

Issue 18,

Upcoming Events!

Spray Irrigation Field Days

Murray Irrigation Limited is holding two Spray Irrigation Field Days to look at opportunities through the on-farm irrigation efficiency program, one at Hatty's property 'Wondilibi' Tocumwal on Tuesday 4 June and the other at Fasham's property 'Studleigh' Wakool on Wednesday 5 June.

Guest Speakers will be Robert Hoogers and Sam North from NSW Dept. of Primary Industries. [Click here for details](#)

Both field days start at **12.30pm** and lunch is provided. For more information, contact Aimee Snowden on T. 03 5898 3317.

Murrakool Land for Wildlife

Photo Competition Submissions



Above: A rare Murray Darling Carpet Python. Photo courtesy Michelle Morton. *More details on Pg. 11*

Irrigation Water Use Planning Workshop

The RGA is hosting a water trading workshop on the **Tuesday 25th June** at the Deni RSL Club.

The day will cover water entitlement for on-farm use in the southern connected system, management of the Common-

wealth Environmental water holders entitlement, overview of water trading in and out of the MIL area of operation, presentation on incorporating water trading budgets into production gross margins and a farmers panel discussion to their approach on

water use trading.

Time: 9.30am to 4.00pm

Lunch is provided.

For more details and bookings contact Neil Bull on 0358983345, or Jennie Hawkins on 58983333.

Profitability through native grasses

The North Central Catchment Management Authority has an upcoming event **'Profitability through Native Grasses - an on farm learning session'** to be held on **June 6 2013** at 300 Bears Road, Loddon Vale (approximately 50km north of Serpentine) from **10.00am to 2.00pm**.

Topics covered on the day will include:

Holistic Management Planned Grazing (Contemporary science based grazing management)

- Regenerate your pastures at a profit
- Monitor and improve land health at a profit
- Monitor and improve animal performance and health
- Develop trials that allow you to determine plant recovery and potential perennial grass species mix
- Design a low cost, low risk grazing enterprise

The day will feature Graeme Hand who is a Holistic Management Certified Educator. Graeme was taught by Alan Savory and learnt much through observing and through his own experience on his farm and other people's farms.

Lunch is provided

Register your interest with the North Central CMA (03) 5448 7124 or email: info@nccma.vic.gov.au

Special points of interest:

- TIPS FROM A LAMB BUYER
- KYALITE AND MOULAMEIN CROPPING GROUP RESULTS
- CORN EARLAGE INFORMATION
- LOCAL PRIVATE WETLANDS WATERING PROJECT
- WEED CONTROL IN WINTER PASTURES
- WILDLIFE SNAP OF THE MONTH
- NATIONAL FOOD PLAN

What is Earlage?

Information enclosed



Pasture Cropping and Native Grasses for Profitability Wed. 12th June.

This field day is a rare opportunity to learn from pioneering farmers about the systems that address these trends while still being highly productive. 'Pasture Cropping' is a technique of sowing crops into living perennial (usually native) pastures and having these crops grow symbiotically

with the existing pastures.

Input costs are putting pressure on businesses everywhere and 'Pasture Cropping and No Kill Cropping' can slash input costs while maintaining production. Colin Seis and Daryl Cluff initiated this idea about 15 years ago.

Since then, Colin has spent much of his time perfecting this technique.

'Pasture Cropping' is being successfully adopted over a very large range of varying climatic conditions and soil types in Australia. In all of these areas good crop

yields have been achieved while stimulating perennial species, whilst improving soil health.

Venue: Lockington Football Clubrooms, followed by local farm tour. Time: 10am – 2pm. Lunch provided.

Contact NCCMA p. 5448 7124

Recent Events

Meeting Market Specifications



Central Murray BestWool / BestLamb workshop at Murrabit "Meeting Market Specifications"

"Heavy lambs are costing you a lot of money"

Greg Harrington



Lamb hung up after being dissected for carcass yield demonstration

The CMBW/BL Group held a meeting at Murrabit on the 22/4/13 with 24 people in attendance. Three speakers presented information on the night.

Peter Bailey (Vic DPI) presented "**Lambs: Feed for Profit**" and looked at calculating the trading margin based on feed intake.

As a lamb gets bigger it needs more feed for maintenance than growth because it has already reached its potential. When the cost of feed inputs for a light lamb was compared to a heavy lamb there is considerable difference in earnings per kg of dry matter. In the example provided, a light lamb would earn 0.24c/kg dry matter consumed vs 0.13c/kg dry matter for a heavy lamb.

A Buyers Perspective.

