the link

FarmLink
change ▪ adapt ▪ prosper

FarmLink Newsletter Winter 2016

Farmers across Southern New South Wales turned to dry sowing this year as they awaited the much need Autumn break, which was widely received in early May. FarmLink Research and Extension Officer, Kellie Jones, and 'Bear' were pictured inspecting operations in the early stages of planting the commercial crops at Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre.

Catch up with CEO Cindy Cassidy

As I sit to write my report today it looks like Autumn and Winter have arrived together! Rain and sunshine were a great combination during May to get the bulk of sowing completed across the region, although dry conditions in the lead up certainly put pressure on feed for early lambing and joining ewes. It is nice to see the follow up rain falling across most of the region as May comes to a close.

During the last few months there have been a number of things happening at FarmLink against a backdrop of planting crop and trials at TAIC. The first among these was the FarmLink AGM held in March where we thanked and farewelled Lyndon McNab as a director of FarmLink. On behalf of members, staff and the Board of FarmLink I thank Lyndon for his fantastic service. We are not losing Lyndon's passion for agricultural innovation (which has been evident in every contribution made to FarmLink) as he is going to continue on our RD&E committee. We also welcome Michael Sinclair who has returned as a director, filling the vacancy left by Lyndon's resignation.

At the AGM, we reported a full year profit of $40k for 2015 – a marked and substantial improvement in a very short time. At the time of the AGM we forecast a shortfall in 2016 primarily due to a lack of substantial new projects commencing in 2016. We talked to members about using 2016 strategically, to position FarmLink with project funders and other partners to secure new revenue in 2017 and beyond. Since then we have announced the creation of a crop breeding precinct at TAIC in partnership with Dow AgroSciences and a new Landcare Project which will increase our revenue. With careful management we plan to remain in the black in 2016.

Even with this improvement we are still pursuing our strategic objective of raising the profile of FarmLink with levy organisations (GRDC, MLA, RIRDC etc) and government (NSWDPI, DAFF, LLS) and reinforcing the importance of grass roots farming organisations in achieving profitability and productive gains in agriculture that underpin local, regional and national economies. FarmLink and organisations like it have been created by farmers, advisors and researchers to deliver your levy funds into local issues, addressed locally. Your investment and involvement in FarmLink has always been vital to its success both in delivering relevant research and in being a vehicle to return levy funds to the region. Your region.

2016 will be a year of reinforcing that message to the broader industry. We will be doing that on your behalf. But nothing resonates more than your voice. Simple things you can do include hanging your farm gate sign and tweeting a picture as well as just talking to people (neighbours, local council, state and federal members) about why FarmLink and local research is important to you, your farm, your family.

Right now we are tendering with other farming groups to GRDC to deliver the Grower Solutions Groups Projects in southern NSW. This project runs for 5 years and is valued at $400-500k per annum. We would like your active support for our tender – completing the 2015 production survey online (or ring the office and we will do it with you in 5 minutes!) is critical to demonstrating the breadth of FarmLink reach and we will be inviting you to sign a letter of support for our application. We will certainly let you know the outcome of our tender.

Thank you as always, Cindy

Meet the Director: Michael Sinclair

Temora farmer, Michael Sinclair, has rejoined the FarmLink board after a number of years' absence after initially serving on the inaugural board. Michael operates a mixed farming business with his wife, Edwina, and parents, Graham and Lorraine, in the Temora district. He graduated with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from Charles Sturt University, and worked as an agronomist for a number of years before returning to the family farm full-time. Michael and Edwina have three children – Catie, Angus and Finn, who he is happy to encourage into a career in agriculture, as it provides some great and varied opportunities.

Michael encourages growers to get involved with the investment of their grain and livestock levies into research. He believes FarmLink provides a conduit between growers, advisors and the research community to develop strategies to improve productivity and profitability in agriculture.

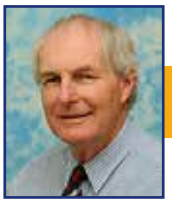
Board of Directors

Each member of the FarmLink Board of Directors brings their own unique skill set to the organisation, combining business, governance management and agricultural skills to ensure a positive direction into the future.

