

# SCF Focus

STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS

WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

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STIRLINGS TO COAST







## JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Sandy Forbes, SCF Chair

Hello to all Stirlings to Coast members, sponsors and staff.

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter. At the time of writing, we are all desperately looking to the front at the end of May to deliver some much needed rain. After a hint of a promising early start, the rain gods turned off the tap. Seeding has been a bit stop start and delayed as a result, and livestock feed is in short supply state-wide. Hopefully this front will bring some widespread rain and will be the start of a good winter rainfall pattern.

Many of you attended the very well-presented Crop Updates and Confinement Feeding workshop earlier in the year. Numbers attending, information presented and discussion at both events was excellent. The lessons we've learned from the confinement feeding project are certainly very useful at the moment.

Since the beginning of the year staff have been incredibly busy with a huge trials program, reporting on projects, meetings, training, seminars and writing grant applications for new projects for the group and much more. We welcome Trish Garnett to our team of staff. Trish is our new Project Administrator who works part time carrying out a range of activities and is really enjoying her new role and is a great addition to the team. Some of you may have already spoken to Trish if you have completed a Feed 365 Project phone survey. We also wish Sheridan a speedy recovery from her surgery after a footy injury.

Once again thank you to you, our members, our staff, sponsors and Board members who make this group what it is. All the best for the rest of the season and enjoy reading the winter newsletter.

Sandy Forbes  
Chairman

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## CEO REPORT

Lizzie von Perger, SCF CEO

Hello SCF Members and Sponsors,

Firstly, we hope that seeding has gone or is going smoothly. It has been a very dry May and we hope the rain received just recently has helped somewhat.

The SCF projects team has been busy seeding too, with all our trials now in for the year and growing well. A big thank you goes out to everyone who has put their hand up this year to assist as trial hosts. We hope you, and your neighbours, get a lot out of having a trial located in your own patch.

The first SCF trial into the ground this growing season was a newly contracted GRDC winter wheat variety and disease screening trial, sown in the first week of April and located in Mount Barker. It will compare the productivity of five winter wheat varieties and their susceptibility to disease. Since then, many more trials have been sown under the guidance of our busy R&D Coordinator, Dan Fay.

Now onto some good news regarding project/equipment funding:

- SCF was successful in the Future Drought Fund Extension and Adoption Grant round with our digital weather station proposal. This was an incredibly competitive national grant round with 160 applications, of which only 18 were successful across Australia. Congratulations to Phil Honey, who will be leading the project!
- SCF has been contracted for the GRDC National Risk Management Initiative. This project will run for five years, allowing SCF to investigate nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) across different nitrogen risk and rotational strategies. To date, not much work on NUE has been conducted in the high rainfall zone of Western Australia, and it is not often a grant opportunity comes along that has the length to quantify rotational impacts. It'll be one to follow.
- SCF was also successful in the GRDC Infrastructure and Equipment Grant, which will soon see us the owners of a small plot seeder, trial boomspray and multispectral drone. This will increase our capacity to do small plot trial work, where we normally need to find contractors to implement/manage.

Grants aside, we've got a few good events lined up for June and July, as well as kicking off with our 'Trials Tuesdays', which will be on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 4-5 pm. These are aimed to be smaller, shorter community events where we catch up for an hour or so, check out and discuss a nominated trial, and head home in time for dinner. These will run throughout the 2023 growing season, and we'd love your feedback as to whether they are a goer or not.

We also have our annual Community BBQ events for the Eastern and Western sides of the membership zone. These events will combine an optional farm business aspect this year and then traditional look at a few local trials, followed by an early family BBQ—more details in this newsletter.

Thanks to all the members who have come on board for another year. We are very proud of our engaged and strong membership base. Please also remember that the SCF door is always open – if you've got ideas or feedback on how we can do things better, let us know.

A big thank you also, as always, to our sponsors. Your support of SCF allows us to support our farming members.

Finally, here's to a bit of rain. I'll hopefully catch you at one of our events; until then, take care.

Best Regards, Lizzie







## Introducing new staff member - Trish Garnett

Hello to everyone,

My name is Trish Garnett and I have recently come on board at Stirlings to Coast.

I was born in Mount Barker, raised in Gnowangerup then moved to Albany around the turn of this century. I also did a stint farming in Chapman Valley north of Geraldton for around 10 years prior to returning to Albany. My family still farm at Gnowangerup with my brother Collyn now at the helm.

I have two children, Scott is a Town Planner in Bunbury and Kate is an RN, currently avoiding Albany's winter working in Karratha. I also have a third child in the form of Storm the silver kelpie.

My working career has encompassed many years of office administration, both in the government and private sector. I have volunteered on many boards and committees, so I feel my skill set matches my role at SCF.

I am really enjoying living in Albany again, I have missed the cooler climate, the beautiful coastline and spending time with my family and reconnecting with friends. I think my talisman has always been the Stirling Ranges as they were always on the horizon at home on the farm, so it is a delight to be within close quarters again.

I hope your seeding is uneventful, no breakdowns or delays and I look forward to meeting and getting to know members and producers in our area, and working with the terrific staff here at Stirlings to Coast.

# SCF Community BBQs are back!! 19 & 20 July

With such a great response with our first ones last year, we are holding East and West Community BBQ's again. The whole family are welcome and you are encouraged to bring non-members as well.

This year we are splitting them up into three sections:

### 10am-2pm Farm Business Workshop

ProcessWorx - Hands On workshop on safety induction, emergency mangement and flood safety.

Achmea - Insurance Review

Amy Sims - Tax Changes and Budget Review

### 2-5pm Field Walk

To be confirmed

### 5pm onwards Community BBQ

Come join us for a free BBQ and drink and connect with the local community!



## meet the member

# Andrew Mackie

**Region:** West Mount Barker

**Farm name:** The home farm is called Gamerigg

**Farm size and soil type:** We currently run just under 6500 acres which is composed of predominantly forest gravel loams.

