

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Science Showcase talks wine, milk and Zebra chips

Here's something you never want to find in a bag of potato crisps – a Zebra chip – identifiable by its striped appearance when cooked and unsavoury flavour.

Just one 15-minute session at the Tasmania Institute of Agriculture Science (TIA) Showcase on Tuesday will have you up to speed with the latest research into the bacteria that causes the undesirable Zebra effect, and what is being done to keep its host, the tomato potato psyllid, from infiltrating local crops.

This emerging threat to the Tasmanian potato industry is the topic chosen by TIA Research Fellow Dr Robert Tegg to present at the Science Showcase, taking place on **Tuesday, August 14, at the Tramsheds, Inveresk in Launceston.**

There are another 14 interesting topics, from improving the quality of pinot noir to assessing the capacity of farmers to adapt to climate change, that will be publicly presented as a sample of the wide range of research, industry development, extension and education that TIA is undertaking.

More than 100 people attended this event last year, and once again a large turnout, including producers, agronomists, industry representatives and university staff and students, is expected.

Dr Tegg said that he'll be talking about the danger posed by importing potatoes from NZ and what New Zealand's control measures are; about the importance of maintaining tight quarantine measures in Australia; and whether there's any chance our native psyllids are capable of carrying the Zebra chip bacteria.

"We have a monitoring project on Australia's East-Coast, which is basically yellow sticky traps on a stick in various potato fields, that are designed to catch tomato potato psyllid if they blow in on winds from New Zealand so that we know when it arrives," Dr Tegg said.

“We are trying to make sure that the pest, which has caused crop losses of 10 to 40 per cent in New Zealand, stays away for as long as possible, giving TIA the best possible chance to develop ways to combat it and protect our potato industry.”

The TIA Science Showcase is part of UTAS National Science Week (August 11-19) activities which includes visiting guest speakers, science shows, workshops and tours.

National Science Week in Tasmania will be launched tonight (August 10) at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston at 6pm.

For more information on UTAS National Science Week

Tammy Edmunds at QVMAG on 6323 3727

For a full list of activities please view the attached program.

For more information on the TIA Science Showcase

Contact TIA Communications and Marketing Manager Liam Gash on 6226 6339, or Liam.Gash@utas.edu.au

For the full program of speakers and their topics please refer to the attached document.

TIA Science Showcase:

Where: Tramsheds conference venue, Inveresk, Launceston

When: Tuesday, August 14 from 10am to 4.30pm

To attend: Contact Jane Bailey on 6226 6368 or email jane.bailey@utas.edu.au

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