



# UNFS UPDATE

Upper North Farming Systems Newsletter

April 2019

## Tackling the Tricky Questions

By Ruth Sommerville

2019 is set to be a big year for trials in the Upper North. Over the past 5 years we have accumulated a great list of “questions and opportunities” from our Operations Committee meetings. We have been feeding these through to the funding bodies and research priority panels and using them to apply for funding. As a result we are seeing trials being funded in our region to tackle these priorities.

We have implemented a new model for delivering these in 2019 to enable UNFS to be more flexible in its delivery and to foster the network of advisors within the region. All of our trials will be delivered this year with a partner organisation, in most cases this is a local agronomist or agronomy team, due to most of our trials being crop or pasture focussed, however our livestock workshops will also partner with nutrition and livestock management consultants to bring you the best information in that area of your business too. We are excited by the network we are fostering and the knowledge this will bring to our members and farming in the region in general.

Highlights of this trial program include:

- Micronutrients in the Upper North – 3 trial sites, 2 near Booleroo Centre, 1 near Baroota. Funded by SAGIT, year 2 of a 3 year trial. “Increasing the knowledge and understanding of micronutrient deficiency”.
- Cover Cropping and Crown Rot – Improving cropping biodiversity to manage soil disease impacts – Trial site at Booleroo Centre with soil PredictaB assessments more broadly across the region. Year 1 of a 3 year trial funded by the National Landcare Program. “Warm and cool season mixed cover cropping for sustainable farming systems in south eastern Australia”.
- Barley Grass Management Options – 1 trial site at Whim Road, Melrose – Year 1 of a 3 year trial. GRDC Funded.
- Dryland Legume Pasture Systems – New legume pasture options for the Upper North – 2 trials sites – Morchard and Belalie East. Year 1 of a 3 year trial. 3-4 new pasture options to be investigated at each site including new varieties and crop types. Funded by a Rural Research and Development for Profit project led by GRDC supported by DAWR, MLA and AWI.

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- Vetch on Sandy Soils – Wandearah – Self funded 1 year trial contribution to work being undertaken by Stephan Schmidt.
- Barley Time of Sowing – Booleroo Centre – Year 1 of a 3 year trial. SAGIT funded.
- Fodder cereal options trial – Booleroo Centre – Balco and UNFS funded. Investigating new fodder cereal crop options for the Upper North. 1 year pilot study.
- Pasture Options Demonstration – Caltowie – UNFS funded 1 year demonstration site.



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## AROUND THE HUBS

**Laura Ag bureau** held a street BBQ to celebrate Christmas.

The group haven't held a Christmas event for a long while but were able to last year, due to the quick harvest.

Santa dropped off a small gift for everyone, including water pistols to help keep the Roos off crops and some "toxic waste candy" for those that recently updated their Chemcert. It was a low key, fun night.



## Learning Together in 2019

We've had some great events to kick start the year, with many more in the planning.

As you flip through the pages today you'll find a summary of the Ladies on the Land event held last month looking into precision agriculture and the foundations of putting those yield maps to good use.

Ladies on the Land continues to be a great learning platform for the region and is always attracting new faces. If you'd like to get on the mailing list for this UNFS Hub please contact Kristina or Jess.

We've also put together a summary of a highlight of the year so far, the Farming Well in 2019 event at Orroroo.



We have supported the delivery of a number of events delivered by other organisations to you. This fits with our focus on facilitating the knowledge and skill gains in the region. This included the GRDC funded "Weather Essentials for Spray Application" workshop held at Jamestown on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February. This was a sell-out event with 25 local farmers attending and learning a great deal about weather systems and their impacts on spray droplets and spray efficacy. A highlight of the day was the bacon and egg rolls from Bindlestick, but I'm sure the information was of high value too!

"It's Ewe Time", held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March was funded by AWI and MLA and brought a high caliber of presenters to the region. This was responded to with gusto, with over 100 attending the event at the airfield at Jamestown. A great outcome for the knowledge growth of our regions livestock producers. Congratulations to Anne Collins for putting together a great line up of speakers.