### WHAT YEAR DID YOU JOIN STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS AND WHY?

As a business we joined SCF as founding members when Iain (father) was involved in a steering group which formed/grew as SCF in 08/09. Personally I ran a few trials for SCF under Kalyx as a research agronomist from 2017-2019 and then have continued that relationship to this day forward from the farm.

### WHAT SORT OF ENTERPRISES DO YOU RUN?

We run a mixed cropping (wheat/canola/oats) and livestock (XB self-replacing flock + finishing lamb feedlot) enterprise. Cropping is currently 60% of land usage and livestock 40% - this is fluid dependent on summer rainfall and seasonal conditions which favour certain enterprises over others.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST PASSIONS AND WHY?

Originally starting out as a research agronomist my passions were cropping and the challenges in which we face year in year out with growing crops in the Great Southern but in the last 3-4 years I have found that the livestock enterprise has taken a major focus for myself. The driving force for this being – my wife Claire, is off a cattle producing property and a big part of her interest is in livestock but also the fact that I believe livestock in our farming area provides an ability to be highly adaptable to seasonal and market conditions without major outlay or risk. The 2021 season, although an anomaly, was a good example that livestock (whether extensive or intensive) were a solid partner to a cropping program in a mixed enterprise farm.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONSTRAINTS TO ACHIEVE HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY ON YOUR FARM? NOT INCLUDING RAINFALL!!

As like all growers in our area, rainfall and WUE of crops/pastures is a major constraint to achieving higher productivity in our business. Aside from this general mixed farming provides its challenges to productivity. Juggling livestock and cropping systems within a business, although symbiotic in a lot of areas, does provide its own constraints. For our situation, labour

units are stretched at differing times of the year even with due planning, paddocks that suit livestock are inefficient for cropping and vice versa etc. To overcome this we strategically zone paddocks and labour to their most profitable use and try to manage any crossover between enterprises as best as possible.

### WHAT TECHNOLOGIES ARE YOU USING ON-FARM?

As for many producers in our area, we rely heavily on yield, EM38, gamma, satellite imagery etc for the cropping enterprises to generate VR applications and annual paddock plans and EID technology in livestock to record growth rates and other breeding traits to ensure that business decisions are not only based on experience and gut feel but also backed by data/factual information that is quantitative over qualitative

### ARE YOU CURRENTLY TRIALLING ANYTHING YOURSELF?

On the back of a few different broadacre trials in the previous years, this year we are in the process of trialling different sub soil drainage techniques to see what is a good fit for our soil types.

### IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TEST OR TRIAL IN THE NEXT 2 YEARS?

I think the grower group research is heading in the direction in which we are interested in and we will follow closely the outcomes to see what may be a good fit for our business in the near future

### WHAT DO YOU THINK THE NEXT BIG THING IN AGRICULTURE WILL BE IN 5 TO 10 YEARS?

I think that the agricultural industry will continue to prove that its resilience, as shown before, is the flexibility of achieving new market targets through the adoption and implementation of new technologies.



# Late sown cereals yield exceptionally well in 2022

Lizzie von Perger, CEO, SCF and Sheridan Kowald, Project Officer, SCF

## KEY MESSAGES

- Four late-sown cereal small plot trials were implemented along the South Coast between Albany and Esperance in 2022. Each included three times of sowing (between Aug-Sept), two wheat and three barley varieties and two nitrogen strategies.
- The trials implemented demonstrated that crops can be successfully established in late winter and early spring with barley yields as high as 7 t/ha harvested at the Munglinup trial site with a late-August sowing date.
- There was no significant yield or quality difference between the short season and main season varieties selected. Yield response to the nitrogen strategies was also variable.

## METHODOLOGY & TREATMENTS

Four small plot trials, with similar treatments and trial designs, were implemented along the South Coast of WA in 2022. Two of these were located in the Albany Port Zone (Green Range and Needilup) and two in the Esperance Port Zone (Munglinup and Condingup). Each trial site included:

- Three times of sowing (late August, mid-September, late-September)
- Two wheat (Vixen and Scepter) and three barley varieties (Maximus, Planet and Rosalind)
- Two nitrogen treatments (High - 80 units of nitrogen, Low - 40 units of nitrogen)

The trials were sown by experienced trial providers and were monitored throughout the growing season. Measurements for each treatment across each time of sowing included:

- Plant establishment (plants/m<sup>2</sup>)
- Growth stages
- Harvest yield (t/ha)
- Grain protein (%)

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1 is a concise summary of the impact of the second and third time of sowing dates in relation to the yields achieved in time of sowing one (TOS1). All average yields for each crop type were below the first time of sowing averages, with the exception of the wheat at Condingup. In Condingup, 112mm of rainfall fell in August impacting the first time of sowing (waterlogging). It should also be noted that the second and third time of sowing at the Green Range site was also impacted by waterlogging.

In regard to variety selection, given the soft, cool finish (except perhaps at the Needilup site), the main season varieties yielded mostly on par with the short season varieties. At the drier and warmer Needilup site, it was much the same story, with yields for each time of sowing across all the varieties within 0.5 t/ha of each other. This gives growers further confidence to seed the typically 'on-hand' main season cereal varieties, rather than specially

Table 1: Average yields for each crop type with yields for TOS2+3 expressed as a percentage of TOS.

Crop type & location	TOS 1 Yield t/ha	TOS2 as a % of TOS 1 Yield	TOS 3 as a % of TOS 1 Yield
Green Range Barley	4.7	69.6%	46.5%
Green Range Wheat	5.2	72.7%	55.7%
Needilup Barley	2.7	99.0%	81.8%
Needilup Wheat	2.9	96.3%	74.8%
Condingup Barley	7.0	78.2%	64.7%
Condingup Wheat	5.2	108.5%	90.3%
Munglinup Barley	6.6	72.9%	52.2%
Munglinup Wheat	6.0	64.9%	34.2%



Figure 1: Munglinup TOS1 (L), taken on the 2 November 2022 & Green Range TOS1&2 (R) taken on the 3 November, 2022.

purchasing a short-season variety for a winter/spring seeding. Interestingly, the wheat yielded slightly higher at the Green Range and Needilup sites and the barley yielded better in the Munglinup and Condingup trial sites.

