

# FACEY CONNECT

LEADING, INSPIRING, SUPPORTING AND CHALLENGING  
OUR LOCAL FARMING COMMUNITY



**AUTUMN 2024**



**2024 MAJOR  
PROJECT  
COLLABORATIONS**

**GRAIN LEGUMES  
SHOWING  
'PEA'-TASTIC  
RESULTS**

**WEB  
WEDNESDAY:  
CHECK YOUR  
WEATHER STATION  
DAY**

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## Major Sponsors



The Facey Group would like to acknowledge and thank our valued sponsors Agrimaster, Australian Grain Technologies, AWI, Bailiwick Legal, Carbon Sync, CRISP Wireless, CSBP, Elders Insurance, Elders Wickepin, Ewen Rural Supplies, Farm Weekly, FMC, Origo.Farm, Planfarm, and Tincurrin Rural Services.

# A Note from the CEO

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2024.

Whilst we can't quite believe how quickly this year is progressing, we can certainly believe how busy we are going to be with more projects to manage going into this year in what could be a record year for Facey Group activity.

Our hallmark Riskwi\$e program will see the team extremely busy on our new trial plot area east of Wickopin, thanks to the generosity of Facey Group stalwart, Gary Lang, and to the lessee, Steve Lyneham.

We were recently successful in being contracted by GRDC to lead the Deep Sown Oat Trial, which will be extremely relevant in this region. We also signed onto the Grower Group Alliance Carbon Outreach Program – which will see us deliver to our growers, workshops on improving understanding and literacy surrounding 'everything carbon', including understanding our emissions, participating in carbon farming, how to minimise our 'on-farm' carbon footprint, and how to extract value back to our business. Most importantly, to become and legitimately prove to be even more sustainable than ever before.

We are engaging closer with those bodies (such as MLA and GRDC) who invest back into our R & D through our contributions, by having them visit our region and engage with our growers.

We recognise that the 'funding landscape' that existed in the past, is rapidly changing. We as a Grower Group can no longer assume that we will be funded for interesting projects. GRDC already brand themselves as 'investors' not 'funders'.

Instead, the Climate-Smart for Agriculture Program; Net-Zero CRC and Nature Positive CRC will be the predominant buckets of money that groups such as Facey Group will need to access to continue to do it's very best work. In this 'nature positive' world, where the carbon economy is already reportedly worth \$95 billion (USD) annually, there is massive opportunity for Facey Group and it's members to position itself to be the solution rather than perceived to be one of the problems.

Of course, our exhaustive list of other projects, field days and of course our GRDC Harvester Set-Up Workshops, will ensure we won't have a lot of spare time.

Thanks to the staff for their tireless energy and to the Committee for their efficient, passionate dedication to making Facey Group what it is today.



*Chris Wyhoon, Facey Group Chief Executive Officer*



# AgREC Update

By Claire Wilcocks, Kaitlyn Anderson & Tina Astbury - Facey Group AGREC Team

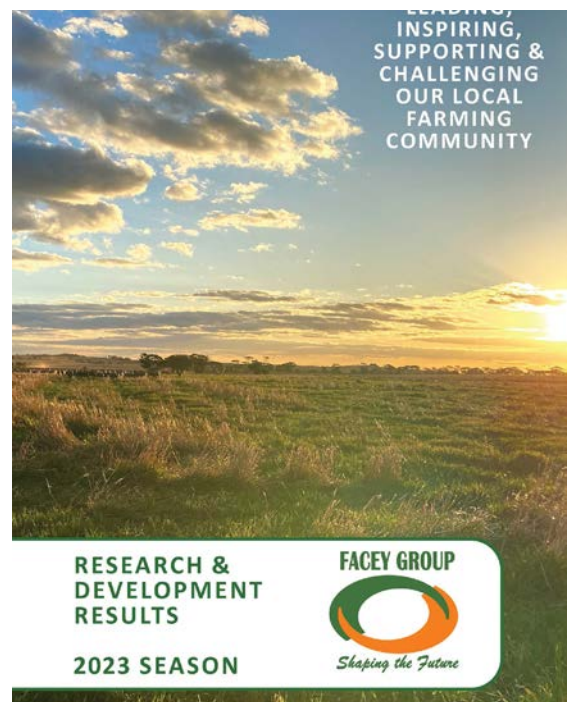
## Annual General Meeting & Post Harvest Bash

Thank you to everyone who attended the Facey Group AGM on the 20th of December 2023. A key highlight for all in attendance was watching Justin Page's drone flying across the oval showcasing amazing new technology in our ag industry. Our Facey Group AgREC team needs the support of a strong committee, and it was great to see all positions filled with such enthusiasm. In addition, we appreciated hearing from Dr. Michael Young, Farm Economist from the Farm Optimisation Group, who explained how his work in collaboration with Facey Group will help our producers get the balance right with two huge cropping decisions, nitrogen applications and time of sowing. This is part of the national GRDC Project RiskWi\$e that is running for the next five years.



## Annual Reporting

Annual reports for our projects are also due at this time of year. Reports have been submitted for the GRDC Stubble Height Project, GRDC RiskWi\$e Project, MLA Confinement Feeding and Deferred Grazing and GRDC Grain Legume Reports are in progress. This reporting process and receiving results back from laboratories and statisticians helped the AgREC team prepare the reports for the Trial Book, which have been busily writing. The 2023 Trial Book is a real team effort and was freshly printed in time for Trials Night this year. It will be distributed to all our members over the next few weeks.



# AgREC Update Cont.

## Harvester Conversations

The entire Facey Group team worked hard to catch up with as many members as possible regarding the Facey Group 'Harvester Conversations' at the end of 2023. We truly appreciated everyone who took the time to chat during such a busy time of year. These surveys help Facey Group plan and support us in ensuring our research projects are focused on our producers' needs. It has been rewarding to hear how many people view this newsletter, how much members appreciate the support they get from other members, and how important it is to keep research local. We will continue to reach out to our members and undertake these surveys through 20224.

