

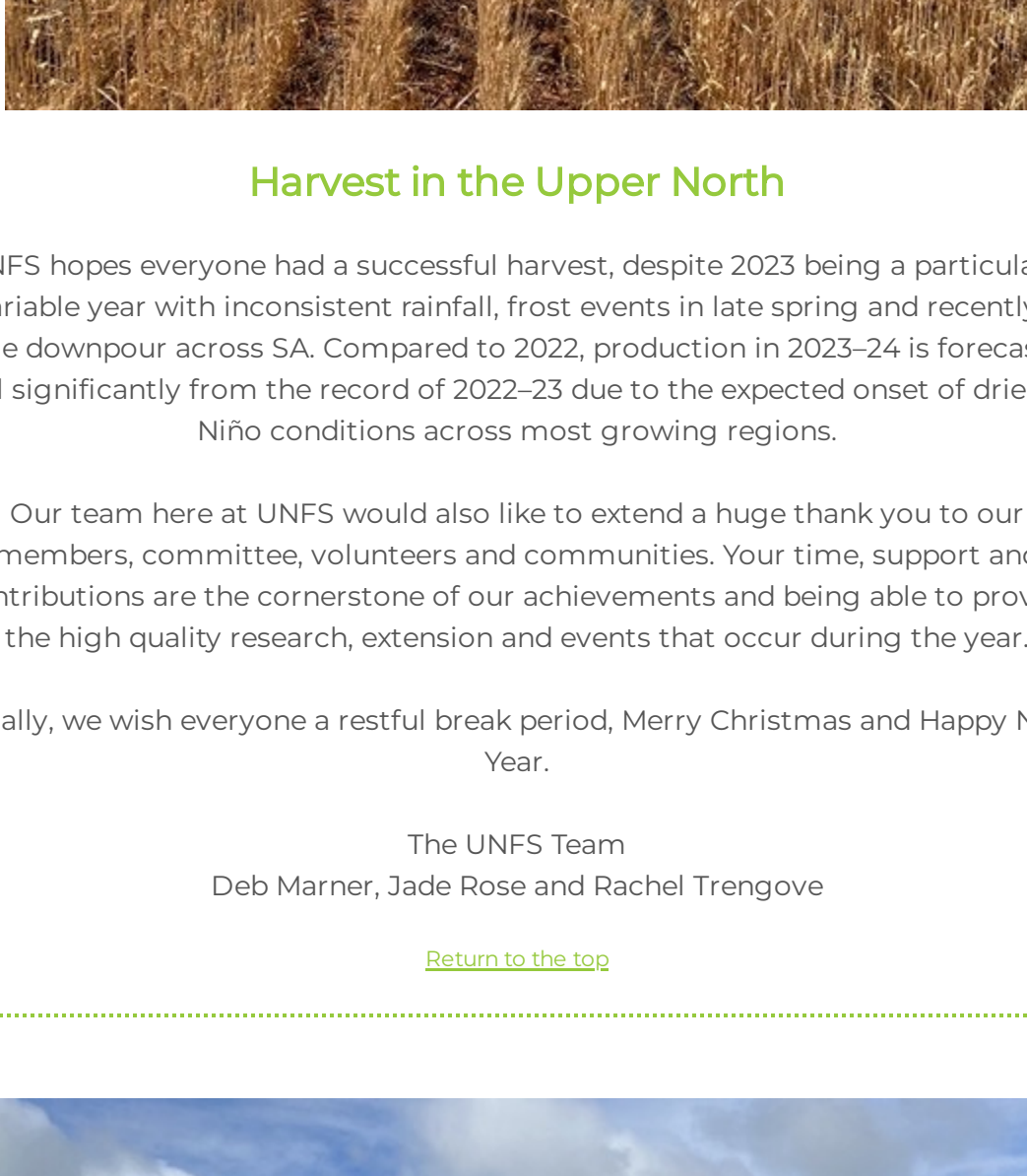
UNFS UPDATE

UPPER NORTH FARMING SYSTEMS NEWSLETTER

Harvest 2023 Edition

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Harvest in the Upper North

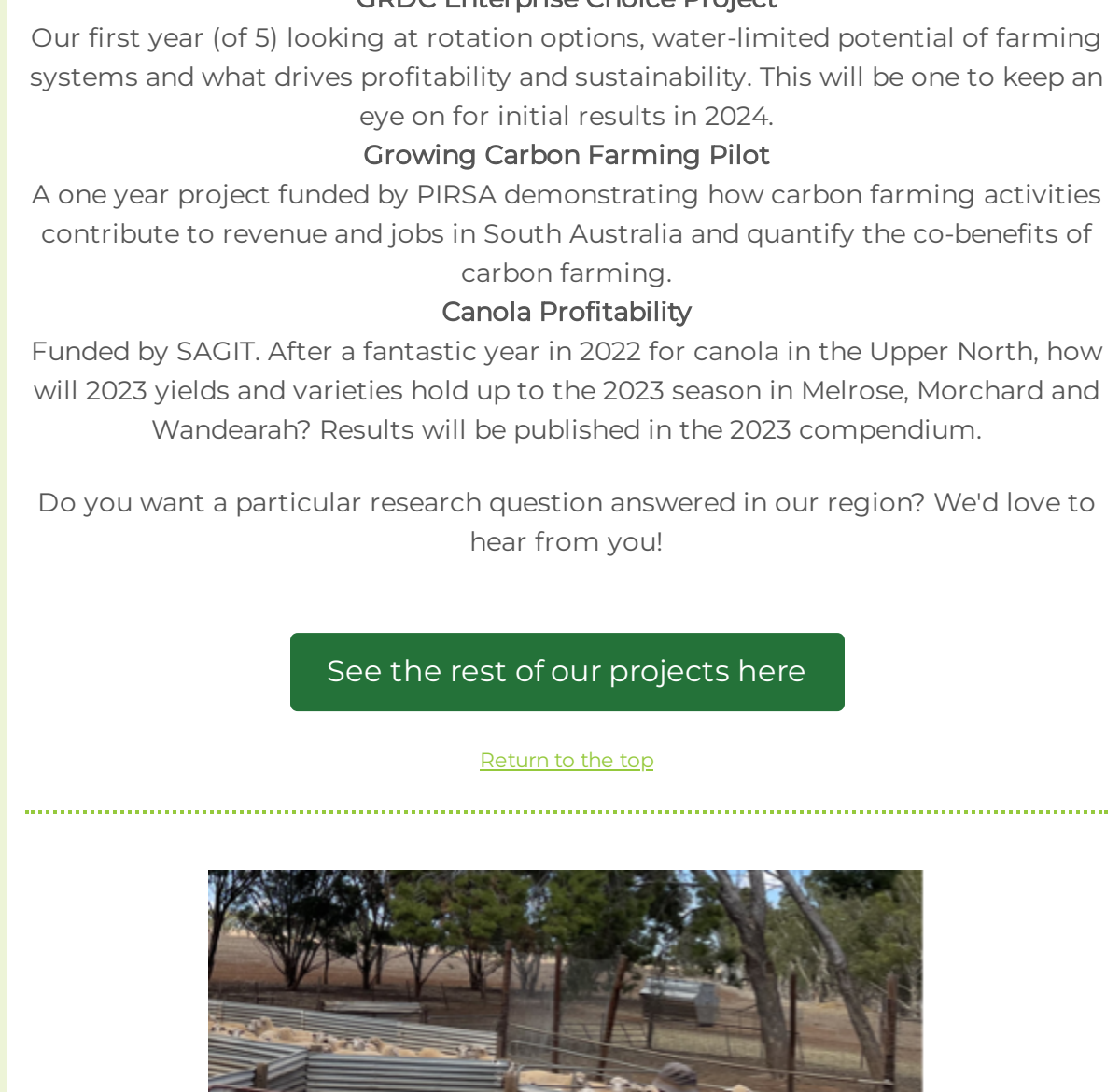
UNFS hopes everyone had a successful harvest, despite 2023 being a particularly variable year with inconsistent rainfall, frost events in late spring and recently a huge downpour across SA. Compared to 2022, production in 2023-24 is forecast to fall significantly from the record of 2022-23 due to the expected onset of drier El Niño conditions across most growing regions.

