



e-news

Sept 2008

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Spain trip sows the seeds for more *Bituminaria* research



Daniel Real gets into a prickly situation among some Spanish cactus to demonstrate the hardiness of *Bituminaria bituminosa*

Plant breeder **Daniel Real** has recently returned from Spain where he collected germplasm of *Bituminaria bituminosa* varieties to aid his research for the CRC. This included collecting some var. *albomarginata* and var. *crassiuscula* from the Canary Islands and breeding lines from the 10-year-old breeding program at IMIDA (Instituto Murciano de Investigación y Desarrollo Agrario y Alimentario) in Murcia.

While in Spain, Daniel also visited farmers who practise the traditional use of *Bituminaria bituminosa* as a fodder plant and strengthened his contacts with researchers from the Canary Islands, Murcia and Alicante. He also began the process of establishing an agreement for research, breeding and commercialisation of the joint research program between Spain (Canary Islands, Murcia and Alicante) and Australia.

For more information about Daniel's work with *Bituminaria bituminosa*, read the [October 2007](#) edition of *Focus on Perennials*.

Saltland Genie™ is out of the bottle



*Saltland Genie*TM – the website that has all the answers when it comes to making better use of your saltland is now online.

Officially online since 24 September, the *Saltland Genie* uses the latest knowledge and tools for saltland management from the Sustainable Grazing on Saline Lands (SGSL) initiative. It works by guiding visitors through a series of simple questions from which the *Saltland Genie* provides recommendations about the usefulness of each of 11 possible productive solutions that land users can use to make the most out of their saltland.

Saltland Genie is currently going through a testing phase and the CRC is encouraging visitors to the website to try him out. Please send any feedback about the *Saltland Genie* to [Nick Edwards](#).

The *Saltland Genie* web address is: www.saltlandgenie.org.au

Site visit helps define perennial wheat project parameters



The Perennial Wheat project team (standing from left to right: Matthew Newell, Phil Eberbach, Robert Gill, Richard Hayes, Simon Crane and kneeling from left to right: Len Wade, Phil Larkin, Nicole Hyde, Mark Norton) examine the well-established perennial wheat trial at Cowra, NSW

A recent team meeting at the NSW DPI Cowra station, in the Central Tablelands, has come up with new research criteria to assess the suitability of a variety of perennial wheat germplasm imported from the US for Australian conditions.

How to manage the site to achieve favourable conditions that best express their capacity for

perenniality and summer dormancy, along with how to maximise seed increase for more extensive assessment of the most promising accessions, were important considerations discussed during the visit.

The team also made new plans regarding future experimentation to assess extent of the root systems, disease resistance and genomic composition for the different kinds of perennial wheat being trialled.

One of the plant breeders, **Dr Stan Cox**, responsible for creating some of the perennial wheat germplasm being used for this project recently spoke at the 14th Australian Society of Agronomy Conference. Read the CRC [media statement](#) about his paper presented at the conference.

Further information about the CRC's Perennial Wheat project, contact [Phil Larkin](#).

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From the CEO

Welcome to the September edition of e-news.

I am very pleased to be back on the job after a welcome one-month vacation, with renewed vigour to take on the opportunities and challenges for our CRC. I sincerely thank Mark Stickells for doing such a great job as Acting CEO.

From discussions with Mike Ewing, program and project leaders, I'm pleased to hear that many research sites have been established without delay and there are some promising observations already. I'm particularly pleased that we have progressed the draft strategy for additional climate change-relevant work and that we have been party to a number of funding bids.

Regarding this last point, there is no doubt that FFI CRC's farming systems and perennial plant technologies will provide farmers with better options for adapting to increasing droughts. With new woody crops in the farm mix there can even be internal offsets to greenhouse gas emissions. In November the CRC's Participants will decide the climate change research, education and adoption strategy, for it to become a clear statement on future work, from which proposals will be developed.

At the same time, in my speeches and media interviews I have stressed the importance of achieving technological breakthroughs and sustaining productivity growth, through Profitable Perennials™ as the best adaptation strategy for climate change.

Elsewhere in this edition of e-news, John Powell reports on the draft Adoption Strategy, also to be finalised in November. I now take this opportunity to sincerely thank John for the leadership and dedication he has brought to FFI CRC and CRC Salinity, to establish the now all important adoption function and Perennial Connections team while completing the extension of headline technologies from CRC Salinity. John will wind up his work on 30 September, in preparation for a new National Adoption Manager to be appointed in the coming weeks.

I welcome further discussion on the CRC's Adoption Strategy and the climate change research, education and adoption strategy.

