

SCF Focus

STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS

WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

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STIRLINGS TO COAST





JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Jon Beasley, SCF Chair

Hello SCF members,

What an incredible start we have had to the 2021 season with the terrific opening rains from cyclone Seroja. Whilst it has wreaked havoc for many in the northern regions of the state, it has certainly enabled us to get a good early start to seeding with some terrific moisture and even germination of crops. I know that the bogged photos have been quite prolific in many areas of the state, and as the old adage goes, "you can make money out of mud but nothing out of dust".

Just as a quick intro, I took up the role of SCF Chair earlier this year. I manage Frankland River Grazing, at Frankland River, where I have been for the past 20 years. I have been a member of Stirlings to Coast for a considerable time now and on the board for the past 5 years. I hope that over the coming months I will get the opportunity to meet many of you at field days and other events.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ken Drummond as outgoing chair, for his incredible passion, commitment, and hard work. Ken has invested much time to SCF over the past years and can be very proud of the standard of work achieved by the grower group.

I believe that Stirlings to Coast plays an incredibly important role as a farmer-based R&D group and would like to thank Nathan and the hard-working team at SCF for the incredible job they continue to do in presenting valuable research and knowledge to farmers from the trials and publications run in such a professional manner. The standard of the latest SCF 2020 Trials Review book is no exception.

I would also like to extend that thanks to all the volunteers who give up their time to contribute to committees, host events and run trials. Without your support this could not happen.

Earlier this year we attended our Strategic Planning session, and I hope that Stirlings to Coast Farmers can continue to be Relevant, Credible, Enthusiastic and Collaborative in our mission to deliver **"relevant research, development and extension to facilitate adoption for our members to be resilient and prosperous in a sustainable agricultural community"**.

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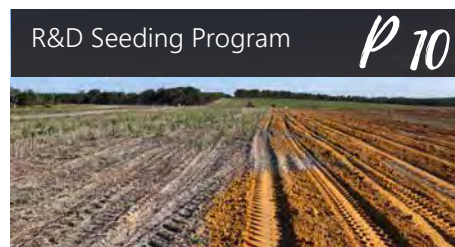
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GOLD SPONSORS





CEO REPORT

Nathan Dovey, SCF CEO

You could not get a greater contrast in seasons between 2020 and 2021, to this point on the calendar at least. In July last year, we were part of a morale boosting community event at Boxwood Hills where people met to lament the dry start to the season and the effects of Covid-19. Although Covid-19 is still hanging around like the proverbial, we are now experiencing a decile ten rainfall year in most of the SCF membership base. Once again, farmers in the region are exhibiting tremendous agility and flexibility in how they grow livestock and crops.

We have had some significant changes in the SCF office with Phillip Mackie returning to the family farm. Our new full-time project officer is Daniel Fay, and you can learn more about him on page 4. On behalf of all members and staff, I would like to welcome Daniel to SCF and wish him the best in his new role. You will see Daniel out and about doing a lot of the SCF cropping fieldwork. Daniel starts in late June, and there will be no shortage of things to do.

As well as Daniel joining us, we have also hired a livestock specialist in Kelly Gorter. Members may remember Kelly working for SCF on a part-time basis a few years back. Kelly will join SCF for 2.5 days per week (0.5 FTE) as a livestock officer and pinch-hitting with some cropping fieldwork. We hope to grow the livestock role for SCF and Kelly by obtaining more livestock projects. Our recently updated strategic plan showed that members overwhelmingly wanted to see SCF conduct more livestock research. With Kelly's knowledge and enthusiasm, we are well placed to improve our livestock capacity. On behalf of the members and staff, welcome to the SCF team Kelly.

NB: News of Kelly joining SCF only came through a couple of days before printing. We will publish some more information on Kelly in the spring newsletter.

Speaking of the strategic plan, the article on page 8 highlights the top six priorities identified by the SCF board for 2021. The SCF team will be focusing on these priorities for the rest of 2021. If you have any feedback on how we can best deliver these priorities, please give me or any of the staff members a call. We would love to hear your feedback.

Continuing with the same theme, we will be updating the Research, Development, Extension and Adoption (R, D, E & A) plan in the next couple of months by utilizing that same consultant that we used for the Strategic Plan. Peter Cooke and Nicol Taylor from Agknowledge will work with SCF research staff and members to update the plan for the next three years. The last time we updated the program was in 2017, and it helped clarify the research priorities for the proceeding years. Out of the top nine research ideas members identified, we conducted projects addressing at least seven of them. That is not to say that we solved all the problems or that there is not more research to be done. It does show that we can identify our member's research needs and go and hunt projects that help answer the questions you have. I look forward to completing this process again. Please keep an eye out in our communications, so you know when we are getting together to have a brainstorm. It will likely be in July or early August.

Finally, I hope that your paddocks dry out soon enough for you to complete your fertiliser and herbicide applications. Who knows what the weather will bring, but I wish you all the best in managing it.

