

Introducing Sturt Grain

Introducing Sturt Grain – new MFMG sponsor in 2012

Leading Australian grain marketer Emerald Group (Emerald) has expanded its presence in South Australia by launching a new Adelaide based company to be known as *Sturt Grain*. This new business will focus on the Eastern South Australia region.

The Chairman of Emerald, Alan Winney, indicated that the establishment of *Sturt Grain* was an important plank in Emerald's strategy to work in partnership with Australian grain growers by providing local representation and focused products in specific regions. This business model has proved very successful in many other Australian grain regions, including the Eyre Peninsula of SA where the Emerald Joint Venture with local growers now has a 30% market share.

"*Sturt Grain* will operate from 2 Hutt Street in Adelaide and will be headed by General Manager Tim Burrow, with Gary Wehr as a Grain Merchant coordinating activities across the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula regions, Julianne Fiebig as a Grain Merchant focusing on the Mallee and South East regions of SA, Ben Harfield as the Regional Trading Manager and Louise Fitzgerald as Office Administrator.

The *Sturt Grain* office in Adelaide will grow the Emerald footprint (either directly, or in conjunction with its JV partners) to 15 grower focused offices, located throughout the Australian grain belt. Growers seeking more information on products should phone (08) 8100 3777, search www.sturtgrain.com.au or visit the office at 2 Hutt Street, Adelaide.



Australian Pulse Market News

The key points from the April 10th Market News are;

- ** On-going support for desi chickpea means confidence in pricing for the coming crop
- ** Kabuli producers, both small and large, face increased competition from increased plantings in Canada and Mexico.
- ** Canada and Europe are dry for this time of year which means a potential for reduced production, also supporting pricing if this continues. This is pertinent for field peas and faba beans.
- ** Lentil pricing is flat because of large stocks of unsold poor quality grain from 2010. Canadians will reduce plantings with similar sentiment in Australia.
- ** Lupins are also in the doldrums, both Australian Sweet and Australian Albus. Production will decline accordingly.

For further information contact Wayne Hawthorne on mob 0429 647455 or pulse.wayne@bigpond.com

Complete Market News available at www.pulseaus.com.au

New Oat Variety Update

The National Oat Breeding Program is pleased to announce the launch of Bannister^A (tested as WAOAT 2354) a new potential milling oat variety for WA. Bannister was launched by the Minister of Agriculture, WA at the Wagin Woolarama last Friday March 9. Minimal seed is available from SeedNet. An information brochure about Bannister is available from Jenny Garlinge at DAFWA ph. 9368 3501 or email jennifer.garlinge@agric.wa.gov.au

In other news, SeedMark now has the rights to commercialise any new varieties released from the WA component of the National Oat Breeding Program. WAOAT2332 is the next variety earmarked for release and seed should be available from SeedMark in 2014.

Varieties from the SA component of the program are still available from Viterra. The two new cereal cyst nematode (CCN) resistant and tolerant dwarf varieties will be available in 2013 (Wombat^A) and 2014 (Dunnart^A).

Bannister, Wombat and Dunnart are now available for comparison on the NVT website.

Forester^A, a new late hay oat variety was also launched at the Sungold field days at Warnambool in February. Seed of this variety is available from AGF Seeds. An information brochure about Forester is available from AEXCO, AGF Seeds or on the SARDI website

http://www.sardi.sa.gov.au/crops/oats_and_vetch

Information provided by Sue Hoppo
SARDI Research Scientist - National Oat Breeding Program



Agriculture in the Naracoorte Herald

The Naracoorte Herald have undertaken to have more of a focus on agriculture in future editions.

This will allow us to raise the profile of agriculture in the region and for us to share some of the great stories and achievements that are happening every day .

If you, or your neighbour, are doing something that is positive and would be of interest to others please let us know and we will organise to get the information out there to the wider community.

Did you know that some people believe that all farmers do is drive around and check their sheep? It is time to change this perception..... And here is our perfect opportunity.

Email information to mfm@bigpond.com or phone Krysteen 0408 655108

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Insurances falling due? Put MGA to work for you.

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WE WORK FOR YOU!

The advertisement for MGA Insurance Brokers features a black and white photograph of a man in a field of wheat, looking towards the camera. The text is arranged in a clean, professional layout with a mix of bold and regular fonts. The MGA logo is prominently displayed in the bottom right corner.

Introducing the new benchmark for high yielding, long season milling wheats.

