



SUSTAINABLY GROWN

*Venus*

ECO CITRUS

# *Natural Farming*

**“Buy our Eco product and support sustainable agriculture”**

SINCE 1977

*Venus*

CITRUS

**SUSTAINABLY GROWN BY  
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
FARMERS**

[www.venuscitrus.com.au](http://www.venuscitrus.com.au)

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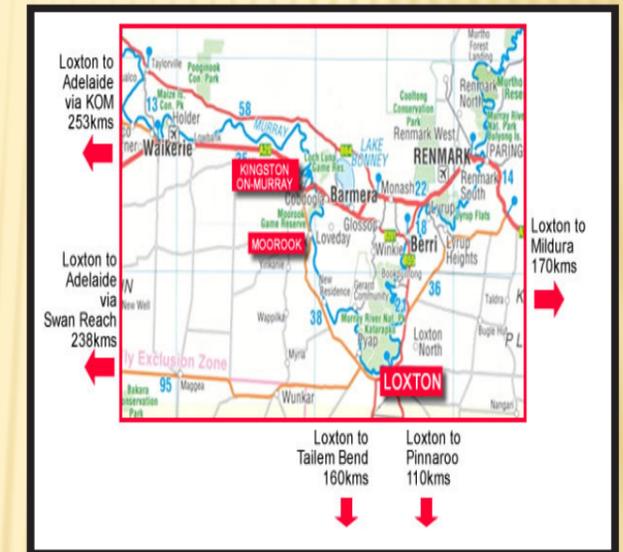
## 'OUR LOCATION'

# RIVERLAND, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SINCE 1977  
**Venus**  
CITRUS



**Venus Citrus is situated in Loxton, South Australia.**  
**All our growers properties are located in the Riverland Region.**



## 'The - Riverland, The Fruit Bowl of South Australia'

Our sunny climate and sandy soils produce some of the best tasting citrus, grapes and stone fruit in Australia.



## OUR JOURNEY

**P. Costi & Sons Pty Ltd** trading as **Venus Citrus** is a third generation family owned and run business who has been packing and marketing citrus since 1977. We supply fresh citrus fruits to local markets nationally, internationally and export markets around the world.

*“My personal passion has always been caring for our environment and eating good, clean, healthy products grown as nature had intended.”* ELENI AGGELETOS Managing Director

In 2013 Venus Citrus started promoting the sustainable fruit growing practices of local growers with the ‘Eco Citrus’ brand. Growers for this brand have been selected due to their existing environmental philosophies, and care for their properties and surroundings. In conjunction with local businesses, Fruit Doctors (Integrated Pest Management Consultants) and Biological Services (Commercial producers of biological control agents) a manual of ecologically focussed fruit protection guidelines has been developed that the Eco Citrus growers must follow. Further to this all growers supplying fruit for this brand are accredited with the highest standards of Freshcare Environmental, and Freshcare Food Safety audits which comply with the HACCP based regulations. These standards ensure we produce a product that is healthier and safer for consumers, orchard staff and our environment.

➤ Choosing to buy an Eco product means you are supporting a more environmental, healthier and socially responsible food system.



## OUR VISION

- Develop a growing system based on sustainable agricultural guidelines.
- To strive for continual improvement in our sustainable farming practices.
- To grow consumer awareness of Eco Citrus and the benefits it brings to our health and the environment.
- To increase our program in volume and categories with a variety of Riverland Produce.
- For the Riverland to lead Australia in sustainable agriculture.



## WHY ENVIRONMENTAL?

**Protection of our local environment is paramount for future generations for centuries to come**

### **Three Important Elements in the Environment**

#### 1. **Air**

- The atmosphere provides oxygen and carbon dioxide for plants and animals in the ecosystem.
- The atmosphere is also part of the water cycle.
- Without the complex interactions and elements in the atmosphere, there would be no life at all.
- Clean air is essential to grow a healthy product.

