

Media Release



FUTURE FARM
INDUSTRIES CRC
PROFITABLE PERENNIALS™ FOR AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

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New publication provides farmers with survival solutions for drier times

A new publication by the Future Farm Industries CRC (FFI CRC) shows how farmers can increase their productivity and remain profitable in a dry and uncertain climate through the use of perennial plants.

Called *Prospects for perennials*, the publication is a definitive guide to incorporating perennial plants into the mixed grazing and cropping systems of southern Australia.

Prospect for perennials editor, Dr Sarita Bennett, said since perennials have deep root systems and peak growth periods that vary across the year, they are more adaptable and better able to convert scarce and unseasonal rainfall to green feed.

“Increasing the range of plants, including the total amount of perennials, is a way that farmers can begin transforming their land to be more productive in a drying climate,” Dr Bennett said.

“For example, a farmer can have a continuous source of fresh, green feed for livestock by having the right mix of perennials and annuals on the farm with different growing seasons, so that as one plant becomes dormant or dies, another starts growing in its place.”

Through the use of regional overviews, case studies and economic analysis, readers can find out for themselves how perennials can add value to their business while gaining a better understanding of how they fit into the landscape.

The publication is particularly relevant to farmers who are weighing up the options for coping with unreliable rainfall and are looking for sustainable ways to remain productive.

“Modelling through the CRC’s *Enrich*[™] project has shown that a typical farm located in the central WA wheatbelt with an annual rainfall of less than 300mm that has 10 percent of its land dedicated to perennial native plants can boost its whole-farm productivity by 20 percent,” Dr Bennett said.

“This productivity gain is brought about by the provision of additional feed often at a time when it is most needed, such as during the summer and autumn months. Some of these plants also have the ability to reduce methane emissions and the need for antibiotics in livestock.”

Prospects for perennials also provides a glimpse of what farming in the future could be like by highlighting the research underway and technologies being developed by FFI CRC to help Australia achieve new levels of sustainability and productivity in a drying climate.

To have your own copy of *Prospects for perennials*, email greg.lawrence@futurefarmcrc.com.au or download an electronic version from the *Publications* section of the FFI CRC website (www.futurefarmcrc.com.au).

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Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre aims to transform Australian agriculture and rural landscapes by developing and applying Profitable Perennials[™] technologies to innovative farming systems and new regional industries.