



Local farmers Karen Pereira and Chris Beckwith from Rubyberry in Childers are focused on sharing the benefits of miracle fruit.



Rubyberry are freeze dried miracle fruit in small cubes that melt on the tongue.

Miracle fruit on the line

By Angela Norval

Two local farmers growing Australia's first Miracle fruit farm are proud to hear that the Cancer Council Queensland have added Miracle Fruit to their 13 11 20 Information Help Line.

Chris Beckwith and Karen Pereira have continued to be passionate about the fruit's positive value and making it available for Australian's struggling to eat, while also closely following a clinical trial in Spain looking at the effects of dried miracle berry on the Olfactory-gustative perception in malnourished cancer patients and in California addressing taste dysfunction with miraculin in head and neck cancer patients receiving radiation therapy.

Miracle fruit (*Synsepalum dulcificum*) is a tropically grown tree with berries possessing a unique taste-modifying effect.

They make sour, acidic, and bitter-tasting food and drinks taste sweet.

Miraculin, the glycoprotein in the berry, binds the sweet receptors on the tongue.

Acidic foods or drink taste sweeter than normal, Kiwi fruit, tomatoes, passionfruit and plain yoghurt all taste sweet.

Mr Beckwith said by significantly reducing or blocking an unpleasant taste, it enabled someone to enjoy their meals for an hour or so, which proves beneficial during cancer treatments.

"Rubyberry Miracle Fruit Cubes are pure fruit and available online or at over 30 pharmacies across Australia and we have appreciated the support of the Friendlies Hospital pharmacy in Bundaberg who sell Rubyberry, which are freeze-dried miracle fruit in small cubes that melt on the tongue," he said.

"Through our work to get miracle fruit greater recognised for its benefits especially for cancer patients, we have appreciated the support of Federal Member for Hinkler Keith Pitt and Member for Burnett Stephen Bennett in raising awareness and helping us speak to the right people.

Mr Pitt said there was such a diverse agriculture industry in the Bundaberg region and local farmers are always looking at different ways to use their produce.

"Not only is the region renowned for its fresh fruit and produce, we have a long history of innovation – from manufacturing cane harvesters to making rum from molasses," Mr Pitt said.

"It's great to see a product grown in our region, by local growers, having success."

Mr Bennett said it was clear the couple had a true passion for helping those

who were suffering.

"When I first met Chris and Karen I was blown away by their story, their commitment to improve the lives of others, and their product," Mr Bennett said.

"It is astonishing how effective this fruit is in greatly improving the quality of life for cancer patients.

"I was lucky enough to taste the freeze-dried cubes and see first-hand how they significantly change the taste of acidic or sour foods.

"Advocating for Chris and Karen was a no brainer as they're bringing industry, knowledge and opportunity to the region, as well as helping those who are suffering.

"I commend Chris and Karen for their dedication, tenacity, and ingenuity and look forward to their next chapter."

QCA to review irrigation prices and wants feedback

The State Government is encouraging irrigators to participate in the Queensland Competition Authority's (QCA) review of irrigation water pricing.

The QCA will consider the supply costs Sunwater and Seqwater recover from irrigators to make sure costs are reasonable, transparent and efficient.

To allow time for the businesses and QCA to consult with irrigators, the Palaszczuk Government is extending a 15 per cent water discount to 2024/25.

The Government has also confirmed that as part of this process, irrigation prices are soon to be capped at the QCA's assessed cost reflective level, often referred to as the lower bound price.

Water Minister Glenn Butcher said the independent regulator would undertake detailed review, talking to irrigators and other stakeholders so that it strikes the right balance between the interests of customers and water providers.

"I encourage all Sunwater and Seqwater irrigation customers to participate in this

process to help the QCA form detailed, well-informed advice on irrigation prices for the government," Mr Butcher said

"Queensland is one of Australia's major food bowls so we owe it to our growers to ensure they're getting a good deal for what they contribute to the Queensland economy.

"The government will consider the QCA review, including the views of customers and stakeholders, before making a decision on prices."

Sunwater and Seqwater own and operate more than 30 water supply schemes which supply water to around 6000 irrigation customers throughout Queensland.

The government said it remained committed to balancing the impact of water prices on customers and agricultural production against the financial viability of the water providers, Sunwater and Seqwater.

Since 2020, the Queensland Government has given irrigators permanent long-term certainty that they do not need to pay any share of dam safety upgrade costs incurred by Sunwater and Seqwater.



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