting food security.

Although Australian produce benefits from a 'clean and green' reputation in Singapore, this can quickly change should distributors and/ or regulators not have full confidence in the security of the Australian product.

Australian strawberries compete in a crowded marketplace in Singapore. Strawberries from Japan and South Korea, despite being more expensive, are widely believed to be of better quality than those from Australia. Strawberries from the US and New Zealand are also sold in Singapore but are not viewed as of the same standard as those from South Korea and Japan.

A review of media activity around the time of the incident revealed mixed attitudes, with some coverage taking a negative angle on Australian strawberries as a result:

- 11 stories were published in Singaporean media, including multiple stories in *The Straits Times* (the #1 Singaporean newspaper by circulation) and *Channel News Asia*, which is screened throughout Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region.
- 50% of all coverage was analysed as negative towards Australian strawberries and the industry, including one story reporting a dip in sales of Australian strawberries (in Singapore) as a result of the crisis.

In terms of stakeholder activity, major distributors FairPrice, Giant and Cold Storage suspended importation of Australian strawberries as a result of the crisis and some local green grocers removed Australian strawberries from sale during the crisis.

When reviewing the response to the incident on social media, there was widespread commentary and opinion sharing, with the majority taking a negative stance towards Australian strawberries:

- Singaporean consumers commented widely online about the strawberry crisis
- They shared opinions in online forums, chat rooms and in the comments pages following online media articles about the crisis

# Marketing campaign

The creative concept that will underpin the recommended campaign is based on data points from market analysis in each of the six export markets covered in this report, specifically:

- Australia has a strong reputation for safe, clean and fresh agricultural produce.
- Australian food is seen as safe and healthy.
- Australia is seen as an open and transparent market where no government agency would try (or be able to) cover up anything which might affect food security.

Since marketing is the most public facing/ most proactive, it is important to set clear parameters for what it should (and should not) do with respect to communicating about Australian strawberries in the current climate.

Marketing must:

- present Australian strawberries in the best possible light
- be subtle and utilise 'pull marketing' techniques
- be SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound)
- be active only to support the peak buying period for the upcoming 2019 main harvest (i.e. from July to December 2019).

Marketing must not:

- be seen as a reaction to the 2018 tampering incident
- utilise 'push selling' techniques.

It is important to note that the marketing should not, in any way, be about the tampering incident – i.e. not even in a reactive sense. The official communication activities detailed on page 27 with respect to the trade delegation will be the appropriate channel for addressing questions about the tampering incident and resulting measures.

Marketing should not be predicated on reputation rebuild. This can be handled through officials in markets where that level of communication is necessary. Rather, marketing should be based on starting new and different conversations with local retailers and consumers to start to show strawberries in a different light – start to think of using them in ways they never previously have.

Subsequently, the objectives of the proposed creative marketing campaign are as follows:

1. Protect and leverage the positive brand dispositions Australian fresh produce.
2. Position Australian strawberries in terms of the local needs of consumers in export markets (e.g. through bespoke health and nutrition angles).

To deliver the objectives above we have developed two possible campaign taglines each carrying specific benefits in terms of positioning.

TAGLINE	WHY IT WILL WORK
<i>Australia's Sweet Heart</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enables positioning around the quality (i.e. sweetness) of Australian strawberries</li><li>• easy pivot to stories about the safe, quality growing, packaging and export of Australian strawberries (e.g. farmer stories, 'field to feast'<sup>6</sup> content)</li></ul>
<i>Grown for Greatness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• easy pivot to health benefits (i.e. growing bodies, feeling great)</li><li>• easy pivot to stories about the journey of Australian strawberries from the field to supermarket</li></ul>

<sup>6</sup> This is a creative concept around which a marketing campaign to help Australian strawberries could be built. It draws inspirations from the successful [From Paddock to Plate](#) schools program which educates children about Australia's food and agriculture industry.

The selected tagline could form the overarching narrative under which a suite of communication tactics could be delivered in export markets. Those recommended tactics are as follows.

### Create a marketing communication toolkit to be deployed in export markets

Delivering marketing to affected export markets will ensure economical use of time by consolidating all suggested communications outputs in one readily available pack.

Content within the toolkit should be made available to:

- retailers who agree to participate in an in-store activation
- trading/ distribution partners in export markets
- retailers who purchase Australian strawberries
- government agencies in export markets
- consumers (via online platforms).

The toolkit should contain a mix of content. Some content should be bespoke to each market; other content should be applicable to all exports markets covered by this report. The following table details the elements we believe should go into the marketing toolkit.

