

Western Murray Catchment Regional Landcare Facilitator Newsletter



HOSTED BY THE WESTERN MURRAY LAND IMPROVEMENT GROUP

Issue 16,

January 2013

Upcoming Events

Livestock Grazing Days - Echuca and Kerang

Bringing together local on-ground knowledge and research outcomes;

- Managing soil constraints,
- Right plant, right place
- Options for filling feed gaps,
- Perennial shrubs for feed and shelter,

- Grazing management research demonstrating increased profitability,
- Opportunities within the BetterBeef and BestWool / BestLamb producer networks.

When:

- **Tuesday, February 5th 2013.** Port of Echuca Motor

Inn, 465 High St. Echuca.
9.30am - 3.00pm.

- **Wednesday, February 6th 2013.** Kerang Valley Resort, Kerang, 9.30am-3.00pm.

Lunch is supplied.

Register by February 1 to
Sam Ellis M: 0408 922 712

E: sam.ellis@dpi.vic.gov.au

"WE'LL BE LOOKING AT OUTCOMES FROM GRAZING EXPERIMENTS AND PRODUCER DEMONSTRATION SITES, THROUGH TO INFORMATION ABOUT PERENNIAL AND ANNUAL PASTURE SPECIES PROVEN TO FILL FEED GAPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR"
SAM ELLIS, VIC DPI LIVESTOCK MANAGER

Soil Biology Workshop

The NSW DPI and MCMA invite you to a soil biology workshop at Moulamein on **Tuesday 12th February, 2013.** A Chinese lunch will be provided at 12pm followed by the workshop which concludes at 5pm.

The "Soil Life: An Introduction to Soil Biology" workshop provides landholders with

techniques to identify and monitor soil biological health; management options to encourage soil biota and build soil organic matter; and highlights the importance of soil biota for sustainable production.

The workshop builds on concepts including: maintaining groundcover, man-

agement to increase soil organic matter, soil biota resilience, and creating a biologically, physically and chemically 'balanced' soil.

Please bring in some of your own soil for "hands on activities".

Contact Roger Knight for bookings (see back pg).

Special points of interest:

- UP TO \$75 SUBSIDIES FROM WMLIG TOWARDS PROFARM COURSES
- WEED AWARENESS. WAKOOL SHIRE WEEDS OF THE MONTH
- REPORT BITTERN SIGHTINGS IN RICE
- SNAP OF THE MONTH! MURRAKOO LAND FOR WILDLIFE PHOTO COMPETITION

Soil Carbon Workshop

This workshop is designed to provide landholders with an understanding of the;

- role of carbon in the soil,
- What drives carbon sequestration,
- What your soils are capable of in terms of carbon storage,

- Land management practices that support building Soil Organic Carbon,
- Results from the Murray CMA Soil Carbon Research Project,
- Current sampling and testing methods,
- Future opportunities in

soil carbon in a "carbon economy".

The workshop will be held at the Barham Services Club on **Tuesday 26th February.** Lunch is provided at 12pm and the day will finish at 5pm.

Contact Roger Knight for bookings.



"There is no point forking out money on super or urea if the levels of phosphorus or nitrogen are optimal. On the other hand, if the levels are deficient then fodder production may be significantly compromised and you won't get the most out of your megalitre of water"

Rick Ellis, Central Murray BW/BL Co-ordinator

Optimise your fertilizer use for fodder production

An "Understanding Fertiliser Needs" day is planned to be held by the Central Murray BestWool / BestLamb Group on **Thursday, 14th February 2013 at 7pm at the Murrabit Football Sheds**. A BBQ dinner will be provided.

The day will discuss the importance of soil nutrient monitoring and the best methods for conducting soil tests on your farm.

The day will also look at the interpretation of soil test results for decision making with regard to fertiliser application rates.

The importance of soil ameliorants, such as lime and gypsum, will also be covered as these may not only improve the soil structure, but can modify the soil pH to levels that allow the plant to uptake more essential nutrients.

