The fourth edition of LFGN Newswire, provides information about a range of local group activities, news, training opportunities, newsletters, field days and funding opportunities. You are welcome to forward this Newswire to others who may be interested and encourage them to join the email list.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY CONFERENCE
The National Australian Society of Agronomy conference will be held in Perth, WA from the 10th to the 14th September, 2006. Put this date in your diary, further updates to follow.

GRDC AGribusINESS TRIAL NETWORK
Six LFGN registered groups have submitted applications for trial funds through the GRDC Agribusiness Trial Network. Submissions have now closed. Those groups who did submit tenders will receive notification of the status of their submission in mid December 2005.

FEBRUARY MEETING FOR ALL LFGN GROUP LEADERS
Please be reminded that the LFGN will hold its first workshop for group leaders on Tuesday 14th February, 2006. This workshop will be held in Perth and is followed by GRDC "Crop Updates".

Guest speakers include Cameron Weeks, Planfarm, Craig Salt, Sustainable Consulting; Ian McClelland, Birchip Cropping Group; and Rhonda Foley, CSIRO.

Accommodation and workshop expenses will be covered by the LFGN and the opportunity to attend Crop Updates is available for those interested.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2006 Young Rural Leaders Course
Are you one of Australia’s leaders of tomorrow or know someone who is? A week long residential course in Canberra in March 2006 is being offered to 30, 18-35 year olds from across Australia who are working or involved in agricultural, fisheries, forestry, food or natural resource management industries.

This is a unique opportunity to make a difference to the future sustainability, competitiveness and profitability of the rural industry. The course provides participants with the skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to decision making at the national level.

Closing date for applications is 16 December 2005. More information go to: http://www.daff.gov.au/content/output.cfm?ObjectId=4DDA3E82-F3F5-4264-820CF8E87328715F
Land & Water Australia Community Fellowships
Land and Water Australia offers a number of Community Fellowships for people who work within the natural resource management field, to share their experiences. This is a non-academic award directed at:

- Community landcare facilitators eg; those who have handled change management issues for regional communities
- Farmers who have adopted innovative farming practices and want to write up their results
- Volunteers for environmental NGOs who have campaigned on community based issues and want to share their experiences

The fellowship is between $10,000 to $15,000 and is designed to provide for the time and resources required for fellows to write their experiences, speak at seminars or the opportunity for others to come and view their work. For more information go to www.lwa.gov.au or email Land&WaterAustralia@lwa.gov.au

GRDC Industry Development Awards
Is your group interested in developing new skills, building relationships with other groups and/or accessing new information that will contribute to building a sustainable and profitable grains industry?

The GRDC is offering several awards to Australian grain growers who are looking to widen their experience by way of study tours within Australia or overseas or for other purposes approved by the GRDC. Each award offered is up to the value of $15,000.00 over a six month period.

This is a great opportunity for your group or for individuals in the group to access GRDC funds to improve their knowledge base. Applications are due by 31st March 2006, but now is the time to start thinking about your group’s direction for next year!


WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

More details on the following workshops can be found on the LFGN website at http://www.lfgn.org.au/group_opportunities

Outlook 2002
Do you need to find a higher level of organisation in communicating with your group? This course provides skills to assist you organise an address book, send group emails, use the Rules Wizard to organise incoming/outgoing messages and much more. Please email admin@lfgn.org.au to register your group’s interest.

“Soils are Alive”
Are you in Perth before Christmas? An opportunity to attend a half day workshop on soils with Professor Lyn Abbott at the University of Western Australia’s laboratories in Crawley, Perth is available. You may choose from one of the 4 hour sessions on Wednesday 14, Thursday 15 and Tuesday 20, December. Email: admin@lfgn.org.au to make a booking.

