Leading vegetable grower Mark Pye crowned South Australia’s Grower of the Year

South Australian potato, carrot and onion grower Mark Pye, owner of one of the country’s leading growing operations Zerella Fresh, has been named Grower of the Year at the 2019 AUSVEG SA and William Buck Vegetable Industry Awards for Excellence, held on Wednesday 22 May 2019.

The Grower of the Year Award is proudly sponsored by Peats Soil and recognises outstanding achievement across all aspects of vegetable and potato production. The award recognises Mark’s achievements as an innovative and successful business owner and his tireless efforts as an industry leader.

Mark’s company Zerella Fresh is now one of the biggest growing operations in the country and has placed South Australia’s Mallee region on the map as one of the biggest potato production areas of Australia.

Mark is a keen adopter of transformational technologies and often trials new varieties of carrots, onions and potatoes, including the low-carbohydrate potato variety Spud Lite, which has amassed a significant customer base around Australia for its taste profile and cooking attributes. This variety also grows for a shorter period of time and has favourable agronomic traits.

In light of the horticulture industry’s crippling labour shortage, Mark has also acted as a dedicated industry advocate and worked with researchers to measure the labour shortage in the state. Zerella Fresh was also the first business to be accredited by the industry-led Fair Farms initiative to demonstrate its compliance to ethical workplace practices.

AUSVEG SA Chief Executive Officer Jordan Brooke-Barnett congratulated Mark on receiving the award, saying it is a well-earned recognition of Mark’s longstanding reputation for running a successful business and bringing innovative technologies and products to market.

“Mark has not only proven to be a highly successful businessman, but he has selflessly given his time to the industry over many years to help further the cause of growers and workers,” said Mr Brooke-Barnett.

“This award recognises his work on his own operation and as an industry leader whose efforts have made a huge positive impact on the trajectory of our local and national industry.”

For photographs of the awards ceremony or to request more information or an interview with Mark, please contact AUSVEG SA using the details below.

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