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GGA NewsWire - September 2014

CONTENTS

- [Across the GGA Desk](#)
- [GGA News](#)
- [General News](#)
- [Workshop Opportunities](#)
- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

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

Across the GGA Desk

As the premier event on the GGA calendar, the 2014 Annual Forum didn't disappoint. This year's forum was a resounding success, with lots of new grower group reps joining a few die-hards that keep coming back year after year!

An observation we made this year is the increased number of grower group staff attending the event, showing the growth of grower groups in WA and an increased professionalism and appetite for opportunities to build their skills and grow their networks. The GGA aims to continue to support this maturation of the network by delivering targeted opportunities build the capacity of groups, such as the Murdoch Uni facilities tour and negotiation training on day one of the GGA Forum.

Moving on to this month and with more than 20 field walks and days crowding the September calendar, the GGA will be kept busy travelling the countryside attending your events. It's important at this time of year to acknowledge the fabulous job grower groups are doing in delivering local, targeted and relevant RD&E, and making a difference to member's bottom lines.

Scroll down to check out the variety of GGA funding opportunities for group development, and a range of funding for group activities. The GGA is always available to support your group in developing projects and applications, so keep that in mind when considering opportunities for your group!

See you at the field days!

Annual Forum increases partnerships and networks

The grower groups asked for it back - with the GGA Annual Forum returning to the calendar, 20th & 21st August in Perth, with key stakeholders keen to reconvene to network, develop collaborations, and share their successes and those of their industry partners.

'Striving for profitability beyond agronomics' set the tone for the event, kicking off with a grower group-only day, with farmers and group staff touring Murdoch University grains and livestock facilities, and participating in a negotiation and influencing people training session, delivered by UWA Business School Professor Ray Fells. The first day concluded with a trial facilitated session work-shopping grower group projects around key agronomic priorities.

Thursday saw around 100 grower and industry participants attend the Annual Forum, and started with hearing lessons from cutting the middle man in the horticulture supply chain, such as Carnarvon Bananas, were related to broadacre cropping, before Lake Grace grower Mark Pearce and AEGIC's Barry Cox offered a glimpse into shifting wheat markets in China.

Brains were kicked into gear before lunch with Victorian consultant Nigel McGuckian, one of the highlights for the day, taking the crowd on a journey through grower decision making.

Concurrent sessions after lunch bought the discussion back to farm level, with the ever popular grower presentations centering on grains, livestock and technology.

The grains session saw SEPWA's Nigel Metz discussed the drivers of the organisation and its impact on the premium wheat market and Yuna grower Erin Green impressing the audience by sharing how their farm business has adopted new technology, such as controlled traffic, developed a new business structure and the role of the Yuna Farm Improvement Group in supporting the community.

In the livestock session, sheep producer Brad Wooldridge demonstrated how he manages his pastures using technology, challenging producers to find the weak link in their pasture management which, when corrected, can lead to substantial profit growth, while Wickopin producer, Audrey Bird from the Facey Group, shared her journey to developing Facey Country Lamb, a niche dorper lamb product sold directly from the property.

Technology session highlighted the future of farming, with Mingenew-Irwin Group farmer Darrin Lee sharing his experiences using UAVs (drones) on his farm, and how they impact his farm business, with Southern Cross grower, Clint Della Bosca, talking on the use of soil moisture probes in the low rainfall area where he crops, working with WANTFA and FEAR (Far East Ag Research group).

Fitting all these speakers into one program was hard enough, let alone applying all the take home messages - so renowned speaker Mark McKeon closed the day discussing how to create more time, with his basic strategy to self-invest and achieve more. Mark gave the audience some key take home processes, talking about the go zone, slow zone and no zone.

To read the full media release [click here](#). For more information contact Rebecca Wallis, T: 6180 5759, E: rwallis@gga.org.au. Presentations will available online soon, and event proceeding will be sent to attendees within the next month.





Northern Agri Group celebrates 10th Birthday

In an industry where time is precious and timing is everything, a volunteer run group is now celebrating their 10th anniversary, delivering local, relevant, RD&E to Binu farmers.

The Northern Agri Group (NAG) is a socially-driven, community-based grower group with a diverse range of interests, but are focused on sustainability, improving yields with whatever means available, farming to deal with a changing climate and accessing to up-to-date and relevant information.

