



## “Consumer demand needs more attention”

*Agriculture itself has always been very challenging: whether it be heavy climate conditions, soil erosion or pests and diseases. Challenges John Said of Fresh Select (Australia) faces every day. But there is something that seems to be even more challenging: consumers’ growing demand for healthier and sustainably produced food. Bayer’s Food Chain Partnership supports him by identifying best sustainable practices, “because consumer demand needs more attention”, he says.*

Partners of the Bayer Food Chain Partnership initiative who grow fruit and vegetables benefit from projects in terms of safety, quality, yield and traceability. In John Said’s case it’s cauliflower, broccoli and a large variety of lettuce. His company is a classic family business with two families involved. “We’ve been farming vegetables for 40 years, growing 16 lines of vegetables in three states of Australia”, he proudly adds. Currently, Fresh Select is farming 3000 hectares “with some great assistance from Bayer”, says Said who started the Food Chain Partnership in 2012. “We saw a very clear advantage in what Bayer could offer: not only chemicals but also understanding what needs to be done to run a successful sustainable business.”



What is Bayer’s Food Chain Partnership about? It is an innovative business model developed by Bayer CropScience in which growers, traders, processors and retailers work together on integrated crop solutions according to sustainable agriculture principles for the benefit of everyone involved. Bayer CropScience acts as a facilitator to bring together the partners along the food value chain to produce high-quality and affordable food in a sustainable manner. “I think sustainability is supply chain driven or rather consumer driven. So one major challenge is to get the right amount of value in that space. That’s why initiatives like Bayer’s Food Chain Partnership are so important”, Said explains. “Bayer is thinking well outside the box. They are not only focused on sales but also what is right for the community. Their social responsibility extends into their product development so they are always very conscious about the consumer and the farmer.”





## Special soil health programme

Also very challenging for John Said and his team is soil health: one of the most critical aspects of his farming business. “No soil, no growing. This is rather simple”, he says. Bayer’s Food Chain Partnership supports Fresh Select with a soil health programme that requires composting activity for example. In addition, they also use alternative cropping and crop rotation to gain back soil. But it is also water management that is still very much in front of John Said’s mind: “We know the challenges involved in growing with little water here in Australia. Today we are much more sensible regarding our water levels and use better systems, such as irrigation technology that allows us to irrigate through the night so we have less deprivation during the heat of the day.”

About 70 Bayer CropScience Food Chain Managers are working in 30 countries around the world, focusing on 40 different crops, mainly fruit and vegetables. A few of them work closely together with Fresh Select. “Bayer is very active in that space. They come to talk to different members of our team who are experts in agronomy, environmental aspects and quality assurance, and give them advice”, Said says. “So we have the entire basis that is required to make this relationship work well.”

## Sustainability Radar System

Farmers depend not only on nature but also on tools. That’s why Fresh Select uses the so called Bayer Sustainability Radar System to measure its success. It gives them the opportunity to identify where they have already improved their agricultural practices and if the company is on the right path to becoming a successful sustainable farming business. For John Said this radar system is also a kind of educational system: “The more people we educate, the better and more sustainable we are. And the improvements achieved so far with the support of the Food Chain Partnership team are really overwhelming.”

Step by step John Said’s children, as well as his business partner’s children, are coming into the business now. “They are the fresh minds and hopefully they will carry on all of this fantastic work that we have done so far and turn it into something even better”, Said says, looking ahead.

### About Fresh Select

Fresh Select has been growing vegetables for about 40 years. The company based in the ‘salad bowl’ growers’ community of Melbourne’s Werribee South, supplies vegetables to local and overseas markets, including cos lettuce, baby broccoli and cauliflower. Fresh Select employs around 250 people and produces about three million units a year that vary in size: some packets include ten pieces of vegetables, some less, depending on the commodity. Fresh Select started partnering with Bayer in its Food Chain Partnership initiative in 2012.





## Food Chain Partnership and Fresh Select

### The task:

Fresh Select was looking for a solution that supports the company in becoming more sustainable and being able to fulfil its customers' demand for sustainably grown and healthy food.

### The solution:

Fresh Select began partnering with Bayer in its Food Chain Partnership initiative in 2012. Fresh Select receives customised, integrated solutions based on effective chemical and biological crop protection products, and complementary services as well as expertise in environmental protection, efficiency and safety.

### The advantage:

Food Chain Partnership, an innovative business model developed by Bayer CropScience in which growers, traders, processors and retailers work together on integrated crop solutions according to sustainable agriculture principles, enables Fresh Select to produce high-quality and affordable vegetables in a sustainable manner. That in turn helps Fresh Select to increase the demand for its vegetables.



food chain partnership

