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Lindsay's perennial grain research recognised in *Science* article



CRC Researcher, Lindsay Bell (pictured above), is one of the leading authors in a [paper](#) released on the global development of perennial grains, such as wheat, in the latest edition of the prestigious journal, *Science*.

The positive message of their research is good news for a world with increasing food demands and where half the world's growing population lives off marginal land at risk of being degraded by annual grain production. Perennial grains have longer growing seasons than annual crops. Their deeper roots, which can reach ten to 12 feet down, let the plants access more water, reduce erosion, and sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Perennial grains also expand farmers' ability to sustain their crops.

For more information, read this [Science Daily](#) article. Researcher, Lindsay Bell (pictured above), is one of the leading authors in a paper released on the global development of perennial grains, such as wheat, in the latest edition of the prestigious journal, *Science*.

Former students reflect on CRC experience



Over the last ten years, both the former CRC Salinity and Future Farm Industries CRC have played an important role in training the next generation of agricultural scientists. Two former PhD students, Nicolas George and Bronwyn Crowe, reflect on their experiences within these CRCs.

Former CRC Salinity PhD student Nicolas George (pictured above) completed his doctorate in 2005. Nicolas' research, which considered the domestication of *Acacia saligna* as a source of biomass for feed and bio-energy, led him to work at the WA Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). A few years later, he moved to North Carolina in the US to manage several agronomic trials aimed at improving biofuel feedstocks.

Nicolas enjoyed his time at CRC Salinity and the camaraderie that developed between the students.

"Academically, the experience was rewarding because of the professional development and other resources made available to us," Nicolas said.

"The level of science being conducted in the CRC was very high – working with world class researchers certainly helped me to develop as a scientist."

Nicolas now works for the North Carolina State University on a project improving the high-starch content of sweet potatoes for bio-renewable production such as plastic and biofuels.



Former PhD student Bronwyn Crowe (far right) enjoys her recent PhD graduation with fellow students at UWA.

A more recent PhD FFI CRC graduate, Bronwyn Crowe completed her research into the use of conservation contracts for environmental investment in fencing and tree planting that may lead to beneficial outcomes for society, or the environmental outcomes themselves.

Bronwyn said being part of the CRC introduced her to many interesting and exciting people, as well as taking her across Australia and the world.

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For more information, read this [Science Daily](#) article.

South Australian Symposium



Future Farm Industries CRC's regional symposia got away to a good start last week with the South Australian event.

On the theme of Bridging Productivity and Sustainability, twelve speakers described their project work, emphasised how it progressed CRC outcomes, and suggested opportunities for future work.

The day, excellently organised by Dr Anna Dutkiewicz (SA Adoption Manager pictured above) showcased the breadth of fodder shrub and saltland systems work, including a visit to the Monarto site to the east of Adelaide where Enrich, old man saltbush and woody crop plantings were on display. Raj Setia and Muhamad Azam, two postgrads supported by FFI CRC, presented their work to the group too.

Visiting on the day were Andrew Inglis (FFI CRC Chairman), Tim Healey (FFI CRC Director), Scott Glyde (Agribusiness Director), Paul Turnbull (Program 3 Leader) and Amir Abadi (FFI CRC Economist).

Nathan Ferguson (NSW Adoption Manager) has organised the NSW Symposium to be held on Thursday 1 July at Orange. A few weeks later, the Mike Ewing Valedictory Symposium will be held in WA on 20 July followed by the Victorian Symposium on 27 August, located at Attwood near Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport.

People involved in the FFI CRC are encouraged to attend one of these events that provide a great opportunity to share and learn about the good work we are all doing.....



Steve leaves the perennials pastures for Tanzania

Improved Perennial Grasses Project Leader Steve Clark and his wife Jenny are going to Tanzania next month where Jenny has taken a year-long volunteer placement with VSO – an organisation closely allied with Australian Volunteers International.

"After going through some tough training, and police and qualification checks, Jenny was offered a teaching placement in Bukoba, Tanzania. However at this stage, I am unsure if I will be able to get a similar placement," Steve explained.

"We will be based in Bukoba on the western shore of Lake Victoria with a population of 100,000 but the work will be at 20-30 small district schools along roads of varying quality. Jenny's job will involve teaching primary teachers to teach maths. Basically, helping them to get away from the stand and deliver, rote methods they currently use."

Tanzania's Bukoba District is close to the equator and sits at 1200m above sea level where it receives 2000mm of rain a year during its two wet seasons. The District's main agricultural industries are coffee, tea, cotton, bananas, maize and fishing in Lake Victoria. Apparently, the region also contains a large dairy herd.

Steve's role, unless he gets a VSO placement, will be to support Jenny and become a house husband. He is also keen to get involved with the region's fledgling eco-tourism industry and help them develop wildlife tours – particularly bird watching.

"The ideas and enthusiasm of fellow PhD students at our annual meetings was incredibly helpful for my work and kept me motivated. The networking and educational aspects of the meetings also helped me when it came to having the confidence to move beyond my PhD and into the workplace."

Bronwyn now works as an adviser at KPMG, helping companies across Perth improve their governance and risk systems based on her understanding of conservation contracts.



FFI CRC Victorian Symposium

The Future Farm Industries CRC is holding its *Catchment Health and Profitable Change* Symposium on 27 August in Victoria to hear about the variety of CRC projects underway in that State.

Held at the Vic DPI Office, Attwood, the Symposium will feature presentations that explain how each CRC research project in the State works together with the other projects to improve overall sustainability and productivity.

Concepts discussed during these presentations will be expanded upon in a follow up workshop, which will examine the strengths and weaknesses of each research project and identify new opportunities to improve collaboration, research outcomes and extension strategies.

