

Research prunes 60 per cent off energy use

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Dried prunes.

A combination of alternative energy and computational modelling developed by CSIRO in collaboration with Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and the Australian Prune Industry Association has cut energy requirements by 60 per cent in some areas of food processing.

Prune Industry Advisory Committee Chair Malcolm Taylor said reducing the cost of the [dehydration](#) process was of major interest.

"We were very interested in working with HAL and CSIRO to improve the cost efficiency of dehydration as it is a major proportion of total production costs," Mr Taylor said.

"Through this research, we expect companies will see major savings in energy, money and green house gas emissions as well as increases in throughput."

CSIRO's Dr Henry Sabarez said that through experimental investigations at laboratory and commercial scale, assessment of operational practices plus computer modelling of dehydration tunnel design and performance, significant increases in [energy efficiency](#) and throughput had been made.

"In addition, further energy savings are likely with retrofitting of both heat recovery and solar-based heating systems in existing dehydrators," Dr Sabarez said.

"Working with the prune industry has shown the real bottom-line benefits that are possible from this approach. Other parts of the food processing industry, and indeed other processing industries, will also benefit."

Provided by CSIRO

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