



Future Farm E-News

Newsletter of the Future Farm Industries CRC

May 2010

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Regional Symposia and Our CRC

Through June and July, everyone involved with the CRC are encouraged to attend a symposium in either WA, SA, NSW or Vic to find out more about the latest research our CRC colleagues are undertaking and to meet the researchers involved.

These symposia have two important purposes:

- To bring everyone together, from researchers to Board Directors, to build upon our collaborative spirit
- To communicate the richness of our work as a first step to preparing reports for the Third Year Review due in February 2011.

Dr Anna Dutkiewicz (Adoption Manager, SA) is setting the standard with the first regional symposium to be held in South Australia at the Waite Campus and Monarto field site on 22 June.

The NSW Regional Symposium is scheduled for 1 July with Nathan Ferguson (Adoption Manager NSW) already consulting on the program. The Victorian Symposium will follow about the end of July.

Postgraduate Development Conference

Organised by Education Manager, Dr John Harper, and Agribusiness Director, Scott Glyde, this year's FFI CRC Postgraduate Development conference will be held at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga from 17-19 August 2010.

Student feedback from previous conferences has enabled this year's conference to be tailored specifically toward issues and activities of student and industry interest. For postgraduate development, the conference will include professional student presentations with expert panels providing feedback and comment. Skills-based training in grant and/or paper writing will also be offered.

For post-study interest, several industry representatives are being invited to provide short presentations on potential career paths within their organisation. Students will also be provided with instructions and guidance on managing risk within research programs and activities.

A conference booklet will be produced with short papers or abstracts by the participants, subsequently made available on *Future Farm Online*. Posters summarising work progress will also be encouraged. And of course, consistent with previous FFI CRC conferences, opportunities for networking and social interaction will be provided and encouraged.

For further information, contact FFI CRC Education Manager, Dr John Harper, on (02) 6933 2837.



Sheep growth over Autumn gives *Enrich* the thumbs up



The greener *Enrich* trial site at Badgingarra, Western Australia.

A recent *Enrich* grazing experiment at Badgingarra, Western Australia, has shown the value of native shrub species as part of the forage base in autumn (Keep your eyes peeled for an ABC *Landline* story on *Enrich* in the coming weeks).

The successful experiment by CSIRO, with help from local farmer, Tim Peacock, involved grazing sheep at 10 head/ha in plots containing a mixture of shrub species, including tagasaste, old man saltbush, river saltbush, bluebush, *Rhagodia preissii*, *Acacia saligna* and an *Allocasurina*.

For six weeks between mid-March 2010 and the end of April

In WA, a Valedictory Symposium will be held for Dr Mike Ewing on Tuesday 20 July, a variation on the regional symposium format. All WA-based FFI CRC people will be invited.

I urge everyone to attend the symposium nearest to them and look forward to meeting you all.

Kevin Goss, CEO



CRC Management Committee tours north central Victoria



The FFI CRC Management Committee learn about NUGF's rehabilitation work at the Kamarooka Saline Drainage Site near Bendigo.

In mid May, the FFI CRC Management Committee visited the historic Victorian goldfields town of Bendigo and surrounding region – home for the CRC's Program Three Leader, Paul Turnbull. The highlight of this two-day visit was a tour to localities within the Bendigo district of interest to the CRC researchers.

Chaperoned on the day by former CRC Salinity Director, Rod Luke, (now working for Kilter Pty Ltd), the tour visited a Colbinabbin farmer, Glen, who talked about the nuances of managing his South African Merinos (SAM) flock, which provide better meat, require less sturdy fencing and grow better on limited feed than merinos. While in the Colbinabbin, the committee visited a subterranean irrigation site used by Cedenco Foods to grow tomatoes. VicSuper, as part of their **Future Farming Landscape Investment Initiative**, use these subterranean irrigation sites as part of their strategy to improve farming systems in Victoria with a focus on maximising the value of water and environment while benefiting the community and delivering commercial returns.

