



# UNFS UPDATE

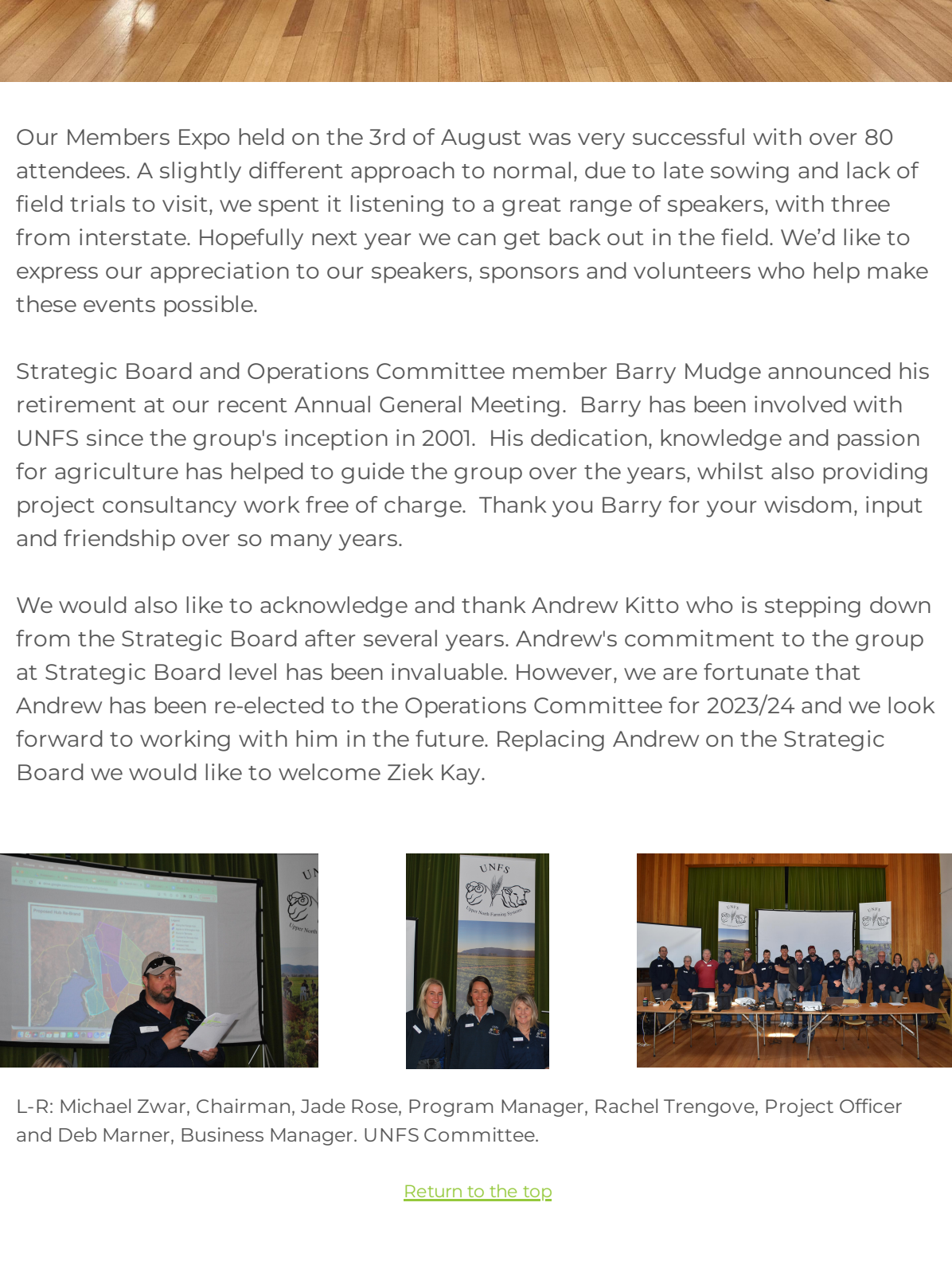
UPPER NORTH FARMING SYSTEMS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023 Edition