“Risky Business”
A simulated farm management game in which farmers experience the highs and lows of climate and markets over a 5 year period in one day. This is an interactive workshop designed to improve your understanding of how price and weather variability affects farming and conversely, how farming affects land and water resources. Workshop is available in two half day sessions or one full day. Email Amir Abadi to register aabadi@agric.wa.gov.au. This course is provided by the Department of Agriculture at no charge. Venue hire and catering to be organised by the group.
“Salty Business”
Plan and manage a virtual wheatbelt farm and experience 25 years in a day. You will have the challenge to manage dryland salinity while making a living from a farm that is facing continual risks and uncertainties. You will need to make commercially sound decisions to survive and ideally build wealth. Can you make the management of your farm’s hydrology and building wealth compatible with each other. Workshop is available in two half day sessions or one full day. Email Amir Abadi to register aabadi@agric.wa.gov.au. This course is provided by the Department of Agriculture at no charge. Venue hire and catering to be organised by the group.

Managing Herbicide Resistance
The Western Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative has released a new round of workshops based on the Resistance Integrated Management programme. This workshop allows growers to test different strategies for profitable herbicide resistance management. More details visit the website http://www.lfgn.org.au/group_opportunities

Adopting Better Nutrient Management Practices
Wayne Pluske, Nutrient Management Systems (an independent company specialising in soil health and plant nutrition) is offering two half day workshops to groups interested in making better fertilizer decisions. Each half day workshop costs $200 and the cost can be recouped through FarmBiz support. More details visit the website http://www.lfgn.org.au/group_opportunities

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES SURVEY
Agriculture Research Western Australia is conducting a project to review nutrient management in the WA grains industry and to develop recommendations for future directions of research, development and extension. The project is supervised by Dr. Bill Porter and overseen by A/Prof Richard Bell (Murdoch), Prof Zed Rengel (UWA) and Dr Bill Bowden (Department of Agriculture). A broad consultation with farmer groups, farm advisors, fertilizer companies and researchers has been conducted, to develop a long-list of nutrient management issues (a total of 17 issues).

Your assessment is sought, by rating the 17 issues for impact and influence. Your assessment will help the review team identify a short-list of key nutrient management issues for further detailed analysis. Please go to the following link to download the survey http://www.lfgn.org.au/group_opportunities?f=4797

Please return your assessment by the 16th December to wchen@agric.wa.gov.au or mail to Dr Wen Chen, Agricultural Systems Research, Dept of Ag, Baron Hay Crt, South Perth. If you have any questions, please contact Bill Porter (wk: 08 9368 3677, mob: 0429 207 502, email: bporter@agric.wa.gov.au).

GROUP PROFILE
North Stirling – Pallinup Natural Resource Group
Based in the southern mixed farming districts of Tambellup, Gnowerangerup, Cranbrook and Broomehill shires, the NSPNR is a dynamic group comprising 12 members.

The group is actively involved in trials and benchmarking on farm and in the future aim to widen their focus to the broader community, with possible projects being developing educational facilities for young people.

A trial on Sheep Genetics, in conjunction with the Ongerup Community Development Groups, is one of the projects planned for 2006. The trial will look at production in lambs, wool and meat to help establish benchmarks for sheep production in the area.

A focus on perennials during 2005 will continue in 2006 after funding was secured to assist farmers develop perennial pastures. The project is aimed at “increasing the area under
perennial pastures to reduce salinity, waterlogging and erosion, whilst increasing farm productivity”. 3000 ha of mixed perennial pastures, 25 km of surface water drains and 75 piezometres will be established for this trial over three years.

Active involvement with various workshops provided many opportunities for the group members to develop knowledge and experience. Workshops held during 2005 included “Soils in Depth” series and “Managing Herbicide Resistance”.

The group meets on a regular basis and invites a different member of the community to each meeting either as an observer or to speak. A group newsletter is issued on a quarterly basis which provides a link for each member of the group as well as information for those interested in joining the group.

For more information on the NSPNR group go to http://www.lfgn.org.au/groups/great_southern/northstirlingpallinup