#### 2. **Soil**

- Soil is a critical part of the ecosystem.
- It provides important nutrients for the plants in an ecosystem.
- It helps anchor the plants to keep them in place.
- Soil absorbs and holds water for plants and animals to use, and provides a home for a diverse range of micro organisms.
- Healthy, living soils are essential for sustainability.

#### 3. **Water**

- Without water there would be no life.
- Water is a large percentage of the cells that make up all living organisms.
- Fresh water is essential for the health of our crops.

***'Our survival would not be possible without these elements.'***

Our growers understand the necessity of these elements for future generations. Under their Freshcare programs we have policies and projects in place to maintain, nurture and improve the air, soil, and water quality on their properties.



## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Sustainable horticulture is the production of fruit, vegetables and other plant products using farming techniques that protect the:
  - Environment
  - Public Health
  - Human Communities
- This form of agriculture enables us to produce healthy food without compromising the future generations ability to do the same.
- Sustainable farms protect biodiversity and foster the development and maintenance of a healthy eco system.
- Sustainable food production systems preserve the lands capacity to grow and nourish food into the future.
- Sustainable agriculture minimises damage to the environment and offers a safe working environment supporting and enhancing rural life and human health.

## ECOSYSTEM

- A healthy ecosystem maximises the biodiversity of species, land, air and water to interact in a harmonious way.
- If one or part of an ecosystem is damaged or disappears it has an impact on everything else.
- When a system is balanced and healthy, scientists say it is sustainable.

## CONVENTIONAL V'S ENVIRONMENTAL

- **Conventional** = All registered chemicals are allowed and damage to environment is often not considered.
- **Environmental** = Minimal or no chemical use, and all on farm practices must consider, protect and enhance the environmental ecosystem.

*'Environmental is a whole farm approach, promoting sustainability and a future for the industry'*



The mighty River Murray is the life line of our local district. It is the home of native plants, animals, birds, fish and invertebrates. It supplies valuable water for towns, cities and our horticultural production. It must be looked after for generations to come.



- Our growers are able to grow fruit that is safer for:
  - Consumers
  - Workers
  - Environment
- This practice encourages short and long term health benefits
- Sustainable farming guarantees a future.

# OUR SYSTEM



**“Food production should never come at the expense of human health”**

- Our system educates growers in sustainable farming practices.
- It values: *Air, Soil and Water*
  - Plant diversity.
  - Naturally occurring insects and micro organisms.
  - Native Flora and Fauna.

## **IT PROMOTES**

- Practices that do not harm the surrounding environment, and looks at activities to manage and minimise risks.
- Minimise the use of chemicals.
- Adoption of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system.
- Use biological controls, beneficial insects, natural predators, pheromones and other cultural practices in place of broad spectrum residually toxic pesticides.



Aphytis Melinus wasp attacking Red Scale is a major pest of citrus. Our growers regularly release these wasps to reduce the need for sprays.

- Promote the use of mulching and ground cover (living mulch) to preserve moisture and enrich our soils.
- Monitor irrigation systems to only use the water required for the crops.
- Recycle or reuse all materials where possible.
- Recognise all native and protected species in our area and promote revegetation projects.
- Chemical sheds banded.

**Living interrow green strips protect the soil from erosion, provide extra organic matter to our soils, and create diversity for beneficial insects and soil fauna.**



# OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN LIST



- Care for the land and soil
- Reduce chemicals (not organic, but reduced chemical use through IPM) No broad spectrum residually toxic products used.
- Minimise fertilisers and increase organic soil additives
- Preserve water and protect water quality
- Increase biodiversity (On farm projects for native Flora & Fauna)
- Reduce waste and recycle all bi products where possible
- Clean air, less pesticides and exhaust pollutants
- Minimise energy inputs
- Conserve fuel and protect surrounds from spillage