## Planning Ahead

After some well-deserved time off over the festive season and summer holidays to catch up with family and friends, the AGREC team is working hard for the season ahead. Sowing the 2024 trials will be happening sooner than we like to think and planning and research has been happening to ensure every trial is asking the right questions and then is well placed to answer them. Facey Group is very grateful to a wide range of researchers, plant breeders, and agronomists who have provided advice and support. Kaitlyn and Tina have also been tinkering with the trial seeder to ensure it is ready for the upcoming season. I would like to say everything is finalised and we are ready for when it rains but there is still more planning to do.

Most projects have a suitable paddock chosen, but the team is still on the hunt for a host farmer for the following projects.

### BASF Luximax® Farmer Demo Trial

Managing and controlling annual ryegrass populations within cereal crops continues to be an issue for growers across Western Australia. With documented resistance in ryegrass reported in Groups B, D, J K, and M, a new herbicide, Luximax, produced by BASF, has shown promising results in problematic ryegrass paddocks. This trial plan is completed, so if you are interested give the team a call about treatments.

We are always looking for trial opportunities, so if you have something interesting happening in the paddock and want some data to back it up, don't hesitate to give the team a call.







# Facey Group

## 2024 Major Project Collaborations

More Information Coming Soon!!

### Harvester Set Up Workshops




### Stubble Height




### Brome Grass




### RiskWi\$e

Projects Include

- Grain Legume
- Spring Cover Crop
- Time of Sowing
- Amelioration and Nodulation
- N Banking





### De-Risking Seeding





### Salt Bush & Novel Understories






### Drought Hub






### Ecosystems Enhancing Soil Carbon




### Plant Solutions for Soil Performance





### Weather Station Network Project



### Visualising Australasia's Soils




### Confinement Feeding & Deferred Grazing




### Landscapes After Fires




### Saltbush Carbon




# AgREC NEWS

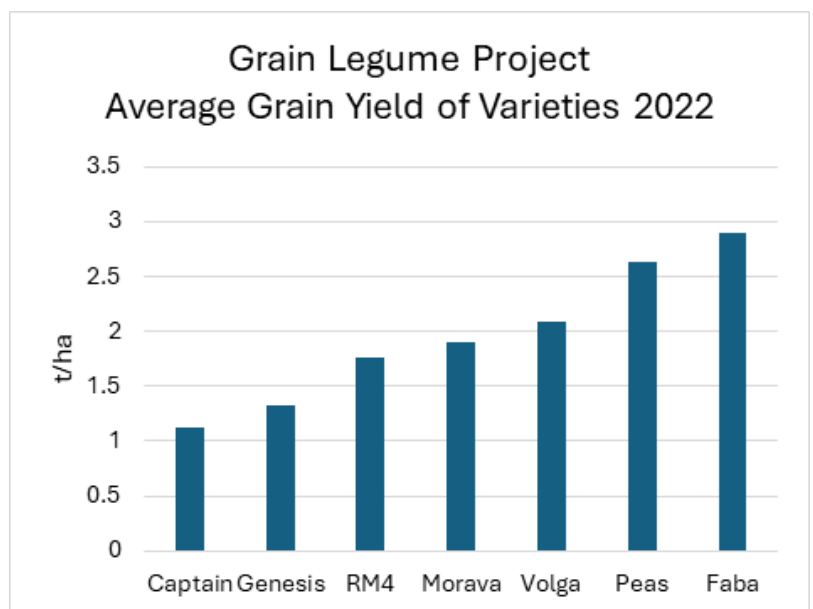
By Kaitlyn Andreson, Agricultural Research & Extension Coordinator



## Grain Legumes Showing ‘Pea’-tastic Results!

Facey Group has invested in trials with legume varieties spread throughout the local growing area over the last few years. Firstly the Grain Legume Project, funded by GRDC and led by GGA in 2022 and again in our Deep Sowing and Long Coleoptile Future Drought Fund Project led by CSIRO in 2023.

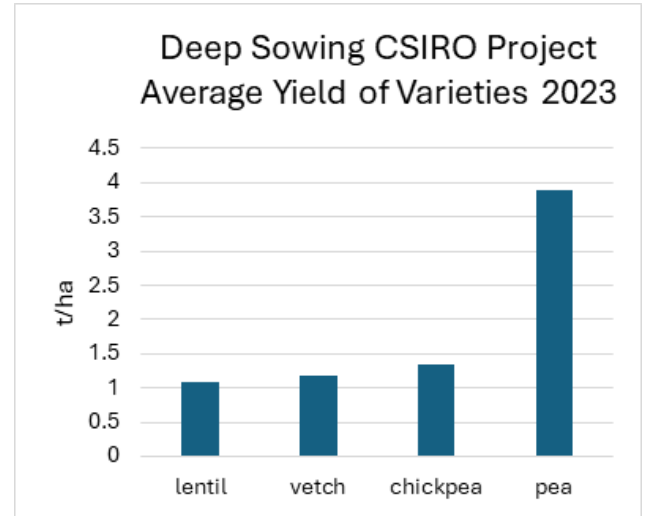
The Grain Legume Project saw chickpeas, peas, faba beans, and vetch sown at two different sowing times in 2022. All varieties yielded better in seed and biomass than expected apart from chickpeas. However, we cannot hide the fact that 2022 was a great season, and Facey Group was fortunate enough to have this trial on great loam-type soil. This leads us to ask - would these legumes perform as well in a different season on different soils?



*Above: 2023 GRDC Grain Legume Project*

In 2023, Facey Group hosted a Deep Sowing and Long Coleoptile trial led by CSIRO and funded by the Future Drought Fund. Although there was lots of focus on the wheat portion of this trial, it also saw Striker chickpeas, Volga vetch, Wharton peas, and Bolt lentils sown at two different depths. The 2023 season was able to give us insights into how these varieties perform with this site receiving 202mm less rainfall than the 2022 Grain Legume Project. This site also had a duplex sand soil type.

# AgREC NEWS Cont.



Above: 2023 Future Drought Fund & CSIRO Long Coleoptile and Deep Sowing Projects legumes.