The committee also visited the Kamarooka Saline Drainage Site rehabilitated by the **Northern United Forestry Group** (NUGF) who have planted saltbush over the saline areas, and salt-tolerant trees, shrubs and grasses in adjacent areas moderately affected by salinity. At the site, NUGF hydrologist, Phil Dyson, and other members talked about the significance of hydrological data they have collected to date.

Their data has shown a decline in the watertable over

2010, the sheep gained more than 4kg (about 90g/day) without supplementary feeding. Enrich researcher, Dr Dean Revell (CSIRO), said the results represent an excellent result for a time of year when poor animal performance is common and supplementary feeding is needed. Other encouraging results included excellent ground cover in the inter-row pasture remaining at the end of the six weeks of grazing, and also the lack of washouts (i.e. good water retention) after the storm events of 22-23 March.

Enrich is a national Future Farm Industries CRC project supported by MLA and involves researchers from CSIRO, UWA, DAFWA, SARDI and NSW I&I.



GRDC sees Future Farm Business as a valuable training tool

Future Farm Business (FFB), the CRC's interactive, group-based simulation exercise developed to help participants learn about managing a farm business is now being used to help train up rural economic consultants and farmers.

Future Farm Industries CRC Economist, Amir Abadi (WA Department of Environment and Conservation), has recently returned from Adelaide where he supervised a Future Farm Business session with Applied Economic Solutions (AES) as part of a pilot training program offered by the Grain Research Development Corporation (GRDC). In attendance were representatives from Elders, Landmark, small farm management firms and the South Australian Government Agency, Rural Solutions.

The FFB session was part of a five-day training program designed to make agronomists provide better advice and support to growers. The program used professional training facilitators like Mike Krause, AES Managing Director, and Amir Abadi to further develop these skills through interactive exercises on farm management.

Amir has reported back to the CRC saying that FFB was well received at the session with many participants wanting the exercise to be applied to other agroclimatic regions. AEC now intends to use FFB in the near future, as they see it as a useful tool to make new recruits in companies like Elders, and their younger farmer clients, more aware of farming systems and the associated planning and risk management strategies needed to manage them.



Great Southern farmer needed for *EverGraze* trial

EverGraze is currently looking for pasture cropping trial sites in the Great Southern Region of Western Australia to run a modest canola following kikuyu pasture cropping trial.

More specifically, a well grazed 0.5ha kikuyu stand located approximately 100km from Albany. Any farmers that would like to get involved, or find out more about *EverGraze*, should

the last decade. Phil attributes the fall to a decline in non-summer rainfall. He says following a flood that brought the water table to the surface, the bores under the plantations showed the most rapidly falling water table.

On the way back to Melbourne, the committee went through the Kamarooka forest, home to native blue and green mallee forest, two tree species which are part of the CRC's mallee breeding program.



Lynley leaves the weeds for new opportunities



After almost six years as the project scientist for the CRC's *Managing Weed and Genetic Risks* project, Dr Lynley Stone (pictured above) is leaving weed science for a new direction in life. She and her husband have purchased a Chiropractic business and are moving to South Australia. Lynley will be finishing up on the weeds project in early June. Christine Munday will continue in her role as the project scientist and provide weed risk advice and support to the CRC. A replacement for Lynley is currently being sought. Christine can be contacted on (08) 9334 0313 or christine.munday@dec.wa.gov.au.

We wish Lynley all the best with her new endeavours.



Manjimup Pasture Group Autumn Bus Tour

The Manjimup Pasture Group invites interested farmers, researchers and agronomists to come on a bus tour and see some of their pasture success stories including:

- Gary East's property on Balbarup Road who is using lucerne over-sown with oats
- Kim Edwards' property on Perup Road who has kikuyu over-sown with ryegrass
- John Mottram's summer active tall fescue on Rockbridge Road.

The tour will also visit the MLA Producer Demonstration Site evaluating the sustainability of higher stocking rates

contact [Paul Sanford](#) on (08) 9892 8475.



2010 UWA Institute of Agriculture Postgraduate Showcase

The 2010 University of Western Australia's (UWA) [Institute of Agriculture Postgraduate Showcase](#) provides the public with an opportunity to view the latest postgraduate work within the Institute and meet the students involved. The Showcase features FFI CRC PhD student, [Lalith Suriyagoda](#) and his research with the native legume, *Cullen australasicum*.