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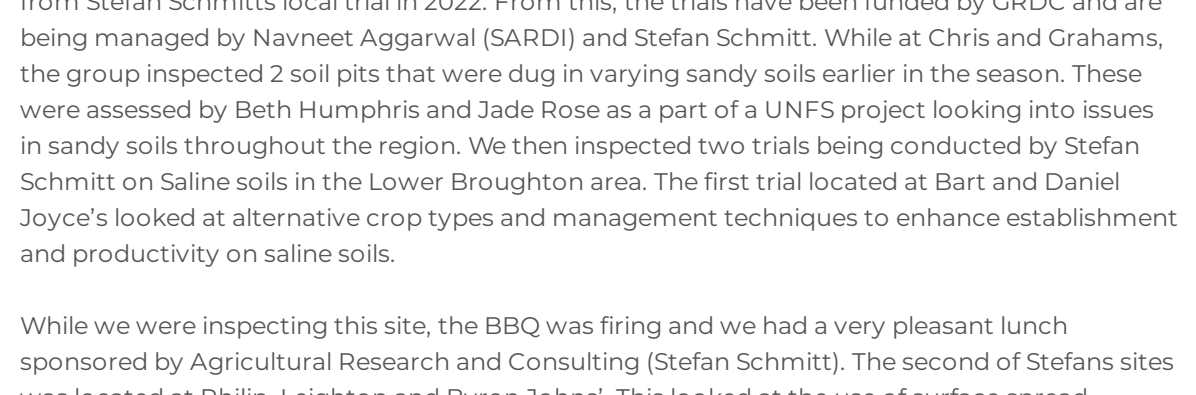
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Our Members Expo held on the 3rd of August was very successful with over 80 attendees. A slightly different approach to normal, due to late sowing and lack of field trials to visit, we spent it listening to a great range of speakers, with three from interstate. Hopefully next year we can get back out in the field. We'd like to express our appreciation to our speakers, sponsors and volunteers who help make these events possible.

Strategic Board and Operations Committee member Barry Mudge announced his retirement at our recent Annual General Meeting. Barry has been involved with UNFS since the group's inception in 2001. His dedication, knowledge and passion for agriculture has helped to guide the group over the years, whilst also providing project consultancy work free of charge. Thank you Barry for your wisdom, input and friendship over so many years.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Andrew Kittis who is stepping down from the Strategic Board after several years. Andrew's commitment to the group at Strategic Board level has been invaluable. However, we are fortunate that Andrew has been re-elected to the Operations Committee for 2023/24 and we look forward to working with him in the future. Replacing Andrew on the Strategic Board we would like to welcome Ziek Kay.



L-R: Michael Zivar, Chairman, Jade Rose, Program Manager, Rachel Trengrove, Project Officer and Deb Warner, Business Manager, UNFS Committee

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## WESTERN CROP WALK

Around 30 people attended the annual UNFS-Nelshatby Ag Bureau Sticky Beak Day bus trip around the district on Friday, August 18th 2023. First stop was at Andriew and Malcolm Sargents place to look at Sam Trengrove's Phosphorus response trial. This is a multiyear trial that looks at crop responses to high ranges of P across varying pH ranges and soil types.

The tour then moved to Nathan and Michael Crouch's to look at a trial held by Stefan Schmitt assessing novel pre-emergent herbicide options in lentils for broadleaf weed control. Following this the group moved to a trial that was looking at three corner jack control in lentils at Chris and Graham Crouch's. This is a major problem in the district. This work was followed on from Stefan Schmitt's local trial in 2022. From this, the trials have been funded by GRDC, and are being managed by Navneet Aggarwal (SARDI) and Stefan Schmitt. While at Chris and Grahams, the group inspected 2 soil pits that were dug in varying sandy soils earlier in the season. These were assessed by Beth Humphris and Jade Rose as a part of a UNFS project looking into issues in sandy soils throughout the region. We then inspected two trials being conducted by Stefan Schmitt on Saline soils in the Lower Broughton area. The first trial located at Bart and Daniel Roy's looked at alternative crop types and management techniques to enhance establishment and productivity on saline soils.

While we were inspecting this site, the BBQ was firing and we had a very pleasant lunch sponsored by Agricultural Research and Consulting (Stefan Schmitt). The second of Stefan's sites was located at Philip, Leighton and Bryon Johns. This looked at the use of surface spread amendments (gypsum, straw and sand), and whether any of these techniques could be used to overcome the difficulties with saline soils. This was the second year of this trial and the group inspected the same site the previous year so it was great to compare results year to year. The group then moved on to a UNFS/SAGIT canola profitability trial at Brendon and Denise Johns' farm. This is the second year of the trials with two other sites at Melrose and Morchard. The trials showed some promising results last year with all canola varieties showing more profitable than wheat, however this was expected with the higher rainfall in 2022.

