



# Future Farm News

Newsletter of the Future Farm Industries CRC

October 2009

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## Tasmanian EverGraze® Support Site doing well



Researcher Eric Hall at the Tasmanian EverGraze Support Site.

Situated on the property 'Weedington' near Oatlands, Tasmania, this EverGraze Supporting Site was established in September 2008. Its purpose is to investigate the suitability of several browse species for use in a hedgerow system.

## New bird proof enclosure to assist perennial plant research



SARDI pasture research staff inside the new bird enclosure.

A \$70,000 two hectare bird proof enclosure has been established by CRC Participant, the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) at the Waite Campus Genetic Resource Centre near Adelaide. The new enclosure is integral to supporting projects developing new drought tolerant fodder varieties. By eliminating bird damage, germplasm representing a diverse range of native and exotic pasture and shrub species can now be reliably established, characterised and harvested. These activities will ultimately lead to the development of new plants and management techniques.

The new enclosure is home to around 80 hardy Australian native shrub species located alongside a larger-scale seed orchard of 20 'best bet' shrub species under evaluation as part of the FFI CRC's *Enrich* project that is identifying new shrubs and profitable systems for livestock industries. It's also providing a safe and secure environment for the seed multiplication of new *Lotus corniculatus* cultivars currently under commercial development by the CRC.

Prior to the new bird proof enclosure, SARDI Genetic

The browse plants were established in combination with the recently released Mediterranean cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata ssp hispanica*) varieties, Sendace and Uplands, to provide grazing and shelter for lambing ewes in this cold and windy environment.

The main focus for the hedgerows has been the leguminous shrub Hairy Canary clover (*Dorycnium hirsutum*). A number of Mediterranean saltbush (*Atriplex halimus*) were planted at the same time to compare with the Dorycnium. The two hectare site has established well despite the extremely difficult conditions.

The successful establishment has demonstrated the suitability of these species in a challenging environment. Their resilience has greatly impressed the property owner and neighbours who have visited the site.

For further information contact Eric Hall.

Email: [eric.hall@dpiw.tas.gov.au](mailto:eric.hall@dpiw.tas.gov.au)



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## Communications Update



Researcher Dr Ed Barrett-Lennard (DAFWA) holds promising salt-tolerant barley seedlings for the West Australian newspaper.

### CRC in the metropolitan newspapers

This month has seen the CRC appear in articles in two daily metropolitan newspapers, the West Australian and the Adelaide Advertiser.

The recent successful field performance of salt-tolerant varieties of barley, in the CRC's *Salt Tolerant Cereal* project headed by Dr Ed Barrett-Lennard, featured on page 10 of the [West Australian](#). At the same time, new legume cultivars, released by the CRC and on display at a series of field days on the Yorke Peninsula this month, were

Resource Centre staff went to incredible lengths to look after their valuable plants that were besieged all year round by pigeons, ducks and cockatoos.

The enclosure will now play an important role in helping to provide solutions to the challenges of climate change, water shortage and the need for new perennials to enhanced livestock production and manage the carbon balance.

The new bird proof enclosure was named after South Australia's first Plant Introduction Officer and Genebank Curator, Eric Crawford, who established the Australian Medicago Genetic Resource Centre and developed many pasture cultivars for low to medium rainfall zones in South Australia.

The enclosure was officially opened by the South Australian Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Paul Caica, on the 17 September.



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## FFI CRC looks at the future of extension at APEN Conference

FFI CRC is supporting the 5th International Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) Conference to be held in Busselton, Western Australia, early next month.

The 500-strong network from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region is inviting all sectors involved in extension to consider the challenge of shaping change in communities.

As part of its support for the event, the CRC is facilitating a plenary session that will group delegates according to their sector or profession and seek feedback from each group (sector) on how they develop and prioritise their extension focus, including the drivers for how they support their networks.

Of particular interest is how the various sectors view the role of the private sector in shaping change. Those attending the session will be asked for their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of the increasing role being played by the private sector in extension, including its relevance to sustainability.

The plenary is hoped to give delegates an opportunity to improve their understanding of the drivers for change that are in place in other sectors, while also allowing FFI CRC to better develop its unique relationship with partners in the public and private sectors toward assisting rural communities in addressing some of the challenges of contemporary farming and other natural resource

profiled by the Adelaide Advertiser.

### First FFI CRC vodcast

Dr Ed Barrett-Lennard is also featured as the first of a number of selected researchers to be interviewed as part of a series of vodcasts (video casts) which will profile the research underway and the expertise offered by the CRC. Go [here](#) to watch the vodcast entitled 'Making the most out of your salty land'.

### WA Science Communication workshop



In early November, science communicators from around the country will meet at the SciTech Discovery Centre in West Perth to hear experts speak on a variety of subjects of high relevance as part of the *WA: The State of Science Communication* series of forums.

Topics up for discussion on the day include the Complexities of Communicating Climate Change, Online Opportunities Available to Science Communicators, Creating Effective Communication Strategies and Engaging Scientists in the Communication Process.

FFI CRC is one of the event sponsors with CEO, Kevin Goss, appearing as a panellist on the Complexities of Communicating Climate Change forum. [Go here](#) to find out more information about *WA: The State of Science Communication*.



