

# The Link

FarmLink Newsletter

Vol 34. - Autumn 2013



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Dear Members and Supporters,

Welcome to our Autumn 2013 edition of The Link, we hope you find it interesting as we update you on what has been happening at FarmLink.

This year sees the wrap-up of our very successful and well known Water Use Efficiency project which examined the impacts of livestock in a no-till system and explored exit strategies for coming out of the pasture phase into crop. This project along with our collaborative projects of Strategic Tillage (Mark Conyers NSW DPI), and Crop Sequencing (Mark Peoples CSIRO) are bringing a wealth of valuable knowledge to growers across the region. For some of you, there has been an element of confirmation of what you already knew, or thought you knew, but regardless, it is important to establish the facts around these practices with good science.

Our Communications Coordinator Karen Giddings has published some of the articles out of the 2012 Annual Research Report in the Members' Only section of the website. We see it as important to get this information to you as soon as possible and where we can, prior to the sowing season. It is still our full intention to publish a hard-copy of the Research Report, but want to ensure you have access to this information in a more timely manner. We'd appreciate your feedback on this.

Last year we moved from producing a hard-copy of our very popular 'Weather or Not' publication to an on-line version. We hope you still find this valuable in this format.

We are moving into our third season at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre and it is getting closer to our vision as a valued centre for mixed farming research in southern NSW. Support from the Commercial Research sector looks to be as strong as it has been in the past and, like you, provided we get rain, we'll be looking forward to another good year.

Recently FarmLink employed a new

Technical Officer, Tony Pratt. We welcome Tony to our team. To read more about Tony see page 7.

FarmLink recently hosted the very successful 2013 Conservation Agriculture Field day at Temora in conjunction with CANFA and CWFS. I understand there were more than 800 in attendance which again shows the relevance and acceptance of this type of event for farmers in this region. This Field Day will now move to a permanent cycle of Temora, Condobolin, Lockhart, Wellington and back around again. The permanent facilities at these sites seem to work very well, as does, in our part of the world, a very successful partnership with Lockhart and Temora Agricultural Bureaus. Thank you guys and girls from the Ag Bureaus - we certainly couldn't run these events without you.

The annual GRDC Grower Update was held at the Ganmain Sports Club. A more relaxed format this year with more time to engage with the researchers and other farmers seems to have worked well and been popular with attendees.

Best wishes for a successful sowing season, and keep an eye out for the further publication of the Research Articles and Report in due course. Our extension events wind down a bit while you are all busy with sowing, so we look forward to seeing you during winter.

Happy sowing.  
Jon Cobden, CEO.

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# FarmLink Projects

## Grain and Graze II

The Grain and Graze II project will have a rush of activity over this season as it draws to a close. A good diary date for you to enter now will be the **Mixed Farming Forum** to be held on the July 31, at Temora. This very well attended event in 2011 will be repeated and revamped this year to be more hands-on and with the active display of a range of livestock handling equipment. There will also be a series of workshops on Risk Management across Enterprises, Feed Budgeting, Grazing of Canola and Cereals and New Pasture Species. We have started to compile a set of Mixed Farming Fact Sheets for distribution to you as well. Keep an eye out for them as we publish them throughout the year.

## Maintaining profitable farming systems with retained stubble

We have early advice of the approval of a new GRDC funded project: 'Maintaining profitable farming systems with retained stubble'. This wide reaching and exciting new project will pick up some of the issues identified towards the end of the Water Use Efficiency project and will address a number of key areas in stubble retention systems including maintaining herbicide efficacy, the use of disc seeders, disease management, nutrition management, stubble retention / management techniques and the impacts of stubble retention on soil health.

## Stubble Management

Currently being produced is a booklet on practices and research in southern NSW on stubble management. All facets of stubble management are included as well as farmer case studies and an action plan for harvest. Keep an eye out as we publish it in the next month or so.

## Emerging Weeds

As it is often difficult to control mature fleabane plants after harvest, it is critical to manage fleabane seedlings in winter crops. Autumn germination of fleabane provides an opportunity for seedlings to develop extensive root systems over winter, creating plants that will be more difficult to control in late spring or early summer.

