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December 2009 Newsletter

Evan's Nuffield Update

Since my last Nuffield update I have been lucky enough to travel through North America and Europe again spending time with leading growers, advisors and researchers. Visiting the International Plant Nutrition Colloquium in California and the National Farm Show in Illinois USA. In the UK I visited Rothamstead Research where they have some of the oldest agricultural research trials in the world followed by meetings and tours of the YARA company's trace element fertiliser production facilities near York before attending the National Field Days in Ireland.

Throughout my three trips I have uncovered more and more on my topic of Trace Elements (TE's) in cropping systems. At first, my focus was on plant growth, production and yield. As I began travelling and meeting the brightest and best farmers, researchers and advisers in the world my view of TE's matured. Not only are TE's important and essential for plant growth, they are also a vital component in human and animal health and function. The absence of TE's in human diets in both the developed and developing worlds is a real and current issue with dramatic consequences for health and wellbeing. There are many important strategies to improve crop growth with TE's which are established and producers need reminding of, in addition there is also cutting edge research into new and innovative ideas and techniques that also needs to be shared from my travels.

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Harvest on the farm at Yarrowonga has had mixed blessings with most of the crop harvested before the rain with the average wheat yield being close to 2 tonnes/ha. This has been a pleasing result considering less than 200mm of rain was received here to grow the crop in 2009.

I look forward to the opportunity to report my findings early in the new year with a comprehensive thesis and presentation.

I hope this finds you all well and wishing you and your families a Merry Christmas and prosperous 2010.

Evan Ryan
2009 Grain Growers Association,
Australian Nuffield Scholar



Evan at a hybrid corn trial in Iowa, September 2009.

NSW Spring Field Day

Debate about the effectiveness of disc versus tyne seeders was a feature of Riverine Plains NSW Spring Field Day held on 17th September 2009. The Riverine Plains site on the Hanrahan family's property at Coreen, is evaluating the performance of different drill openers (disc, tyne and disc/culter combination) at 9, 12 and 15 inch spacings.

The trials will be monitored for plant establishment, weeds, growth, and yield, over the next 4 years, as part of Riverine Plains Inc's latest GRDC funded project to investigate "Improved water use efficiency in no-till cropping and stubble retention systems in spatially and temporally variable conditions in the Riverine Plains".

A panel discussion led by Adam Inchbold and including John Siedel, Peracto (trial site managers), local farmer Jarrod Hanrahan, and sowing contractor Beau Longmire, provided the focus for the debate amongst the 60 attendees.

Beau and Jarrod use both disc and tyne machines, commercially, and felt the choice of opener was based on your farming system and what you hope to achieve – disc openers give better establishment, but tyne machines are better in heavy clay, sodic soils and where hard pans are an issue.

The group then navigated their way through Roy Hamilton's Rand property to the *Canola in Depth* trial site.

This is a collaborative project between the CSIRO, EH Graham Centre, Farmlink and the GRDC to investigate Declining Canola Yields with trials on sites in sodic and acidic compact soils from north of Young, south to Buraja.

John Angus, Mark Peoples, and Tony Swann from CSIRO, along with Mark Conyers, discussed their findings. The dry seasons have limited their research outcomes.

Mark Peoples told the group that over 50% of the site showed a positive response to ripping by aiding canola root infiltration, but ripping lost water which has been critical in the dry seasons.

Summer weed control was beneficial and wheat stubbles used in rotation preventing runoff and retaining moisture aided the following canola crops according to John Angus.

Tony Swann, also from CSIRO, stressed the need to ground truth EM surveys and pay attention to sodium chloride and calcium sulphate levels when examining high EM zones.

John Angus told the crowd they suspect where high EM zones are producing higher than expected canola yields the high EM reading may be due to calcium sulphate, rather than salinity.

To finish the morning Gerard O'Brien of RSM Bird Cameron urged farmers to investigate their eligibility for EC Interest Rate subsidies and get their applications in and Barry Membrey of NAB encouraged everyone to try to farm with the money they have, if at all possible, and to get their problems on the table and talk about them with their bank and /or adviser.

Jan Davis

***Footnote:** Dr John Angus is retiring after 42 years with CSIRO in various roles. Many members will have met John or seen his research over this time. His farmer friendly approach to agricultural research will be missed. We wish John all the best for his retirement.*

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PYCAL potential yields, how did they end up?

By Dale Grey, Cobram

Presented are the monthly rainfall figures for selected Riverine Plain locations obtainable on the web. Most locations ended up around decile 2-3 for the growing season, which is certainly a fair bit below the long term average, but nothing above average for very recent times. Final potential yields have been calculated for a range of rainfall outcomes for 2009. The odd high

rainfall location might have got a kick out of the November rain. I am not going to try and make comment on the validity of these yields in a year such as this. Suffice to say that some of you will think they are on the money, some will have got a bit more and others with the vagaries of 30+ degree temperatures during grain fill and a sprinkling of frost aren't happy campers at all.

	Euroa	Rutherglen	Dookie	Yarrowonga	Cobram	Albury	Henty	Corowa	Lockhart	Urana
April (mm)	58	49	37	22	28	85	62	41	38	45
May (mm)	14	3	16	11	24	7	8	5	4	3
June (mm)	61	79	60	45	42	71	65	78	61	71
July (mm)	52	37	41	33	22	55	52	39	29	20
August (mm)	72	40	26	27	20	62	25	41	22	15
September (mm)	55	43	39	40	32	61	37	42	30	64
October (mm)	30	36	21	18	15	26	32	33	28	23
GSR Apr-Oct (mm)	342	286	241	197	184	367	281	279	212	242
Decile	3	3	2	1	2	3	3	3	2	5
Wheat (t/ha)	4.6	3.5	2.6	1.7	1.5	5.1	3.4	3.4	2.0	2.6
Canola (t/ha)	2.3	1.8	1.3	0.9	0.7	2.6	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.3

WUE of 20kg/mm, evaporation of 110mm growing season to end of October.

NE Victoria Drive by Survey

By Dale Grey, Cobram DPI

This was the eleventh Spring of the survey where the same 682 paddocks have been monitored.

In short it was a record year for wheat, canola and oats and a record low planting of triticale. Half of the oats were cut for hay. Pulses and barley are still poor cousins. 2009 was a

“normal” hay production year, but most was cereal rather than the majority being pasture hay. This year's hay production was down on the record 2006 and 2007 years. This year we cracked over 50% of paddocks being cropped which is almost a doubling of the 27% 11 years ago.

	1998 %	1999 %	2000 %	2001 %	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %
Pasture	65.4	63.6	63.5	59.5	55.4	54.4	52.8	56.0	56.3	51.5	47.1	45.0
Crop	27.5	29.6	31.2	35.3	40.2	41.3	43.0	40.0	40.0	45.3	49.6	51.0
Cereals	24.6	23.8	24.6	29.5	32.0	33.6	33.1	34.5	29.6	37.0	40.0	40.6
Canola	2.0	5.1	6.2	5.0	6.6	6.6	8.1	5.0	8.7	6.9	8.5	8.9
Canola Fodder									4.7	5.6	1.3	0.3
Pulses	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.9	1.3	1.2	1.6	0.6	1.8	1.5	1.0	1.3
Pasture Fodder	5.4	4.7	4.4	4.1	0.9	5.1	4.4	4.5	1.2	1.3	0.6	1.2
Cereal Fodder	3.2	3.1	2.1	2.1	3.5	2.5	2.2	2.9	9.8	12.0	8.2	6.5
Irrigation	4.1	2.6	2.8	6.6	5.1	3.2	3.7	3.2	3.4	1.2	0.6	1.3
Dryland Lucerne	1.7	1.9	2.8	2.8	3.7	4.8	4.5	5.6	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.0
Mech. Fallow	3.5	2.3	1.8	1.8	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.3	1.3
Wheat	12.3	10.4	11.9	13.6	13.2	16.7	18.9	17.2	13.6	21.3	24.5	26.8
Triticale	6.2	6.2	6.5	10.0	11.1	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	7.3	6.7	3.5
Oats	5.4	6.3	4.5	4.5	6.0	6.3	3.8	4.8	5.9	6.6	6.3	7.9
Barley	0.7	0.9	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.6	3.7	1.3	1.8	2.5	2.3

50% Investment Allowance on farm sheds as well

Having already taken advantage of the 50% investment allowance by acquiring bigger and better machinery, many farmers may have inadequate shed storage facilities for these valuable assets.

A new farm machinery shed may also be eligible for the 50% investment allowance.

Farm buildings used in farming businesses are treated as depreciable plant under tax rules and, like new farm machinery, can be eligible for the investment allowance.

Commercial sheds and buildings not used in a primary production business are not treated as depreciable plant and instead are covered by the building cost write off rules. Such buildings are specifically excluded from eligibility for the investment allowance.

Significant tax savings from the 50% investment allowance on farm sheds means that many farmers can purchase a new shed now and extend the life of their machinery by suitably storing it knowing that the cost of the shed has been heavily discounted by the tax saved.

But farmers have very little time to make a decision.

This advice is of a general nature only. You should consider the appropriateness of this information in light of your own circumstances.

Those still eligible for the investment allowance and in need of a new farm shed should consider ordering a shed before 31st December 2009 when the eligibility period for the 50% investment allowance expires.

Those eligible for the investment allowance must at least order the new farm shed by 31st December 2009 and have the shed constructed before 31st December 2010 to qualify.

A shed costing \$70,000 exclusive of GST may provide a tax deduction to an eligible farmer of \$35,000 investment allowance and \$1,750 in depreciation in the first year and yearly depreciation calculated at 5% in future years.

At a tax rate of 31.5% the tax saving in the first year is \$11,576 which is effectively a 16.5% discount on the \$70,000 purchase price.

Farmers should discuss new farm shed purchase plans with an experienced accountant to ensure they meet the investment allowance eligibility criteria and fully understand the potential after tax cost or benefit before committing.

For further information contact Gerard O'Brien or Jason Croker on 02 6041 3700.

Cashflow a key challenge for agribusiness

The availability of cash is critical for business success through good and bad times, and being caught out of pocket can have a domino effect on other parts of the business.

Barry Membrey, National Australia Bank's (NAB's) Riverina Agribusiness Manager, offers five tips to help businesses manage their cashflow:

- 1. Understand the difference between cash in the bank and cashflow.** Cash in the bank is only a 'point in time' measurement; cashflow is more dynamic and takes into account income being received and expenses being paid out over a period of time.
- 2. Control and reduce operating expenses.** Make sure you understand the true cost and profitability of everything you do, and how it aligns to your business plan. Talk to staff to get their buy-in and help to identify and reduce costs.

- 3. Release cash invested in fixed assets.** Capital investment in fixed assets can help to boost business efficiency over the long-term. However, prioritise purchases and look at funding options such as leasing.

- 4. Manage risk to protect profits and create certainty.** Protecting your future cashflow from the effects of external influences can be a smart move. Risk management solutions can include insurance, fixing interest, hedging exchange rates and taking a forward position on prices.

- 5. Use your networks.** See what the neighbours are doing, attend courses, and keep learning. Talk to your team of experts: accountant, financial adviser and local NAB Agribusiness Banker - about your business, where you want to take it and what the economic environment means for you.

For more information, contact your local NAB agribusiness banker, call **13 10 12** or visit nab.com.au/agribusiness.

CASE IH Axial Flow Combines No. 1 2009 Now open for business 2010



The September ABARE report is indicating that the Australian winter crop will be larger than in 2009, and that wheat exports will climb from 14.51 million tonnes in 2008/09 to 15.46 million tonnes in 2009/10. The total Australian crop tonnage for 2009 is predicted at approximately 36 million tonnes, up from the prior year of 33 million tonnes.

With the increase in per barrel oil prices there is upward pressure occurring on corn prices in the USA as the ethanol producers scramble to secure more corn tonnage for expanded ethanol production.

World crop production and consumption are running close together and any glitches in production tonnage from the Northern hemisphere in 2009 could see consumption and production move closer together.

Current retail sales programmes are designed to allow those customers who would like to take advantage of the Government Investment Allowance to purchase a new CaseIH Axial-Flow combine prior to 31st December, 2009 for 2010 delivery.

For further details contact Johnsons Corowa on 02 6033 1666 or O'Connors Shepparton on 03 5821 4555.

BOXER® GOLD, Australia's most advanced pre-emergent Annual Ryegrass control



A new alternative to delay the onset of Group D resistance

BOXER® GOLD is an exciting new soil applied pre-emergent herbicide from Syngenta Crop Protection for the control of Annual Ryegrass and Toadrush in Wheat and Barley.*

Herbicide Resistance Management

Recent surveys of herbicide resistance across WA, SA, VIC and NSW have demonstrated increasing levels of resistance to the Group D (dinitroaniline) herbicide, trifluralin in Annual Ryegrass.

A greater reliance on trifluralin and high frequency of resistance to the Group A (ACCase) and Group B herbicides is likely to result in the future increase in Group D resistance levels across all major cereal cropping regions.

BOXER GOLD will provide growers with an alternative pre-emergent herbicide MOA for the management of Group A, B, C, D and M resistant Annual Ryegrass.

Weed Spectrum

BOXER GOLD provides control of Annual Ryegrass and Toadrush equivalent/superior to currently registered preemergent herbicides. A single use rate of 2.5L/ha will provide control of Annual Ryegrass, with 1.25-2.5L/ha providing control of Toadrush*. Australian and overseas trial

work has also showed promising activity on several other major annual grass and broadleaf weed species.

Crop Safety

BOXER GOLD provides levels of crop safety equal to current industry standards. Like many other pre-emergent herbicides, it is positional selectivity that is of primary importance in relation to crop tolerance. Care must be taken to ensure herbicide is concentrated in the crop inter-row or seed is sown below the herbicide band to maximise crop safety.

Low Volatility

The active ingredients in BOXER GOLD have low volatility. In fact, the major active ingredient, Prosulphocarb, was first developed as a low volatile alternative to other more volatile thiocarbamates. This low volatility provides greater flexibility in relation to speed of incorporation.

Flexibility of Use

BOXER GOLD may be used in both Wheat and Barley in either full disturbance (conventional) or minimum tillage seeding systems. The product must be mechanically incorporated via the sowing operation.

For further details please contact Craig Sharam on 0409 038 116 or visit www.syngenta.com.au.

BOXER® is a registered trademark of a Syngenta Group Company.



Better access to precision agriculture for district farmers

Farmers all around the north-east VIC and southern NSW areas will now have better access to the latest precision and sprayer agriculture technology following the opening of GPSmart as a dealer for the national supplier of autosteer and technology products gps-Ag.

gps-Ag is a 10 year veteran of the industry and specialises in providing farmers with flexible guidance and control solutions. Their products are designed to be moved from machine to machine to improve utilisation and reduce costs.

Paul l'Anson, who is well known in the area as a gps-Ag specialist technician and sales representative, has recently been given the opportunity to become an independent dealer for gps-Ag. Paul l'Anson has over 11 years experience in gps equipment and said he is very excited to be offering the latest farming technology to his local farmers who otherwise would have to wait until the bigger manufactures start to stock the technology.

"At GPSmart our commitment is to supply technology products to improve the bottom line for farmers. Having spent many years with gps-Ag and

in the agricultural industry I am now proud to be supporting my local area through GPSmart.

My partnership with gps-Ag will allow me to continue to provide precision ag solutions to all local farmers regardless of what brand of equipment they have. On top of which GPSmart is designed to be a one-stop shop for all advanced farming technology, spraying supplies and equipment."

gps-Ag general manager, Peter Johnston, agreed with Paul l'Anson saying that the opening of GPSmart would be of great benefit to the area.

"Our partnership with GPSmart will work well. Paul has a wealth of knowledge behind him and the specialist support is available when necessary. gps-Ag is just as excited by this new partnership and we look forward to continuing our partnership for many more years."

To find out about the latest technology available contact Paul l'Anson, GPSmart on mobile: 0428 686 209, internet: www.gpsmart.com.au or in person at 204 North St, Albury.

Managing risk and waste in business

As 2009 draws to a close with disappointing yields and grain prices under pressure, attention should be turning to managing finances in 2010.

With the likelihood of tight finances, the New Year will require a close look at farm business with a focus on risk management and elimination of financial waste.

The review of Risk Management should cover all aspects of the business including:

- Interest Rates – This involves comparing current variable rates against fixed rates and stress testing the business to see what the effects will be if variable rates continue to escalate.
- Commodity Prices – If you are holding grain in anticipation of rising prices in the New Year, consideration should be given to managing down side risk by developing marketing strategies including target price selling and rising options to put a floor in prices.
- Life and Income Protection Insurance – In tight financial times a business can fail if the primary income earner is seriously injured or dies. Therefore, it is critically important to review life insurance and income protection policies to ensure that cover is adequate to meet day to day costs and provide for the cost of additional labour costs.

Elimination of financial waste is critical in managing costs and ensuring the long term viability of the farm business. The waste can be identified in several ways including:

- Benchmarking your profit and loss statement against industry best key performance indicators. This will enable you to identify where variable and overhead expenses are above average and put in place.
- Reviewing Equipment Finance Commitments to see whether the associated plant is still required and could be sold with the finance contract being paid out.
- Identifying and selling surplus plant and equipment including scrap metal.
- Identifying new sources of revenue - This is particularly relevant for people over 55 who have superannuation assets that could be accessed.

While this type of review is a result of minimizing risk in a tight financial situation, the positive side of it is that it makes your business lean and mean and ready to capitalize on opportunities as the economic situation improves.

For further information phone Belmores on 03 5744 1221 or email belmore@belmores.com.au.



The world's most advanced spraying technology



The new Platinum options range from Goldacres includes some of the world's most advanced spraying technology. This range completes the new Goldacres option categories which also include Gold and Premium categories. Each category has been designed to allow suitable customisation of a sprayer for your application.

The Platinum range includes:

- **Direct Chemical Injection (DCI)** – Apply up to 5 chemicals in one pass.
- **Smartsteer** – Make one set of wheel tracks & eliminate sprayer “cut in” on corners.
- **Ultraglide** – Ultrasonic auto boom height levelling.
- **Twin Line Spotspray** – Spotspray a different chemical over specific areas only.
- **Dual Product** – Multiple products, in multiple tanks, through dual boom lines.
- **Joystick** – sprayer control at your fingertips.
- **Raven 4070 CanBus rate controller** – Less connections and simpler communication.
- **Accuboom** – Auto section shut off to prevent spray overlap.

Those options included in the Platinum range are becoming popular with operators who are looking to make spray applications more efficient. These options work to reduce unnecessary costs being incurred due to spray overlap, chemical wastage, incompatible chemical mixes, crop damage and multiple passes.

Rising input costs mean that you must do more with less across all aspects of your business. Solutions from Goldacres such as: DCI, Twin Line Spotspray and Dual Product help you to achieve this by allowing the application of different chemicals, at different application rates, in one pass.

Contact Goldacres for further information – 03 5342 6399 or www.goldacres.com.au

Farmers Survey - confident of future



Results from a comprehensive survey of Victorian farmers showed more than half of the respondents were confident that general economic conditions will improve over the next 12 months and 46% believe the agricultural economy will also improve.

The survey, commissioned by Rural Finance, was conducted during September 2009 and looked at farmer confidence levels as well as the most important issues confronting agriculture.

Rural Finance chief executive officer Mr Dugald Graham said Rural Finance has a proud history over 60 years of working with farming families to invest wisely in the future and the survey was another tool in helping Rural Finance understand farmer needs. The confidence levels of farmers reflect that while some commodity prices are low and some parts of the state still had irrigation issues, farmers believe the future is promising particularly given ongoing world food shortages. Mr Graham said the survey identified that water supply was the most

important issue facing farmers in the future, followed by drought, interest rates, farm profitability and climate change.

“The issue of climate change is still contentious among the farming community with the survey showing just over half of the respondents believing climate change is a reality,” Mr Graham said. “Farmers in viticulture as well as young farmers were in agreement about climate change, while less than 50% of sheep and beef enterprises agreed that climate change was a reality.” Mr Graham said he believes this reflects a strong farm community view that the current extended dry conditions are part of normal seasonal cyclical events. However he also suspects that as these conditions continue the support for climate change will grow.

To contact Rural Finance phone 02 6056 9063 or 03 5821 2655.

New Zealand farmers estimate local crop yield at 8t/ha (if in NZ)!!

Riverine Plains hosted the Arable Y's, a group of young farmers under 35, from the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) from the Canterbury region of New Zealand's South Island on October 11-12 around Dookie and Pine Lodge. They came from a diverse mix of both dryland and irrigation farms, including grazing, cropping, dairy and vegetable seed production, many having a mix of enterprises.

Their first visit was to David Cook and Peter Jeffery's 9m Cross Slot seeder, which is bigger than the 3-4.5m Cross Slot seeders operating New Zealand, where they are made. David talked about how he and Peter are running the 2 adjoining farms as a single farm using jointly owned machinery.

Along with a number of local RP membrs, the group wine and dined at the Gladstone Hotel in Dookie that night and Adam Inchbold talked to the group about how precision ag fits into local farming systems – lucky it was interesting or their concentration after a few drinks at 9pm on a Friday night would surely have been tested. There was definite interest but many couldn't get their head around going to no till and control traffic to capture the gains of precision ag when cultivation and mouldboard ploughing are still commonly used. FAR considers a disc allowable in a minimum till system.

After spending the night with the local RP members and having a look around their farm, Mark and Leticia Harmer showed them their on farm grain storage system after a great morning tea – great job Teash! Mark talked about how the grain storage fits in with the farms marketing plan and his “take no prisoners” approach to weeds!

We then headed to Gerard and Kate McKinley's to show them the big gear – a 40' DBS and 12 000L Gason triple bin, or as Gerard described it, what he bought to do a job until he works out what he really wants to buy! Gerard outlined how he had set the big rig up to handle variable rate application for the 3 bins (P in 2009) and to utilise hired labour by only needing to fill every 8 hours so he can concentrate on spraying and filling the grouper.

Having looked at 3 dryland farms, it was thought it was only fair their appetite was whet with a

couple of farms that would make them feel like home, although it was going to take a couple of irrigation farms to get close to that. The first stop was to Ross and Kaye Heywood's at Pine Lodge to look at the various seeding rigs Ross has bought, made or modified – who else has a seeder for each day of the week. Ross showed how stubble retention had improved their soils moisture holding capacity and the Baudin barley crop we inspected was proof of that.

The final stop was at Ross and Kayes' neighbours, Craig and Helen Reynolds, who work together with both machinery and ideas. Helen cooked up a storm on the BBQ and Craig demonstrated how he has set up his 6m NDF disc seeder with a steerable rear axle, with the help of a brother who is good with electronics. Craig has configured the seeder so he can remove the disc bar and put in precision planters for row cropping.

Finally, Gerard, wanting to know what they had learned and what we could learn from them, led an open discussion, covering everything from farm succession (a big issue for many) to machinery ownership v contracting to the relative price of land.

Thanks to Mark Harmer for his tour organisation, the farmers who gave an insight to their farm operation or those who billeted the group. Feedback from the Arable Y's was great and they are waiting to host a group from RP – although they might have to lift the age limit!!

David Cook



“Just look at this soil - but make it quick - Kaye's calling, I'm late for a wedding!”

New Victorian Grower Group Alliance

Over the past few months, a number of Victorian Farming Systems Groups have been working together to lay the foundations of the Victorian Grower Group Alliance. This new Alliance has been initiated to bring together farmer driven research, development and extension organizations to better deliver outcomes for the grains and mixed farming communities.

The Alliance currently includes Birchip Cropping Group, Mallee Sustainable Farming Systems, Riverine Plains Inc, Southern Farming Systems, VFF Grains Group, Victorian Irrigated Cropping Council and the Victorian No-Till Farmers Association.

Farmer groups such as those making up the Alliance, are increasingly undertaking more of the farming systems research and extension across Victoria. Currently, each of these groups develops projects and applies for funding individually, though many are already working collaboratively on individual projects. The Alliance hopes to facilitate greater collaboration between these grower groups to make more efficient use of the resources and partnerships that already exist.

