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Kerribee Field Day

Thursday 27th August

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Waikerie Field Day

'A Decade of Difference'

More information on this page or
www.msfp.org.au

Oil Mallee Workshop

Tuesday 8th September

Tuesday 8th September
DPI Irymple (Mildura)
10am to 3pm

Speakers will discuss all aspects of the Oil Mallee industry already established in the West Australian Mallee. More information from MSF on 03 5021 9100.



Sustainability Snapshots

Volume 1, Issue 5, August 2009

Waikerie in the Spotlight

In the lead up to the 2009 Waikerie Field Day, the SA Stock Journal recently featured an article on perennial trial work being conducted at the site. In the article, MSF Waikerie Core Site farmer Allen Buckley talked about his work to maximise the value of both cropping and grazing using a zoning ap-



Allen Buckley stars in the Stock Journal

proach. You can read the full article at www.msfp.org.au/ articles.

The work on grazing perennials is being conducted as part of the CRC Future Farm Industries EverCrop project led in the Mallee by Trish Hill from the CSIRO. Ms. Hill will present the trials as part of an extensive and varied line-up at the 2009 Field Day.

This year, the Waikerie Field Day celebrates its 10th Birthday and so is appropriately themed "A Decade of Difference". Join guest speakers as they look back at farming in the Mallee 10 years ago, how it stands today and where it is heading in the future.

Topics this year include farm

finance, machinery and technology, crop varieties, perennials, weeds and livestock.

Allergic to the GP?

A men's health pit stop will be held in the main tent with the aim (and in the words of the Field Day Committee) of making the farmer as well as the farm sustainable. Basic checks of blood pressure, waist measurements, skin cancers and the like will provide indicators of potential health problems. Information on further resources and services will also be available. The 2009 Waikerie Field Day is being held on 1st September 2009 with registration at 8.45 am. Entry is \$10 for MSF Members, \$20 for non members and offers great value with the inclusion of a fantastic roast lunch, field day booklet and a packed day of relevant information. The full program is available at www.msfp.org.au

From The Boardroom

Dear Members,

I have been hinting at the announcement of MSF's new Executive Manager for a while now and although it has not yet been publicly announced, I wanted you to be the first to know. I am delighted to reveal that Mike Mooney has been appointed to the role of MSF Executive Manager and will take up this role next Monday, 24th August. Mike comes to us with a great deal of local knowledge as well as extensive management experience. Mike's name may already be familiar to you as the former Area General Manager, North West Victoria for Telstra Country-wide. You can find out more about Mike later

when he has had a chance to settle in!

There are lots of field days happening at the moment in all three Mallee states and I hope you can find time to attend one or two of them. If you need help with transport to the Waikerie Field Day, MSF will be providing a couple of buses to take you there—one through the Millewa and one along the Mallee Track. Just give the office a ring if you are interested in booking a seat. I had better get going and make sure Kerribee is in tip top shape for our Field Day on 27th August. Hope to see you there.

Jim Maynard
Chairman

Free Buses to Waikerie Field Day

Bus 1

Robinvale-Duyen-Mallee Hwy-
Waikerie

Bus 2

Mildura-Sturt Hwy (Millewa) -
Renmark-Waikerie

Booking Essential: 03 5021
9100 or admin@msfp.org.au

New SA Trial Sites



Grains Research & Development Corporation

Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. gratefully acknowledges the continued funding and support received from GRDC for the Karoonda Water Use Efficiency Project and the July CRDC/MSF Grains Update in Swan Hill.

Karoonda

As part of a national initiative to boost water use efficiency in farming systems, GRDC is funding a major new farming systems project across the Mallee. As well as a large amount of ongoing work at Waikerie, Mallee Sustainable Farming in partnership with CSIRO and Rural Solutions is establishing a major new MSF field site on the property of Peter and Hannah Loller at Lowaldie near Karoonda. An important feature of the trials is that they aren't just placed on one "average" soil type but are designed in a way that covers the full range of soil types that Mallee farmers have to deal with. The first of the trials are being established by CSIRO and Rural Solutions SA at the site this year, with more to come over the rest of the life of the 4-year project in partnership with local growers.



Bill Davoren, CSIRO at work on the 150m long plots at the Karoonda MSF Field Site.



