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South-West WA
Drought Resilience Adoption
and Innovation Hub

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MEDIA RELEASE

Media Release

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New project will arm horticulturalists against a drying climate

Assisting horticulture producers to use irrigated water more efficiently is the aim of a collaborative new project that will help maintain crop production in a drying climate.

“The project ‘Modern soil moisture monitoring to improve irrigation management’ will facilitate knowledge sharing between different geographical areas,” South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub) Knowledge Broker Tanya Kilminster said.

“It is a great example of the Hubs facilitating collaboration – linking farmers, researchers and others to achieve learning and adoption to improve drought resilience practices.”

The project, being led by the SW WA Hub, involves collaboration with the Victoria and Northern WA and Northern Territory Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, with demonstration sites being hosted in all three regions.

In Western Australia the project is being conducted in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

Funding for the \$620,000 horticulture project has been provided by the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund (FDF), as part of \$4 million invested by the FDF into five projects that support Australia’s eight national Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs to work together.

Additional in-kind contributions to the horticulture project have been provided by the three Hubs involved and their partners, including DPIRD.

Ms Kilminster said ‘Modern soil moisture monitoring to improve irrigation management’ recognised that drought could have a major impact on the availability of surface and groundwater resources to irrigators.

“Growers involved with this project will be supported by irrigation development officers to build their capacity to strategically implement soil moisture monitoring and irrigation management,” she said.

DPIRD horticultural researcher Neil Lantzke said soil moisture sensors had been proven to reduce (by 10 to 20 per cent) the amount of water that irrigators needed to apply to their crops.

“In other Australian vegetable production areas, regular on-farm visits by irrigation development officers have provided growers with the confidence and skills to interpret data effectively and then apply these insights to their irrigation management practices,” Mr Lantzke said.



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“This project represents a cross-sector, collaborative approach – involving farmers, researchers, service providers and industry development officers – to deliver specific on-farm programs and peer-to-peer learning.”

The SW WA Hub is funded by the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund and aims to improve the drought resilience and preparedness of local farmers and their communities and foster agricultural innovation. Information is available at www.gga.org.au/activity/drought-hub.

Caption: South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub) Knowledge Broker Tanya Kilminster says a collaborative new horticulture irrigation project will establish on-farm demonstration sites at growers’ properties in southern WA, northern WA, NT and Victoria.

– ENDS –

Contact

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