Nathan



Introducing new staff member - Daniel Fay

Hi SCF Members, I'm Dan and I'm excited to be joining the Stirlings to Coast team, as the new project officer. I will be working on current projects, as well as developing future projects and extension activities that will provide members with insightful and tailored R&D. I will bring my acumen and enthusiasm for field research, trial design, data driven analysis, and sustainable agronomic practices to the SCF team and their members.

I come to SCF and Albany from Queensland, where I have just completed a Masters of Agriculture Science at the University of Queensland. My research at the University was centred around long-term field trials exploring the use of cover crops as a fallow management technique to improve yields and nitrogen dynamics within a Maize cropping system.

Before moving to Queensland, I grew up on a mixed cropping and livestock farm near Lake Bolac in the Western District of Victoria. The family farm focused on oilseed and cereal production and was supplemented by a prime lamb operation. After a stint in the big smoke I returned to the country and worked in the agriculture industry across various hands on positions from machinery contracting to a farm operations manager. My passion for farming, agriculture science, and rural development, lead me to ask myself; is this the best way of doing things, can we do better? So, after a very informative stopover in QLD, I arrive in Albany hoping to help the team at SCF deliver the best results possible for their members.



My grandfather used to say that once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher but everyday, three times a day, you need a farmer

BRENDA SCHOEPP



Head to **YouTube** and search
Stirlings to Coast Farmers
to watch our
Trials Review Videos



EVENTS NOTICEBOARD



SAVE THE DATE SPRING FIELD DAY 2021 SEPTEMBER 22

KEEN TO BE MORE INTOUCH WITH THE SCF R&D CONVERSATION?

SCF have set-up an R&D Chat group on 'WhatsApp', a secure messenger application available on Apple and Android devices. The chat group will be used to get conversations happening between members and staff around the SCF research and trials programs – from updates and discussions on existing projects to

suggestions for work we should be doing. If you are interested in hearing more about the R&D conversation at SCF, download the app, and scan the QR code or use the link below. **It's that simple!**

<http://bit.ly/SCFRD>





meet the members

Phil Griffiths

Region: Orchid Valley (South West Kojonup) , Mt Barker to Frankland and Wellstead

Farm name: All owned by the Forest Investment Trust (FIT) which is a corporate superannuation structure.

Size of farm: 8,000ha arable cropping program.
Approximately 12,000ha total including bush, bluegums and pasture areas.

Year joined SCF: 2017

Type of enterprise: Cropping (cereals, oilseed and legumes) and hay.

What are some of your biggest passions and why?

Passions on the farm include

- Hay making, harvest, calving and lambing. Along with reversion of tree farms to cropping country.

Passions off the farm include

- Family and seeing their personal development.
- Restoration of vintage tractors and equipment.

What are some of the most significant constraints to achieve higher productivity on your farm?

- Start point of farms which are all ex bluegum plantations in the HRZ.
- No livestock or pasture
- Very limited plant and equipment at my disposal.

Is there anything that you do on-farm that is slightly different to the so called 'norm' that is interesting?

Corporate structure with individual farms spread over 250km. All contract so challenging logistics to say the least.

What technologies are you using on-farm? If so what is it (eg. Yield mapping, VR applications, security cameras, tank sensors etc.) and how has it shaped your farm?

Yield mapping, remote weather stations (including moisture sensors), weed destructors and solar pumps.

Are you currently trialling anything yourself?

Soil wetters, clay incorporation, drainage, seed/grain loss at harvest. High yielding wheats in the HRZ

Is there anything that you would like to test or trial in the next 2 years?

- Under ground drainage.
- Inter-row fertilisation in-ground applications.
- "Swarm" tractors/equipment particularly for fertiliser application.
- Autonomous tractors.

What do you think the next big thing in agriculture will be in 5 to 10 years?

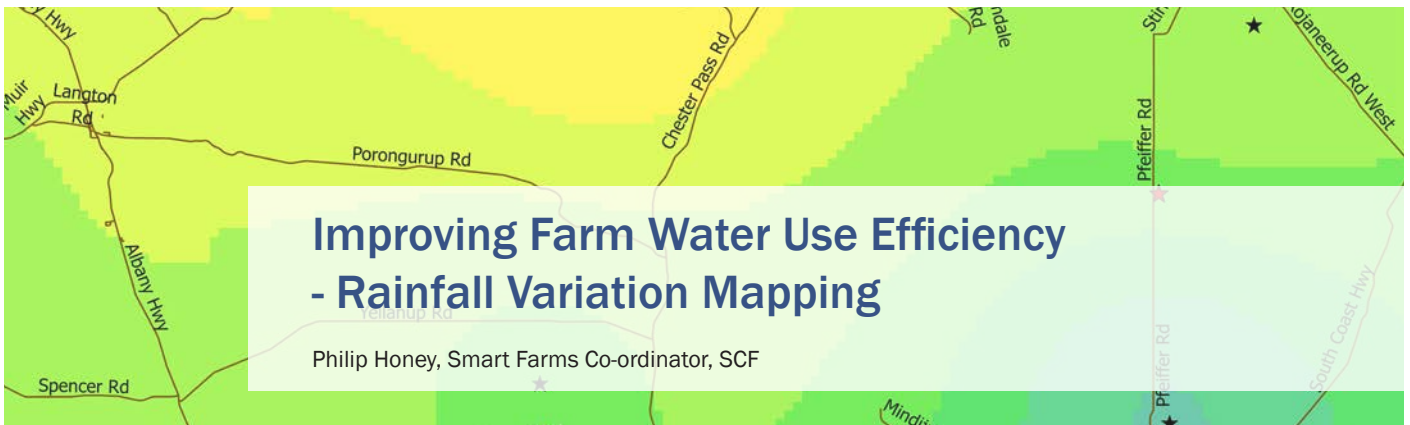
- Autonomous machinery.
- Weather forecasting/predictions to plan inputs.
- GM traits, such as salt tolerance and frost resistance.