Fodder production is directly related to the individual plant requirements for micro and macro nutrients and the field day will show the farmer how to interpret this information.

To book contact the CMB-

W/BL Co-ordinator Rick Ellis on 0428 372 357.



Solar Power and Irrigation Information Session

Have your water pumping costs gone up significantly?

Do you want to know what the use of a "smart meter" entails, and possible rebates available on solar?

It may be worthwhile to look at solar power as an option, as the payback for a solar powered system may have a similar payback as your cur-

rent electricity bill payments, but be paid off after 6 years.

A large scale system is being built at the Kaylock property, "Narrowa" and Peter Kaylock is planning on this being the case.

An information day at "Narrowa" is planned for **early March** to look at a

new large commercial system installed for river pumping, as well as domestic solar supply.

This day will provide an opportunity to view the solar and irrigation system, hear about the technical specifics and feasibility of the installation from the solar energy supplier. Further details to follow.



Beef up your EU know how

Want to know what the EU beef market is all about?

Can you access Australia's highest value market?

The Victorian DPI is running a workshop to help beef producers understand how to supply the European Union Market and meet traceability requirements.

DPI Livestock Officer Sam

Ellis said the EU was Australia's highest paying global market on a dollars-per-kilogram basis and 10th largest beef market.

A workshop will be held at Charlton on **Wednesday 27th February** at the Charlton Football Club Rooms or Boort on **Thursday 28th February, 2013** at the Boort Resource Infor-

mation Centre.

The morning session, session 1 is from 10am to 12pm. Session 2 is 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

The afternoon skills session is limited to 15 people.

For more details contact Sam Ellis on 0408922712. E: sam.ellis@dpi.vic.gov.au



GRDC Sustainable Grains Production Course

A new or enhanced career in the Australian grains industry beckons students who undertake the University of New England's Sustainable Grains Production Course.

Supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), the course aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills to fast track their career in the grains industry or advance their farm businesses.

This distance education course, studied as part of a Masters, Graduate Certificate or Diploma, enables students to meet and learn from grains industry experts.

Applications for trimester one in 2013 close on February 3*.

Felicity Harrop, from the UNE, says the course offers two areas of study during trimester one.

"One area is grains industry systems and this covers topics such as socio-economics of grain production, grain processing and products, marketing and finance, quality assurance systems, occupational health and safety, and human resource management," Ms Harrop said.

"The other area is grains and the environment, and this looks at ecology and sustainability of grain systems, crop and pasture rotations, environmental impacts and management, native vegetation and soil conservation, legal issues and property management planning.

"During trimester two, the units cover grain production and crop protection."

Ms Harrop said UNE's Sustainable Grains Production course allowed students to study from home over a one to two year period, depending on personal time commitments.

Each of the four units has an intensive school which is held in a regional centre such as Wagga Wagga (NSW), Horsham (Victoria) or Adelaide (South Australia).

More information about the course is available via www.une.edu.au/grainproduction

* Applications can be made after February 3, 2013, however UNE cannot guar-

antee acceptance for a trimester one commencement after this date.

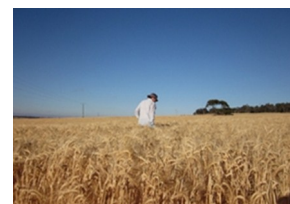


Photo of barley crop care of GRDC

Profarm courses: Up to \$75 subsidy available from the WMLIG

PROfarm courses are delivered locally by NSW DPI staff. The WMLIG will provide a subsidy of \$75 (for WMLIG members) or \$50 for non members for the cost of the training towards sustainable agriculture subjects to reflect the public benefits provided by the adoption of more sustainable farming practices.

If there is a high demand for specific courses the DPI may tailor training for individual groups.

Go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/Profarm.

Examples of courses available are outlined below;

Develop a whole farm plan

This online course focuses on describing and managing your natural resources of soil, climate, water and vegetation. It also considers the people, finances and enterprises on the farm.

Develop and review a farm business plan

This course takes you step-by-step through the process of developing a farm business plan - a plan that will help you measure progress against the plans, vision and goals for your property.