The yield and grain protein data from the high and low nitrogen fertiliser regimes was highly variable, with only a slight positive grain protein trend detected at the Condingup site in response to a higher nitrogen fertiliser rate. The overall lack of response may have been a result of the nitrogen being applied all up-front (at seeding). Given the rainfall that fell between August and December across all sites, much of this may have leached before uptake by plants. It makes the case for split nitrogen applications (particularly in wetter conditions).

## CONCLUSIONS

The trial sites implemented as part of this project have demonstrated the adaptability of cereal cropping systems along the South Coast of WA. The data gathered from each trial site shows that seeding cereals in late-winter and/or early spring was profitable in the favourable conditions of 2022.

Although this investment was extremely successful, there are still some questions around the viability of late sown crops in less favourable conditions i.e., how would they perform with a hotter, drier finish. There are also grower questions around better understanding nutritional requirements, with a split application of nitrogen potentially having a greater impact on yield and grain protein compared the 'all nitrogen up-front' strategy.





## 5-year project to investigate nitrogen use efficiency in the Albany high rainfall zone

Lizzie von Perger, CEO, SCF

### KEY MESSAGES:

- SCF will be part of an exciting 5-year national GRDC project investigating risk and reward in relation to nitrogen management decisions.
- The SCF component will establish a long-term trial that will investigate the role of rotations and nitrogen strategies (high to low risk) in nitrogen use efficiency.
- It will also include a carbon emissions component, whereby each trial treatment is run through the PICCC calculator, developed by Melbourne University.

### BACKGROUND

The high rainfall zone (HRZ) of Western Australia is a unique environment, where the vast majority of cropping is conducted on sandy soil types with low nutrient and water holding capacity. As a result, there is a significant yield gap between the WA HRZ and those in the eastern states.

Additionally, the nitrogen use efficiency in the WA HRZ poses a significant risk and challenge to farmers. The low conversion rate of applied nitrogen to grain yield and grain protein, which is likely the result of losses through high rates of leaching and denitrification, coupled with the inability to bank nutrients in the typical WA soils, has led to some risk adversity in nitrogen decisions.

In 2023, Stirlings to Coast Farmers will establish a longitudinal field trial to examine the impact of crop rotation and grower appetite for nitrogen risk on nitrogen use efficiency. In addition, APSIM models and carbon emissions calculations will be utilised to expand upon the field research by utilising the field trial data to model different cropping scenarios and management strategies to broaden the scope of the project.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In 2023, Stirlings to Coast Farmers will establish a comprehensive small plot trial that will continue through 2027. Along with auxiliary models, results from the trial will measure the impact of crop rotation and nitrogen strategies on nitrogen use efficiency, carbon emission efficiency, and profitability to increase grower nitrogen decision-making confidence and ultimately improve grain productivity and sustainability in the HRZ of Southwest WA.

### METHODOLOGY

The small plot trial was sown in Kendenup on the 24 May 2023 and will be hosted by the Webster family (thank you!) for over four years. The trial will contain three crop sequences and three nitrogen management strategies within the paddock, replicated three times. The crop rotations will be fully phased i.e., every crop planted in every year.

An intense soil and plant nitrogen regime will be followed in each year of the trial to determine accurate nitrogen use efficiency data for each treatment. All input and yield data will be captured to inform APSIM simulations, and carbon emission and profitability calculations.

### GOING FORWARDS

There will be plenty of opportunity to engage with the project, with numerous field walks planned over the five years. Being part of a larger national project, SCF will also be able to share results from numerous nitrogen trials spread across Western Australia and interstate.





## New Projects for 2023

SCF is pleased to announce that we have been successful in obtaining funding for several new projects for the 2023 season. We are happy to be able to deliver locally relevant and practical research to help our members improve their farming businesses.

### **GRDC NATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE – NITROGEN USE EFFICIENCY IN THE HIGH RAINFALL ZONE**

This long-term project will run from 2023 to 2028. The project will examine the impact of South Coast high rainfall zone (HRZ) farming systems on nitrogen use efficiency. It will include a four-year small plot trial and associated comprehensive study to assess the impact of crop rotations and varying nitrogen strategies on nitrogen use efficiency, sustainability, and overall profitability. This project will also deliver to farmers an accurate account of the carbon footprint of various nitrogen and rotation strategies within the HRZ of WA.

### **GRDC FALLOW REPLACEMENT**

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 is in replacement of the traditional chemical fallow. It differs from previous summer cropping investments which have explored summer grain production and/or grazing opportunities. The first legume trial of the project was sown on the 2 February 2023 with the purpose of fixing nitrogen over the summer period. Six legume species were seeded and included vetch, soybean, lablab, cowpea, chickpea and faba bean. A winter cereal crop will be sown over the trial in 2023 without nitrogen fertiliser to quantify the benefits of the summer legume species.

### **GRDC EARLY SOWN WINTER WHEAT Paddock Scale Demonstration in the APZ**

This new project commencing in 2023, will provide growers and advisors with crop productivity and disease resistance information for numerous winter wheat varieties to give greater confidence in selecting a suitable variety for the region. The project will give growers and advisors the opportunity to discuss winter wheat agronomy in general with growers who have been successfully incorporating winter wheats in their programs for several years.

### **GGA/GRDC CLOSING THE ECONOMIC YIELD GAP OF GRAIN LEGUMES IN WA – TESTING THE PERFORMANCE OF A NEW ACID-TOLERANT RHIZOBIA INOCULANT IN THE FIELD**

Faba beans are the preferred pulse crop in the Frankland River/Tenterden region because they have the greatest waterlogging tolerance. A major limitation to growing pulses in this region is the detrimental impact of soil acidity on legume nodulation. A new rhizobium strain has been developed in South Australia that has increased tolerance to soil acidity. A demonstration trial has been set up in Frankland to compare the nodulation and productivity of faba beans grown in acidic soil using the new acid tolerant inoculant with faba beans grown using the standard Group E/F inoculant.

