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## GGA NewsWire - December 2014

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Dear <<First Name>> <<Last Name>>

### Across the GGA Desk

Someone in your office missing out on this great newsletter? Then get them to [subscribe](#) to the *GGA NewsWire* - Grower groups. Researchers. Industry. All the news. One email.

As we look forward to next year, there will be 12 GRDC-funded Regional Crop Updates held in March, along with many other grower group events, sharing all the latest and greatest research results from this season. Make sure you don't miss out - see all your important dates below! GGA are also sponsoring up to five growers to attend Perth Crop Updates in February, scroll down for EOI information.

The GGA wishes everyone a relaxing Christmas and New Year. Thank you for all the support throughout the year. *NewsWire* will be taking a break over the Christmas period but will return at the start of February.



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## GGA News

### 2014 - Year in Review!

Cramming a lid on 2014 is not easy as we review the huge amount of grower group activity that happened over the season and across the state, with the GGA working to connect the network, form collaborative partnerships and build capacity for effective farmer groups.

The year kicked off with Regional Meetings in Ravensthorpe, Geraldton, Katanning and Merredin, discussing group activities and opportunities for local collaboration. We also ran a discussion on grant application writing and produced a ['Tips and Tricks'](#) resource for grower groups to reference when writing applications.

2014 saw a record number of growers and grower group staff attending Perth Crop Updates with GGA subsidising 10 growers and seven grower group staff members to attend.

Part of the GGA activities is to coordinate speakers from the eastern states in a 'researcher roadshow' and this year the GGA supported SA farmer Robin Schaeffer to speak on his Nuffield studies on long-term weather forecasting and about his experiences in the establishment of a collaborative farming venture, and Georgie Alley, Grains Legumes Nutrition Council, on the nutritional analysis of Australian grains.

April saw the GGA relocate to the GIWA offices in Kensington, under a new funding arrangement with DAFWA.

A new version of the GGA [Toolkit](#) was released and distributed to all grower groups in WA and nationally. The Toolkit is still a very sought after resource, with the new version providing additional templates and information on grant writing, strategic planning, evaluation, risk management, Executive Officer & Project Officer job descriptions, sponsorship proposal and agreement, incorporation, and much much more!

The 2014 GGA Annual Forum had one of the best grower group involvements on record, with 100 grower group representatives and key industry and research partners participating in the 'Striving for Profitability Beyond Agronomics' theme. If you missed it, check out the presentations [here](#).

Rebecca was kept busy in September, attending eight field days in the month, with reports of high attendance, rigorous trial programs, great guest speakers and relevant local research.

New groups joined the GGA in 2014 - Agricultural Wheatblet Women East (AWWE), Merredin and Districts Farm Improvement Group (MADFIG) and the Carnamah LCDC Group.

The GGA took an active role in the GRDC Investment Plan, aiming to link grower groups to researchers and projects. The GGA will continue to play an active role in facilitating collaboration within our network. If you need assistance with any collaborative project ideas, contact the office.

A number of groups also took advantage of support to attend events, conduct training and strategic planning and visit other grower groups. Six grower group representatives attended Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) governance training, with great feedback on content and relevance.

And finally, continuous effort has gone into providing grower groups with support in any way we can, whether by assisting with speaker ideas, being a sounding board or pointing your group in the right direction, we're here to help.

Remember all these opportunities and many more are available in 2015. [Click here](#), or contact the GGA Office for more information on any of the GGA activities, T: 6180 5759, E: [rwallis@gga.org.au](mailto:rwallis@gga.org.au).



## EO Meeting Wrap

Last Thursday (27th Nov) 13 Executive Officers from the large grower groups within the GGA network came together to discuss collaboration, trials and all things operational. One of the key outcomes of the meeting included developing frameworks around how groups work better together, and with DAFWA and key partners, and how the GGA facilitates the linkages.

This meeting is highly valued by these groups as they face similar operational challenges and can share group successes. For more information about how the GGA facilitates and enables the network to come together, contact Rebecca Wallis, T: 6180 5759, E: [rwallis@gga.org.au](mailto:rwallis@gga.org.au). Keep an eye out for Regional Meeting dates to hit your inbox early 2015!

## GGA Strategic Advisory Group position vacant - seeking EOI's

The Grower Group Alliance (GGA) is currently seeking a grower or grower group representative to fill a vacant role on the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG).

