GROUP LEADERS WORKSHOP A BIG SUCCESS

The inaugural LFGN Group Leaders Workshop was held on the 14th February at the Burswood Convention Centre. Fifteen groups were represented by over 40 farmers and industry figures. The workshop gave members an insight into the resources available for groups through the Network and provided the tools to identify ways in which the groups can help themselves. Participants rated the workshop a success for the most important reason, it provided an opportunity for representatives from different grower groups to meet each other and share their ideas.

For a copy of the Workshop Proceedings

WA RURAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2006

Bev Logue from Binnu has been awarded The WA Rural Woman of the Year Award. Bev is Treasurer of the Northern Agri Group and is involved in converting Canola into biodiesel. A part of Bev’s prize is an Australian Institute of Company Directors course together with a bursary of $10,000. Congratulations Bev!

JERDACUTTUP DELIVER RESULTS WITH AGRIBUSINESS NETWORK

Last year the Jerdacuttup Top Crop & Pasture Improvement Group investigated the best ways to ameliorate a subsoil acidity problem in their district. The group applied for funds through the Agribusiness Trial Network Program of GRDC and were successful in obtaining $25,000. They teamed up with United Farmers agronomist, David Eksteen and Agritech Research to develop a two year trial. Last year was the first year of results. The Group also looked at late nitrogen on canola to find some positive results in the district.

PARTNERS IN GRAIN GETS UPDATED

Partners in Grain sponsored 7 growers to attend the 2006 Agribusiness Crop Updates. Six of the 7 have written their reports in response to the question:

“What I have learnt from the Agribusiness Crop Updates experience and how this will benefit my farming enterprise/community/industry?”

Each grower has agreed that they are happy to be contacted by their local media in response to their case studies being circulated.

NEW BARLEY VARIETY AND INFORMATION

Production package for the new barley’s in WA is now available. The recent release of Vlamingh will provide barley growers with a widely adapted malting barley variety which has a distinct plump grain. The Department of Agriculture has also released new Farmnotes for Barley Variety Guide and the Hamelin variety.

FRENCH STUDENTS SEEK WORK EXPERIENCE

French students seek on-farm work for a maximum period of 6 weeks between 26 June and 18 August, 2006. This is an opportunity for students to acquire knowledge of Australian agricultural systems by working on farms. In return it is expected the student will receive free room and board. Students are all insured for medical, surgery, accidental, hospitalization and liability. For further enquiries please contact Dominique Blache, School of Animal Biology, UWA phone 08 6488 3587 or email mailto:dbl@animals.uwa.edu.au
NORTH MALLEE FARM IMPROVEMENT GROUP PROFILE
Located around Salmon Gums this local farmer group started in 1999 as a Top Crop Group and has continued to develop despite the very low input the group has. They felt there were areas that needed addressing which weren’t covered by other groups in the region. Most of the research and field days were held well south of Salmon Gums where soils and rainfall differed greatly. Written by Chezley Guest.
For more information about the group and its background visit follow the link <North Mallee Case Study>

BETTER CANOLA PRODUCTION FROM FARMER CASE STUDIES
Oilseed WA has investigated what some of the top canola growers are doing in the state to get consistently high yielding canola. Good canola production does really come down to management and these four studies from the <Great Southern>, <South East>, <North> and <Eastern> Wheatbelt are worth checking out.

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

New low rainfall canola variety demonstration package
Canola Breeders of WA are keen to demonstrate new canola varieties to groups who consider canola too hard in marginal environments. They are offering a limited number of demonstration packages to local groups for them to evaluate the new varieties in their own paddock. CBWA will provide seed, speakers and $500 towards the cost of establishing the 5 ha block of the new CBWA canola variety. For more details <Expression of Interest form>.

Wide Rows or Skip Rows – What does it mean?
Recent research by Paul Blackwell of the Department of Agriculture has shown there can be significant benefits for growers in the low rainfall environment with shallow soils going to wider rows and lowering seeding rates, especially in dry years. Paul is interested in hearing from grower groups in the eastern wheatbelt who would like to look at this as a strategy to reduce yield risk. Dr Blackwell would be happy to provide interested groups with some guidance as to how they could test this strategy on their own farm. He would also be willing speak at a group field day if they were to set up some testing. For more information contact Paul Carmody

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

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.