### **FARMANCO MOUSE SURVEILLANCE**

High numbers of mice cause crop damage, loss of livestock feed and fodder, contamination of stored grain, and can spread disease. Monitoring reveals changes in populations and can help indicate when control is needed, and the most important times to undertake monitoring are prior to sowing (March–April) and in early spring (September–October). SCF will be monitoring 10 paddocks throughout 2023 for mouse activity using chew cards and undertaking active burrow counts.

### **MLA PDS OPTIWEIGH - IN Paddock WEIGHING SYSTEM**

The aim of this MLA-funded producer demonstration site project is to utilise an Optiweigh unit on properties in Southern WA to demonstrate the value of in-paddock cattle weighing systems for improved labour efficiency, monitoring animal weights and optimising compliance with target market weight specifications.

### **DPIRD/MLA FEED365 PROJECT**

The FEED365 project as part of the larger SheepLinks program and aims to create resilient sheep production systems to enable farmers to increase livestock returns by grazing quality (preferably green) forage all year round with minimal supplementary feeding. The SCF project will investigate various pastures and forage plants through demonstrations implemented on host producer properties. Sheep weight gain will be monitored on the alternative pastures and forages and compared to weight gain on traditional pastures. Different crop and pasture types and different management methodologies will be implemented to gauge what will best suit producers in the Albany Port Zone.

## 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.

### STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING FDF EXTENSION AND ADOPTION GRANT.

Stirlings to Coast Farmers were 1 of 18 groups nationally to be successful in obtaining funding under the recent Future Drought Fund's Extension and Adoption Grants. The funded SCF project is based on the 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. Keep an eye out for further information and opportunities as the project gets underway.

To read more about the projects across Australia, please visit <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/future-drought-fund/extension-adoption-drought-resilience-farming-practices-grants>

### WATER SMART DAMS – MAKING DAMS WORK AGAIN

The two-year project aims to develop knowledge and water planning tools for farmers who need their dams to work in all years and be able to make water investment decisions with confidence. The project involves a collaboration between the Grower Group Alliance (through the SW WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub), DPIRD and UWA, as well as four grower groups, including Southern DIRT and Fitzgerald Biosphere Group in our region. Demonstration sites will investigate solutions including renovating existing dams, building new dams, and implementing evaporation suppression and runoff technologies.

Kojonup based grower group, Southern DIRT, recently installed their first dam cover as part of the project. We look forward to hearing how it reduces evaporation and impacts on water quality as results come to hand. Jerramungup based Fitzgerald Biosphere Group is also hosting demonstration sites for the

project. Visit Southern DIRT's and FBG's websites to keep up to date with their Water Smart Dams projects. [www.southerndirt.com.au](http://www.southerndirt.com.au) and [www.fbg.org.au](http://www.fbg.org.au) - you can also read about the FBG project later in this newsletter.

### SCIENCE TO PRACTICE FORUM – BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF DROUGHT RESILIENCE.

The Future Drought Fund's annual Science to Practice Forum, is on again, 6 – 8 June 2023. The forum brings together farmers, researchers, government, industry, and the community to explore innovative tools and practices helping our farmers and regions prepare for future drought.

Award-winning television journalist and presenter of ABC TV's Landline, Pip Courtney, is hosting this year's 3-day forum and will facilitate engaging discussions with keynote speakers, presenters, and panel members.

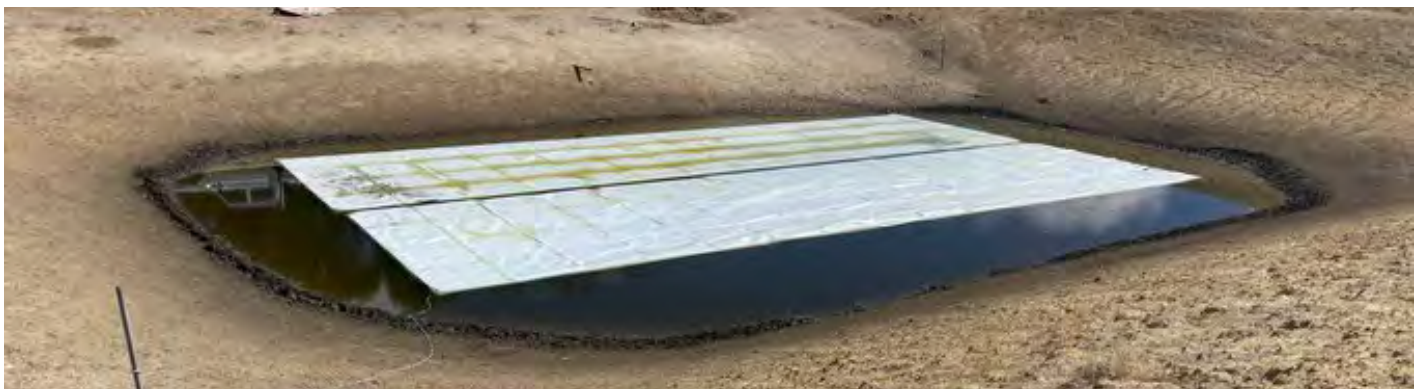
Each day focusses on a particular theme:

- Tuesday 6 June – Research and development
- Wednesday 7 June – Producers
- Thursday 8 June – Community and policy