2014 marks ten years since the inception of the NAG and on Saturday 2nd August 95 members and friends attended the NAG anniversary dinner at the Binu Hall to celebrate their achievements.

To read more about NAG achievements [click here](#). For more information contact Jim Wedge, M: 0427 512 052. E: northernagrigrp@bigpond.com.



General News

Boosting Grains Research and Development

Royalties for Regions has funded a four-year Boosting Grains Research and Development (R&D) project, via the Seizing the Opportunity agriculture initiative.

The four main R&D priorities for the initiative are;

- Frost-proofing farm businesses - bringing new research technologies and skills to regional WA that will help to increase knowledge and understanding of ways to manage and reduce frost damage.
- More grain from less rain - focusing on linking growers to better agronomy and new varieties to ensure productivity gains continue during dry seasons.
- Lifting the yield ceiling - developing new crop 'management packages' that will provide new opportunities for growers to take advantage of high rainfall seasons.
- Regional agronomy systems - focusing on improving farm productivity and reducing production risk through the effective delivery of integrated information from industry projects. There will be an investment in frontline staff across the wheatbelt, working with grower groups and the agribusiness sector.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Kerrine Blenkinsop, T: 9368 3256: E: kerrine.blenkinsop@agric.wa.gov.au.

MLA announces restructure

MLA announced an organisational restructure last month, to address the recommendations made into a review into levy investment in on-farm R&D in 2013 and result in an organisation that will deliver the support and services required by industry into the future.

Under the new model, producers will be able to provide input at a local level on RD&E priorities that feed into the regional RD&E investment plans, including a [new regional group](#) encompassing southern West Australia.

For more information [click here](#).

Probes & Prophets

A new webpage, 'Probes and Prophets', funded by the GRDC RCSN, is providing growers and advisers with indications of plant available water versus growing season rainfall at critical stages of the growing season at 12 sites.

It also includes comprehensive crop reports such as probabilities of reaching/exceeding yield potential and incidence of frost and heat shock; availability of soil nitrogen (N), water and N stress levels; projected crop performance with no added rain or fertiliser; and a three month rainfall outlook from the National Climate Centre.

For more information [click here](#) or contact Julianne Hill, M: 0447 261 607, E: regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com.

eXtension: expert grains info on tap

Expert grains information is now available through the new online platform www.extensionaus.com.au.

eXtension, a GRDC funded project, allows people to connect, have real conversations, explore issues in a more personal way, have an influence over the information made available and to interact with tools, including social media, that can enhance learning. The pilot is focused on field crop diseases and crop nutrition.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Gavin Beever, T: (03) 5441 6176, E: gavin.beever@orm.com.au

Bankwest Planfarm Benchmarks 2013/14 Survey

New statistics from 556 WA broadacre farm businesses have been compiled in the Planfarm Bankwest Benchmarks survey for the 2013/14 season, to allow farm businesses to compare their financial and production performance to other farmers in their district and region.

Key findings from this years survey include;

- Overall positive trend across the state, with all crops exceeding their 10-year average yield for the 2013 production year
- Return on capital (ROC) of an average of 8.2 per cent (increase of 1.1% on 2012)
- 25 per cent of the 556 farm businesses surveyed had a 15.3 per ROC

For more information on the survey report [click here](#).

Recommended malt varieties for 2015/16

GIWA Barley Council have released the recommendations for malting barley varieties for the 2015/16 season, to assist growers in deciding which varieties to keep or buy seed of.

There are presently a high number of malting varieties and it is not feasible to segregate them all, so the GIWA Barley Council works with industry to develop plans that will maximise segregation and pricing opportunities for growers and ensures the trade is able to accumulate marketable tonnages from each port zone.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Steve Tilbrook, M:0427 380 065.

Are you a future grain leader?

Build your potential in grains industry leadership, with applications now open for the GrainGrowers Australian Grain Farm Leaders Program.

Grains growers aged between 25 and 40 years, who are keen to enhance their industry leadership capacity and develop personal and professional leadership knowledge and skills, are eligible for the fully-funded program. For more information or to apply, visit the [GrainGrowers website](#).

Nominate Now! RIRDC Rural Women's Award

With WA women leading at a national level over the past three years, nominations are sought for the 2015 RIRDC Rural Women's Award, with applications closing 30th October.