Our team here at UNFS would also like to extend a huge thank you to our members, committee, volunteers and communities. Your time, support and contributions are the cornerstone of our achievements and being able to provide the high quality research, extension and events that occur during the year.

Finally, we wish everyone a restful break period, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The UNFS Team
Deb Marner, Jade Rose and Rachel Trengove

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Trials Summary 2023

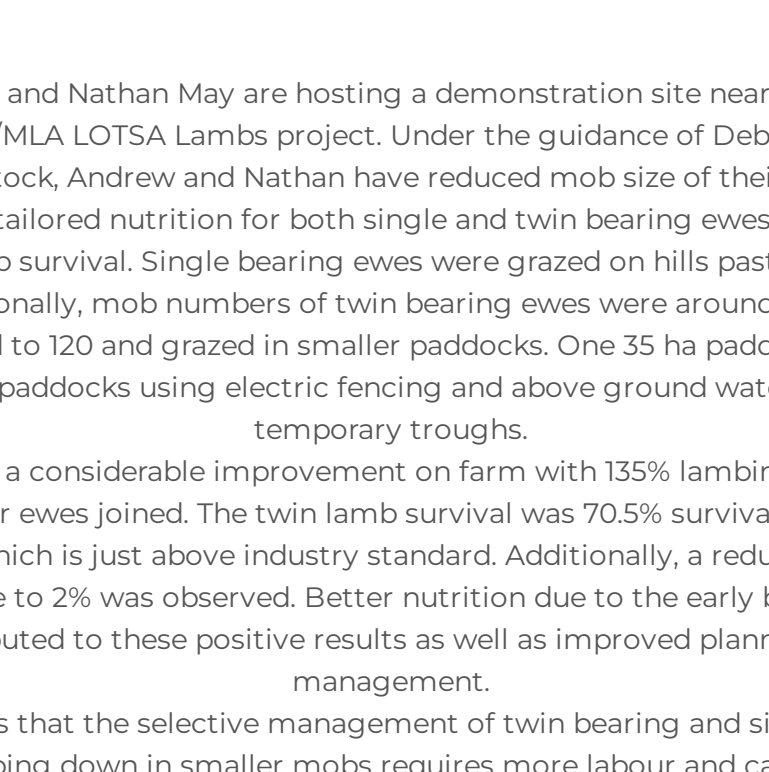
The UNFS Team and contractors ran several successful projects in 2023. Some highlights included:

- Building Soils Knowledge Project**
Holding our first regional Soils Conference in the region was a great success. The team also produced several super interesting podcasts - all available here [Soil Podcasts](#)
- GRDC Risk Initiative**
How do farmers manage risks and maximise rewards? This national project aims to find out.
- GRDC Enterprise Choice Project**
Our first year (of 5) looking at rotation options, water-limited potential of farming systems and what drives profitability and sustainability. This will be one to keep an eye on for initial results in 2024.
- Growing Carbon Farming Pilot**
A one year project funded by PIIRSA demonstrating how carbon farming activities contribute to revenue and jobs in South Australia and quantify the co-benefits of carbon farming.
- Canola Profitability**
Funded by SAGIT. After a fantastic year in 2022 for canola in the Upper North, how will 2023 yields and varieties hold up to the 2023 season in Melrose, Morchard and Wandearah? Results will be published in the 2023 compendium.

Do you want a particular research question answered in our region? We'd love to hear from you!

[See the rest of our projects here](#)

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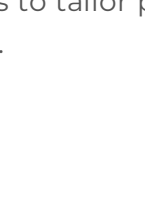
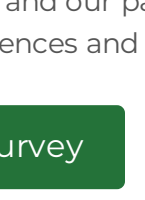
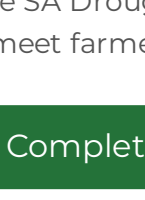
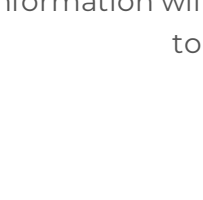
Livestock Project Update

Andrew Kitto and Nathan May are hosting a demonstration site near Glardstone for our UNFS/MLA LOTSa Lambs project. Under the guidance of Deb Scammell, Talking Livestock, Andrew and Nathan have reduced mob size of their twin bearing ewes and tailored nutrition for both single and twin bearing ewes aiming for better lamb survival. Single bearing ewes were grazed on hills pasture in large mobs. Traditionally, mob numbers of twin bearing ewes were around 300. Mob size was reduced to 120 and grazed in smaller paddocks. One 35 ha paddock was split into four paddocks using electric fencing and above ground water pipes to temporary troughs.