CEO
Cindy Cassidy

Chair
Darryl Harper

Deputy Chair
Rob McNoll



Director
Rob Patterson

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Lisa Anderson

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Michael Sinclair

Director
Bernard Hart

Crop breeding precinct emerges at TAIC

Dow AgroScience's Jean-Yves Merchez flew in from France to speak at the launch of Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre's Crop Breeding Precinct on April 14.

Much growth has occurred at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre's Crop Breeding Precinct, with the first crop planted and already emerging, just one month after stage one of the precinct was officially launched. Dow AgroSciences have frequented TAIC to continue subsequent sowings in their 2016 trial, with the assistance of FarmLink staff. The official lunch of the precinct took place on April 14, in a joint effort between collaborators on the project, FarmLink, Temora Shire Council and Dow AgroSciences.

The in-paddock launch gave the opportunity for participants to view the precinct, complete with the newly acquired lateral irrigator in operation, which enabled Dow AgroSciences to begin wheat breeding trials at TAIC in 2016.

Dow's Jean-Yves Merchez said that Dow AgroSciences had identified New South Wales and particularly the Riverina region, as the ideal site to locate the wheat breeding station, and on further investigation of a numbers of sites, TAIC was selected for the development. "After 12 months of work, we can successfully start activity with the wheat breeding season," Mr Merchez said last week.

New dryland wheat varieties will be sown by Dow AgroSciences this season, with water being piped from Temora recycled water facility, to ensure successful germination of the crop. FarmLink Chief Executive Officer Cindy Cassidy welcomed Dow AgroSciences to TAIC, Temora and the Riverina region.

"I think it's wonderful such a major agricultural research innovation organisation is making its home here in Temora. I think it's great for the community, great for our farmers, and hopefully great for Dow AgroSciences as well," Ms Cassidy said. "We are seeing TAIC strengthen its reputation as a thriving hub of agricultural research and development. The irrigation precinct will add to the already impressive swag of R, D and E that we have running here at TAIC, from the new CSIRO soil water project and MLA Satellite Flock to the ongoing GRDC projects looking at stubble, carbon, micronutrients and strategic tillage."

The proposal has the active support of the Temora Shire Council, with Mayor Rick Firman welcoming Dow AgroSciences to Temora for the launch. "In its previous life as a Research Station, TAIC accommodated the development of wheat and oat varieties which made a huge contribution to agriculture in Australia. Dow AgroSciences bringing wheat breeding back to Temora is a positive move for regional agriculture. Temora Shire Council has been very keen to work together with FarmLink and Dow AgroSciences to ensure this development goes ahead. Dow is an important international player in the agricultural industry and we are over the moon to be partnering with them at TAIC," Cr Firman explained.

"This development has triple bottom line benefits for regional NSW. Our proposal has economic, environmental and social benefits that stretch beyond Temora and our shire. It will see new investment, jobs creation, sustainable use of recycled water, skilled people attracted to the region and delivery of innovation that improves profitability for farmers in southern NSW."

FarmLink Chairman Darryl Harper explained that FarmLink activities delivered benefit to all farmers across southern NSW in a region that represents nearly 1.2mill hectares of arable land.

He outlined that recent ABARES figures showed that agriculture in NSW was worth $11.2billion dollars annually, with 20 per cent ($2.1bill) of total agricultural output for NSW being generated in the Riverina. Grain production in the Riverina is worth $795 mill – 37% of total Agricultural production in the Riverina; while sheep and wool production adds another 10%. Wheat production on its own in the Riverina is worth $505mill.

"The key message from that is that agriculture is very important to our state economy - the Riverina and southern NSW more broadly makes a large contribution to that," Mr Harper said. "Investment, here in the region, in research and development that will deliver productivity gains in broad acre cropping – is an investment in the future farms and farmers; it is an investment in the future economic wellbeing of the region and the state and it is an investment in the future of our regional and rural communities.