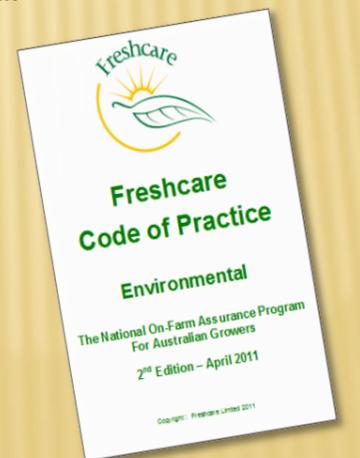
## **ONGOING COMMITMENT**

- ✓ Annual external audits from Freshcare
- ✓ Annual internal review of environmental action plans
- ✓ Ongoing improvement of growing protocols by P Costi & Sons, staff and consultants with the Eco Citrus Manual.



## **FRESHCARE ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION**

- Industry owned Australian standard
- Written by industry experts in conjunction with growers
- Assurance that produce is grown & packed with care for the environment
- **Preventing environmental harm**



## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

An example of one of the environmental projects that one of our eco growers are completing a project to encourage native animals back into tree lots in particular the Yellow Regent Parrot. The parrot is recognised by their distinctively bright colours. In South Australia they nest in River Red Gum woodlands along the River Murray, they are a threatened specie, in the past this parrot was destroyed as an agricultural pest and many nesting and foraging areas were cleared. While destruction of this bird is no longer permitted and the clearance of vegetation is regulated the parrot is still in decline.

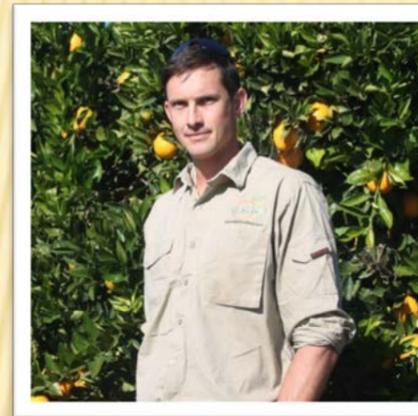
### LD Lloyds & Sons Pty Ltd

- Project - To encourage native animals back into tree lots and onto the property.
- Objective 1 – To encourage the endanger species of the Yellow Regent Parrot which have been spotted in the area.
- Goal – To place hollow logs (nest) up in the trees to encourage nesting.



## OUR ECO GROWERS

P Costi & Sons in conjunction with a group of our farmers started working on this project in 2013, we have invested in a growing system that will ultimately help protect and improve our environment and build a sustainable fruit growing system for our future generations. Our farmers are committed to continue to grow their fruit in a way known as 'Natural Ecosystem Farming'. The farming practices implemented take care of our water, soil & air for future generations.



### **Michael Arnold – Pyap Produce**

We strive to grow our citrus in an Ecologically friendly manner. To produce a healthy sustainable eco system within our orchards environment. Creating a natural, healthy citrus eating experience.

### **Mathew & Sam Lloyd – LD Lloyds & Sons Pty Ltd**

LD Lloyd & Sons Pty Ltd is a third generation family owned & managed citrus farm established in 1953. Current management has been operating since 2004. Sustainable farming has always been a cornerstone for the Lloyd family. Concern has been mounting for several years over the use of harmful agricultural sprays. We have been looking at ways to remove and reduce these, including the release of Aphytis wasps to help control Red Scale. We are delighted to be involved in the growing of Citrus under the Eco growing system.



**Mark McLean - Riverhaven Enterprises**

Our family has been farming near the River Murray for over 50 years. We have always used environmentally sustainable farming practices to produce high quality food and produce. We are happy to be involved with

Eco-citrus farming because we want to provide customers with safe sustainably grown foods. We enjoy a rich Mediterranean climate with healthy soils that are ideal for premium tasty food.



**Peter Hill - Ridgehill Properties**

My wife Michelle & I are deeply committed to looking after the land, environment and our community. We have been farming now for over 25 years and understand the importance of working with nature and utilising the latest sustainable practices including the release of biological control agents to reduce the need for chemical sprays. Not only does this ensure our family farm will be in a better condition for the next generation, but just as important our customers will always enjoy healthy great tasting citrus guaranteed, the way nature intended.