Greg Harrington is a buyer of lambs for wholesale customers with Elders who has 40 years experience. Some points made from his talk were;

- Composites have a lot of variation in the eye muscle etc. whereas first crosses are more consistent.

- If selling direct, ask how the fat is trimmed. There is a large variation in carcass yield between knife trimmed or machine trimmed.... *And it is costing you money for excess trimming, so ask the question!*

- Lambs are inquisitive; When feed lotting lambs it is important that they be entertained. It was found that lambs met target weights 7-12 days quicker when there was an old car body available for them to play in for example.

- Any marks on the skin and damage will receive high penalties.

- Skins and burr: Speargrass and barley grass penetration can devalue skin and carcass by up to 20%. Control weeds on check banks too.

- Dust in yards is a major issue and will become a worse problem in the future causing downgrades.

- Producers are short changing themselves every time they produce heavy lambs. Trade lambs fetch nearly the same price as light lambs due to demand for smaller portion sizes by consumers.

- Coles supermarkets will reward you if you have the right genetics and right breeding values. They do quality checks such as the shear force value.

- National Vendor Declarations are a legal document and must be correct and there will be a clamp down. There must be an MSA no. if product goes through the abattoirs (refer to page 7 of the newsletter, section "Livestock Production Assurance" for more information and link to a 4 minute video).

Carcus Demonstration

- Lamb was 50 kg live weight.
- 23.5 kg dressed (47% conversion).
- Fat depth 14mm, fat score 3-4.
- Eye muscle area. Width 70mm, Depth 32mm, A 22mm
- Grid 18-24kg = 95%
- Fat trim weight 5kg valued at @40c/kg. This works out to be @ 22% of the carcass weight being fat. Heavy lambs have a much higher percentage of fat.

Kyalite Stubble Management Field Day

A “Stubble Field Day” was held at John Standens property “Rosenhoe”, Kyalite on the 27th March.

The Field day was the result of planning and trial work by the Mallee Sustainable Farming Group, Murray Catchment Management Authority and local farmers.

The site is one of 10 sites in the Mallee environment conducting trials on stubble retention.

The following is a summary of Findings;

Varying stubble loads and management result in different groundcover results which effect erosion. The target is to have 50% groundcover at the most susceptible time which is sowing.

Results of different management options (see photo Fig. 1 to Fig. 3);

- Cultivate with disc: 46% groundcover retention
- Rubber tyred roller: 76% groundcover retention
- Prickle chain: 72% groundcover retention
- Standing: 84% groundcover retention

Stubble is fuel for micro-organisms which turn over nutrients. Legumes should also be in the rotation as well to create greater microbial diversity and build soil nitrogen.

After a walk and talk in the paddock looking at the stubble trial plots, presenters covered information on a range of topics.

Herbicide Use

Guest speaker Sam Klee-mann, a researcher with the University of Adelaide, provided new insights into pre emergent herbicides, disc seeders and brome grass behaviour and management.

Treflam is a group D herbicide that bonds to soil particles and stubble. Don't want more than 50-60% stubble cover on the ground as it will limit pre emergent effectiveness.

Pre emergent herbicides such as Treflan can be applied safely to cereal crops by creating position selectivity.

Knifepoint seeders with press wheels throw the soil where chemical was applied out of the crop row and into the inter row.

South Australian ryegrass resistance has brought about the use of Boxer Gold (Group J and K herbicide) and Sakura (Group K) which have a different mode of resistance but cost more \$\$\$.

It will be good to hold on to Treflam as a herbicide option as long as possible as it is inexpensive but has resistance in a lot of regions. Some new herbicide products are \$30-\$80/ha and can't be justified in a low rainfall environment.

Weed Seeker - Lance Howley used 4ha worth of spray over 200ha. Only used 300l of mixed spray all up which is a 30-40% saving/yr = 3yr payback. Weed seekers sense weeds therefore spray is only applied to the actual

weed instead of blanket spraying the entire paddock, therefore reducing the quantity of spray applied.

In the Kyalite area brome grass is the major weed, not ryegrass.

Disc systems promote very good establishment and with the right set up can avoid hair pinning. Discs are faster sowing than with tynes.

Treflam has a poor fit with discs due to poor position selectivity. Sakura much better pre-emergent with discs, but hard to justify due to cost unless in high rainfall areas.

Disc Seeder:

- Double sheath knife point system used.