Mustard growing at the MSF Karoonda Site

Brinkley

A new branched broomrape trial site has been established at Michael and Andrew Willis' property on Jarvis Road, Brinkley. The site has a total of 11 different trials conducted by Rural Solutions SA and the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. Although this site is in a broomrape quarantine zone it is emphasised that the trials will be of interest to all low rainfall farmers. The trails include a comprehensive broadleaf herbicide trial that demonstrates the effectiveness of herbicide use in pasture for broadleaf weed and broomrape control. You will be able to see for yourself the striking difference between the growth of Group B resistant Angel Medic Vs Herald Medics as well as viewing the growth of low-rainfall Balansa clover and Rufus triticale. This trial also demonstrates the use of selective herbicides in regenerating pasture. There is also a plot featuring low rainfall Juncea canola, with different seed treatments and conventional canola for comparison. Different rates of the selective Clearfield herbicide Intervix will for the control of broadleaf weeds and broomrape in Juncea canola will be investigated. A perennial grass demonstration will also feature. Grasses trailed include low rainfall Cocksfoot (a potential alternative to veldt); WA Veldt and SA Veldt. The DLWBC have established two trials with a broomrape eradication focus. One trial focuses on which commercial broad acre crops may be used to cause seed bank decline. The other trail investigates alternative fumigates that can be used to control broomrape. Finally there is a large trial that looks at how changes in timing of commonly used herbicide application may lead to better broomrape control. Broadstrike, Ally and Intervix have been applied to all plots at 500, 750, 1000, and 1250 Growing Degree Days (GDD) to determine the most effective time for each herbicide. GDD refers to cumulative average soil temperatures from the break of the season. After all that walking you're bound to have worked up an appetite so we'll have a BBQ and some drinks waiting for you after all the hard work. For catering purposes please register your attendance by contacting Tamara Rohrlach on 0428 115 205.

Recognising Women Farmers

MSF has engaged Mildura based company Focus Consulting to conduct a series of free seminars for women farmers. The project is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under its Australia's Farming Future initiative.

The seminars will be run in six centres across the Mallee and will include the topics of Networking, Leadership, Manage-

ment Skills, Corporate Governance and Time Management.

The one day free presentations (which include lunch) will be held at

Ouyen	28th August
Wentworth	7th September
Loxton	23rd Spetember
Werrimull	20th October
Balranald	22nd October
Murray Bridge	24th October

If you would like more information or to book a place, contact Focus Consulting on 03 5022 1859 or lin@focusconsulting.com.au



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Improving Winter Pastures



ProGibb Trial at a Glance

As extra production is at a cost you need to be in a situation of feed shortage to justify application.

ProGibb application in pastures is only for winter use when temperatures and sunlight hours are limited

For best results apply to your most fertile paddocks

Cost of additional feed from 15g ProGibb is \$94 per tonne DM

Can growth hormones such as Gibberellic Acid be used to stimulate winter growth of pastures to fill the winter feed gap?

While stocking rates are similar throughout the year, pasture production varies with the season so stocking rates are limited by feed availability. Gibberellic acid is a naturally occurring plant hormone that is produced in higher quantities in warmer months. During the colder months however, its production is low and hence plant growth is slow. The idea behind the application of the hormone is that it will stimulate cell expansion, resulting in leaf and stem elongation.

A trial was recently conducted on Chad Burbidge's property at Ettrick to determine whether winter medic pasture production could be increased by the

application of ProGibb a commercial form of Gibberellic Acid produced by Sumitomo Chemical. This trial investigated the merit of ProGibb application in the Mallee with the hope that it will assist in increasing winter production of pastures, leading to the ability to increase stocking rates and overall profitability.

The recommended application of ProGibb's is 20g/ha and is best applied to freshly grazed pastures when experiencing feed shortages. In this particular trial, we compared ProGibb at two different application rates—5g/ha and 15g/ha; as well as comparing to an overall nutrient mix, 'Pasture Foliar' (4L/ha) and a liquid nitrogen application 'Easy N' (20L/ha). All ProGibb applications also had 100ml/ha BS1000. Costs include application (\$3/ha). Application was conducted on the 24th June.

Results were visible within seven days. Medic growth was more upright and the treated plots were also slightly more yellow in colour. This coloration is due to the same amount of chlorophyll being stretched over larger cells. Initially it was questioned whether there was actually more dry matter in these plots or whether it was just because the plants were sitting taller.

Pasture cuts were taken two and a half weeks later on the 13th July (maximum dry matter production is reported as 3-4 weeks after application). Although there was some variation, all treatments increased the dry matter of the plot. When looking at the most cost effective treatment, 15g/ha ProGibb gave an extra 188kgDM/ha at an equated cost of \$96 per tonne DM. Feed test results have also showed that there was less than 1% difference in the quality of feed between the ProGibb 15 application and the control.

While the trial showed that the use of ProGibb can improve winter pasture production it is recommended that you apply the hormone to your best pastures to maximise your results. It would also be beneficial to use ProGibb as part of a cell grazing rotation so you can spray a paddock a few weeks prior to moving sheep into the paddock.