Manage soils

This online course covers the process of monitoring and managing soils in an agricul-

tural or horticultural enterprise.

Identification and management of native grass pastures

This course will assist landholders to identify native grasses, understand why these grasses best fit into an agricultural landscape, and learn how to manage these grasses for agriculture and conservation.

Centre pivot and lateral move irrigation systems

A course designed for growers /managers who are considering purchasing or who have purchased centre pivot and lateral move irrigation systems.

"If we get the pressures right and our machines are running more efficiently, then our energy costs will come down"

Ian "Bonshaw"



Cereal crop grown under centre pivot irrigator near Moulamein.

The following four Class 4 weeds are a high priority for the noxious weeds department of the Wakool Shire this summer. Control of the weeds is outlined in the link <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/noxious-enviro-weed-control>. Contact Stephen Battenally on Ph. 0427 513 982 for more information.



Sagittaria (*Sagittaria platyphylla*)

Sagittaria is an emergent, erect plant, up to 1m high when mature. Sagittaria has large flowers, spoon shaped leaves with only one main mid vein. It grows in a number of forms. The most recognizable form has lance or arrow shaped leaves which are a distinctive green colour. The next most prominent form has long, narrow strap like leaves. These are often more yellow in colour and can grow adjacent to or separate from the lance shape plants. The least prominent form grows under water. Its leaves are also strap like but much shorter and grow in a rosette arrangement up to 50cm long and almost flat against the soil. Spread by seed, stolons, tubers and floating entire plants.



Silverleaf Nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnafolium*)

Silverleaf Nightshade is an erect, deep rooted perennial plant with annual summer top growth. New shoots are produced in spring from the crowns of vertical and lateral roots and root segments. Flowering begins in November and December and may continue until March. Berries may form in December and usually ripen four to eight weeks after seedset. Each plant can produce up to sixty berries each containing about seventy-five seeds. Cultivation encourages the spread of Silverleaf Nightshade by breaking up the root system and stimulating regrowth and germination.



Khaki Weed (*Amaranthaceae*)

Khaki Weed is a prostrate perennial forb, with somewhat hairy stems up to 60cm long rooting at the nodes. Leaves are opposite, shortly stalked, ovals up to 3cm long, hairless or sparsely hairy, with prominent veins on undersurface. It flowers in small prickly brownish clusters in the leaf axils, the clusters are around 15mm long and 10mm diameter. The fruit is a very small nut, numerous within the flower clusters, flowering mainly in summer. Noxious in Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory and parts of New South Wales.



Hardhead Thistle (*Rhaponticum repens*)

An erect perennial herb 40-100cm in height, with softly hairy grey-green alternate leaves scattered along the stems. Although the purple flower heads are similar to those of the thistles. The stems and leaves lack spines, and the green overlapping bracts enclosing the flower heads also lack spines. Flower heads are borne singly at the tip of each stem. Flowers are thistle-like in form but lack spines. Black knapweed is the most similar weed. Cultivation is ineffective due to the risk of further root fragments.

One Land-Many Stories: Prospectus of Investment

The national biodiversity conservation prospectus, *One Land – Many Stories: Prospectus of Investment* (the Prospectus), presents the Australian Government's vision for conserving and managing Australia's valuable and most vulnerable environments. Follow link to read more; [One Land – Many Stories: Prospectus of Investment](#)



Greening Australia Revegetation Guides

Greening Australia 2012 Revegetation guides

Greening Australia have developed a series of 'how-to' guides to support the successful implementation of significant revegetation and restoration programs being delivered around the country. There are several free-to-download guides, covering a range of ecosystem types.

Rebates and Assistance

Governments across Australia offer a range of rebates and other assistance to help you to live greener. This easy-to-use searchable database helps you quickly identify those you may be eligible for.

Rebates and assistance easy-to-search database

Future Farm Industries CRC publications

Publications are available from the Western Murray Land Improvement Group Office in Barham that focus on innovation in profitable perennial farming systems.