Do you attend any agriculture field days other than SCF?

Yes, Field days

Supplier/agronomist days

Southern Dirt



Improving Farm Water Use Efficiency - Rainfall Variation Mapping

Philip Honey, Smart Farms Co-ordinator, SCF

Stirlings to Coast Farmers are proud to announce that we have been successful in our recent AgriFutures Producer Technology Uptake Program (PTUP) grant application.

Under the Producer Technology Program, 24 digital rain gauges will be supplied to SCF members, under a wider regional rainfall mapping program that benefits all SCF members.

Project Summary:

The SCF PTUP Water Use Efficiency trial involves the implementation of digital technologies that help raise grower awareness of weather variability and methods to improve overall on-farm water use efficiency. Ultimately, we want to lead our grower members onto a successful digital technology adoption path that helps improve their overall farm productivity & profitability.

This two-part program will involve a workshop-based training component first, followed by a broad-scale member trial which utilises low-cost rain-gauge devices scattered across 24 farming organisations throughout the Great Southern region of WA. This rainfall data will be collated to produce rainfall variability maps each week across the whole membership zone, with a final rainfall value map & yield-potential map produced at the end of the season. Members will be able to analyse their management processes and identify potential shortcomings where their actual yield is lower than their potential yields.

At project conclusion, members will ultimately have a better understanding of how digital technologies could be utilised to better inform decision-making processes and how to best implement them from experience.

How can I be involved & what will I get out of the project?

To claim your free digital rain-gauge valued at \$650 each, members participating will be required to attend a smart farms training workshop later this year. Workshop participants will learn about digital technologies available, create a technology uptake plan which they can utilise on their own property and also have the opportunity to ask the specialists on how they can implement technologies on their own property.



At the project's end (February-March 2022), the SCF team and technology specialists will engage with each rain gauge host member and review their technology adoption plan, record their experiences with the project and answer any questions they may have.

In addition, all SCF members will receive a link to weekly rainfall variability maps and have the ability to access the dedicated resource portal created by AgriFutures.

What is the catch and are there any fees to be involved?

Stirlings to Coast Farmers will donate one cellular based rain-gauge to each member farming organisation who wishes to take part in the project, on a first-come, first served basis. In lieu of donating the rain-gauge (RRP \$650 ea), installation of the rain-gauge and development of technology adoption plans, SCF kindly requests that the member covers the upkeep of the device, a minimal \$70/year Telstra connection/dashboard fee.

To learn more about the SCF AgriFutures Water Use Efficiency project or to register interest in hosting a rain gauge on your property please email Philip at philip.honey@scfarmers.org.au.

Acknowledgements

The development of the SCF Rainfall Variability Mapping Project was made possible through funding support from AgriFutures.





Heading into the future: SCF priorities for the next 5 years

SCF Strategic Plan 2021-25

SCF has recently been undergoing a strategic planning process which some members have been involved in via phone surveys or attending the workshop. From these, the Strategic Plan has been condensed into one page that the SCF Board and staff can regularly review to focus on our objectives.

There are 20 tactics listed under four major strategies to deliver SCF's objectives. The Board has ranked the top six tactics for SCF staff to focus on for the rest of 2021.

Top 6 strategic tactics

1. Deliver outcomes focused research that creates member engagement and keeps our research program dynamic. Aim for a 65:35 crop: livestock balance.
2. Implement an engagement program with members to understand members' research and project priorities and include Member Professional Development.
3. Maintain an interactive partnership with DPIRD, industry bodies, research institutions and R&D funders.
4. Professionally manage the R&D program projects with accountability and on-time acquittals.
5. Foster a values-based culture, which emphasises collaboration, fun, professionalism, innovation, and continual improvement.
6. Promote a favourable profile for progressive agriculture in the region and promote a sense of community.

Activities for SCF

How are we addressing these priorities?

We are using a multi-pronged approach to addressing the first priority because it is really at the heart of SCF. In the next couple of months, we will be seeking feedback from members that will shape our R & D research priorities. The central aspect of this will be through a brainstorming session with members and interested sponsors, like we had at DPIRD in 2017 for those that went. Those that can't make it on the day will have an opportunity to contribute their ideas. From this session and other member feedback, we will create an R, D, E & A plan that will form the basis of all grant applications for the next three years. We will also share this plan with key investors such as MLA, GRDC and DPIRD.