The showcase will be held at the UWA Molecular and Chemical Sciences building foyer between 1.30pm and 5pm on Wednesday, 9 June. To register your attendance, contact [Pam Townshend](#) on (08) 6488 4717.



DWLBC report shows perennials reduce salinity impact

A report released by the former South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (now the Department of Environment and Natural Resources) has shown that perennial plant treatments in the small saline Mt Eagle Catchment have made a positive contribution to groundwater and salinity reduction.

Although climate was a major driver of groundwater responses and dryland salinity, the establishment of perennials in the two sub-catchments resulted in a drop in groundwater levels above that expected from declining rainfall alone. Beginning in 1990, the Mt Eagle trials aimed to quantify the effect on depth to groundwater levels (watertable levels) of tree plantings in identified high recharge zones. The trial was subsequently expanded to include dryland lucerne as an alternative perennial to trees for recharge reduction.

Different perennial vegetation treatments were planted in the two sub-catchments, with the third remaining as a control sub-catchment under annual crop/pasture. Groundwater monitoring within each sub-catchment was undertaken from 1990 to 2008. During this period, an overall declining trend in rainfall was experienced. Repeated EM surveys confirmed a

at the Deeside Muir property on the Muir Highway.

The bus leaves from the Manjimup Mini Mart on the South West Highway at 10.00am sharp on Friday, 28 May returning at 4pm. For further information, please contact Paul Omodei on 0427 728 566.



The Peter Cullen Trust applications now open

The **Peter Cullen Trust** is a new charitable organisation set up to support research programs that continue the work of the late **Professor Peter Cullen**.

Applications are open for the Trust's 2010 leadership program, designed to train a small group of water scientists and policy experts to work together and achieve measurable outcomes bridging water science and policy.

Information packs are available from office@petercullentrust.com.au. Applications close on 1 July 2010.

retraction in saltland extent and saltland severity, due to falling groundwater levels. The relative water use of different vegetation was confirmed as being tree plantings highest, followed by dryland lucerne and annual pasture in descending order.

A copy of the technical report on this research, entitled Impact of Perennial Vegetation on Watertables and Dryland Salinity Mt Eagle, can be downloaded [here](#).

Coming Events...

Pathfinder 2010 - The Innovators Conference

26-28 May, Alice Springs, NT

Further Information: www.crca.asn.au/conference

Biochar Conference 2010

27- 28 May Sydney, NSW

Further information: www.iir.com.au

Institute of Agriculture Post-Graduate Showcase

9 June, University of Western Australia, Crawley, WA

Further information: erika.vonkaschke@uwa.edu.au

2010 Australian Summer Grains Conference

21-24 June, Gold Coast, Qld

Further information: www.australiansummergrains.com.au/contact-us.html

FFI CRC SA Regional Symposium

22 June, (TBC), SA

Further information: sglyde@csu.edu.au

F'EW E'TURE Farming Conference

23 June, Bendigo, Vic

Further information:(03) 5355 0531

2010 International Climate Change Adaptation Conference - Adaptation Futures

29 June - 1 July 2010, Gold Coast, Qld

Further information: www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010

FFI CRC NSW Regional Symposium

1 July, Orange, NSW

Further information: sglyde@csu.edu.au

Enviro 2010

21- 23 July 2010, Sydney, NSW

Further information: www.enviro2010.com.au

LambEx

4-6 August, Perth, WA

Further information: www.lambex.com.au

FFI CRC Postgraduate Conference

17-19 August Wagga Wagga, NSW

Further information: jharper@csu.edu.au

Dowerin Field Days

25-26 August, Dowerin, WA

Further information: willemien@dowerinfielddays.com.au

Agriculture Outlook 2010

13 - 15 September, Sydney, NSW

Further information: www.terrapinn.com

Farming Ahead Conference

22-23 September, Sydney, NSW

Further information: debbie.boxall@kondinin.com.au

Sheep CRC Conference

20-21 October 2010, Adelaide, SA

Further information: www.sheepcrc.org.au

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