Peas seem to be performing well in these trials. Twilight peas in the Grain Legume trial had a harvest yield of 2.5t/ha in 2022 compared to a mean yield of 2.34 t/ha in the 2022 [WA Pulse NVT's](#). In 2023, [Wharton Peas](#) had higher yields of nearly 4t/ha. Wharton has a naturally slightly higher yield than Twilight, but lower rainfall and hard finish didn't affect its performance in 2023. Volga vetch performed slightly lower in 2023 with an average yield of 1.2t/ha compared to 2t/ha in 2022. Chickpeas also performed similarly in both years.

Economic analysis for the Grain Legume trial is currently underway and the team will continue to monitor the site this year to investigate how long the N benefits from legumes last. Watch this space!

The GRDC Pasture Legume Guide is now available.

**PASTURE LEGUMES:**  
A NEW ERA FOR PASTURES IN SOUTHERN  
AUSTRALIAN FARMING SYSTEMS: SECOND  
GENERATION HARDSEEDED LEGUMES (G<sub>2</sub>HSLs)



SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA



# AgREC NEWS

By Claire Willcocks, Agricultural Research & Extension Coordinator



## Conference Season: GGA Lift Off, Agrifutures Evoke AG, and Facilitation Training

Our incredible Facey Group AgREC team, Chris Wyhoon CEO, Tina Astbury Senior Project Coordinator, Claire Willcocks and Kaitlyn Anderson Agricultural Research and Extension Coordinators and Maree Dougall Innovation Coordinator, had a very busy end to February, across seven days attending the Grower Group Alliance (GGA) Lift Off, the Evoke Ag Conference, Facilitation Training, and the GRDC Research Updates.

The week started at the GGA Lift Off event which comprised grower groups all around WA, interstate, and even overseas, with people attending from Israel, Canada, and the UK. The morning began with a welcome from CEO Rikki Foss, where she conveyed the rapid expansion of the GGA which now comprises 18 staff members. She also conveyed that the group extends to 4000 collective members and has 90 grower groups from a range of sectors. The new board of GGA was announced, which included our very own Facey Group Committee Member, Audrey Bird. Congratulations Audrey.

The Facey Group team then attended a Project Officers afternoon program, where the GGA's new Research Professional Development Program was unveiled. Here the team also participated in a session run by Value Creators. Once this session was complete, there was a sundowner for all grower groups to enjoy and network.



Day two saw the beginning of Agrifutures Evoke AG, a two-day conference that connects the agrifood innovation community across the Asia Pacific and around the world. Here the team saw presentations from scientists, startups, global business leaders, and farmers. The first day started with the Founder of Tamang Ventures, Nina Schick, who presented her keynote speech titled Mind-Bending AI: The Edge of Possibility. This talk gave insight into the future of AI and what that means for the way we produce and trade agricultural commodities and consume food. Nina discussed that AI is a meta technology that enables other technology, such as processing information, can be used in farming in terms of improving production systems in multiple ways, such as sheep monitoring. She ended with the fact that the AI agricultural revolution will help to feed the world's growing population.

On the second day of Agrifutures Evoke AG, Facey Group staff delved into the 'exchange,' a platform showcasing the latest developments in agrifood innovation by event partners. Additionally, attendees explored Startup Alley, featuring 40 startups from both local and global spheres, showcasing their inventive creations. The final day also saw presentations on natural capital accounting, with a panel discussing different perspectives on what it is, how it is quantified and valued, and the opportunities it may unlock. The panel pointed out that half of the world's outputs is dependent on nature and there are now new opportunities for investment in nature and land.

At the end of the busy week on Thursday and Friday, Tina and Claire were lucky enough to participate in Facilitating Learning and Change Workshop funded by De-Risking the Seeding Program. This was led by the inspirational Jeanette Long from Ag Consulting Co and they both learned many tips and tricks for running workshops that will facilitate learning and change effectively.

# AgREC NEWS

By Kaitlyn Anderson, Agricultural Research & Extension Coordinator



## Global Outlooks at the 2024 GRDC Perth Grains Research Updates, 26th & 27th February

It's that time of year again when GRDC showcases what research has been happening within the state and gives us an outlook on what is to come in the Grains Industry.

This year Tina Astbury, Senior Projects Coordinator, and Kaitlyn Anderson, Agricultural Research & Extension Coordinator, attended the GRDC Grain Updates in Perth to learn from the vast lineup of presentations. There were many proud moments for Facey Group as we were highlighted in projects throughout the two days including, 'Future directions' presentation by John Woods, Chair of GRDC, that opened the event and highlighted the RiskWi\$e Project and its extensive Grower Group involvement throughout the state. Other projects Facey Group was part of included, 'Managing frost and heat', presented by David Deery, CSIRO, 'Lessons learned from five years of monitoring diamondback moth and larvae across all port zones' presented by Dusty Steveston, DIRPD, 'Closing the economic yield gap of grain legumes' panel led by Daniel Kidd, GGA, 'Deep Sowing Oats', presented by Angelia Tanu, UWA and the 'Drought Hub Introduction' presented by Mark Holland, GGA.

In addition to the projects Facey Group was involved in, there was also a lot of information to take in from other projects across the state and globally.

Day one started with big-picture thinking, giving global insights into the industry, economically and socially. Dennis Richardson AC, Former Director General of ASIO, Ambassador to the USA, Secretary of DFAT, and Secretary of Defence, started the presentations by discussing global geo-political factors that will affect all trade and underlined the importance of agriculture globally and to Western Australia. Dennis reminded us of the history of the global markets and how since WW2, Australia has worked with the US and allies while advocating for international trade and the World Trade Organisation. Although Australia has a rich trade history, it is facing borderless issues including climate and geopolitical challenges, such as strategic competition intensifying, with China and Russia drawing closer together, and increasing pressure on the diplomatic relationship with the US. With election time just around the corner in the US, leadership changes may result in short-term challenges to Australia if Donald Trump is to be voted back in, posing some risks to free global trade. However, this is unlikely to cause deterioration of the long-term relationship. Supply chain disruptions are also likely to continue.