Pre-emergent herbicide:

- 60-70 Ltrs / ha watering in rate with medium drop-let size.
- Other pre-emergent used was Metribuzin at 120-180g/ha with trifluralin for brome grass. METRABUSIN IS NOT REGISTERED

Brome grass:

- Besides wild oats, it is the second most competitive weed in southern Aust.
- Increasing in prevalence with adoption of conservation tillage. It remains dormant for longer under no till because there is less soil disturbance and light. This means you have to deal with larger numbers in the crop rather than at pre-sowing.



Fig. 1 Disc cultivated stubble



Fig. 2 Rolled stubble



Fig 3. Stubble left intact

“CROP ROTATIONS THAT PROVIDE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF MANAGEMENT ARE KEY TO DEPLETION OF THE BROME GRASS SEED BANK AND ITS LONGER TERM CONTROL.

Kyalite Cropping Field Day Continued

"THE TRIALS SAW
YIELD BENEFITS
FROM A BREAK
CROP OF 30%
OVER CEREAL ON
CEREAL
PRODUCTION."



Michael Moodie, Agronomist from Mallee Sustainable Farming (MSF) and Sam Kleenann, Researcher from the University of Adelaide on the right.

Continued from page 3...

- Best to use a paraquat (e.g. Gramoxone) on all of the crop if there is a high brome infestation before it sets seed.
- More than 18% of brome grass seeds remain viable after 12 months. Dry conditions or cultivation may increase persistence (up to 3 yrs), so it depends on how much seed per m².
- If high loads of brome grass are still an issue with a vetch or pasture, may need 3 yrs without another wheat crop.
- Only get @58% control of brome grass with triflam (trifluralin).
- Sakura and Avadex (Group J) have 78% control (but up to \$80/ha), so no highly effective economic pre-emergent herbicide control for brome grass.
- Crop rotations that provide consecutive years of management are key to depletion of the brome grass seedbank and its longer term control.

Post emergent herbicide for wheat and Clearfield wheat

- Group B herbicides worst for herbicide resistance.
- Vetch, pasture, canola using group A. Rotate mode of action (groups) from a resistance point of view.

- Clearfield technology used for resistance fairly widespread, but only class B control, so it is an issue in the future.
- Clearfield now have generics and more competitive. Midas being trialled out, better varieties.
- Clearfield wheat is better if there is no rain over summer etc. for microbes to breakdown residual herbicides from the previous year.

MSF Trial Results 2012— NSW break crop trials.

Trial messages:

- Grow the best available varieties
- Field pea, canola, faber beans, lentils and lupins trialled.
- Best: Twilight field pea 1.3tn/ha.
- Big seeded crops had more vigour early and most tonnage.

Canola

- Best: Garnet conventional achieved 1 tn/ha, but put in a weed free environment, followed by 43C80 Clearfield, Mustard, Stingray TT and roundup ready GT viper all went 0.7-0.8 tn/ha.
- Not ideal conditions for trial. Seed went in on the 2nd week of May 2012.

Why Break Crops:

- Disease Control

- Fuel, feed the soil with nitrogen
- Soil biology
- Less weeds.

Crop Sequencing

Nitrogen: Break crops and fallow increased soil N in the soil profile prior to sowing in 2012 by 10-20kg N/ha more relative to cereals (40kg extra urea in soil profile).

Water: Soil water was approx. 40mm more in the fallow treatments after harvest in summer 2011, however these differences were not there @sowing 2012 (so fallowing not giving any soil moisture benefits)

Rhizoctonia: Levels were reduced under all treatments except for canola.

Grass weeds: less brome grass seed numbers.

Yield: Seeing yield benefits of break crop of 30% over cereal on cereal production.

Fodder Crops: Pulse crops show best results. Vetch, medic pasture, field pea.

Pasture break affect is greater than N addition on some soil types.

A Stubble Management Guide is being developed and will be available in the future.

Contact MSF on (03) 50219100 for a copy of the Stubble Management Guide or visit the MSF website for more information.

Moulamein Cropping Group 2012 Trial Results

The Moulamein Cropping Group ran a number of trials at two sites through the 2012 winter cropping season.

One site had wheat, barley, canola and dual purpose crop variety trials at Chalmers' property 'Riversleigh'.

The second site was a high yielding site under Gorey's centre pivot at 'Tiquito' where Durum wheat and barley N management trials were conducted.

Key Messages were;

- Suntop was the most consistent performing wheat variety across the watering treatments. It has also performed well across the NVT trials throughout the state
- Wheat varieties that performed well under dry-land conditions also performed well with autumn irrigation in 2012.
- Autumn irrigation has provided an addition 1.0 - 1.2 t/ha of grain yield in wheat compared to dry-land over the two years of trials.
- Spring irrigation in 2012 provided an addition 2.3t/ha of grain yield in wheat compared to the autumn irrigation.
- Nitrogen amount rather than timing was more important for grain yield in wheat and barley in 2012 (an unusual result)

Contact Roger Knight if you require a full version of the trial results.