**Question:** Are there any suitable post emergent herbicides to control fleabane in wheat or canola, with sufficient residual activity to suppress emergence and growth in summer?

## Herbicides in wheat

A series of trials were established at Wagga Wagga, Temora and Condobolin to investigate the impact of herbicide choice and application timing on fleabane control. All sites were bulk sown to wheat in May or June (EGA Gregory in Wagga and Temora and Livingston in Condobolin).

Plots were established in a randomised complete block design with three replicates, with plot size 2 x 10 m. Herbicides were applied using a 2m hand operated boom fitted with Teejet 11002 nozzles, delivering 100L/ha spray volume at 2 Bar pressure. Early post emergent herbicides were applied 24th-31st July. Late post emergent herbicides were applied 28th August – 3rd September. The number of fleabane plants was recorded in a 0.5 x 10 m strip in the centre of each plot from November 2012 through to January 2013.

## Early post-emergent herbicide treatments:

1. Lontrel (300) 300mL
2. Lontrel 200 mL + MCPA LVE 625mL
3. Metsulfuron 7g
4. MCPA LVE 625 mL + Ally 5g
5. Glean 20g
6. Glean 15g + Lontrel 200 ml
7. Glean 20g + Starane Advance 250ml + MCPA LVE 250 ml
8. Igran 850ml+ Lontrel 200 ml
9. Bromoxynil 1.4L + Lontrel 200 ml
10. Control

Assessment of plots in Condobolin found no fleabane plants present during summer. For trials in both Wagga Wagga and Temora, no significant control of fleabane was observed with the use of 20g Glean alone or 7g Ally alone. Variable results were observed between sites for treatments 6 (Glean + Lontrel), 7 (Glean+Starane+MCPA) and 8 (Igran + Lontrel). All other treatments provided significant control compared to the untreated control.

## Late post-emergent herbicide treatments:

1. Starane (200) 600mL
2. Amicide Advance 700 1L
3. MCPA LVE 750ml 1L
4. Tordon 75-D 300mL
5. Tordon 242 1L
6. Lontrel Advance 100mL + MCPA LVE 625mL
7. Amicide Advance 700 800 mL + Ally 5g
8. Amicide Advance 700 800 mL + Velocity 600mL
9. Amicide Advance 700 1L + Lontrel Advance 150mL
10. Starane 600 mL + Ally 5g
11. Starane 600 mL + Lontrel Advance 150mL
12. Untreated control

Continued over page.

# FarmLink Projects

## Emerging Weeds Cont.

**Table 1: Weed density (plants/m<sup>2</sup>) in January following early post-emergent herbicide applications in wheat at Temora.**

Treatment	Fleabane	Hairy Panic	Wireweed	Other b/leaf	Other grass
1	0.2	11.4	0.7	0.7	0.2
2	0.0	16.4	0.2	2.7	0.0
3	0.6	17.4	0.0	1.0	0.0
4	0.2	15.5	0.0	1.5	0.0
5	1.6	8.4	0.2	1.0	0.4
6	0.6	12.7	0.3	0.3	0.0
7	0.7	15.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
8	0.0	17.0	0.4	0.3	0.0
9	0.0	14.6	0.0	0.4	0.0
10	3.0	7.9	1.0	0.7	0.1

**Table 2: Weed density (plants/m<sup>2</sup>) in January following late post-emergent herbicide applications in wheat at Temora.**

Treatment	Fleabane	Hairy Panic	Wireweed	Other b/leaf	Other grass
1	0.4	4.2	0.8	0.2	0.0
2	0.0	11.0	0.6	0.2	0.0
3	0.1	7.9	0.5	0.5	0.1
4	0.1	6.7	0.6	0.1	0.0
5	0.0	8.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
6	1.0	5.2	1.0	0.0	0.0
7	0.0	2.2	1.0	0.3	0.0
8	1.1	4.6	2.0	0.4	0.0
9	0.0	4.1	0.7	0.7	0.0
10	3.0	5.7	1.0	0.6	0.0

## Ag Futures

This year has seen the start of a new project for FarmLink Research, where Year 9 and 10 Agriculture students from St Anne's in Temora are completing part of their agricultural studies at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre.