The final site was also at Brendon and Denise's, Dylan Bruce ran us through the SARDI pulse trial site, a site that has been in this area for many years now. Of keen interest is the very early pulse sowing trials which have been showing substantial yield advantages by sowing as early as the start of April. This year will again be an interesting comparison and the work SARDI has done here over multiple years now has certainly been beneficial for the local area with many growers in the region now sowing pulses earlier than ever before.

The day finished with dinner and drinks at Bryon Johns'. An excellent day had by all as always and we look forward to next year already.

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## UPPER NORTH FARMING SYSTEMS EASTERN STICKY BEAK DAY

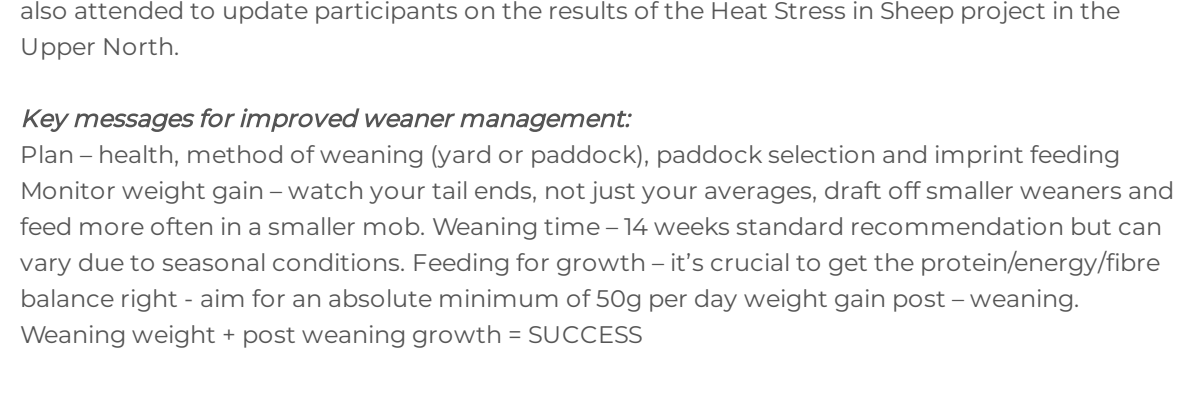
**FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 22ND**  
**Andrew Walters: 801 Collins rd, Booleroo Centre**  
**8:30am - 10:30am**

- Canola profitability, a break crop in the Upper North? - Dustin Berryman, NORTHERN AG
- Pulse legume and intercropping trials - Sarah Day, SARDI
- Heat, Drought and Chilling stress management for lower rainfall cropping systems - Dr Peter Anderson & Dr Crystal Sweetman, FLINDERS UNIVERSITY



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## PDS LOTSa Lambs Workshops - Improved Weaner Management - Wirrabara & Wilmington

Improved Weaner Management workshops were recently run in our region on 9th June at Lachie Smart's farm near Wirrabara and 20th June at Michael and Catherine Battersby's farm near Wilmington. The host farmers shared their experience in livestock management and provided an opportunity to sticky beak at their containment feeding yard set-ups for workshop participants. Guest presenters and sheep experts, Deb Scammell, Talking Livestock and Colin Trengrove, Proing Consulting, provided valuable insights and guidance on optimising weaner management practices such as nutrition, health, and other relevant topics. Adelaide University also attended to update participants on the results of the Heat Stress in Sheep project in the Upper North.