* Kevin Goss: (08) 6488 2555; kevin.goss@futurefarmcrc.com.au

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Business matters

A South Australian-based Project Leaders workshop was held in Adelaide on the 19 September. The workshop covered such issues as intellectual property, commercialisation, foundation project commissioning as well as providing updates on project management in Centric in the lead up to on-line reporting.

The good news is that setup for the 2008-09 Effort Reporting in Centric is nearly done with stage one for the September quarter expected to kick off in the first week of October. Program and Project Leaders who may have any queries are encouraged to contact the finance and operations Manager [Christina Sanderson](#). Christina recently attended a CRC business manager's meeting

in Melbourne that focused on strategic planning, commercialisation modelling and research capacity mapping.

Audits for the 2007-08 financial year are near completion with KPMG's sign off expected early next month with the annual insurance review and renewal following soon after.

For further information contact:

- * Mike Ewing, Research Director: (08) 6488 1876; mike.ewing@futurefarmcrc.com.au
- * Mark Stickells, Commercial Director: (08) 6488 1429; mark.stickells@futurefarmcrc.com.au
- * Christina Sanderson, Finance and Operations Manager: (08) 6488 1954; christina.sanderson@futurefarmcrc.com.au
- * Julia Wilson, Research Contract Manager: (08) 6488 1846; julia.wilson@futurefarmcrc.com.au

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Adoption & commercialisation

Adelaide Adoption Strategy workshop



From left to right: Anna Dutkiewicz (SA Adoption Manager) and Alison Bowman (Program 2 Leader) consider the CRC's Adoption Strategy at the workshop

A workshop was held in Adelaide on 18 September to assist FFI CRC 'insiders' to implement the CRC's *Adoption Strategy* and *Regional Partnerships Strategy* in a consistent and coordinated way.

Explaining the objectives of the workshop, National Adoption Manager **John Powell** said that over the last twelve months the Perennial Connections Team (Senior Executive and Adoption Managers) has put in a lot of work to embed adoption and commercialisation activities into Foundation projects, and to formalise the CRC's approach to adoption and commercialisation within the draft *Adoption* and *Regional Partnerships* strategies.

However, notwithstanding the team's efforts to date, and extensive consultation with Program and Project Leaders and CRC Participant representatives, there is still some uncertainty amongst these groups about how the draft strategies will work in practice within the states and regions. In addition, agency in-kind extension staff need more clarity about the CRC's expectations of them and how they can manage their CRC activities along with their agency activities. There also needs to be a common understanding amongst CRC Participants about how their delivery programs can work in concert with CRC-managed adoption initiatives.

27 people from the Perennial Connections Team, the Adoption & Commercialisation Consultative Panel, CRC Farming Systems Leaders, Selected CRC Project Leaders and Qualdata (undertaking the Monitoring & Evaluation contract for the CRC) participated in the workshop.

CRC know-how to be incorporated within Participant programs

Making More from Sheep and *More Beef from Pastures* are best management practice packages developed by Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI) and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA),

two of the CRC's key industry Participants.

The sheep and beef packages include comprehensive manuals and supporting events aimed at delivering to advisers and producers the information, technologies and tools developed through years of investment by the sheep and beef industries in research and development.

National Adoption Manager **John Powell** has recently reviewed the sheep and beef manuals and identified potential opportunities to update their content, drawing on 'headline technologies' from CRC Salinity and results to-date from FFI CRC Foundation Projects. For example, there is potential to incorporate *Saltland Genie*, recent *EverGraze* knowledge, and new knowledge about sub-tropical pastures into the manuals and their associated workshops.

John met with AWI and MLA adoption representatives in Sydney on 23 September to discuss potential updates in more detail.

For further information contact:

* John Powell: (02) 6226 5298; jpowell@optimalicm.net.au

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State adoption managers

SA Node

Enrich sites established

Two *Enrich* support sites have recently been established, on Eyre Peninsula and in the Northern and Yorke region.

For further information contact:

* Anna Dutkiewicz: (08) 8303 9735; dutkiewicz.anna@saugov.sa.gov.au

WA Node

For further information contact:

* David Bicknell: (08) 9881 0222; dbicknell@agric.wa.gov.au

VIC Node

For further information about the Victorian Node contact:

* Austin Brown: (03) 9742 8728; austin.brown@dpi.vic.gov.au

NSW Node

For further information contact:

* Peter Regan: (02) 6391 3185; peter.j.regan@dpi.nsw.gov.au

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Communication

Salt-tolerant wheat story makes page three of the West Australian



Ed Barrett-Lennard (left) and farmer Michael Lloyd (right) proudly show their salt-tolerant wheat trial plot (the salt-tolerant wheat is on the far left)

The interest in the CRC's salt tolerant wheat continues with the West Australian running a page three story on the very encouraging field results at **Michael Lloyd's** property near Pingaring in the eastern WA Wheatbelt.