FarmLink's CEO Jon Cobden, facilitates the students at the Centre where they are learning about the applications of agriculture both on and off-farm.

Right: Students from St Annes, Temora filling pots, to commence a pot trial at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre.



# News and Events

## CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE FIELD DAY IN THE SOUTH

Almost 800 farmers from across the region were able to see the latest conservation agriculture technology at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre on Thursday 21st February.

As farmers saw at the Conservation Agriculture Field Day, gone are the days where you need perfect damp conditions to sow a crop; new machinery enables the planting of seed under many conditions, from dry and dusty to wet sticky soils and with varying stubble loads. Farmers were able to see the latest machines in the paddock at work, which is helpful in comparing implements and critical in keeping up-to-date.

New technologies showcased on the day included crop sensors which detect crop health so fertiliser can be variably applied on the run, weed seeking spray sensors and enhancements to the GPS network.

Tony Windsor, Independent Member for New England was a guest speaker and spoke about tax incentives to encourage farmers to invest in conservation tillage equipment. John Harper from Stockinbingal ('Mate Helping Mate') also engaged the large crowd with his emotive discussion around farmers' mental health and depression. The Conservation Agriculture Field Day will next be held at Temora in 2017.



## iPad MINI WINNER

As a membership promotion, FarmLink offered new members who joined before 31st January, 2013 or existing members who renewed their membership the chance to win a mini iPad.



Brent Alexander from Lockhart, a long standing member of FarmLink and also member of the inaugural Executive Committee was the lucky winner of the iPad mini. Congratulations Brent!

Above: Brent Alexander was very impressed with winning the iPad Mini and thought it would come in very handy for accessing data from the Soil Moisture Probes.

## OPTIMISING TECHNOLOGIES IN MIXED FARMING SEMINAR

A seminar presented by Professor David Lamb from the Precision Agriculture Research Group, UNE showed that technologies available to graziers and mixed farmers is progressing and will assist with management and decision making.

Along with current technologies and their applications, David spoke about the need for an effective National Broadband Network (NBN). High speed access forms a vital link in the chain of converting data to actionable information and getting much of what is now 'off farm intelligence' back in the hands of the farmer, while at the same time avoiding the need to overload farmers with the technicalities of getting the data in the first place.

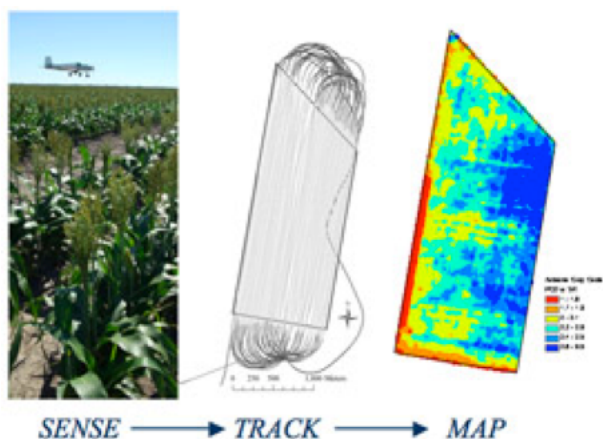
Some of the technologies David spoke about are: Crop Circle an active crop canopy sensor providing classic vegetation index data (NDVI, SRI and others) as well as basic reflectance information from plant canopies and soil. Measurements can be made day or night and cloud cover will have no impact on measurements. The sensor can be hand held or mounted to a vehicle to map crop or pasture canopy biomass while driving through the paddock.

<http://hollandscientific.com/crop-circle-acs-470-multi-spectral-crop-canopy-sensor/> continued over page...

