

SCF Focus

STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS

WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER

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STIRLINGS TO COAST





JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Ken Drummond, SCF Chair

Greetings SCF Members

So far 2020 has been a wild ride, I hope the second half calms down. One thing for sure is we can expect the unexpected, we are however so lucky to live in this incredible Country.

Whilst we felt cloistered by our remoteness, the flow on effects will soon bare down. It's been wonderful to see the community come together. But highlights our

reliance on China and how important multiple customers are, if you're selling more than 80% of your produce to one seller you are a weak seller.

Here in our backyard we have much to be proud of. Nathan and his team at SCF are kicking goals. The Trials Review publication is something that all our members can be proud of. I think it is the best document regarding trials that I have read. Sometimes it can be a chore to sift through all that information to find something of value. I was enthralled by how much we can use on our farm.

Credit is due to our committees and the members volunteering their precious time. I was going to name everyone on a Committee in my report until I saw how many wonderful members are contributing, about 40, so well done to everyone involved. Thumbs up to our Trial hosts for going the extra distance. SCF is building a fantastic culture which has real depth. I have always wanted us to be credible and relevant on an international basis, suppling information that adds to our members bottom line.

Big thank you to Ian Evans who has stepped up to be Chair of the finance committee. We had a meeting on the 18th June, Ian pointed out that there will be a tightening up of government funds. Ashton Hood is the new chair of the R&D Committee, it is heart-warming to have our young guns taking on the responsibility of leadership. Welcome to Rebecca Williss who has come onto the Board as an independent member. Rebecca is an accountant working in Albany with a strong interest in Agriculture.

For a year that was predicted to be wet, our patience is being tested. Happy farming and stay safe.

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CEO REPORT

Nathan Dovey, SCF CEO



Hello everybody,

We are rapidly approaching the halfway stage of 2020, and so far, it has been a year like no other. Here is hoping we settle down to some form of normality soon and we do not see a nasty second wave of Coronavirus. I hope you have all got your crops in and by now and getting a day or two to catch your

breath before the spraying program gets into full swing. I understand many of our members are still struggling for rain; I hope you get a decent downpour soon.

At SCF, we have been busy managing our projects and creating content for members which can be consumed anywhere, any-time. I sound like former Fremantle coach Ross Lyon here. Kathi has been busy updating the SCF website with the latest trial and project information. If you have not already, please have a look and let us know what you think. Hopefully, you all received the electronic copy of the SCF Annual trials review booklet last week, and the hard copy will be sent out as soon as the printers are finished. We hope you enjoy the content produced welcome any feedback that you might have.

Due to the Coronavirus, we shut down non-essential meetings and gatherings over the last few months. Although this provided us all with a break from meetings, some would say welcome; we are now ready to resume our SCF committees. Please keep an ear out for SCF communications about meeting times and places.

In this newsletter, you will hear about some of our new projects, with a few preliminary results. The Webster family are hosting a non-wetting trial at Tenterden that is proving topical. We have stuck to wetting agents only in this trial and still managed to come up with 11 different treatments on the canola paddock. Initial plant counts are complete and presented in this newsletter, but staff will head out again in a couple of weeks to collect some more data.

Project officer Phillip Mackie has also written about the new GRDC Hyper Yielding Crops project, which is a national undertaking managed by FAR Australia. We are excited to be a part of this venture, and the competitive focus farms aspect will be an excellent opportunity to engage with SCF members. Have a read of the article on page eight, and if you have a 2020 wheat crop with high yield potential, maybe you want to be one of our focus farms and enter the national competition?

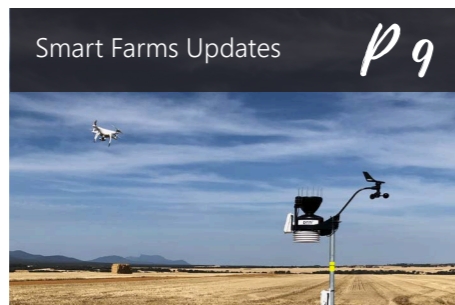
Both SCF Phil's have been busy on our Smart Farms at Kendenup and Woogenellup in the last few weeks. They have been installing a heap of different technology hardware, and we look forward to hearing the pros and cons from the grower hosts once they have had some time to assess the tech.

As a grower group, we are starting to install weather stations as part of our larger funded projects. In 2020 we will be installing weather stations at Cranbrook and Green Range as part of the GRDC subsoil drainage and high rainfall zone yield gap projects. We are starting the process of creating a weather station network that should benefit SCF members now and in the future.

For members that want to install weather stations privately and other IoT (internet of things) devices on their properties, please get in touch with Phil Honey our Smart Farms Coordinator. SCF is offering this service to enable our members to speed up adoption of Ag technology. We recognise that the adoption of Ag technology can be limited due to the lack of technical support and advice. Members will be charged for custom based solutions at commercial rates, and all transactions will be managed by SCF. If you have any queries around this service, please get in touch with myself or Phil Honey to discuss.

I am looking forward to catching up with many of you again soon, until then, good luck for the season and stay safe.


Nathan



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Follow SCF online!

Search

Stirlings to Coast on these platforms and visit us @ scfarmers.org.au:



SCF Podcast is here!

The very first SCF podcast is live.

Nathan Dovey & Philip Honey talk with *Bayer Australia Market Development Agronomist Craig White about a range of projects and topics underway.

In this "Hands-Free" podcast, we discuss Closing the yield Gap in the High Rainfall Zone, Mid-row banding of nitrogen to bring about greater N utilization by plants and a Non Wetting Soils trial being undertaken as part of a larger project managed by Southern Dirt grower group.

Phil talks about the Ag-technology project covering a 100% cropping farm and a mixed crop and livestock farm, with the goal of Smart-Farms being to test Ag-Tech in a real farm situation and understand the usefulness in terms of; creating efficiency, time saving and making money. Future SCF podcasts will feature in-depth discussion about some of the Smart-farms technology and what it is bringing to the farming operation.



Head to
soundcloud.com &
search **Stirlings to Coast** or scan the QR
code to listen now!



SCF AgTech has arrived!

Need assistance in implementing AgTech on-farm or not sure what to buy, what to look for, or where to even start?

Maybe you would like to improve internet accessibility at home?

