

## SA GROWER

# Waste in spotlight at CRC conference

**POTATOES SA**  
By **ROBBIE DAVIS, CEO**

THE end of May was a busy period for conferences.

On May 29, Food SA held its annual Food Summit themed 'Change. Challenge. Opportunity' at Adelaide Oval. The conference is an update on local and global factors affecting manufacturers, producers and distributors in the food and beverage industry. It is also the premier event for policy makers.

The program included speakers from across the world and explored topics including consumer trends, packaging innovation, business efficiency and emerging technologies.

Of great interest to me was a presentation by Richard Swannell of United Kingdom-based WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) Global. He was the driver of the Courtauld commitment; the first of its kind to commit supermarket retailers to an ambitious and collaborative approach working with food manufacturers to reduce food and

packaging waste.

Along with the well-regarded 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign, there has been a reduction in packaging and food waste by more than three million tonnes since their introduction.

Other speakers included Mintel head of consulting Shelley McMillan, who spoke about global consumer trends in food and beverages driving innovation across the world, Food & Nutrition Australia director Sharon Natoli, who highlighted the ways to connect consumers to brands and Visy Insights and Innovation general manager Richard Macchiesi, who shared recent packaging innovations for the food and beverage industry.

A special feature was the tasting of a delicious vegan mango sorbet/ice-cream produced by Puree Australia, which the University of Adelaide's John Carragher and I served to delegates. You guessed it - it was made from nearly 50 per cent graded out potatoes.

From May 28 to 30, the Co-

operative Research Centre Association held its annual conference in Adelaide. Themed 'Collaborate Innovate', the program included presentations by chief executive officers of CRCs including Low Carbon Living, Capital Markets, Food Agility, Soil, Cyber Security, Honey Bee Products, Cancer Therapeutics and Fight Food Waste. The presentations focused on achievements and lessons and the relationships between researchers, governments, investors and industry.

I was very fortunate to be a guest speaker in a session titled 'Communicating for Change'. Of course, I used examples in the Australian potato industry and food waste and loss. With the title of 'Why do we not appreciate the value of food?', I spoke about the need to change behaviours across the value chain, enabling all stakeholders from producers to consumers to appreciate the inherent costs of food production and its end worth to our society.



Graded out potatoes have been used to produce vegan sorbet.



Potatoes SA is the voice for seed producers, growers, packers, processors, exporters, wholesales and retailers.

I added that every year in Australia, we are losing more than \$20 billion of value through food loss and waste. This means that Australians are creating in excess of 7.3mt of food waste across

the food supply chain, which is equivalent to 298 kilograms per capita a year.

The questions to be asked of all of us are:

■ Why is food going to landfill or to feed livestock

- while others go hungry?
- Why can't we appreciate that food can be repurposed, sometimes into higher value products?
- Why aren't we conscious that wasted food is the world's third largest greenhouse gas emitter?
- Why don't we appreciate this financial cost and the potential financial gains to be made?

Other speakers in this session were MinEx CRC's Anna Porter, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC's Vivienne Tippet. Chaired by Australian Science Media Centre CEO Susannah Eliot, it was clear changing behaviours is a difficult process across all sectors.