

SCF Focus

STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS

AUTUMN 2023 NEWSLETTER

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STIRLINGS TO COAST



FARMERS



JOTTINGS FROM THE (VICE) CHAIR

Alaina Smith, SCF Vice Chairman

Hello SCF members, sponsors and staff, I am filling in for Sandy for the Autumn 2023 newsletter.

Well harvest 2022-23 will be one to remember! Yields were generally excellent however the cool, humid weather meant harvesting dragged on for far longer than usual and caused headaches with lodged crops and weather damage. This means many members will have moved straight from harvest into shearing or other tasks for the season ahead without much time to rest and relax in between. We know farmers can push through the busy, stressful times but the problem is when they never seem to end. Please be mindful of this

going forward and take care of yourself and those around you. Unfortunately, stress, anxiety, burn out and depression are becoming increasingly common in our industry and none of us are immune. Check in with your family and friends, prioritise rest and play, and don't put off those medical appointments.

On a more positive note, our region has generally had an excellent season with high yields across most crops and a profitable end result, so it is worthwhile to stop and appreciate what we can achieve when the weather gives us the chance.

One of the core aims of Stirling To Coast Farmers is grower networking and building the farming community in our region. With this in mind, SCF are busy planning plenty of events for us this year. While there is always a job we could be doing, getting off the farm and talking to your neighbour or another member from across the highway can give you a fresh perspective and a bit of a boost when you get back to your own business. So make it a priority this year to go on a field walk, get to an update or workshop and make the most of this amazing community we have at SCF.

One of the first events this year will be the Crop Updates on Monday 20th of March and SCF have been working hard to make the program engaging and relevant to our farming systems. The day will have mix of growers and researchers discussing both local trial results and bigger issues like grain emissions, so make sure you are there.

I will finish by wishing everyone good luck with seeding programs and the season ahead, here's hoping it's another good one!

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CEO REPORT

Lizzie von Perger, SCF CEO

Hello SCF Members and Sponsors,

The Stirlings to Coast Farmer's office has been a hive of activity over the summer period, with the team (especially Dan and Sheridan) busy collecting harvest samples from the 2022 trials and storing them in the SCF Boardroom! The samples are currently being processed and we'll work hard to get preliminary results out to members ahead of the trials review book being published later in Autumn.

Of note, the late-sown cereals trial in Green Range has produced some amazing results. Of the cereals sown on 21 August, wheat averaged 5.2 t/ha and barley 4.7 t/ha. For the cereals sown as late as 22 September, wheat still yielded 2.9 t/ha and barley 2.12 t/ha. Very handy.

We've been astounded to hear of some of the yield results in the region in general, many record-breaking and a testament to the hard work and progressiveness of the farmers in the area. That being said, it was also a slow, long harvest and SCF acknowledges that many farmers are tired and didn't end up getting the break they needed before the next season kicks off – please look out for your mates who might be struggling.

On a lighter note, SCF has recently initiated two new projects with investment from GRDC and MLA. The GRDC project is investigating the viability of growing a legume cover crop in place of a chemical fallow over summer, purely to produce nitrogen for the following winter crop (more details in this newsletter). The MLA project is looking a demonstrating the benefits of in-paddock real-time cattle weighing equipment (Optiweigh). Our Optiweigh is currently in transit from the east coast and as well as trialling it, we'll take it along to a few key events so farmers can have a look.

March is shaping up nicely with lots of opportunities for our members to learn and network. SCF are hosting a confinement feeding day on Tuesday, 14 March – this workshop will also include information on the sheep EID tags for those that would like to know more about the new requirements. This is closely followed by an Ag-Tech workshop on Thursday, 16 March with CSIRO experts discussing the opportunities that exist for analysing and using your recorded farm data. The biggest event mention goes to the GRDC Regional updates which SCF are hosting in Albany on Monday, 20 March. This is kicking off with an SCF breakfast, followed by presentations on locally relevant research from local and state-wide experts, finishing with a networking sundowner. I really hope that all our members can take a day out of work to support this extremely valuable event – you won't be disappointed.

Moving onto the next few months, the SCF team will be organising the 2023 trials and looking for farmers to host trial sites. We've got some exciting projects lined up and hosting trials is a great opportunity to learn from research located on your own patch.

A big thank you to all our sponsors who have jumped back on board for the 2023 year. We truly value your support. A special mention goes to Achmea Insurance who have signed up as a Gold Sponsor, welcome to the SCF Community!

Finally, we wish you all the best for a safe seeding and successful year ahead. Our door is always open, so if you are in town (Albany) call in for a yarn!

Best Regards,

Lizzie





Introducing new staff member - Sheridan Kowald

Hello, I am Sheridan, also known as "Shez."

Born and raised in Katanning, Western Australia, I grew up surrounded by agriculture, spending regular time on a family farm, east of Katanning. Following my completion of Year 12 ATAR at Katanning Senior High School, I pursued my love in Agriculture and worked in the Merchandise Sales Administrator field for 2.5 years. To progress my career in Ag, I began a project officer role with grower group Southern Dirt Inc, located in Kojonup, spending two years in the research field. With an interest to gain hands-on farming experience, I pursued a role as a farm hand with a local Kojonup mixed farming enterprises grower. Gathering a wider understanding of farming operations and enterprise management, I enjoyed being the predominant seeding operator and the rewards that lambing and shearing season creates. Coming on-board with Stirlings to Coast Farmers, I look forward to expanding my knowledge even further within the agricultural research field, providing advanced agricultural research and expertise and how it can create opportunities for growers to develop their farming operations.

Apart from pursuing my career, I enjoy quality time with family and friends, being a crazy indoor plant lady, being out in the elements, the beach, fitness and playing multiple sports. In recent years I have been pursuing AFLW, previously playing in the WAFLW South Fremantle Women's League side, and locally having Mt Barker Bulls as my amateur home club; netball and basketball within the Great Southern region. I look forward to living in the Albany area and getting to know members and growers in the area, working alongside them and the team here at Stirlings to Coast Farmers.

2023 GRAINS RESEARCH UPDATES - ALBANY



20TH MARCH, 9AM - 5PM @ RETRAVISION STADIUM

Members & SCF Sponsors- \$15, Non-members & Industry - \$30

This is a great opportunity to hear from a large range of agricultural experts, researchers and farmers, both local and from across the state, covering the latest in grains export, weed, pest and disease management, crop nutrition, soil amelioration and farm emission minimisation, across 14 sessions.

For more information, the program and to RSVP head to

2023GrainsResearchUpdatesAlbany.eventbrite.com.au



meet the member

Colin (Ferret) McAlpine

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am 62 years old, I have a partner Deb and three children, two of whom have careers linked to agriculture, with the other in mining. My nickname is Ferret and I have always been called that so I probably won't answer if you use my official name!

I was born in Dalwallinu and spent my childhood on a farm near Buntine. I went to Guildford Grammar as a boarder and then Cunderdin Ag school. I farmed at Dalwallinu until I was 40 but after buying out my brothers and parents decided to farm at Badgingarra on a strip of very fertile white gum gravel clays. Rainfall was double and frost risk negligible. Non wetting soils became a serious issue with mould board plowing the solution that I employed along with lime and trace elements.