Stirlings to Coast Farmers can assist with product selection & installation for a wide range of products including:

- Weatherstations
- Soil moisture probes
- Rain gauges
- Tank level
- Water-flow monitoring
- LoRaWAN & WIFI Networking

Reach out to Philip Honey (Smart Farms Coordinator)
0428 768 589 or philip.honey@scfarmers.org.au

EVENTS NOTICEBOARD

GREAT SOUTHERN livestock'20

The Great Southern Livestock'20 has been rescheduled to

October 22-23

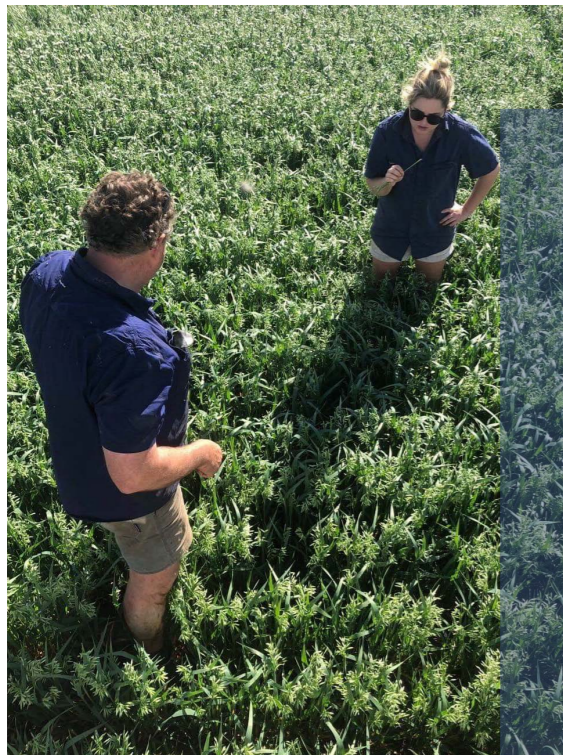
Update your calendars and be sure to register your spot through Eventbrite. The program will be released soon covering topics:

- Water security and weather
- Pasture management
- Feed and nutrition in drying climate
- Livestock health (beef/sheep)
- Market Outlook (beef/sheep)
- New technology



Head to
bit.ly/greatsouthernlivestock20
or scan the QR code
to register now!





meet the members Hannah Iffla

Region: Just north of Bremer Bay on the Mid South Coast.

Farm Name: Montagna and San Pedro

Size of farm: 3000 hectares

Soil type: Soil type is a bit all over the shop, varying from deep beach sand to cracking grey clay, but mainly sand over gravel.

Year joined SCF: 2019

Type of enterprise: We run both cropping and livestock enterprises. Our primary crops are canola and barley, with a few paddocks of wheat and oats each year. Our merino ewe flock is approx 2000 head, joining them with White Suffolk rams for lamb production.

What are some of your biggest passions and why?

I think my favourite time on the year on the farm is both pregnancy testing and lambing time. I love animals and I've put a lot of effort into working on our ewe nutrition, it's nice to be able to see all the hard work put in during summertime come to fruition and the productivity gains from it.

Off-farm I enjoy playing hockey – both for the love of the game and the social aspect of it! It is nice to take a break from the farm and stop stressing about the weather for a day!

What are some of the most significant constraints to achieve higher productivity on your farm? – NOT including rainfall!!

I know it says not to include rainfall but! I think inaccurate long-term (and short term...) weather forecasting has been a bit of a problem the last couple of years, especially when trying to make decisions around wind erosion risk during seeding time. Related to that, the fragile nature of our soils is another constraint. It would be nice to be able to chuck 3 tonnes of clay over the whole lot to ameliorate our nonwetting issues, which have shown how much of an issue they are during these marginal starts.

What technologies are you using on-farm? If so what is it and how has it shaped your farm?

We have just begun to start delving down into the precision agriculture line. We are beginning to yield map, along with a lot of both soil and plant testing each year with results dating back 10 years, to begin to build a more detailed picture. I think time is a major constraint here – both to learn the application and to put it into practice!

As much as I would hate to say it, technologies that help me physically "keep up with the boys" are important for me. Being 5ft2 makes drenching and tagging 2000 80kg ewes a bit of a mission by myself – so my favourite contraption at the moment is our new Clipex Sheep Handler.

Are you currently trialling anything yourself?

Yes, this year we are giving a long season wheat variety, DS Pascal, a shot. We also have a long-term lime incorporation trial on our farm – as like most places' acidity is always an issue we must keep on top of.

Is there anything that you would like to test or trial in the next 2 years?

I would like to do some delving and clay spreading to increase the productivity of our gravelly non-wetting paddocks – or perhaps start trying out soil wetters. If anything new comes out to kill snails, I would be keen to try that out!

What do you think the next big thing in agriculture will be in 5 to 10 years?

Technology, as the knowledge and capacity to implement it improves and the initial outlay cost reduces.

Do you attend any agriculture field days other than SCF?

I am also on the advisory committee of the Fitzgerald Biosphere Group – so I attend a lot of their field walks and workshops!



Update on Stubble Management for Snail Control

Phillip Mackie, SCF



Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) are currently investigating if summer stubble treatments could lead to a reduction of small conical snails at a paddock level. This project is based on South Australian (SA) practices where snails on stubbles are knocked onto the ground surface on hot (+35°C) days, where they dehydrate and die. Stubble treatments in SA are mainly for the control of the larger round snails, but farmers have speculated that stubble treatments can reduce small conical snail numbers. We aim to determine if stubble treatments could reduce small conical snail numbers in Western Australia, where very little research like this has been completed before.

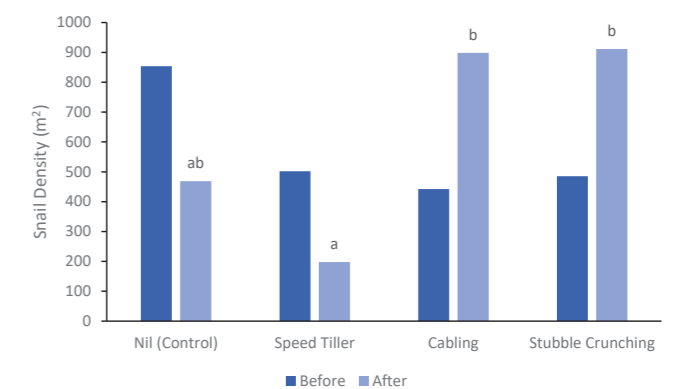
The treatments investigated in our trial are cabling, stubble crunching and speed tilling. Cabling was done with an inch-thick cable towed between two utes driving at 20km/hr. For stubble crunching, we used a 12m wide machine that cut the stubble into 25cm lengths. A three-metre wide speed tiller was hired to mix topsoil to a 10cm depth. The speed tiller caused the most aggressive soil and stubble disturbance.