Forrest[®]

- APW Classification in VIC & SA (pending NSW)
- Triple rust resistant plus MR-MS to YLS and MR to Black point
- First wheat with resistance to Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus

Seednet

www.seednet.com.au

LM070 Seednet Ad 2009/10 AW.indd 1 2/11/11 4:40 PM

The advertisement for Seednet's Forrest wheat variety includes a close-up photograph of the wheat grain. The text is presented in a clear, sans-serif font, with the product name 'Forrest' in a larger, bold font. The Seednet logo is positioned at the bottom left, and the website URL is at the bottom right. A small technical reference code is visible at the very bottom.



better seeds, better choices

Update from Seedmark

I would like to update you on an exciting development in the Australian Pasture Seed and Field Crop market. Heritage Seeds (a Barenbrug company) has made an offer to acquire the Seedmark business with a view to finalizing the transaction in late March 2012.

The Heritage Seeds and Seedmark product portfolios are very complimentary and will enable the “new” Heritage Seeds to offer a broader range of pasture and forage seeds, whilst adding the Seedmark range of field crops. The end result will be a more extensive and complete product and service offering from the one organization which will enable us to further strengthen our relationships with our distribution partners.

The acquisition of Seedmark by Heritage Seeds will enable the fully integrated business to maximize its offering by:

- ** combining a more complete, market leading product range,
- ** increasing the capability and coverage of our sales and marketing and customer service teams,
- ** increasing the opportunities of our current production grower base,
- ** fully leveraging our significant investment in breeding, research and development, and partnerships,
- ** fully utilising the new Heritage Seeds logistics facility that will open in the first half of 2012.

As we work to finalize the transaction and commence the integration process, it will be business as usual, particularly as we lead into the all-important autumn season. The Heritage Seeds and Seedmark sales and customer service teams will continue to sell and supply their respective product ranges through the season. A smooth integration will be critical to the success of the acquisition and we will keep all our customers and other stakeholders informed of our plans and progress.

Importantly for our growers, the current seed production contracts/agreements will flow through to the new entity without disruption.

We firmly believe that the acquisition of Seedmark by Heritage Seeds will deliver significant value through the entire seed supply chain and we look forward to continuing to work with our growers, customers and clients to share the benefits.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the key Heritage Seeds or Seedmark staff

Kind Regards

Craig Myall

General Manager

Seedmark



Jason Clothier



"Profiting from Prime Livestock Production"

Family: I am married to Elyse and have two little boys named Patrick who is 2 1/2 yrs old and Geoffery born on 30th March 2012

Where do you live: 10 kms west of Naracoorte

All little bit about our property:

The family farm consists of two properties "Yacca Downs" and "Clearview".

"Yacca Downs"

"Yacca Downs" is the home of Woolumbool Poll Dorset, White Suffolk, Merino and Multi meat studs. This is 701 Hectares of mainly non-wetting deep sand and some sand over clay. The studs are run in conjunction with commercial wool and prime lamb enterprise

"Clearview"

This property is 78.1 Ha of heavy clay flats with clover based pastures. "Clearview" is for beef production system running 70 cow herd of Angus background, The Steers in this enterprise are turned off as yearling's. The Heifers are mated as yearlings for six weeks to obtain early maturing animals and to speed up genetic gain within the herd.

These properties are managed by my parents Phil and Sharon, myself and brother Aaron.

Any other enterprises: I also run my own fencing contracting business known as Jase's Fencing

Off farm interests: My of farm interest in sport are hockey I am currently the vice president of the Kingston Lucindale Hockey Club.

Anything else you would like to share:

I have worked in Western Australia for five years as a general farm hand in Borden and as a crop overseer at willemenup merino stud. After my stint in WA I ventured of to the UK on a working holiday in the east anglia region and spent a period of 11 months over two years working as a farm hand for their harvest and seeding program.



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MacKillop Irrigation Management Group

Important Dates for all Irrigators

The MIMG is currently putting some information sessions together to assist with improving efficiencies of your irrigation systems and to therefore save you all money and resources.

Each session will be run over two days (locations to be advised)

Knowing your Soil, Water Quality and Plants

Will focus on ensuring the right amount of water is applied to achieve the best result for productivity, sustainability and efficiency for both the resource and producers



17th and 24th July



Knowing your Delivery System?

Sessions will be held specific to surface irrigation and pivots. These sessions will follow up on the initial series to ensure the delivery systems being used are the most efficient that they can possibly be

10th and 17th October

More information available in the near future



FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

We're answering the question: "How can the cost of production be reduced..?"