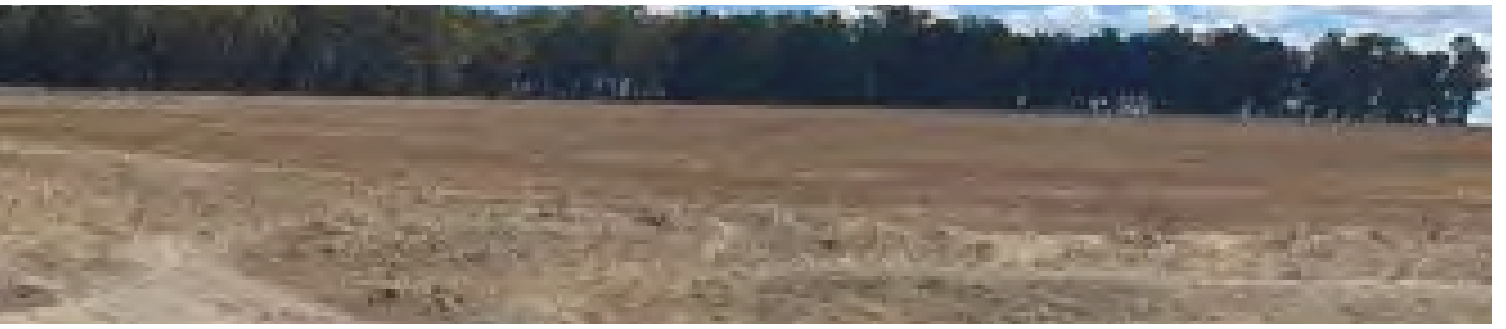
The online forum is free to attend – register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-science-to-practice-forum-tickets-596424209867>

### Register for Manjimup workshop – hear from SCF's own Smart Farms Coordinator, Phil Honey.

In support of this year's Science to Practice Forum, the SW WA Hub will host a face-to-face workshop at the Manjimup DPIRD Research Institute on June 8.







The event will showcase outcomes from projects supported by the FDF and how they can be put into practice on WA farms. SCF's own Phil Honey will be presenting and will also be part of an expert panel session on AgTech and applications to improve productivity.

Other topics include improving dam water retention and performance; combining CSIRO technology and weather data to improve on-farm decisions; analysing current monitoring technology to find the right fit for your farm; and digital tools to map and improve yield.

The event is supported by the SW WA Hub's Manjimup and Bunbury Regional Node Leads – the Southern Forests Food Council and the Southwest Catchments Council. It begins at 1pm, finishing at 5pm with a sundowner and beef and gravy roll to follow.

Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/sw-wa-hub-science-to-practice-forum-workshop-tickets-620513702187>

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@scfarmers.org.au](mailto:kathi.mcdonald@scfarmers.org.au) and check out the Albany Node webpage for further locally relevant information - <https://www.scfarmers.org.au/swwadroughthub-albany>.



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment



Future  
Drought  
Fund



GROWER  
GROUP  
ALLIANCE  
Together we grow



South-West WA  
Drought Resilience Adoption  
and Innovation Hub

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

# SW WA Hub **FREE EVENT** Science to Practice Forum Workshop - Manjimup Thurs 8 June

Manjimup DPIRD  
Research Institute  
28527 South West Hwy  
1pm - 5pm  
BBQ sundowner to finish



# Diving into WaterSmart Dams: Strategies for water security on show in Jerry shire



WaterSmart Dams is a collaborative project between GGA, DPIRD, UWA, and grower groups Compass Agricultural Alliance (Darkan), Southern Dirt (Kojonup), Merredin and Districts Farm Improvement Group and Fitzgerald Biosphere Group. The project aims to address the challenges of improving on-farm water security. To achieve this, we have been working towards implementing a series of demonstration sites across the shire, each focusing on different methods of improving dam efficiency. We are just entering this exciting new phase of the project, with three demonstrations well underway. By combining the expertise of various organisations, professionals, and farmers, we hope to demonstrate and assess viable and effective solutions that can be easily replicated by local landholders.

## INCREASING CATCHMENT RUN-OFF USING SECOND HAND CBH TARPS

The Jacup Community Dam is a demonstration site lead by DWER, in collaboration with Mark Lester, DPIRD, GGA, UWA, and FBG. This dam's catchment has been lined with second-hand CBH tarps to improve run-off and maximise water capture. A tipping gauge and logger system has been installed at the site to closely monitor the efficacy of this liner in capitalising on even the most minimal rainfall events. Water quality

testing is also underway to assess any potential issues with microplastics from the tarp, and the longevity of the tarp will be assessed throughout and beyond the life of the project. Results will be on their way soon...stay tuned!

## MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING EVAPORATION WITH A DAM ENLARGEMENT AND DAISY DAM COVER

Progress is being made at the Gairdner demonstration site with the expansion of a critical dam on Alex & Marni Jones' property. This expansion offers an opportunity to both test and refine existing dam design tools, and inform evolving design tools; enhancing our understanding of how dams can be optimised for water conservation. The new and improved dam will soon be equipped with a Daisy Dam cover. A rigorous monitoring program will be implemented here, allowing us to assess the cover's performance in reducing evaporation rates, and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of this.

## IMPROVING WATER QUALITY WITH A DAM FILTRATION SYSTEM

Our third demonstration site will aim to improve water quality for the primary purpose of optimising spray efficiency. A suitable filtration system could also provide an alternative source of potable water. A ceramic filter system has been trialed at the site, with initial results suggesting that up to 40,000l/day could be converted, and charcoal/UV filters added to create potable water. A particulate distribution test calculated the % of microns in the dam <0.01 (the limit of the filter's capability), which indicated the % of particulates that could be removed from the dam; 70-80% in this case. We are eagerly anticipating further investigations so that we can continue to pursue practical solutions for enhancing water quality.

Want to know more? Check out the resources available on GGA's website, sign up as a project follower, or follow along on socials for regular updates on demonstration site findings, field walks, and more.



Left: The CBH tarp installed on the Jacup catchment. Middle: Checking out how the filtration system works. Right: A comparison of the dam water before and after being pumped through a ceramic filtration system





## Confinement Feeding Field Walk March 14, 2023

What an incredible turn out at our second Confinement Feeding Field Walk! We had over 25 farmers and a great representation from local industry coming to learn about the previous year's findings and have a look at John Howard's set up.

On March 14, the MLA funded Confinement Feeding project held a field walk at John Howard's in South Stirlings. The day included presentations from Bridie Luers (Nutrien), Andrew Longbottom (DPIRD), project lead Sheridan Kowald and was filled with great conversation!

