

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Producing high quality vanilla

Mrs Sahar Van Dyk along with Associate Professor Paul Holford, Associate Professor Robert Spooner-Hart and Adjunct Professor Barry McGlasson from the Centre for Plants and the Environment is developing a world-class natural vanilla growing and processing technology. This research is funded by the Australian Vanilla Plantations Pty Ltd.

'Currently, Australia is importing almost all of its vanilla' explains Associate Professor Holford. However, tests indicate that commercial quantities of vanilla plants can be grown in north Queensland and processed into quality cured beans. What is needed to do this well is a proper understanding of the whole production process – from growing beans to making the final product. Our research is focused on understanding the science that underlies growing vanilla plants and producing cured vanilla beans. This knowledge will support efforts to develop a commercial process for an efficient production of quality cured beans in Australia.'

The researchers will analyse the growth and development of the vanilla beans in order to determine the optimum time for harvest. The research team will also investigate different curing and drying methods in an attempt to produce vanilla beans with the best possible appearance and with a high vanillin content and superior aroma. The next step following this will be an analysis of the packaging materials and storage systems for cured vanilla beans in order to minimise the loss of vanillin.



The benefits of this research lie in its contribution to expand the vanilla industry in Australia and developing knowledge that will allow vanilla producers to improve their current practices and products. This may lead to economic and social benefits for Australian vanilla producers, as well as taste and flavour benefits for all Australians.

Project Title: Production of high quality cured vanilla beans

Funding has been set at: \$26,400

Contact Details: p.holford@uws.edu.au

<http://www.uws.edu.au/cpe>

December 2009