# News and Events

## OPTIMISING TECHNOLOGIES IN MIXED FARMING SEMINAR CONT.

The Raptor is an aerial crop sensor capable of collecting vegetation information when attached to agricultural aircraft flying at low altitudes above crop canopies. Information produced by the sensor can be utilised to quantify the impact of nutrients, water, disease or other growing conditions on plants or crops. More information <http://hollandscientific.com/raptor-ac-s-225lr/>



**Taggle livestock location** The Taggle ear tag allows your livestock to be tracked economically on a web-based map. Boundaries can be drawn on the map and SMS alerts sent to you if any taggles go outside the boundary. A typical rural installation provides coverage of greater than 7km radius (>150sq km).

Taggles can also be used to track other farm assets, such as tools and equipment, and can be used to detect open gates and stock water levels. The taggle is waterproof, rugged and weighs under 20 grams. A standard NLIS applicator is used to insert the tag on livestock. More information: [www.taggle.com.au/livestock.php](http://www.taggle.com.au/livestock.php)

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Above: Attendees at the recent optimising technologies in mixed farming seminar for part of FarmLink's Grain and Graze II project.

## GRDC AND FARMLINK'S GROWER UPDATE - GANMAIN

More than 80 farmers attended the recent Grower Update at Ganmain. Informative presentations were made by;

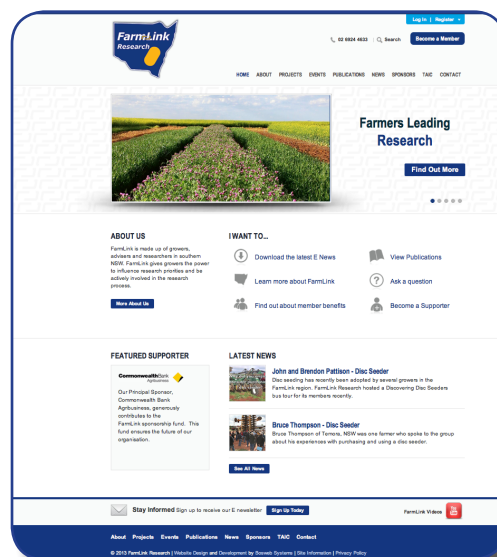
- James Hunt; Sowing dates - Getting the best from our varieties and optimising whole-farm wheat yield.
- Mark Conyers; The strategic use of tillage within conservation farming.
- Paul Breust; Moisture probes - Application and usefulness in crop decision making.
- Tony Swan and Laura Watson; Break crops and brown manures, grass weeds, grain yield and profit.
- Mark Day; How pulse manuring fits our system.



## NEW FARMLINK WEBSITE COMING SOON!

FarmLink's Communications Co-ordinator Karen Giddings has been working on the development of a new website for FarmLink. We will keep you posted when we launch the new site!

[www.farmlink.com.au](http://www.farmlink.com.au)



# 2012 NVT Trials

The National Variety Trial reports from 2012 season are now available through a list of current trial reports and the Google Maps functionality on the NVT website.

Current trial reports can be accessed by clicking on the link under the What's New section of the homepage, called "2012 Trial Results". This spreadsheet is regularly updated and shows the reports that are close to release, those that will not be released as well as hyperlinks directly to any reports that have been released.

Tabled below are 2012 average main season wheat yield results extracted from NVT reports of some of the commonly used varieties in the region.

## WHEAT MAIN SEASON 2012 PREDICTED AVERAGE YIELD t/ha

SITE	Dart	EGA Gregory	Livingston	Lincoln
Lockhart	3.10	2.98	3.17	3.05
Temora	3.58	5.14	4.54	4.45
Quandialla	3.90	4.98	4.45	4.16

For more information visit  
[www.nvtonline.com.au](http://www.nvtonline.com.au)

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## Did you know?

### WEEDSmart

Is an initiative that promotes the long term sustainability of herbicide use in Australian agriculture.

Herbicides have delivered vast improvements in weed control across Australia's farming systems, conserving moisture, improving yields and boosting profits.

But herbicide use as we know it is under threat. Conservation (no-till) farming has made us overly dependent on herbicides, with resistant weeds threatening the productivity gains of the past 20 years.