The second speaker, Simon Kuestenmacher from The Demographics Group, gave us insights into the demographics of the Australian landscape and how it is affecting the agriculture industry, but more precisely, the grains industry in Western Australia. Overall, we can expect the population to peak in the next 60 to 80 years and this, coupled with the large emergence of the middle class on a global scale, the demand for Australian agricultural products will continue to grow. What was interesting is the age of the current workforce within agriculture and the "retirement cliff" that it could be facing in the next decade. 5% of the agriculture workforce is above 65 and about to retire with 16% between the ages of 55 and 65 which will look to retire shortly. The transport sector is going to be the worst affected, with 35% above the age of 55 which means we may lose a large portion of our truck drivers in the next decade.

Although these challenges are issues that we can't directly tackle through the Facey Group, or at the farm gate, on-farm research and development to increase productivity will be a key asset to help the industry prepare and overcome them.

After such an informative big-picture start, Tina and Kaitlyn attended a wide range of smaller presentations on wheat and barley breeding, brown manuring, the economic benefits of soil amelioration, and the exciting work being done in lupin breeding. We met some of the important researchers in a range of fields and even managed to hold some meetings during the busy two days which may lead to further projects or ideas. The GRDC Perth Grains Research Updates continue to be a valuable date in the calendar for the Facey Group team to learn and grow.

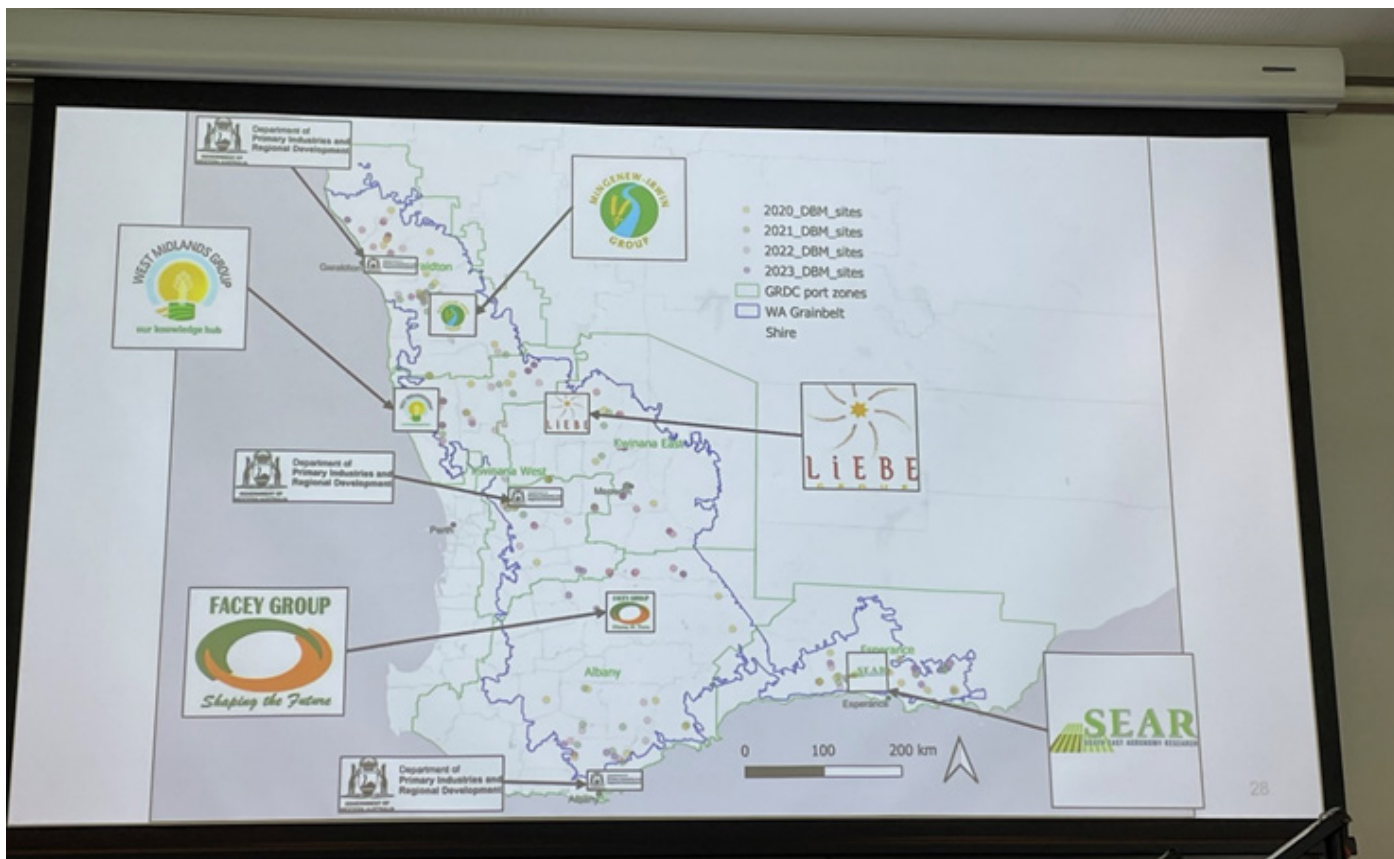


Image Above: Dusty Steveston, DIRPD, discussing the Diamondback Moth Project and highlighting the support of various growers' groups, including Facey Group.

Image Below: A summary of a GRDC-funded project looking at brown manuring legume crops and the yield benefits on the following wheat crop.

A presentation slide from GRDC showing the results of a project on Scepter wheat yield in 2023 following different treatments. The slide includes a table with columns for Treatment, Yield (t/ha), Protein (%), N recovery, and Screenings (%). The data shows that brown manure treatments generally result in higher yields and nitrogen recovery compared to fallow or grain treatments.