Element	Detail	Channel distribution
In-store activation livery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>t-shirts for display staff</li> <li>posters and livery for preparation table</li> <li>sample cups</li> <li>take home recipe cards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one in-store activation in each market</li> </ul>
Advertorial articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health benefit focus; incorporates one local recipe</li> <li>beauty benefits focus; incorporates a second local recipe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>food/ lifestyle publications in each market</li> </ul>
Animation videos; language localised for each market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recipes video (new, fast ways to reimagine strawberries)</li> <li>field to feast story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social media channels (paid promotion)</li> <li>in-store activations</li> <li>government owned microsite/ webpage</li> </ul>
Paid social media content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teaser campaign asking consumers to select local dishes that can use strawberries</li> <li>content to support promotion of animation videos</li> <li>content to support promotion of local dish recipes incorporating strawberries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook</li> <li>Weibo (Hong Kong only)</li> </ul>

All content in the marketing toolkit should be provided to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and to the Australian strawberry industry through its national and state industry groups for use in future campaigns should the industry wish to continue/ replicate marketing to support future harvest/ sales promotions.

Further detail concerning the above content is as follows.

## 1. In-store activation

A strategic initiative for restoring public faith in Australian strawberries would be to hold an in-store activation in selected markets. The activation should coincide with trade delegation visits by Australian officials.

The purpose of the activation would be to:

- provide consumers with content relating to the marketing campaign
- show support for local retailers to support sales of Australian strawberries
- use the visiting delegation as an opportunity for media PR to support the marketing campaign.

The activation should last not more than 1-2 days. It should include local recipes prepared onsite, which have incorporated Australian strawberries.

Shoppers would receive samples in branded cups, along with take home recipes, printed in local languages on attractive cards. Staff delivering the activation would be either:

- a) existing staff of the retail outlet trained by on-ground communication staff on approved messaging and the experience they are to provide to shoppers, or
- b) on-ground communication staff who are already familiar with the campaign objectives messaging and the purpose/ mechanics of the activation.

## 2. Advertorial articles

Two themes have been identified as marketing content for the export markets covered in this document – health and beauty. Both these themes are known to be successful cues for marketing content concerning food in Asia and GCC markets, and both reaffirm existing positive associations of Australian horticultural produce in export markets.

Framing strawberries – specific recipes and preparation – within the context of the benefits they offer in terms of healthier living and more beautiful appearance, is a way to engage consumers without drawing attention to the 2018 incidents.

We recommend producing two advertorials, both of which will include different local recipes that are prepared using Australian strawberries. One advertorial should focus on the health benefits of eating strawberries. The other should focus on the beauty benefits.

Placement of these advertorials should be in publications that reach the primary decision makers concerning family food shopping, diet, health and hygiene. Throughout Asia-Pacific that demographic is overwhelmingly women aged 25-55.

## 3. Animation videos

To support the health and beauty themes of our campaign we recommend production of 1-2 informative animation videos.

The videos would track the life of an Australian strawberry and how they are *Grown for Greatness* and fed to growing and healthy bodies who are also aiming to be great! Australia's clean air and bountiful sunlight would feature as a differentiator which makes our strawberries special.

The animation videos would communicate the health and beauty enhancing properties of Australian strawberries and the unique ways they can be added to regional cuisines.



#### 4. Paid social media content

The campaign would be supported on social media through a paid content promotion which serves our campaign content directly to the social media feeds of our target demographic in selected export markets.

Content packaged for social media promotion could include:

- animation videos
- food recipes
- beauty balm/ face mask instructions
- fact sheets (as infographics)
- interactive questionnaires to reveal the many ways in which strawberries can be consumed/ used, and to reveal the health and beauty benefits of Australian strawberries.

This campaign would utilise Facebook for paid social media content. Facebook is still the most ubiquitous channel in the Asia-Pacific region, comfortably outranking all other channels in the markets covered in this plan. This includes Hong Kong where 75% of people on the Internet are users of Facebook.