The feedback regarding the need for more livestock research was conclusive. This was also identified back in 2017, but we have found it more challenging to obtain livestock related projects. We have addressed this by hiring Kelly Gorter, who brings excellent skills and expertise in this area. Currently the livestock officer role is only halftime. We aim to have enough project work to make this role full time in the future. The Board and members that attended the strategic planning day settled on a ratio of 65:35 for Cropping to Livestock projects. Do you think this is the correct amount? Please let us know.

Priority two is similar to number one. However, it mentions SCF facilitating member professional development. We are planning to host a farm safety workshop with Rural Edge in 2021. Again, this is based on feedback from the updated strategic plan. The other high priority is helping members learn more about the human resources side of their business. We will work with an organisation like Rural Edge to deliver more workshops on this topic.

Priority three is something I believe we have been working on and will continue to build. Our priority is to develop more significant relationships with funders for livestock and pasture related research. Two bodies that fit this description are MLA and AWI. The two new projects, "Optimising Pastures" and "Drought resilience dashboard for southern W.A., tools & technologies



to deliver adaptive and resilient land management practices, " will involve collaboration with CSIRO, whom we have not partnered with recently.

Priority 4 is an ongoing process that we are doing better and better. We have a part-time bookkeeper and excellent guidance provided by Rebecca Williss, board member and chair of the finance committee.

Priority 5 talks about promoting a value-based culture, having fun, collaborating and continual improvement. This sounds like it has more of a focus for SCF staff but is equally relevant to members. SCF staff will continue to form new relationships with industry stakeholders and improve the flow of information in and out of SCF. Where appropriate, the CEO will provide training opportunities that will up-skill SCF staff and lead to better team outcomes. For example, Nathan has previously completed a project management diploma, as has Phil Honey in recent months. Currently, Nathan and Sam Jeffries are completing a national communications and extension program, which is being run online and with face-to-face sessions planned for later in the year.

Priority 6 is also an ongoing priority. We have contributed through our schools' program, where we have organised student Agricultural careers days and hosted field walks and other activities. Through our CEO, we will continue to contribute and engage with the media when appropriate. This offers opportunities to engage with both the ag and non-ag communities.