Informing Today's Decisions For Tomorrow's Profits

Contact:
 Tim Powell
 Integrated Irrigation
 13 Biddack St
 Poreke, SA 5177
 Ph: 0408 231 028
 Email: tim@integratedirrigation.com.au

Ever thought fungal sprays are expensive?
 Ever wondered how to predict yield of crops at the start of the season?
 Agronomic sciences have leapt forward as recently as 2 years ago!

ASK US ABOUT REDUCING YOUR INPUT COSTS

Reduce the number of sprays you apply and direct how much fertiliser to apply in a given year to match crop requirements and disease risk
AT THE PADDOCK SCALE!!

Evaluating drop tube and sprinkler irrigation for white clover seed production

By James De Barro, Alpha Group Consulting

Snapshot of 2011/12 irrigation season results

The final irrigation season for the research has been completed. A full report will be compiled towards the end of 2012 with this brief providing a snapshot of the season's results.

The treatments involved a combination of drop tubes and regulated IWOB sprinklers which were compared to the pre-existing non-regulated rotators. The drop tubes and regulated IWOB sprinklers were configured to apply both 80% and 100% of each irrigations anticipated application. The rotators applied 100% of anticipated application. The aim of the research was to compare white clover seed yield achieved under the different emitter types and different irrigation volumes.

The irrigation season commenced on 13 October 2011 and harvest occurred on 18 January 2012. 213 mm of irrigation was applied across 11 irrigation events. 63mm of rain fell through the production period with the main rain event of 23mm occurring on 18 December. The total effective combined rain and irrigation total was 257mm or 2.57ML/ha. A field day was conducted on 22nd December to view the research site when the clover was in full flower.

To facilitate harvest with the small plot header, treatments were windrowed immediately prior to harvest. The crop had been desiccated with Sprayseed 7 days earlier. 20 replicates of each treatment were harvested. The samples were cleaned and weighed with average yield determined. Clean yields for each treatment are tabled below:

Treatment	Drop Tube 80%	Drop Tube 100%	IWOB 80%	IWOB 100%	Rotator 100%
Yield (kg/ha)	399.5	407.1	385.2	448.7	405.1

Statistical analysis of the data determined that there was no significant difference beyond that created by chance between any of the treatments. In other words, the treatments neither increased nor decreased seed yield compared to each other. These results reflect those determined in the first season of the research in 2009/10.

The research's results suggest that drop tube irrigation is as acceptable as overhead sprinkler irrigation for white clover seed production. There is also a suggestion that reducing irrigation output below a perceived acceptable application volume does not significantly reduce seed yield. There are a number of accompanying agronomic and management factors that preside over how these results are utilised in a production setting. These factors, as well as commentary regarding irrigation scheduling practices of white clover seed production, will be discussed in more detail in the final report which will be available at the end of the year.

The research would not have been possible without the support of the White Clover Grower's Association, South East Natural Resource Management Board, Irrigation Components, Water Dynamics Mt Gambier, Tallageira and Alpha Group Consulting.



From dust bowls to food bowls: Australia's conservation farming revolution

Source: The Conversation

Author: John Kirkegaard

The misconception of Australian agriculture being inefficient and unsustainable is deeply concerning for me. Images of dusty ploughed fields and dying sheep and trees are misleading. On the contrary, if there was an Olympics for conservation agriculture Australian farmers would win gold!

Far from being inefficient and unsustainable, Australia is leading the world in conservation agriculture techniques. Conservation agriculture which emerged from the "dustbowl" years of the 1930s is based on three key principles - minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover, and a diversity of plant species. I call it the three R's - reduce tillage, retain crop residues, rotate crops.

Three developments brought Australian farming from the tillage-based agriculture that dominated from the 1800s up to the 1980s to the conservation farming revolution:

- The development of herbicides. These chemicals have been refined and are now effective at targeting specific weeds with minimal environmental impact. Before herbicides, farmers' only option for weed control was ploughing the soil to kill the weeds and to prepare a seedbed for planting. Soils had to be ploughed repeatedly because every time it rained new weeds emerged.
- The evolution of more effective and efficient machinery to sow through crop residue into undisturbed soil. Herbicides allowed crops to be grown without ploughing, but machinery designed to sow into soft, bare, cultivated soil had to be redesigned to sow into undisturbed soil and through a mulch of residue left from the previous crop. Farmers led the innovations in machinery to make this happen.
- The introduction of broadleaf rotation crops (lupins, peas, canola) to underpin weed and disease control in conservation agriculture systems. Rotating crops is necessary for conservation agriculture. Weeds and diseases will build up in the residue and be carried from one crop to the next if the same crop is grown year after year. In addition, weeds soon become resistant to herbicides if the same herbicide is used repeatedly. By rotating the types of crop that grow, the diseases of one crop cannot build up and the types of herbicides used for the weeds can be changed each year. Legume rotation crops (peas and lupins) also make their own nitrogen which reduces the need for fertiliser.