"Farmers across the FarmLink region will benefit into the future from the creation of the Crop Breeding Precinct at Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre, and FarmLink is proud to have had role in bringing together this partnership that will see the Dow AgroSciences southern wheat breeding program located at Temora Shire Council's Agricultural Innovation Centre."

Plans are also being developed for beyond 2016 for the TAIC Crop Breeding Precinct. FarmLink and Temora Shire Council, with the support of Dow AgroSciences, have submitted a National Stronger Regions Fund application to further redevelop the site and expand the crop breeding precinct. The larger precinct will include construction of a 100 mega litre dam to store water, sourced from overflow from the recycled water facility and an existing storm water holding dam. This water will allow development of a much larger area of land into irrigable trial area for Dow AgroSciences. Works will also be carried out at existing TAIC facilities to provide office space and seed processing capability to support new employees as a result of the jobs expected to be created by the project.

Dr Matt Cahill Dow AgroSciences R&D Leader for ANZ said the new wheat breeding program would tap into the international genetics and technical resources of Dow AgroSciences. "We are targeting significant productivity gains in the wheat varieties we are developing – which is great news not just locally, but regionally too," Dr Cahill concluded. "We are keen to build the field capacity to match our global capability in advanced breeding technology."

Timely advice for Winter grazing

Nitrate or Nitrite poisoning, just be careful!

Author - Murray Long, ClearView Consulting

Murray is currently conducting the livestock operations at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre

A recent lamb trial at TAIC where a subclinical case of nitrate poisoning was suspected is a timely reminder of the risks of grazing ewes and lambs on canola and cereal crops over the winter. With recent rain getting the growing season off to a good start, there are several factors that could potentially provide an added risk over the next few months.

So what are the symptoms, what are the risks and how to avoid nitrate poisoning?

Nitrate by itself is relatively low in toxicity however nitrite is 10 times more toxic and is the main culprit of what we know as nitrate or nitrite poisoning. In the rumen the conversion of nitrate to nitrite by rumen bacteria is relatively rapid whereas the detoxification of nitrite to ammonia is much slower. When the nitrite levels in the rumen exceed the rumen flora's capacity to detoxify it, we have nitrate poisoning and the nitrite enters the bloodstream where it combines with haemoglobin to reduce the capacity of red blood cells to carry oxygen. This transfer of nitrite into the bloodstream is influenced by several factors including rate of feed intake, rate of digestion, nitrate conversion and movement of nitrite out of the rumen. Highly digestible green crops are a prime cause due to the first 2 factors mentioned. Nitrate by itself can have a caustic effect on the lining of the gut if present at high concentrations

There is however a degree of variation in the tolerance of some animals to nitrate poisoning and some degree of conditioning animals to higher levels of nitrates in feed is possible however the conditions that usually occur over the winter months all add to the risk of grazing sheep and lambs on cereal and especially canola crops. This, coupled with the fact that many crops will be top dressed with nitrogenous fertilizer this season due to both the cheaper price of urea and the fact that heavy crops last season will necessitate higher levels of nitrogen topdressing this year. There is also the added risk when weather is cold and cloudy that makes this season potentially a risky one. The application of some herbicides can also increase the risk of high levels of nitrate accumulating in the plant. Canola is an especially risky plant and the lamb trial at TAIC where lambs were grazing on volunteer canola was a good example of just how risky canola can be, especially in a mono culture situation where no alternative grazing options are present. The offer of a loose lick supplement can provide some assistance for animals grazing cereals, however it would seem the risk is increased on canola when supplements are provided.

The signs of nitrite and nitrate poisoning are slightly different. Nitrate poisoning causes diarrhoea and vomiting, excessive saliva production and obvious stomach pain. Nitrate poisoning may take a few days to develop whereas nitrite poisoning will occur within 6-24 hours after ingestion of toxic feed. Nitrite poisoning causes rapid difficult breathing, rapid pulse, staggering, tremors, blue chocolate coloured mucus membranes and the animals blood

is dark and chocolate in colour and clots poorly. The lambs at TAIC showed none of these signs except some belligerence when moving them to the yards. Subsequent weights showed they had not gained any weight after a 2-week period on actively growing plants. No lamb losses were recorded, but 2 weeks without weight gain was significant indicating a possible subclinical case of poisoning. Pregnant ewes that experience even a slight case of nitrite poisoning are prone to abortion due to lack of oxygen to the foetus.

The use of grazing cereals as a feed source in mixed farming operations is becoming more common practice as producers search for practices to improve efficiencies.

So how do we ensure we are not putting a significant section of our enterprise at risk? Although testing for nitrates is an obvious first step, it is probably not going to be the answer if cereal crops were sown with the intent to utilise them as a grazing option. There are a few practices that can minimise the risk albeit coupled with the obvious proviso that the stock are to be watched closely for symptoms at all times. If animals are hungry, do not put them into lush cereal crops, especially if they have been recently top-dressed with urea. Avoid grazing crops for a week after rainfall, heavy frosts or damp, miserable cloudy days. If we happen to experience a dry spell over the winter, wilting crops are also an added risk as nitrates are accumulated in the plant. One practice that is labour intensive but eliminates risk, is to rotate the animals on and off the cereal paddocks which allows time for nitrites to escape the rumen. Within the plant, nitrate levels are highest in the lower third of the stem and in lower concentrations in the leaves so don't be fooled by thinking a well grazed cereal crop has a lower risk. Anything that inhibits growth will increase nitrate accumulation in the lower half of the plant. Soil deficiencies in either Sulphur, Molybdenum and Phosphorus will boost nitrate uptake into the plant. Also be aware that if heavy rain has fallen during the growing season, watering dams may also contain higher than normal levels of nitrates especially if early applications of urea have been done.

What to do if you suspect a case of nitrate or nitrite poisoning? Very calmly move the affected animals off the crop back onto lower quality pastures. Be aware that some cereal hay or lucerne hay may not solve the problem as dried forages can also contain high levels of nitrates. Treatment for affected animals is limited and although they can be treated with intravenous injection of methylene blue, it is no longer approved for use by food producing animals so prevention is definitely better than the alternative.

A measured approach to the use of grazing cereals is best, oat crops are most dangerous along with canola but weather conditions and the use of fertilisers and herbicides, can make any cereal crop a potential risk of other factors are not in favour. Be aware of the risk, especially given the probability of higher than usual use of nitrogen fertilisers and protect the value of your livestock enterprise. If in any doubt, remove animals from the risk and consult your vet if you have any ongoing concerns.

The move to self-propelled sprayers

In terms of machinery investment, a self-propelled sprayer is second only to the purchase of a harvester. The outlay for a reasonably well equipped sprayer can easily exceed $500,000 and the choices are now greater than ever, so deciding on the best machine to suit your needs may take careful consideration.

Croplands officially released the RG1300B in Australia last year and farmers and contractors alike are already raving about the machine's fuel consumption and performance.

The perfect combination of the 339hp AGCO Power engine and tandem hydrostat cross-drive transmission, coupled with the new swash plate type wheel motor and the reduction planetary hub enables consistent engine RPMs and optimal power to the ground - all without sacrificing fuel efficiency. RoGator owners can instantly see the benefits when comparing their hectares covered per hour and their fuel consumption to that of their old sprayer. A pleasant surprise, given the amount of power and torque it exudes. A 6300 litre tank is standard on the RG1300B to further improve productivity and reduce the amount of time spent refilling.

The RoGator booms have been a benchmark for durability in the North American market and specifically designed for the rigours of daily contractor application. With the bar already raised high, the machine is more than suitable for both contractors and farmers alike. The three section boom breakaway is a standard feature of the RoGator, extending the life of the machine and helping to avoid costly downtime. The RG1300B has a variety of boom size options – 27.4 metre, 30.5 metre and 36.6 metre.

Croplands have modified the quality American machine especially for Australian conditions to ensure it performs even better. Croplands have designed their own spraying systems which have improved the machine's spraying precision at a wide range of speeds. The Air Pro three tiered boom system was formulated to automatically switch a second and third tiered set of nozzles via air valves at the nozzle body. This has created very fast spray on / off times and combined with up to 16 boom sections it provides extremely accurate auto-section response and application. Air Pro is especially useful for farmers with paddocks of an irregular shape to practically eliminate the double spraying of sensitive crops. The Air Pro system can be fitted with a range of nozzles to ensure constant and reliable application in virtually any spraying scenario encountered by Australian broadacre farmers today, including hilly terrain or contours. The new Air Pro design has been refined with stainless steel boom tubes for improved fast flow, back to tank recirculation and easy boom clean out.

Air Flush is another system that has made the process of decontaminating the sprayer fast and efficient by evacuating all chemical and boom cleaners from the boom lines with simple air pressure. In-cab operation provides a great tool for the operator.

RoGator RG1300B units now run the upgraded Raven tech package. The new Viper 4 console along with many features including mapping, record keeping, Smartrax hydraulic steering, auto shut off, 5 sensor boom level system, weather station and remote boom section control, up to 16 sections makes using this sprayer very easy.

Contact the team at Temora Truck and Tractor on 02 6977 1098 to discuss a Croplands self-propelled sprayer.

Temora Truck & Tractor Service PTY LTD

NEW HOLLAND AGRICULTURE

CROPLANDS

Soil moisture education focus of Landcare grant

Federal Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack (right) at Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre with (l-r) Local Landcare Co-ordinator (Temora/Bland) Megan Harris, and FarmLink staff Colin Fritsch, Cindy Cassidy, Kellie Jones and Lyndal Turner.

FarmLink welcomed Federal Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack to Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre in late May where he announced FarmLink as a recipient of a $55,000 grant under the National Landcare Programme Sustainable Agriculture Small Grants Round 2015-16.

The focus of the grant is education in soil moisture management to reduce erosion risks across farming operations in Southern New South Wales.

The project will use FarmLink's existing Weather or Not publication to deliver soil moisture information across the growing season to landholders across SNSW, paired with the inclusion of a workshop looking at soil moisture and seasonally appropriate management practices, to be held at the annual FarmLink Open Day on September 2 at TAIC.

Mr McCormack said FarmLink had received the grant which would support Australia's vibrant, innovative and competitive agriculture sector. "FarmLink will receive $55,000 to support their successful project helping local farmers understand soil moisture conditions to boost their productivity," Mr McCormack said.

"This project will help share local knowledge and skills across the sector to boost farm productivity and protect the natural resources that our agricultural industries depend on.

"The Small Grants Round is an important component of the National Landcare Programme which ultimately delivers on the Coalition Government's commitment to support profitable returns at the farm gate. Mr McCormack congratulated FarmLink on its success and said he was looking forward to seeing the projects deliver results for our local farmers.

Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister Keith Pitt said the Nationals in Government were working closely with volunteer Landcare groups and farming organisations to strengthen the Landcare program and prioritise works where they can have greatest impact. "The Coalition's strong investment of $1 billion over four years in the National Landcare Programme demonstrates our great commitment to support Landcare in Australia and ensure our lands remain a solid foundation for our agricultural sector," Mr Pitt said.

"Projects like FarmLink will contribute greatly to increasing the knowledge and skills sharing of local farmers, leading to higher productivity and yields, and boosting the local economy."

Commonwealth Bank confirms commitment

FarmLink is happy to announce an ongoing partnership with the Commonwealth Bank, after the agribusiness specialists reconfirmed their commitment to agriculture in Southern New South Wales by embarking in a new partnership agreement with FarmLink as a Silver Partner.

In this issue of The Link we continue introducing you to the people behind the Commonwealth Bank Agribusiness Team, this time focussing on a Regional and Agribusiness Banking Graduate - Courtney Altmeier.

Although she now calls Wagga home, Courtney grew up with her two older sisters and younger brother on a cattle/cropping property near Walla Walla NSW. Her family is local to the Albury region where they operate a retail butchery.

Courtney believes that growing up on a family property has given her the exposure to understand the management practices that take place on rural properties.

"This built the foundation for my passion for Australian agriculture. From here I studied agriculture throughout high school and went on to study Bachelor of Agriculture/Bachelor of Business at the University of New England in Armidale NSW.

"It was during my University studies that I began to fully understand the constraints climate and other environment factors place on production and the direct impact of these factors on the financial wellbeing of many rural properties and communities.

What do you see as most important in your role as a graduate?

"The graduate role at the Commonwealth Bank is an exciting role which allows me to learn and experience various divisions of the bank and the different aspects of banking. In this role I am able to get involved in multiple projects and work with team leaders and other graduates from across Australia. However, the part I see as most important is the ability to work in a team environment and to interact and support our clients to get the most out of their business.

For Courtney, the most exciting thing about agriculture today is the technology, both available and being developed.

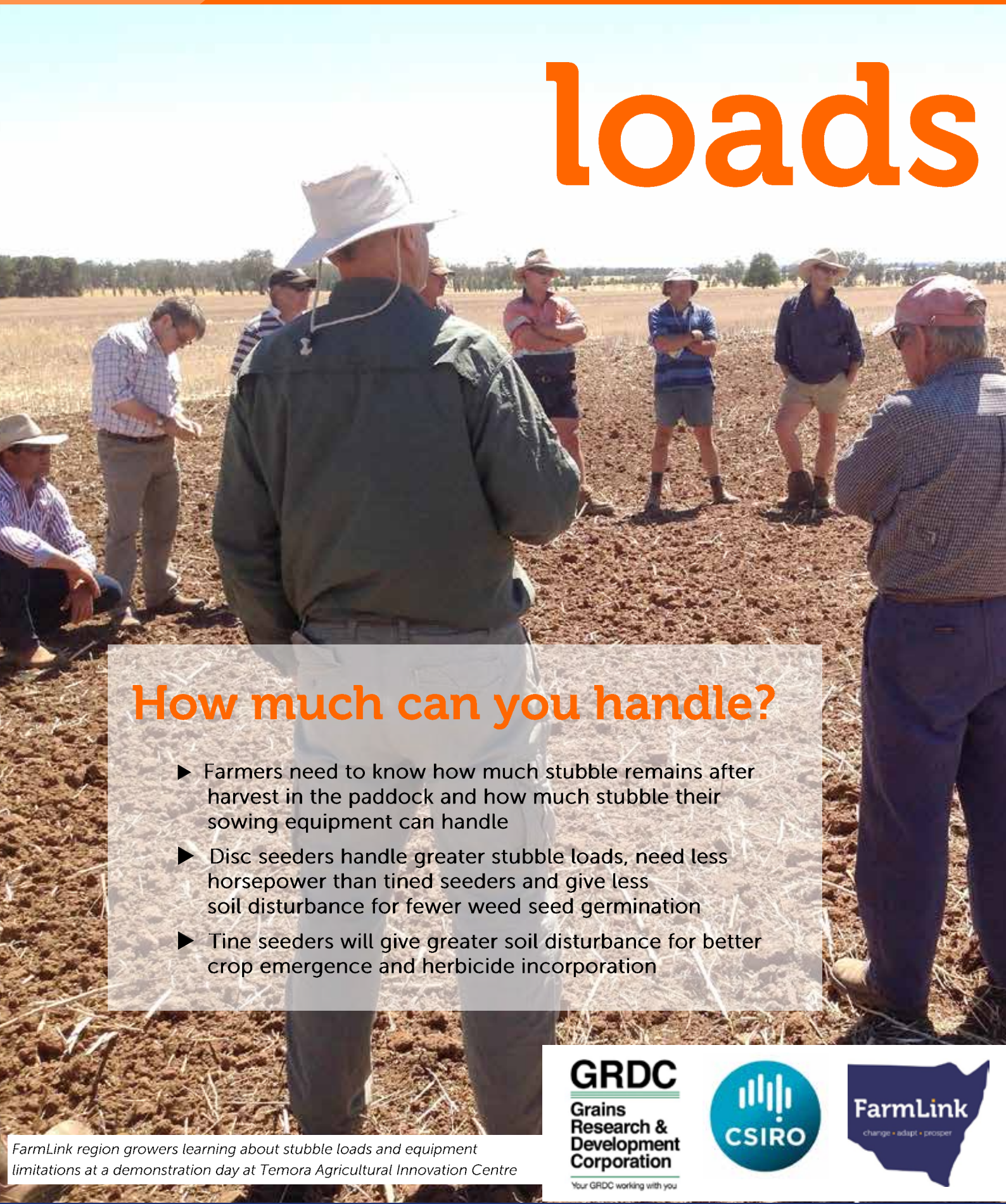
"Technology and innovation has the ability to enhance production in a sustainable manner whether it be; controlled traffic, variable rate fertiliser application or genetics to improve yield and quality. I believe moving forward technology and innovation will play a major part in the sustainability of Australian agriculture."

Away from work, Courtney likes to think of herself as an outdoor person and can always be found outside in her spare time, whether it be walking through the paddocks checking pastures and stock, or riding horses. She also likes to get involved in local sporting clubs and playing netball. And secretly ... she's all for a bit of retail therapy.

If there was one thing you could control in the future, what would it be?

One thing I would control in the future is the ease of access to quality education for both children and adults in remote rural communities.

Stubble loads



How much can you handle?

- Farmers need to know how much stubble remains after harvest in the paddock and how much stubble their sowing equipment can handle
- Disc seeders handle greater stubble loads, need less horsepower than tined seeders and give less soil disturbance for fewer weed seed germination
- Tine seeders will give greater soil disturbance for better crop emergence and herbicide incorporation

FarmLink region growers learning about stubble loads and equipment limitations at a demonstration day at Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre

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Managing stubble to cope with seeding equipment limitations

Assessment is key

Assessing stubble load in paddocks is an important consideration after harvest and during the fallow period leading up to sowing the next crop. There is a need to know how much stubble is likely to cause a problem at sowing so that actions can be put in place to deal with this in between harvest and sowing. The maximum benefit of stubble retention will be achieved when all the available stubble is left as ground cover but will not cause blockages of sowing equipment or crop establishment issues by the time the next crop is going into the ground. For many farmers in the region, stubbles will be grazed immediately after harvest, so being able to assess condition of the residues after stock are removed can help in deciding if other treatments such as mulching or burning is required.

Conservation farming technology has evolved, in general, as a result of the many advances in engineering with seeders. There have still been problems with establishing crops, but air seeders with discs or tines can give precise seed placement, good soil contact with seed and handle high levels of residues compared with the old combines. Sowing operations are faster and smoother with larger capacity machines and fewer blockages. The development of accurate GPS guidance systems has encouraged the adoption of zero till and use of inter-row sowing.

These guidelines give some insight into the different sowing systems and how crop stubble needs to be managed for each.

Tine seeders

For many farmers the move to direct drilling techniques came about by adapting the sowing equipment that they had on hand. In most cases that has involved converting old combines by replacing the wide tines with narrow points and increasing the spaces between them.For many farmers this has been a gradual process. As the conservation farming system proved viable on their farm, machinery has been updated to the latest technology.

Tine seeders have been the most popular choice because they are cost effective, have a greater range of design features to suit different soil types, give greater soil disturbance for disease control and seedling vigor, and better herbicide efficacy. Some problems such as increased soil throw from higher speed planting, and fertilizer toxicity from the higher rates in proximity to seed have had engineering solutions. Narrow point design has changed to separate seed and fertilizer and prevent excessive soil throw.

Photo 1 - Tine seeders have been modified to increase stubble handling capacity. Photo - Phil Bowden

This is the first section of a four page fact sheet created by FarmLink as a part of the GRDC National Stubble Initiative (CSP:00174).
The remainder of the fact sheet can be downloaded from the projects section of the FarmLink website, or contact us via farmlink@farmlink.com.au or 02 6980 1333 if you would like us to send a copy to you

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Legal advice generously provided by

TressCox Lawyers

Out and About

FarmLink board member Lisa Anderson (left) catches up with Nicole Baxter (GroundCover Associate Editor) and Lyndal Turner (FarmLink Administration Officer) after the AGM.

FarmLink board member Bernard Hart (right) farewells Lyndon McNab (left) and former CSIRO researcher James Hunt at the March AGM.

New FarmLink board member Michael Sinclair (right) and Murray Long talk about the livestock operations at TAIC following the FarmLink AGM.

FarmLink board member Robert Patterson (right) with John Pattison (left) and Bruce Thompson after the FarmLink AGM at TAIC.

Celebrations followed the launch of the TAIC Irrigated Crop Breeding Precinct on April 14.

FarmLink board chairman Darryl Harper talks to Jean-Yves Merchez of Dow AgroSciences at the launch of the TAIC Irrigated Crop Breeding Precinct.

Out on the Farm

An update from Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre (TAIC)

The much anticipated Autumn break which fell on Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre and further afield throughout southern New South Wales slotted perfectly into the 2016 cropping program for TAIC.

Over 400 hectares have been sown for season 2016, with a mixture of wheat, canola, lupins, oats barley and pastures in the commercial crops, plus the variety of trials which have been meticulously planted by collaborators Landmark, Bayer, AGT, CSIRO, CSU and newcomers this year, Dow AgroSciences, across a total of 56 hectares of trial paddocks, which will form part of the focus for FarmLink's Annual Open Day set down for September 2, 2016.

The newly established Irrigated Cropping Precinct is boasting a healthy green colour as the early sown trials have emerged thanks to the pre-sowing irrigation which was applied in early April.

FarmLink staff opted to begin dry sowing in late-April, a decision which paid off thanks to the early May break which saw a total of 58 mm falling in the TAIC rain gauge between May 7 and 12.

Commercial cropping at the centre consists of 130 hectares of wheat (Spitfire and Suntop), 100 hectares of canola (Bonito), 100 hectares of barley (LaTrobe, White Stallion, Hindmarsh), 32 hectares of oats (Eurabbie) and 7 hectares of pastures.

Seedlings are now emerging well thanks to the good moisture levels and warm days and staff are conducting regular crop inspections to keep an eye out for any insect damage.

On the livestock front at TAIC, the MLA Satellite Flock has been moved onto the lucerne pastures which were bolstered by the recent rain. The Artificially Inseminated ewes are expected to start lambing in July, which will be a very exciting next phase for the project.

Like all mixed farming operations, the need for livestock feed vs the preparation of stubbles for sowing had to be balanced particularly before the welcomed break, but with pastures now growing nicely, that is becoming less of a challenge. The planting of oats as a combined weed management strategy and grazing option will also assist the livestock coming into winter.

Diary

June 16 - Partners in Grain Farm Business Management Essentials

July 20 - Partners in Grain Risky Business Workshop

July 29 - FarmLink Annual Dinner

August 1 – Making Sense of Precision Ag

September 2 – FarmLink Open Day

September 20-22 - Henty Machinery Field Days

September 28-30 – Universities Crop Competition

Current Projects

- GRDC Crop Sequencing (CSP-00146)
- GRDC/Department of Agriculture Cropfacts Soil Carbon (CRF00002)
- GRDC Early Sowing (CSP-00178)
- GRDC Harvest weed seed control in the Southern region (2015.03.06D)
- GRDC Managing Subsoil acidity (GRDC DAN00206)
- GRDC Regional Soil Testing (DAN0000168)
- GRDC Stubble Initiative (CSP-00174)
- GRDC Strategic Tillage (DAN00152)
- Landcare Soil Moisture Education
- Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Resource Flock Database Satellite Flock

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Our major project funding partner is GRDC Grains Research & Development Corporation Your GRDC working with you