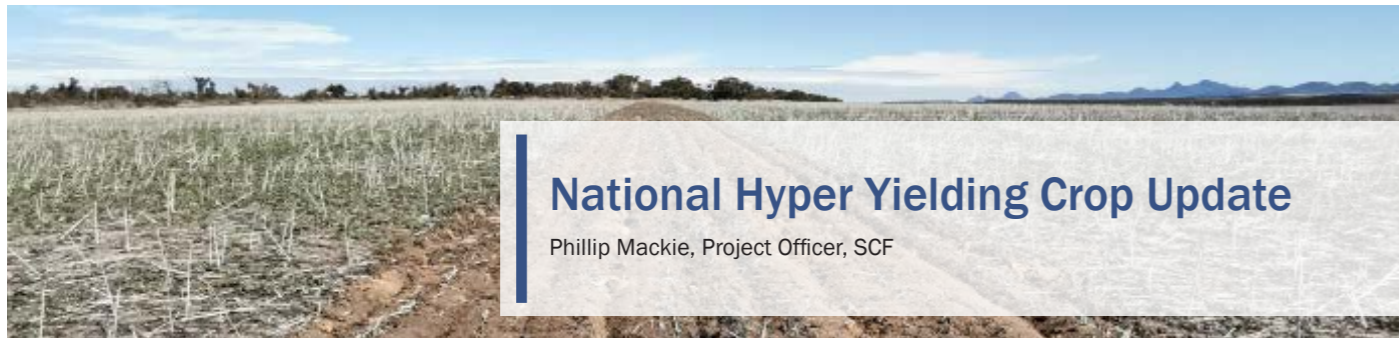
Snail density counts were completed before and after treatments with large numbers of snails found in the paddock. Snail density in the speed tiller plots was 58% lower compared to the nil. There was no statistical difference between cabling, stubble crunching and the nil control early in the season, however, there was an increase in snail numbers in the cabling and stubble crunching plots after treatments were applied. This confusing result could be due to the extreme variability of snail populations within the paddock and the plots themselves. We are hopeful that

measurements of snail numbers in the grain sample at harvest will provide greater clarity on the treatment effects. Our snail counts suggest that speed tilling was most effective; however, this could be due to the machine mixing the snails thoroughly into the soil, making them hard to find and therefore count. However, if snails are buried and subsequently die, this would be an effective control method.

Researcher observations suggest that cabling and stubble crunching would cause less snail mortality because they were not aggressive enough to move or disrupt the harvest row compared to the speed tiller. Small conical snails were easily found within the seeding furrows after the cabling and stubble crunching treatments were completed. The speed tiller mostly removed last year's seeding furrows which would have caused more considerable disruption to the snails and their habitat.

At harvest time, a grain box camera (GrainCam) will be used to map the snail populations from the four treatments. Project partners John Moore and other DPIRD staff will be engaged to install and manage GrainCam at the trial site in 2020 and 2021.





National Hyper Yielding Crop Update

Phillip Mackie, Project Officer, SCF

Stirling's to Coast Farmers are a part of a national Hyper Yielding Crops (HYC) research project led by FAR Australia. The project covers five regions across higher yielding zones of Australia, including the Albany port zone. In our area, we will be looking for five focus farms that will be used to scale up key findings from small-plot research to increase crop yields. This year is the first year of the HYC Research Centre in the region, so the broad-scale demonstrations don't have any new 'key findings' to scale up just yet. SCF have already collaborated with FAR Australia, CSIRO, DPIRD and the SEPWA grower group on a HRZ farming systems project to devise this year's trial design which we have installed with the Hood and Preston families already. The design looks at wheat and barley over two sowing times and the difference between ripped and unripped soil to find the most productive and profitable treatment.

SCF will conduct at least two in-season field walks each year, across the focus farms in our region, including an annual spring walk. The spring field walk will hopefully include national and potentially international speakers pending COVID-19 implications in 2020 and future years. Focus farmers will also be encouraged to talk about their farming approaches at other HRZ regional walks to create peer to peer learning across the country.

The focus farms will look at elements of increasing productivity with the following areas of interest.

- Planning, paddock selection and preparation
- Understanding crop and varietal phenology and optimum flowering window to ensure variety selection and planting date is suited to environment, system and attitude to risk
- Optimising crop establishment - target number of plants and tillers/branches
- Nutrition - feeding the crop to reach potential
- Crop protection - managing weeds, pests and disease
- Canopy management – optimising biomass for grain yield and avoidance of lodging
- Harvest – minimising harvest losses to capture yield and quality.

Linking all the national, regional HYC research centres and focus farms will be the introduction of an annual national HYC awards. Friendly competition will aim to create a community of interest in improving productivity, profitability, and sustainability. In the first year, there will be a focus on wheat with the potential to include

barley in the second year and canola in the third. There will be a limit of 10 entries per region in the first year with one entry from each focus farm included. The nominated paddocks will be monitored with data being collected on soil type, location, crop details, biomass measurements, yield data and grain tests. SCF project officer Phillip Mackie will be managing the data collection process for the ten entries from the Albany port zone. The awards will be presented in three categories, highest yield, highest yield as a percentage of rainfall potential and most profitable crop. The awards provide an excellent opportunity for focus farmers to evaluate how their cropping practices perform locally, but also how they compare to others across Australia and different environments.

If you are interested in increasing crop yields and becoming a focus farm for this project, please contact Phillip Mackie on 0437120891 or email him at phillip.mackie@scfarmers.org.au.