Treatment	Yield (t/ha)	Protein (%)	N recovery	Screenings %
Fallow	1.62	11.2	29.2	2.4
Lupin (grain)	0.66	13.9	14.7	4.8
Lupin (Brown manure)	1.67	11.9	31.8	3.3
Vetch (grain)	0.71	13.1	15.0	5.8
Vetch (Brown manure)	1.25	12.5	25.0	3.7



# AgREC NEWS

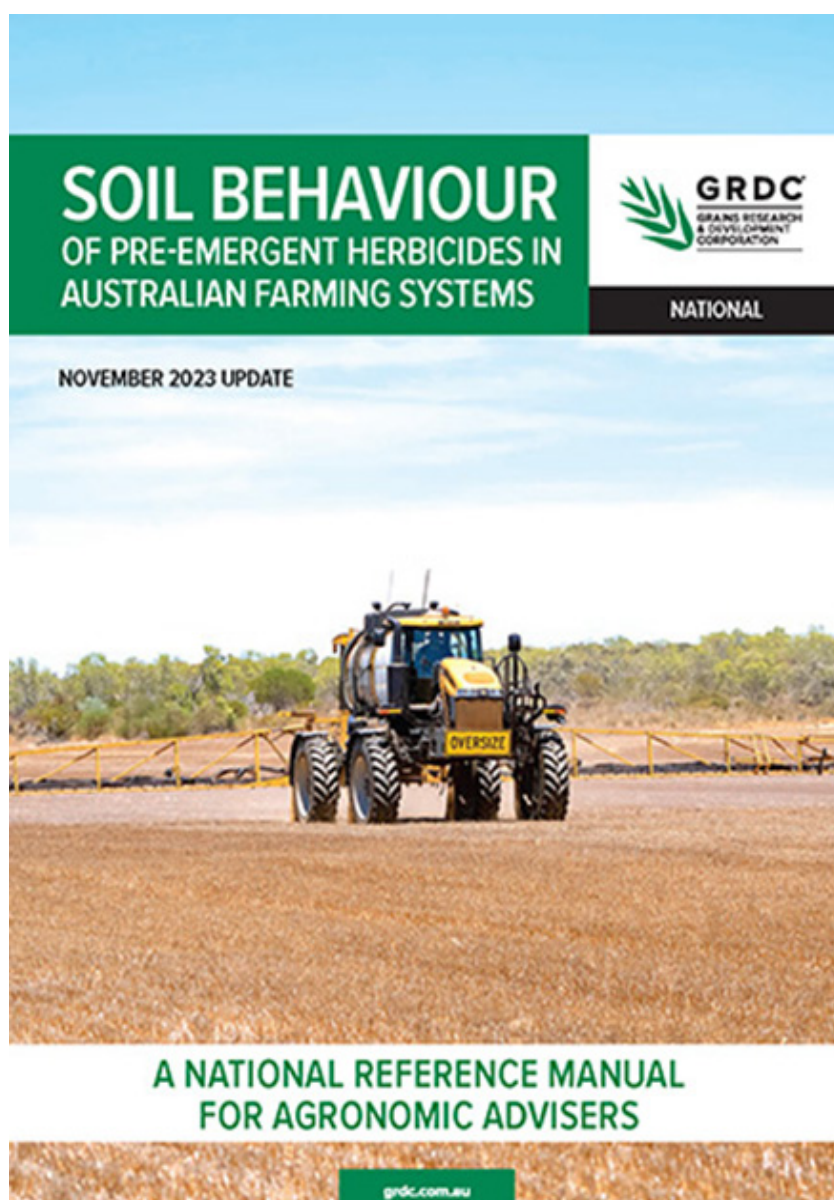
By Tina Astbury, Senior Project Coordinator

## Updated GRDC Herbicide Manuals



GRDC has recently updated its Pre-Emergent Herbicide Reference Manual and it might be worth a review with seeding approaching. It is called ‘Soil Behaviour of Pre-emergent Herbicides in Australian Farming Systems.’ Pre-emergent herbicides are a valuable additional tactic to help control weeds. This herbicide manual is comprehensive but does contain simplified tables to compare various characteristics of many common herbicides. It concludes with a summary table for individual herbicides with short notes on the practical considerations of using them.

The key considerations this season are that pre-emergent herbicides have the potential to persist in the soil for longer if conditions don’t favour breakdown. Dry summer conditions may increase the risk of herbicide carryover. Growers should consider the number of weeks during spring and summer when the topsoil was moist as this is the only time when an herbicide would have been degrading.