In the planning we have "Weathering the Dry Times" in Morchard through Ladies on the Land in May and June, and Business Management Workshops in July and August. We've started our Mixed Farming Masterclass planning for the Members Expo on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and plenty of crop walks to visit all our trial sites once they get up out of the ground! If you know of an event in the region please let us know so we can circulate it too, so many opportunities are currently happening in the region to get together and learn from each other and the best the industry.

## SPONSOR'S CORNER





The Ladies on the Land group had its second Precision Ag Workshop in the second series on Friday 29th March at Booleroo Centre - Smart Farmers, Smart Farms - Upskilling the Women of the Upper North to be Future Ready Sustainable Farmers.

In the class we looked at different map layers and their practical uses. We looked at storing data correctly and different file types. After this, we analysed last years yield, made our own P replacement prescription shape file, and then headed out to the field to get it set up in the cab. Jess Koch showed the group over a variable rate seeding set up, and then a paddock inspection was done to look at the different soil types in the field.



## GPSA members urged to have their say on changes to CFS powers

GPSA members would have received an email recently informing them that parliament's Select Committee into the recently proposed CFS powers has allocated members a dedicated time to voice their concerns.

GPSA is pleased to see that the Government has listened to its concerns and voted to establish a Select Committee to investigate the changes. This provides growers a proper forum to have their say on these important changes.

GPSA is currently compiling a submission to the Committee which will make the case for a more targeted application of CFS powers.

The Committee has held hearings in Port Lincoln and Balaklava and has given GPSA members a dedicated time to talk about how these proposed changes will impact their farm business.





# Farming Well in 2019 – Helping to see past the dust

Orroroo – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March – Ruth Sommerville

A great afternoon and evening was held in Orroroo on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March.

Over 60 people joined UNFS to discuss a variety of topics that are challenging farmers in the region under the current climate. Some of the highlights of the event included Tom Moten, Kerin Landmark Jamestown, and his thorough overview of the risks and issues to be considered going into the 2019 cropping season on the back of such a dry summer and 2018 production season.

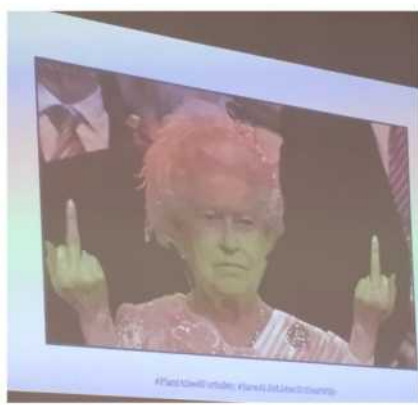
Deb Scammell, Alltech Leinerts, detailed the opportunities confinement feeding present to sheep producers with ewes going into lambing with a lack of in paddock feed available. The benefits of uptake of technologies such as preg testing and scanning for twins were clearly shown and may make significant financial benefits to your operation in a year like 2019. The message was however clear, it doesn't take a fancy set up to make confinement feeding a viable option.



The role pest species play in impacting our farming operations has become very clear over the past few years. Kevin Smith, Northern and Yorke NRM, presented on the values of implementing fox and kangaroo management activities and how partnering with neighbours can make your efforts more effective.

Marty Bower, PIRSA Biosecurity SA, discussed the management of wild dogs in the region. From their

combined presentations it became clear that pest management is best done across boundaries and with targeted multi approach actions. Why not get a group of your neighbours together to discuss how you can do it together better? Remember there are resources out there to help, including with providing baits, permits and advice around where additional trapping and culling support can be obtained.