The peak national award recognises Australia's most inspirational rural women, providing financial assistance, mentoring and access to a nation-wide network of business and community leaders for the selected winners.

State winners receive a \$10,000 financial bursary to implement their award vision, with the national winner and runner-up receiving a further \$10,000 bursary awarded to support their professional development and contribution to primary industries. For more information [click here](#).

DAFWA is on Youtube

Videos featuring leading producers transforming the Northern sandplains by intergrating perennials pastures into their farming systems are now available on the [DAFWA YouTube page](#). The release of these seven new videos is to support success in establishing and integrating perennial pastures into the farming system, and is part of range of videos available on the site.

Sheep Easy Presentations now available

Presentations from the Sheep's Back Sheep Easy event held in Wickepin on 6 August are now available online. [Click here](#) to view.

Workshop Opportunities

Grower Group Spring Field Days

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
2 Sept	WANTFA Spring Field Day	Cunderdin	David Minkey, 0417 999 304 david.minkey@wantfa.com.au
4 Sept	Mingenew-Irwin Group Spring Field Day	Mingenew	Sheila Charlesworth, 9928 1645 sheila@mig.org.au
	Condingup Spring Field Day	Condingup	Lyndon Mickel, 0427 766 029
9 Sept	West Midlands Group Spring Field Day	Warradargee/ Eneabba	Anne Wilkins, 9651 4008 anne@wmgroup.org.au
11 Sept	Liebe Group Spring Field Day	Buntine	Clare Johnston, 9661 0570 clare@liebegrp.org.au
	SEPWA/EDRS Spring Field Day	Esperance	Niki Curtis, 9083 1125 eo@sepwa.org.au
16 Sept	RAIN Spring Field Day	Ravensthorpe	Elisa Spengler, 9838 1018 rainoffice@westnet.com.au
17 Sept	Facey Group Spring Field Day	Wickepin	Felicity Taylor, 9888 1223 eo@faceygroup.org.au
	Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Spring Field Day	Jerramungup	Anne Sparrow, 9835 1127 anne@fbg.org.au
	Nyabing Farm Improvement Group Spring Field Day	Nyabing	Fiona Hobley fiona@hobley.net.au
18 Sept	Corrigin Farm Improvement Group Spring Field Day	Corrigin	Gerald Williams, 0487 321 067 geraldwilliams825@gmail.com
	Stirlings to Coast Farmers Spring Field Day	South Stirling	Heather Adams, heatheradams_ohcg@bigpond.com

23 Sept	Lakes Grower Group Spring Field Day	Lake King	Elisa Spengler, 9838 1018 rainoffice@westnet.com.au
	Cascade Spring Field Day	Cascade	Murray Ayers, 0427 792 018
24 Sept	Southern DIRT Spring Field Day	Kojonup	Pip Crook, 9831 1074 eo@southerndirt.org.au
	North Mallee Farm Improvement Group Spring Field Day	Salmon Gums	Nigel Metz, 9083 1115 nigel@sepwa.org.au
24-25 Sept	ASHEEP Pasture Field Days	Esperance	Jan Clawson, 0407 990 497 eo@asheep.org.au
25 Sept	WANTFA Long Term Systems and Soil Health Day	Cunderdin	David Minkey, 0417 999 304 david.minkey@wantfa.com.au
	Jerdacuttup Top Crop Group Spring Field Day	Jerdacuttup	Elisa Spengler, 9838 1018 rainoffice@westnet.com.au

Do you want to visit another grower group this Spring?

The GGA has a small amount of funds, of up to \$500 per group, available to support grower group exchange. This can be put towards event entry fees, bus hire or accommodation subsidies.

Contact Rebecca Wallis for more information, T: 6180 5759, E: rwallis@gga.org.au.

AICD Governance Foundations for Not-for-Profit Directors Course

The GGA are offering four subsidies of \$500 for grower group committee or board members to attend the AICD Governance Foundations for Not-for-Profit Directors course, to be held 25-26 September in Perth.

The course will provide participants with an understanding of fundamental roles and responsibilities of directors, specifically in the areas of governance, risk, financial performance and strategy.

This opportunity is for groups that haven't already accessed it in the past. For more information or to express your interest contact Rebecca Wallis, T: 6180 5759, E: rwallis@gga.org.au.

