

Australia releases ATMAC grant for pest control to boost fresh apple trade

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Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) has been awarded a \$450,000 Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) grant by the Australian Government, to investigate the combined effectiveness of orchard and packhouse practices in managing pests that restrict trade in fresh apples.

The Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) program provides grants for projects that harness opportunities to access new markets and strengthen market presence through existing channels for agricultural commodities affected by market disruptions and which have restricted access to key destination markets.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt said that by quantifying the effectiveness of Australia's best-practice farming methods, our growers will be able to produce a premium product for export with fewer chemical treatments. The funding announcement was made in the Huon Valley which is home to some of the most innovative growers in the country.

"This grant will enable APAL to improve export opportunities for Australian apples to premium markets across Asia by ensuring we can sustainably deliver the highest quality fruit to the highest-paying markets in the world. By looking at how farming methods control pest presence along the export pathway, this research could also be used to improve trading opportunities for other industries," Minister Watt said.

Minister for Small Business Julie Collins said unlocking new markets will help Australian businesses grow.

Apple and Pear Australia Limited Chief Executive Officer Phil Turnbull said the ATMAC grant would enable industry to better understand and measure the impacts of in-field pest management and packhouse practices to reduce phytosanitary risks in apple exports.

“This grant will not only improve the processes in export pathways, but it will also increase export opportunities for Australian growers while delivering higher quality fruit to consumers. Together with the CSIRO, the Australian apple industry will invest in world-leading science that will create export pathways not currently available to Australian growers, including the potential removal of the use of methyl bromide in export practices” said CEO Turnbull.