

# The Link

FarmLink Newsletter

Vol 32. - Spring 2012



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Hello members, sponsors and supporters,

Happy spring! The last three months have certainly been busy here at FarmLink. Please see inside for photos on the Disc Seeder Discovery Tour, Annual Dinner and Leadership Program Graduation, Liverpool Plains bus tour, Expo and the Governor General's visit to open the newly named Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre along with further information on some of this year's trial work.

Activity at all of our trial sites across the Riverina and at the Innovation Centre has certainly been at fever pitch as we finalise spraying, top-dressing and treatment programs.

All we need is that finishing rain.....Last Wednesday saw FarmLink's Annual General Meeting at Temora. Charles Kingston from The Rock was returned as Chairman, with Matthew Dart from Ariah Park as Deputy Chair. Four new Executive Board Members were also nominated to the Board, taking it to 13 for this year. (see back page for more information). Long standing Executive Board Members Michael Sinclair and Geoff Dale have recently stood down from the Board. Michael was one of FarmLink's original Board members and was Chairman since 2008. Their contributions have been greatly valued.

FarmLink Research celebrates ten years of operation next year and it is maturing into a well-respected provider of research and agricultural information to regional farmers. The rural community of southern NSW should be very proud of the foresight of those individuals who worked hard to establish this business. We now employ five staff (with one vacancy) and operate from our offices in Junee as well as partnering with Temora Shire Council in the management and operation of the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre. As most rural research funding in Australia is project-based (i.e. not on-going) we have to work hard to ensure the security and longevity of the business and continuity of employment

for our valued staff. 2011-12 was another profitable year for FarmLink and we have consolidated our position further.

In this, we certainly appreciate the on-going support of our valued commercial sponsors and each of you as members. Despite drought and a decline in family farm numbers we have maintained positive membership growth over the years, but we always welcome more! Please don't forget to ask your neighbours "Are you a FarmLink member yet?"

We have spent some time this year considering our organisation's strategy for the next ten years, and we welcome input from you as members and supporters into that on-going process. Feel free to contact one of the staff or Board members with your thoughts. Your feedback and ideas on possible research programs and other opportunities and services that FarmLink can undertake is always appreciated.

Our Board will undergo corporate governance training early in the New Year as we finalise this strategy and continue working towards another exciting and successful ten years.

Best wishes to you all for a successful harvest season; let's all hope for a profitable finish to what has been another challenging year. You've got to admit - it sure is hard to get bored when you're involved in agriculture!!

Jon Cobden, CEO.

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# FarmLink Project Update

## GRDC Crop Sequencing Project - Eurongilly and Junee

### Research questions:

1. What are the trade-offs between the cost of production (risk) and potential reward (profit and system benefits) of different broad-leaf break crop options in the SW slopes?

2. How can resistant ryegrass be managed most cost-effectively under different break crop options?

Can we buy our way out of needing a break crop by using;

- Flutriafol (Impact/Intake) for take-all.
- Difenconazole + metalaxyl-M (Dividend) and zinc seed dressing for rhizoctonia.
- More fertiliser = early vigour for competition and root diseases.
- Higher seeding rates = competition.
- New pre- and post-emergent grass herbicide chemistry.

3. Does growing a broad-leaf break crop allow lower inputs and production risk and more profit in subsequent cereal crops?

### CSIRO and Agritech NSW experimental site – Eurongilly Collaborators: Tom and Simon Brabin

**Table 1: 2012 Treatments**

Crop	End-use	Risk
Canola (RR hybrid)	Grain	High
Canola (TT open pollinated)	Grain	Low
Lupin	Grain	High
Lupin	Brown manure	Low
Wheat – high input	Grain	High
Wheat – low input	Grain	Low
Field pea	Brown manure	Low
Fallow	NA	Low
Lentils	Grain	High

**Table 2: Herbicide Resistance Preliminary Results, March 2012**

Herbicide	Herbicide group	Survival (%) Rating
Verdict + 1% Hasten 75 A	Fops	70 RR
Select + 1% Hasten 300 A	Dims	55 R
Axial + 0.5% Adigor 300 A	Den	65 RR
Factor + 1% Supercharge 180 A	Dims	0 S
Hussar + 1% Hasten 200 B	Sulfonylureas	95 RRR

#### Resistance rating:

RRR - indicates plants tested have strong resistance

RR- indicates medium- level resistance

R - indicates low- level but detectable resistance

S - indicates no detection of resistance

# FarmLink Project Update

## GRDC Crop Sequencing Project cont

### CSIRO and Agritech NSW Experimental site - Junee Collaborator: Hart Bros. Seeds, Junee Reefs

#### 2012 Treatment

All plots from 2011 were split into 'low' and 'high' wheat systems with Spitfire wheat being sown on the 23rd May at target rates of 75 and 150 plants/m<sup>2</sup> respectively with MAP at either 25 or 75kg/ha.