The full article can be read [here](#).

Communication Strategy updated

The *Communication Strategy* has been updated to include an appendix that explains the CRC's practice when attributing quotes in media statements.

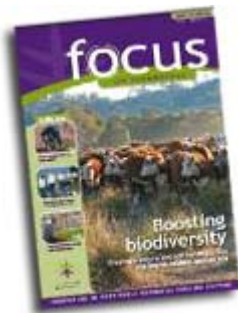
A copy of the FFI CRC *Communication Strategy* can be downloaded from the [staff](#) section of the CRC website.

Biodiversity in the Paddock publication profiled on the Bush Telegraph

Researcher **Josh Dorrrough** (CSIRO) has recently spruiked the benefits of the recently released FFI CRC publication *Biodiversity in the Paddock: A Guide for Land Managers* on Radio National's *Bush Telegraph* program.

A podcast of the show can be downloaded [here](#).

September edition of Focus on Perennials out now



The latest edition of *Focus on Perennials* is now available featuring articles on the birdsfoot trefoil breeding program, lucerne's ability to handle dry times and Landmark's new *Farm Services* to encourage on-farm innovation.

Download a copy [here](#).

For further information contact:

* Greg Lawrence: (08) 6488 7353; greg.lawrence@futurefarmcrc.com.au

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Program activities

P1 Future Livestock Production

Project profile: *Improved Perennial Grasses (P1FP01)*

Led by Steve Clark, the *Improved Perennial Grasses* project will breed new perennial grasses for areas with unproductive annual grasses and weeds on the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range in Victoria and New South Wales.

The project will expand on the work done by CRC Salinity and CSIRO in creating new cultivars of Cocksfoot, Tall Fescue and Phalaris that are tolerant of high acidity and aluminium levels, and low rainfall. These new cultivars will be water efficient making them suitable as complements to lucerne in phase farming systems in the region and more reliable in drier climate change scenarios.

A critical part of this project will be the development of optimum grazing management practices for these new cultivars, which will be delivered as agronomy extension packages.

* For further information about this project email Steve Clark: steve.clark@dpi.vic.gov.au

For further information about Program 1 contact:

* Joe Jacobs: (03) 5561 9946; joe.jacobs@dpi.vic.gov.au

P2 Future Cropping Systems

Project profile: *EverCrop™ and EverCrop Decide (P2 FP09)*

The *EverCrop™* project will facilitate the incorporation of perennials into mixed farming systems found in three Australian agro-climatic zones to boost productivity, enterprise diversification and provide positive environmental impacts. These regions are the uniform rainfall zone of eastern Australian, and the low-rainfall (Mallee) and medium rainfall zones of Western Australia.

In addition to shorter-term benefits to the farming system, the use of *EverCrop™* systems featuring perennials will prepare farmers for the sustainability challenges of climate change such as reduced and more variable rainfall.

Led by Dr Rick Llewellyn (CSIRO) and Michael Robertson (CSIRO), *EverCrop™* will work closely with growers and agronomists at a local level to develop improved farming systems and identify and develop ways to overcome adoption constraints. Part of the *EverCrop™* project is the *EverCrop Decide* initiative which will provide systems modelling to analyse the role for perennials under a range of possible soil, climate and market scenarios and develop cropping-system evaluation tools for identifying the best on-farm fit for perennials.

* For further information about this project email Dr Rick Llewellyn: rick.llewellyn@csiro.au

For further information about Program 2 contact:

* Alison Bowman: (02) 6938 1628; alison.bowman@dpi.nsw.gov.au

P3 New Woody Crop Industries

For further information contact:

* Paul Turnbull: (03) 5441 7301; paul.turnbull@dpi.vic.gov.au

P4 Farming Saline Landscapes

For further information contact:

* Ed Barrett-Lennard: (08) 9368 3441; egbarrettlennard@agric.wa.gov.au

P5 Biodiversity & Water

For further information contact:

* Ken Wallace: (08) 9334 0341; ken.wallace@dec.wa.gov.au

P6 Economic, Social & Policy Analysis

For further information contact:

* Mike Ewing, Research Director: (08) 6488 1876; mike.ewing@futurefarmcrc.com.au

P7 Education & Training

Postgraduate scholarships

FFI CRC is currently seeking applications for its 2009 round of postgraduate scholarships with up to ten scholarships for postgraduate research projects available at any of our participating universities. Researchers within our partner organisations are strongly encouraged to submit applications.