WHERE DO YOU FARM NOW?

The farm at Badgingarra went through a major financial setback last year which I had prepared for so have spent many years planning my response and planning where I might relocate to. Mt Barker is the area I chose for many reasons. We have purchased three properties - One grazing farm just east of town on the side of Mt Barrow, a vineyard just west of town which I intend to convert to cattle grazing once all the wire is rolled up but until then I am running wethers there. The third farm is slightly further west with a small vineyard on it. This will be my cropping farm after spending a year removing vines and wires. I will be observing the areas too wet for cropping and fencing off those areas. I hope to crop the following year (2024).

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT FARM ENTERPRISES?

I have white wool merino ewes mated to Prolific rams from Genstock at Kojonup. The first cross ewes bred from these I mate to a terminal sire.

Long season high quality wheat and Canola will be my target crops.

WHAT FARMING PRACTICES ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT?

I am interested in hyper yielding crops and intensive grazing and want to learn from the locals so the Stirlings to Coast Group is going to be an extremely valuable information source.

Maybe find out if any mouldboard plowing has been trialed as I'm bringing my plow with me. I assume you might end up extremely bogged if you do any so will proceed with extreme caution but have had spectacular responses on duplex clay soils at Badgingarra. The soil type on the cropping farm appears to be more of an alluvial granite loam so keen to hear from the locals before I crash and burn! The state of my pH profile on all my farms is an absolute priority so soil testing will be my starting point

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am passionate about local communities and supporting sporting groups. I am an Aussie rules senior field umpire so hope to maybe get involved in that.

Farming is my life and hopefully I can spend the next 20 years doing what I love and hopefully push boundaries on crop yields as I believe Mt Barker is in a sweet spot to achieve this.

I can't wait to meet new people and learn new ways to farm.

MLA PDS – Alternate Forage Crops

Sammy Cullen, Memberships Officer, SCF

Host – Tim Metcalfe

Location – Porongurup

Soil type – Gravely loam

Control – Ryegrass / clover pasture, 25.5ha, 35 yearling steers, ~1.4 yearling cattle/ha

Treatment – Winter wheat (DS Bennett), 85ha, 210 yearling heifers, ~2.5 yearling cattle/ha

KEY POINTS

- Winter wheat produced more than double the biomass at 3.88t/ha across 85ha compared to the clover rye pasture that averaged 1.86t/ha across 25.5ha.
- Total livestock weight gain over the 40 grazing days was 17.2 kg/ha higher on the DS Bennett compared to the rye clover pasture.
- DS Bennett (winter wheat) benefits extend beyond grazing. In this project, 65ha was taken through to harvest yielding 3.6t/ha and 17ha was cut for silage with a yield of 12t/ha.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) began a project funded by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) looking at alternative forage crop options for southern WA. The alternate forage crops were compared to traditional feed sources at the time of grazing for both nutritional value and live weight gain (LWG) on either lambs or weaner cattle. The project has run for three years with final year results currently being collected. This article discusses final year host, Tim Metcalfe's site, comparing yearling cattle that grazed winter wheat to those grazing a ryegrass clover pasture over 40 days from July to August 2022.

METCALFE'S PRODUCER DEMONSTRATION SITE (PDS)

As the alternate forage, Tim decided on DS Bennett, a winter wheat. Winter wheat varieties are suited to the high rainfall zone and are a great alternate feed source. Advantages of DS Bennett include higher biomass production which in turn supports higher stocking rates compared to traditional annual pastures. Sowing winter wheat early for early grazing opportunities can allow farmers to defer grazing. This deferment can allow these pastures to establish and increases subsequent pasture availability. After grazing, winter wheat gives a diverse range of options to growers depending on seasonal conditions. For this demonstration, Tim had a herd of 210 yearling heifers rotationally grazing 85ha of winter wheat and a herd of 35 yearling steers grazing a 25.5ha clover rye pasture. Ideally, the cattle grazing the two treatments should have been of the same class, and initially, Tim thought these animals would have been okay to compare against each other in this trial. It highlights the difference that sex and genetic variation can play in an animal's growth and this difference should be kept in mind when comparing the results. The steers were yearlings with a good frame and were brought in with the purpose of filling out to sell. The heifers, which were the Metcalfe's third draft, had remained on-farm to fatten.



Figure 1. Top: 35 yearling steers grazing 25.5ha of clover ryegrass. Bottom: 210 yearling heifers grazing 85ha of winter wheat.



Figure 2. Biomass cuts of DS Bennett wheat (left) and clover rye pasture (right).

Table 1. Key nutritional value analysis of forages (full analysis published in previous article SCF Spring Focus)

NV Analysis	Mixed Pasture	DS Bennett Wheat
Dry Matter (DM)	18.5 %	14.9 %
Moisture	81.5 %	85.1 %
Crude Protein	20.0 % of DM	21.7 % of DM
Digestibility (DMD)	71.1 % of DM	84.3 % of DM
Est. Metabolisable	10.6 MJ/kg DM	12.9 MJ/kg DM

Table 2. The Average weaner weights recorded on the 1st July and the 10th August, and their average weight gain across the 40 days.

	Weigh In (Avg kg)	Weigh Out(Avg kg)	Weight gain (Avg Kg)	Avg weight gain kg/hd/day	Weight gain kg/ha/day	Weight Gain Total / ha (40 days)
Mixed Pasture (Steers)	389	463	74	1.85	2.53	101.2/ha
Bennett Wheat (Heifers)	385	433	48	1.20	2.96	118.4/ha

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biomass cuts of the clover rye pasture equated to 1.86t/ha across the 25.5ha and the DS Bennett wheat averaged just over double at 3.88t/h across 85ha. Nutritive value samples showed both feed sources were relatively comparable with the DS Bennett being of slightly higher quality (Table 1). This extra biomass and quality allowed the DS Bennett to support a higher stocking rate of 2.5 heifers/ha, compared to the 1.4 steers/ha on the clover rye mix. Over the 40 days grazing, the heifers on the DS Bennett produced an extra 17.2kg/ha (Table 2).

One of Tim's favourite aspects of DS Bennett wheat was the versatility and range of options it gave him. In 2022, Tim took full advantage of this diversity and cut 17 ha for silage which yielded 290 rolls at approximately 700kg each (12t/ha). The remaining 68 ha were taken through to harvest, with an average yield of 3.6t/ha.

SCF are currently collecting final surveys.

If you are a livestock producer and have not done so yet, could you please take a few minutes to complete the following survey.

HEAD TO:
bit.ly/SCFforagesurvey
 or use the QR code below



How much nitrogen can we grow during summer on the South Coast?

Dan Fay, R&D Co-ordinator, SCF

SCF have recently implemented a trial with GRDC investment to explore the use of legume cover crops grown over summer, in replacement of the traditional chemical fallow. Nitrogen fixing opportunities were rated as the second highest R&D priority by SCF members in 2022, and This project will investigate the viability of legume crops sown post-harvest after a significant rainfall event or where ample soil water is available, solely to produce nitrogen for the following winter crop. This differs from other summer cropping investments which have explored summer grain production and/or grazing opportunities.