### Seed Establishment Workshop

In late October a Seed Establishment Workshop was held at the FFI CRC Head Office to have a closer look at the research being done in establishing perennial plants (trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species). The workshop focused on developing techniques suitable for use in difficult conditions, such as low rainfall areas, infertile, sandy or saline soils. Low cost and high reliability in establishment is a requirement across all plant types and the meeting was conducted to share insights from a group of projects with a common interest. As well as reviewing progress on the projects with a specific focus on establishment, improved direct seeding and reliable establishment of non-traditional perennial pasture species, the workshop

management.

The 5th International APEN conference will be held between 9-12 November. To find out more information about the APEN conference, visit their [website](#).



### Enrich® and EverCrop® update for South Australia

Enrich project activities have continued to be rolled out in SA:

- Two sites on Eyre Peninsula were planted in June 2009, at the Minnipa Research Centre, and at the Hollitt's property at Streaky Bay in collaboration with the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board. The Minnipa site was inspected as part of the annual Minnipa field day, which also included presentations on FFI CRC activities. The Wandearah site in the Northern and Yorke region was planted in June 2009
- The Morchard site in the State's Upper North was inspected in August by a group of Eyre Peninsula farmers from Buckleboo, and hosted a site visit as part of the annual Upper North Farming Systems field day in September.

Monarto Agricultural Bureau recently visited the SA Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation's Monarto research site.

In the Kadina – Wallaroo area, two new row trials have been established under the drought tolerant perennial legumes project (Future Cropping Systems Program) following the impact of dry conditions at the original Paddick's site, where only the wild lucerne survived. The sites are supported by Alkaline Soils Group and Landmark.

Selection for improved old man saltbush traits (palatability, nutritive value, productive biomass) also continues at the Monarto site.

*EverCrop* and *Enrich* have combined forces at the Waikerie Mallee Sustainable Farming (MSF) site with the establishment of an *Enrich* shrub species evaluation in July this year. The site was visited during the MSF field day in September where several FFI CRC presenters spoke on the potential of perennials.



featured presentations on the progress being made by the *Enrich*, *Oldman Saltbush Improvement* and *Productive, Persistent Perennial Grasses* projects. An important feature within these projects has been input from the WA (King's Park) Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority with its highly regarded history in the seed ecology of native perennials and techniques to enhance establishment as part of restoration initiatives. The workshop was the first in a series of steps the CRC is undertaking to develop new agronomy packages for farmers wanting to establish perennials under difficult conditions. While knowledge is growing steadily, the project teams are in a position to synthesis results to date and provide a guide to lower risk establishment systems for a range of plant types.



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### EverGreen Farming field walk

EverGreen Farming will be holding a field walk at the Flora Downs property located near Gillingarra, north of Perth on 2 November.

The field walk will give visitors an opportunity to see how DAFWA's perennial pasture establishment trials are performing and a closer look at the Evergreen Farming's establishment machinery.

As part of the field walk activities, Chris Vanetti's *EverCrop* pasture cropping trial located 20km north of Flora Downs will also be open for inspection.

For more information, call Mark Weston on 0427 244 525.



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## Coming Events

### Environmental and Resource Economics Early Career Workshop

**3-4 November 2009, Bathurst, NSW**

Further information: [www.ecrew.org.au](http://www.ecrew.org.au)

**OECD-GenomeAssociation-OZ09**

**9-12 November 2009, The University of Western Australia, Perth, WA**

Further information: [www.oecd-genomeassociation-oz09.com](http://www.oecd-genomeassociation-oz09.com)

### 4th International Conference on Coexistence between Genetically Modified (GM) and Non-GM Based Agricultural Supply Chains

**11-12 November 2009, Melbourne, Vic**

Further information: [www.gmcc-09.com](http://www.gmcc-09.com)

### 2009 APEN Conference

**11-13 November 2009, Busselton, WA**

Further information: [www.apen.org.au](http://www.apen.org.au)

### Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society 2009 Conference (53rd)

**10-12 February 2009, Adelaide, SA**

Further information: [www.alloccasionsgroup.com/AARES2010](http://www.alloccasionsgroup.com/AARES2010)

### Outlook 2010 (ABARE)

**2-3 March 2010, Canberra, ACT**

Further information: [mfinnegan@abare.gov.au](mailto:mfinnegan@abare.gov.au)

### 2010 National Landcare Forum

**23- 24 March 2010, Adelaide, South Australia**

**WANTFA Annual Conference**

**10 March 2010, TBA**

Email: [kaye@wantfa.com.au](mailto:kaye@wantfa.com.au)

Further information: [www.wantfa.com.au](http://www.wantfa.com.au)

**2010 Australian Summer Grains Conference**

**21-24 June, Gold Coast, Qld**

Further information: [www.australiansummergrains.com.au/contact-us.html](http://www.australiansummergrains.com.au/contact-us.html)

**2010 International Climate Change Adaptation Conference - Adaptation Futures**

**29 June - 1 July, Gold Coast, Qld**

Further information: [www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010](http://www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2010)

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