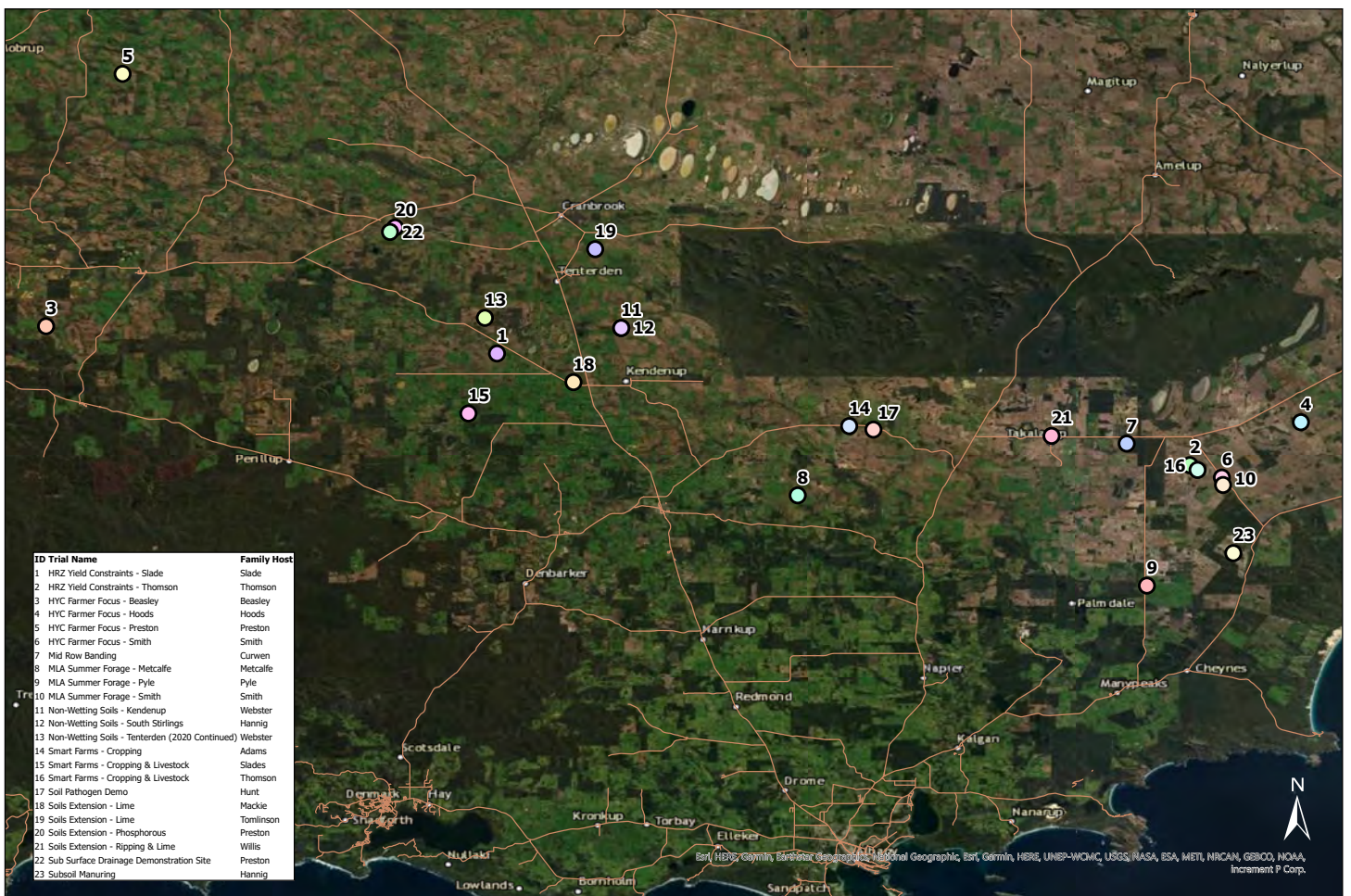
CALL TO ACTION

SCF is your group. The Board and staff value input and ideas from all our members and we welcome feedback on the updated Strategic Plan and how you would like to see the group move forward. Drop into the office for a chat with Nathan, give him a call or email, or ring one of the SCF Board members (contact details are on the back of this newsletter) and let us know what you think will help SCF meet your needs as a member.



R & D Trial Program 2021 Seeding Summary

Seeding the 2021 SCF trials program is well underway with most trials in or almost in. To keep you up to date on the range of projects we have in our trials program this year we have put together a quick list of the projects, aims and treatments for 2021 below.



P. 16. Ripper Gauge:

Farmer Host: Clint Willis

Location: South Stirlings

Sowing Date: After June 2, (too wet at the moment). Barley in 2021

Treatments:

1. Control- Pre-sowing Ripping to 60cm
2. Ripping to 60cm 7 days after sowing
3. Ripping to 60cm 21 days after sowing
4. Ripping to 60cm 6 weeks after sowing or end of tillering.

Project Aim: To evaluate the option of deep ripping after sowing to reduce the risk of wind erosion on sandy soils versus potential yield losses from plant damage.



P.21. High Rainfall Zone Yield Gap:

Locations: West Kendenup & South Stirlings

Farmer Hosts: Andrew Slade and Mal Thomson

Sowing Dates: April 13 (Slade) and April 29 (Thomson)

Treatments:

- Control- 100% Farmer starter fertilizer and 100% Nitrogen
- 100% Farmer starter fertiliser and 150% Nitrogen
- 150% Farmer starter fertiliser and 100% Nitrogen
- 150% Farmer starter fertiliser and 150% Nitrogen

NB: Nitrogen is applied over the whole growing season as per the farmer's normal strategy

Trial Aim: To see if luxury rates of fertiliser, including nitrogen, drive greater canola yields and if this strategy is economical.



P.22. Non-wetting Soils Mitigation:

Farmer Hosts: Michael Webster and Trevor Hannig (First Australian Farmland)

Sowing Date: May 23 (Webster paddock from 2020 trial)

Trial Locations: Tenterden, Kendenup and Green Range

Trial Aim: To measure if there are second-year benefits from wetting agent treatments applied in 2020 at Tenterden.

2021 Demonstration Sites: Michael Webster is demonstrating four new wetting agents provided by sponsors. Although not fully replicated, we will collect yield data in 2021.

Trevor Hannig has also installed demonstration strips of SE14, Nil Control and 4Farmers Aquifer wetter. Plant counts, early biomass and grain yields will be monitored in 2021.

Treatments tested at Websters (Kendenup):

- Nil control
- 2Lt/ha SE14
- 2Lt/ha 4Farmers Experimental wetter
- Eco-Wet (Elders)
- 600ml/ha Agri-SC Soil Conditioner (Agspec Product)
- 2Lt/ha Aquimax Breach- injectable soil surfactant (Agspec Product)

Treatments tested at First Australian Farmland (Green Range):

- Nil control
- 3Lt/ha SE14
- 3Lt/ha 4Farmers Aquifer





P.27. Mid Row Banding (MRB) Nitrogen Trial:

Farmer Host: Reece Curwen

Trial Location: South Stirlings

Sowing Date: May 26

Treatments:

1. 100kg/ha urea MRB at sowing fb 100kg/ha urea MRB at tillering
2. 100kg/ha urea MRB at sowing fb 100kg/ha urea top-dressed at tillering
3. 100kg/ha urea top-dressed at sowing fb 100kg/ha urea MRB at tillering
4. 100kg/ha urea top-dressed at sowing fb 100kg/ha urea top-dressed at tillering
5. Nil urea at sowing fb 200kg/ha urea MRB at tillering
6. Nil urea at sowing fb 200kg/ha urea top-dressed at tillering

Aim: To see if applying nitrogen via mid-row banding is more efficient than top-dressed urea applied to wheat.