The Strategic Advisory Group provides direction, advice and feedback on the activities of the GGA project. Most importantly, the SAG is required to ensure the Grower Group Alliance is working towards its vision through the objectives. This will ensure the GGA achieves its goals, and delivers benefits to all its members. The SAG is chaired by a farmer representative and meets twice a year, with occasional email responses required out of session.

For more information [click here](#). To apply for the position, please submit an expression of interest that includes a short two page CV, and a statement (max half page) about why you would like to join the strategic advisory group, including history with working/involvement with grower groups. For more information contact Rebecca Wallis, T: 6180 5759, E: [rwallis@gga.org.au](mailto:rwallis@gga.org.au). Applications close Friday 30 January.

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## General News

### Regional Cropping Solutions End of Year Update

GRDC's Regional Cropping Solutions networks (RCSN's) have all met in the last few months in WA. The RCSN's meet twice a year in each port zone of WA to help identify the top issues affecting profitability, and/or productivity in their region. After identifying the top issues, the RCSN's then help define the activities to address these issues. The top issues across the southern RCSN zones can be seen in the table below.

**Top Issues for each Southern RCSN port zones  
Current as at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014**

Issue	Kwinana West	Kwinana East	Esperance	Albany	TOTAL
Soil constraints, including subsoil and soil health	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
Water use efficiency		Yes	Yes		2
Herbicide resistance			Yes	Yes	2
Business management and farm profitability	Yes	Yes			2
Frost management options	Yes			Yes	2
Frost versus September drought		Yes			1
VRT (Paddock mapping)	Yes				1
Rotations/profitable legumes				Yes	1
Slugs/Snails				Yes	1
Non-wetting soils			Yes		1
Crop disease	Yes				1

The southern zone RCSN's meet again in February next year. Dates are:

- 11th February - Albany port zone RCSN at Bremer Bay
- 12th February - Esperance port zone RCSN at Esperance
- 19th February - Kwinana East port zone RCSN at Mukinbudin
- 20th February - Kwinana West port zone RCSN at Perth

To view a list of projects that have been or are being completed with final reports due in early next year [click here](#). For more information about the RCSN's [click here](#), or contact Julianne Hill, M: 0447 261 607, E: [regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com). For information on the Geraldton RCSN contact Cameron Weeks, M: 0427 006 944, E: [cameron@planfarm.com.au](mailto:cameron@planfarm.com.au).

### Soil Acidity in WA

Subsurface acidity is a major constraint to crop and pasture productivity across WA's grainbelt and is estimated to erode potential crop yields by 9 to 12 per cent, worth \$500 million annually.

About 14.25 million hectares of WA grainbelt soils are acidic or at risk of becoming acidic to the point of restricting crop yields, and lime use has increased in recent years to address acidic soils with low pH levels. Useful information for grain growers about subsurface acidity and liming is available on the GRDC [website](#).

Furthermore, the Mingenew-Irwin Group, West Midlands Group, Liebe Group and Southern DIRT groups have joined forces this year to help find the best ways to manage subsurface acidity.

WA growers and researchers have already found that pH improvements can be fast-tracked if lime is mechanically incorporated into the soil subsurface during amelioration. Incorporation methods include deep tillage, spading and mouldboard ploughing. The application, performance and economics of these systems - and liming rates - are the focus of the new collaborative WA grower group project, funded by the GRDC.

[Click here](#) for more information on the project.

### Agribusiness Crop Updates registrations open next week!

Early Bird Registrations for the 2015 WA Agribusiness Crop Updates, held on 24-25 February, will open next Monday 8 December!

The two day program will showcase the latest research, technology, market development and management innovations to improve the productivity and profitability of the WA grains industry.

For more information on the program [click here](#) and registration [click here](#). Early Bird Registration close Friday 23 January.

### Online trial databases

### *Online Farm Trials*

Online Farm Trials (OFT) is a web application that delivers Australia-wide cropping trial research information to all members of the grains industry. OFT is designed to help farmers improve productivity and sustainability by improving access to trial research information and findings through web browser services.

The Liebe Group are currently involved in the project, with trials from 2002 to 2012 across of range of crop types and farming systems available to [view](#).