For more information, contact [Rina Cooper](#) on (02) 6030 4605.



Changes to the CRC's Weed Risk Team



The CRC's weed risk scientists (from left to right) Christine Munday and Karen Bettink.

Karen Bettink has recently been appointed as joint project scientist (part-time) to the CRC's *Weed and Genetic Risk* Project to replace Lynley Stone. Karen will share the position with Christine Munday who is currently the project scientist.

Karen has worked at DEC in the weed management area for many years, and is a great addition to the team. For any weed related enquiries, and to submit weed risk assessments, please contact either [Christine](#) or [Karen](#), or telephone (08) 9334 0313.

The CRC's Weed Risk Team would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Dr Brian Dear, member of the Weed Risk Assessment Technical Committee for the past six years. Brian has put considerable time and effort into reviewing the Weed Risk Assessments (WRAs) submitted by CRC researchers to ensure we achieve consistently high standards. Thank you Brian!

Brian has now stepped down from this position, and we now welcome Geoff Moore, the *Productive, Persistent Tropical Grasses* Project Leader to the Committee. Thank you to Geoff for agreeing to participate, who joins John Virtue – a Committee member since its inception.

A priority for the *Weed and Genetic Risk* Project is the weed risk assessment of all species recommended on the [Saltland Genie](#) website. Many CRC researchers have already been contacted with a request to complete a WRA for particular species. We thank you for your co-operation, and encourage you to collaborate with other colleagues to ensure comprehensive analyses. Chris, Karen, Geoff and John look forward to reviewing the WRAs to be submitted over the coming months. Please contact Christine or Karen if you require any assistance.



You can find out more about Steve and Jenny's African adventure as it happens by following their blogs:

www.bukobasteve.blogspot.com

www.wantingafrica.blogspot.com

While Steve and Jenny are out of the country from July 2010 to July 2011, Zhongnan Nie (DPI Vic) will lead the Improved Perennial Grasses Project.



Ram heads off to Hyderabad

Highly regarded SARDI researcher and *Oldman Saltbush Improvement* Project Leader, Ram Nair, is leaving the CRC to take up a Legume Breeder position at AVRDC – the World Vegetable Centre.

AVRDC's mission is to alleviate poverty and malnutrition in the developing world through increased consumption of safe vegetables. While AVRDC's headquarters are based in Taiwan, Ram will be relocating to their south Asia centre at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), located in Hyderabad, India.

Following Ram's departure from SARDI at the end of June, Dr Greg Sweeney will take over as *Saltbush Improvement* Project Leader.

We wish Ram all the best with his new job.



Communications Update

Focus on Perennials and Future Farm magazines now online

The June editions of Focus on Perennials and Future Farm are now available from the *Future Farm Online*.

Focus on Perennials looks at the mallee harvester prototype, how the wet summer in eastern Australia has shown the value of perennial pastures and the biodiversity value of saltbush.

Future Farm features several farmer case studies that follow the themes of profit, drought tolerance and efficiency in livestock production with EverGraze® featuring prominently throughout.

FFI CRC Technical Report 5

A new FFI CRC Technical Report on the impact on farm profit from incorporating perennial pastures in the rotation of crop-livestock enterprises in southern New South Wales is now available from the *Other Publications* Section of *Future Farm Online*.

FFI CRC now Twittering

Future Farm Industries CRC has its own Twitter Site. Go [here](#) to start following.



ESA Biodiversity Conference

The Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) celebrates a 50 Years Anniversary at the *Sustaining biodiversity – the next 50 years* Conference to be held between 6-10 December at the Australian National University, Canberra.

The event, through a series of symposia, will address several themes focusing on the challenges facing Australian ecosystems during the next 50 years. Of interest to the CRC is a session entitled *Biodiversity conversation in agricultural landscapes: is it really worth the effort* which will feature CRC researchers Andrew Fisher (DWBL) and Dr Patrick Smith (CSIRO).

Go [here](#) for more information about the Conference.



WA lucerne growers guide now available

Western Australian farmers now have a guide to help them determine if the perennial pasture, lucerne, can add value and increase the profitability and sustainability of their business.

Produced by FFI CRC and the WA Department of Agriculture and Food, the *Lucerne Guidelines for Western Australia* publication highlights the benefits lucerne has to offer farmers by communicating the experiences that local researchers and farmers have had with growing it.

The publication is a valuable resource for farmers, agribusiness advisers, natural resource management groups, researchers and students wanting to learn more about how lucerne can make agricultural systems more profitable and sustainable.

Lucerne Guidelines for Western Australia can be downloaded [here](#).



2011 Fulbright Professional Scholarships

Applications are now open for the 2011 Fulbright Professional Scholarships. Valued at up to \$30,000, these scholarships support Australian citizens to undertake three to four months of professional development in the United States anytime between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012.

Fulbright Professional Scholarships are available to professionals from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors who want to undertake research or professional development in the United States.

The Fulbright Professional Scholarship must include an educational component and are specifically designed to help the advancement of staff to more senior positions.

For further information and application forms, visit: www.fulbright.com.au. Applications close on 31 August.



Coming Events...

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

FFI CRC Vic Regional Symposium

27 August, Attwood, Vic

Further information: rina.cooper@dpi.vic.gov.au

Dowerin Field Days

25-26 August, Dowerin, WA

Further information: willemien@dowerinfielddays.com.au

NFF National Congress

5-7 September, Melbourne, Vic

Further information: www.congress.nff.org.au

Focus 50 Workshop National

7 September, Perth, WA

Further information: barbara.williamson@futurefarmcrc.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, Adelaide, SA

Further information: www.sheepcrc.org.au

ESA Biodiversity Conference

6-10 December, Canberra, ACT

Further information: www.conlog.com.au

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