Cover crops are essentially grown to either preserve soil moisture, through the continuation of ground cover, or to produce a crop that will provide a nutritional benefit to the following crop (or both). This project focusses on the latter and finding a viable legume that could be grown over our summer (when moisture is available) could be a game changer for the region. The need to get legumes into crop rotations is becoming increasingly evident given the skyrocketing commodity prices. Since January 2021, the price of urea has increased from \$256/t up to \$1,026 and has since dropped back to a still high price of approximately \$750/t (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, 2022). This has been driven by rising global energy prices and by Russia and China imposing fertiliser export

restrictions in 2021 and constraining global supply. It has been predicted that urea prices will continue to remain high with continued conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The limited marketability and price volatility of faba beans and lupins restrict a farmer from taking advantage of the nitrogen they can fix. Could a summer legume cover crop provide this nitrogen growing opportunity, particularly on the South Coast and in the Lower Great Southern?

HOW IT WORKS

The key is to select a crop type that will have good heat tolerance, produce a large amount of biomass, and have a high biomass to fixed nitrogen ratio. It should be noted that a suitable soil pH is necessary to encourage both crop growth and nodulation. The crop is seeded and then grown until peak biomass production, and terminated prior to pod set. This is important for two reasons; once the pods are formed, nitrogen will be accumulated in the burgeoning seed and will not be readily available for the following crop, and two, if a viable seed is formed, volunteer plants will be very difficult to control in the following winter crop.

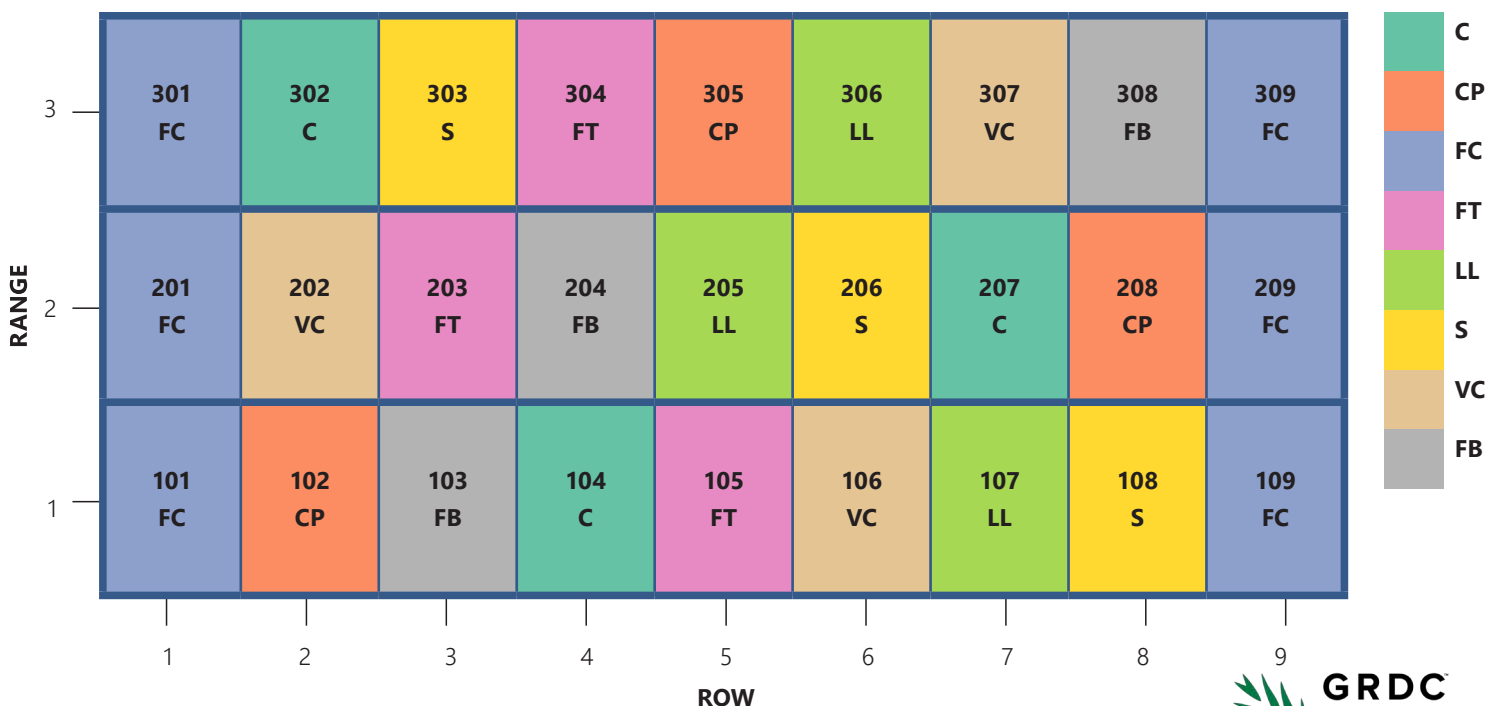


Figure 1: 2023 Legume cover crop small plot trial design



THE TRIAL

The SCF small plot trial is located at the Adams' property in Woogenellup. The trial contains six legume species; common vetch, soybean, lablab, cowpea, chickpea and faba bean, as well as two control treatments- a chemical fallow and a cultivated control. Each crop species will produce differing levels of biomass and will fix different amounts of nitrogen. This trial aims to assess the most effective and efficient species for fixing nitrogen within the summer fallow period. The trial is triple replicated and was irrigated initially with the equivalent of 25mm, to replicate the conditions of a summer rainfall event. We did try and wait for a summer storm, but with no luck! Deep soil cores have been taken to 80cm to establish the level of nitrogen currently in the soil, and to act as a baseline figure. Throughout the trial, additional deep soil core samples will be taken and analysed to form an account of the nitrogen as it moves through the system.

The cover crops will be terminated as they begin to set pods, or at autumn knockdown (whichever comes first), before the paddock is then seeded to spring wheat. At this time cover crop plant biomass will be assessed to determine the total nitrogen contribution to the system. The plots will then be incorporated into the soil to encourage a rapid breakdown of the plant residue. The winter crop and soil nitrogen will be monitored to effectively establish the impact each legume species has had on nitrogen availability and winter crop production.

The trial was seeded on February 2, and despite the subsequent hot conditions each treatment has had a good germination and is well established. This is critical to the plants surviving the summer and building biomass. SCF will continue to report on this novel trial over the next couple of months. Stay tuned for updates!



Figure 2: Trial site as of February 13 2023.



Figure 3: Soybean nodulation at 28 days after seeding.

Local farmers improve on harvest grain losses in 2022

Sheridan Kowald, Project Officer, SCF

For the last two harvests, 2021/22 and 2022/23, Stirlings to Coast Farmers has participated in a Grower Group Alliance (GGA) led, GRDC investment that aimed to determine the current level of grain losses through the harvest process, inclusive of both front and machine losses. This project utilised the Bushel Plus system, and focused on reducing losses in the field by manipulating header settings. The project was developed after a study by Planfarm found that 90 million dollars' worth of canola is lost in the harvest process each year in Western Australia.