### [www.weedsmart.org.au/](http://www.weedsmart.org.au/)

outlines how you can assess the risk of herbicide resistance developing on your farm and provides important weed management tools on how better manage this risk. It is time to act and protect the good work of Australian farmers in combating weeds.

**Harvest weed seed management is key.**

# New FarmLink Staff Member

FarmLink welcomes Tony Pratt as our new Technical Officer. Tony has a farming background from the Bethungra and Ardlethan districts and will also be familiar to a number of you through his previous work with FarmLink, Landcare and NSW DPI on stubbles, and prior to that with Agritech (now Kalyx). He will pick up responsibilities for a number of our projects and assist across the business with the agronomic, technical and extension work.

## Tony Pratt, Research Technical Officer

Tony (pictured right) grew up on his family's farm at Illabo with his two younger sisters. His junior schooling was at Illabo public school and his secondary education at Junee High school where he finished his HSC. Tony then completed a 12 month traineeship at the Wagga Ag Research institute as a laboratory assistant. He then went across the road to the Wagga Ag College, CSU where he completed his Bachelor of Applied Science in Agriculture in 1993.

Tony worked at the family property before travelling throughout Europe and the UK before returning to the farm at Illabo. The acquisition of more land at Kamarah near Ardlethan saw him and his family move to and spend 7 years conservation farming at that property until 2004. Tony took up a position as a research agronomist with Agritech NSW (now Kaylx Australia) which is where his keen interest in ag research began.

In 2009, Tony took a role as the conservation farming officer with NSW DPI based at Cootamundra and oversaw the running of stubble management trials at 16 locations throughout southern NSW.

Tony is married to Gemma and they have two boys Hughie 10 and Xavier 5. They have a small farm near Dirnaseer which is close to Cootamundra where the boys attend school. Gemma is an exhibited artist with her favourite disciplines being sculpture and silver smithing.

Tony enjoys waterskiing, watching rugby union at all levels (Hughie and Xavier play for the Coota Bears) and metal sculpture. He says despite his love of agriculture and farming he hopes his boys will be his greatest achievement.



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# EXECUTIVE MEMBER in PROFILE

## LYNDON McNAB, “OORIE” QUANDIALLA



Above: FarmLink Executive Member, Lyndon McNab of Quandialla.

Lyndon grew up on the family farm with his three siblings at Canowindra. The farm consisted of grain lucerne hay production and farm contracting.

Lyndon attended Canowindra High School until year 10 and worked on the farm for the following two years.

Later, Lyndon took part in a farm exchange to Canada for eight months working on a grain farm. On Lyndon’s return he worked for three years with the Soil Conservation in the Dubbo region.

In 1992, Lyndon spent eight months in the UK and Europe working on various farms in Denmark and England.

1992-2000 Lyndon went back to the family farm in partnership with his parents. In 2000, Lyndon leased more country around Stockinbingal and struggled through the drought years, with everyone else.

In 2006, Lyndon took the leap and bought a property at Quandialla, and then his true definition of drought was faced.

After surviving the drought Lyndon realised how passionate he was about agriculture and all the diversity that comes with farming. Lyndon still continues to farm at Canowindra and Quandialla.

Lyndon is supportive of FarmLink because research is essential to the future of agricultural development.

### FarmLink Executive

- Charles Kingston, The Rock (Chair/ Director)
- Matt Dart, Ariah Park (Director)
- Steven Day, Lockhart (Director)
- Darryl Harper, Barmedman
- Rob Hart, Junee Reefs
- Jeff Hoffmann, Lockhart
- Bruce Holden, Coolamon
- Ernie Idiens, Canowindra
- Derek Ingold, Dirnaseer
- Ian Jennings, Coolamon
- Lyndon McNab, Quandialla
- Mike O’Hare, Beckom

### FarmLink Staff

- Jon Cobden, CEO
- Paul Breust, Research and Development Coordinator
- Tony Pratt, Research Technical Officer
- Karen Giddings, Communications Coordinator
- Judith Neill, Administration Officer

## Date for Your Diary

Event	Date
<b>Mixed Farming Forum, Temora</b>	31 July

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