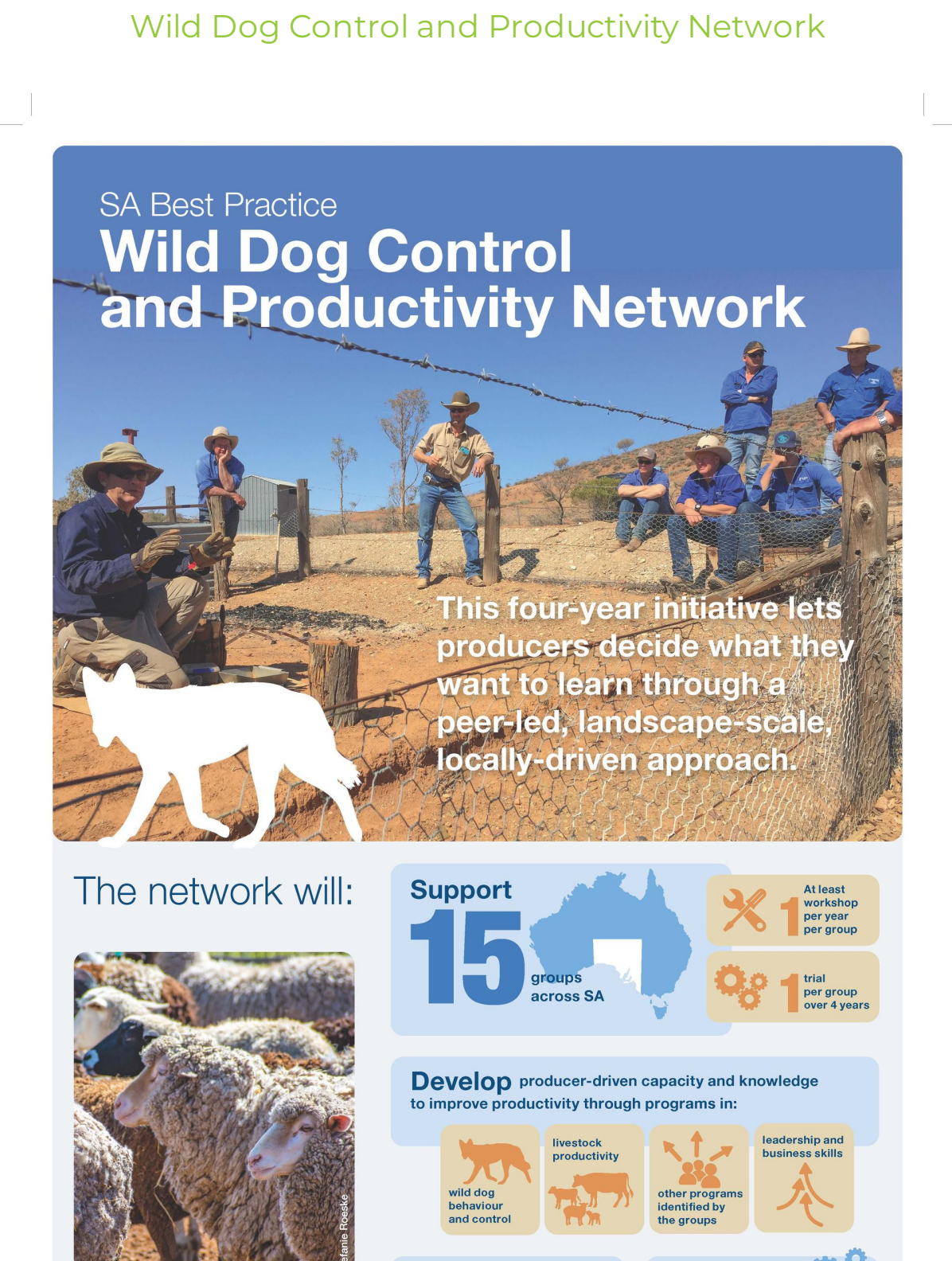
**Key messages for improved weaner management:**

- Plan - health, method of weaning (yard or paddock), paddock selection and imprint feeding
- Monitor weight gain - watch your tail ends, not just your averages, draft off smaller weaners and feed more often in a smaller mob. Weaning time - 3-4 weeks standard recommendation but can vary due to seasonal conditions. Feeding for growth - It's crucial to get the protein/energy/fibre balance right - aim for an absolute minimum of 50g per day weight gain post - weaning. Weaning weight + post weaning growth = SUCCESS

Deb says to get weaners up around 45% SRW (Standard Reference Weight), you need to look closely at your lactating ewe nutrition - a small amount of undernourishment can make a massive difference to your lamb growth rate. Impacts of lighter weights on flock productivity can be significant - a low liveweight at 9 months of age results in a decreased lifetime net reproduction rate (NRR). "Weaners that struggle are not usually useful in your flock down the track". Ewe recovery is also important when considering weaning time. "Good recovery time for ewes will set you up for success the following year with plenty of twins."

These workshops were funded by MLA and supported by the Northern & Yorke Landscape Board as part of the Living Finders program through funding from the Australian Government's National Landscape Program.