There was no significant difference in plant emergence counts within each risk category with plant populations being 101 and 168 plants/m<sup>2</sup> in the low and high respectively.

Disease: Predicta B results indicated that there was generally no main soil borne diseases at the start of the season. However, where wheat was sown in 2011, there was low level of risk from *Pratylenchus neglectus*.

#### Preliminary Results

There was no significant difference in soil water between the fieldpeas, chickpeas and barley treatments in April 2012 (only fieldpea soil moisture).

The fieldpea/chickpea/barley treatments were significantly wetter than the driest treatments of Lentils, Lupins (High) and Canola (High)

**Table 1: Estimated Wheat DM (kg/ha) and NDVI at GS30 (10th Aug 2012).**

Crop_2011	RISK 2012			
	Est DM SAVI (kg/ha)		NDVI	
	High	Low	High	Low
Lupins-L	1558	951	0.80	0.71
Chickpeas	1386	863	0.77	0.69
Field Peas	1201	860	0.75	0.70
Lupins-H	1195	771	0.73	0.67
Lentils	1114	737	0.76	0.69
Canola-H	1013	614	0.74	0.65
Canola-L	903	666	0.72	0.64
Wheat-L	827	432	0.70	0.58
Wheat-H	813	439	0.72	0.61
Barley	803	495	0.72	0.62
lsd (P<0.05) same crop 2011	149		0.028	
lsd (P<0.05) for interaction	206		0.0436	

# FarmLink Events

FarmLink Research Annual Dinner and Rural Leadership Program Graduation  
Garden Court, Wagga Wagga - 26th July, 2012.



Former Wallabies World Cup winning captain Nick Farr-Jones gave an inspirational address at the **FarmLink Research Annual Dinner and Rural Leadership Program Graduation** in Wagga Wagga on July 26, 2012.

Graduates were Brendan Murray (Coleambally), Caroline den Drijver (Condobolin), Daniel Fox (Marrar), Jess Davis (Griffith), David Lee (Wagga Wagga), Joel Murphy (Wagga Wagga), Michael Gooden (Holbrook), Nick Hewlett (Binalong), Robert McColl (Binalong), Greg Hunt (Cootamundra), Tom Redfern (Young), Laura Kaylock (Moulamein), Chris Toohey (Albury), Aimee Snowden (Tocumwal), and absent Nicole Maher (Wagga Wagga).

Graduates also addressed the large gathering and spoke of their experience with the program, how it had benefited them and their vision for a productive, innovative and sustainable future in agriculture and agri-business.

FarmLink Executive Board member Geoff Dale resigned from the Board and received the traditional framed caricature (pictured above left).



**Disc Seeder Discovery Tour**  
29 June, 2012



**Agquip Liverpool Plains Bus Trip**  
August, 2012



# FarmLink Events

FarmLink Research EXPO - Temora Research Station - Wednesday 12th September, 2012



The Governor-General, Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, marked the 100th anniversary of the Temora Research Station and unveiled a plaque to commemorate 100 years of research at the facility and its re-naming as the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre on Sunday 16th September, 2012. **FarmLink Principal Sponsor**

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# FarmLink Project Update

## The Strategic Use of Tillage within Conservation Farming

Conservation farming involves reduced tillage, stubble retention and good rotations. This underpins sustainable grain production systems worldwide. Problems arise when complete zero tillage is made the centre of the farming system:

- On one hand we are encouraging the adoption by farmers of zero tillage. On the other hand we are advising farmers that limestone has to be incorporated into the soil or else it does little to ameliorate acidity.
- A lack of tillage causes nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus to accumulate on the soil surface where they are less accessible to plants due to extremes of temperature (sub zero to >50°C) and because of soil drying.
- Zero tillage can favour diseases such as Rhizoctonia and Pseudomonads around the roots of some species and cultivars. Additionally, conventional tillage has been found to suppress plant parasitic nematode populations compared with direct drilling.
- Tillage can be used to lower numbers of snails and slugs prior to canola crops, and to lower mice numbers in affected fields.
- Integrated weed management might require the use of strategic tillage to manage herbicide resistance. In mixed farming systems, grazing of the pasture phase can be used to minimise weed burdens but for continuous croppers, or within the cropping phase of mixed farming, some tillage might be needed for integrated weed management.
- Finally, zero tillage maintains soil structure and conserves soil moisture but in a mixed farming system, infiltration of rain can be poor following compaction by livestock. Tillage might be necessary to improve infiltration of rain.

### Research questions

How much damage is done to soil by occasional tillage, strategically applied, in an otherwise no-till system?

The agronomic and economic benefits of a strategic tillage operation exceed any agronomic costs due to damage to soil structure. The net benefits will accrue from such factors as lime incorporation, the homogenization of stratified nutrients, disease and pest control, and weed management.

### Treatments

The trial consists of three tillage treatments: Ongoing no-till (knife points, press wheels), Scarifying (non-inversion) and Offset discs (inversion).