# AgREC NEWS Cont.

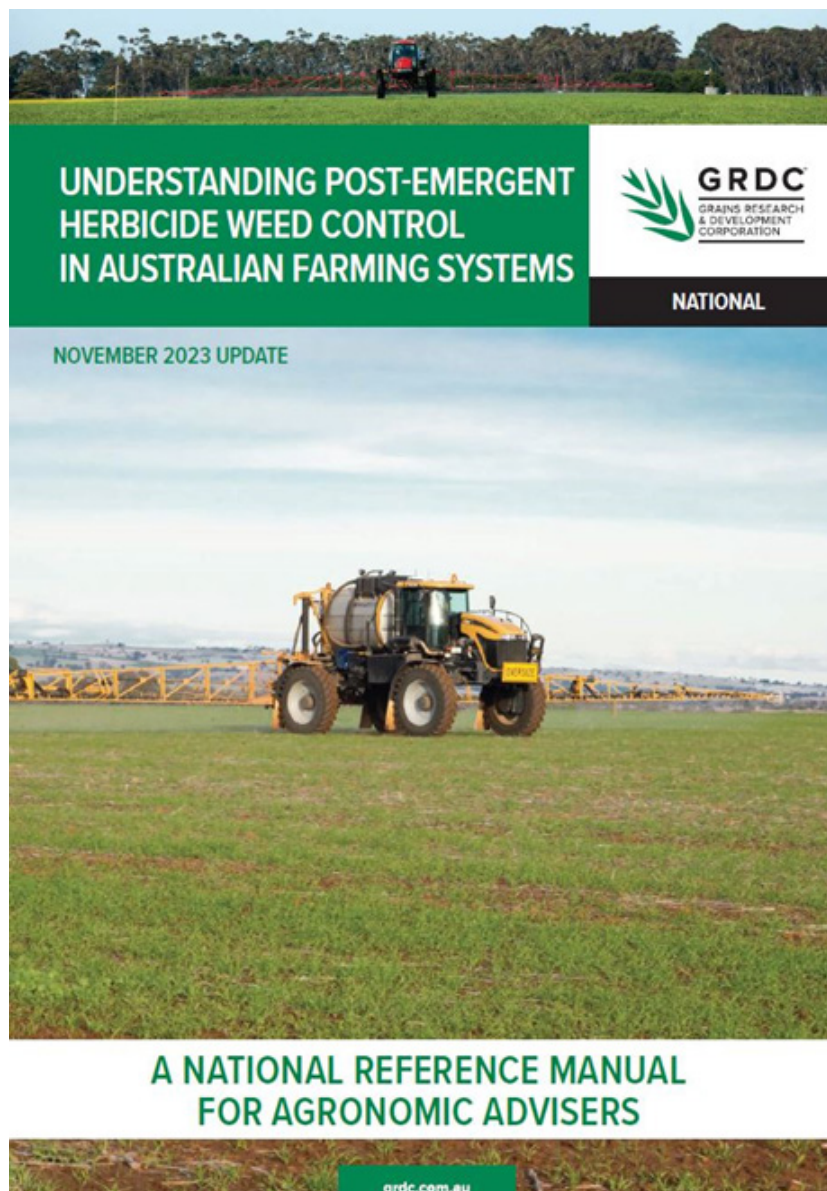
The 'Understanding Post-Emergent Herbicide Weed Control in Australian Farming Systems' is the updated GRDC guide for post-emergent herbicides. Australian farmers readily adopted herbicide use as a robust and cost-effective way to control weeds. However, this widespread use over many years has led to resistance. In WA, resistance was first noticed for annual ryegrass (*Lolium rigidum*) to the herbicide modes of action Groups A and B. As herbicide chemistry has developed and resistance among various weeds continues to emerge and spread, understanding how to use post-emergent herbicides most effectively has become more pressing.

This guide covers principles for understanding grass and broadleaf weed behaviour. It overviews a range of tactics for controlling weeds in crop systems. Then does a deep dive into how herbicides and the key nodes of action of the various herbicide groups. The book ends with considerations of herbicide resistance with some interesting information on how ryegrass develops resistance so quickly.

Both these manuals have been developed by the Independent Consultants Australia Network for GRDC to be used by growers and advisors and are available to download or hard copy through the image links or below:

['Soil Behaviour of Pre-emergent Herbicides in Australian Farming Systems.'](#)

['Understanding Post-Emergent Herbicide Weed Control in Australian Farming Systems'](#)



# Member NEWS

## Facey Group 2023 Trials Review and Pre-Seeding Catch-Up Event



The annual summary of Facey Group trials was well attended by members and industry representatives on Thursday 7th of March 2024. Facey Group aims to ensure these presentations are farmer-focused and provide information that supports local farming systems. Edward McGeoch, Associate Analyst from Rabobank, commenced the presentations with some big-picture views of where the market is in terms of sheep, lamb, wool, and the grain markets.

He predicted interest rate cuts for late 2024 but thinks global economic headwinds are likely to continue. Through a series of interesting graphs that showed the domestic and export proportions of Western Australia's various agricultural commodities, he talked us through several factors that will be at play in the short term.



In the first instance, Chinese consumer demand is likely to remain slow. This particularly impacts lamb exports as lamb is a premium meat in this market. This is somewhat offset by the potential of the US market to improve. The weaker rain outlook than the strong season of 2021 and 2022 will impact the grain market, offset by the predicted lower prices for farm inputs this year.

However, current geopolitical tension could result in big energy price swings which would also impact the costs of these products, particularly fertiliser. Current conflicts may result in shipping issues, but they also may benefit Australia by giving us preferential trade routes to Asia, compared to wheat exports from Europe that would be required to avoid the Suez Canal.



Next on the podium was the Facey Group AgREC Team. Tina Astbury, Senior Project Coordinator, reviewed two years of complex findings on the Stubble Height project which is GRDCfunded and led by Liebe Group. The project commenced just after harvest in 2021 and we have conducted two full years of cropping using a 'strip and disc' system. The higher stubble 'strip and disc' systems create time and fuel efficiencies at seeding and usually at harvest. In the Facey Group trial, they supported the soil moisture retention of the soil.

Weed management can be more challenging in 'strip and disc' systems and ensuring the correct herbicide package for discs can make a critical difference. Finally, Facey Group has been closely examining the soil parameters to see if these higher stubble systems support improved soil carbon, retained nutrients, or improved soil pH. At this stage, no differences have been discernible, but research in cropping systems over much longer time frames demonstrates that soil changes are slow processes.

Claire Willcocks, Agricultural Research & Extension Coordinator, presented Facey Group's findings on our Soft Wheat Trial. InterGrain and AGT were kind enough to provide pre-release varieties for Facey Group to compare with RockStar. Some varieties performed well given the tough end to the season. The full results of this trial are documented in the Facey Group Trials Book which was available during the evening and will be distributed to all members soon.



# Member NEWS Cont.

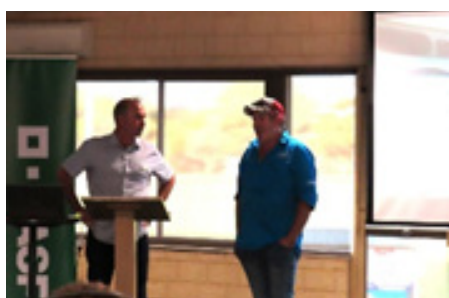
## Facey Group 2023 Trials Review and Pre-Seeding Catch-Up Event - Cont.

Then Kaitlyn Anderson, Agricultural Research & Extension Coordinator, presented the findings from a range of legume trials that Facey Group has conducted recently. These projects have demonstrated that early sowing legumes can create greater yields in the following year's cereal crops, using a high-value legume as part of a double break can have positive effects on your three-year gross margin, and seeding lupin directly after soil amelioration may be a low-risk option.