A key feature of the event was a focus on the “top paddock”. Through funding from the Mid North Local Health Cluster, provided by the Country SA PHN, we were able to bring Alex Thomas and Dr Kate Gunn to the event. Alex, 2018 SA Agrifutures Rural

Woman Award winner, and developer of the “Plant a Seed for Safety” Campaign, tackled the challenges drought put on our workload and our state of mind. Focussing on helping those in the room to stop and think about how they are approaching their daily tasks to ensure that they look after their own health and safety and that of all those who are part of the farm. It's not about the paperwork, it's about the attitude. Take a breath, review the task and complete it safely. If you aren't focused on the task, or the task isn't one you can complete by yourself or with the tools at hand and walk out of the paddock in one piece...then walk away and find a solution for tomorrow. It was clear from around the room, all can see areas for improvement, machinery that needs modification or replacement or have a story of when they went in...bull at a gate...and got hurt or nearly did. Let's learn from each other and focus on solutions.



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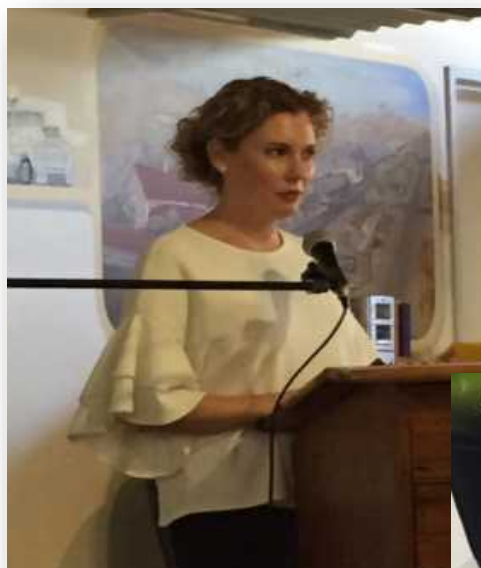
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**LANDMARK**

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Dr Kate Gunn, a Clinical Psychologist and Researcher with Uni SA with a Eyre Peninsula farming background, has recently led the development of [www.ifarmwell.com.au](http://www.ifarmwell.com.au) designed to help Australian farmers' better cope with things beyond their control. Kate ran through the process of identification of negative thoughts and emotions and how you can start to process and reduce their impact on your day to day. The website is a great tool, please take the time to look at it and register. It will help you to prioritise your "top paddock" and to focus on building a resilient personal, family and business mentality. We all have an internal critical voice, reviewing our actions and our current position, learning how to identify that voice and quieten its impact on the every-day is a vital tool to farming well and into the future.



The day was wrapped up with a great meal provided by the Blacksmiths Chatter and tunes provided by John O'Dea. The majority of attendees stayed on for dinner and an evening of great discussion and laughs was had. Thank you to all that made it such a great event!

Supported by  
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COUNTRY SA  
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*Mid North Local  
Health Cluster*



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## Farming Assistance for those in Drought

Do you know what assistance is out there? The eligibility criteria for a number of the government support programs have changed so it is worth reviewing your eligibility.

Please remember there is no shame in seeking advice or assistance.

[https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/grants\\_and\\_assistance/drought\\_support](https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/grants_and_assistance/drought_support)

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought>

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/farm-household-allowance>

[https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/grants\\_and\\_assistance/drought\\_support/family\\_and\\_business\\_support\\_program](https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/grants_and_assistance/drought_support/family_and_business_support_program)

There are a number of people in the region that can help point you in the right direction for assistance as well:

Carmel McNamara – Department of Human Services Farm Household Case Officer,  
Port Pirie – 0436626235 [carmel.mcnamara@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:carmel.mcnamara@humanservices.gov.au)

Judy Wilkinson – Family and Business Support – Upper North: 0401 122 049

John White - Family and Business Support – Upper North and Pastoral: 0447 787 436



## **UNFS Snail Update Summer 2019** by Michael Richards

Snail numbers appeared to be as high or higher than in previous years at the Belalie East Site near Jamestown on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2019.

Please note the wheat stubble was undisturbed, and the snails were approx. 300 to 400 mm off the ground and were moist and juicy when squashed. Reaffirming time-lapse camera imagery which indicated snails were moving during periods of high humidity during previous weeks, ie above 90% relative humidity.

