

# e-news

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OUR  
COUNTRY

by

June 2009

*e-news* is designed to share information and improve linkages between SA Grower Groups, NRM bodies, Researchers and key agricultural stakeholders - *please feel free to share it around to your members and key stakeholders*

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## [Sustainable Farming: SA Farmers Reaping What They Sow](#)

South Australian farmers can take pride in the way they are managing SA's erosion prone soils through the adoption of sustainable farming practices.

Data collected over the last 10 years by the Department of Water, Land, and Biodiversity Conservation's (DWLBC) land condition monitoring program shows that the average number of days per year that agricultural land is protected from erosion has increased from 272 days in 2002/2003 to 293 days in 2007/2008. This is an even more significant with the occurrence of consecutive droughts in that period and demonstrates progress to achieving a target of 326 days protection by 2014, as identified in the State Strategic Plan.

As well as monitoring soil protection through assessment of surface cover, the land condition monitoring program carries out Land Manager telephone surveys. These surveys are showing significant increases in the adoption of conservation farming practices. For example the reported use of one-pass sowing methods such as no-till, direct drill, or zero till systems, which has risen from 53% in 2002 to 77% in 2008. The number of farmers who reported usually or occasionally burning stubbles or pasture residues, has fallen from 69% in 2002 to 38% in 2008.

The DWLBC Land Condition Monitoring Program provides a benchmark and monitoring process to gather long-term data on land condition and sustainable farming practices. This data shows SA's farmers are not only looking after their land but are also improving it.

For more information on the Land Condition Monitoring Program and seasonal erosion protection reports go to the DWLBC website at

[http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/land/monitoring/current\\_reports.html](http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/land/monitoring/current_reports.html)

*Glenn Gale, Manager, Land Management*

## **2009 State & Territory Landcare Awards Now Open**

Applications are now open for the 2009 Landcare Awards and close on 14<sup>th</sup> August. 10 categories including Primary Producers, NRM Regions, various Groups and the People's Choice Award. Go to [www.sa.landcareheroes.com](http://www.sa.landcareheroes.com)

**Peter Olsen Fellowship for 2009** is now open to all young South Australians involved in agriculture between the ages of 18 to 35.

The Agricultural Bureau and PIRSA are proud to again join forces to promote this initiative for the betterment of the young and agriculture in this State with a bursary of \$8 000. Please promote to any young person you believe may be eligible. Further information and an application form is available on [www.agbureau.org.au](http://www.agbureau.org.au) under Awards.

## **NRM News - South East Irrigators Access Local ETo Data**

Irrigators in the South East constantly strive to maximise the efficient use of their groundwater allocations, and improve the productivity and viability of their agricultural enterprises. Access to new technologies can form an integral part of this process.

Among the various irrigation scheduling methods employed by regional irrigators, the uptake and confident utilisation of climate-based irrigation scheduling techniques is strongly influenced by the availability of locally relevant reference crop evapotranspiration (ET<sub>o</sub>) data.

The ability of irrigators in the South East NRM Region to access localised ET<sub>o</sub> data has been significantly enhanced this month, with information now available online from the South East Natural Resources Management (SE NRM) Board's network of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS).

Funded through the Complementary State NRM Program, the AWS network comprises twelve stations - located from north of the Dukes Highway to south of Mount Gambier - and also includes data from an existing AWS located at Tintinara.

Sensors on the AWS regularly measure temperature (air and soil), humidity, wind speed and direction, solar radiation and rainfall. Figures calculated from the output data include ET<sub>o</sub>, dew point and Delta-T.

Data from the AWS network can be freely viewed by visiting the SE NRM Board's website, [www.senrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.senrm.sa.gov.au), and clicking on "nrmSPACE.se". Following the links, click on

"nrmWEATHER", and chose a location from either the map or main menu. Current information can be viewed, as well as archived data in graph and table form.

*For further information on the AWS network and future ETo workshops, contact Rob Palamountain at the SE NRM Board on 08) 8724 6000.*

## **EPARF Activities**

### **Crop Insect Identification and Control Workshop (FREE)**

*8.30am to 12.30pm Tuesday 4 August at the Wudinna Community Club*

Morning tea provided Presenters: Ken Henry and Judy Bellati, SARDI

This workshop is aimed at farmers interested in correctly identifying useful bugs versus damaging bugs, in order to save time and money on control methods.