The December 2012 edition features a case study on a mixed farming enterprise to balance risk. It looks at the synergies between cropping and livestock through weed control options, nitrogen fixation through legume pastures, and grazing crops for livestock and cropping outcomes.

The August edition looks at research on a new forage legume called Teder, new elite lines of saltbush and a case study of a farm that has converted previously unproductive salt-land into an integral part of the farming system.

"The nutritional constraints of saltbush are managed by feeding the ewes hay and lupin supplements to ensure a balanced diet. The hay provides energy and fibre, the saltbush provides crude protein, sulphur, minerals, vitamin E and some protein, while the lupins provide energy"

Extract from Dr Hayley Norman, CSIRO in the December edition of Future Farm

2012 National Landcare Conference videos now online

At the National Landcare Conference this year, Dr David Suzuki gave an inspirational talk to the audience, via live video feed. Dr Suzuki's speech, along with videos of the plenary sessions held throughout the conference are [now available to view online](#).

Each Landcare conference session has been broken into a series of shorter videos, for ease of viewing - perfect for watching while eating lunch or grabbing a quick break at work.

Landcare and the Work, Health and Safety Information

The following sources of guidance may assist Landcare groups and networks to understand and fulfil their obligations.

Safe Work Australia

Detailed guidance about Work Health and Safety legislation for volunteers and volunteer organisations is available on the Safe Work Australia website [here](#).

The volunteer organisation [resource kit](#) is particularly useful. These resources offer very clear guidance and are written in a very accessible way. They also provide a range of FAQs and useful links and contacts if you are seeking further information.

Link to GRDC Information

The GRDC has a list of useful publications which may assist your farming enterprise.

Contact Roger Knight if you would like to receive a copy of these publications or go to the link; <http://www.grdc.com.au/Resources/media>

Examples of publications available include the following;

- Fumigating with phosphine - Do it right, do it once. (free)
- Aerating stored grain - Cooling or drying for quality control. (Free)
- Grain storage facilities - Planning for efficiency and quality. (Free)
- Ajuvants - Oils, surfactants, and other additives for farm chemicals. \$10 (Free to WMLIG members).
- Weather essentials for pesticide application. \$10 (free to WMLIG members)
- A guide to succession: sustaining families and farms. (Free)
- Water use efficiency of grain crops in Australia: Principles, benchmarks and management. (Free).

Drought Feeding and Management of Sheep and Beef



Drought Feeding and Management of Sheep and beef - This booklet provides a practical guide on sheep and beef feeding and management during a drought to help producers break the daunting planning

phase down into manageable steps and then to see the plan realised as a successful way of combating the drought.

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-

[management/fire-flood-other-emergencies/drought-information/protecting-land-in-dry-times/drought-feeding-and-management-of-sheep](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-management/fire-flood-other-emergencies/drought-information/protecting-land-in-dry-times/drought-feeding-and-management-of-sheep) (html 31k) - 30 Oct 2012

CSIRO app for Soils

Australia's national soil databases can now be accessed in real time online through a new iPad app called [SoilMapp](#). The new app provides open access to the best and most up-to-date information for soil at any location in the country within a matter of seconds.

Information such as soil depth, acidity, salinity, soil carbon, soil water holding capacity and other attributes will help land managers, farmers and rural advisors make on-the-spot, decisions about how to more effectively manage their land.

This mobile device technology will deliver detailed scientific information on soils directly into the hands of farmers, rural consultants, agronomists, and potentially other soil enthusiasts like real estate agents, hobby farmers and keen bushwalkers.

Useful apps for Australian Agriculture - iPhone and iPad

NSW DPI have developed a guide containing the latest iPhone and iPad applications (apps) useful in Australian Agriculture. Apps are

grouped into categories including government and industry; weather; farm management; agricultural tools (including calculators); livestock management;

markets; news and social media; books and banking.

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/broadacre>

Bitterns Boom in Rice

The Ricegrowers' Association of Australia (RGA) and Birdlife Australia have teamed up with local organisations to answer some of the key questions that might help this poorly known bird.