In other districts, or paddocks with minimal soil cover and limited refuge areas, we would expect snail numbers to be significantly lower than in previous years. Due to high summer mortality as result of close proximity to hot dry soil during multiple days with maximum temperatures over 38 degrees Centigrade. A stubble height of approximately 70mm will significantly increase snail survival during hot summer conditions.

The best time to monitor snails is when they are active, ie in moist conditions. In many soils the soil surface will be a darker colour when the relative humidity has been at or above 90% for two to three hours. Before sunrise, following a dewy evening is ideal. I take a torch and my reading glasses!! But most of you are much younger!!

High summer temperatures will break down the active in metaldehyde baits. Observations indicate the breakdown of metaldehyde is significantly higher in cheaper metaldehyde baits. More work is needed to quantify the difference in the rate of metaldehyde degradation due to temperature in various metaldehyde baits.

Aim to purchase new season manufactured baits for summer baiting by inspecting product labels for the manufacture date.

Inspect paddock perimeters and un-arable areas and compare snail numbers and the range of in snail sizes as you move towards the centre of the paddock. A range of snail sizes indicates they are living in the area. A population of only larger snails, indicates they are invading from nearby areas and baiting the perimeter of the paddock, rather than the whole paddock may give adequate control.

As the number of daylight hours continue to shorten and maximum day temperatures fall, baits will degrade at a slower rate. Snails often begin mating in late March and in ideal conditions can commence egg-laying 14 days after mating. Soils need to be moist to a depth of 30 to 40 mm before snails commence egg-laying.

Check the bait label for recommended rates. In areas with higher snail populations, known problem areas and paddock perimeters, apply the higher rate. Applying around 30 baits per square metre improves snail control through increasing the chance snails will encounter baits. In high snail populations it is likely two bait applications will be required, as snail mortality seldom exceeds 80%. If snails cause minimum problems at crop emergence, harvest and grain delivery and cash is tight and snail numbers appear low. Save your funds for more important items.

For further information see the Upper North Farming Systems Stubble Management Snail Control Guidelines [http://unfs.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/UNFS\\_StubbleMan\\_Snail\\_Guideline.pdf](http://unfs.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/UNFS_StubbleMan_Snail_Guideline.pdf) or contact Michael Richards 0427 547 052



## Be mindful of nutrient loss from cutting failed crops for hay

Grain growers in Victoria and South Australia who have cut crops for hay and silage due to moisture stress and frost are advised to be mindful of the amount of nutrients being removed from their paddocks.

Cutting hay removes significantly more nitrogen, potassium and sulphur than if the crop was left standing for grain production.

Crop nutrition experts supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) say hay can remove up to two times more nitrogen and up to 10 times more potassium than if the crop was harvested for grain. In canola, up to five times more sulphur can be lost.



Agriculture Victoria research scientist Roger Armstrong says one-off hay cutting of a failed crop can prompt changes in crop nutrition programs and paddock management into the next season.

*Cutting hay removes significantly more nitrogen, potassium and sulphur than if the crop was left standing for grain production. In canola (pictured), up to five times more sulphur can be lost.*

*Photo: Felicity Pritchard.*

“With nutrients that would otherwise be recycled in the soil being lost through the removal of crop material in hay and silage, soil tests will become more important ahead of next year’s sowing to inform nutrition programs in 2019,” Dr Armstrong says.

Information on nutrient removal from cutting crops can be found on the GRDC Communities website at <http://bit.ly/2qyUCre> and <http://bit.ly/2DBYOnz>. Leading agronomist and former International Plant Nutrition Institute Regional Director for Australia and New Zealand, Rob Norton, has contributed a significant amount of this information.

GRDC Communities, for which Dr Armstrong and Dr Norton are among the crop nutrition experts, brings together a range of specialist grains researchers and advisers online to share information, knowledge and technical advice on seasonal issues to improve grower profitability.