The OFT project is inviting participation and feedback from grower groups, research organisations and government agencies. There is no charge to use or access the system, and ownership of all research information submitted is retained by the provider/custodian.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Rob Milne, T: 03 5327 9488, E: [r.milne@federation.edu.au](mailto:r.milne@federation.edu.au) to become involved. To subscribe to the OFT newsletter [click here](#).

### *DAFWA's interactive online map of research trials*

Feedback is sought from grain growers in the northern Wheatbelt on an interactive pilot map which highlights and reports on DAFWA's field research conducted in 2014.

The pilot map was developed to provide a centralised site which included details about grains-related research, development and extension activities conducted by the department. It will also provide information on trials while they're occurring, rather than waiting until trials are complete, with researchers imputing basic details about trials early in the season, and progressively updating the results as they come to hand.

Feedback on the web tool will drive future improvements. For more information [click here](#), or contact Andrew Blake, T: 9956 8564, E: [andrew.blake@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:andrew.blake@agric.wa.gov.au).

### **Subscribe to the AWI Sheep's Back Network**

The Sheep Back is the AWI-funded grower network for Western Australian woolgrowers, which champions the sheep industry and improves the capacity of WA woolgrowers to make better and more timely decisions. It aims to be recognized as a leading network that provides timely, independent practical information; understand the current issues facing woolgrowers and communicate these to industry stakeholders; and deliver three technologies per annum based upon woolgrower priorities and funders' objectives.

The project produces a monthly electronic newsletter showcasing the latest news and events. To view the latest newsletter [click here](#), to subscribe click here, or for more information contact Ed Riggall, M: 0418 299 007, E: [ed@iconag.com.au](mailto:ed@iconag.com.au).

### **Fertiliser calculator released online for grain growers**

A new online fertiliser calculator developed by DAFWA aims to help grain growers select the best options from hundreds of commercially-available products. Growers can customise the calculator to include fertilisers they commonly use and create fertiliser programs for crops that can be stored or printed, effectively creating their own fertiliser schedule and records. To access the calculator [click here](#).

### **Centre for Crop and Disease Management now online**

The grains industry now has fast access to latest crop disease management information with the unveiling of a website for the new Centre for Crop and Disease Management (CCDM).

The website will provide a hub for research results and links to a range of resources from the CCDM's national wheat, barley, canola and pulse projects investigating fungal diseases and resistance.

CCDM research targets the major fungal diseases (other than rust) affecting grains in Australia, including stagonospora (septoria nodorum blotch) and yellow spot (also known as tan spot) in wheat; net form of net blotch (NFNB) and powdery mildew in barley; and sclerotinia in canola.

To view the website [click here](#). For more information about CCDM contact John Noonan,

## Summary of SWCC funded projects

SWCC's Sustainable Agriculture program aims to improve agricultural soil health, production and profits and the quality of broader environmental services, by supporting farming entities to trial new and innovative practices.

Funding has been provided until December 2017 to 31 entities, including grower groups, landcare groups and individuals, to trial and demonstrate practices across different industries and regions.

For more information about the projects [click here](#), or contact Steve Ewings, T: 9780 6264, E: [Steve.Ewings@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:Steve.Ewings@agric.wa.gov.au).