THE PROCESS

To measure header front losses, trays are placed under the divider, feeder house, and offset of the feeder house. The header then drives over the trays, capturing the losses. The material captured is cleaned and grains are separated from the residue. The weight of the losses from each tray are weighed separately and the total for front losses is then calculated using a formula (Figure 1).

Machine losses are measured by using two trays, one dropped under the centre of the machine, off the back axis of the feeder house (Figure 2) and the other dropped within the residue spread zone typically just outside the wheel. One tray is dropped to the left and one to the right side of the machine to account for wind/preferential spread (Figure 3).

The academic consensus on acceptable harvest losses varies widely depending on which institution has conducted the research, and when the research was conducted. However, 3% machine losses for cereals, and 1% for canola are widely accepted as a good result, with losses on pulses ranging from 5-20% depending on variety.

RESULTS

In the 2022/23 harvest, SCF measured 12 participating crops, covering cereals, pulses, and oilseeds, and all of varying yields and varieties.

While the 2021 Albany Port Zone (APZ) harvest loss results were only slightly higher than the optimum range, harvest loss percentages for 2022 were even lower again. In 2021, waterlogging reduced grain yields, and the grain lost compared to the grain hitting the bin resulted in a higher percentage lost. In comparison, in 2022, crops were heavier and yields were

higher (even record-breaking!). In these instances, it is easier to minimize on percentage lost due to more grain hitting the bin compared to grain lost.

In regard to the 2022 losses, crop lodging and grain quality may have reflected the machine losses. Front losses could have been impacted by the gap between maturity and time of harvest, the overall brittleness of the straw and crop lodging. Also, with the higher commodity prices and higher input prices in 2022, it is possible that growers spent more time in setting up their machinery and getting the process right to be able to maximise on every grain coming through the header, taking advantage of each commodity's pricing.



Figure 1. Measuring front losses with the Bushel Plus system.



Figure 2. Placing the tray on the axis.

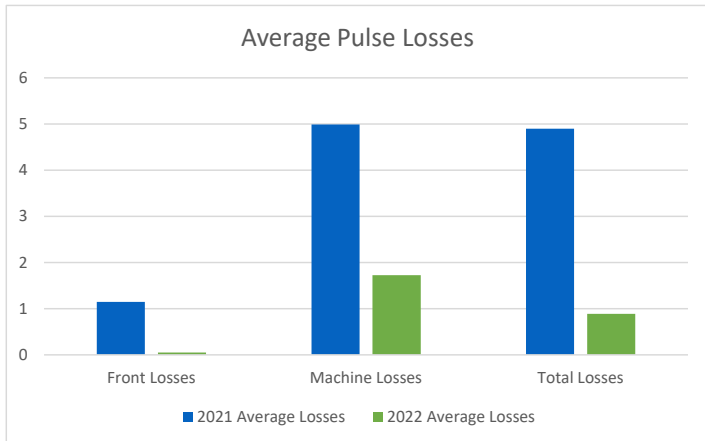
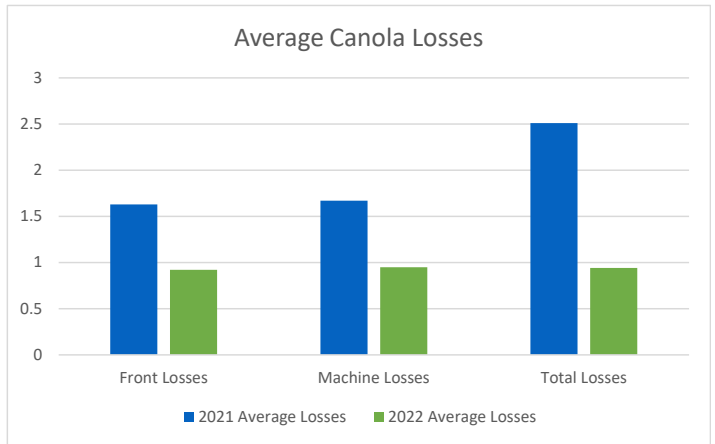
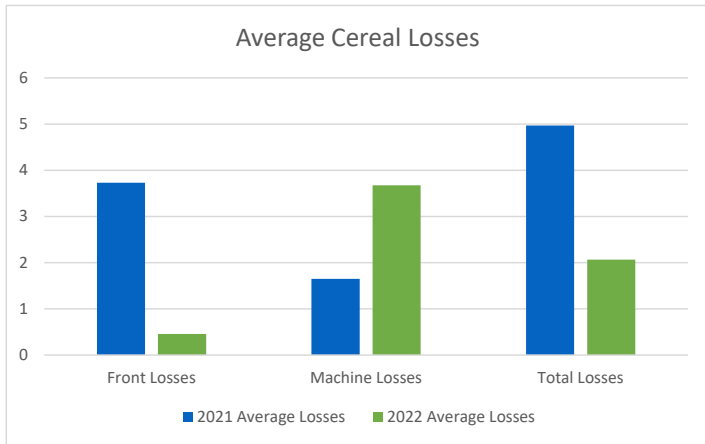


Figure 4. Placing losses through the Bushell Plus system

Figure 3. Average harvest losses for canola, cereal and pulse crops for the 2021 & 2022 seasons.

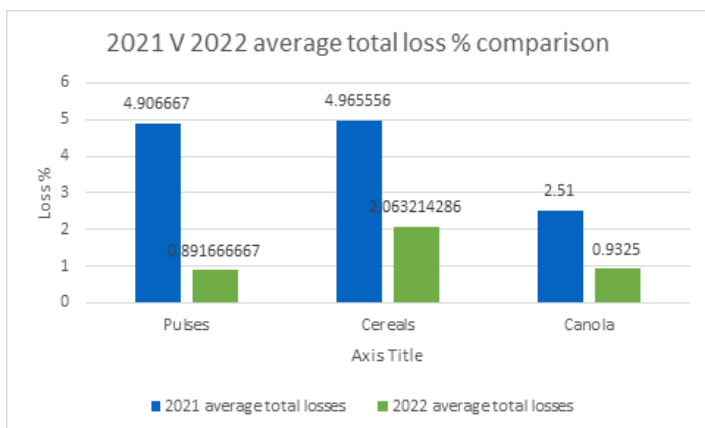


Figure 5. Total average loss % comparison between 2021 & 2022.

CONCLUSION

It is positive to see a continuing improvement with harvest losses in the region, although seasonal factors will continue to potentially play a part in each years' results. Ongoing extension and engagement with growers about the importance of measuring and minimising harvest losses will continue to drive improvement within the Great Southern area and although the project has finished, equipment to measure harvest losses will be made available to SCF members going forwards.



Drought Hub Update

Stirlings to Coast Farmers, as a 'Drought Hub Node', provides guidance to the Nationally coordinated 'Future Drought Fund' on drought & climate resilience issues for the Albany Region.