Mehdi Zaboli
Rural Solutions SA Murray Bridge



Farmers at the ProGibb trial site, Chad Burbidge's, Ettrick via Murray Bridge.

Treatment	Rate/ha	Kg DM/ha	stdev	Feed in addition to control (kg/ha)	Cost to produce an extra tonne of feed
Control	N/A	450	167.1	N/A	\$0
Easy N	20L	525	201.0	75	\$240
Pasture Foliar	4L	531	59.1	81	\$309
ProGibb 5	5g	544	124.8	94	\$85
ProGibb15 + Pasture Foliar	15g + 4L	631	151.9	181	\$221
ProGibb 15	15g	638	193.1	188	\$96
ProGibb 15 + Easy N	15g + 20L	681	170.0	231	\$143



Free Buses to the Waikerie Field Day, Tuesday 1st September
Bus 1—Robinvale-Duyen-Mallee Hwy-Waikerie
Bus 2—Mildura-Sturt Hwy (Millewa)-Renmark-Waikerie
Bookings Essential—Contact MSF on 03 5021 9100

Sustainability Snapshots

Kerribee

The annual Kerribee Field Day is on Thursday 27th August, 2009. With the great rain earlier



Some of the Kerribee Trials on display at the 2009 Field Day on Thursday 27th August, 2009.

in the growing season, the property is looking superb and the trials are progressing well.

Some of the trials to be covered at this year's

Kerribee Field Day include:

Phosphorous Recovery Trial

New Perennial Legumes

Pea Variety Trial

Agrivision Variety Time of Sowing Trial

Vetch Trial

CSIRO Research Update

Registration is from 9am and the day will conclude with a barbecue lunch. RSVP's would be appreciated for catering purposes. Contact MSF on 03 5021 9100 or admin@msfp.org.au



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Notice The Difference

Mallee Growing Season Rainfall

The table below shows rainfall figures for 1st April to 14th August, 2009.

Balranald	99.9 mm
Hay	140.0 mm
Hopetoun	124.0 mm
Karoonda	124.9 mm
Lake Victoria	106.8 mm
Lameroo	132.4 mm
Loxton	63.4 mm
Mildura	78.6 mm
Murray Bridge	156.0 mm
Ouyen	108.9 mm
Pooncarie	78.0 mm
Renmark	85.4 mm
Swan Hill	120.8 mm
Walpeup	141.6 mm

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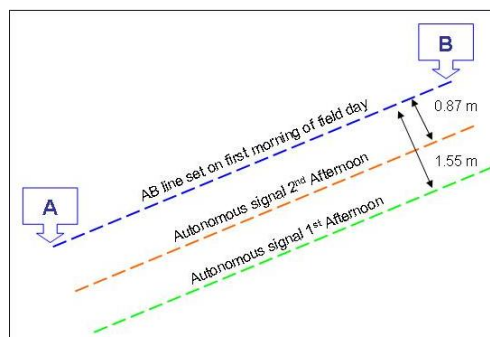
Steering Straight at Speed

At the recent Mallee Machinery Field Days, MSF teamed up with O'Conner's Case IH to demonstrate the accuracy of autonomous (free to air) and RTK (Real Time Kinematic) GPS signals. The tractor used in the demonstration was fitted with two separate guidance and steering systems, an Ezi Guide 500 and Ezi Steer operating an autonomous GPS signal and a Field Manager and hydraulic steering kit using a corrected, RTK signal.

On the first morning of the field day, an identical AB line was created for both systems. Over the following days, the tractor was 'steered' back along the AB lines using the autonomous and the RTK GPS signals. Over the

two days, the RTK signal repeatedly steered the tractor to within 2.5 cm on the line set on the first morning. However, the autonomous, free to air signal drifted considerably. On the first afternoon, the AB line had moved 1.55 m away from the line set that morning and on the following afternoon the tractor was 'steered' to within 0.87 of the original line.

The adoption of GPS guidance and steering technology in the Mallee has been rapid in the past few years. The low cost steering products that utilise the autonomous systems have been valuable in reducing overlap and wasted inputs, providing the option of night spraying and reducing operator fatigue. However the free to air GPS signal has limitations in accuracy and repeatability. Therefore, if you are looking to take guidance technology a step further, such as inter-row and potentially inter-row spraying a corrected GPS signal will be required. This however will require extra investment in reliable steering products and GPS signal corrections such as base stations and RTK networks.



While the RTK GPS system performed to within 2.5cm accuracy over two days, the autonomous GPS signal was less reliable.

Michael Moodie
MSF Agronomist

The Winter issue of *Agronomy Matters* is now available at
www.msfp.org.au/docs/media_229.pdf