## Workshop Opportunities

### Important Grower Group Dates for Feb/Mar 2015

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
17 Feb	Liebe Group Trials Review Day	Dalwallinu	Sarah Tholstrup, 9661 0570 <a href="mailto:sarah@liebegroup.org.au">sarah@liebegroup.org.au</a>
24 - 25 Feb	Agribusiness Crop Updates	Perth	Shai Dunbar, 6262 2128 <a href="mailto:sdunbar@giwa.org.au">sdunbar@giwa.org.au</a>
3 Mar	WANTFA Crop Updates	Cunderdin	Lauren Celenza, 0419 908 793 <a href="mailto:lauren.celenza@wantfa.com.au">lauren.celenza@wantfa.com.au</a>
4 Mar	Liebe Group Crop Updates	Dalwallinu	Sarah Tholstrup, 9661 0570 <a href="mailto:sarah@liebegroup.org.au">sarah@liebegroup.org.au</a>
5 Mar	Facey Group Crop Updates	Wickepin	Brownwyn Dew, 9888 1223 <a href="mailto:admin@faceygroup.org.au">admin@faceygroup.org.au</a>
	Mingenew-Irwin Group Crop Updates	Minengew	Sheila Charlesworth, 9928 1645 <a href="mailto:sheila@mig.org.au">sheila@mig.org.au</a>
	North Mallee Farm Improvement Group Crop Updates	Salmon Gums	Andrew Longmire, <a href="mailto:stonyfell@bigpond.com">stonyfell@bigpond.com</a>
10 Mar	West Midlands Group Crop Updates	Badgingarra	Anne Wilkins, 9651 4008 <a href="mailto:anne@wmgroup.org.au">anne@wmgroup.org.au</a>
11 Mar	Southern DIRT Crop Updates	Kojonup	Pip Crook, 9831 1074 <a href="mailto:eo@southerdirt.com.au">eo@southerdirt.com.au</a>
12 Mar	North East Farming Futures Crop Updates	Mullewa	Jenny Thomas, 0467 640 722 <a href="mailto:innovation@neffgroup.com.au">innovation@neffgroup.com.au</a>
17 Mar	RAIN Crop Updates	Ravensthorpe	Elisa Spengler, 9383 1018 <a href="mailto:rainoffice@westnet.com.au">rainoffice@westnet.com.au</a>
18 Mar	Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Crop Updates	Jerramungup	Karryn Dorrell, 9835 1127 <a href="mailto:karryn@fbg.org.au">karryn@fbg.org.au</a>
19 Mar	Stirlings to Coast Farmers Crop Updates	Green Range	Heather Adams, 9854 1051 <a href="mailto:heatheradams.ohcg@bigpond.com">heatheradams.ohcg@bigpond.com</a>
20 Mar	SEPWA Harvest Review	Esperance	Niki Curtis, 9083 1125 <a href="mailto:eo@sepwa.org.au">eo@sepwa.org.au</a>
25 Mar	Lakes Grower Group Crop Updates	Lake King	Elisa Spengler, 9383 1018 <a href="mailto:rainoffice@westnet.com.au">rainoffice@westnet.com.au</a>

The GGA is offering sponsorship's, to up to five grower group farmer representatives, to attend the 2014 Agribusiness Crop Updates, held 24th and 25th February in Perth.

This two day conference will showcase the latest research, technology and management issues influencing the WA grains industry.

A farmer representative, who has not previously received support to attend, must contact the GGA to receive \$500 towards event registration. To register your interest, contact Rebecca Wallis, T: 6180 5759, E: [rwallis@gga.org.au](mailto:rwallis@gga.org.au). Successful representatives will be contacted in January in time for early bird registrations.

### **Persuasion Skills Workshop - how to influence change**

The workshop is designed for the agriculture and NRM industries, for people working farmers to encourage the implementation of new processes, products or technologies on their farms.

Delivered by Bruce Howie and Jeanette Long, the two day workshop will be held Tues 17 & Wed 18 February in Perth.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Bruce Howie, T: 0418 254 668, E: [Bruce.Howie@c-qual.com](mailto:Bruce.Howie@c-qual.com).

Plant Pathologists and Entomologists from DAFWA will discuss Pest and Disease research results and seasonally topical crop protection issues in a Webinar presentation, on Tuesday 9 December.

The following topics will be included in the webinar:

- 2014 disease update and implications for 2015
- Root disease - Rhizoctonia fungicides, Take-all, Crown rot.
- Loose smut - Don't throw out Hindmarsh, use seed dressing
- Red legged Earth Mite - Insecticide resistance
- Wheat and barley leaf rusts - Impact of changing pathotypes

For more information [click here](#), or contact Geoff Thomas, T: 9368 3262, E: [geoff.j.thomas@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:geoff.j.thomas@agric.wa.gov.au)

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## **Funding Opportunities**

### **NACC Agriculture Innovation Grants**

Expressions of Interest are now being sought for the establishment of on-farm demonstration sites within the Northern Agricultural Region as part of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) sustainable farming program.

Projects can demonstrate innovative practices that address any or a combination of the following issues:

- Salinity;
- Nutrient management;
- Non-wetting soils;
- Acid soils;
- Herbicide resistance;
- Erosion;
- Adaptation to climate variability;
- Other practices that alleviate natural resource management issues.

Applications can be for up to \$30,000 per demonstration, and multiple applications are encouraged. For more information [click here](#), or contact Sally Fenner, T: 9938 0125, E: [Sally.Fenner@nacc.com.au](mailto:Sally.Fenner@nacc.com.au). Expressions of Interest close **Thursday 15 January**.

