

Regional Landcare Facilitator Newsletter, August 2012

HOSTED BY THE WESTERN MURRAY LAND IMPROVEMENT GROUP

Issue 14,

Upcoming Events

Open Farms - Open Minds. Saturday 15th Sept.

"Showcasing our diverse regional farms, produce and best land management practices, whilst providing the opportunity for the community to learn about our unique natural environment"

The inaugural **Open Farms, Open Minds** event is taking place Saturday, September 15.

The Open Farms, Open Minds Tour aims to highlight biodiversity and natural resource management on farms and help reconnect the regional - urban relationship.

"The kids will love the wildlife adventure with Matt Herring, see cows being milked and a chance to feed the calves"

This is your chance to experience our beautiful region and learn about farm management practices first hand.

The day includes two on-farm field days at Barham Avocados and O'Neill's Murray Eden dairy. You can also take an adventure with wildlife expert Matt Herring, experience a camp oven in the bush cooked by Matt Wilkinson with The Red Gum Food Group and follow it all up with a night of wildlife spotlighting.

As well as looking at cows being milked and calves being fed at O'Neill's dairy farm, a presentation by Brian Crockart from CRC Agri-solutions will cover changed dairy farm management

practices to improve resource efficiency as well as covering the use of a feedpad, rotary dairy, silage and waste composting system.

The event also celebrates the "Australian Year of the Farmer" and leads into the farmers' market on Sunday. This is your chance to experience our beautiful region and the fabulous things our farmers do first hand!

Contact our new web site at www.westernmurraylig.org/events or contact Katrina Warne on 0428 475 442 .



Grain savings using a feedpad system will be discussed at the Open Farms Open Minds event.

Special points of interest:

- CENTRAL MURRAY BESTWOOL/ BESTLAMB DAYS AT "MURRABIT AND NOORONG"
- OPEN FARMS OPEN MINDS EVENT
- MOULAMEIN CROPPING GROUP ESTABLISHES SEVERAL TRIAL SITES
- RESULTS OF "GRAIN AND GRAZE" TRIAL AT PRETTY PINE LIVESTOCK FIELD DAY.
- BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF PATTERSONS CURSE IN AREA.

Moulamein Cropping Group Annual Field Walk, Friday 7th Sept.

The Moulamein Cropping Group has sown a series of winter crop trials again in 2012 and will be holding a field walk at two of the trial sites on Friday, 7th September at 10.00am. The trials are building on the trials conducted during the 2011 winter cropping season.

Wheat, barley, canola and dual purpose crop trials have been sown under 3 different irrigation treat-

ments; dryland, autumn irrigation only and full irrigation with spring irrigation scheduled using simple soil moisture measuring equipment.

Irrigation, on the heavy clay soils, reduced established plant number in both the 2011 and 2012 season, however the additional plant growth from the autumn irrigations more than compensates for the reduc-

tion in established plant number.

In the 2012 season this has been seen most graphically in the canola. The top photo to the right (taken on August 16, 2012) shows the canola that received two irrigations in the autumn, the photo on the bottom left shows the dryland bay, the huge difference in dry matter production and growth stage difference can be clearly seen. *Continued pg 3.*



Canola that received two autumn irrigations



Canola without irrigation

Recent Events

Murrabit Central Murray BestWool / BestLamb Information Day

"The biggest mistake people do is keeping lambs too long. You need to look at \$ made per ha, not just a good lamb price. If you keep lambs for 8-10 months you might get a good price, but you need to know what have you sacrificed to get that?"

Gary Armstrong,
"Victoria DPI"

The Central Murray Best-Wool/BestLamb Group held a meeting at the Murrabit Football sheds on the 23rd July with 22 people.

Sam Ellis (Vic. DPI) facilitated the annual planning program. Topics that participants would like covered in the next 12 months that are in addition to existing projects include;

mulesing; options being used, breeding, trisuphin

(pain relief medication) register.

marketing lamb; e.g. MSA accreditation

Animal welfare; upcoming expectations, transport and leirage (confinement of animals prior to slaughter).

Meat Standards Australia (MSA) representative John Simmonds discussed factors affecting meat quality and requirements for being a registered MSA

producer. The MLA will provide training support for people looking to become MSA producers.

Gary Armstrong (Vic. DPI) presented information on the topic of "Managing Lambs on a Diminishing Feedbase to Meet Market Expectations".

For further information on the Central Murray Best-Wool / BestLamb Group contact Rick Ellis.

"Operina" Sheep Day



Assessing the attributes of different sheep from six district properties.



Dr Jim Watts providing an overview of positive sheep traits

The Central Murray Best-Wool/BestLamb held an event at the property "Operina" in the Noorong district on the 13th August with 31 participants.

The day involved an overview of the sheep operation by Tim Mulholland on genetic changes being made at "Operina" in the last six years and future efficiency targets.

Dr Jim Watts presented information on the evolution of Merino sheep, wool follicle development, skin type, density, bundling, crimp and other desirable wool traits in sheep.

The presentation was followed by a hands on as-

essment of ewes in pens from different properties in the district. Participants had the opportunity to score the different sheep and get a feel for good fleece and body traits with the help of Jim.

