

## Chinese delegation tours potato farms in Creswick area

Potatoes

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Chinese delegation that recently toured the Creswick potato growing area

Syngenta Australia recently hosted fifteen Chinese delegates on a tour of the Creswick potato growing area to learn from local growers on how they achieve higher yields and better disease control as well as about their success in producing fifth/sixth generation seed.

The tour party included twelve Inner-Mongolia potato farm managers, Yiquan Ma, a Manager at McCains, along with three Syngenta China staff members, Jian Chen, Insecticide Executive Seedcare Marketing, Demin Meng, Commercial Unit Head of North China, and Feng Sun, Area Manager of North Hebei and Inner-Mongolia.

Neville Marra, a Territory Sales Manager at Syngenta hosted the delegation with help from Andrew Powell and Jamie Davies of Davies & Rose Rural in Creswick, and local consultant David Ryan.

“Each farm manager is responsible for around 1000 hectares of potatoes back home and they were particularly interested in hearing from the local growers on how they can implement practices to improve their yields and disease control,” he said.

“Andrew and Jamie organized the tour to visit three local growers looking at irrigation, digging commercial crops, seed crops, and a commercial self-propelled sprayer, and for something different a robotic dairy.”

“Although the language barrier was a challenge at times, the group profited from the information

exchange between the local growers and themselves.”



The party joined David Ryan mid-way through the two day tour to visit another local grower to inspect a seed cutter, heavy trucks, tractors and a helicopter with its fertilizer spreader - which the party found very interesting.

The second grower visit gave the tour the opportunity to look at a variety trial and irrigation systems.

The managers learned new operation concepts that are considerably different from Chinese practices, which inspired the thinking of new ways to run their farms said Jian Chen, Syngenta China’s Insecticide Executive.

“For example, our growers will look to extend the service life of equipment to reduce waste, and they also agree that seed cutters are the future trend along with increasing labor costs,” he said.

One of the Chinese potato growers, Haidong Wang, said that he was shocked that 20 year old equipment was still in service on Australian potato farms.

“In China, we update farming equipment at a fast pace but think little about service life. It’s time to slow down the step and think about the investment,” Haidong said.

Neville Marra was pleased with the success of the tour.

“It really came down to the local growers and agronomists who volunteered their time to help show our guests what we do in the Creswick area. Their involvement was greatly appreciated and valued,” Neville said.



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