Baudin Barley showing yellowing from waterlogging either side of fleet barley during the overhead irrigator high yielding trials

Tech Note: Winter cleaning of pastures

Even though its been a dry start to the season, now some regions have had rain it is time to think about what level of annual grasses (e.g. soft brome, barley grass and silver grass) are in pastures and plan to evaluate if winter cleaning is required.

In previous years, where we have experienced late autumn breaks, weeds such as annual grasses have been a valuable component of perennial pastures, as they provided feed over autumn and winter. However **weeds can dominate a pasture at the expense of the more desirable species**, therefore it's important to reduce the level of annuals grasses and replace them with perennial grasses.

Once levels of annual grasses exceed 30 per cent then winter cleaning should be considered, especially if silver grass is the dominant species and new pastures are planned for

the following year. Silver grass is one of the worst agricultural weeds affecting pasture production, persistence and farm profitability. It has an allelopathic affect on clover inhibits germination, growth and seed production.

Winter cleaning involves applying low rates of selective soil active herbicides that are approved for use in your pasture type following the autumn break to target seedlings of unwanted winter grasses. It removes the majority of annual grasses from an existing pasture and helps reduce the soil seed bank.

To kill barley grass, Wimmera ryegrass and soft brome grass, other herbicides approved for use in your pasture type can be added to the herbicide mix. Contact your local chemical reseller, agronomist or consultant for advice on which chemical products will perform best in your specific situation.

Winter cleaning silver grass from improved grass/legume based pastures significantly increases the clover composition and maintains the pasture relatively free of silver grass for up to five years after spraying.

The objective is to kill the standing mass of silver grass and prevent the emergence of seedlings for up to three months after application. Applying chemical in autumn has no adverse effect on sown perennial grass or clover in spring.

Winter cleaning is best performed early in winter after an autumn break (e.g. June). The soil should be moist when spraying. Spraying can occur any time over an extended period of six to ten weeks after the autumn break.

The optimal times to spray are:

- an early spray from May to mid June if there has been an early or normal

autumn break (i.e. April to mid May); or

- a late spray from mid August to mid September if there is a late or stop start autumn break.

A major advantage of winter cleaning over traditional annual grass control programs, such as spray topping, crash grazing or pasture cutting, is there is a wide window of opportunity in the time of application. (Note: Sub clover must have three trifoliate leaves before application.)

The main disadvantage of winter cleaning is the loss of grazing post-spraying and winter pasture growth can be reduced by up to 40 per cent. Therefore winter cleaning is best carried out during seasons where there is excess feed.

Contact: Alison Desmond.
03 57611643

What is Earlage?



Western Murray Land Improvement Group representatives travelled to Hells Gate beef feed lot near Hay to have a look at earlage being harvested on the 13th February.



'Corn Earlage' describes when just the cob, grain and small amount of husk cover are ensiled at 70% dry matter later on in the plant life, rather than just using high moisture grain for silage at full maturity.



Earlage is ensiled corn, cobs, and in most cases husk, it is higher in energy than corn silage with similar protein content. It is commonly lower in energy than corn grain, because it does not include husk and cob, but works very successfully in a variety of feed diets, including growing and finishing diets for beef cattle and feed for lactating



dairy cows.

The advantage of Corn Cob Mix really comes with:

1. Later harvest than whole plant silage – yet earlier than High Moisture Grain or Dry Grain.
2. Higher fibre content than High Moisture Grain.
3. A energy yield/hectare almost double that of Grain.
4. The return of nutrient and organic matter to your soil.
5. Ideal rotation with a legume crop and a crop of whole plant maize silage.
6. Raw fibre content can be as high as 25 % of total dry matter if harvested at the correct stage.
7. Earlage is very palatable and mixes well with many other feeds and forages.
8. Earlage is easy to feed, and

cattle stay on feed more consistently with earlage in the ration due to the digestible fibre present in the cob and husk and the positive effect of the cob "scratch factor" on rumination.

9. Due to the concentration of energy in earlage you are able to have a broad harvest window:

Energy in corn silage is 10-11MJ, whereas earlage can peak at 14MJ.

The main reason for people producing earlage is to save on stock feed costs by not having to feed out as much grain to stock.

Earlage can also has soil health benefits, as just taking the cob means the stover can be incorporated back into the soil profile adding structure.

Source: "Earlage", R. Kenyon Maize Association of Australia.