P.31 Subsoil Drainage Trial:

Farmers Hosts: Preston family

Trial Location: West Cranbrook

Sowing Date:

Treatments:

A series of subsoil drains were installed into parts of the paddock this summer. Comparisons in final grain yield will be made between the drained areas of the paddock versus undrained sections.

Project Aim: To collect grain yield data over the next three years so that we can complete a cost-benefit analysis of installing sub-soil drainage into high rainfall cropping land.



P.32. MLA PDS Summer Forage Crops

Farmer Hosts: Pyle, Smith and Metcalfe families

Trial Locations: Manypeaks, Green Range and Mt Barker

Sowing Dates: Pyle- September 2 2020 (Still growing) and Metcalfe canola – April 23 2021

NB: Smith's 2021/22 summer crop yet to be planted.

Treatments: Pyle Raphno in 2020 and 2021, Smith Millet in 2020/21, unknown 2021/22, Metcalfe, winter canola; Feast and Hyola 970 versus spring-type canola (CI-44Y93) in 2021.

Project Aim: To demonstrate the feed value of alternate high biomass summer forage crops in increasing stocking rates and live weight gain of prime lamb or beef cattle relative to current systems in the HRZ of WA.





P.38. Soil Pathogens

Farmer Host: Nathan Hunt

Trial Location: Woogenellup

Sowing Date: Yet to be sown (too wet)

Project Aims: To deliver an integrated suite of extension and knowledge transfer activities focussed on localised soilborne disease management strategies.

Project Design:

1. Barley with 200ml/ha Impact applied on the fertiliser
2. Barley without Impact applied to the fertiliser
3. Pre-seeding tillage then sowing barley without Impact
4. Legume break crop or chemical fallow

The 2021 demonstrations will assess up to four management options considered available to growers. The 2021 treatments will be followed in 2022 by sowing each site with a single cereal to determine any impacts from 2021 management on pathogens in the following year.

P.34. Soils Extension Trials

Farmer Hosts: Mackie Family, Chris Tomlinson and Clint Willis

Project Design: Host farmers sow each paddock as per their standard agronomic strategies each year. SCF researchers measure the effects on grain yield and soil nutrition each season and report the long-term changes to members. Each trial is focused on the long-term benefits of liming, with the Willis trial also measuring the long-term effects of deep ripping.



P.33. On-The-Go Soil pH testing

Farmer Hosts: Not allocated (contact Phil Honey if you are interested)

Treatment Design: We will be comparing soil pH maps created from hiring a technology provider (contractor) taking multiple samples per hectare to a map created from 3-4 different paddock sampling points. A paddock soil pH map allows for a detailed variable rate lime application map to be made. With more data points, the map will hopefully reduce the overall amount of lime required on the paddock.

Project Aim: To determine if the money saved from reduced lime applications will be greater or less than the cost of using technology to create the variable rate soil pH maps.

Potential outcome: Accurate variable rate lime maps could allow farmers to treat more hectares of acidic land each year for the same budget. For example, Instead of spreading 2000t lime over 1000 hectares (2t/ha), it might be possible to cover 2,400 ha's with the same amount of lime.



P.35. Hyper Yielding Crops

Farmers Hosts: Jon Beasley, Preston Family, Ashton Hood (at least two more trials to install in 2021)

Trial Locations: Frankland, Moberup and Kojaneerup

Project Aims: To push the economically attainable yield boundaries of wheat, barley and canola.

Treatments:

Preston

1. 80kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
2. 100kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
3. 120kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
4. 140kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
5. 160kg/ha Rockstar Wheat

Beasley

1. 90kg/ha Kinsei Wheat
2. 110kg/ha Kinsei Wheat
3. 130kg/ha Kinsei Wheat

Hood

1. 80kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
2. 100kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
3. 120kg/ha Rockstar Wheat
4. 130kg/ha Rockstar Wheat

Note: Each trial may also be treated with a plant growth regulator at Growth Stage 30 to see its effects on wheat. We will complete another two farm-scale trials on wheat in 2021, looking at nitrogen rates, fungicide strategies or something else? If you have any ideas or would like to participate, please get in touch with Nathan.



P.39. Subsoil Manuring:

Farmer Host: Trevor Hannig

Location: Green Range

Sowing Date: Yet to be sown

Treatments:

1. Untreated control
2. 250t/ha Clay (incorporated to 30cm)
3. 20t/ha Soil Conditioner from Abbot's Liquid Salvage (incorporated to 30cm)
4. 250t/ha Clay + 20t/ha Abbott's Soil conditioner (incorporated to 30cm)

In 2021 we will carry out a trial measuring the soil health benefits and hopefully grain yield increases from applying Abbott's Soil Conditioner. In 2022 we hope to install trials ripping and placing the conditioner deep in the soil profile.

Trial Aims: To determine if applying Abbott's Soil Conditioner can make a semi-permanent improvement to soil health and increase grain yields.