# Appendix

Interview questionnaire

# Strawberries stakeholder perception research – International (single market)

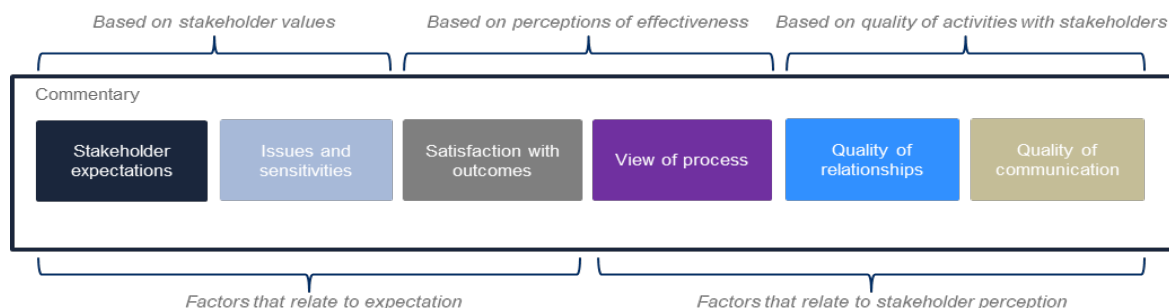
Food safety is of fundamental importance to Australia and confidence in the food people consume is crucial. Food tampering, recently discovered with Australian strawberries, can result in significant public health and safety risks. These have the potential to create widespread consumer concern, large recall costs, disruption to business and can threaten the livelihoods of growers and producers. Incidents like this can damage the trust and reputation of Australian products internationally.

## Background to this research

To fully understand the challenge facing Australia's strawberry export industry, SenateSHJ engaged its PROI network in New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and United Arab Emirates (UAE) to conduct initial research into the impact of strawberry tampering in those markets. This covered traditional media coverage, public commentary on social media, and official commentary from respective government departments and / or local distribution networks.

This research informed our stakeholder consultation process and this questionnaire, which aims to test the assumptions of local stakeholders against the data from each export market. The findings will inform recommended strategies or tactics to address those markets where issues are identified.

Our approach is based on the following model:



## 1. Introduction

a) Can you briefly describe your areas of responsibility?

[clarify specific markets]

b) Are you aware of any issues that affected Australian strawberries in September 2018?

Y/N

[If Yes, move to Q 2 / If No, Q 3]

### 3. Understanding the incident (if yes to 1)

a) How has this incident affected your markets?

Interpret the answer and probe for any impact on order volumes to be categorised as follows:

- order volume has stayed the same
- order volume dropped a little but has returned to normal levels
- order volumes dropped a lot but have since recovered
- order volumes dropped a lot and have not recovered
- order volumes have increased
- prices at retail level have decreased

PROBE: can the interviewee cite or provide quantifiable measures (e.g. amount in tonnes / kg / \$) to support the answer?

[If order volumes dropped and have not recovered go to Q 3 b-e / otherwise Q 4]

b) Why do you think the impact was as big as it was?

c) Has there been any kind of lag effect? If so, why?

d) Did any other countries try and capitalise on the Australian strawberry issue and, if so, what did they do and were they successful?

f) Who do you think should be responsible for the quality and safety of Australian fresh produce?

### 4. Analysing the response

a) Did you receive any communication from any Australian organisation, private or government, about the strawberry tampering?

Y/N

Where, specifically, did you get your information from?

[Prompt: phone call, email, face-to-face meeting, skype, notice...? Which organisations?]

b) Did they keep you updated throughout the issue and on the eventual outcome?

c) Were you satisfied with the information? Did it help you fully understand the situation and what was being done to address it?

Y/N

d) Please give an overall ranking of how well your Australian contacts handled the strawberry tampering issue with you:

<p>1. Poorly      2. Met expectations      3. Exceeded expectations      4. Handled it exceptionally well</p> <p>[If Poorly] – What could they have done better?</p>
<p>e) What other broader communications were you aware of as the incident unfolded? Do you think it helped resolve the issue?</p>
<p>f) What is your view of the communication by Australian authorities during and since the tampering incident?</p>

## 5. Options for rebuilding reputation

<p>a) What do you think needs to be done to drive volumes back up again?</p>
<p>b) Are there any sensitivities we should be aware of when trying to increase the volume of Australian strawberry sales?</p>
<p>c) Have incidents of this nature occurred in any other country that you are aware of, and, if so, what did they do well that impressed you?</p> <p><i>[If needed prompt: which country? Which product was impacted?]</i></p>
<p>d) If you still have concerns, what would it take to put your concerns to rest?</p> <p><i>[Prompt, practical steps that could be taken e.g. packaging, metal detectors, traceability of produce, public campaign]</i></p>

# About SenateSHJ

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SenateSHJ was founded in 2002, and since that time we have grown to become one of Australasia's most successful independent consultancies. We have won multiple awards, including being recognised in the 2017 Holmes Report, which ranked us in the top 150 for public relations agencies in the world.

Our diverse backgrounds include government, healthcare, journalism, media, marketing and business consulting, digital and social strategy management, as well as communication consulting. We pride ourselves on our work, our people and our industry.

# SenateSHJ

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