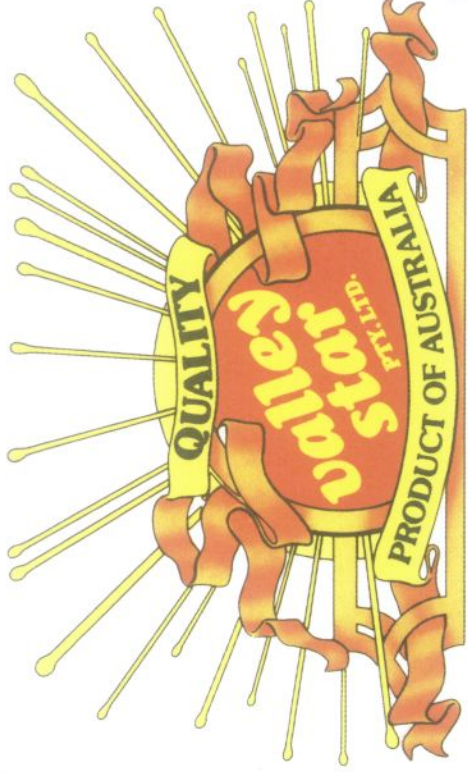


Cosgrove Road,
Lemnos
Vic., 3631
Australia
Tel: (03) 5829 9396
ABN 76 027 559 692

P.O. Box 30
Lemnos Vic, 3631
Australia
Fax: (03) 5829 9053
Email:
vstar@mcmedia.com.au



The Ymer family trading as Valley Star Pty has been growing fruit in the Goulburn Valley since 1949 and are recognized as a major apple and pear producer. Over the years we have grown from a 15.4 ha orchard at Lemnos to 109 ha at Lemnos, Ardmona and Cobram.

Our orchards comprise 50% apples and 50% pears, have an average \$8million to \$9 million turnover per year and currently employ up to 50 staff year round in our packing shed and an extra 50 people in the orchards pruning, picking and maintaining our orchards to produce the green, clean apples and pears to the high Australian Horticulture Industry standards for which Australian fruit is renown.

We follow strict standards set by HACCP and Environmental Quality Assurance to produce our fruit for which we are audited yearly, yet fruit will now be allowed in from China which is not following these same strict standards, using many chemicals which have been banned as unsafe here in Australia and likewise New Zealand will be able to determine their own phytosanitary protocols with little input from Australian AQIS inspectors. **Where are the level playing fields for the Australian Apple and Pear Industry?**

The consequence of fireblight entering our orchards would decimate our livelihood, our lifetime investments of over 60 years in the fruit industry, the jobs of 100 employees with huge ramifications for their families, and enormous flow-on effects to the many service industries, especially the transport industry. **And we are only one company in the fruit industry.**

Multiply these figures many times over and the results would be catastrophic to the regional towns and areas where the fruit industry is a major player, resulting in massive unemployment, and driving more people back to the cities, reversing Governments initiatives of building up regional areas to take pressure off the major capital cities.

We desperately urge that stringent protocols and practice is implemented in the importation of apples and pears from both China and New Zealand and that we are all at least competing on a level playing field.

Yours sincerely,


Elita Ymer

DIRECTOR

VALLEY STAR PTY LTD