But we didn't stop in the 1980s.

Farmers can now manage their fields down to centimetre accuracy. Precision agriculture is continuing the revolution, introducing controlled traffic, zone management and in-crop sensing to improve farming systems' efficiency and sustainability.

Controlled traffic is where farmers keep all of the machinery on the same tracks in the field (up and back instead of round and around) so that only those areas are compacted by the wheels. This reduces compaction on the field, reduces wasted spray and fertiliser due to overlaps, and makes the tractor much more fuel efficient because it is driving on harder soil. Better growth of crops in the un-compacted area compensates for the narrow tracks.

Harvesters can also stay on these tracks - with GPS guidance and an ability to measure crop yield on the run - can produce yield maps to show the farmer which parts of the field are performing better than others. Different amounts of fertiliser or other inputs can then be applied to the different zones, further increasing efficiency. Colour sensing monitors fitted to tractors can even sense how green the crop is and adjust the amount of fertiliser that is applied as the tractor is passing over the crop.

So it is now possible with GPS and optical sensing for farmers to deliver nutrients or herbicides exactly where they are needed in the paddock within a 2cm margin of error. This not only reduces costs to the farmer but reduces the impact of these chemicals and residues on the environment.

There are still many challenges for the future. These include managing herbicide resistant weeds that can emerge when the same herbicides are used repeatedly as the only form of weed control. Rye-grass is one of the most challenging weeds for no-till systems in Australia. Careful management – including rotating the types of herbicides that are used, destroying the seeds through collection at harvest time and growing vigorous crops that can out-compete the weeds – are all part of the integrated management required. Diseases that can be carried on crops residues and roots can also create problems, but selecting resistant varieties, rotating crops and judicious use of fungicides provide good control options.

Crop yield has doubled in the last 30 years under conservation agriculture systems. But there is still more scope to improve yields as there remains a considerable gap of 30-50% between the potential yield in experimental plots and what is being achieved on farms. Though some of this difference relates to pure economics and risk that farmers have to consider, new innovations to increase yield without higher risk are emerging.

We are breeding new varieties to take advantage of the conservation farming techniques, such as wheat varieties with longer coleoptiles to emerge through the mulch of stubble and vigorous shoots and roots to compete better with weeds. New rapid real-time environment and crop sensing technology will provide quicker analysis of soil and crop conditions and allow farmers to make more timely decisions about fertiliser and other inputs.

As much of the change to farming with conservation agriculture is in the soil, a new focus on root-soil biology research rather than on the above-ground parts of the plant may provide new ways to improve crop performance under these new conservation systems. Though soil improvements such as earthworms and organic matter are welcome, not all of the organisms that build-up are “crop-friendly”. We need to understand how to avoid the effects of the disease and inhibitory organisms while capturing the benefits of better soil.

Finally the “Holy Grail” for farmers – improving accuracy of weather and seasonal forecasting – is being made possible by information being gathered internationally about the ocean temperatures and how they influence our climate. Better forecasts allow farmers to better match crops and inputs to the seasonal condition. They can grow better crops with less input and reduce their financial risks as well as those to the environment.

Much of my research success can be attributed to the strong relationships I have developed over the years with farmers and farm consultants who are often first to alert us to interesting factors affecting their crops and the difficulties encountered when introducing conservation farming techniques. They are genuinely committed to preserving and improving their land and providing safe and nutritious food and we should be aware and proud of the world-leading revolution in conservation agriculture they have achieved in 30 years.

Author is John Kirkegaard – Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO

John Kirkegaard receives funding from the Grains Research and Development Corporation and Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation to conduct research at the long-term tillage site at Harden.

CSIRO is a Founding Partner of The Conversation which is an independent source of information, analysis and commentary from the university and research sector – written by acknowledged experts, curated by professional editors and delivered direct to the public.

If you want to know more you can watch the public lecture John Kirkegaard gave at the Academy of Sciences at <http://www.science.org.au/events/publiclectures/ac/kirkegaard.html>