Supported by the EP Grain & Graze Project

*Contact Naomi Scholz at Minnipa Agricultural Centre, 8680 6233 for more info*

### **EPARF Members Day/GRDC Update**

*9am to 5pm Wednesday 12 August at the Minnipa Ag Centre*

EPARF members free entry and evening meal starting at 6pm.

SAFF members cost \$40, non-members cost \$50.

A great range of speakers on topics such as business resilience and profitability, grain storage and handling, weed control, variable rate technology.

*To register or find out more, contact Jon Lamb 8362 5417 or Naomi Scholz 8680 6233.*

## **MacKillop Farm Management Group**

MacKillop's website is now up to date and includes information on

- Trials for 2009
- Dates of coming events
- Membership information
- Reports for Trials completed recently
- Sponsorship information
- Links to all sponsors websites

Access via the following link: [www.mackillopgroup.com.au](http://www.mackillopgroup.com.au)

## **Agriculture Kangaroo Island Conference – Looking Forward**

Ag KI are hosting their first ever conference which will be open to members and the general community. To be held in Kingscote on the Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2009, the conference will start at 1pm and go till evening.

Some guest speakers are still to be finalised, but areas that will be addressed are Emissions Trading Scheme, Market Analysis, and Cooperative Farming.

For further information or for bookings please contact Kate Buck, AgKI Conference Co-coordinator, 8553 4372 Monday-Thursday.

## **2009 CASE IH SANTFA Cropwalk Program**

This year's cropwalk program will cover 11 regions from the far west coast to the lower south east and will combine where possible with local farming systems groups

Special guest speakers will be renowned South Australian agronomists Mick Faulkner and Jeff Braun of Agrilink Agricultural Consultants Pty Ltd. Greg Butler will be available to answer your questions in relation to carbon capture, conservational techniques and future environmental considerations.

Some of the topics for discussion include canopy management, integrated pest & weed control, crop chemicals and resistance issues, stubble retention and erosion reduction.

SANTFA proudly acknowledge the support of our sponsors together with the Ag Excellence Alliance and the following Natural Resource Management Boards; Northern & Yorke, SA Murray Darling Basin, Adelaide & Mt Lofty, Eyre Peninsula and the South East.

*Please check diary dates below for Cropwalk locations, dates etc, and for further information contact the SANTFA office or your regional SANTFA representative.*

## Ag Ex Activities

### Recent Grower Group Projects supported by Ag Ex funding

In the past couple of months Ag Ex has approved funding support for various conference speakers, training workshops, cropwalks, group travel etc to; Partners In Grain, SANTFA, SPAA, EP Ag Research Foundation, MacKillop Farm Management Group, Mallee Sustainable Farming, AG KI, Lower Eyre Ag Development Assoc, and YP Alkaline Soils Group.

**Ian Plowman Workshops** – The Ag Ex Committee and staff members are looking forward to workshops with Ian Plowman, PhD, in early July to improve efficiencies, revisit and update the Ag Ex Strategic Plan, and generally address future plans and challenges.

Ag Ex is also hosting a free full day workshop "Innovation & Change, and Co-operative Conversations" open to all growers and agricultural stakeholders on Friday July 3<sup>rd</sup> with Ian. Rabobank are kindly sponsoring morning tea and lunch.

**Grower Group Survey** – The majority of Grower Groups have recently participated in a survey of where they see Ag Ex's value, strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement etc. This is being considered by the committee during its planning and evaluation sessions with Ian Plowman.

**Meeting with PIRSA and Farming Systems Officers** – members of Ag Ex committee and staff will be discussing Sustainable Agriculture and NRM with key stakeholders from across the state. The objective of the meeting is to; build relationships through understanding by identifying who is involved and discussing what we are all trying to achieve; and identify opportunities to strengthen engagement and support for industry to address NRM agricultural needs.

**Critique of Farming Business and Agronomic Tools** – with funding from Ag Ex, Bill Long is currently preparing a critique of all tools available to farmers which will be widely available to Grower Groups and members.