2023 saw a considerable improvement on farm with 135% lambing at lamb marking for ewes joined. The twin lamb survival was 70.5% lambing of scanned foetuses, which is just above industry standard. Additionally, a reduction in ewe mortality rate to 2% was observed. Better nutrition due to the early break this year contributed to these positive results as well as improved planning and management.

Andrew says that the selective management of twin bearing and single ewes as well as lambing down in smaller mobs requires more labour and can have costs associated but can deliver good economic outcomes and efficiencies when lamb prices are strong.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DROUGHT RESILIENCE ADOPTION AND INNOVATION HUB

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FARMER SURVEY

Share your thoughts about the impacts of climate change on your farm

We want to:

- Understand the strategies and barriers for you in making changes on your farm to reduce the impact of climate change and drought.
- Learn from your experience to improve advice to farmers across South Australia.
- Help farmers to have more productive farms and more sustainable operations.

If you are a South Australian farmer, please complete this short (10 minute) survey by clicking on the following link or scanning the QR code:
https://australia.flinders.edu.au/jcr/farmfs_v5_survey#26d5fs

In recognition of your time and contribution, there is a prize draw for one of fifty (50) X \$50 Shop Local Gift Cards.
Redeemable at stores including IGA, Mitre 10, Home Hardware, Total Tools, True Value Hardware, Thrifty Link Hardware and other local stores.
A project information sheet with additional detail is available by clicking on the following secure URL: <https://flinders.edu.au/dro>

If you have any further questions, please contact Chief Investigator Associate Professor Ann Louise Henderson on 0220 5003 or annlouise.henderson@flinders.edu.au

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC 2446)

This project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

Flinders University and the SA Drought Hub are investigating how to increase farmer engagement, in particular, in the management of climatic risks and impacts. We want to understand the challenges that farmers face when it comes to participating in projects, workshops, field days, training sessions and other events, and the opportunities and strategies that we could employ to overcome these barriers so that more people are able to get involved. We would like to hear the views, experiences and suggestions of South Australian farmers about how to best achieve this, and to better tailor projects, events, and communication activities to meet the needs of all farmers and communities.

If you are a South Australian farmer, please complete this short (10 minute) survey by clicking on the link below

A project information sheet with details including contacts for the survey, involvement, withdrawal rights, confidentiality and privacy, and data management is available at <https://flinders.edu.au/dro>

We appreciate your assistance in forwarding this survey through your members, partners, and extended networks as we are keen to get as many responses from farmers across South Australia and commodity types as possible. As stated above, this information will help the SA Drought Hub and our partners to tailor projects to better meet farmer preferences and needs.

[Complete the survey.](#)

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WHEAT, BOULEROO CENTRE SA, MAIN SEASON, 2023

NVT Single Site and Long Term NVT Test Results - Key Statistics

Year	Grain Yield (t/ha)	Grain Quality (t/ha)	Grain Protein (%)
2018	1.8	1.2	12.5
2019	1.5	1.0	12.0
2020	1.2	0.8	11.5
2021	1.0	0.7	11.0
2022	0.8	0.6	10.5
2023	0.6	0.5	10.0

Grain Quality: 1000 Grain Weight (g) 45.0, Test Weight (kg/hl) 45.0, Grain Protein (%) 12.5

