



Company Profile

Botanical Resources Australia Pty. Ltd., (BRA), is the Australian producer of pyrethrum, the natural insecticide. It is based on the island of Tasmania, the most southerly state of Australia. Tasmania is almost the same size as the Republic of Ireland and only slightly smaller than Scotland. It lies forty two degrees south of the equator and has a temperate climate with cool winters and mild summers. It has a moderate rainfall, which is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year.



Due to its climate, availability of agricultural land, experienced growers, strict quarantine controls and a stable democratic government, significant agricultural industries with large overseas export markets have been successfully established in Tasmania, like the poppy industry which is the world's largest producer of opium alkaloids; the potato industry, which is a significant supplier of potatoes for the fast food chains; the hop industry, Tasmania is the largest producer of hops in Australia and of course, the apple industry which gained Tasmania the title of "The Apple Isle".

The pyrethrum industry has grown from 750 hectares in 1996, when BRA was formed, to almost 3000 hectares by the beginning of the twenty first century.

BRA aims to achieve the most efficient pyrethrum industry in the world, using improvements in high technology to constantly fine-tune all areas of its operation. The company currently supplies more than 45% of the world's pyrethrum market. With a full-time staff of 35 and extra people employed during the harvest season of December through February, BRA is now a significant employer in Tasmania, where most of the crop is grown and processed.

Pyrethrum is grown on a contract basis by experienced farmers with top quality land. The



220 growers who contract with BRA to grow pyrethrum receive ongoing support and advice from a team of highly qualified field officers. Regular meetings allow growers to share skills and expertise and to receive updates on the industry. Classes have been offered in computing to enable growers to take advantage of modern technological advances.

The harvested pyrethrum is processed at BRA's ever expanding site in Ulverstone in



the north of Tasmania. The processing is facilitated by new, technologically designed solvent extraction followed by CO2 refining. BRA formulates product to exacting specifications and it is then exported to customers all over the world. The high quality of the product is supported by a fully equipped NATA accredited laboratory.

BRA recognises that its people are its greatest asset. It employs a highly

skilled workforce with university graduates in agricultural science, economics, chemistry, and chemical engineering. The company has established a scholarship program at the University of Tasmania to encourage students to pursue careers in business and research at BRA.



A Brief History

Botanical Resources Australia Pty Ltd is a relatively new company, having been formed in 1996 when British Oxygen Company (BOC) made the decision to sell up its ownership of the fledgling Tasmanian pyrethrum industry. Back in 1981, a subsidiary of BOC, Commonwealth Industrial Gases (CIG), began to develop the pyrethrum industry in Tasmania into a commercial proposition, initially entering an agreement with the Tasmanian Government and the University of Tasmania. Fifteen years and many million dollars of investment later,

the industry was up and running but was at the point where new and more efficient technologies needed to be developed.

A staff buy-out from BOC created Botanical Resources Australia and the company has gone from strength to strength. The main reasons for its success have been the passion and commitment of its staff, the support of the growers, the support of the overseas customers, funding support from the Federal Government, research and development and highly focused management.

Sales and marketing

That BRA exists at all is owed to the fact that a group of believers and risk-takers could see a sales opportunity which they thought they could fulfill. "The fact that Tasmanian pyrethrum was able to find a niche in the worldwide market had a lot to do with the cyclical nature of African supply," says Ian Folder. "We saw the market opening there and we went for it." The rest is history.

As BRA has come of age, the focus of the business has been increasingly on marketing the product. While research and development are still crucial, and there remain improvements to be made in production; the now stable and growing supply of Tasmanian pyrethrum has made selling the end-product a new priority.

"This slight change in focus in recent years has been a real challenge for the industry," says Product Development Manager, Brian Chung. "This new emphasis is as big a milestone as some we faced in the nuts and bolts of producing pyrethrum in the early years."

One of the biggest tasks on the desks of the sales and marketing staff is the registration and re-registration of the pyrethrum in overseas markets. This is a process that's very expensive and taken many years, with requirements being rigorous, and specific to each market. BRA is a member of an industry task force that has just achieved successful re-registration of pyrethrum in the USA. BRA is also working towards meeting the EU directives for the product, and completing member country registration in Asia. "Very good progress has been achieved now," says



Product Development Manager
- Brian Chung

Brian Chung, who is assisted by Kristin Groom in these processes. "The European re-registrations are imminent, and we are working on the Asian requirements case by case. We've already had success in Singapore, Israel and Korea and we're still working on the registration of new products in Korea, Taiwan, India and Malaysia."

The sales and marketing division has also bulked up on staff, with the transfer of Matthew Greenhill into this side of the business as Operations Manager, while also spending a large part of his time on product development. "We're now looking into developing our own customer-focused formulation, PyZap, for use in public health and horticulture," says Matthew. "We're also developing a product for integrated pest management in cotton. We're on the verge of some pretty good discoveries with pyrethrum, with the prospect of developing several new formulations for non-traditional applications."

The focus on consolidating markets, and on commercialising new products both domestically and internationally is an important new part of BRA's present and future direction. "It's an exciting time," says Matthew, "and a big learning curve for us all."



Operations Manager - Matthew
Greenhill with Jytte Close.

BRA Management Team