Dr Armstrong says repeated removal of hay is considered to be one of the most acidifying of agricultural practices, and on acid soils can exacerbate the issue in the longer term.

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The removal of cereal or canola hay requires 25 kilograms/hectare of lime for each tonne of biomass removed, or 45 kg/ha for each tonne of annual legume hay removed, to neutralise the resulting acidity.

Cutting hay reduces inputs of organic matter into the soil for that season. The size of the effect when the hay is cut from a failed crop might be roughly similar to organic matter lost from burning stubble residues from a good crop, compared to retained stubble.

Following hay cutting, little residue cover (maybe 0.4 t/ha of residue after hay cutting versus 2.0 t/ha after harvest) remains.

Growers are therefore advised to reduce grazing and traffic across these paddocks to minimise the risk of wind and water erosion which also contribute to soil nutrient loss.

More information on cutting crops for hay and silage can be found in the [GRDC fact sheet](#).

To support growers and advisers wishing to access tools and resources to assist with dry season decision-making, and for general support, the GRDC has developed a “[Dealing With The Dry](#)” web portal which contains links to useful information.

Further information on managing frosted crops can be found at <https://grdc.com.au/frost-faq>



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## GrainGrowers partners with 30 farming system and grower groups throughout Australia

GrainGrowers has announced it will support 30 local farming system groups and grower groups across Australia in 2018-19 under its Partnership Opportunity Program.

GrainGrowers Western Region (SA) Regional Coordinator David Evans said that each year GrainGrowers partners with farming system groups and grower groups in order to support them in conducting field trials which address local agronomic issues and a range of industry development work and training. “We recognise the important role farming system groups and grower groups play in delivering local trials, research and other activities directly aimed at



improving grain growers’ bottom lines,” said Mr Evans.

“Aligned with the activities, these groups also provide a great pathway for GrainGrowers to connect with grain farmers directly and ensure our policies are focussed on the issues that matter to their business.

“This year we have also assisted several groups who are running programs and events specifically targeted at women involved in cropping businesses.

*GrainGrowers Regional Coordinator David Evans with Simon Mildren from Southern Australian Durum Growers Association, SA.*

These include basic agronomy, business and office management, workplace health and safety, and networking activities.

GrainGrowers is conscious of the critical roles played by women in grains businesses. Supporting and further developing their skills in a range of areas will provide long term benefits to the industry.”

GrainGrowers Western Region (WA) Regional Coordinator Alan Meldrum said that for many years GrainGrowers had provided support to regional grower groups across Australia. “Grower groups are producing some amazing results in research trials and demonstrating the worth of new agronomic techniques and technology across the diverse grain growing regions across Australia,” said Mr Meldrum.

“GrainGrowers looks forward to fostering strong relationships with its partners and supporting them to meet their goals in accordance with our vision to develop and promote a more efficient, sustainable and profitable grains industry for all Australian grain farmers.”

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Our partners for the 2018-19 financial year are:

#### WA Partners

Corrigin Farm Improvement Group, Far East Ag Research Group, Ravensthorpe Agriculture Initiative Network, West Midlands Group, Liebe Group, Northern Agri Group, Stirlings to Coast Farmers, Facey Group, Women in Farming Enterprises, Merredin and Districts Farm Improvement Group, Southern DIRT, Mingenew-Irwin Group, South East Premium Wheat Growers Association, Lakes Information and Farming Technology, and WANTFA.

#### SA Partners

Hart Field Site Group, Lowbank and Districts Ag Bureau, Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group, Northern Sustainable Soils, South Australian No Till Farming Association (SANTFA), Upper North Farming Systems, MacKillop Farm Management Group and Southern Australian Durum Growers Association.

#### Vic Partners

Birchip Cropping Group, Mallee Sustainable Farming and Southern Farming Systems.

#### NSW Partners

Irrigated Cropping Council, Central West Farming Systems, FarmLink Research Limited and Riverine Plains.