Grain Yield
1.8 t/ha

Grain Quality
1.2 t/ha

Grain Protein
12.5 %

Grain Yield
1.8 t/ha

Grain Quality
1.2 t/ha

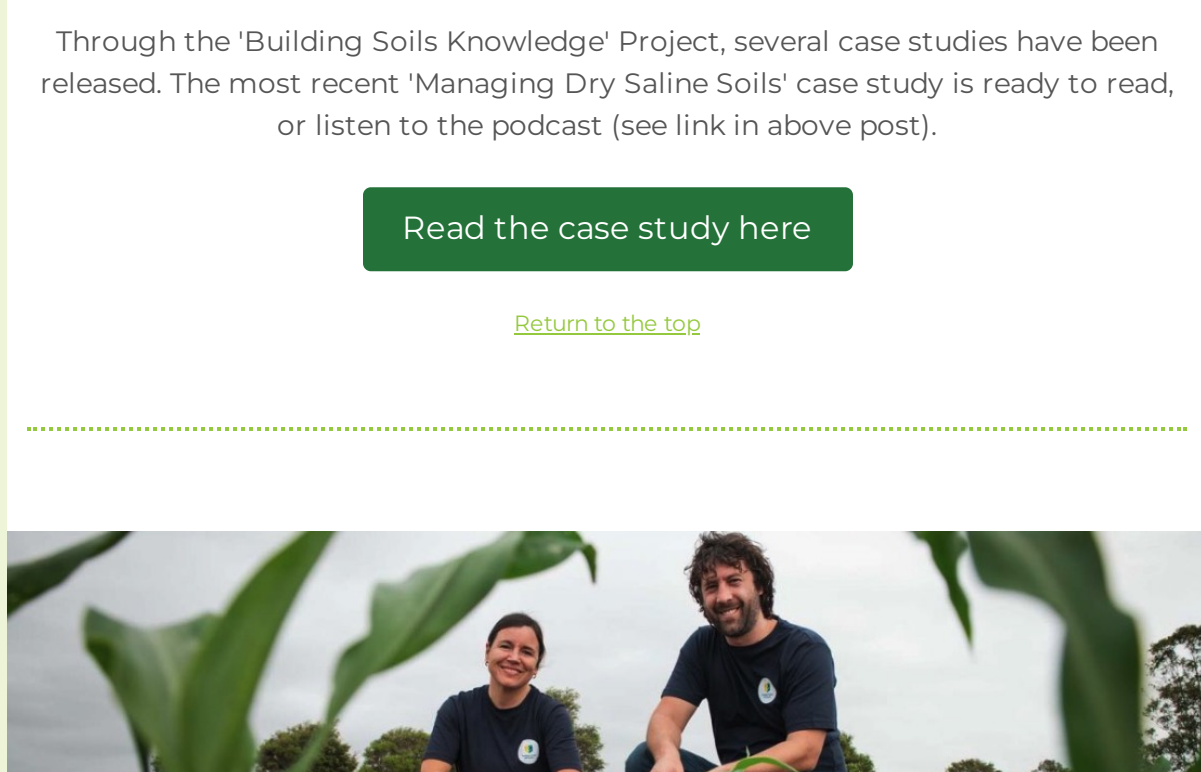
Grain Protein
12.5 %

Interim NVT Snapshot

Some of the NVT interim results have been released such as the wheat NVT (shown above). This trial, located in Bouleroo Centre demonstrated that the top performing wheat varieties in the area were Calibre and Tomahawk CL Plus. Read more about the other NVT results below.

[More NVT Results](#)

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Khaki Weed - Reducing their impact in the Northern and Yorke region

Khaki Weed (*Alternanthera pungens*) is a creeping herb with a perennial woody taproot and annual above-ground growth. Prostrate stems are reddish with soft, silky hairs. Stems grow to 60 cm long and can develop roots where stem nodes touch the soil.

Leaves are numerous and grow in opposite pairs of unequal size up to 4 cm long. The oval shaped leaves are green with red-purple veins.

Flowers appear mainly in summer and autumn. The flowers are very small and occur in clusters in the axils of the leaves. The flowers are surrounded by sharply-pointed, chaff-coloured bracts.

Fruit is a prickly chaff-coloured burr about 1 cm long.

Seeds germinate in the spring but can also germinate in response to summer rains. The taproot and stems develop over spring and summer, with all above-ground growth dying off in late summer. New growth is produced from the tap root in the following spring.