WHAT'S NEW

LONG-TERM TRIALS GRANT ROUND OPEN NOW

The FDF has opened a new grant program early this year that will support long-term trials to build the drought resilience and profitability of cropping and grazing farmers. The \$40 million program will invest in trials until 2027-28 that test drought resilience practices and produce robust data on their effectiveness, so farmers can be confident to try it themselves. Head to the Australian Government Community Grants Hub for more information.

<https://www.grants.gov.au/Fo/Show?FoUuid=7f128956-39c3-4475-b602-9ba01b0f5a80>

SCF SUBMITS FDF EXTENSION AND ADOPTION GRANT APPLICATIONS

SCF has submitted two funding applications for this grant. The first is titled 'Demonstrating the benefits of hard-seeded, deep-rooted pasture legumes for increasing drought resilience in mixed farming systems throughout the Great Southern Region of Western Australia'. If successful, this project will deliver on-farm demonstrations, and conduct farmer field walks and bus tours to extend the benefits of hard-seeded, deep-rooted pasture legumes to improve the climate resilience of farming businesses.

The second project submitted is 'Adoption & extension of digital weather and soil moisture monitoring technologies to drive climate-resilient farming practices in the South-West Agricultural region of Western Australia'. The project identifies methods of building drought resilience through improved

weather monitoring & forecasting, soil moisture management & opportunistic land management practices.

CLIMATE GREAT SOUTHERN

The Climate Great Southern website is now live. Developed by Stirlings to Coast Farmers under funding support from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, Climate Great Southern acts as your one-stop location for current weather conditions, soil moisture levels, pasture forecasting and climate resources in the Great Southern region of Western Australia.

Our aim is simple. We want to create a drought resilience dashboard for the Great Southern region of WA and to provide tools & technologies to deliver adaptive and resilient land management practices.

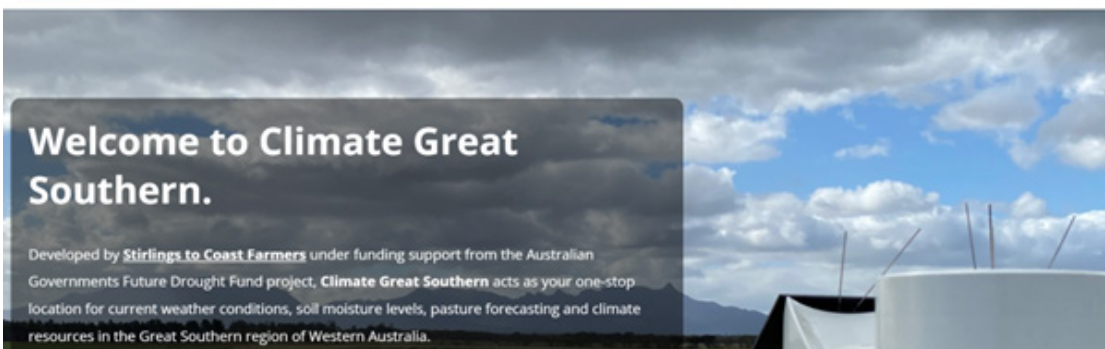
**Head to
<https://climategreatsouthern.com.au/>
to check it out.**

To keep up to date with all that is happening with the South West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub and anything climate resilience related, check out their web page and subscribe to their newsletter here - <https://www.gga.org.au/activity/drought-hub/>

If you are interested in knowing more and being involved in project development for improving climate resilience in our local area, give Kathi McDonald (Albany Regional Node) a call on 0408 418 531 or email kathi.mcdonald@scfamers.org.au and check out the Albany Node webpage for further locally relevant information - <https://www.scfamers.org.au/swwadroughthub-albany>.



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Barley variety selection for the Albany Port Zone area

Kithsiri Jayasena, DPIRD, Albany

The choice of variety by the grower is primarily driven by yield potential, adaptability and acceptability of varieties at each delivery point, but disease resistance is becoming an important consideration.

In the 2022 season, Net form net blotch (NFNB) was widely seen in the region due to wider sowing of RGT Planet barley (very susceptible). Spot form net blotch (SFNB) was seen to a lesser extent. In recent years a gradual increase of barley scald has been noticed, with some paddocks sown to Laperouse badly affected and a few Flinders crops in the region also affected by barley scald. These diseases are all stubble borne, with NFNB and scald also seed borne. Due to the good seasonal finish and with bumper crops during 2021 and 2022 there are plenty of infected stubbles around in the Great Southern region. Growers will need to watch out for net blotches and scald in the 2023 season and choose varieties with some resistance (refer to Table 1) or prepare a robust fungicide and rotational strategy.

The barley varieties currently grown and varieties that could potentially be grown in the Albany Port Zone are shown in Table 1. Unfortunately there isn't a single barley variety possessing resistance to all the barley diseases. Susceptible and very susceptible varieties for a particular target disease e.g. net blotches, should be avoided if possible. Moderately susceptible varieties are better than susceptible or very susceptible varieties and additionally in NFNB predominate areas it is better to focus on 'Integrated Disease Management' (IDM) strategies such as avoiding sowing barley on barley, rotation, delayed sowing and improved plant health to reduce the disease pressure so that fungicides can successfully control the disease.

Table 1. Foliar disease resistance profiles on some of the barley varieties currently grown or with the potential to be grown in the Albany Port Zone, WA.

Maturity	Variety	NFNB		SFNB		Scald		PM		BLR	
		Oxford virulent								(5457P-)	
		Seedling	Adult	Seedling	Adult	Seedling	Adult	Seedling	Adult	Seedling	Adult
Medium	RGT Planet*	VS	SVS	S	S	nd	MR	R	R	MS	MRMS
	Laperouse	S	MSS	MRMS	MSS	nd	S	MR	MR	MS	MSS
	Minotaur	MS	MS	S	S	nd	VS	SVS	MSS	S	S
	Flinders	S	S	MSS	S	nd	MSS	R	R	MS	MRMS
Early	Spartacus CL*	S	S	S	SVS	nd	MR	MS	MRMS	S	MSS
	Rosalind*	S	S	MSS	S	nd	S	S	S	MRMS	MR
	Maximus CL*	S	S	MS	MSS	nd	MR	MR	RMR	S	MSS
	Commodus CL	S	S	MRMS	MSS	nd	S	MR	MR	S	S
	Beast	SVS	MSS	MS	MSS	nd	S	MRMS	MR	S	MSS
	Cyclops	S	S	MSS	MSS	nd	MRMS	MR	MR	S	S
	Fathom	S	SVS	MR	MRMS	nd	MR	MRMS	MRMS	MSS	MRMS
	Buff	MS	MS	MS	S	nd	MS	S	S	SVS	S

Abbreviations: VS= very susceptible; SVS=susceptible to very susceptible; S=susceptible; MSS= moderately susceptible to susceptible; MS=moderately susceptible; MRMS= moderately resistant to moderately susceptible; MR= moderately resistant; RMR= resistant to moderately resistant; R= resistant; nd= no data. NFNB=net form net blotch, SFNB= spot form net blotch; PM=powdery mildew; BLR= barley leaf rust; * denotes GIWA recommended varieties for 2023/24 harvest

Source: https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/sites/gateway/files/DPIRD_CSG%202023_Barley.pdf

Finally, the DPIRD publication, '2023 Western Australian Crop Sowing Guide' is a valuable resource as farmers head into seeding, and also has a section on the yields of varieties in the Albany Port Zone - agzones 3, 5 and 6.