Earlage Feed Test Analysis (wet), 2006 Hells Gate feed test

Test	Units
Moisture %	53.2
Dry Matter %	46.8
Ash %	2.4
Crude protein (n x 6.25) % of DM	8.6
Neutral Detergent Fibre % of DM	27.6
Digestibility	83.7
Metabolisable energy MJ/kg DM	12.4

Earlage Yield Breakdown

Harvest Moisture	Grain % of Total Earlage	Cob and Husk % of Total Earlage DM
35-65% DM	75-80%	20-25%



Ewe will pay a price for poor nutrition before lambing

Maintaining sufficient quality and quantity of nutrition during the last two months of pregnancy is vital for optimal production in sheep, District Veterinary Officer Natarsha Williams from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has warned.

Dr Williams said that the majority of a lamb's growth occurs during this vital stage of pregnancy and inadequate nutrition for ewes in late pregnancy results in a significant drop in body weight of the ewes and lambs of a lower birth weight.

"Under-weight lambs are

less likely to survive and if they do survive may have lower production for life," she said.

"Ewes in poor condition have a higher mortality rate and are likely to produce insufficient colostrum. They will also have reduced maternal behaviour and are more likely to leave the lamb to feed themselves within six hours of birth and this can result in an increase in mis-mothering."

Pregnancy toxæmia (twin lambing disease) is relatively common in ewes receiving inadequate nutrition late in pregnancy even if nutrition in early pregnancy was good. Unmanaged, it will result in

the death of the ewe and her lambs.

Dr Williams said monitoring the condition of ewes in later pregnancy and throughout lactation would maximise production and help to reduce losses.

"Feed supplementation should be targeted depending on pregnancy status and the energy and protein requirements of the sheep should be considered when selecting a supplementary feed."

Contact: DPI Victoria
Customer Service Centre:
Phone 136 186



It is vital that ewes receive good nutrition in the last two months of pregnancy.

Livestock Production Assurance

The Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program is your pledge that the meat from your farm has been produced safely and ultimately meets customer expectations. Your LPA accreditation means you stand by what you sell.

There are 195,000 participants involved in the LPA program, and anyone may be subject to random audits.

When you tick the box on your National Vendor Declaration form, you are guaranteeing your on-farm practices meet LPA requirements. Your tick must be backed up by accurate farm records.

As industry's on-farm food safety program, LPA meets the stringent requirements of

domestic and export markets, providing assurance of the safety of Australian beef, lamb and goat meat.

National Vendor Declarations

The LPA National Vendor Declaration (LPA NVD) is the main document behind Australia's meat and livestock food safety reputation. Producers must be accredited to access and use LPA NVDs.

Producer Identification Codes

LPA accreditation is linked to property identification codes. The PIC owner (or representative) is responsible for ensuring on-farm management systems meet LPA requirements.

LPA Requirements

The LPA program requires a producer to comply to;

On-farm practices;

- Property risk assessment. Start by mapping out your farm and noting any risks such as chemical storage areas, rubbish tips, lead painted timbers and exclude livestock access.
- Safe and responsible animal treatment
- Fodder, crop and grain treatments
- Preparation for dispatch of livestock
- Livestock transactions

Record keeping

On-farm audits

LPA rules and standards

For more information, click here: <http://www.mla.com.au/Meat-safety-and-traceability/Livestock-Production-Assurance>



LIVESTOCK
PRODUCTION
ASSURANCE

Thinking of building a new shearing shed?



Raised saw-tooth shearing board

Are you thinking about renovating an existing shearing shed or building a new one?

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) lists issues to consider and provides detailed recommendations when propos-

ing the construction of a new shearing shed or the renovation of an existing one. AWI's shearing shed guidelines provide information about shed design so growers and shed builders can make informed decisions

about building or renovating a shed.

For more information, click here: [AWI - Shearing shed guidelines](#).

Autumn edition of Sheepnotes



The autumn 2013 edition of Sheep Notes is now available. This edition contains articles on how producers are managing to wean more lambs, or how they

are measuring the performance of individual ewes and lambs to find their most productive sheep, along with a host of others, ranging from pastures to biosecurity.

For more information, click here: [Sheep Notes Newsletter 2013](#)

Private Wetlands Watering Project



Cochran Creek

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) is intending to conduct a wetlands watering project in Murray Irrigation's area of operations this spring (allocation permitting).

The project provides adaptive environmental water to help improve and/or maintain biodiversity values of wetlands

located on private properties.

Landholders interested in participating in this project should complete an Expression of Interest form, available from the 'Current activities' section of Murray Irrigation's website:

www.murrayirrigation.com.au, or from reception on T. 03 5898 3300.

