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## M E D I A R E L E A S E

### **> Truss helps citrus industry \$ize up Profit\$**

A national approach to water issues, export trade development and enhanced biosecurity are just three of the ways the Australian Government is assisting the citrus industry to size up its profits and position itself for the future, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Warren Truss, said today.

Speaking at the opening of the Australian Citrus Growers' 56th Annual Conference in Mildura, Mr Truss emphasised the Australian Government was working with the citrus industry on a variety of issues to ensure the industry remained profitable and sustainable.

"One of the most significant issues facing all agriculture industries, but particularly the horticulture sector, is access to water," Mr Truss said.

"It is in all our interests to ensure we manage and harvest water in a sustainable and profitable way. Nationally, we have taken a whole-of-government approach to water issues and the horticulture industry has been a significant beneficiary of water trading because it is an efficient water user."

Mr Truss also acknowledged the potential for the citrus industry to continue to expand through maximising opportunities in export markets.

"To assist the industry meet this challenge, the Australian Government is pursuing trade opportunities wherever they exist - on multilateral, regional and bilateral levels," Mr Truss said.

"To take just one example, under the US Free Trade Agreement, the tariffs on oranges, mandarins and lemons will be abolished as soon as the agreement enters into force. This is expected to save citrus exporters in the order of \$450,000 - \$670,000 dependant upon the volumes exported during the season."

Mr Truss also cited the strategic approach adopted by the citrus industry to marketing and research and development as being a key factor in the industry's success to date.

"The widespread use of integrated pest management, improved irrigation technologies and improved pruning techniques, as well as the availability of improved rootstocks and varieties, are just some of the rewards from the industry's strategic approach to research and development," he said.

Mr Truss also launched the Citrus Industry Biosecurity Plan (see separate Media Release) at the conference. Improving biosecurity measures, he said, will boost the confidence of the industry's members, and it will assure consumers and other market participants that the industry is doing what it can to secure its future.

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**Further media inquiries:**

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<http://www.affa.gov.au/ministers/truss/releases/04/04101WT.html>

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