[Learn More](#)

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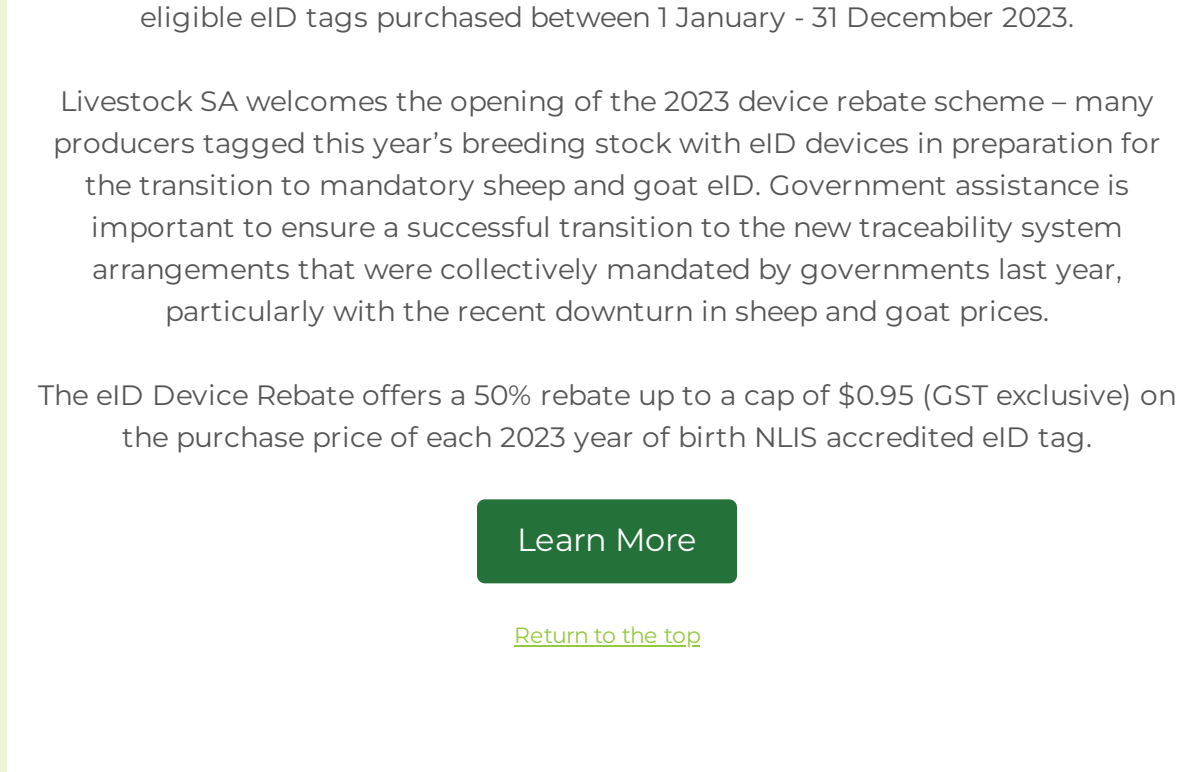


Managing Dry Saline Soils

Through the 'Building Soils Knowledge' Project, several case studies have been released. The most recent 'Managing Dry Saline Soils' case study is ready to read, or listen to the podcast (see link in above post).

[Read the case study here](#)

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GRDC MEDIA RELEASE - Growers needed for research to assess Regen Ag

A national hunt is on for at least 60 growers who use a range of farming practices to assist in a GRDC research investment exploring current cropping methods, with a focus on regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture has become a topical issue in Australia in recent years, however, there is no regulatory or widely accepted definition of the practice.

GRDC's investment aims to gain a better understanding of the relevant objectives and how they might be changing soil, land and business management.

Using this knowledge, the project team will establish ways to monitor the potential benefits or disadvantages of regenerative agriculture in Australian cropping systems across a range of agronomic, soil health, ecological, social and economic indicators.

[Learn More](#)

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Sheep Containment Feeding - Boost Sheep Enterprise Resilience and Performance

Have you considered containment feeding your sheep?
Do you containment feed sheep at certain times but want to do it better?
Do you want to know more about why, when and where you should containment feed? Then you can benefit from taking part in the new Containment Feeding Program!

What is this project?
The inclusion of containment feeding in livestock enterprises can lead to improved productivity, improved reproductive performance, enhanced landscape and pasture management, greater drought resilience and increases in profitability. A new project has been developed focused on supporting sheep producers to implement best practice containment feeding, suited to their individual farming systems. Expressions of interest are now open to participate in a pilot program where you will join a small group of like-minded sheep producers, paired with a trained advisor. The advisor will then work one-on-one with each of the producers in the group to support the decision-making, planning, design and implementation of a containment feeding setup best suited to the farmer, sheep enterprise and farming environment.