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



Live Export Vessel Tour – Fremantle

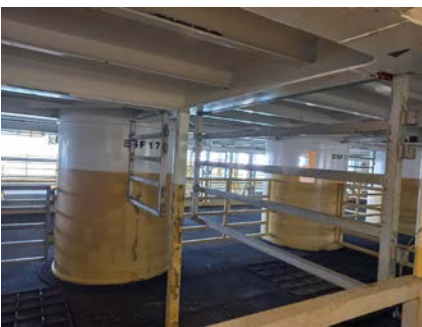
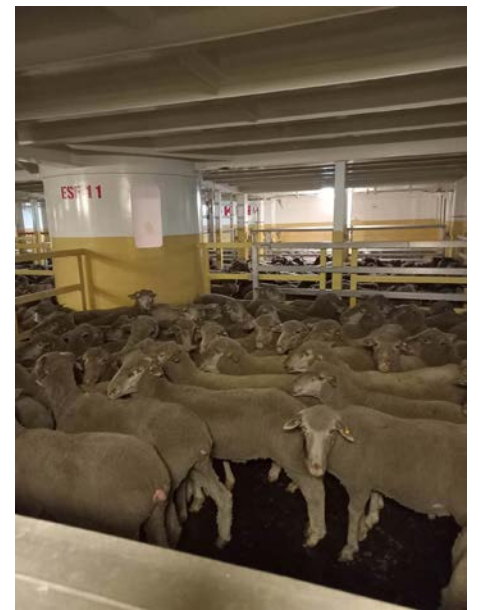
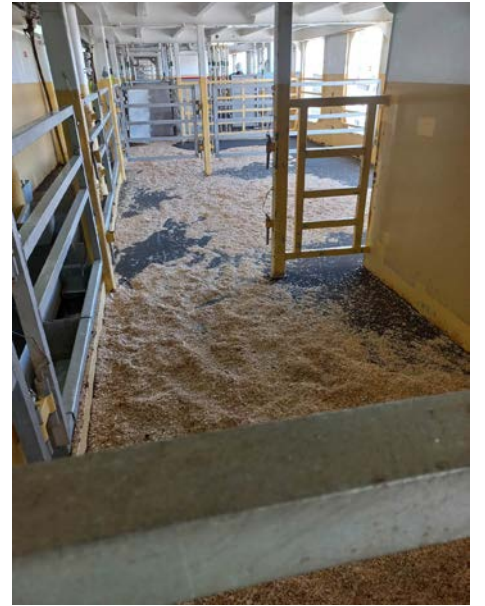
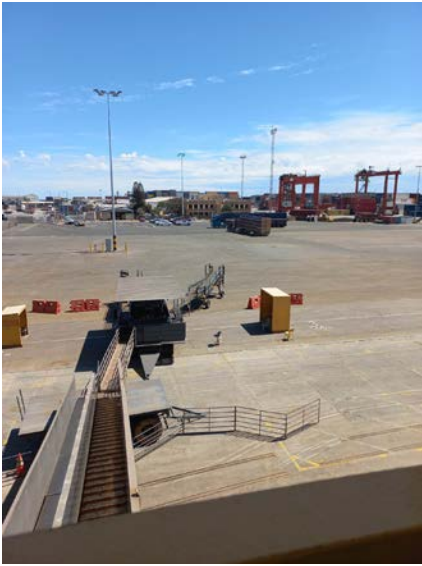
Jamie Spence, SCF Member

While I only supply a small portion of my livestock operation to the Live Export trade, I was still keen to see one of the vessels in operation and understand more about the process. Milly Nolan and Co from the Livestock Collective met us at the Nutrien office based at the shipping yard in North Fremantle, where we were given a detailed presentation on the procedures and protocols that go into the Live Export for both cattle and sheep. The presentation covered the Australian export and welfare standards that have enabled and encouraged the markets we export to, to upgrade and meet the same standards as we have in Australia. Although it was somewhat a case of preaching to the converted in the room, with several other attendee groups including the Royal Ag Society and Steve McGuire from the WAFarmers Federation (Vice President), there was still room for questions to be asked, especially directed toward the on-board veterinarian.

We proceeded to suit up in hi-vis and later hard hats as a bus dropped us off at the livestock vessel (MK Al Kuwait) that was in the process of boarding sheep. We could see the various government inspectors looking at sheep as they came off the truck and any questionable sheep were quickly drafted to the side in a special holding pen that was apart of the loading ramp system. We then scaled up and down the various levels of the vessel. First stop, was the bottom deck for livestock where the sheep were being loaded into. These sheep were loaded first as they were 'heavier', and so help balance the ship. Lighter sheep and lambs were scheduled to be loaded the next day to fill the upper decks. While there were no open sides in the lower decks, the ventilation system had a decent roar, keeping cool air flowing and if you got close enough to one of the vents it could almost blow you over. Also, an interesting fact is that most of the drinking water for the livestock comes from desalination plants onboard the vessel.

This vessel was also equipped to transport cattle and had a small consignment to go abroad as well. The modification for the pens from sheep to cattle was a 'simple' rotation of the feed/water panels so that the dispensing trays were at head height for right animal. The crew amongst the livestock decks were mostly of Filipino, with the bridge being operated by Croatians. The bridge itself was filled with modern or better equipment that exemplified the level of management that goes into making the vessel and its voyage as problem free as possible. Prior going on the tour I was already content with the fact that best practices were in place, and that this tour only reinforced those thoughts.





- **Know your pest.**
- **Know your conditions & your paddocks.**

Big harvests potentially mean a lot of grain on the ground, which means a lot of feed to support a large mouse population.

Due to the potential risk we face again this year, a lot of growers would like to know what we can do early in the season to mitigate all or part of the problem, or at least come to a better understanding of the problem. Mouse baiting can be expensive, however the cost of not doing so, if it is warranted, could be worse.

Farmanco undertook a GRDC funded mouse surveillance project in 2022, in which I took part in the surveillance for the Albany and Esperance Port Zones. This article will focus on some of the practical lessons learned during that experience:

- Understanding the lifecycles of mice. Understanding the problem brings knowledge to better manage your decision making.
- Narrowing the focus of your paddocks. The problem of mice can seem overwhelming, and some practical lessons I learnt may help you evaluate, focus, and potentially mitigate some problems.
- Practical and easy ways of surveying mice in your paddocks.

UNDERSTANDING THE LIFECYCLE OF MICE

Under ideal conditions, mice can breed from 6 weeks old, and their litters can range from 6-10 babies every 19-21 days. Females can fall pregnant again 3 weeks after giving birth. What this means is, that at any given point, we are potentially only 3 weeks away from an outbreak.

Ideal breeding conditions are between 17-26°C and 40-60% humidity.

Mice need 3 key elements to thrive, not unlike the fire triangle: Feed, Shelter & Water. Of these, feed is the most important, and is the one we can influence the most.



