

Final presentations from each workshop, from land manager Gavin Rehn and researchers Jim Franklin McEvoy (FFI CRC) and Craig Neumann (DWLBC) covered the role of saltbush.

"Respondents to follow-up surveys from the events indicated that they gained new knowledge and understanding from the presentations, in particular, on saltland pastures and saltbush followed by lucerne and other perennials," Dr Dutkiewicz said.

"The feedback also suggested the CRC needs to ensure grower experiences are documented and transferred to others to fill the gap between research and adoption."

Tammin workshop

All 30 advisers and other 'next users' who influence grower decisions rated the workshop at Tammin as 'useful to very useful' in increasing their knowledge and confidence in advising on technologies featured at the workshop.

The workshop featured 'headline' technologies for whole farm and landscape water management in the eastern wheatbelt of WA, including lucerne phase farming, saltland pastures, and oil mallees.

Day one of the workshop started with presentations on the technologies from lead

CRC researchers Perry Dolling, John Bartle and Ed Barrett-Lennard.

Participants then learned more about the practical side of the technologies on four farms, where growers talked about why they adopted the technologies, the challenges in adopting them, and whether they delivered the anticipated benefits.

"There was lively discussion and networking through the day (and night) among the participants," John Powell said.

Table group sessions on day two saw growers, CRC researchers and 'next users' having in-depth discussions about the merits of the technologies. They also put forward their 'big ideas' for what should happen next to increase adoption of the technologies.

The 'big ideas' to come out of the Tammin workshop were:

- Promote lucerne to croppers as a tool to preserve cropping yields and land value, instead of promoting it as part



ABOVE: Land manager, Gavin Morgan, uses 2 m deep soil pits to demonstrate the effect of lucerne in preserving his future grain yields at the Tammin workshop. (Photo: John Powell)

of lucerne-livestock systems to address waterlogging and salinity

- Promote saltbush as part of normal farm and landscape management, rather than something to do when land is no longer useful for anything else
- Establish regional partnerships between the Oil Mallee Association, State agencies and Shires, for co-ordinated oil mallee industry development. ⚡

More information

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Fellowship recognises post-graduate perennial work

Dion Nicol is one of only two students nationally to win the highly contested 2008 AW Howard Memorial Research Fellowship that recognises students who have a research project pertaining to the development, management and use of pastures.

A Curtin University of Technology Environmental Biology Honours graduate, Dion has been acknowledged for his outstanding post-graduate research with native legumes.

Dion's work focuses on using native perennial legumes as an alternative to lucerne to improve the productivity of Western Australian low-rainfall regions.

"I am particularly interested in low rainfall soils and the chemical constraints restricting root growth of current crop and pasture varieties," Dion said.

"My studies in environmental biology provide an excellent background to study native legumes.

"WA has a unique environment and a diverse and well-adapted native plant population. I hope to use this diversity and adaptability to find crops that will grow well in stressful environments."

Hailing from WA's central wheatbelt, Dion hopes the field trials on his uncle's property will capture agronomy and water usage information on two legume species – *Cullen cinereum* and *Cullen graveolens*.

"The legumes, found as wild populations in low rainfall areas, could be a future profitable crop for the WA wheatbelt."

"In natural grasslands, these species are highly productive and remain so much longer than almost all other herbage under water stress. If successful, they could provide an income from summer rain and stored soil moisture while reducing recharge."



Dion has started his doctoral studies at the University of Western Australia (UWA) with assistance from the FFI CRC and UWA's School of Plant Biology.

The \$15,000 AW Howard Memorial Research Fellowship bursary will help finance Dion's research and field experiments. ⚡

More information

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