

# Biosecurity focus cuts losses at Proteaflora

Specialist production nursery Proteaflora has cut stock losses to make biosecurity a priority, and expects that the processes put in place may allow it to continue trading in the face of any future statewide pest or disease outbreak.

**P**roteaflora is certified through the on-farm biosecurity program for production nurseries in Australia, BioSecure HACCP.

The Victorian-based production nursery employs 20 staff and produces half a million quality Proteaceae plants annually. The company supplies retail outlets, commercial landscapers and cut-flower specialists both in Australia and around the world.

By regularly monitoring stock, conducting plant pest and disease inspections at despatch, and controlling pests and diseases throughout the production cycle, Proteaflora has reduced stock losses by approximately three per cent.

Proteaflora's General Manager Rob Furniss says that driving the company's success today and into the future is a strong commitment to innovation and quality assurance.

"Quality and consistency is what Proteaflora prides itself on. It's part of our vision and ingrained in our culture to produce quality stock. You have to have quality systems," says Rob.

"BioSecure HACCP also provides a measure of protection. When we look back at the myrtle rust outbreak in Victoria of 2012, production nurseries were unable to trade plants within the Myrtaceae

family. Our hope is that if we can document conclusively that we are disease free, we will still be able to trade at times of disease outbreak."

The company has always maintained very high standards around systems and processes and has a continuous improvement program.

"When the Australian nursery industry began trialling BioSecure HACCP, we were already along a similar path of risk management, so it was a natural next step for us to seek certification," says Rob.

"BioSecure HACCP fitted with what we needed. We wanted to prevent problems rather than solve them."

There have been unanticipated benefits to adopting the system as well.

"The roll out of BioSecure HACCP has enabled greater staff engagement. They now have a much better sense of why they are completing certain tasks in a particular way."

Data collected by staff is uploaded onto a centralised BioSecure HACCP web-based portal on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, depending on the nature of the report. The reporting process is transparent and has improved internal efficiencies by requiring consistent data input. The system also

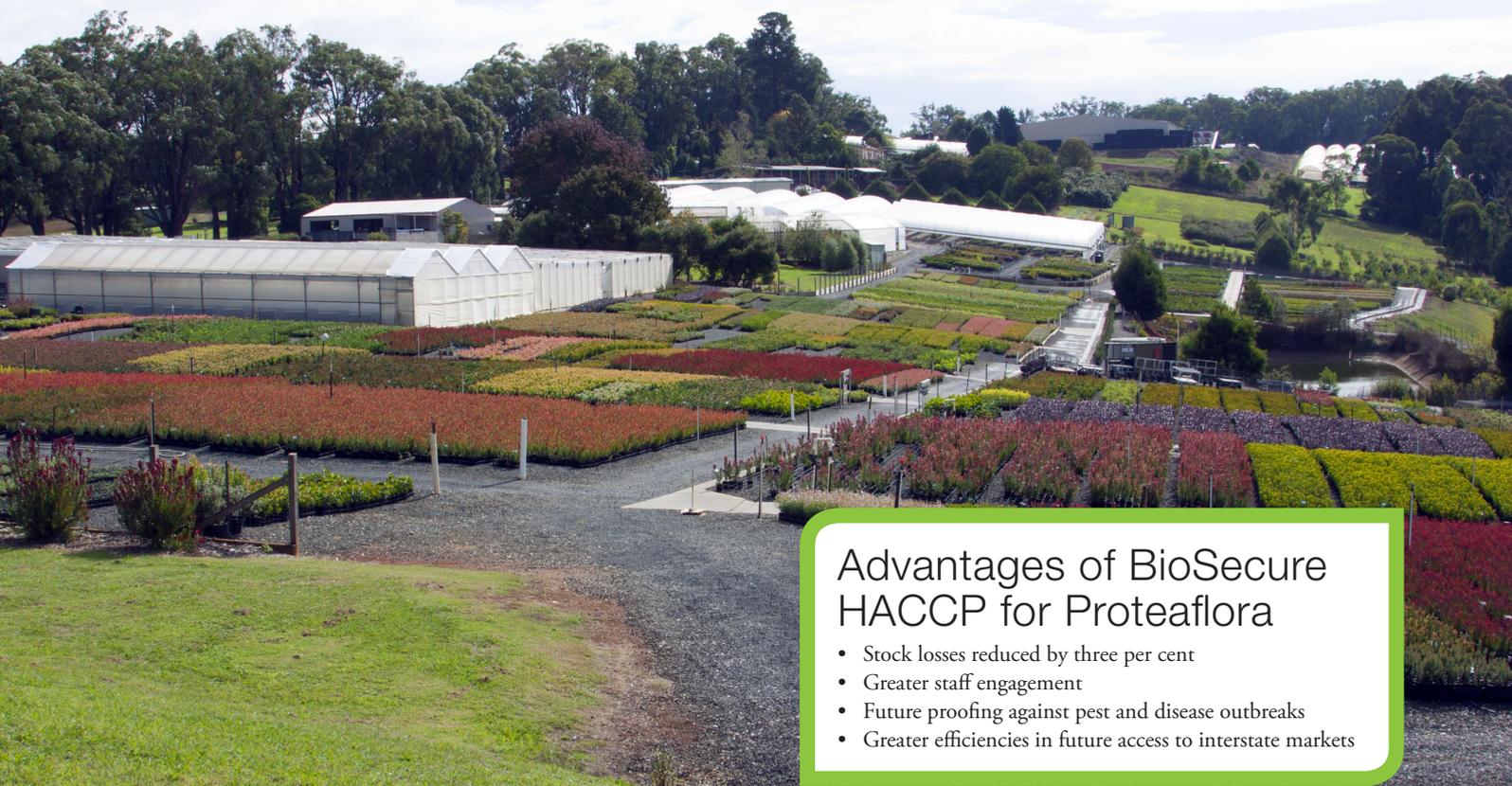
allows for electronic plant health certification for consignments of nursery stock, which improves administrative efficiencies.

Proteaflora is an accredited production nursery under the NIASA Best Management Practice program, a prerequisite to BioSecure HACCP certification. Completing Proteaflora's industry credentials is their EcoHort Certification, the third and final program in the Nursery Production Farm Management System. These programs are administered by the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia and any enquiries can be sent to: [biosecure@ngia.com.au](mailto:biosecure@ngia.com.au).

The expectation is that when BioSecure HACCP is adopted nationally, it will enable participants more flexible and efficient market access between the states and territories in trading nursery stock.

"Greater efficiencies in market access can only be a good thing for our industry and businesses' bottom line. Our buyers can be confident they are receiving a healthy plant, and transparent documentation helps to build trust in the Australian nursery industry." 

*Acknowledgement: This article was supplied by the Nursery and Garden Industry Association.*



## Advantages of BioSecure HACCP for Proteaflora

- Stock losses reduced by three per cent
- Greater staff engagement
- Future proofing against pest and disease outbreaks
- Greater efficiencies in future access to interstate markets