- **Monitor numbers pre-season.**
- **Make your decision.**

NARROWING THE FOCUS

You can narrow your focus to paddocks that pose a higher risk to the three key elements above that help support high mice populations. These are generalisations, and I am sure some exceptions can arise.

- High feed base paddocks: target paddocks that had a lot of residual grain either through an inefficient harvest (throwing grain out the back), lodged paddocks where headers couldn't pick up the crop, head loss, or crops such as canola which might have had weather events which caused pod shatter.

Prioritise heavy stocking rates for these paddocks. Livestock generally reduce the breeding potential of mice through reducing available feed and destroying shelter.

Mice don't appear to favour paddocks with heavy or overly gravelly soil types. They are hard to dig into. Target soils that are softer and sandier to monitor for mice numbers. Paddocks that are too sandy and dry would collapse burrows, and mice may not prefer these.

- Tall standing stubbles (if you harvested high for example) provide shelter. A factor to consider in the context of others.
- How much Summer and Autumn rainfall have you had? Mice won't thrive in the dry, but they will survive. If you have enough feed on the ground these numbers could increase when the rains arrive, but you can also reduce feed availability year-to-year with an effective spraying program that reduces weed seed set.
- Are you using seed destructors, and if you are, where didn't you use them?
- Monitor areas around grain bags or alternate sources of shelter.
- Have good silo hygiene. This is also advisable to help suppress stored grain pests such as weevils and the like.

Assessing risk would likely be a product of determining overlapping criteria that produce the best environmental conditions for mice to thrive. This way you can target paddocks to monitor to get the best picture.

MONITORING

This is arguably the most important part to pre-season preparation. Monitoring the mice numbers going into seeding will give you information on if you need to bait and where to bait. There are no accepted thresholds on what number of mice you need to have to bait, but the following indicators have been used in 2022. I would suggest that if you have around 100 burrows per hectare, you need to be wary, monitor and be ready to bait.

As an overall monitoring strategy, include a paddock where you don't think there will be many mice based on the above criteria, in addition to those that you think will be problem paddocks. This 'control' paddock will aid in the interpretation of mice activity on your property, as a comparison.

Pre-season monitoring, I think, should consist of 3-4 transects in a paddock along the fence lines as a minimum. Each transect should start 50m out from the fence line, with a 100m long transect. Walk the transect only counting the burrows 50cm on either side (1m wide in total) of the transect. Each burrow should be marked with some flour (be generous so they are easier to spot the next day). Active burrows will be easily marked the next day by digging activity overnight (Figure 1).

THE QUICK CALCULATION

The average number of active burrows you find along each transect is multiplied by 100 (to get a per-hectare amount) and then multiplied by 2 (as we assume 2 mice per burrow). The number is then averaged out across the calculated amounts for each of the 3-4 transects, and the more transects, the better the accuracy. This forms the basis of the decision-making. If you are marginal, you may want to do early-season monitoring with bait cards.

ACTIVE BURROWS: (Avg Active Burrow Count x 2) x 100 =
Estimated mice/ha

Worked Example:

Transect 1 – (0 active burrows x 100) x 2 = 0

Transect 2 – (3 active burrows x 100) x 2 = 600

Transect 3 – (1 active burrow x 100) x 2 = 200

$(0 + 600 + 200) / 3 = 266$ mice/ha – HIGH!

<100 Low, 100-200 Mod, >200 High



Figure 1: This hole was covered by flour all around. Digging overnight indicated an active burrow.

DECISIONS & CONCLUSION

You have two baiting windows, either at seeding (or soon after) and during the spring. Baiting is a form of control that aims to manage breeding potential, so numbers do not become economically damaging. Some decisions will be clear cut, but marginal numbers are a grey area. If you are over 200 mice/ha (100 burrows) you will likely need to bait, but that depends on conditions as previously discussed.

Marginal paddocks that aren't baited should be monitored, and if appropriate, use the second baiting window to reduce the breeding potential going into crop maturity. My observations were, those who baited in autumn didn't need to bait in spring.

2023 is shaping up as another strong year for Australia’s agricultural sector, although a repeat of last year’s “exceptional” performance is unlikely, Rabobank says in a newly- released industry outlook.

In its flagship Australia Agribusiness Outlook 2023, titled ‘Continuing on a successful path’, the agribusiness banking specialist says a stand-out 2022 – with high, often record, commodity prices and good to partly-record production volumes – has put the nation’s farm sector in a healthy position for the year ahead, allowing for “record high farm incomes across the country, well above the already very good 2021 results”.



But it cautions against expectations of a repeat of last year’s stellar conditions in the agricultural sector, which were overall “exceptional”, despite the impacts of severe flooding in some regions.

“Beef, dairy, grain, oilseeds and canola prices all hit excellent and often record levels in Australia at a time when our farmers produced good to excellent volumes,” the report said. “This was a fantastic combination which allowed Australian farmers to cash in because these factors far outpaced the significantly-elevated cost of fertilisers, energy, interest rates and farmland.

“2023 will bring many opportunities, (but) those with overly-inflated expectations of a repeat of 2022 might be disappointed as the world heads into recession.”

Agricultural commodity prices – last year driven to record levels as a result of the war in Ukraine, supply chain issues related to Covid and labour shortages as well as global market tightness and volatile input prices – are forecast to track at less elevated levels through 2023, albeit “well above the five-year average”, according to Rabobank.

Report lead author, RaboResearch general manager Australia and New Zealand Stefan Vogel said prices for grains and oilseeds and beef had moved notably below highs seen last year, and 2023 was likely to “deliver good, but not record, prices in an environment of elevated costs and global recession”.

The Rabobank Rural Commodity Price Index – which tracks local prices of key commodities in Australian-dollar terms – is forecast to continue to ease from record highs reached in Q2 2022 over the course of this year, albeit to still track above the five- year average with a chance of rising again in late 2023.

To find out more about other Rabobank research, contact Rabobank’s Albany team on (08) 9844 5600 or subscribe to RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness Australia & New Zealand on your podcast app.

Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world’s leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 120 years’ experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank is structured as a cooperative and operates in 38 countries, servicing the needs of more than nine million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1000 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group is one of Australasia’s leading agricultural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the region’s food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 90 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.



ELDERS Albany has a new branch manager with Travis King officially starting in the role in January.

Travis took over as branch manager from long-term Elders employee Peter Hassell who has moved into retirement.

Travis was previously working as a District Wool Manager for Elders covering the Great Southern region and is looking forward to taking on the challenge of a bigger role for the company.

"Given I have been working with Elders and in the Great Southern region through my role as a district wool manager for the past three years I have got to know a lot of our clients and I look forward to continuing those relationships as well as making new ones," he said.

"I will continue to service the Albany and Mt Barker regions on the wool side of things in conjunction with the branch manager role."

Travis has had a long association with agriculture, growing up on the family farm at Darkan and having worked for Farm Weekly for more than 20 years prior to joining Elders.

"I've always been involved in ag and with my family background it's something that's in my blood so to speak," he said.

