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Industry future focus of grower forum

New research, market trends, on-farm biosecurity and labour hire are some of the big issues on the agenda for this year's dried grape industry forum.

Growers and industry representatives from around Sunraysia, Swan Hill and the Riverland will converge in Mildura on Thursday 8 November for the Dried Fruits Australia (DFA) event.

Keynote speaker, National Farmers' Federation (NFF) chief executive officer Tony Mahar, will talk about major issues affecting the sector.

"Dried Fruits Australia is a valued member of the NFF and worked with us on a number of important initiatives during the year," Mr Mahar said.

"The NFF has a plan for agriculture to achieve \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030 – up from \$63 billion in 2016-2017.

"To achieve our vision, we have significant work to do over the next 12 years and need the help of our industry, government and boarder community."

Viticulture researcher Vinay Pagay, who is based at the University of Adelaide, will present on a recent heatwave mitigation trial.

"We evaluated several water-based cooling treatments during heatwaves, and assessed their effect on vine function, yield, and fruit composition," Dr Pagay said.

"Our results showed that water application can reduce heat stress in vines and maintain acidity in grapes. And the location of water application was an important factor in achieving greater cooling."

Attendees will also hear from Plant Health Australia's Susanna Driessen.

Dr Driessen will discuss critical biosecurity issues for the dried fruit industry, what is being done to mitigate the risks, and why on-farm biosecurity makes good business sense.

The forum is open to anyone interested in the future of the dried grape industry. It will be held at the Mildura Working Man's Club from 2pm, following the members only AGM.

For more information, visit www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/2018-annual-conference. Contact DFA to register on 5023 5174 or admin@driedfruitsaustralia.org.au.

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