Different rams from Operina were also displayed and their genetic history and ewe joining program discussed.

The CMBW/BL Group thank Tim and Tam Mulholland and the Murray Catchment Management Authority for funding the day.



Checking the wool for crimp, length, bundling and colour.



Tim Mulholland welcoming participants and providing an overview of genetics history and targets at "Operina".

Recent Events - Continued

Pretty Pine Livestock Health Day

The RGA held a livestock health day at Pretty Pine on the 4th July 2012.

Brian Crockhart discussed livestock nutrition and the basic feed requirements for sheep and cattle.

Ian Locke presented on the topic of "Setting up a Reproductively Efficient Cow Herd" and how farm livestock are managed around farm fodder production to maximise profit.

Richard Apps presented MLA research information and future targets.

Presentation notes taken on the day from Brian, Ian and Richard are enclosed in the email in a separate Word file.

John Fowler, NSW DPI, presented outcomes from a "Grain and Graze" cereal trial in the region. The aim of the trial was to improve the financial performance of

winter cereals, improve the gross margin returns of irrigation water, and reduce business risk.

John pointed out that autumn is traditionally a 'feed gap' period, autumns are becoming drier and early sown cereals are one way of addressing the trend.

The trial was very successful and provides the opportunity for higher gross margin returns from irrigation water.

Some key takeaway points were to;

- sow a winter habit cereal (e.g. Wedgetail wheat) early in its sowing window (preferably in early to mid March)
- Commence grazing when plants are well anchored and tillering has commenced (6-8 weeks from emergence)

- stock have to be removed once plants reach first node (Z31)
 - Comply with all chemical withholding periods
 - always provide access to magnesium based supplements (such as a 1:1 causmag and salt lose lick) as this can lead to substantial increases in live weight gains
 - Grazed crops require additional N
 - Greatest dry matter production occurs when N is applied at sowing and Z31.
 - Do not graze within 20 days of topdressing urea to avoid nitrate poisoning.
- For further information on the trial contact John Fowler on 58819913.

"YARD WEANING CATTLE IS GOOD SCIENCE. IT SOCIALISES YOUNG CALVES, IS GOOD FOR BUG CONDITIONING AND YOU CAN CONTROL ENERGY INTAKE FOR A PERIOD, SAY IN FEBRUARY WHICH IS BETTER THAN ANIMALS GOING BACKWARDS AND FRETTING. THE CALVES LEARN THAT YARDS ARE A GOOD EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST WHERE DEHORNING, CASTRATION AND DRENCHING TAKES PLACE"

IAN LOCKE, DIRECTOR
ABRI - HOLBROOK

"The 'Grain and Graze' trial produced returns on lambs of >\$250/ha for a grazing period of 48 days. Grain returns were \$470/ha based on a yield of 4.4tn/ha using 2.1ML water/ha"

John Fowler, "NSW DPI, Deniliquin"

Moulamein Cropping Group Trials....Continued

The cropping group is also looking at the production of high yielding cereals using the high yielding principles developed by the NSW DPI.

Trials with hard wheat and durum wheat as well as barley are being conducted under an overhead irrigator. However, it is important to remember that the principles were

developed on good border check layouts.

Over the last two years these management principles aiming for 8t/ha of wheat have achieved an average of 6.9 and 6.4 t/ha over the paddock area (180 ha), with the small plots reaching 7.3 t/ha.

If growers are looking at improving layouts or are

installing overhead irrigators then these trials will provide them with local experience on what is required to achieve these high yields consistently.

The Moulamein Cropping Group annual field walk starts with the variety trials under different irrigation management at Chalmers property "Riversleigh" at 10.00am

followed by a visit to the high yielding site to discuss the high yielding principles at Gorey's property, "Tiquito".

Contact John Smith, NSW DPI Agronomist on 0428 236 629 or 0358 19935 for more information.

Biological Control of Patterson Curse



Photo: A couple of interested local farmer's collecting Flea beetles on East Barham Rd.

The Wakool Shire Council has been involved in the biological control of Patterson's curse since 1999.

The first involvement with the Flea Beetle (*Longitarsus echii*) was in 2002. Since then the Flea Beetle has been collected each year from Tarcutta (near Wagga-Wagga), brought back to the Wakool Shire and released.

Now that funding has ended for the biological control of Patterson's Curse, the shire had a follow up visit from Paul Sullivan 'the Invasive Species Officer' from DPI. Paul is measuring the success of Flea Beetle release sites throughout NSW.

On Wednesday 1st August, a mini field day was held

at East Barham Rd. with Paul who spoke about the biological control agents and demonstrated how to collect the Flea Beetle for release. We are now able to collect from our own Flea beetle site on the East Barham Rd.

For more information, please contact Stephen Battenally of the Wakool Shire Council on 0427 513 982.

Moulamein School Indigenous Food, fibre and medicine Garden

A group of local community members met at the Moulamein State School on the 18th June to plan for the Indigenous food garden.