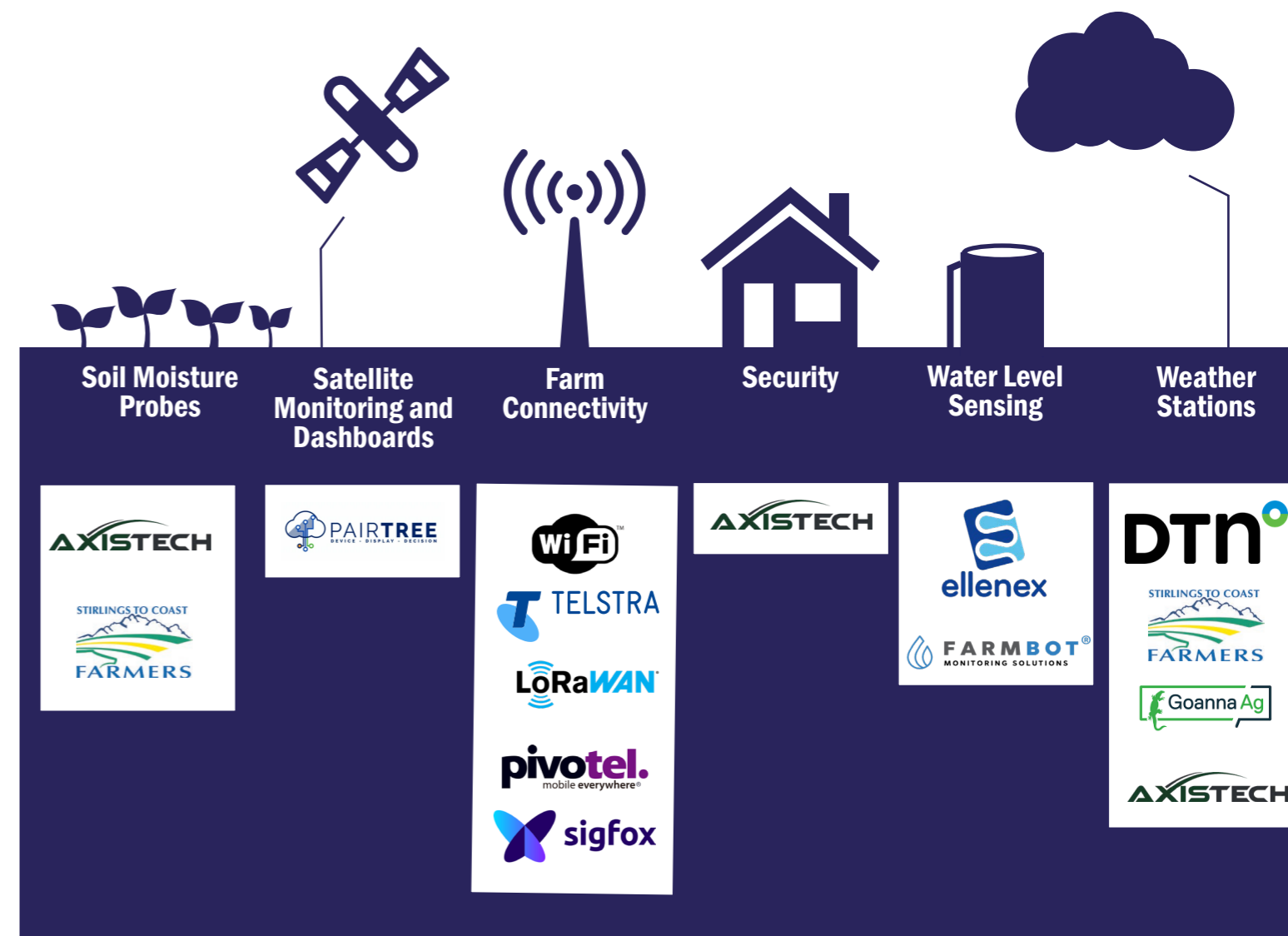
Smart Farms Updates – Current Installs & considerations

Philip Honey, Smart Farm Coordinator, SCF

It has been a busy few months across the SCF Smart Farms Initiative, as we approach the second year of the initiative. With a wide range of AgTech equipment now installed across our demonstration sites and initial teething issues resolved, we are starting to see some quality data come through in-line with the growing season.

So what technology do we currently have on the smart farms?

Across both demonstration sites, our soil moisture probes are settling down nicely to reflect the field conditions, while our remote rain-gauges are actively recording rainfall variation across the landscape. A range of tank-level monitoring solutions have also been installed on the livestock/cropping demonstration site, proactively alerting our smart-farm host to any issues with water-supply, while both sites now have improved Wi-Fi coverage with the recent installation of point to point equipment and meshing access points.





Current Equipment Installed WEATHER STATIONS

We are currently utilising DTN weather stations across both farms, which utilise sensors made by Davis. These lower-cost stations continuously record weather data and send the information (rainfall, temperature, humidity & wind speed/direction) to the cloud every 15 minutes. Alternative brands will also be tested during the 2020 growing season across a range of locations in our membership base.

Tip: Consider the on-going costs & platform fees between lower-cost & higher-cost stations, as differences do apply with total costs of ownership. Sometimes the more expensive set-up can be cheaper in the long-term.



HYPER LOCAL FORECASTING PLATFORM

The two DTN weather stations are continuously feeding current weather conditions into the DTN cloud, creating 36-hour & 14-day forecasts for each location. The platform also utilises the established Bureau of Meteorology & DPIRD weather-station sites and allows pretty well any other internet-connected weather-station to be fed into the model, should users wish to upload their own data.

Tip: There are platform options available for users to utilise hyper-local forecasting, even if you do not have an internet-connected Weatherstation on the farm.

SOIL MOISTURE PROBES & STATIONS

To gain a better understanding of soil conditions, SCF has installed soil moisture probes under the Smart Farms Initiative. Featuring our in-house designed solution and also AxisTech Soil Moisture stations, we are regularly receiving soil moisture & temperature conditions in 10cm increments across all sites. In combination with rainfall data, SCF now can measure infiltration rates and amounts for our soils, while grower members can utilise this data for nutrient management decisions throughout the growing season.

TANK LEVEL MONITORS

SCF is currently trialling two tank-monitoring solutions provided by Ellenex & Farmbot systems. Both sensors measure the pressure above a pendant, calculating the water level above the sensor and providing the option to send alerts if water falls below a pre-set level.

While the Farmbot solution is more expensive than the Ellenex solution, it does provide additional options to connect sensors such as rain-gauges, safety check-in buttons, electric fence monitoring and much more. These Farmbot devices run off either the Telstra or satellite network, meaning that you can also install these devices in remote locations where LoRaWAN coverage may not exist.