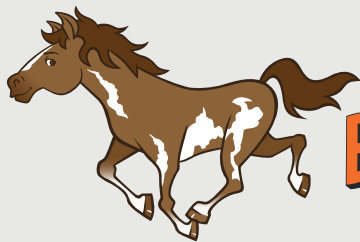
"Elders is a well-respected agribusiness and brand, we've got really good clients and it's just a great company to work for."

Travis, along with his wife Clare and their three children, live on Clare's family farm at in Narrikup, only 40 kilometres north of Albany.

"It is a good area to live and work in, there is a lot going on in the Great Southern and the diversity of agriculture in the area is large," he said.



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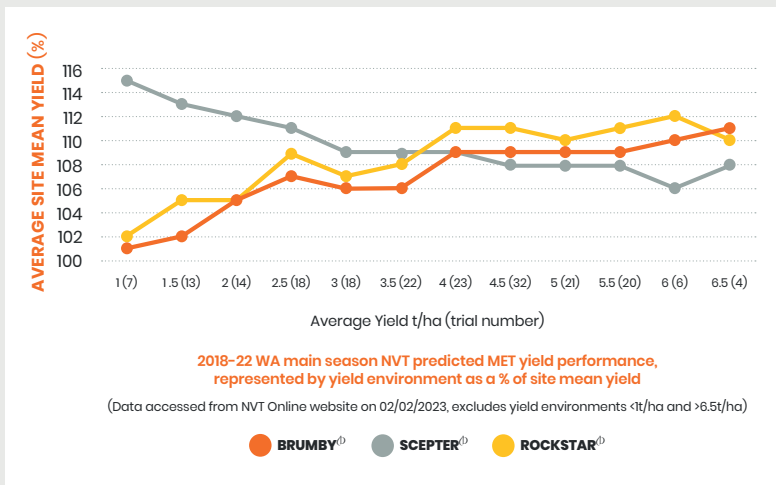
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Local Field Trial Results From 2022

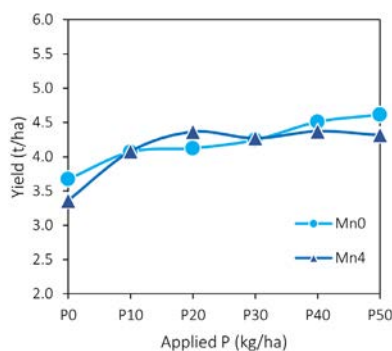


Phosphorus & Manganese in Scepter Wheat, Tenterden

Summit Area Manager Mark Ladny has observed Manganese (Mn) deficiencies in the southern cropping area over the last few seasons.

This trial investigates six phosphorus (P) rates (ranging from 0 - 50 kg P/ha), both with and without Mn (0 or 4 kg Mn/ha) on Scepter Wheat yields in the Tenterden area at a high PBI site. Tenterden had a decile 9 growing season rainfall in 2022, with a soft finish to the season.

Results



- There were significant differences in yield between different applied rates of P, particularly between 0kg P/ha and 10kg P/ha.
- Application of Mn did not affect yield at this site, with no observable trends.
- This trial demonstrates the importance of DGT-P and PBI soil analysis for forest gravels as there is a significant yield response to applied P, despite Colwell P indicating adequate levels of soil P.

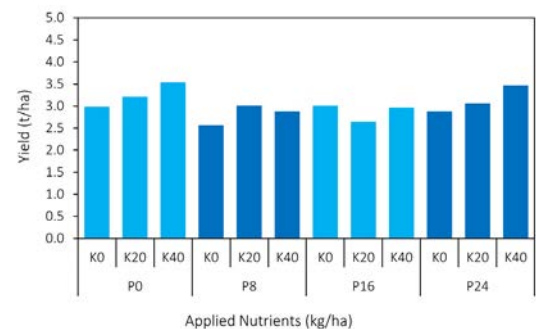
For further information on this trial contact:
Mark Ladny, Area Manager Albany (West), 0498 223 421.

Optimum Phosphorus & Potassium Rates, Borden

This trial aims to better understand wheat requirements in the high rainfall cropping zone and improve local knowledge of optimal P and K rates.

It includes four P rates (ranging from 0 - 24 kg P/ha) and three potassium (K) rates (0, 20 and 40 kg K/ha) for a total of 12 treatments. Borden had a decile 10 rainfall growing season rainfall for the second year in a row, with waterlogging during August and very heavy rainfall during October.

Results



- Biomass measured in August showed a substantial increase with increasing rates of applied K.
- The average yield was 3.0t/ha.
- Yield was not significantly affected by rates of applied P or K.
- Waterlogging in August likely affected nutrient movement, root activity and subsequent yields.

For further information on this trial contact:
Andrew Wallace, Area Manager Albany (East), 0427 083 820.



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SCF out&about



Sheridan completing her harvest losses training in Corrigin using Bushel Plus systems.



On the 16th of December 2022 SCF hosted a Christmas Party for all members and sponsors at our office. A first for Lizzie and Phil was cooking the lamb spit, after re-attaching it over 6 times, it was delicious and well worth it! (Bill (Lizzie's Dog) seconds this)



GRDC Updates in Perth in 2023 was, as always a great event, with the whole R&D team and Lizzie attending this year.



In January/February we are never short on samples! After weeks of weighing and recording 4 projects worth of cuts, some will be off for more testing in Victoria and some will go straight to reporting.



On the 1st of March 2023, a handful of SCF Members and Sammy Cullen were given a tour of the Live-export ship 'Al Kuwait' by the Livestock Collective. What a great, educational opportunity!



YOUR SCF TEAM

STAFF, BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2023

Stirlings to Coast Farmers could not thrive without the amazing work of our various board and committee members. From SCF members to expert advisors, each one plays a key part in the development and growth of the SCF community.

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Sheridan Kowald, Project Officer	
Dr Kathi McDonald, Communications Manager	0408 418 531
Samantha Cullen, Memberships Officer	0417 605 784
Samantha Jeffries, Marketing Officer	0422 332 212

The SCF team is based at the SCF office located at 75 Albany Highway (opposite Dome) in Albany.

Staff can be contacted on 9842 6653 or admin@scfarmers.org.au

MARCH

March 14: SCF - Confinement Feeding workshop

For more info call Sheridan on 0455 581 729

March 16: SCF - AgTech Workshop

For more info call Phil on 0428 768 589

March 20: SCF - GRDC Regional Updates Albany

For more info head to scfarmers.org.au/events

March 23: NSPNR - Agriculture in the Energy Transition

For more info head to nspnr.com.au/events

March 24: Gate to Plate

For more info head to gate2platechallenge.com.au

March 24: Pasturama

For more info head to gga.org.au/event/pasturama/

March 28: MLA Meat Up

For more info head to mla.com.au/news-and-events

March 30: MLA - T90 Field Day

For more info head to mla.com.au/news-and-events

APRIL

April 5: DPIRD - Feed365 and Future Sheep field day

For more info head to mla.com.au/news-and-events

LATER IN THE YEAR

July 18: Community BBQ West

July 20: Community BBQ East

Sept 5: SCF - Spring Field Day East

Sept 6: SCF - Spring Field Day West