A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 TRIAL HOSTS

P.16. Ripper Gauge:

Clint Williss - South Stirlings

P.21. HRZ Yield Constraints:

Mal Thomson - South Stirlings

Andrew Slade - Kendenup

P.22. GRDC Non-wetting Soils:

Michael Webster - Tenterden, Kendenup

Trevor Hannig - South Stirlings

P.27. Mid Row Banding N:

Reece Curwen - South Stirlings

P.31. GRDC Sub-soil Drainage

Preston Family - West Cranbrook

P.32. MLA Summer Forage

Tim Pyle - Manypeaks

Tim Metcalfe - Mt Barker

Ryan Smith - Green Range

P.34. Soils Extension

Lime - Mackie family- Kendenup

Lime - Chris Tomlinson- Tenterden

Phosphorus - Preston family- West
Cranbrook

Lime & Ripping - Clint Williss- South
Stirlings

P.35. Farmer Focus Trials

Hyper Yielding Crops

Jon Beasley- Frankland

Ashton Hood- South Stirlings

Preston Family- Mobrurp

Scott Smith- Green Range

P.38. Soil Pathogen Demo

Nathan Hunt- Woogenellup

P.39. Subsoil Manuring

Trevor Hannig (FAF)- Green Range

SCF Smart Farm Demonstrations

Adams Family- Woogenellup

Slade Family- Kendenup

Mal Thomson- South Stirlings



WANT TO GET INVOLVED? SCF TRIAL PROCESS

1

Planning

From trial design to treatment planning, we ensure trials fit in with project and operational requirements for the farm host & funder.



Seeding

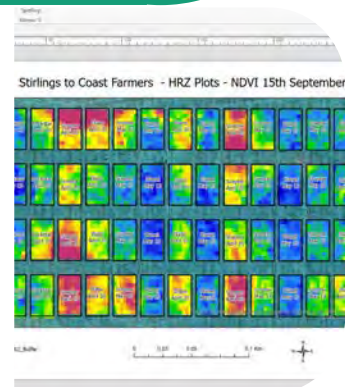
We assist farm hosts with marked out trial plots and layout maps allowing the farmer to sow independently and within their scheduling.

2

3

Observation

Field measurements and sampling is carried out by SCF staff utilising traditional methods and new technologies. This includes drones and high-resolution satellites for measuring ground cover and plant health, and weatherstations for monitoring local climate. Trials are aligned with the farm hosts usual operations.



Harvest

Where possible the SCF team will collect harvest yield data direct from the header and grain quality samples, ensuring the process doesn't disrupt harvest operations.

4

5

Analysis / Reporting

We process yield and grain quality data in-house and report results & outcomes to SCF members and funders.

Global urea price declines in sight – but is it too little, too late locally?

The past six months has proved difficult for farmers procuring phosphate and urea ahead of the winter season, both from a price and in some regions, a supply perspective, according to Rabobank senior agricultural analyst Wes Lefroy.

In US dollar terms, Mr Lefroy says global DAP benchmarks increased between 37% and 47% (year-to-date). Additionally, many global suppliers have been caught on the hop, meaning supplies were also very tight.

“Local growers who locked in prices and supply early managed to miss the brunt of the pain,” he says. “Some of those who left it later, however, are paying much higher prices for product that is yet to be delivered, or have had to settle for an alternative phosphate fertiliser.”

With the winter crop season here, Mr Lefroy says attention has well and truly turned to urea for application through winter and spring.

“As with phosphates, Australian growers are heavily reliant on global markets,” he says. “On average 90% of urea sold locally, is imported – meaning growers remain heavily exposed to global fertiliser price movements.”

At the peak, global urea benchmarks across Asia increased by approximately 23%, while urea of Middle East origin increased by 39%. Like the phosphate market, the global urea price rally has been demand-led.

Looking forward, Mr Lefroy says he expects global prices of nitrogen and phosphate to have largely peaked across the global fertiliser complex and to continue to ease in Q3.

“We also expect urea supplies to be ample, meaning that we do not foresee the global shortages that have been seen within the phosphate market,” he says.

However, timing is everything. “We are now in the middle of the peak urea-importing period, with on average approximately 64% of Australia’s annual imports hitting our shores between April and July.

“Given global prices can take months to flow through locally, we consider it unlikely Australian growers will receive the full benefit of the global price downside this season.”

Mr Lefroy says the heavy congestion in global freight markets due to the strong demand for shipping has also impacted prices, with prices per tonne between origin and destination increasing by as much as 5%.

“For growers, the importance of maintaining close communication with suppliers was re-affirmed over the summer,” he says, “and we see this as imperative to ensure farmers don’t suffer the same fate, as some did with phosphate.”

CHART: Selected Global Urea Benchmarks



Source: CRU, Rabobank 2021

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

New partnership to boost Australian canola research

Pacific Seeds and CSIRO have joined forces on a new three-year \$250,000 research project set to better tailor canola hybrids and crop management to regional Australia's variable growing conditions.

Pacific Seeds National Canola Technical Manager Justin Kudnig said the Winter Canola Research project aimed to improve access to integrated and region-specific information on Agronomy, Phenology and Extension for Grain-n-Graze canola hybrids.

"Pacific Seeds has always been about providing the best options for growers, we know the more you can tailor your variety choice and agronomy approach to your local conditions the more your crops and farming business can prosper."