More information visit GrainGrowers [website](#)



*Source: GrainGrowers media release*



**APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN – GPSA Emerging Leaders Programs** GPSA has launched its Emerging Leaders Program, modelled on the highly successful SAFF Future Leaders Program that was established in the early 2000s, and is now seeking the first round of applicants.

The program is adapted for contemporary leadership challenges including social media and director responsibilities and will serve as a training ground; supporting succession planning for GPSA and its member organisations, through participation in committee structures and eventually at Board level.

To deliver our mission, we need skilled and capable individuals involved in setting policy, to manage and anticipate emerging issues relevant to grain producers and the wider industry. That's why GPSA wants to inspire and motivate the next generation of industry leaders.

The GPSA Emerging Leaders program will sponsor up to eight applicants.



If you know someone that's determined to make a difference for their family farm, community and industry then please encourage them to register their interest.

GPSA is now accepting applications until Tuesday 30th April 2019.

[Register now!](#)



# 2019 – Headwinds are stiffening...

For Australian agriculture, 2019 is likely to be characterised by stiffening headwinds and concern for significant downside risks.

On a secular basis (i.e. putting cycles to the side), the industry remains on a strong path.

- The industry will continue to enjoy rising offshore demand for its products;
- It will further benefit from improved access to these markets in 2019. Barriers to China will continue to come down under the FTA and recently negotiated protocols, and the CPTPP starts to come into play.
- Investment that has flown into the sector because of these factors will further boost productive potential and value-adding in coming years.
- The above three factors are likely to more than offset the structural challenges presented by climate change and social licence to operate, which remain key medium-term issues.

However, many cyclical and short-term climate factors are less favourable for Australian agriculture as we enter 2019, with tailwinds softening and some headwinds arising:

- Most obviously, we open the year with a majority of Eastern Australia amid significant long-term rainfall deficiencies.
- For winter production to return to average on the east coast this season, above-average rainfall is required in coming months.
- At present, climate indicators provide mixed signals as to whether that is likely or not.

- Murray-Darling Basin water storage levels are low and pasture is in poor condition in many grazing regions.
- At the market level, after two years of strong and rising growth, the global economy is starting to decelerate. Economists are reducing forecasts, and while most of them (including Rabobank's) are still pencilling in just-below average growth, their language suggests a level of pessimism not yet factored into these numbers.
- Locally, Australian consumers are facing rising pressure, as east-coast housing prices enter what looks like a major correction, mortgage rates rise, and wage growth remains absent.

There is a significant offset to the concerns raised above. A weak and falling currency, combined with strong local price basis, is ensuring exceptionally high AUD prices for many key agricultural commodities.

- We expect that the slowing global and local economy, combined with concerns over downside risk, will see Australian exporters enjoy the lowest annual average exchange rate against the USD in a decade in 2019.
- Meanwhile, a poor 2018 harvest, and low beef and sheep herds, will keep the prices for Australian crops and livestock higher than usual compared to world prices over most or all of 2019.
- With dairy and sugar markets also tightening globally, and wool only likely to see a slow retraction from record levels, price will be the industry's friend in 2019.

Source: Tim Hunt, Head of Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory, Australia and New Zealand

Article provided by



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**Joint statement from Grains Industry Market Access Forum, Australian Grain Exporters Council, GrainGrowers, Grain Producers Australia and Grain Trade Australia**

## **Industry Update: Uncertainty continues from China anti-dumping investigation against Australian Barley**

**20 March 2019**

### **Key Messages:**

- China's anti-dumping investigation against the Australian barley industry is continuing and the potential outcomes remain uncertain.
- Australian growers should be aware of this market risk as they approach the autumn planting period. Growers are encouraged to seek advice from their independent market advisors or consultants in relation their grain marketing and crop rotation options.

The People's Republic of China initiated an anti-dumping investigation regarding Australian barley in late 2018. The World Trade Organisation definition of injurious dumping is when exports are sold at a price lower than the exporting country's domestic market, and/or lower than production costs which results in 'injury' to the importing country's domestic production.

