

Media Release – Wednesday 17th Feb 2021

Upper North Landholders tackle limitations to pulse production

Members of the Upper North Farming Systems (UNFS) Pulse Check group have been supported to diversify into pulse crops in non-traditional production areas through a Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) initiative.

One of the members of the UNFS Pulse Check group is Brad Dennis. The Dennis Family run a cropping and livestock enterprise in Baroota, SA. The group was formed at the right time, just as Brad was preparing to sow his first crop of lentils in 2017.

"We went right out of growing pulses for grain crops because we couldn't get the yields and had a lot of issues," Brad says. "With the tight finishes up here, we were losing all the flowers in the heat and that was affecting yield. The price of sheep and lambs steered us back into sowing more vetch for feed and we got right out of peas, but we've got back into peas and lentils in the last three or four years and increased the overall area sown to pulses."

Thanks to the discussion group, Brad says he now has a much better idea of timing for insecticide and fungicide application, chemical safety and rates, and the influence of soil type on results.



Matt, Rob & Brad Dennis

The UNFS Pulse Check group have met at least three times a year over the three-year life of the project to discuss issues relating to pulse crop production, management and marketing. They have been focused on a "back to basics" approach to pulse production through practical in-field learning and group discussion.

Meetings have covered a range of topics, including a post-harvest review for the previous season, paddock selection and other sowing considerations, different types of pulse crops and different varieties, pests, weeds, diseases, and pulse storage and markets.

The group has consisted of growers and advisers with varying experience in production of pulses. Those with no or limited experience were particularly encouraged to take advantage of a unique opportunity to learn from more experienced growers in their region and experts in the industry.

Given the diversity of the Upper North region, meetings have been alternated between both western and eastern sides of the Flinders Ranges. UNFS Project Officer Rachel Trengove says "It has provided a great opportunity to access agronomic trials and researchers in the region. There is value in joining everyone together from across the district to share ideas and knowledge."

As the Sothern Pulse Extension Project concludes, the UNFS Pulse Check Group is holding its final meetings and a bus tour. Details can be found at www.unfs.com.au/calendar/

Upcoming event details:

- UNFS Pulse Check meeting 18/2/2021 Napperby Tennis Club
- UNFS Pulse Check meeting 19/2/2021 Booleroo Centre Sporting Complex
- UNFS Bus tour 10/3/2021 Warnertown to Roseworthy

For more information: Denni Agnew: denni@unfs.com.au 0431 233 679 or www.unfs.com.au