### **Royalties for Regions: Biosecurity Research and Development Fund**

The Boosting Biosecurity Defences Biosecurity R&D Fund provides funding for innovative solutions to better manage significant pests and diseases that impact on Western Australia's (WA) agriculture and agrifood industries.

Up to \$3.2 million is available over three years from April 2015. Each project is able to apply for between \$50 000 and \$500 000 per year, and projects must be completed by 31 December 2017.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Jenny Crisp, T: 9368 3254, E: [jenny.crisp@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:jenny.crisp@agric.wa.gov.au). Applications close **Monday 15 December**.

### **Regional Grants Scheme & Community Chest Fund**

The Wheatbelt Development Commission is seeking applications for the 2014-15 Royalties for Regions, Wheatbelt Regional Grants Scheme and Community Chest Fund.

Regional Grants Scheme and Community Chest Funds are for community, public and not-for-profit organisations to improve and develop infrastructure and services in the region.

*Regional Grants Scheme* - Grants from \$20,001 to \$300,000. Applications close: **Thursday 11 December**.

*Community Chest Fund* - Grants up to and including \$20,000. Applications for small grants will be taken throughout the year until funds are exhausted.

For more information [click here](#).

### **CBH Grass Roots Fund**

Applications for the CBH Grass Roots Fund will open on the 1st January 2015. The fund aims to provide financial support for projects across the grainbelt, with a focus on programs that contribute to the vitality, development, well being and safety of grain growing regions.

Grants of up to \$5000 are available, and close Friday 30 January. For more information [click here](#), or contact Amie Bolton, T: 9237 9712, E: [amie.bolton@cbh.com.au](mailto:amie.bolton@cbh.com.au). For support in developing your applications contact the GGA.

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## **Grower Group Spotlight**

### **The Liebe Group - Grass Roots Capacity Building**

The Liebe Group is busy pulling together a plethora of information from a year of quality research in the area. With over 60 trials and demonstrations conducted during 2014, all of which will be reported on and extended in our annual R&D book to continue to build members knowledge and capacity for their businesses.

Reflecting on the 2014 season, Liebe has had a busy year of projects, workshops, grower tours and major field days. Highlights include the Spring Field Day at the Fitzsimons' Property east of Buntine, Crop Updates, the 17th annual Women's Field Day and gaining funding to support 15 young Liebe members to attend the Innovation Generation Conference in Toowoomba, QLD. The two day conference was extended out to a week tour for the group who had the opportunity to visit local feedlots, broad acre farms and an ethanol bio-refinery. The Liebe membership has a great number of younger farmers engaged in the group as was evident in getting 15 people along on the tour. Many of the attendees are also involved in the R&D Committee, helping to drive future research. The tour participants brought back a wealth of information with new ideas for the group.

To read more about the Liebe Group's 2014 activities and plans for the coming year [click here](#). For more information contact Clare Johnston, T: 9661 0570, E: [clare@liebegrup.org.au](mailto:clare@liebegrup.org.au).



*PHOTO: 2014 Spring Field Day audience for Craig Scanlan's, DAFWA, trial presentation.*

### **The Changing Face of the Facey Group**

The past 24 months have been busy ones for the Facey Group resulting in the creation of a new role and a new face joining their team. Due to continued demand for quality farmer driven agricultural research and demonstrations and to improve their service and commitment to current partners and funders, the Facey Group created the role of a Technical Field Officer.

The group sought someone that had a strong attention to detail, was highly organised with an enthusiastic and innovative personality to work closely with the Sustainable Ag Coordinator on their research and development program. Specifically the role called for someone to monitor and collect data from their field trials, assist in the implementation and development of projects and assist in the coordination of the groups Cropping and NRM speciality groups. After a successful recruiting process the group welcomed Sheree Blechynden to their team.

Sheree has written an introductory article for the GGA introducing herself to the network. Please [click here](#) to read and welcome Sheree by contacting her at the Facey Group Office, T: 9888 1223, E: [tfo@faceygroup.org.au](mailto:tfo@faceygroup.org.au).



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### **Calendar of Events**

*To view the full GGA Calendar of Events click [here](#), or subscribe to the fortnightly email click [here](#).*

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To view the full Grower Group Alliance Calendar of Events, please go to the [GGA Website](#)

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[rwallis@gga.org.au](mailto:rwallis@gga.org.au)

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