Acacia Hills mango farmer Martina Matzner has been presented this year’s Northern Territory Rural Women’s Award.

The Australian Government’s Rural Industries Research Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women’s Award is Australia’s pre-eminent award for rural women.

The Award identifies and supports emerging leaders and change agents with the capability to drive innovation, productivity and sustainability for Australian primary industries and the rural communities they depend on.

Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister Gary Higgins said Ms Matzner will now go on to represent the Territory at the national awards.

“Martina has had a career in mango farming spanning 20 years. As well as being the farm manager of Acacia Hills Mango Farm, she is a director of the NT Farmer’s Board and has been at the forefront of technological advances for the industry,” Minister Higgins said.

“She has seen first-hand how rewarding a life in the food production industry can be and is a passionate advocate for encouraging more women into a career in food production.

“She is a well-deserved winner of the Award.”

The 2016 Territory finalists were: Helen Foster, the Territory’s only independent female agronomist; Martina Matzner; and Samantha Nowland, Aquaculture Research Scientist, NT Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries.

“The Territory has always had a high calibre of nominees in the awards and in 2013 our NT Award winner, Giovanna Webb of Crocodylus Park went on to become the National Award winner,” Mr Higgins said.

“The high calibre of the 2016 Award projects clearly demonstrates the important contribution women make to agriculture in the Northern Territory.”
Project ideas for the 2016 NT finalists were:

- ‘Advancing NT Women’ (Helen Foster) is a series of 1-2 day workshops offering professional skills development, including key personal and interpersonal skills, for young women working in primary industries.

- ‘Making Ag/Hort careers more attractive’ (Martina Matzner) to address the significant decline in young women choosing a career in food production in partnership with Stephanie Alexander Schools and Charles Darwin University.

- ‘Indigenous Women Youth Seafood Industry Immersion Program’ (Samantha Nowland) will investigate young Indigenous women’s preferred training and employment arrangements within fisheries businesses and enterprises.

The National RIRDC Rural Women’s Award will be announced at a celebratory dinner to be held in Canberra later in September-October.

As the NT winner, Ms Matzner will receive a $10,000 bursary to implement her Award idea. She also has the opportunity to participate in the Australian Institute of Company Directors’ company directors course and will be supported to develop an individual integrated leadership plan.

The National Award winner will receive an additional $10,000 and the national runner-up will receive an additional $5000. This will assist in meeting national commitments such as speaking engagements.

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