Following our team's presentation, the attendees heard from Dr. Sarah Rich, Research Scientist at CSIRO who shared findings of the Long Coleoptile and Deep Sowing Project. This demonstrated wheat that has been bred for longer coleoptiles will emerge from sowing depths as great as 120mm and will establish and yield at comparable rates. Deep sowing may suit opportunities where growers want to sow into stored moisture from early rainfall events. Sarah also demonstrated the emergence rates and subsequent yield of various legumes and this site, chickpeas, field peas, lentils, and vetch. Due to the larger seed size, these varieties all emerge from depth very well and are an option if you choose to sow deeper into stored moisture.



Dr. Hayley Norman, Senior Research Scientist at CSIRO, discussed findings from the Future Drought Fund project 'Enhancing Low Production Paddocks for Productive Sheep Systems'. This trial demonstrated the capacity to fill feed gaps in low-productive areas among saltbush plantations. Two sites established a range of clover, sub-clover, medic, serradella, and wheatgrass. Various varieties produced considerable biomass, and the project will track which varieties will re-establish best in 2024.



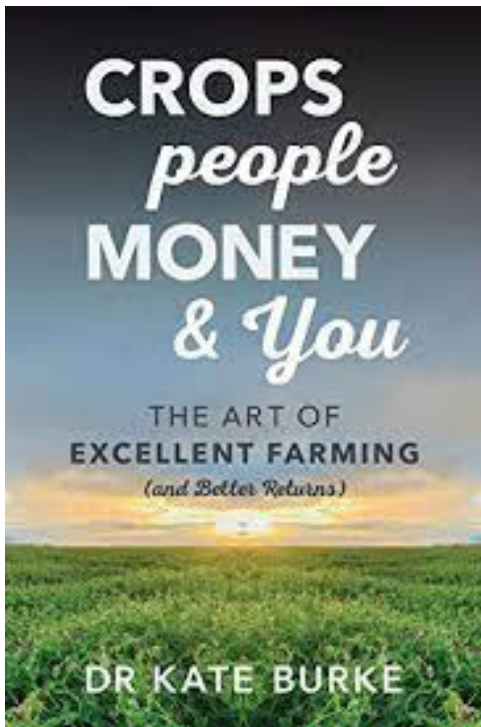
The presentations were wound up with a well-earned beverage with local Arthur River farmer and #6Bs spokesperson, Sam Burgess, who gave a heartfelt presentation about the importance of your mental health and how looking out for yourself, and your mates is so vital. He is a proud member and spokesperson of #6Bs- Blokes, Barbecues, Bonfires, Beers, Bonding, and Bullsh\*t where events are organised in regional Australia for men to relax and discuss their mental health in a safe space.

It was great to catch up for a drink and a bite to eat at the sundowner which was sponsored by Carbon Sync. With relaxed conversations & a drink in hand, many Facey Group members viewed the Summarised Projects Posters displayed at the event. These will be made available exclusively to our members through our website.



# Book REVIEW

By Tina Astbury, Senior Project Coordinator



Dr. Kate Burke is an agronomist who has a long family farming history in northern Victoria. Her background in crop production saw her career transition through research, teaching, independent agronomy, and a stint as a commercial manager with one of Australia's largest corporate grain producers.

During the lockdown, she took the opportunity to nurture a deeply held vision of a practical book that distils her knowledge on building a resilient business and nurturing a competitive edge in dryland farming systems.

The book is divided into easy-to-read chapters with key points and accessible graphs and diagrams. She also uses helpful sports metaphors to better explain concepts. Each chapter has a summary at the end and a few key questions to consider. As such, considering this is a book on farming economics, it is easy to read and contains plenty of practical tips.

The early chapters commence with an overview of studies about profitable and successful dryland farming throughout Australia. Kate makes a compelling case that profit not driven by farm size or commodity price. Individual farm characteristics, production and efficiency of that production are what cause some farms to consistently outperform other similar farms. Kate calls this the 'farm effect'.

The following chapters outline the various practices that give certain farms a profitable edge and gives readers small steps they can take to progress. They are themed into three broad sections as summarised in the title: crops, people, money, and you.

Kate considers cropping decisions as part of a whole-farm system and encourages making decisions based on what can be controlled. Cropping does have inherent risks and how to unpack these and ensure decision-making is a positive and reflective process is also discussed in this section.

The chapters on money can be summarised into three parts. The first is how to generate revenue. Then how to spend wisely, and finally how to balance risks and rewards.

The largest section of the book focuses on people but does start with a deep dive into your thinking style and values. Gaining mastery over how you react and respond to events and people around you gives you choices even in tough situations. In turn, Kate argues that this helps you build strong teams with employees and family. This leads her to the final section of the book about working with advisors, banks, and other corporations and professionals. While the differences in how farmers operate are often in contrast to corporations, they still have lots to offer each other.

In summary, I think Dr. Kate Burke's book is a bright gem that came from the darkness of Covid. If you are interested in a practical book that might help you improve, even if it's just one or two things on the farm, then this is an accessible place to start.

# Future Drought Fund - SW Drought HUB

By Kaitlyn Anderson - Facey Group AGREC



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry



Future  
Drought  
Fund



GROWER  
GROUP  
ALLIANCE  
Together we grow



South-West WA  
Drought Resilience Adoptior  
and Innovation Hub

As we review the year that was and prepare for another year ahead, business strategies are being discussed and are a core tool for managing on-farm risks. These strategies can also play a vital role in ensuring that your farm can continue to be resilient to the risks that a dry season and changing climatic conditions can bring. We have highlighted some of resources below that are available to assist farmers in navigating “back door” strategies and improving farm systems to cope with possible climatic extremes.

The Farm Business Resilience Program has released several fact sheets to help you consider not just the environmental and economic impacts that a dry season can present, but also the social impact it can have on farms.

[Accessing Farm Finance Fact Sheet](#) covers information you may want to consider when accessing your farm finances to better absorb seasonality and prepare for unfortunate events such as drought.