The partnership follows on from work last season with CSIRO, farmers and local agronomists which saw Pacific Seeds' Hyola 970CL product combined with science-based agronomic management to set a new Australian canola yield record of 7.16t/ha.

Dr Julianne Lilley CSIRO Group Leader Mixed Farming Innovations said initially the project would collate, review, and organise existing information and identify any knowledge gaps across the industry.

"In its first year, the project will conduct highly detailed phenology trials with three time of sowing events at four locations across Australia involving industry, growers, agronomists, and advisors," Dr Lilley said.

"This research will help us to jointly develop a world-first interactive decision-making tool for canola variety selection, dedicated time of sowing advice along with grazing advice, applied crop nutrition agronomy and animal health recommendations."



InterGrain takes the National Oat Breeding Program into a new era

Oat growers can look forward to a future suite of new oat varieties as InterGrain takes on the National Oat Breeding Program.

Led by Dr Allan Rattey, the program, backed by joint \$5.4 million investment from AgriFutures Australia and the GRDC over five years, will be propelled into a new era. InterGrain will also work closely with DPIRD to optimise their recent election commitment of \$10.1 million towards a Processed Oats Industry Growth Partnership.

This program is the only one of its type in the world and builds on research in hay and milling oat breeding by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI).

Following a competitive tender process, InterGrain was selected to lead the Program. InterGrain has extensive experience in transferring public breeding programs into the commercial sector. As part of the program's commencement, the business has identified priority activities in the short, medium and longer-term, to build a best practice oat breeding program to deliver whole of supply chain value.

Short term

- Increasing population sizes and selection intensity
- Reduced time for variety development cycle (using speed breeding and summer nurseries)
- Improved seed delivery pipeline

Medium term

- Develop and apply genomic selection methods
- High throughput phenotyping of hay yield and quality

Longer term

- Widen the oat gene pool

InterGrain plans to bring new technologies to the National Oat Breeding Program by deploying the transformational technology used in its successful wheat and barley breeding programs such as phenomics and genomics. After the formula for success of many barley and wheat varieties, strong engagement with the grain and hay value chains has been, and will continue to be, a key strength of the program as it enters a new era.

InterGrain is looking forward to working with industry to ensure national breeding targets are prioritised, on-farm productivity is increased, and market share, domestically and globally, continues to grow.

For more information, don't hesitate to contact Georgia Trainor on 0439 093 166 or GTrainor@intergrain.com



Bayer CropCast episode 16 is live!



Market Development Agronomist Craig White, walks and talks with SCF CEO Nathan Dovey at a co-located trial site in Southern WA near Albany with the Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) Group. At this site Bayer has established Mateno® Complete trials, and SCF is undertaking interesting mid-row banding of fertiliser trials to increase fertiliser Nitrogen use efficiency and encourage vigorous crop growth.

Stay tuned for future episodes with updates on progress at this trial site. www.scfarmers.org.au/ Bayer is a long time supporter of SCF.

Plant Testing & Fuel Gauges Help Make The Best Nitrogen Decisions



Nitrogen is one of the most important elements for plant growth and is usually taken up by crops and pastures in the largest quantities of any nutrient. During the season farmers will need to make important decisions on matching nitrogen inputs to the crop's yield potential, which may have changed since the nitrogen budget was formulated following soil testing in the summer.

At Summit, your local Area Manager can assist with the nitrogen decision making process through the use of inSITE Plant Analysis and in-season nutrient Fuel Gauges.

inSITE Plant Analysis

Plant analysis can determine if your fertilizer program has been adequate for the crop, or needs fine tuning.

The very best time to sample is when the crop is growing well, and is healthy with no visible deficiency symptoms. The crop is then putting maximum pressure on nutrient supply. Plant analysis at this time may well pick up a hidden nutrient deficiency or nutrient supply that is not yet critical, but may be in the near future.

The Benefit's of Summit inSITE Plant Analysis

- Independent Laboratory (APAL).
- Rapid turnaround times.
- Wide range of nutrients measured.
- Support from Area Managers trained in plant sampling techniques.
- View & download results on SummitConnect.
- Customer owned data.

Nutrient Fuel Gauges

Fuel Gauges are nutrient rich strips set up in paddocks by Summit Area Managers. Most often they consist of non-limiting rates of nitrogen.

A GreenSeeker® is used to take NDVI measurements on and off the strip during the season.

NDVI values are keyed into N-Calc, along with the paddock planting date. N-Calc is Summit's unique software developed for WA conditions. It takes into account a number of factors and generates a Nitrogen recommendation, based on the ideal N rate to optimise paddock potential.

The extensive development work behind N-Calc has led to nutrient Fuel Gauges becoming a unique technical service here in WA that Summit Area Managers can use to support customers with in-season nitrogen decisions.



Get in touch with your local Area Manager to learn more.

Andrew Wallace, Albany (East),
0427 083 820.

Mark Ladny, Albany (West),
0498 223 421.

SCF BEHIND THE SCENES

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020

Stirlings to Coast 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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