REMOTE RAIN GAUGES

Remote rain gauges are a cost-effective method to infill rainfall data between weather stations and help measure rainfall variation across the landscape. SCF is currently trialling Axistech Sigfox rain gauges, GoannaAg LoRaWAN & Satellite rain gauges and is also collating data from our in-house developed soil moisture probe stations to gain a better understanding of rainfall distribution throughout the region.

Tip: Some stations will allow users to purchase a basic rain-gauge first, then allow additional sensors such as temperature/humidity or wind sensors to be added at a later date, allowing farmers to start small and grow!

LORAWAN GATEWAYS

LoRaWAN gateways are the device that creates a radio-network for your LoRaWAN sensors to connect to, typically up to 15 kilometres in the ideal world. They require a modem or internet connectivity for the sensor-data to be displayed on dashboards. Pricing typically varies depending on the gateway used and its features, frequencies & channels available. Both smart-farm demonstration sites are utilising lower-cost solutions produced by Laird (Sentrius RG191-Au version) & MatchX, operating on the Au-915mhz frequency. This allows us to connect our tank level monitors and soil moisture probes to the internet.

POINT TO POINT WIFI & BUILDING WIFI

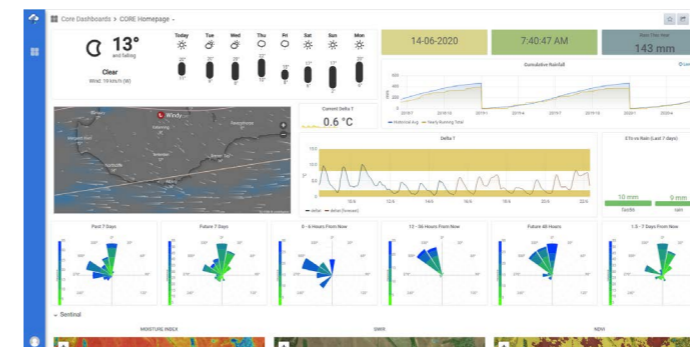
Instead of relying upon a multitude of modems to create network connectivity in multiple buildings, members can develop networks and share connectivity between devices through a combination of two types of Wi-Fi networking; Point to Point Wi-Fi solutions & Building Wi-Fi solutions.

As the name suggests, Point to Point connectivity shares data between two or more buildings only, while building Wi-Fi provides the network for mobile devices, tablets and computers to physically connect to. SCF have deployed these technologies across the farms to provide connectivity in buildings where phone coverage is not available, and to create the backbone for our sensor networks to connect to.



DASHBOARD INTEGRATIONS – PAIRTREE INTELLIGENCE

As our smart farms get more complicated with different sensor types, vendors & platforms, it is essential that farmers can take advantage of aggregating their data into one single point, where they can easily make management decisions from. SCF is currently trialling the PairTree platform which combines the sensor data from our in-house built soil moisture probe/rain-gauge stations with Bureau of Meteorology 5km x 5km point forecasting & satellite imagery.



NEED SOME SUPPORT OR GUIDANCE IN CHOOSING AGTECH?

Stirlings to Coast Farmers are here to help our members on their AgTech journey. Throughout this Smart Farms Initiative, we will be hosting & providing a range of workshops and publications materials to help identify how to choose your AgTech equipment and what features to look for. In addition to this, SCF can offer assistance in the acquisition and installation of your AgTech equipment. For more information regarding products available or to arrange a copy of our Smart Farms Workshop manual, please contact Philip on 0428 768 589.

EARLY IMPLEMENTATION REWARDS - SMART FARM CALCULATOR

While some of the technologies implemented on the demonstration sites won't have easily calculable "returns on investment" within the first year such as soil moisture probes, other technologies such as remote rain-gauges and tank level monitoring can yield considerable savings in both labour and travel from the initial implementation. To help identify some of the potential cost-benefits that could be implemented, SCF has developed a basic calculator which helps determine potential savings over five years. To find out more, please visit <https://bit.ly/smartfarmcalculator>.

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS –

The development of the Smart Farm Demonstration Sites was made possible through funding support from the Australian Government National Landcare Program & the WA Government Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development Decision Ag grant programme.





MLA Producer Demonstration Sites: Alternate forage crops for Southern WA

Samantha Lubcke, Memberships Co-ordinator, SCF



SCF has recently partnered with MLA to host three Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) for sheep or cattle grazing alternate forage crops in Southern WA over the next three years. We are currently looking for producers who would be interested in hosting a site for one or multiple years.

SCF researchers want to demonstrate which crops are the most productive in our region, comparing millet, Pallaton Raphano, winter canola, cowpea, and sorghum. The productive capacity of the summer forage crops will be measured in live weight gain of sheep or cattle.

The aim is to demonstrate the feed value of alternate high biomass forage crops in increasing stocking rates and live weight gain of prime lambs or beef cattle relative to current systems in the HRZ of Western Australia. Current systems to be compared include grazing either stubbles or pasture.

SCF are currently running a survey as part of this project.

If you are a livestock producer and have not done so yet, could you please take a few minutes to complete the following survey.

HEAD TO:
surveyMonkey.com/r/mlapds2012
 or use the QR code below



Some of the benefits alternate forage crops can provide include deferred grazing of annual pastures, allowing more time for a critical biomass to be reached. This in turn creates more productive annual pastures with more biomass, potentially allowing increased stocking rates over the autumn period along with increased weight gain of stock and reduced supplementation feed costs.

Important data PDS hosts will need to collect.

Before grazing:

- Stock number
- Stock class
- Stock weights
- Plant samples from summer crop and control pasture or barley stubble

Post grazing:

- Stock weights

Do not despair if you have no method of weighing animals, SCF can organize weigh scales to use and will assist in critical data measurements. If weighing the whole mob is not practical a subsample of sheep or cattle can be tagged so we can determine pre and post grazing average weights.

If this project interests you, or you would like to be involved, please contact Samantha Lubcke on 0417 605 784.