Forms must be submitted to OEH by 5.00pm Friday 14 June. For further information please contact OEH Project Officer Emma Wilson on T. 02 6022 0617, M. 0418 962 697.



Jimaringle Ck after an environmental water release

National Workforce Development Fund

Through the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) the Australian Government will provide \$700 million over five years to industry to support training and workforce development in areas of current and future skills need.

Under NWDF, organisations can identify their current and future business and workforce development needs and apply for funding to support the training of existing workers and new workers in areas of shortages.

The Fund is part of the Australian Government's Building Australia's Future Workforce package and also forms part of Australian Government Skills Connect, an initiative designed to link employers and industries to funding for whole of workforce (including language, literacy and numeracy training and mentoring of Australian Apprenticeships) planning and development.

Preparing your application

To apply to participate in the Fund, organisations will need to work with their relevant Industry Skills Council. During the application stage, Industry Skills Councils will assist organisations in developing each proposal. Approval of each proposal will be made by the Minister for Tertiary

Education, Skills, Science and Research.

Application Forms

To obtain an application form, access the TED online site.

TED Online Application Form - <https://tedonline.deewr.gov.au/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fdefault.aspx>

Applications for funding are now open and may be submitted on a continual basis until all funding available for the financial year has been allocated.

Amount: \$2,000 to \$50,000

For Further Information go to: www.innovation.gov.au

Action on the ground

The objectives of The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Action on the Ground program are to assist farmers and land managers undertake on-farm trials of emissions abatement technologies, practices and management strategies.

Overview: It is an ongoing program, investing \$99 million (GST Exclusive) from 2011 to 2017 to:

- trial on-farm abatement technologies, practices and management strategies to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions (methane and nitrous oxide) or sequester carbon in soil while maintaining or enhancing productivity
- measure and demonstrate how emissions abatement technologies or changes in practices or management

strategies can reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions or sequester atmospheric carbon in soil

- promote collaboration between farmers and land managers, researchers, industry, government and non-government organisations — to develop and realise opportunities for improved management of, and reductions in, greenhouse gas emission from Australian farms.

Round two will provide funding of \$30million (GST Exclusive).

Amount: up to \$775,000

Nuffield Farm Scholarships

The Nuffield Farm Scholarships are to encourage Australian Primary Producers to adopt local and international best practice so that excellence in all aspects of Australian agricultural production, distribution and management is achieved.

The Benefits of a Scholarship

- Research a primary production topic overseas
- Enhance knowledge, skills and techniques
- Join the Nuffield network of 1,300 Scholars worldwide

Scholarship Program

The Nuffield Australia National Conference is a chance to meet other Scholars and be briefed on the overall Scholarship program.

- An individual study program enables the Scholar to travel to countries of choice.
- The Scholar will submit a written report on the individual study program after completing their tour.

- The Scholar will make a verbal presentation about the individual study program.

- There is financial assistance to the value of \$30,000 (subject to conditions) to cover costs associated with the pre-tour briefing, overseas study and living expenses during the study period. Costs exceeding the value of assistance must be met by the Scholar.

Limitations

The Scholarships are open to men and women, who are:

- Between 28-40 years of age. (Nuffield understands that there may be people outside this age range who would benefit from the Scholarship experience. We encourage them to apply);
- Engaged in farming or fishing as an owner or manager or an active member of a farming business; and
- Intending to remain involved in primary production in Australia.

Regard will be given to the value of the experience that the applicant should gain through his or her studies.

All Scholars will be expected to resume residence in Australia after completion of their scholarship and must write a report of their studies (see Scholar's agreement). Amount up to \$30,000

For further information go to: www.nuffield.com.au
Email: enquiries@nuffield.com.au

Phone: (03) 5480 0755 (Jim Geltch, CEO, Nuffield Australia)

Applications close Sunday 30 June 2013.

Caring for our country sustainable agriculture program



The design of the Sustainable Agriculture stream draws upon the extensive community feedback received during the review and consultation processes.



The Sustainable Agriculture stream is being delivered in the context of other major government policies and initiatives including the National Food Plan, the Inter-governmental Agreement on Biosecurity, the Carbon Farming Initiative, drought policy reform, Commonwealth policy on Fisheries By-catch and the National Volunteer Strategy.



Over the next five years, the Sustainable Agriculture stream will focus on ensuring Australia's agricultural base is sustainable, productive and resilient.

