Vineland's e-Newsletter – Spring 2020

Helping you determine what consumers want

Did you know Vineland Research and Innovation Centre's (Vineland) Consumer Insights team now offers a wide range of services to help with your next product launch?

From sensory profiling, consumer taste testing to demographic data analysis, we can guide your marketing initiatives and drive your sales.

Our multi-disciplinary experts in sensory and consumer science understand what consumers prefer in a variety of horticultural products including fruit and vegetables, wines and processed natural products such as sweet potato fries and plant-based ingredients.

More information can be found in the Consumer Insights e-brochure and video.

Let's talk. Contact info@vinelandresearch.com now.

New head of automation named

Hussam Haroun has joined Vineland as Director of Automation. In his new role, Haroun will oversee Vineland's activities related to automation, artificial intelligence and digital agriculture technologies.

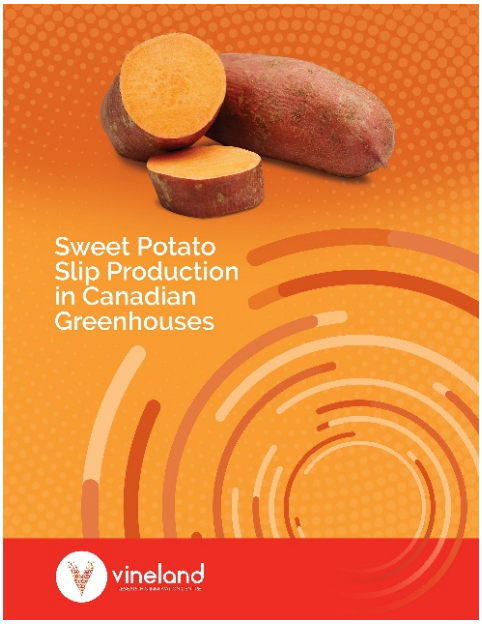
He launched his own start-up after patenting and commercializing a new technology during graduate school. As CEO, he secured more than $3 million in seed investment and grew the company to 30 employees with multimillion dollar annual revenues.

Haroun holds a Masters of Engineering, Entrepreneurship and Innovation from McMaster University and has experience in the telecommunications industry, managing multimillion dollar projects with Rogers Communications as a senior design engineer.

"Haroun's technical, business and leadership experience will provide an excellent foundation for his role at Vineland in leading the automation team to success," says Tania Humphrey, PhD, Vice President, Research & Development. "Automation is key for Canadian growers to address rising costs, labour accessibility and more efficient resource management. Vineland is proud to be a leader in this developing field."

A new business opportunity

To meet the increasing demand for sweet potatoes in Canada, Vineland has published best production practices to support the creation of a national slip propagation industry.



The new guide offers information on various aspects of production to grow high quality, high-yielding sweet potato slips in greenhouses. Highlights include:

- Nomenclature system to describe the three generations of sweet potato seed stock
- Detailed step-by-step process to grow slips in greenhouse and field production of seed
- Several cost of production and revenue potential models using direct and fixed expenses

The guide is available to download here.

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Platform Genetics evolves to new stage

Platform Genetics, Vineland's first spin-off company, offers trait development and genomics services on a broad range of crops to meet the needs of seed companies. Want to know more? Check out the recently launched website platformgenetics.ca.

Propagation trays play vital role in producing healthy trees

Growers looking to give trees their best chance to survive need to return to their roots, according to new findings from Vineland. Healthy trees depend on healthy roots and an ongoing study shows propagation trays can have a permanent impact on root development and growth.

The five-year study, led by Vineland's Research Scientist Darby McGrath, PhD, analyzes the health and growth of trees propagated in five different trays, including the RootSmart™ system, and planted in the field in 2017. Findings from a recent dig of the two-year-old trees show root defects occurring in propagation trays were persistent and resulted in permanent defects including circling roots and root ball development.

"Our analysis showed that, for better or worse, propagation trays play a big part in healthy root development," explained McGrath. "In most cases, we found roots had been obstructed and misdirected by the walls of the tray during propagation, resulting in lasting defects that can impact tree health and mortality over the long term. However, for growers who are eager to improve root development, we were thrilled to find trees propagated using RootSmart consistently produced more optimal root systems."