The MCMA has approved funds to the

Project as part of the Community Grants scheme. The project aims to showcase species indicative of the region that can be used as a resource, plus outside species that may have been traded by indigenous

groups.

A list of species have been developed for review by local indigenous groups and other community members.

A garden plan is currently

being done and site preparation (weed killing, planning etc.) has commenced.

Further details to follow.

Australian Framework for Landcare - Community Call for Action

The Australian Landcare Council has the pleasure in providing the Community Call for Action, the companion document to the Australian Framework for Landcare.

The council was tasked to prepare the Action plan for the Framework on behalf of the Landcare community. The council renamed the action plan to Community Call for Action to acknowledge that it is the community's document and to reflect the community's views, key issues and messages provided during consultation for both the

framework and the action plan. The framework document has been updated to complement the action plan.

The Community Call for Action calls for all Landcare stakeholders and potential partners to respond by developing and making available via the council's webpage their own complementary strategies. A public commitment to Landcare through their plans for action, together with actions taken by other organisations will form a package of measures to implement the framework.

It is hoped that the Community Call for Action will help revive and build partner-

ships at all levels - national, state, regional and local - to better support Landcare and to facilitate information exchange. It encourages stakeholders to develop and implement their response strategies, and will assist the Australian Government to identify opportunities to help the community fulfil its objectives.

Hard copies of the document will soon be available from regional NRM bodies, state and territory peak Landcare bodies and Landcare Australia Limited. Hard copies can also be requested by emailing alcsecretary@daff.gov.au

at@daff.gov.au

The council will formally hand over the Community Call for Action to the community during Landcare week at this year's National Landcare Conference, held 3-5 September.

The documents are available by contacting Roger Knight and also available at www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/the_australian_landcare_framework.

Young trees and shrubs bring birds back

Monitoring of 46 farms across southern NSW over ten years has found a big increase in numbers of rare and endangered birds on the farms, despite years of drought.

Plantings and regrowth areas where grazing pressure has been reduced, have seen the biggest re-

turn of native birds due to the understorey of young, vigorous trees and shrubs. The survey found an average of 29 bird species in new planting areas, 25 in seedling regrowth areas and 20 in areas re-spouting after fires or land clearing—compared with only 15 bird types in old growth areas where trees

were all mature or ageing. This suggests that farmland needs a range of vegetation growth types to support bird species in Australian temperate woodland ecosystems.



Photo: A range of vegetation growth types, such as understorey species, improve biodiversity despite drought.

Funding Opportunities

The 2012-13 round for **Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations** (GVESHO) has now been announced.

The GVESHO program helps eligible community based organisations to value, conserve and protect Australia's natural environment and historic heritage and to promote sustainability by assisting with their administrative costs.

Grants provided through the program may be used to assist with salaries and salary on-costs for executive and administrative staff; office accommodation rental; electricity, gas, phone and other similar charges; essential office supplies and equipment; staff and volunteer training; photocopying and printing costs; and travel costs incurred on behalf of

the organisation.

Applications will close 5pm (AEST) 14 September 2012. More details on the program along with the application form and guidelines will shortly be available on the website: www.environment.gov.au/gvesho or can be obtained by contacting gvesho@environment.gov.au or phone on 1800 003 562.

Water for the Future - Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance

Applications close 29th October 2012, or until allocated funds are exhausted.

Grant Purpose:

To identify and consider the range of options available to increase the efficiency of their irrigation distribution system and

help to address the Australian Government's four water priorities: taking action on climate effects, using water wisely, improving water security and supporting healthy rivers.

Amount details:

Up to \$350,000

Applicant Details:

To be eligible, an applicant must;

- own or operate infrastructure within the Murray Darling Basin for the purpose of delivering water to other persons for the primary purpose of agricultural irrigation.
- Be registered with the ATO for GST purposes with a valid ABN.

Contact Email: water-planenquiries@environment.gov.au

WMLIG Mission Statement:

"Promote sustainable farm and land management practices to enhance our unique natural environment through innovation, education and strong community networks".



**Western Murray
Land Improvement Group Inc.**



Photo of the Western Murray Land Improvement Group Office in the Barham Rest Centre. Call in if you or your group needs a hand with an application or NRM / sustainable agriculture related information.

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Dates to Remember;

- *Friday, 7th September, 10.00am - Moulamein Cropping Group Trial Site Annual Field Walk*
- *Saturday, 15th September, 7.00am (itinerary below) - Open Farms Open Minds, Barham District*

Open Farms Open Minds Schedule**Saturday**

7:00 Depart Barham and travel to Horseshoe Bend (Barham Avocados)

7:30 – 8:30 Matt Herring farm wildlife

9-11 Barham Avocado farm overview at Horseshoe Bend

11-12 Matt Herring wildlife talk Horseshoe Bend

12 -1:30 BBQ Lunch at Horseshoe Bend

1:30 – 2:00pm Travel to O'Neill's Dairy

2:00 – 4:00 Tour and talk

4:00 – 5:00 Cows milking

6:00 onwards – Camp oven in the bush and spotlighting tour with Matt Herring

Sunday

9-1pm Koondrook Barham Farmer Market First Birthday



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY