

Grass-roots approach to climate change

By Samantha Johnson

Being able to adapt your farming systems and make the most of today's variable climate is a vital skill to have.

The Advisory Board of Agriculture recognises this and is supporting farmers to up-skill and prepare for the impacts of climate change through a series of workshops being held across the State.

ABA Chair, Mark Dennis, says the workshops will demonstrate to farmers how they can adapt their farming systems and better manage their businesses by looking closely at climatic information.

"Rainfall across the growing season remains difficult to predict, which is making it really hard for farmers to manage," Mr Dennis said.

"And while seasonal climate outlook models are constantly improving, this information can be very difficult to interpret at a local level.

"These workshops will alleviate this confusion and give farmers knowledge that is relevant to them and their situation."

The 14 workshops will kick off on 29 January in Parawa and finish on 3 April in Eudunda, providing farmers with the latest information and tools to assist them in managing the impacts of a variable climate.

Coordinated by Rural Solutions SA, the workshops will include presentations by the SARDI Climate Applications Unit and the Bureau of Meteorology, with input from CSIRO and the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation.

Mr Dennis says with projections for a warming and drying climate across South Australia, farmers will need to be on the front foot and be responsive in managing this variability.

"At the workshops, farmers will be taught how to understand the risks and tradeoffs of different strategies and utilise available seasonal indicators and tools, giving them greater knowledge to base decisions upon."

The ABA will also use the workshops to assess farmer's needs, which will hopefully guide future research trials and information workshops.

The workshops are part of the ABA's \$100,000 'Responding to climate variability at a local level' project, funded under the Australian Government National Landcare Programme – Sustainable Practices Grant.

Farmers interested in attending the workshops should RSVP by contacting Penny Stevens at Rural Solutions SA on (08) 8821 1555.

(BREAK OUT BOX)

Managing Climate Variability Workshops will be held:

- Parawa (Fleurieu) - Thurs 29 Jan
- Monarto - Thurs 5 Feb
- Mallala - Mon 16 Feb
- Piednippie (Western Eyre Peninsula) - Wed 4 Mar
- Kimba - Thurs 5 Mar
- Wharminda - Fri 6 Mar
- Crystal Brook - Wed 11 Mar
- Bute - Thurs 12 Mar
- Parilla - Wed 18 Mar
- Karoonda - Thurs 19 Mar
- Coonalpyn - Wed 25 Mar
- Padthaway - Thurs 26 Mar
- Yorketown - Wed 1 Apr
- Eudunda - Fri 3 Apr