Each tillage is with or without additional N, P, and S nutrients applied to stabilise stubble C as soil organic matter. Therefore 6 treatments by 4 replicates.

Each of these treatments was applied in early 2012 after 5 years of lucerne. Directly across the fence line we hope to repeat the exercise in 2013 after 6 years of lucerne, so as to get the effect of tillage in two different seasons.

### Results

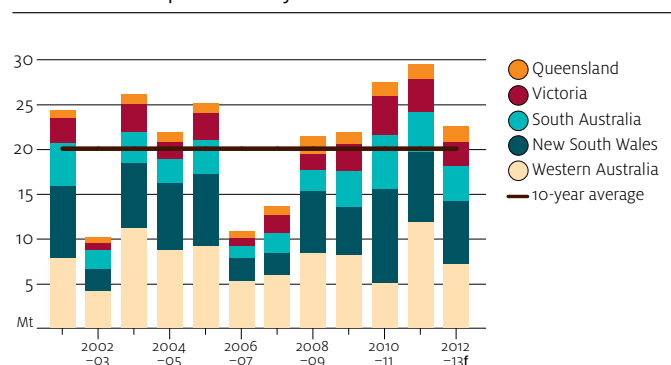
The output of the project will be an understanding of the trade-off between damage to soil structure and the maintenance of agricultural production.

## Australian Wheat Production to Fall

Australian wheat production is forecast to fall by 24 per cent in 2012–13 to around 23 million tonnes. This reflects an estimated decline in planted area and a forecast fall in average yields from the highs of last season. Rainfall over winter in major growing regions was mixed; sufficient and timely rainfall will still be needed over the important spring growing period to achieve prospective yields.

Source: Abares Agriculture Commodities, Sept 2012

Australian wheat production by state



# World Oilseeds Indicator Price



## Choose the local team with global reach



The world canola indicator price (cif, Hamburg) is forecast to decline by 1.5 per cent in the 2012–13 fiscal year to US\$610 a tonne. The canola price has risen since the beginning of August in response to the increasing soybean price. However, when the 2012–13 Canadian crop (forecast to be a record) becomes available around October, it is likely to place downward pressure on the world canola price.

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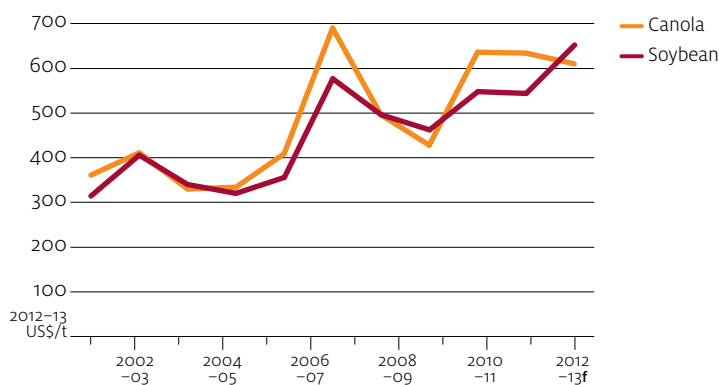
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World oilseeds indicator prices



Source: Abares Agriculture Commodities, Sept 2012

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# Meet our new Executive Members



**Robert Hart, Old Junee**



**Bruce Holden, Rannock**

At our recent Annual General Meeting four local farmers were successful with their nominations to the FarmLink Research Executive Board. We welcome Robert Hart, Bruce Holden, Rob McColl and Lyndon McNabb and we look forward to their valued input into the strategic direction of the business.

During 2012, Michael Sinclair and Geoff Dale stood down from their positions as Executive Members.

2013 will see the formation of three new Sub-Committees: Communications, Finance and Funding. The Research and Development Committee continues to guide FarmLink with research priorities.

A number of FarmLink Executive Members will play a role on each of the new Sub-Committees.

To view profiles of our Executive Members visit [www.farmlink.com.au/executive-members](http://www.farmlink.com.au/executive-members).

Profiles on each of our new Executive Members will be available online very soon!



**Rob McColl, Binalong**



**Lyndon McNabb, Quandialla**

## FarmLink Executive

Charles Kingston, The Rock (Chair/Director)  
 Matt Dart, Ariah Park (Director)  
 Steve Day, Lockhart (Director)  
 Darryl Harper, Barmedman  
 Robert Hart, Junee  
 Jeff Hoffmann, Lockhart  
 Bruce Holden, Rannock  
 Ernie Idiens, Canowindra  
 Derek Ingold, Dirnaseer  
 Ian Jennings, Coolamon  
 Rob McColl, Binalong  
 Lyndon McNabb, Quandialla  
 Mike O'Hare, Beckom

## FarmLink Staff

Jon Cobden, CEO  
 Paul Breust, Research Coordinator  
 Karen Giddings, Communications Coordinator  
 Judith Neill, Administration  
 Phil Maroney, Farm Hand

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