LOCAL FARMER GROUPS NETWORK IN THE CITY

Local farmer groups in WA are enjoying a convenient network that is helping them integrate new technology and practices in their farming systems.

At the recent Local Farmer Group Network (LFGN) Group Leaders Workshop, Liz Bungey of the North Stirling/Pallinup Natural Resources Group said that her group had benefited greatly from the ‘one-stop shop’ effect provided by the LFGN.

Ms Bungey joined more than 40 other growers from across the grainbelt and grain industry representatives at the Burswood Entertainment Complex to discuss issues affecting local farmer groups and to workshop, network and pool resources to provide solutions.

“Our group has benefited from linking with groups which have similar size and aims. The network also keeps us informed about future workshops that would benefit our region.

“It’s a fantastic network to be a part of, because it’s convenient for us and easily manageable. Ultimately, it has widened the resources available to us,” Ms Bungey said.

LFGN is funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and is based at the University of Western Australia.

During a workshop session, GRDC Executive Manager, Practices, Greg Fraser said the LFGN was successfully adding value to the activities of regionally focused grower groups.

“LFGN is increasing growers’ productivity by helping them successfully integrate new farming practices and sharing their experiences,” Mr Fraser said.

WA’s grainbelt is an ecologically diverse 320,000 square kilometres, with soil types ranging from sand plains to clay and rainfall that can force growers to face droughts one year and floods the next.

This extremely diverse region, which typically produces 40 per cent of Australia’s grain, needs to be managed efficiently and sustainably by the many rural groups, research entities and growers it hosts.

The LFGN has 24 active groups and LFGN Co-ordinator, Paul Carmody, has identified potentially 40 more groups that could join the network.
“Communicating effectively and sharing knowledge is crucial if local farmer groups and research bodies are to function productively and address the real issues of farming today,” Mr Carmody said.

“LFGN offers local farmer groups an expanded network well beyond their farm gate or the local pub.

“It is a network few farmers can ignore, as connections to new research and outcomes become more crucial for farm efficiency and sustainability.”

Workshop participants outlined many issues affecting their groups, including access to resources, geographical constraints, isolation, the ‘shrinking’ of local towns and ageing populations.

The day concluded with a genetically modified crops information session, which was well received by growers keen to learn more about new technologies that could benefit their farming systems.

Groups represented were: Bodallin Catchment, Brookton Land Conservation District Committee, Casuarina Walkaway Farm Improvement, Duli Farm Improvement, Freebairn Farm Progress, Gibson Lupin, Grass Patch Sustainable Farm, Greenhills Production, Jerdacuttup TopCrop and Pasture, Kellerberrin Demonstration, Newdegate Crop Improvement, Ninghan Farm Improvement, North Mallee Farm Improvement, North Stirling/Pallinup Natural Resources, Northern Agri, Nyabing Farm Improvement, Oldfield, Pindar, Ravensthorpe Agriculture Initiative Network, Saltland Pastures Association, West River Catchment, West Wagin TopCrop, Williams Productivity, Woolacutty Local Farmer and Yuna Farm Improvement Group.

www.lfgn.org.au

Authorised by LFGN and issued on its behalf by Brendon Cant & Associates, Tel 08 9384 1122

MEDIA CONTACTS: Paul Carmody, LFGN Co-ordinator 0427 997 878
Lisa Mayer, LFGN Administration Officer 08 6488 7937