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## SA Best Practice Wild Dog Control and Productivity Network

This four-year initiative lets producers decide what they want to learn through a peer-led, landscape-scale, locally-driven approach.

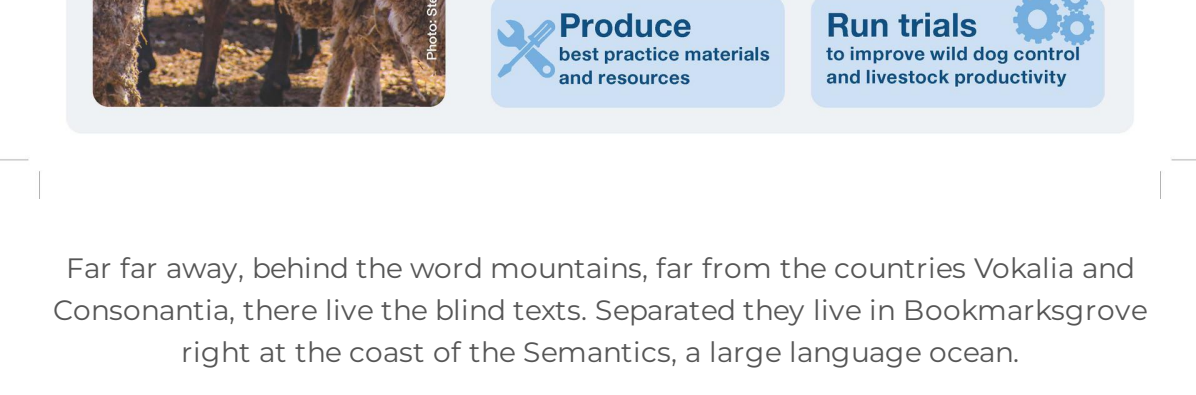
The network will:

- Support 15% increase in SA production across BA
- Develop producer-driven capacity and knowledge in innovative enterprise through programs to:
- Produce and practice materials and resources
- Run trials to improve wild dog control and livestock productivity

Far far away, behind the word mountains, far from the countries Vokalia and Consonantia, there live the blind texts. Separated they live in Bookmarkgrave right at the coast of the Semantics, a large language ocean.

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## DE-RISKING THE SEEDING PROGRAM


UNFS is involved in a project funded by the Future Drought Fund from 2023-2025.

With the increase in farm size and associated cropping programs and the seasonal break to the Australian cropping season tending to be later, earlier sowing / dry sowing of cereal crops has increased significantly over the past decade throughout the grain production districts of Western and South Eastern Australia. There are numerous benefits to early sowing of cereal crops including the likelihood they will produce more grain and biomass, offering increased opportunity for grazing or hay production in the event of a low rainfall or constricted season. Whilst the practice of early / dry sowing is employed by large numbers of growers, it carries with it considerable risks if the break to the season is significantly delayed. There are however a range of strategies that can be employed to optimise the germination and persistence of seed sown under dry conditions and reduce the risks associated with early / dry sowing.

We would appreciate if you could help us understand the issues with early/dry seeding for your region and do a very short survey:

[Take the survey](#)

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## X-RAY TECHNOLOGY POINTS THE WAY TO REDUCING HEAD LOSS IN BARLEY


For some South Australian growers, the risk of head loss in barley outweighs the potential returns of including it in a rotation.

Now, a three-year trial supported by SAGIT has investigated the problem and discovered several avenues with the potential to protect yields.

Plant scientist Associate Professor Matt Tucker from the University of Adelaide led a team of agronomists, geneticists and technicians who studied the nature of head loss caused by the barley stem breaking at the peduncle - typically within the first 3 centimetres immediately below the head.

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## Request for Ascochyta blight and sclerotinia in pulse and canola crops

Do you have Ascochyta blight in your pulse crop, or sclerotinia in your pulse or canola crop? If so Sara Biale and Mohsen Khan, SARDI Pulse Pathology, need your assistance. They are collecting diseased plant samples as part of GRDC funded projects in the southern region. If you have plants with these diseases present, contact Sara on sara.biale@sa.gov.au, or Mohsen on Mohsen.khan@sa.gov.au for a paid pre-addressed Express Post return envelope and specimen envelopes. Mohsen is also keen to receive canola flowers for collecting sclerotinia and can provide collection tubes and return Express Post sachet for this purpose.