Wildlife ecologist Matt Herring, who is working with interested rice growers throughout the season, said that he and others involved in the project were thrilled to confirm the presence of 20 bitterns using rice in the first week of the study.

"The surveys have only just begun and our coverage so far is very limited, but the early results suggest that rice might support several hun-

dred of these endangered birds".

"It is critical that we get a larger sample of farms though, so we're encouraging as many rice growers as possible to look and listen for the birds, and report their sightings".

RGA Environmental Champions Program Co-ordinator Neil Bull said "we are off to a great start however with the crops growing quickly we are likely to only get a glimpse of this elusive bird so now we need to focus our ears on the booming call"

Coleambally rice grower Ian Payne is passionate about

bitterns and has already found them in several of his rice crops this season.

"The rice seems to provide perfect habitat for bitterns and I think everyone can benefit from learning more about the preservation of this magnificent bird".

Sightings can be reported via the Birdlife Australia website, where there is a special bitterns in rice survey form, or contact Neil Bull at RGA 0428 603 557, neil.bull@murrayirrigation.com.au



Video clip link from Murrumbidgee Landcare website



Australasian Bittern extending its head in the air



Can you spot the bitterns on the left and right in this photo?

Snap of the Month! - Murrakool Land for Wildlife Photo Competition

Murrakool Land for Wildlife are holding a photo competition for Native flora and fauna found in the local region.

There will be a monthly prize for the best photo and a bigger prize for picture of the

year, to be voted by the public at the Barham Show.

If you do not know the species of animal or plant you have photographed it does not matter as we will endeavour to find out what it is

and publish the photo in the Regional Landcare facilitator Newsletter.

Send your photo's in to email: roger.knight@wmlig.org



Azure Kingfisher photographed by Michelle Morton near Kyalite

Native Animals of the Local Area - Feathertail Glider

Known populations of these native animals are on the outskirts of Barham around the Eagle creek, along the Wakool River and the Red Gum forests along the Murray River.

The feathertail glider (*Acrobates pygmaeus*) is the smallest gliding marsupial in the world, also having a

unique feather-like tail. The scientific name for this species means pygmy acrobat.

The animals are at home in the trees, feeding on insects, pollen and nectar and can glide up to 25 meters when it needs to get from one tree to the next.

They tend to live in communal groups of between 5 to

30 individuals and the breeding cycle is in spring, summer to late winter.

They have a home range of 0.4 to 2.1 hectares and life expectancy of 4 years in the wild.

Protection measure: Keep cats locked up at night.



Feathertail gliders weigh only 10-15 grams. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Tally's Lake Day - Murrakool Land for Wildlife



Pelicans at Tally's Lake.
Photo courtesy of Michelle Morton

Murrakool Land for Wildlife held a nature day at Tally's Lake on the 16th September 2013.

Some photo's of the day have been provid-

ed. If you are interested in having your property registered as a Land for Wildlife Property contact Pam O'Neill.



Matt Herring and participants at the Tally's lake day.

Open farms Open Minds Day Photo Compilation - *Photo's courtesy of Faye Ashwin and Katrina Myers*



WMLIG Mission Statement:

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



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;

- Tuesday, 5th February 9.30am - 3.00 pm, Livestock Grazing Management, Port of Echuca Motor Inn.
- Wednesday, 6th February 9.30am - 3.00 pm, Livestock Grazing Management, Kerang Valley Resort.
- Tuesday 12th February, 12pm - 5pm, Soil Biology Workshop.
- Central Murray BestWool/BestLamb Fertiliser Day. Thursday, 14th February, 7pm at the Murrabit Football Sheds.
- Tuesday 26th February, 12pm - 5pm, Soil Carbon Workshop.
- European Union Market Beef workshop. Charlton Football Club Rooms, 10.00 am Wednesday 27th February, 2013.
- European Union Market Beef workshop. Boort Resource Information Centre 10.00am Thursday 28th February, 2013.
- Solar Power Information Day "Narrowa" tentatively planned for early March. Further details to follow.



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY