



Maintaining Profitable Farming Systems with Retained Stubble

The GRDC initiative, Maintaining Profitable Farming Systems with Retained Stubble, or the “Stubble Initiative”, is a five year program to address the issues encountered by growers when retaining stubbles from one year to the next.

Based in the southern cropping region, the initiative involves farming systems groups in Victoria, South Australia, southern and central New South Wales and Tasmania collaborating with research organisations and agribusiness to explore and address issues for growers that impact the profitability of cropping systems with stubble, including pests, diseases, weeds, nutrition and the physical aspects of sowing and establishing crops in heavy residues.

The initiative aims to address the issues with stubble retention, quantify the effects that these issues are having on yield and profitability, develop practical solutions and then extend the knowledge to grain growers and their advisers.

The farming systems groups involved are developing regional guidelines and recommendations that growers can implement on-farm to help them to consistently retain stubbles. The ultimate goal is to provide southern growers with practical information to guide their crop management, underpinned by results from local trials across the southern cropping region.

While each grower group is investigating their own locally relevant issues, there are common issues across the region that are also being addressed in a consistent manner by the groups, with the support of the CSIRO research team led by Dr John Kirkegaard.

The groups and organisations involved are BCG, on behalf of Southern Farming Systems, Victorian No Till Farming Association and Irrigated Cropping Council; Mallee Sustainable Farming Systems Inc; Riverine Plains Inc; Central West Farming Systems; Farmlink Research Limited; Eyre Peninsula Agricultural Research Foundation; Lower Eyre Agricultural Development Association; MacKillop Farm Management Group; Upper North Farming Systems; and Yeruga Crop Research, on behalf of the Mid North High Rainfall Farming Systems Group and the Yorke Peninsula Alkaline Soils Group. Hart Field Site group is also participating in the initiative, with South Australian Grains Industry Trust (SAGIT) funded trials (H0113 and H0114).

Research support is being provided by CSIRO, and SA Research and Development Institute’s Naomi Scholz has been appointed to assist with co-ordination and communication.

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GRDC Project codes: BWD00024, CWF00018, EPF00001, CSP00174, LEA00002, MFM00006, MFS00003, RPI00009, UNF00002, YCR00003, DAN00170.