Interested in Attending the Birchip Expo, 29 June 2006
Expressions of interest are sought from group members who are interested in travelling to N.W Victoria as part of LFGN 4 – 5 day study tour of TopCrop Groups and to attend the Birchip Cropping Group Expo on the 29 June 2006. Please contact Paul Carmody if you are interested in participating in such a trip – there maybe some funds available for members of the Network. Contact me by 31st March.

2006 Rabobank EDP
Rabobank offers an Executive Development Programme (EDP) specifically for primary producers who are seeking to develop practical business management skills. The programme
not only provides participants with business development skills, it also offers an opportunity for farmers to develop networks with other leading producers outside their local area. Conducted in Sydney over two, six day modules, they are held approximately nine months apart. Applications are now open for the 2006 Rabobank EDP. Module 1 will run from 10-15 September 2006. For further information contact WA Rabobank representative, Myra Quartermaine Ph. 08 92212644.

Land & Water Australia Community Fellowships
Land and Water Australia Community Fellowships are for people who work within the natural resource management field, to help share their experiences. This is a non academic award directed, in part, at farmers who have adopted innovative farming practices and want to write up 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

WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

Managing Herbicide Resistance
The Western Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative has released a new round of workshops based on the Resistance Integrated Management (RIM) 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. For more details visit the website http://www.lfgn.org.au/group_opportunities

“Risky Business” Pre-seeding Series
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, free of charge. Email Lisa Mayer or Paul Carmody.

“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? This workshop addresses this question and is available in two half day sessions or one full day, free of charge. Email Lisa Mayer or Paul Carmody.

Grain Risk Management Workshop or Training Program
Profarmer in conjunction with LFGN are currently working on developing a Grain Marketing Risk Management Training Program for the coming year. Groups who are interested in participating in such a training program with a independent professional please contact Paul Carmody. It is early days in planning for this training program and we would like your input as to what you would like to see in such a training/workshop program.

COMING EVENTS

Nyabing Farm Improvement Group Kicks Off, 8th March at 10 am
This will be the first open meeting of the Nyabing Group and all farmers are welcome. Guest speaker is Richard Koch, Profarmer, he will speak about market outlook and developing a grain marketing plan for 2006. For further information contact Ben Hobley or Mb. 0409 2859054.
Hay Industry Update. March 8th, York
A Hay Industry Update will be held in York on Wednesday, 8th March. It is a combined day from AFIA and WOA and will be very informative. There is a cost of $44 or $55 which includes meals for the day and a booklet.
For more information contact Kellie Winfield, Oat Industry Development Officer on 9690 2083.

Biofuel and Energy Field Day - Coomberdale 10th March. 9.30am
There is a Biofuel and Energy Field day at Coomberdale (22km north of Moora on the Midlands Rd). The day is being presented by Wheatbelt Timbers. Speakers include: Phil Bellamy - Executive Officer of Trees Midwest Inc; John Bartle - Manager of the Revegetation Systems Unit in CALM; Hongwei Wu - Curtin University of Technology.
Cost is $44 per person. The event is fully catered. For more information contact Sarah Bellamy on 9651 8091 or on 0427 656 644.

Ninghan Farm Focus Group AGM & Update – Wednesday, 15th March 10.30 am
Ninghan’s (at Mukinbudin Recreation Centre) first meeting for the year will mean the election of new office bearers followed by an Update on the trials the group did last year. Some discussion planning for the year will also be encouraged. For more information contact Vanessa Steward 08 9044-1024 or 08 9081-3149.

Yuna Farm Improvement Group AGM and Update, Thursday 16th March 1:00pm
The Yuna Farm Improvement Group will have their first meeting for the year followed by an Update session which will included the following topics : Fungicides, Deep soil moisture monitoring, Review on new products, Summary of cropping issues in 2005, Nitrogen placement trial data, Summary of MIG trials, Wide row spacing, Potassium issues.
For more information email John Warr or phone him 08 9920 107.

Australian Society Agronomy Conference, Perth 10 – 14 September
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. Or visit the conference website http://www.agronomy.org.au/events/ or download. Conference tours will include the WANTFA field day on 14th September at Meckering.
Conference organisers would like to hear from group representatives interested in attending the conference. Please contact Paul Carmody for possible funding support to attend the conference.

Calendar of Events
For a complete list of events for 2006 go to http://www.lfgn.org.au/calendar