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2010 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

Australian Dairy Conference	Horticulture Australia Limited
Australian Processing Tomato Growers	Landmark
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Friday 23 October 2009

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2008

Nuffield Scholarship for hydroponic producer

South Australian horticulturalist Hieu Ly will tonight be awarded a scholarship in Australia's leading research program for primary producers, the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship Program.

Mr Ly is one of only 18 Australians to receive a 2010 Nuffield Scholarship. He will be presented with his scholarship tonight at the Innovation in Australian Farming Awards dinner at the Hawkesbury Race Club, which is part of the four-day Nuffield Australia Spring Tour being held in the NSW Hawkesbury region.

Nuffield Farming Scholarships, each worth \$27,000, give young Australian primary producers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1400 Nuffield scholars worldwide. Mr Ly will use his scholarship, supported by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the vegetable levy and matched funds from the Australian Government, to investigate hydroponic vegetable production.

Mr Ly runs a hydroponic vegetable business with his father, producing truss tomatoes in a greenhouse hydroponic system at Waterloo Corner, north of Adelaide. They also manufacture and install hydroponic systems for other growers and assist with the conversion from soil to hydroponic production techniques. He plans to investigate best practice in hydroponics, particularly tomato production, and to evaluate equipment and techniques for application in Australia.

"Hydroponics is a booming industry all around Australia and many growers are converting from soil-based systems to hydroponics in passive glasshouses," Mr Ly says. "But hydroponic systems require a huge investment, particularly for smaller family businesses, and managing these systems is very different to managing soil-grown crops. We need to evaluate the equipment and techniques that will work for us.

"I don't think Australia should rely solely on Dutch technology, for instance, even though they are world leaders in hydroponics, because their climate and business management systems are not the same as ours. Learning how to grow the best crops possible in low-tech, protected, passive glasshouses will be the major focus of my studies," he says.

Nuffield Australia CEO Mr Jim Geltch says many Nuffield Scholars go on to become active leaders in agriculture and the community, and sharing their research findings is an important part of the scholarship program. "For many, the scholarship experience changes their lives by opening their eyes to the wider world and giving them the confidence to pursue their goals," he says.

The 2010 Australian Nuffield Scholars will leave Australia in February, June or September 2010 for a compulsory Global Focus Program. This will involve travel to China, North America, South America, Middle East, India and Europe investigating agricultural marketing and trade issues, environmental issues and experiencing the different social and cultural aspects of each region. Following the initial six-week program the scholars will go their individual ways to pursue specific study programs in the country or countries of their choice. Mr Ly plans to visit the US, Japan and Netherlands during his individual study tour.

More information:

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A high-resolution photograph of Mr Ly can be downloaded from the link

www.coretext.com.au/communications_images.php