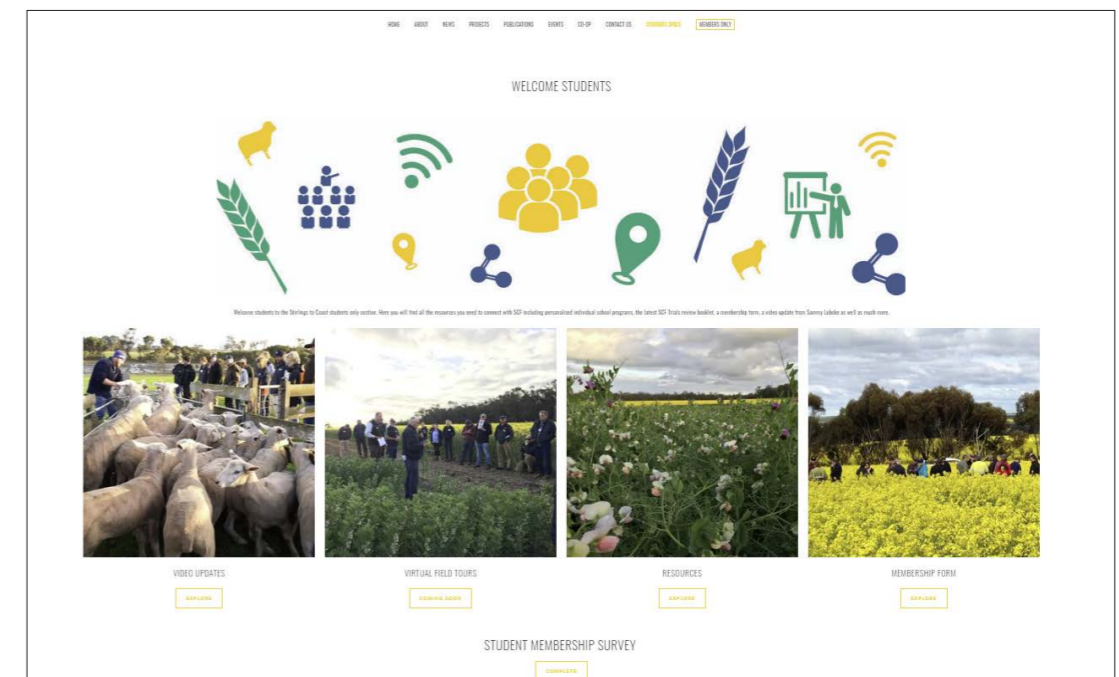
Student Connect Program 2020 - managing in a COVID-19 environment

Samantha Lubcke, Memberships Co-ordinator, SCF

Creating connections between farmers and agriculture students through sustainable farming innovation demonstrations, lectures, and mentoring.

Well this year has thrown us a bit of a curve ball with Covid 19 forcing schools to close for a while and we wondered how the Student Connect project could continue. However, resourceful teachers out did themselves by providing online options for students to continue their studies. While students have now returned to school, most have a no visitors policy making presentations and field exercises with the students a little tricky! They say "necessity is the mother of invention" with platforms such as Zoom and Webex taking off. These platforms have become the new norm for face to face teaching and even staff meetings. With all these new options available, SCF will continue to deliver the Student Connect Program to the best of our ability.

Most of the content can be adapted to be delivered in a different way. For example, we have recently converted the welcome packs into an online format so teachers can deliver them during class time or even to students who remain at home. We plan on pre-recording some educational short videos and presentations that can then be presented to students. Hopefully towards the end of the year or even sooner, some restrictions may be eased to allow face to face presentations and small events to be held with the students. We can all look forward to that.



The newly establish student connect area on the SCF website; allowing SCF to connect and provide resources remotely to the students, teachers and schools within the program.



Update on Non-wetting forest gravels at Michael & Clare Webster's

Phillip Mackie, Project Officer, SCF

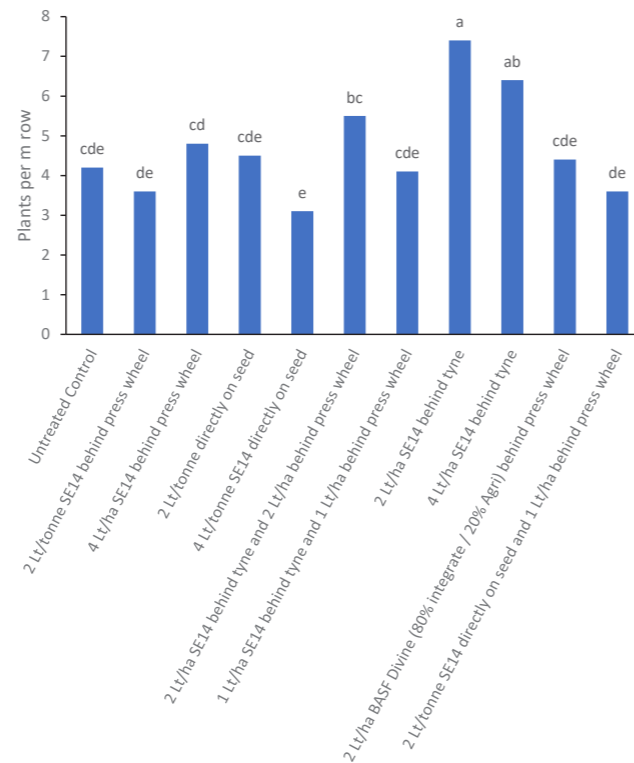
SCF is continuing investigations into the best methods of alleviating non-wetting issues in forest gravels. Results from Watterson's at Tenterden last year showed mechanical tillage (Plozza plough and Horsch Tiger Deep Ripper) in forest gravel provided no improvements to non-wetting.

This year on a similar soil type we are investigating the use of wetting agents. We created 11 different treatments covering different placements, rates and new chemistry. For the new BASF Divine products, a soil sample was taken and sent to CSBP for testing. Based on the test results, a ratio of Divine Agri and Divine Integrate was recommended and was applied behind the press wheel.

A list of treatments follows:

1. Untreated control
2. 2L/ha SE14 behind the press wheel (Webster's system)
3. 4L/ha SE14 behind the press wheel (Webster's system)
4. 2L/tonne SE14 directly on the canola seed
5. 4L/tonne SE14 directly on the canola seed
6. 2L/ha SE14 behind tyne (using temporary liquid kit on the bar) and 2L/ha SE14 behind press wheel (Websters system)
7. 1L/ha SE14 behind tyne (using temporary liquid kit on the bar) and 1L/ha SE14 behind press wheel (Websters system)
8. 2L/ha SE14 behind tyne (using temporary liquid kit on bar)
9. 4L/ha SE14 behind tyne (using temporary liquid kit on bar)
10. BASF Divine Agri 400mL/ha and Divine Integrate 1.6Lt/ha in 50L/ha water (Based on soil test results sent to CSBP) behind the press wheel (Webster's system)
11. 2L/tonne SE14 directly on canola seed and 1L/ha SE14 behind press wheel – Grower host control.