This will include:

- Sustainable production of food
- Innovation in Australian agriculture and fisheries practices
- Reduced impact of weeds and pests on agriculture
- Improved management of agriculture and fisheries and the natural resource base
- A skilled and capable Landcare community

The new program will be delivered in a more streamlined manner and provide budgetary certainty for up to five years, which will allow for more strategic planning and investment.

Funding of management of

established weeds and pest animals through the Sustainable Agriculture stream will move to a more strategic platform that will include national surveillance and coordination. Support for nationally cost-shared eradication programs will be provided under existing agreements, such as the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement.

A mix of funding approaches will be used to deliver the Sustainable Agriculture stream objectives. This includes the Community Landcare Grants.

For more information on the Sustainable Agriculture stream of Caring for our Country, visit:

www.nrm.gov.au

National Food Plan

The Australian Government has developed Australia's first ever **National Food Plan** to help ensure that the government's food policy settings are right for Australia over the short, medium and long term.

The Australian Government's National Food Plan is a roadmap that sets the direction for government policy on food into the future. It is one of the key pillars for achieving the goals of the Australia in the **Asian Century** white paper.

A number of **new initiatives** have also been announced to achieve the

goals of the National Food Plan. These measures aim to increase Australian children's connection with food, build our food trade ties with Asia, build recognition of the Australian brand in international markets and boost investment in research and development for Australian agriculture.

New Initiatives

- Food in the Australian Curriculum
- Moving food
- Community Food Grants
- What Asia Wants
- Asian Food Markets Research Grants
- Building our food trade ties

- Australian Council on Food
- Building Australia's brand

Community Food Grants will be available of up to \$25,000 to support farmers markets, community gardens, city farms, food hubs, cooperatives and food rescue service projects to start up and expand. Up to \$10,000 will be available for small scale initiatives such as community gardens, city farms or similar activities. A call for applications for the Community Food Initiative will be released soon.

For more information go to: <http://www.daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan/home>.



Local Land Services: Governance and Boundaries

The LLS Reference Panel has provided its major piece of advice to the Minister for Primary Industries on these reforms. They have provided a preferred set of boundaries, preferred board structure and a list of functions and services that the new LLS should deliver.

Landcare NSW was able to achieve a number of outcomes by being a part of this panel including recommendations for:

- A strong and ongoing role for the government via LLS to support community groups carrying out NRM and biodiversity activities,
- A variety of skills including community engagement, environmental management, agricultural expertise and natural resource management expertise to be included on the LLS boards (skills also need to be independently verified for elected members),
- Boundaries to consider catchments and communities -of-interest,
- A formal community engagement process,
- The continuation of existing Catchment Action Plans and the establishment of similar plans for biosecurity and agricultural extension,
- and a sole auditing body to audit the perfor-

mance of the LLS across all the aspects of its operation (including community engagement).

The Minister is due to make a decision on the Reference Panel recommendations shortly. This will be followed by the drafting of Legislation that needs to be passed by the end of the year for the LLS's to become operational.

Snap of the Month! - Murrakool Land for Wildlife Photo

Murrakool Land for Wildlife is continuing to hold their photo competition for native flora and fauna found in the local region.

There are now two categories, the prize for the best photo, and prize for a photo of a local **"rare species"**. The prize for the best photo includes a fauna or flora book, and a major prize "the people's choice award" will be awarded after voting by participants at this year's Barham Show.

We have had a few people submit some great photo's, so keep up the good work you bird twitchers, and whatever else you call keen photographers of reptile's, marsupials etc. and various plants.

Other photo entries will be published in the next newsletter as well, so thanks to the entrants.

Remember, if you do not know the species of animal 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.

Your species might also make it into the Tech note section, "Native animals of the Local Area, such as the carpet python did on pg. 12!

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



Kangaroo photo by Michelle Morton of Kyalite



Striped Honeyeater photo by Michelle Morton



Rare species winner. Get into the vermin Mr Carpet Python. Photo by Michelle Morton



Antechinus photo by Pam O'Neill of Barham



Ring Tail Possum photo by Pam O'Neill of Barham



Noisy Friarbird photo by Faye O'Brien of Barham



Bush Stone Curlew chicks. Can you spot the two of them? Photo Pam O'Neill



Winning Female Superb Wren. Photo Michelle Morton



Black Duck. Photo Faye O'Brien



Kingfisher photo by Michelle Morton



Diamond Firetail. Photo by Faye O'Brien



Orb Weaving Spider. Photo Michelle Morton

Tech Note: Native Animals of the Local Area - Inland Carpet Python



Murray Darling Carpet Python

Common names: Inland carpet python, Murray Darling carpet python, MD carpet python, Victorian carpet python.