The key takeaways from the project so far were presented with a focus on the labour efficiency gains, with some producers saving over 24 hours a week. Sheridan also presented on the reduction of supplement wastage and increases in energy efficiency, with all farmers in the trial so far having significant financial savings.

Bridie presented on the importance of appropriately managing feed quality within a confinement feeding setting and also discussed the need for understanding the cost of feed on an

energy basis. Andrew then presented on eID's and their place within confinement & traditional style grazing, and additional information regarding the upcoming requirement changes for sheep eID's.

We also had a presentation from our own Philip Honey, who went through the NLP Optimising Pastures project and talked us through the digital tools available for landholders to better manage their pasture (level) variability.

The day finished with a viewing of the Howard's confinement feeding set up with 5 pens with water troughs at the top of the paddocks and half cut corrugated pipe along the bottom of all paddocks to make for easy filling.

With the final group of farmer's setups in the 2023 trial to be discussed, there are several more field walks coming in the year, so be sure to keep an eye on this project! To find out more head to: [scfarmers.org.au/confinement-feeding](https://scfarmers.org.au/confinement-feeding)



# Worksafe WA Agricultural Inquiry Report

ProcessWorx

The agricultural industry inquiry report has been released by WorkSafe WA and independent inquirer Ms. Pamela Scott.

On the 23rd of June 2022, WorkSafe WA's Commissioner Darren Kavanagh announced an independent inquiry into the WA agricultural industry, following the 12th fatality in the industry within 12 months.

The independent inquiry was conducted by Former Chief Industrial Relations Commissioner Ms. Pamela Scott and the report has been released today alongside the WorkSafe Commissioner's response.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY TAKEAWAYS?

Eight formal recommendations were identified by Ms. Pamela Scott which can be found in the full report.

Here is a summary of what we can expect to come as a result of the findings.

1. WorkSafe will prioritise the allocation of resources towards the agricultural industry. This includes the establishment of a dedicated specialist Agricultural Team within WorkSafe comprised of inspectors and liaison officers. WorkSafe have commenced the process of appointing an additional 3 inspectors to establish a specialist Agricultural Team of 6 inspectors.
2. Specialist Agricultural Team activities will involve:
  1. Proactive and reactive regulatory and advisory inspections.
  2. Participation in industry events and implementation of an Agriculture Communication Strategy.
  3. Developing content and updating the agricultural safety pages of the WorkSafe website.
  4. Development of a newsletter directed at farmers and their workers.
  5. Selected materials to be translated to languages most relevant to the sector.
3. WorkSafe budgets will prioritise communication, education and awareness to specifically target the agricultural sector.
4. The development of user-friendly and industry-relevant information such as codes of practice specific to the agricultural sector is being considered as a priority.

5. WorkSafe will establish an Agriculture Advisory Assistance Program. This means free educational services will be provided to the farming sector by consultants who will visit various regions and provide onsite education. These consultants will be separate from inspectors, meaning they provide proactive support as opposed to issuing penalties.
6. WorkSafe will investigate establishing an Agriculture Advisory Assistance Fund. This will be discussed with the State Government with further details to come.
7. WorkSafe to reinstate the Agricultural Safety Advisory Committee.
8. A proactive campaign targeting both farmers and machinery/equipment manufacturers will take place to draw attention to the need for machinery and equipment to be fit for purpose and for safe operational practices to take place.
9. WorkSafe will continue to communicate best practice advice and provide educational material to the agricultural industry. WorkSafe will consider how timely information on causes of fatalities and serious injuries including preventative actions can be released to the industry.

These actions will be subject to a two-year review period to determine their success and desired outcomes.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The agricultural industry has been deemed the most dangerous industry in Australia following the release of the agricultural inquiry findings today, reporting the highest number of deaths of any industry sector.

Ms. Pamela Scott's report highlights the following causes of fatalities and serious injury in WA within the agricultural industry.

1. A failure to use safety equipment and personal protective equipment.
2. Use of unsafe methods, particularly in dealing with plant and equipment and large animals.
3. A lack of awareness of the location of bystanders and others working.

Findings demonstrate that:

1. Approximately 90 per cent of the fatalities were men.



2. Nearly half of the men were aged over 55.

3. In descending order the circumstances involved:

- being crushed or struck by a tractor or other large machinery which was either being repaired or it was idling while awaiting engagement of the gears.
- a quad bike crash resulting in the driver being crushed and asphyxiated, or having head or neck injury;
- vehicle roll-over or crash, or a vehicle being reversed or moved and crushing an unsighted bystander;
- being crushed by livestock;
- falling from the roof of a shed under construction.

## WORKSAFE WA

You can find both the report to WorkSafe WA and the Commissioner's response at the link below.

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/worksafe-commissioner/agricultural-industry-inquiry>

## MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to discuss this, or any other WHS issue, please call (08) 9316 9896, or email [enquiries@processworx.com.au](mailto:enquiries@processworx.com.au).



# CropCast

with

Craig White

**CropCast is a podcast developed to deliver current broadacre agronomic news, product and application know-how and information from Bayer's Market Development Agronomy Team about the latest technologies.**

Produced and hosted by Craig White, Market Development Agronomist at Bayer Crop Science, CropCast is created for everyone with an interest in agriculture. With new episodes available covering seasonally relevant topics for broadacre crops, CropCast is essential listening to keep you up-to-date with what is going on in the world of broadacre farming.



Search CropCast or scan the QR code to listen to the latest episode.





# SCF out & about



On the 20th of May, SCF hosted the GRDC Regional Updates at Retravision Satidum. With over 100 attendees and an abundance of local and national presenters it was a wealth of knowledge and networking.



This year MLA Meat Up was held at the Albany Entertainment Centre! With some incredible presentations, it was particular great to hear from many of our members who presented and connect with many more on the day.



Sandy Forbes (Chair) and Trish Garnett at the Gate 2 Plate Gala.



Great discussions were had at the SCF AgTech Decoded Workshop in March.



An incredible turn out at the DPIRD 365 trials day in Katanning!