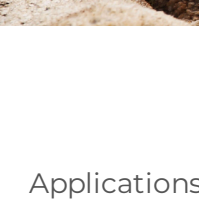
When is it happening?
Expressions of interest are now open through your local farming systems group, with the program to kick off in early February 2024, depending on seasonal and regional needs. The advisor will work with the group for approximately 6 months.

What is expected of producers?
Producers in the pilot program are expected to participate in a 1-day workshop, which will be a small group of sheep producers. Each participant will then have the opportunity to work one-on-one with an advisor to work through the decision-making processes, planning, design, and implementation specific to their farm and needs. Ideally, the producer group will meet again later to see what worked well (and what didn't!)

Cost – Participation for SA sheep producers is free, but places are limited so register your interest quickly!

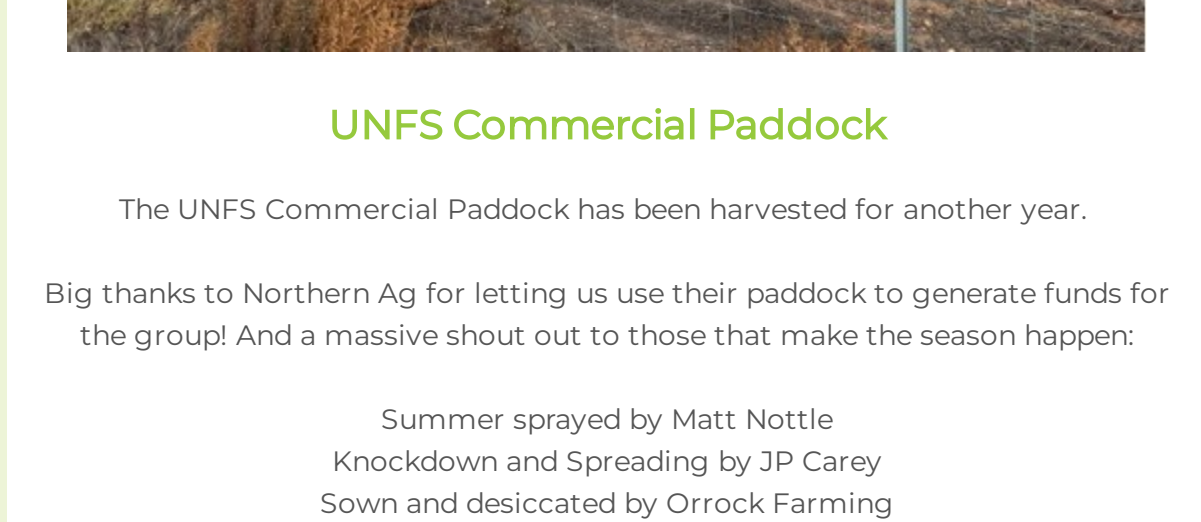
Register your interest:
Upper North Farming Systems
Rachel Trengove, 0438452003
rachel@unfs.com.au

By 10th January



The program received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

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Sheep & Goat eID device rebate

Applications for the electronic identification (eID) device rebate are now open. South Australian sheep and farmed goat producers can now apply for a rebate on eligible eID tags purchased between 1 January - 31 December 2023.

Livestock SA welcomes the opening of the 2023 device rebate scheme – many producers tagged this year's breeding stock with eID devices in preparation for the transition to mandatory sheep and goat eID. Government assistance is important to ensure a successful transition to the new traceability system arrangements that were collectively mandated by governments last year, particularly with the recent downturn in sheep and goat prices.

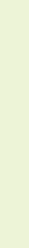
The eID Device Rebate offers a 50% rebate up to a cap of \$0.95 (GST exclusive) on the purchase price of each 2023 year of birth NLIS accredited eID tag.

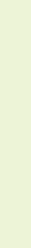
[Learn More](#)

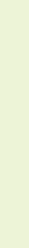
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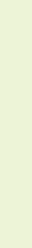
Upcoming Events


- 1st August 2024 Members Annual Expo

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UNFS
Upper North Farming Systems

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