Morelia spilota metcalfei is a python subspecies found in Australia, commonly known as the Murray Darling carpet python. The pythons are non-venomous snakes that constrict their prey. They grow

up to 2.7m (9 feet), but adults are usually around 2.4m (8 feet) and are generally silvery-grey in colour with brown or black lines and blotches. These pythons are semi-arboreal, typically inhabiting rocky outcrops, dry woodlands, riverine forests and flood plains. The threats to the snakes are people and other snakes.

Diet: Murray Darling pythons naturally feed on mammals, birds and lizards. In captivity, they are fed mice and rats, and as adults can be fed rabbits, quails and small chickens.

Geographic range: Found in Australia in the Murray-Darling Basin of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

ENERGY**Canola farm biodiesel plant**

A new biodiesel facility on an Echuca canola farm will produce up to two million litres of fuel a year to fuel machinery at the farm and sell to customers. It will also generate up to 4000 tonnes of animal feed.

<http://www.mmg.com.au/local-news/echuca/biodiesel-project-launches-near-echuca-1.43503>



Madowla Park Biodiesel Facility opened February 26, after a \$500 000 State Government grant. From left: Peter O'Donnell, owner of Madowla Park Biodiesel Facility and Paul Weller, Member for Rodney.

**Sustainability
Sustainable beef farming videos**

In these videos general manager Glenn Morris and farm manager Henry Sheehan of the northern NSW company FigTrees Organic Farms explain their ecologically based farming system.

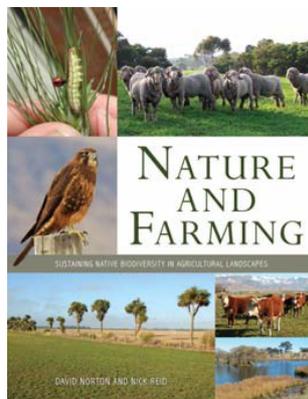
<http://www.nlss.com.au/index.php/community/regional-landcare/36-regional-landcare>

<http://figtreesorganicfarms.com.au/figtrees-environmental-health.html>

BIODIVERSITY**New book: Nature and farming**

This new book from CSIRO Publishing looks at how landholders can sustain native plants and animals in agricultural landscapes.

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/6713.htm>

**Flexible grazing management favours native plants**

A three year trial of different sheep grazing regimes in Victoria found that some grazing exclusion may enhance survival of species most sensitive to grazing. Exclusion of grazing in spring increased grazing-sensitive native forb species and exotic annual species, while extended exclusion reduced exotics and increased native plants.

Native forbs species increased with a 3-month grazing exclusion, but declined with year-round exclusion due to accumulation of biomass. Having a mosaic of flexible grazing management regimes across the landscape is likely to benefit native plant diversity.

http://www.publish.csiro.au/index.cfm?act=view_file&file_id=RJ12074.pdf

FOOD**ABARES outlook food**

Food issues were a key feature of the ABARES Outlook

conference in March. Topics include future food and farming, global food demand and supply in 2050, food security, and consumer preferences.

<http://www.daff.gov.au/abares/outlook/conference-program>

Sustainable Food Summit

Presentations from the third National Sustainable Food Summit held in Melbourne last month are available online.

http://www.3pillarsnetwork.com.au/p3_Events-Resources.html?&event=88&page=4

**Love food hate waste**

NSW EPA now has a 'Love food hate waste' webpage to help consumers reduce waste of food and natural resources required to grow it.

<http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.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.

Roger Knight
Regional Landcare facilitator
WMLIG
Phone: 54 531 577
M: 0487 455 511
E-mail: roger.knight@wmlig.org
25 Noorong St.
Barham NSW 2732

Rick Ellis
Project Officer
WMLIG
Phone: 50 372 357
M: 0428 372 357
E-mail: rick.ellis@wmlig.org

Dates to Remember;

- Wednesday, 5th June 12.30pm, MIL "Spray Irrigation Field Day", Fasham's property "Studleigh" Wakool.
- Thursday 6th June, 10am to 2pm, "Profitability through Native Grasses - an on farm learning session", 300 Bears Rd. Loddon Vale.
- Wednesday 12th June, 10am - 2pm, NCCMA "Pasture Cropping and Native Grasses for Profitability", Lockington Football sheds.
- Tuesday 25th June, 9.30am to 4.00pm RGA "Irrigation Water Use Planning Workshop" .
- Monday 22nd July, CMBW/BL "Bred Well - Fed Well" Workshop, Operina, Noorong.



**Catchment Management
Authority**
Murray



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY