

NSW Partners in Grain

A GRDC funded grower driven project that focuses on facilitating professional development activities for farming businesses

Quarterly Newsletter

25 April 2010

NSW Partners in Grain have had a busy few months since our last newsletter.

From the 8th to the 12th March we delivered five farm office management workshops titled "Office Meltdown – Let's set the record straight". 81 grain growers from across the state participated in these practical and motivating training days. Some of the comments from participants of the workshops were:

"An entertaining, inspiring and life changing day."

"Excellent, positive, enthusiastic presenter."

"Got a lot of value out of this workshop. Really practical advice."

"I had a wonderful day. Jeanette was a fantastic presenter and an inspirational woman."

NSW Partners in Grain would like to extend our sincere thanks to Jeanette Buegge for the energy and enthusiasm she showed in delivering these workshops for us. We would also like to thank the FarmReady program for providing funding for participant attendance. Watch this space for more of these workshops in the future!

Applications for the 2010 Grains Industry Scholarship closed at the end of February. We received a fantastic response with the applications being of an extremely high standard. It was because of this that we decided to award two scholarships.

The successful applicants were Tom Nixon and Alex Benecke.

Tom is from a farm at Savernake, in southern NSW. He is currently studying a Bachelor of

Agricultural Science / Bachelor of Agri Business at La Trobe University, Bundoora and wishes to pursue a career in agricultural risk management.

Alex is undertaking his Honours year of study at the University of Sydney. He is studying Plant Pathology and is keen to pursue a career in wheat breeding with a focus on breeding for disease resistance.

Both recipients have undertaken extensive work experience in their fields of interests and have shown a great commitment to the grains industry. They are very worthy recipients of these Scholarships.

Congratulations Tom and Alex!

In February we also awarded Allison Glover, a farmer from Yarrowonga, a sponsorship package to attend one day of the 2010 GRDC Advisor Updates held in Wagga Wagga. Allison has written a letter of appreciation, including a summary of her take home messages from the Update. This letter is included on page two of this newsletter.

NSW Partners in Grain are currently planning more events to be delivered throughout 2010. We welcome any suggestions you may have.

Best of luck for the months ahead. We hope you have a stress-free sowing with plenty of rain!!

Ingrid Taylor

NSW Partners in Grain Coordinator



Profiling the Reference Group

NSW Partners in Grain's Reference Group plays a critical role in the development and implementation of our events. We thought it might be a good idea over the coming months to introduce you to them.

We'll start with the NSW and National Partners in Grain Chairperson, Mandy Strong.

Mandy Strong

Mandy, her husband Lynton and son Toby farm near Lockhart and Boree Creek, in southern NSW. The business operates approximately 6,500ha, all continuously cropped. Mandy also teaches part time, fueling her other passion - to promote agriculture to students in a relevant and timely context. Partners in Grain, with its extensive opportunities to educate, has provided Mandy with some very satisfying outcomes.



Mandy Strong (right) with NSW PinG Coordinator Ingrid Taylor at the 2009 Grain Testing Workshop in Lockhart.

14/03/10

Dear NSW Partners in Grain,

I am writing to thank you for awarding me a sponsorship package to the 2010 GRDC Adviser Update at Wagga Wagga on February 17. Having been an agronomist in the past, it was a great opportunity for me to update my agronomic knowledge and network with others in the industry. Currently I farm with my family and also work with Riverine Plains Inc farmer group providing seasonal agronomic updates to members.

The theme of the day was 'Managing Change: On Farm Topics' including biosecurity in the grains industry, better varieties for Australian farmers and using DNA testing to solve the mystery of rhizoctonia. Workshop sessions on the day included hybrid oilseeds and GM canola, farming practices for closer cereal rotations, herbicide resistance, pre-emergent herbicides and new pulse varieties and more cost-effective agronomy.

The highlight session on the day for me was Clive Kirkby's presentation on 'Building soil carbon – is it cost effective?' The key messages from his presentation were:

- Stable soil organic matter (humus) contains C, N, P and S in predictable and constant proportions.
- The supply of N, P or S (and not just C input), can limit the formation of humus.
- Carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emission from soil can be affected by limited nutrients.
- Zero or minimum tillage primarily leads to a build-up of undecomposed plant material (not humus), near the soil surface which can easily be decomposed (with an accompanying loss of carbon from the system) if the soil is cultivated.

Thank you again for your sponsorship of the day, it was greatly appreciated.

Allison Glover