# Is your farm insurance up to date?

## Talk to specialist agricultural insurer Achmea Australia about your farm insurance needs

Inflation has impacted the agricultural industry, affecting the cost of farming equipment and the value of farm assets.

"With rising input costs, it is important to check whether your farm insurance is up to date to ensure you are adequately covered in the event of a loss," said Alec Jones, Farm Insurance Specialist with Achmea Australia, Stirlings to Coast Farmers' new Gold Sponsor.

As a specialist agricultural insurer, Achmea Australia supports thousands of agribusinesses across Australia through its co-operative approach to farm insurance.

When it comes to understanding the needs of farmers in Western Australia, as an Albany local himself, Alec is deeply rooted in the local farming community. With a background in agriculture and passion for supporting the growth of the agricultural sector, Alec is focused on supporting the insurance needs of Achmea Australia's clients across the Albany and Great Southern region.

Alec emphasises the importance of regularly reviewing your insurance policy to ensure it provides adequate coverage, especially as your business grows.

"As your agribusiness expands, so does your exposure to risks," Alec emphasises.

"When it comes to farm insurance, we encourage agribusinesses to consider the rising costs of labour and materials, driven by supply-chain shortages and inflation, and how this may impact the cost to replace or rebuild insured items in the event of a loss.

"If your insured sum does not keep pace with your growth and these market-factors, you may find yourself underinsured. This means facing the risk of a shortfall if you need to rebuild or repair your farm buildings, and not having sufficient funds to get your business back up and running," Alec said.

"As a Farm Insurance Specialist with Achmea Australia, we take the time to get to know your agribusiness and what you value most through our on-farm approach to insurance," Alec said.

Alec said understanding the common causes of underinsurance can help you avoid the risk. These include:

- Underestimating the replacement cost of your house or farm buildings when nominating your insured sum.
- Not updating your insurance policy to account for market changes or renovations that can increase the value and replacement cost of your insured buildings.
- Increases in labour and building materials after a catastrophe, which can push the cost to rebuild above your selected insured sum.
- Intentionally reducing your insured sum to lower the cost of your premium may cause the insurance cover not to cover the replacement cost.



*Achmea Australia Farm Insurance Specialist Alec Jones*

Talk to Achmea Australia directly about how you can tailor our All-In-One-Farm-Pack to the unique requirements of your agribusiness.

"If you think you might be at risk of underinsurance, now is a good time to check your insurance policy is up to date," Alec said

Achmea Australia's All-in-One Farm Pack, offers Guarantee Against Underinsurance optional cover, which is available for eligible farms. With this option, Achmea Australia will arrange and pay for the repair or rebuild of your insured building to the same condition as when it was new, or they will pay you the equivalent amount.

"Through Achmea Australia's purpose of keeping farmers farming, I am passionate about supporting the insurance needs of agribusiness in the Albany and Great Southern region," Alec said.

Contact Achmea Australia today to request a farm insurance quote or appointment. Call 1800 724 214 or visit [www.achmea.com.au/specialist/alec-jones](http://www.achmea.com.au/specialist/alec-jones)

### About Achmea Australia

Achmea Australia is part of the Achmea Group, which is one of the largest insurance companies in the Netherlands. The Achmea Group has approximately 10 million clients worldwide and is fully dedicated to farm insurance in Australia.

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**achmea**

Farm Insurance

This month has seen the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have its first crack at world grain and oilseed supply and demand estimates for 2023/24, and it has been a mixed bag.

While the outlook for wheat was bullish for prices, Rabobank agricultural analyst Dennis Voznesenski said, corn and soy were both bearish.

Mr Voznesenski said wheat market bullishness is being propelled by a decline in production across Russia and Ukraine. “And also expectations of lower production coming out of Australia. There may also be more to come to fuel bullish wheat price sentiment, considering the USDA’s May WASDE report assumes both a record wheat harvest in Canada – which is seeing dry conditions – and a rebound in Argentina’s production to the five-year average, despite no material improvement in the weather there so far,” he said.

For wheat, Mr Voznesenski said the USDA estimates saw particularly dramatic cuts to both Russian and Australian production – down 10.5 million metric tonnes and 10 million metric tonnes year on year respectively – amid a switch to an El Niño weather pattern.

“Ukrainian production was slashed by 4.4 million tonnes year on year (21 per cent), while planted area is estimated to be down by 19 per cent and exports five million metric tonnes (33 per cent) lower. Forecast 2023/24 wheat production for the US is for a decline of 0.3 million metric tonnes on last season,” he said.

Rabobank’s outlook for wheat prices is currently ‘slightly bullish’ due to global production being lower year on year in these key exporting countries, and with further cuts potentially on the horizon.

“While production is expected to be down in major wheat-exporting nations, overall, from a global perspective, the USDA forecasts world wheat production up 1.5 million metric tonnes year on year to 789.8 million metric tonnes,” Mr Voznesenski said.

The Rabobank analyst said notable increases include Argentina, up seven million metric tonnes year on year, with the expectation the country will recover from the 2022/23 drought. “However drought is still ongoing there and, in our view, the USDA’s decision to place its estimation in line with the five-year average may prove overly optimistic.

“The USDA also estimated increases for Canada’s wheat production (up 3.2 million tonnes year on year), which again may



be optimistic given the continued dry weather in that country. EU wheat was estimated to be up 4.7 million tonnes.”

Mr Voznesenski said global ending stocks for wheat are forecast to decline 1.9 million metric tonnes, which, as the USDA notes, would be the lowest stocks-to-use ratio since 2014/15.

“Global wheat consumption has also been trimmed – three million metric tonnes down on last year to 791.7 million metric tonnes, as larger feed grain supplies make wheat less competitive.

“Soy and corn prices are bearish due to rising global stocks for both. This also, to a large extent, hinges on weather in north and south America playing ball,” he said.

There are expectations of a record US corn crop, Mr Voznesenski said, despite several states in that country currently being in drought. And Argentina is rebounding to a record production year.

“While the global outlook does not look overly bullish following this report, drying conditions in Australia may see local crop prices hold up comparatively well to global markets.”

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.