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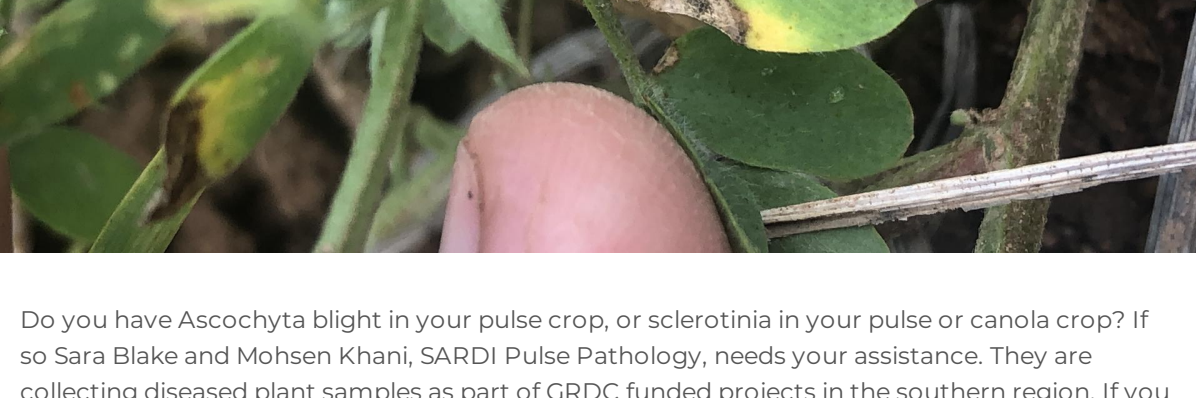
## GPSA MEDIA RELEASE - EYRE PENINSULA CONNECTIVITY PROJECT TO SHOWCASE SOLUTIONS

A pilot project at a grain producer's farm on lower Eyre Peninsula is paving the way for future connectivity through a collaboration between Grain Producers SA (GPSA) and AgriFuture Australia.

Following a successful wireless network extension project, GPSA has been awarded funding through AgriFuture Australia's "Producer Technology Uptake Program" for a project delivered by tailored agricultural connectivity specialist, Connected Farms.

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## GPSA MEDIA RELEASE - COMMONSENSE DECISION ON GRAIN HARVEST CODE

A decision to continue current adopted practice under the Grain Harvest Code for the coming harvest has been welcomed by growers as a common sense approach, according to Grain Producers SA (GPSA).

The South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) had put forward a proposal to change the Grain Harvest Code away from current adopted practice. However a decision was made this week to continue with the same arrangements for this harvest as the last.

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## UPDATE: GPSA OPPOSES PROPOSED GRAIN HARVEST CODE CHANGE

After extensive consultation with its members, Grain Producers SA (GPSA) is standing firm on its position to oppose an alarming reduction to the measurement of the cease harvest number in the Grain Harvesting Code of Practice.

[See full update](#)

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## MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA



## THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

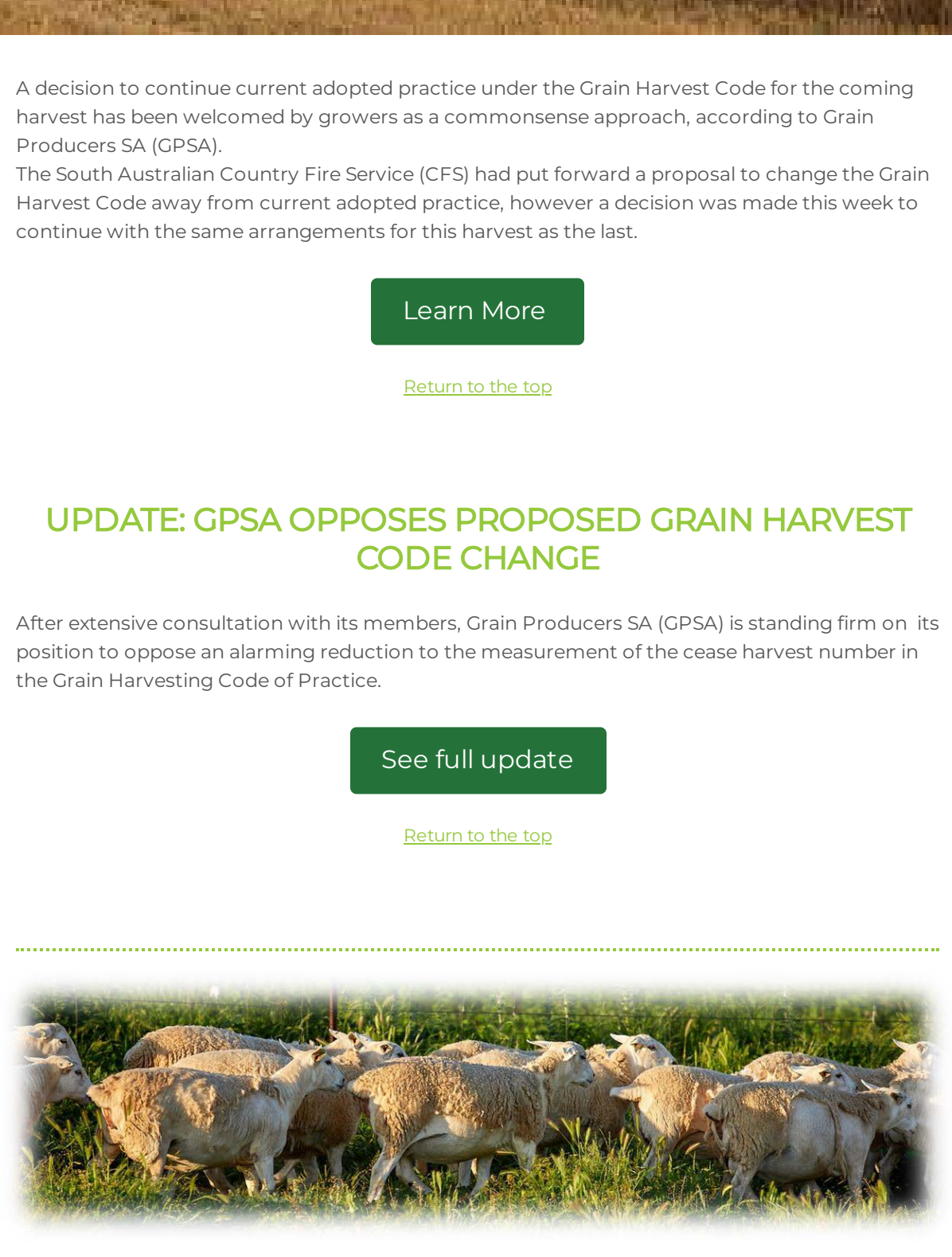
### QUANTIFYING AND UNDERSTANDING THE REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE OF AUSTRALIA'S SHEDDING SHEEP FLOCK

The University of Adelaide is leading a five-year, MLA funded project to quantify the reproductive performance of Australia's shedding sheep flock, and establish when and why reproductive wastage occurs. Reproduction specialists working alongside industry consultants with considerable experience of shedding sheep production systems (including Tim Cole and Anne Collins), will seek to identify management options which improve weaning rates, and ultimately demonstrate these management practices on farm.

We are seeking collaborating producers across Australia to be involved in this project, with representation from different system types, regions/environments and breeds. If you are running a shedding sheep flock with at least 200 breeding ewes, please register your interest by completing the questions in our short survey:

[Click here to do survey](#)

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## The Centre State Photo Competition is back!!

Simply click here to submit your entries to our website [www.centrestatephoto.com.au/photo-competition](http://www.centrestatephoto.com.au/photo-competition)

OR you can email your entries to [photo@centrestatephoto.com.au](mailto:photo@centrestatephoto.com.au) (the email to include your name, location and photo selection)

Entries close Friday the 15th of September 5pm.

For more info call Henry or Tom in the office on 1800 244 211.

Cash prizes up for grabs including a 1st prize of \$500, 2nd Prize of \$300, and 3rd prize of \$200

Winners will be announced at the 2023 Paskerville Field Days where all photos will be displayed in our tent.

Terms and Conditions: CFS reserves the right to copy photos entered in the competition to future and promotional material, all entries will be subject to CFS approval. Entrants must be members of the Centre State Farming Community.

**CentreState. 1800 244 211**  
**www.centrestatephoto.com.au/photo-competition**

[Enter competition](#)

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## SAVE THE DATE

### Upcoming Events

- 11th September - GRDC Grower forum - Warrarootown
- 13th September - GRDC Grower forum - Jamestown
- 16th September - Soil biology forum - Carleton Place
- 20th September - Soil biology forum - Clare
- 22nd September - UNFS Eastern Sticky Beak Crop Walk

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