**James & Simone Altmann - Belair Orchards**

Belair Orchards has been operating under an environmental program since 1992. Owners James & Simone Altmann have set aside 20 hectares of undeveloped native vegetation that will stay as much as possible in its natural condition. Most of this is comprised of Murray River Flood plain, and adjacent native Mallee scrub. We are very aware of the biodiversity benefits that native vegetation provides our horticultural business. We made a conscious



decision right from the start to not use broad-spectrum, or residually toxic insecticides or miticides in our fruit production. This helps preserve naturally present beneficial species, and ensures our fruit is always safe to consume. We encourage grasses and broadleaf herbage to grow in between the orchard rows and on the headlands to help build organic matter in our soils, protect against wind, water & traffic erosion; and provide refuges and biodiversity for our beneficial insects. We do utilise a copper spray once a year for disease suppression, and use some weed sprays around sprinklers to maximise our water distribution. Fertilisers both natural and artificial are used, and applied when required in small amounts. This is done to reduce the possibility of excess nutrients in the ground water, and to be ever vigilant in our protection of the nearby Murray river. Therefore we are not organic producers, but have a very stable sustainable production model that is environmentally focussed. We believe we can continue to produce fruit & vegetables this way for an indefinite period into the future & maintain or improve the environment at the same time.

**Darren Pfeiler - Jireh Citrus**

We are a family owned farm and are keen to grow our fruit in a sustainable environmentally friendly manner. Growing Eco-Citrus helps protect our local environment for future generations.





**KE, RI & DJ Nairne – Darren Nairne**

The Nairne family has been producing citrus in the Riverland for about 30 years now. We have always had the environment in mind when producing our fruit and we have released wasps for Red Scale control every year since the 1980's instead of spraying. We believe the Freshcare System will help us to focus on the health of our environment, which includes the Majestic River Murray and to grow even better tasting fruit for you in a more balanced & sustainable way. The aim of our family run farm in essence is to be sustainable and to leave the environment in a better condition than when we started working the land.

**Winkie Heights Pty Ltd – Steve Bye  
 Farm Manager**

Winkie Heights Pty Ltd has converted its Citrus and Viticultural operations to Freshcare as a response to increasing consumer demand both throughout Australia and internationally. Our Manager, Mr Steve Bye, notes that approximately 10% of Australian horticultural product is now grown ecologically and that the percentage will certainly increase.

“Apart from the marketing advantages, there are benefits for Winkie Heights overall tree and orchard health as a consequence of adopting Freshcare protocol” Mr Bye said.

Our packer, Venus Citrus, have always been the vanguard of marketing and packing innovation and they have provided great support for this change.



**Peter Miller - PJ & SJ Miller Pty Ltd**

We are second generation fruit growers committed to growing high quality, nutritious fruit. My father is an original soldier settler of the Loxton District after WWII. The care of this property has now been passed on to me, and we understand the importance of using a sustainable farming practice that grows fruit nature's way. Our vision is to achieve this in a sustainable way, in conjunction with the environment, for the benefit of future generations to come.



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# *Natural Farming*

OUR CITRUS HAS BEEN GROWN IN AN  
ECOLOGICALLY BALANCED ENVIRONMENT,  
THE WAY NATURE INTENDED.

OUR GROWING SYSTEM VALUES THE NATURAL  
ENVIRONMENT AND OUR SUSTAINABLE FARMING  
PRACTICES HAVE BEEN CERTIFIED BY THE  
FRESHCARE ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD.

BY ALLOWING OUR CITRUS TO GROW  
AND DEVELOP NATURALLY, YOU CAN SEE,  
FEEL AND TASTE THE DIFFERENCE.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT  
[WWW.VENUSCITRUS.COM.AU](http://WWW.VENUSCITRUS.COM.AU)

AUSTRALIAN FARMERS

SUSTAINABLY GROWN BY

SOUTH