Forum to discuss investment in natural resources in WA

DAFWA are hosting the 'Laying the groundwork for investment in the sustainable use of natural resources in

WACOSS Workshops

Some great workshops running with WACOSS in the next few months:

- WEBINAR - 4 Sept - [Interpreting Financial Reports for Boards](#)
- WORKSHOP - 6 Oct - [Contract Law for NFP Organisations](#)
- WEBINAR - 15 Oct - [Risk Management - What Boards Need to Know Interpreting Financial Reports for Boards](#)
- WORKSHOP - 29 Oct - [Taking the Stress Out of Time Management](#)

Group representatives looking to attend can receive \$100 towards registration from the GGA. For more information, or to register your interest, contact Rebecca Wallis for more information, T: 6180 5759, E: rwallis@gga.org.au

Training programs for sheep producers

Current opportunities to host workshops or discussion groups for sheep producers in your region;

['More Lambs More Often - bullet proofing your business against variable seasons'](#)

- NEW one day workshop being offered over next 2 years
- Eight participants per deliverer
- Contact Andrew Thompson, T: 0437 316 117, E: andrew.thompson@at-consulting.com.au

[Bred Well Fed Well](#)

- Practical sessions include condition scoring, feed budgeting, ram rankings and ram selection.
- The 'hands-on' workshop, 5-6 hr duration for around 15 producers, and available until June 2015.

agriculture' Forum in Perth Thursday 11 September, which will provide an opportunity to hear about the evaluation and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices and the decision-making approaches to be considered for investing in the future of natural resource use in WA agriculture.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Jamie Bowyer, T: 9368 3135, E: jamie.bowyer@agric.wa.gov.au.

- Contact Serina Hancock, M: 0403 570 823, E: s.hancock@murdoch.edu.au

Lifetime Ewe Management

- AWI have recently funded another 120 LTEM groups (nationally) over the next 2 years.
- The course is based on groups of 5 to 6 producers that meet 6 times per year with a trained facilitator.
- Contact Priscilla Cuming, T: 03 5573 0943, E: pcuming@rist.com.au

Funding Opportunities

Wheatbelt NRM Trials and Demonstrations

Wheatbelt NRM are offering grants of up to \$20 000, in improved soil management, innovative crop management, sustainable grazing systems and tree crops.

For more information [click here](#), or contact Jo Wheeler, T: 9670 3121, E: jwheeler@wheatbeltnrm.org.au. Applications close Friday 26 September.

CBH Community Grant Fund

Applications for the CBH Community Grant Fund are now open. 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 Tuesday 30 September. For more information [click here](#), or contact Amie Bolton, T: 9237 9712, E: amie.bolton@cbh.com.au. For support in developing your applications contact the GGA.

RIRDC Open call for research proposals

RIRDC's 2014 call for research project proposals is now open, and covers the following topics relevant to grower groups in WA;

- New and Developing Plant Industries
- Pasture Seeds

For more information [click here](#). Applications close Wednesday 17 September.

Landcare 25th Anniversary Grants

As part of the 25th anniversary of Landcare, the Australian Government is launching the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants 2014-15, providing up to \$20,000 for local groups to enhance their natural resources and engage their communities in land and environmental management. Grants are expected to open this month. For more information [click here](#).

SCNRM Southern Incentives Grant Round 5

Grants of up to \$20,000 are available to farmers and community groups to complete conservation works on private property.

This current round aims to protect, restore and enhance native vegetation within the Forest to Fitzgerald macro corridor (Walpole to Jerramungup) by implementing on-ground works.

For more information [click here](#). Applications close Monday 13 October.

GRDC Industry Development Award

GRDC Conference Awards and Industry Development Awards are currently open, specifically targeted at grain growers or groups working directly with growers for study tours, travel or other forms of training.

The aim is to develop new skills, build relationships and acquire new information that

will contribute to building a sustainable and profitable grains industry. Grants of up to \$15 000 are available, and applications close **Wednesday 29 October**.

For more information [visit the website](#), or contact Tom McCue, T: (02) 6166 4500, E: tom.mccue@grdc.com.au. For support in developing your applications contact the GGA.

Calendar of Events

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

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

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it on to your friends and fellow community groups in your area.

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