## GrainGrowers grain marketing workshops - Dalwallinu, Kellerberrin and Cranbrook

GrainGrowers has partnered with Market Check, professionals in research and analysis to deliver a series of informative half-day workshops on grain marketing across 5 states and 13 towns.

There's a lot involved in grain marketing. If you're a grain grower interested in learning more about risk management, strategies to navigate volatile markets or what's driving the price of grain - these workshops are for you!

Across these half workshops, experts from Market Check will take attendees through the A-Z of grain marketing and answer any questions you have.

You'll even take home some resources to share your knowledge back on the farm!

Registration is free for growers - book your spot today!

**Dalwallinu – June 27 // Kellerberrin – June 28 // Cranbrook – June 29**



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**To find out more contact your local Elders Albany team on 9842 7900 or [albany@elders.com.au](mailto:albany@elders.com.au)**



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# Summit Fertilizers - Plant Analysis



Plant Analysis can determine if your fertilizer program has been adequate for the crop or if it needs fine tuning. The very best time to sample is when the crop is growing vigorously, with no obvious deficiency symptoms. When these conditions prevail, the crop is putting maximum pressure on nutrient supply.

Plant analysis at this time may well pick up hidden nutrient deficiency or nutrient supply that is not yet critical but may be so in the near future. If this is the case actions can be taken to ensure the impact of this deficiency is minimised.

Once deficiency symptoms are visible, reductions in yield potential of 30 per cent or more may already have occurred and the application of additional nutrients may do little to regain the loss. Nutrients that are required early in the plants' life, such as phosphorus, manganese or zinc fall into this category. Other nutrients like nitrogen, sulphur and copper can be effectively applied later if early supplies were inadequate.

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**Andrew Wallace**  
Area Manager – Albany East  
0427 083 520



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Area Manager – Albany West  
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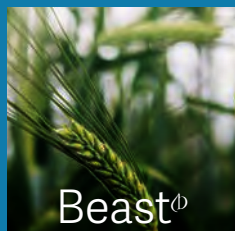
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[Joe.galantino@nutrien.com.au](mailto:Joe.galantino@nutrien.com.au)





# 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.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Amy Sims (Chair)  
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Shannon Slade  
Mark Preston  
David Brown  
Lizzie von Perger (SCF CEO)  
Taryn Graham (SCF)

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Andrew Slade (co-chair)  
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Nathan Crosby  
Sandy Forbes  
Christine Howard  
Iain Mackie  
Mal Thomson  
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Rob Wright  
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Mark Preston (co-chair)  
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Neil Preston  
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Philip Honey (SCF)  
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Tony Slattery  
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Simon Bigwood (Rabobank)  
Michael O'Dea (CSBP)  
Rodney Scott (CBH)  
Lizzie von Perger (SCF CEO)  
Philip Honey (SCF)

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Iain Mackie  
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Alaina Smith  
Lindsay Watterson  
Clare Webster  
Lucy Anderton  
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Keith Gundill (CSBP)  
Brent Pritchard (Farmanco)  
Wayne Birch (Farmanco)  
John Blake (GRDC)  
Lizzie von Perger (SCF CEO)  
Philip Honey (SCF)  
Dan Fay (SCF)

### EASTERN F2F GROUP

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Victoria Bennett  
Josh Goad  
Shane Greenslade  
Alaina Smith  
Lizzie von Perger (SCF CEO)

### BOARD MEMBERS

Sandy Forbes (Chair)	0427 354 036
Alaina Smith (V. Chair)	0438 986 404
Ken Drummond	0427 541 033
David Brown	0428 447 036
Mark Preston	0427 834 200
Shannon Slade	0477 197 970
Jeremy Walker	0437 955 443
Amy Sims	9842 5155

### OFFICE STAFF

Lizzie von Perger, CEO	0448 888 265
Philip Honey, Smart Farms Coordinator	0428 768 589
Dan Fay, R&D Co-ordinator	0498 278 177
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
Trish Garnett, Project Administration	

*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](mailto:admin@scfarmers.org.au)*

# Community Calendar

**June 6 - 8: Science to Practice Forum**

**June 8 - SW WA Hub Science to Practice Forum Workshop**

**June 8 - AHRI & Farmanco Glyphosate & Paraquat Resistance Field Walk**

**June 14 & 15: Soil Health & Your Wealth**

For more info head to:  
[southcoastnrm.com.au/upcoming-events/](https://southcoastnrm.com.au/upcoming-events/)

**June 21: Confinement Feeding Field Walk**

For more info head to [scfarmers.org.au/events](https://scfarmers.org.au/events)

**June 22: SPAA Precision Ag VRT Workshop Green Range**

For more info head to [https://bit.ly/VRT\\_greenrange](https://bit.ly/VRT_greenrange) or call Angelique McAvoy on 0473 790 109

**July 16-19 Innovation Generation**

For more info head to [innovationgeneration.com.au](https://innovationgeneration.com.au)

**July 19: Community BBQ West**

For more info head to [scfarmers.org.au/events](https://scfarmers.org.au/events)

**July 20: Community BBQ East**

For more info head to [scfarmers.org.au/events](https://scfarmers.org.au/events)

**July 26: Barley Diseases Forum**

For more info head to [scfarmers.org.au/events](https://scfarmers.org.au/events)

**August 23: FBG Ladies Day**

For more info call Maddy Wylie on 0428 351 127

**Sept 5: SCF - Spring Field Day East**

For more info head to [scfarmers.org.au/events](https://scfarmers.org.au/events)

**Sept 6: SCF - Spring Field Day West**

For more info head to [scfarmers.org.au/events](https://scfarmers.org.au/events)

**September 12: FBG - Spring Field Day, Gairdner**

For more info call Maddy Wylie on 0428 351 127

## TRIAL TUESDAYS ARE COMING!

We have heard your feedback and are bringing in a new SCF event - Trial Tuesdays.

Every 2nd Tuesday we will have a short, sweet and casual field walk/chat at a local trial site with nibbles and drinks.

Keep an eye for more details coming soon...