



Conservation Agriculture & No-Till Farming Association Inc.

The Bulletin

May 2009

From the Chair



Anne Williams

Welcome to our first e-Bulletin! As I write sowing has been halted due to rain but it is all good. After travelling south to Wodonga on the weekend we noticed that many southern farmers were either busy on the tractor or had early sown crops up. Let's hope that they receive decent follow up rain.

Recently about 20 Coonamble CANFA members has a great night out at Mount Tenandra homestead to listen to John Lawrie from the Central West Catchment Management Authority give an entertaining and light hearted after dinner speech on soil carbon and 'carbon cookies'. Thank you John and well done. Other CANFA committee members are organising similar events in their areas. Please keep an eye out for them as they are a great way to meet up with other local members.

The trip to Western Australia/Northern Territory has been organised and Garry Hine has done an exceptional job lining up the route, accommodation farm and site seeing visits. Those that have indicated an interest in the trip have been notified and given the first option to attend. If there are any vacancies then we will advertise.

I am looking forward to our annual conference in July and meeting up with you all. Neville has been very busy lining up high quality and interesting speakers. It should be another great event.

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From the Executive Officer



Neville Gould

What a mixed bag of paddock conditions many of us have. Whilst many to my north have early crops out of the ground and are now too wet to continue with planting after another frontal downpour, most of us in central and southern NSW have very little to show for our summer and autumn paddock preparations - except clean paddocks, thank goodness!! The little bit of rain recently has been a great tonic and hopefully there is more to follow.

Following on in our first e-Bulletin is plenty of information about upcoming events, developments with significant sponsors and research trials and demonstrations. Let us know what you think of the new format bulletin. We're planning to utilise technology to improve our communications with you, which also includes greater use of the CANFA website.

Neville Gould, CANFA EO
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News



Last year's CFOTY finalists

Conservation Farmer of the Year Award 2009

The 2009 Conservation Farmer Of The Year program has been officially launched. For the first time, landholders in four catchments, the Murray, the Murrumbidgee, the Lachlan and the Central West will be eligible to enter the competition thanks to Catchment Management Authority sponsorship. The application form will be available shortly from our website www.canfa.com.au or by contacting our office on 02 6845 1044 or [emailing us](mailto:canfa@canfa.com.au). Entries close on July 3 so you need to be quick!

New survey shows plenty of work ahead for CANFA

A recent new survey report commissioned by the SANTFA and CAAANZ, titled "Adoption of no-till and conservation farming practices in Australian grain growing regions: current status and trends" written by Rick S Llewellyn, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems and Frank D'Emden, Dept. Agriculture & Food Western Australia has been released.

From CANFA's perspective, the results in the report are very disappointing (Table 2). Whilst the proportion of NSW growers who have used no-till has increased slightly over the past 5-10 years and levels of adoption are high in Southern and Northern NSW amongst respondents, the levels in Central West and NSW Mallee are very low (2 of the 3 lowest rates in all areas sampled in Australia). The NSW average is second only to WA, but could be considerably higher.

The other major disappointment is the high level of respondents who had used no-till but chose not to continue or have decreased the proportion of crop sown using no-till systems.

CANFA's response to the report, written by Neville Gould, and the report can be located on the [Articles](#) page of the CANFA website.

Events



2008 conference underway

Thanks to continued sponsorship through our *Caring For Our Country* project, the next few months are again packed full of events.

CANFA Conference: 29 July

Our major get together is of course the Conservation Agriculture Conference on July 29 2009. Mark it in your diary because the theme this year of *Water use efficiency - more crop for your drop* couldn't be more appropriate given the conditions. We have still to lock in all our speakers but the current list includes some great presenters in Dave Duncan (local soil management consultant), Matt McKenzie (2008 Conservation Farmer Of The Year), Tony Condon (CSIRO Plant breeder), St John Kent (CFI Chair and Qld farmer), Barry Haskins (NSW DPI District Agronomist and Young Agronomist of the Year 2008), Michael Pfitzner (Griffith farmer) and Ian Packer (Lachlan CMA).

Precision Agriculture Workshops: 3 workshops, 21 – 23 July

Workshops on Precision Agriculture, presented by Ed Cay are planned for Coonamble (July 21), Wellington (July 22) and Greenethorpe (July 23). CTF Solutions are also scheduled (dates TBA) for more presentations as well as Craig Day and his Advanced Spray course and the "Why No-till" course, particularly in the Murray and Murrumbidgee Catchments.

Western Australia/Northern Territory bus tour: 12 August start

The itinerary and costing for the WA/NT bus trip have finally been announced. We already have an oversubscribed list of candidates but if you are keen to go, please contact either [CANFA](#) or [Anne Williams](#) in case some vacancies occur. The bus plans to leave Perth on August 12 and arrive in Darwin on August 24 with exciting stop-overs in Geraldton, Carnarvon, Mt Tom Price, Port Hedland, Broome, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, Katherine and Kakadu.

Sponsorship

A major Diamond sponsorship deal has recently been made with Chesterfield Australia, Hutcheon & Pearce and John Deere. This involves the loan of a John Deere tractor with 2cm RTK guidance to enable commercial and trial crops at Wellington to be planted using gps guidance.

Planting this year will be made even easier with the purchase of a 60 bag Kerin Engineering Grouper.

Research trials & demonstrations

Sites have been made ready for a string of research trials and demonstrations for 2009 here at Wellington (if only it would rain!) and elsewhere.

Cover cropping

Matt McNee will again be conducting experiments at Wellington (on our Cadonia site) as part of our GRDC project. Livingston wheat is to be planted at the earliest opportunity into cover cropped residues of French white millet, cowpea and lab lab from the 2008/09 summer.

Field sites are also located at the following properties - Ray and Anne Williams (Coonamble), Haydon Wass (Nyngan), Tony Gilmour (Gilgandra), Peter Knowles (Wellington), Trangie Agricultural Research Centre (Trangie) and Richard Langley (Greenethorpe).

Stubble management

Another aspect of the GRDC project is the management of heavy stubble residue and so we have established four stubble treatment levels (K-Line Stubble Cutter, Schulte Mulcher, Coolamon Mulcher and control) in wheat stubble. This will be planted to chickpeas on 60cm spacing with the Blue Heeler planter, with treatments split with coulters either up or down.

Agrichem

Seed additives (Kepak and zinc) trials will again be conducted at Wellington on wheat, barley and chickpeas.

Barley variety trial

A range of barley varieties will be planted at the Research Centre.

Seed dressing coleoptile assessment

Jonno Shields (final year student at University of Western Sydney) is, as part of his final year project, assessing the impact of Baytan seed dressing on the coleoptiles length of eight different wheat varieties.

Wellington Working Farms

The second phase of the project is now in full swing. CANFA will be planting over 40ha of oats (for hay), wheat and barley at the Wellington Field Station site and working with Wellington High School students in training them in no-till systems and gps-guidance on tractors. CANFA have also been involved with substantial tree planting programs as part of the University of New South Wales FATE program of revegetating the site.

CANFA

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