## Diary Dates

### July

- 2nd Birchip Cropping Group Expo "From Surviving to Thriving", 8.30am start  
Go to [www.bcg.org.au](http://www.bcg.org.au) for further info
- 24th MacKillop Sponsors & Members Dinner, 7pm @ Struan House. Guest speaker Sue Brown of Browns of Padthaway. RVSP July 16 to Krysteen McElroy 0408 655 108 or [mfmfg@bigpond.com](mailto:mfmfg@bigpond.com)
- 28th Hart Field Site Group Winter Walk, 9am till noon at Site
- 29th Northern YP / SANTFA / SPAA / YPASG Cropwalks
- 30th Southern YP / SANTFA / YPASG Cropwalks

### August

- 3rd Upper SE SPAA, meet 8.30am at Coomandook shop morning
- 3rd Lower SE SPAA / MacKillop PA afternoon, 2pm meet at Frances Hotel

- 4th EPARF Crop Insect Identification and Control Workshop (FREE) 8.30am to 12.30pm at Wudinna Community Club, Morning tea provided Presenters: Ken Henry and Judy Bellati, SARDI
- 4th Lower SE SPAA / MacKillop PA, 8.30am meet at SA Ambulance Centre, Padthway
- 4th Mallee / SPAA / MSFS PA, 2pm, meet at Robin Schaefer's, 2.3kms south of Loxton
- 5th SANTFA / SPAA Mid North Cropwalk, Location: Western Districts Kybunga/Balaklava
- 6th SANTFA / SPAA Mid North Cropwalk, Location: Eastern Districts Saddleworth/Tarlee
- 7th Lower EP / SPAA PA, 7.30am breakfast meeting starting at Randall Wilksch's, Yeelanna
- 7th Upper EP / SPAA PA, 2pm at Wes Matthews' sheds, 25 kms east of Kyancutta on Eyre Highway
- 12th GRDC Grower Update Southern Region & EP Agricultural Research Foundation (EPARF) Field Day @ Minnipa
- 16 - 21 MacKillop FMG Study Tour - Irrigation Systems & Precision Ag in Sth East Queensland
- 17th Northern Mallee SANTFA / MSFS Cropwalk, Location: Wanbi/Copeville
- 17th Advisory Board of Ag Annual Dinner & AGM @ Victor Harbour
- 18th Southern Mallee SANTFA / MSFS Cropwalk, Location: Pinnaroo/Coonalpyn
- 19th GRDC Grower Update Southern Region (TBC) @ Crystal Brook
- 20th GRDC Grower Update Southern Region (TBC) @ Loxton
- 25th Kerribee Crop Walk (NSW) – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August
- 26th Western Eyre Peninsula SANTFA Cropwalk, Location: Pt Kenny/ Mt Cooper
- 27th Central Eyre Peninsula SANTFA Cropwalk, Location: Darke Peak
- 28th Upper North SANTFA Cropwalk, Location: Wirrabara/Gladstone/ Jamestown

### September

- 1st Mallee Sustainable Waikerie Field Day, 10 year celebrations "A Decade of Difference" - any ideas for demonstrations etc welcome
- 4th SPAA Conference @ Mawson Lakes Hotel
- 15th Hart Field Day, gates open 9am, proceedings start 10.30am, entry fee \$30
- 16th Minnipa Ag Centre Field Day
- 17th LEADA's Spring Field Day / SANTFA / LEADA Cropwalk Southern EP, Cummins
- 18th Upper North Farming Systems Field Day
- 18th SANTFA / MacKillop Cropwalk Location; SE Districts, Bordertown
- 29 - 1 YP Field Days @ Paskeville

### October

- 15th Hart Field Site Spring Walk, 4pm at Site, followed by BBQ & drinks
- 28-29 MacKillop Field Days

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The next Ag Ex e-news is planned for late August, so if your group has an activity to report, or a date for the diary email contact Heather Baldock as per details below

### AEA Contacts & Committee

[www.agex.org.au](http://www.agex.org.au)

Chair – Mick Faulkner, 0428 857 378, [faulkner@sa.chariot.net.au](mailto:faulkner@sa.chariot.net.au)

Vice Chair - Bill Long , [bill@agconsulting.com.au](mailto:bill@agconsulting.com.au)

Committee; Mark Stanley, Leighton Pearce, Sharon Honner, Jeanette Long, Deb Baum, Mark Pedlar, Jen Lillecrapp, Kieran Wauchope, Nigel Wilhelm,

Project Manager - Heather Baldock, 08 8627 4056, 0428 101 416, [heather.agex@bigpond.com](mailto:heather.agex@bigpond.com)

Admin Officer - Lorraine Rice, 08 8853 2269, [lorraine@agex.org.au](mailto:lorraine@agex.org.au)

Ag Ex Sustainable Ag Officer in the NY NRM Region - Michael Richards, 0427 547 052, [michael.asg@netyp.com.au](mailto:michael.asg@netyp.com.au)