With the site being highly non-wetting, we were dry seeding the morning after an inch of rain on the 6th of May. Four weeks later initial plant counts were taken with varying results seen from patchy germination. The highest plant counts were from the 2L/ha behind the tyne treatment, which was significantly higher than all other treatments, except for 4L/ha behind the tyne. No other treatments were significantly different from the untreated control. However, the 4L/tonne directly on seed treatment had the lowest plant counts. As expected, due to the severity of non-wetting and poor early germination, a second lot of plant counts will be taken to see the effect of wetters with later germinating plants.



Pivotal 4G Service - Network Build Update

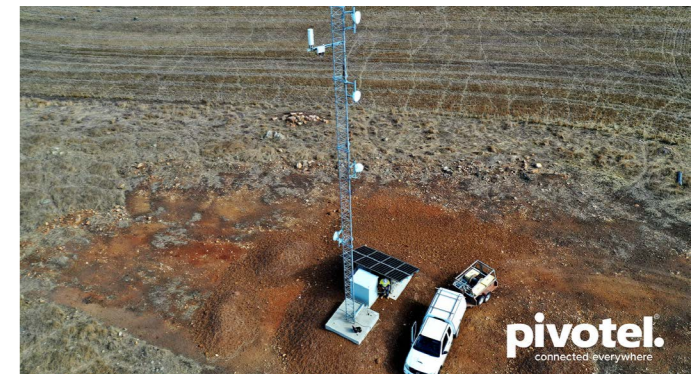
Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) are pleased to confirm that work on Pivotal's local 4G Network Build has progressed well in the first half of the year and we now have nine sites online that are linked together via microwave links. Currently there are a small number of users conducting testing on the network using both static homestead and mobile applications.

We experienced a small setback when one of the sites was struck by lightning, however the damaged equipment has now been replaced. The final high capacity internet link has been ordered with an expected delivery date of late July. Once online, this link will increase the available link capacity 10-fold over the current satellite link. The satellite internet link will remain after the completion of the new Telstra backhaul link and will be used as a redundant link to cover any backhaul outages.

After we have completed the final integration testing of the network with the new backhaul online, we anticipate that further user testing will commence in September, with a commercial launch of the service expected to take place at the end of October.

We would like to thank all of the Stirlings to Coast Farmers members that are hosting towers and have assisted us throughout the process of building the towers and bringing them online. We have been amazed by the local community spirit, the level of interest, as well as the willingness to participate and help the project through the various stages.

We plan to announce further information on network plans, including how to sign up in the coming months, but in the meantime if you would like to register your interest, or trial the Pivotal 4G service, contact Pivotal's Customer Care team on 1300 882 448, or email Nick Hart at nicholas.hart@pivotal.com.au.



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Bayer CropCast – Podcast



Long days, planning and preparing for the season that is upon us? Why not tune into the latest episode of CropCast - Podcast? There's plenty of back episodes to listen to and Episode 11 will be out in late March 2020.

In Episode 11, you will hear about the recent Bayer Connect – Adviser updates including some of the new Crop Protection developments underway as well as what's happening in agricultural research with the Bayer Market Development Team from right around Australia.

To listen, you can simply scan the QR code with your iPhone camera (or QR reader app on other devices) or subscribe in good podcast apps "Bayer Crop Cast."

Search for it on Google or visit www.crop.bayer.com.au/news-and-insights/cropcast

Summit Fuel Gauges for better in-season nitrogen decisions



Fuel Gauges are nutrient rich strips set up in paddocks by Summit Area Managers. Most often they consist of non-limiting rates of nitrogen (N), however they can also be done with other nutrients. They are an effective tool, used in-season to gauge the nitrogen nutritional requirement of the crop. This method is calibrated to local conditions by Summit Field Trials and uses NDVI readings to help growers determine the best rate and timing of future N applications, taking into account yield and protein potential.

A GreenSeeker® is used to take NDVI measurements on and off the strip during the season. While placing nutrient rich strips in paddocks and measuring any growth improvements are useful observations, its Summit's In-Season Nitrogen Calculator (N-Calc) that is used to generate any N recommendations, based on the ideal N rate to optimise paddock potential.

NDVI values are keyed into N-Calc, along with the paddock planting date. N-Calc then takes into account a number of factors to determine the potential of the crop to achieve a yield increase from an application of N.

The extensive development work behind N-Calc has led to nutrient Fuel Gauges becoming a unique technical service here in WA that Summit Area Managers can use to support customers with in-season fertilizer decisions. To date, a total of 23 fully randomised, replicated validation trials have been completed. In 17 of the 23 trials Summit's N-Calc recommended rate produced an optimum yield and return.

Growers should speak to their Local Area Manager for more information about setting up Fuel Gauges.



Andrew Wallace, Area Manager - Albany (East), 0427 083 820.



We are recruiting new members now!

The key objective of the Co-operative is to increase profits for farmers through scale of supply and opening new market opportunities that would otherwise not be possible for individual farmers.

Recent updates

Our first pilot lamb sales of 4,000 lambs was very successful and provided confidence in the WAPC model as a way of gaining higher prices and lowering costs for WAPC members. The seven WAPC members who sold lambs to WAPC earned an additional \$20,800 in total or \$2,971 each on average on this small number of lambs than what they would have earned on grid prices. If you multiply this to larger volumes, you can start to see the benefits that could be possible. The next phase of the pilot for WAPC is to focus more on higher value customers that will provide better returns than grid prices for the best quality lambs. If you want to learn more, WAPC will be holding public meetings in July as part of its membership drive in Katanning, Mt Barker, Jerramungup and Borden.

New smart farm

WAPC is deepening its commitment to technology by partnering with SCF to establish a third SCF smart farm that will serve as a WAPC demonstration site for sheep technology at a WAPC member's farm - Keelocking South. Starting in July, digital equipment such as EiDs, soil monitoring and weather stations will be installed into a Hitachi farm management system at Keelocking South. WAPC will provide training to all WAPC members at the site so that all members benefit from seeing how the integration of digital systems can help to save costs and increase productivity for your business. WAPC members will be provided with ongoing workshops, training and demonstrations about what works and what doesn't to help you to choose and use equipment and how to use the data for specific purposes, such as weight gain, genetic selection, water and pasture management and lot-feeding. Ultimately, the aim is to manipulate the Hitachi farm management system to integrate your cropping, livestock and farm management tools into one farm system that can send alerts, help make decisions and move us towards having more automated, time and money saving systems on farm.