Although the Australian grain industry is confident that dumping has not occurred, the likely outcome of this anti-dumping investigation is unknown at this point in time. Possible outcomes could include the imposition of provisional import measures such as securities or cash deposits on Australian barley exports to China. These measures have a similar impact as tariffs in that they artificially increase the price of Australian barley in China. Australian growers should be aware of this market risk as they approach the autumn planting period.

China is Australia's largest barley export market and Australia is the largest supplier of barley to China. This investigation has created uncertainty within the Australian grain market, that has resulted in downward pressure on Australian barley prices.

The organisations making this statement; the Grains Industry Market Access Forum, Australian Grain Exporters Council, GrainGrowers, Grain Producers Australia and Grain Trade Australia fully respect China's right to conduct these investigations.

Australian exporters, industry bodies and government provided extensive responses to China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) as part of the investigation. We are confident that the information provided confirms that:

- The claim of dumping, causing injury to China's domestic barley industry is unsubstantiated;
- The Australian grain industry operates in an open, commercial and competitive global market; and
- The notion of dumping is not consistent with the commercial realities of the Australian grain industry.

The outcome of this investigation process remains uncertain, and several potential scenarios exist. The outlook is difficult to predict.

Australian grain growers should be aware of the potential risk of the imposition of provisional measures on barley exports to China as they approach the autumn planting period, which may have a consequential impact on prices.

Growers should also be aware of the broad range of factors that may also impact barley prices over the coming season. While the issues surrounding the China export market are uncertain, other factors would include issues such as global weather and plantings for grain crops in other countries.

Growers are encouraged to consider their specific circumstances and to seek advice from their independent market advisors or consultants in relation to their grain marketing and crop rotation options

[Article provided by Viterra](#)




# Managing vegetation on farm for increased production

Presented by Burra Rangelands Action Group (BRAG)



## Guest Speakers include:

Mary-Anne Young PIRSA, Soils and Land Management Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion control options</li> </ul>
Anne Brown Greening Australia, Vegetation Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property design- using your existing natural assets</li> </ul>
Hamish Dickson AgriPartner Consulting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stock nutrition and health</li> </ul>
Marty Bower PIRSA, State Wild Dog Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperative management of fringe wild dog populations</li> </ul>
<b>BBQ and light refreshments supplied by Regional Council of Goyder</b> 	

**12-5 pm April 10<sup>th</sup>: Richard and Tom Riggs place**

**Dutton's Trough, 912 Top Road Worlds End**

**For more information contact Hilly or Leanne 0407 795 005**

**[hilly86@bigpond.com](mailto:hilly86@bigpond.com) or [alex@springvalenorth.com.au](mailto:alex@springvalenorth.com.au)**



*This project is supported by the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board and Northern and Yorke Natural Resources Management Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the NRM levies.*

# Apps Galore

## SoilWaterApp



SoilWaterApp (SWApp) provides Australian farmers and advisers with a ready estimate of plant available water in the soil (PAW) during a fallow and early crop phase.

Soil water (PAW) can be a critical component of a crops water supply, influencing crop yield and profit. Estimates of PAW contribute to richer decisions at planting and early in crop growth where inputs can be adjusted.

SWApp estimates soil water (PAW) using a tested water balance model and inputs from:

- weather data from a nearby Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) sourced from the Silo (<https://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/silo/>); plus
- rainfall data from a local rain gauge (entered manually); or
- rainfall data automatically uploaded from a Bluetooth enabled rain gauge (10m range)
- a soil description best suited to local conditions; and
- soil and crop cover conditions for each paddock.

The model in SWApp simulates infiltration, runoff, evaporation, transpiration and deep drainage to provide an estimate of soil water on a daily basis. Additionally, SWApp uses long term climate data to provide a forward looking estimate of likely outcomes for the specified soil, climate and cover conditions. Starting conditions are specified by the user and can be adjusted from sensors such as a soil push probe or soil water sensor network.

