

South Australia gets new support from old friend

South Australia's new Industry Development Officer (IDO), Sam Rogers, has hit the ground running.

Just one week into the job, she's planning an intensive two weeks visiting packers and growers across the state to ensure they have the support they need to meet export protocols for South Korea, China and Thailand.

"These are very important markets and the timing is critical," says Sam.

"Growers need to submit their registration forms to their nominated packing sheds, which include their property maps by the 28th of February. This registration will also include the Registered Crop Monitors Verification Survey.

"It's so important we follow the protocols correctly and on time."

Sam brings to her new role extensive industry knowledge, which she began accruing when aged 19 hand-packing fruit for Waikerie Producers.

From there, Sam learned all aspects of packhouse duties and by the time she was 23 found herself a production manager overseeing 72 staff.

Since then, Sam has worked in almost every position along the citrus supply chain, a fact to which Citrus Australia Market Development Manager Andrew Harty will attest.

"She's at home in an orchard, she knows packhouses backwards and she's very good at quality control. Most recently she's become expert at pest monitoring," says Andrew.

Sam has also built up an extensive network of contacts across the Riverland, which will assist her in her new role.

Sam's position replaces that of Kym Thiel, who stepped down to focus on farm duties last year, although based on feedback from industry, the new IDO role will now extend beyond a production focus.

Explains Andrew: "The previous position was quite farm-based. That's not going to go away – Sam will still be running grower groups on farm. But we've also tasked her to establish and maintain links with the packer sectors and assist with maintaining export protocols on farm."

He says the idea is to add value across the whole supply chain in order to return more to growers.

Citrus Australia South Australia Region (CASAR) Chair Con Poulos says Sam's assistance will provide an enormous boost to Riverland growers. "Having Sam on board will allow us to take our support of growers to the next stage.

“She’ll be liaising with growers and packers on a daily basis. This means when the season starts, we’ll have someone on the ground reporting directly back to our committee and the national body.”

He says Sam will also ensure Riverland growers are kept up to date with the latest in market and production information. “That flow of information will work both ways.”

Sam says she’s excited about getting started in her new position. “I am looking forward to representing growers and packers, and making sure they’ve got a say. It’s important we deliver what they tell us they want and need.”

Sam invites Riverland growers and packers to contact her with queries. “I’ll work closely with them to try and resolve or improve their situation.”

Sam’s position is supported by a Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) market development project, with funding through national citrus levies and regional voluntary contributions. She is employed by Citrus Australia and reports to CASAR.

To find out more about Sam’s role hear from her directly at www.citrusaustralia.com.au/literature_157525/Sam_Rogers_letter

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Citrus Australia Ltd is the national peak body for citrus growers. Citrus Australia represents the industry in policy and advocacy, biosecurity, market access, development and promotion, research, and communications. The citrus industry in Australia is worth \$540 million and represents the interests of around 1800 citrus growers. It is the largest fresh fruit exporter, with annual export earnings of around \$190 million. Go to <http://www.citrusaustralia.com.au/>.

About Sam Rogers

Samantha Rogers (Sam) is Citrus Australia's South Australia Citrus Industry Development Officer.

Sam has a strong citrus background dating back to 1994, with experience mainly in the packing sector which includes all aspects of production and quality assurance management, as well as export and food safety compliance.

She has worked closely with the Department of Agriculture on export work plans and has strong relations with Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) in regards to fruit fly and interstate certification programs.

She has a good understanding of integrated pest management and citrus entomology, is an accredited Department of Agriculture Approved Inspector and Registered Crop Monitor, Riversun Approved Assessor and PIRSA Certification Assurance Controller.

From 1998 to 2006 Sam worked as a Production and Quality Control Manager and was responsible for two packing lines, a glace peel and juice plant, and the employment, training and coordination of 72 staff. She achieved accreditation as a Safe Quality Food Consultant with the Food Marketing Institute which enabled her to create food safety manuals for growers and packers based on HACCP principles.

In 2006 Sam was part of a small management team which created a new packhouse. She consulted at management level but held the position of Grower Liaison Officer. She created the DAFF, HACCP, PIRSA and OH&S manuals for this operation.

In 2012 Sam represented the SA region as a Citrus Supply Chain Liaison Officer and has been an ongoing part of leadership and PISCE Grow Smart mentoring programs. She has participated in crop estimate and crop regulation committees and is an avid promoter of the citrus industry at regional shows and field days.