‘By focusing on the individual strengths of the farmer groups and other stakeholders, we can better harness the resource opportunities as well as the scientific and business partnerships – all whilst delivering better services and outcomes to a broader range of farmers’ said Jan Davis from Riverine Plains Inc.

The Alliance will also provide greater opportunities for identifying, prioritising and undertaking farmer based research, development and extension across a range of issues.

Funding will come to the Alliance from membership, contribution from associate members and funding from government and business.

The members of the Alliance recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which will give the group a platform from which to operate.

The Alliance draws inspiration from the Farmer Group Alliances in Western Australia and South Australia, who have significantly improved communication between funding bodies and the farmer groups undertaking projects.

For further information please contact Jan Davis.

Riverine Plains Committee News

In 2010 Riverine Plains Inc will have a revamped structure for the management committee. These changes reflect the growth of the group, and the changing needs and demands on key committee members, especially the Executive.

In ten years, Riverine Plains Inc has grown from humble beginnings to our current position of 300 members, with considerable amounts of finance being handled through project grants and sponsorship contributions. Riverine Plains is well known and respected in the wider community and the group has been able to achieve results in research and extension which are widely applauded in the agricultural community.

These great achievements have been made possible by volunteers on our committee contributing large amounts of their own time and energy. As the group has expanded, so has the demand on this contribution, to the point where the committee, especially the executive, are being called on to give increasing levels of support.

Andrew Russell, Barry Membrey, David Wolfenden, Jan Davis and Peter White took on the task of reviewing the groups management needs. After discussions with the committee and investigating

other farming and service groups structures, their recommendations were presented to and accepted by the current committee.

For members, there will be few noticeable changes, and the group will continue to have its affairs managed by a management committee of elected members.

The most noticeable change is the creation of several new subcommittees. In addition to the current Research, Extension and Sponsorship subcommittees there will be Administration and Membership subcommittees. Another key change was the introduction of a Nominations Committee to actively encourage people to accept nomination for offices prior to the AGM. You can read more about this on the back page of this newsletter.

The creation of more subcommittees will reduce the workload for some individuals and give each committee member the opportunity to contribute to the group, in an area that interests them. Use of email and teleconferencing has reduced the need for face to face meetings, and made it easier for subcommittees to maintain representation from all parts of the membership area. This diversity and mix of NSW and Victorian interests is one of the groups strengths.

Jan Davis



*The Riverine Plains Inc Committee
thank all members and sponsors for your support during
2009 and wish you and your families
a very Merry Christmas
and a safe and prosperous New Year.*



ADVANCE NOTICE...

Our GRDC Farmer Update and Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 18 February 2010 at Corowa RSL Club. Full details will be mailed out in the new year.

Something to contribute?

Being a Riverine Plains Inc Committee Member is both rewarding and enjoyable. The committee meets five times a year, of a Monday evening. Meetings are held in February, April, June, August and October and usually alternate between Yarrowonga and Corowa.

There will be the opportunity to join the committee when the elections take place at the Annual General Meeting on 18 February, 2010.

Now is the perfect time to start thinking about whether you may be interested to assist shape the future direction of Riverine Plains Inc.

Nominations need to be made, in writing, prior to the AGM. Nomination forms (to be mailed out in the new year) will include the choice of nominating for the position of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Research Subcommittee Chair, Extensions Subcommittee Chair, Sponsorship Subcommittee Chair, Membership Subcommittee Chair or General Committee.

Elections will be held if there is more than one nominee for an executive position, or if there are more nominees than positions available on the general committee.

The general committee is to consist of no more than 20 members.

For further information please contact a member of the Nominations Committee, Andrew Russell, Peter White or Barry Membrey.

3rd Crop and PA final reports

Please find enclosed with this newsletter final reports from the GRDC funded project 'Improving winter cropping systems in the Riverine Plains'.

Committee Contacts

Chairman

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Deputy Chairman

Peter White (03) 5744 2176

Treasurer

Jan Davis (02) 6032 4196

Committee

David Cook (03) 5829 2263

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Improved water use efficiency in no-till cropping and stubble retention systems in spatially and temporally variable conditions in the Riverine Plains

project funded by:



**Grains Research &
Development Corporation**