The functionality of SWApp will increase as more data sources come on-line (e.g. other climate and soil water networks and new sensors).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SoilWaterApp was developed for the Grains Research and Development Corporation project “New tools to measure and monitor soil water” (USQ 00014) by the University of Southern Queensland. This App’s development benefited from the significant contributions of grain growers and research scientists across Australia who contributed data for model testing and feedback on the user experience.

Check out [soilwaterapp.net.au](http://soilwaterapp.net.au) for more info



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## “Something to listen to”



Here are a couple of interesting crop nutrition podcasts the GRDC have issued recently, you can find more and subscribe at <https://grdc.com.au/news-and-media/podcasts>.

[Growing Legumes In Acid Soils](#) - Effective nodulation and vigorous early growth sets the production and nitrogen fixation potential of pulse crops. Helen Burns and Dr Mark Norton from NSW DPI have looked closely at soil acidity or low pH and have released a new GRDC publication that will detail this complex issue for growers and their advisers.

[Deep placement of P and K](#) - GRDC funded research is revealing the importance of managing nutrient availability to the crop deeper in the soil profile. On this podcast, David Lester from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), joins Darling Downs farmer John Alexander to talk about the encouraging results of trials in which phosphorus and potassium were placed deep below the soil surface.

## “Websites to explore”



Online Farm Trials (OFT) is a web based system that provides open and free access to on-farm, or field based, cropping research trial data and information. Interactive maps, searching and viewing tools are provided to enable quick and easy access to relevant information on a range of cropping topics, issues and methods.

A [Grains Research and Development Corporation](#) (GRDC) and [Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation](#) collaboration, OFT hosts past and present research trials undertaken and contributed by a range of grower and farming systems groups, government researchers, universities and private industry throughout Australia. OFT offers a central online source of knowledge and information to support decision making, practice change and improvement of farm profitability.

OFT has a collaborative approach through its engagement with grower groups, research organisations, agricultural experts and grain industry organisations. This ensures the outcomes are highly relevant, practical and beneficial for growers. OFT provides [support](#) and [tools](#) for researchers and organisations to digitise, upload, manage and publish their past and current trial information, data, documents and other digital content.

Visit <https://www.farmtrials.com.au/>



## Upcoming Events Calendar

### April 2019

4	Warren Davies 'The Unbreakable Farmer' , Peterborough	A. Clifford 8644 4925
4 - 5	Ag Excellence Forum & Awards, Adelaide	Kerry Stockman 0418 841 331
10	Managing Vegetation on farm for increased production, BRAG, World's End	Hilly/Leanne 0407 795 005
11	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344

### May 2019

15	Ladies on the Land—Weathering the Dry workshop, Morchard	Jess Koch 0407 986 557
23	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344

### June 2019

19	Ladies on the Land—Weathering the Dry workshop, Morchard	Jess Koch 0407 986 557
20	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344

### July 2019

16	Hart Winter Walk, Hart	Sandy Kimber 0427 423 154
18	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344

### August 2019

1	UNFS Members Expo, Booleroo Centre	Kristina Mudge 0438 840 369
20 - 22	AgQuip Field Days, Gunnedah NSW	Melanie Ison 02 6768 5800
22	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344
25 - 29	19th Australian Agronomy Conference, Wagga Wagga	Linda Bennison 0428 900 622

### September 2019

17	Hart Field Day, Hart	Sandy Kimber 0427 423 154
19	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344
24 - 26	Yorke Peninsula Field Days, Paskeville	Elaine Bussenschutt 08 8827 2040

### October 2019

3	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344
15	Spring Twilight Walk Hart	Sandy Kimber 0427 423 154
17	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344
31	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344

### November 2019

14	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344
28	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344

### December 2019

12	Jamestown Livestock Market	Pt Augusta 08 8642 4344
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“Best Wishes to all our members and families  
for the 2019 growing season  
from Ruth, Kristina, Mary  
and all of the  
Strategic Board and Operations Committee Members.”



# Upper North Farming Systems

## Contact Details



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