The added bonus is that by having digital systems on member's farms, the WAPC can also use these systems to prove product traceability and improve eating quality to attract higher prices. This is state of the art farming that we hope to have operational in time for our Great Southern October Livestock '20 event in October (23-24) but members will have an opportunity to see how the system runs before then. We will provide more information about this project at our next WAPC members meeting on June 25 so please put that afternoon in your diary.

Beef

WAPC will be widening its activities and membership in 2020/21 to establish a range of branded beef and lamb products. This means actively engaging with beef producers and piloting some sales of beef commodities in early 2021. Branding and traceability is a key product differentiator for WAPC with a new range of product brands expected to be announced at the October Livestock '20 event. Beef producers will be approached to join the co-op and our programs will be expanded to include training and extension activities with beef producers in the Great Southern regions.

Public forums

WAPC will be holding public forums for beef and lamb producers in Katanning, Borden, Mt Barker and Jerramungup in late July. At these meetings we will provide a progress summary and outline WAPC plans for the future, including our work on digital trading, feed milling, sheep and beef marketing and member support programs and terms of trade for 2020/21. These will be forums open to all WA livestock producers who have an interest in the Co-op and might be considering joining. The aim is to increase WAPC membership and encourage feedback and discussion at these producer-only forums. If you are a producer and you wish to attend, registration is critical and numbers limited (due to Covid restrictions) so to find out more and register see: www.waproducers.com.au/events



What next for Australian barley? – Words by GrainGrowers CEO David McKeon

The anti-dumping investigation from China has been ongoing for 18 months. The premise of the argument is that Australian barley was dumped on the Chinese market, and that Australian barley production is subsidized through government programs such as those for irrigation efficiency in the Murray Darling Basin.

GrainGrowers provided comprehensive and factual responses to the Chinese authorities and also helped support the Australian government responses throughout the various stages of the investigation. Unfortunately, the process ignored evidence provided by Australian industry and government and made some unsubstantiated claims about Australian barley exports.

The recent announcement by the Chinese government is deeply disappointing for Australian growers. The tariffs of 73.6% for alleged dumping and 6.9% for alleged subsidies will disrupt and halt barley exports to China. We have worked with exporters and estimated the cost to the Australian industry to be at least \$500m this year alone.

Where will your barley go? Saudi Arabia may be an alternate destination for Australian feed barley, or at a reduced price to China, while Japan is another major market for Australian malt barley. GrainGrowers will continue to engage with the Australian Government ensuring growers are at the front of their considerations and that all possible is being done to resolve this issue (through the World Trade Organisation or other means), hopefully before the upcoming summer harvest.

This rapid market shift is something that has occurred with other major agricultural commodities in recent years. It happened to chickpeas following the introduction of tariffs for the Indian market. This highlights the need for investment in market development, technical support, and in-market promotion. The newly established Grains Australia, a process driven by GrainGrowers, will step into this role. We will continue to provide regular grower updates as market developments occur.

If you would like to know more about this issue or have a comment for GrainGrowers, please contact Alan Meldrum, 0427 384 760, alan.meldrum@graingrowers.com.au



Nitrogen Strategies on wheat

Keith Gundill CSBP Regional Sales Agronomist / Account Manager.

With Covid restrictions lifted, CSBP Field Research was given the go ahead to carry out the 2020 trial program.

One of many trials CSBP have across the state is located on Ashton Hoods property South Stirling's. The CSBP site is in the same paddock as the long term GRDC and SCF Optimising profitability in the high rainfall zone trial.

Trial Aim: To compare various nitrogen (N) fertiliser strategies on wheat for the South Stirling's area and provide more data for calibration of CSBP's NUlogic model.

Background: Continuous cropping of typically barley / canola rotations has depleted soil organic N reserves, and without productive legumes, crops have become increasingly dependent on N fertiliser. More N is also required to realize the higher yield potential of modern wheat varieties. This trial will determine the profitability of N applied at seeding (banded), 3 leaf (Z13), 1st node (Z31) and Flag emergence (Z37). The trial has 5 rates of N: 14, 64, 114, 165 and 215 kg/ha.

There is a total of 12 treatments replicated 3 times.

Nitrogen applications in the high rainfall zone (HRZ) of the South Coast are prone to leaching and waterlogging which can reduce nitrogen use efficiencies, but good rains later in the season mean higher yield potential.

The benefits of mid row banding (MRB) – a new system aimed at improving N efficiencies in season is also being investigated.

Soil test results taken on the 18th May showed low mineral soil Nitrogen (N) and low organic carbons (OC). Potassium (K) levels are marginal. The site was canola in 2019 and the paddock was badly windblown and sown down to corn rye in 2018.

The trial was sown on the 21st May with 120 kg/ha Scepter wheat. A basal rate of 140 kg/ha Macro Pro Extra was banded away from the seed and 80 kg/ha Muriate of Potash (MOP) top-dressed out in front of the CSBP plot seeder.

The trial was sown into moisture at 3-4cm, 20mm rain fell within 8 days after seeding. Keep an eye out for updates on the trial...

To find out more head to waproducers.com.au or reach out to:

Christine Kershaw, WAPC CEO: ceo@waproducers.com.au; 0429 236 729

Ken Drummond, WAPC Chair and member: kgd@iinet.au; 0427 541 033

SCF BEHIND THE SCENES

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020

Stirlings to Coast could not thrive without the amazing work of our various board and committee members. From SCF members to expert advisors, each one plays a key part in the development and growth of the SCF community.

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Nathan Dovey, CEO	0429 468 030
Philip Honey, Smart Farm Coordinator	0428 768 589
John Blake, R&D Consultant	0438 761 950
Philip Mackie, Project Officer	0437 120 891
Dr Kathi McDonald, Communications Manager	0408 418 531
Samantha Lubcke, Memberships Officer	0417 605 784
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The SCF team is based at the SCF office located at 75 Albany Highway (opposite Dome) in Albany.
Staff can be contacted on 9842 6653 or admin@scfarmers.org.au

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