The CRC's Program teams have spent a lot of time developing a suite of PhD topics to complement existing research projects and research program objectives. The full list of these topics is available from the [CRC website](#).

The CRC strongly encourages candidates to consider topic areas on this list, as they are priority areas for this recruitment cycle. However, applications will also be accepted from candidates proposing alternative topics, provided they are endorsed by the relevant Program Leader for the research area under consideration.

Applications can be downloaded [here](#); however, potential applicants are encouraged to contact Daryll Richardson before lodging an application.

For more information about CRC postgraduate students and activities, contact the Education Manager Daryll Richardson: 0409 312 574; drichardson@agaveeducation.com.au

For further information about Program 7 contact:

* Scott Glyde: (02) 6933 2385; sglyde@csu.edu.au

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Snippets

Weed risk protocol on the web

The CRC's [Weed Risk Protocol](#) and [assessments](#) already completed by CRC researchers are now available from the FFI CRC website.

Created by **Dr Lynley Stone** (WA Department of Environment and Conservation), the protocol was developed to help researchers assess the weed risk potential of forage species in field trials.

The protocol assesses weed risk through answering a series of questions related to the plant's biology and ecology. The questions deal with the species' invasiveness, impacts and potential distribution.

It is a requirement that a Weed Risk Assessment (WRA) be done on all species being promoted by the CRC. If you are unsure if your research project requires one, contact [Dr Lynley Stone](#).

Understanding Practice Change by Farmers

- a national symposium

Adoption of new practices by farmers and other rural landholders is the focus of the *Understanding Practice Change by Farmers* symposium. The symposium will bring together leading researchers from around Australia to showcase their research and provide insights into the current thinking about what drives practice change, when adoption of new practices is likely or unlikely, and what can be done to influence it. The symposium will link the research evidence to practical application.

Who should attend?

Anyone working with land managers or rural landholders seeking an overview on the latest research into facilitating farming practice change is encouraged to attend, particularly:

- Agencies involved in agricultural policy and management of land, water and biodiversity
- Agricultural researchers and extension agents
- Catchment management authorities
- Non-government organisations
- Lobby or farming groups interested in changing farming practices.

Speakers on the day include **Dr Neil Barr** (Vic DPI), **Professor Allan Curtis** (Charles Sturt University), **Geoff Kaine** (Vic DPI), **Dr Rick Llewellyn** (CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems), **Dr Graham Marshall** (University of New England), **Professor David Pannell** (University of Western Australia), **Professor Frank Vanclay** (University of Tasmania) and **Roger Wilkinson** (Vic DPI). The symposium's facilitator is FFI CRC Board Member **Andrew Campbell**.

Workshop attendance is free but places are limited, so please advise [Fay Davidson](#) of your intention to attend as soon as possible.

The symposium will be held on 14 November at the Vic DPI Theatre, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne, 9am to 4pm.

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Coming events

EverGraze Proof Site Open Day (Albany)

October 2008 (tbc), Albany, WA

Email: psanford@agric.wa.gov.au

EverGraze Proof Site Open Day (Wagga Wagga)

3 October 2008, Wagga Wagga, NSW

Email: mfriender@csu.edu.au

EverGraze Proof Site Open Day (Orange)

15 October 2008, Orange, NSW

Email: warwick.badgery@dpi.nsw.gov.au

STIPA Native Grasses Association Inc 2008 Conference

9 -11 November 2008, Horsham Town Hall, Victoria

Email: vivienne.stipa@bigpond.com

EverGraze Proof Site Open Day (Hamilton)

12 November 2008, Hamilton, Vic

Email: ralph.behrendt@dpi.vic.gov.au

Understanding Practice Change By Farmers - a national symposium

14 November 2008, Melbourne, Vic

Email: fay.davidson@uwa.edu.au

EverGraze Proof Site Open Day (Albury-Wodonga)

25 November 2008, Albury-Wodonga, NSW, Vic

Email: meredith.mitchell@dpi.vic.gov.au

2009 CRCA Conference

May 2009, Canberra, ACT

Email: ceo@crca.asn.au

Further information: www.crca.asn.au

2009 APEN Conference

11-13 November 2009, Busselton, WA

Further information: www.apen.org.au

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Feedback is always welcome: greg.lawrence@futurefarmcrc.com.au