Designed by Vineland in partnership with A.M.A. Horticulture Inc., the RootSmart propagation system features a unique wall-less, bottom-less design to help prevent root defects during propagation. After four years of research and development, including ongoing grower input, the RootSmart propagation tray was introduced to the market in 2018.

"We started trialing the RootSmart system in 2018 and have seen a big difference in root quality and overall tree health," said Joe Klassen, Manager of Purple Springs Nursery, an innovative, science-based tree grower in British Columbia, Canada, that focuses on growing trees that thrive in an urban setting. "This propagation system sets a new high watermark for our industry and Purple Springs is proud to be an early promoter of this innovation."

Vineland's research team, L-R: Jason Henry, Larry Moore, Charlene Williams, Darby McGrath and Ryan Munroe.

A video demonstrating the benefits of RootSmart can be viewed here.

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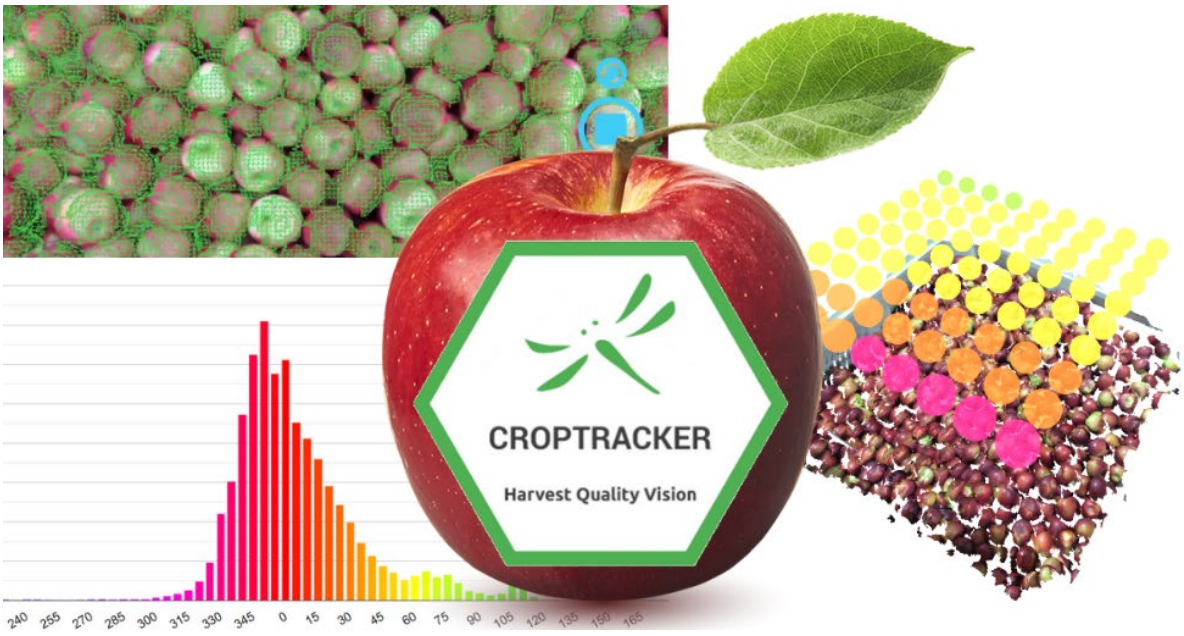
(Excerpt from a press release distributed at Landscape Congress, January 7, 2020).

New partnership to improve orchard management

Croptracker's Harvest Quality Vision™ is helping Vineland researchers make better decisions for assessing fruit quality in the orchard.

"Croptracker and its mobile app have been a useful addition to our management tools as we deal with a large number of crop varieties and different research programs," said Michael Josiak, Vineland's Manager, Farm & Ground Operations. "The ability to enter data at Vineland's research farm and generate reports in real-time has made tracking resource allocation easier and helped avoid cost overruns."

Harvest Quality Vision is a rapid, economic and objective tool that monitors and analyzes harvest progress. It saves time and money by eliminating manual inspection and by alerting growers of problems and deviations to course-correct early on in the harvest process. This results in more consistent harvests, higher-quality produce and less manual labour. For more information, visit croptracker.com or contact support@croptracker.com.



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