[Let's Talk About Drought Fact Sheet](#) contains some great self-assessment tools and resources to ensure everything is covered as you plan the year ahead.

[Environmental Indicators Framework Fact Sheet](#) covers water security for both livestock and cropping systems, as well as soil health and vegetation variety to build business resilience.

[Getting The Right People](#), [Succession Planning](#), and [Work Health and Safety](#) Fact Sheets cover what is sometimes overlooked when it comes to planning, ensuring you have a good, healthy network of support around you.

The program is now open for you to register your interest in Farm Business Resilience Workshops. For more information on the program and how to register your interest visit the Farm Business Resilience website [HERE](#).

## Farm Business Resilience Program

Your tailored business  
resilience toolkit





## Facey Group Regional Node Update Cont.

# WATER SMART FARMING MANUAL



NATIONAL

### Water Smart Farming Manual

The [Water Smart Farming Manual](#) was published in November to help farmers maximize rainfall and provides new strategies for increasing yield and profit while improving farm business resilience. The manual covers 7 topics:

**Understanding Your Soils** – Understand how soil influences water infiltration and storage, and how soil constraints may affect your decisions. This topic also highlights some self-assessments and how to use existing data to understand your soil.

**Plant-Available Water Capacity (PAWC)** – Covering everything about PAWC - what it is, how to determine it, and instructions on how to use APSoil to access PAWC data.

**How Crops Use Water** – Understand how rainfall patterns affect crops, vapor pressure, and how you can use this for on-farm decisions.

**Preparing for the Growing Season** – Insights on practices that can be used before the growing season to improve water use efficiency and how fallow, stubble, cover crops, and previous crops influence stored water.

**Optimising Water Use in the Growing Season** – Matching varieties and cultivars to nutrition, WUE, and sowing time.

**Using Technology to Improve Water Efficiency** – This topic covers technology such as NDVI and soil moisture and weather monitoring, and how to utilize it to manage risk.

**Managing Risk** – Making tough decisions is hard, especially when it comes to risk. This topic covers why and how to manage risk when it comes to water and nitrogen decisions.

### Drought Hub Podcast - Confinement Feeding with Sanda Fowler

The Grower Group Alliance's South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub is dedicated to sharing information that supports growers in preparing for, and responding to, dry seasons. In this podcast series, hear from growers and industry experts on managing dry season responses. These range from early planning, to tactical decision-making as the season changes throughout the year, and then setting up for the following season.

This month, Facey Group member Sandra Fowler, joins the podcast to talk about confinement feeding ewes and some key management considerations when designing and managing ewes in confinement.

[Listen HERE.](#)



# Facey Group Regional Node Update Cont.

## BOM Grains Climate Outlook



Trust in reliable and relevant weather data continues to be a concern for local farmers. The Bureau of Meteorology has started to tackle these concerns by providing monthly weather updates for the grain-growing region of Western Australia through its YouTube channel. This monthly review looks back at the month that was to assess the accuracy of the forecast while giving predictions out to June 2024 to help support on-farm decisions. They are open to feedback about the format of this report. Feel free to email them at [agriculture@bom.gov.au](mailto:agriculture@bom.gov.au)

The March outlook is now available [HERE](#)

## Upcoming Grants

### Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative – Small Network Grants

Small Network Grants are now available to community organisations in regional and rural Australia to develop and deliver one-off events or initiatives to strengthen community networks and capabilities that build drought preparedness.

Through this initiative, with the support of the Australian Government, we are investing in the future by enabling agriculture-dependent communities to identify and act on their drought preparedness priorities at a grassroots level and in ways that best suit their communities.



The Small Network Grants will fund networks, community events, training initiatives, community infrastructure, development, and learning initiatives that assist local people and communities in strengthening social capital and capability to prepare for future droughts.

- Two streams of grants are available via two rounds:
- Up to a maximum of \$20,000; or
  - Up to a maximum of \$50,000 (dependent on location).

Round one has closed, but round two is now open!

<https://frrr.org.au/funding/disaster-resilience-and-climate-solutions/small-networks-grants/>



**FRRR**  
Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal

# Facey Group Regional Node Update Cont.

**APPLY NOW!**  
**2025 NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIPS**  
FOR AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY PRODUCERS

SEE WHAT'S POSSIBLE

NUFFIELD AUSTRALIA



nuffield.com.au

- **\$40,000** bursary
- 15 week scholarship
- Applications close **31 May 2024**

## 2025 NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY PRODUCERS NOW OPEN

We urge those with a desire to enhance agricultural knowledge to consider applying this year. If you would like a hand in your application don't hesitate to reach out.

Each scholarship is valued at \$40,000 and open to Australian citizens or permanent residents directly involved in food and fibre production typically aged between 28 and 45. The bursary allows scholars to travel overseas both individually and in small groups.

### Benefits:

- 15-weeks of purposeful learning and unique access to our approachable, global agricultural network.
- Connections to the global alumni – over 500 scholars in Australia and 2,000 worldwide.
- Access to international businesses and individuals not otherwise reachable.
- Select a research topic that will be of use to you, your business, your community, and industry.

In addition to a study topic idea that may relate directly to your industry sector or rural community, we are encouraging applications this year from those keen to research both drought resilience and sustainability.

### As a Scholar you will:

- Research a topic to add value to the primary industry sector.
- Join a global network of 2,000 scholars who have enjoyed this unique experience.
- Become a lifelong member of Nuffield to promote primary industries.

Scholars are innovative, free-thinking people. After the study, scholars produce a written report and communicate the new knowledge and experience to others in the industry.

Nuffield Scholars are scholars for life. There is ongoing communication with our alumni, plus events, workshops and the chance to be involved in additional learning opportunities.

In summary, Nuffield opens doors to exciting and rewarding experiences. Whether it's walking the halls of Westminster or Washington DC, or touring a leading wheat and maize research facility in Mexico, it presents a career-defining opportunity.

Apply [HERE](#)



# Innovation Update

By Maree Dougall - Facey Group Innovation Coordinator



## Hurry! Applications Closing Soon for HARVEST 2024: WA's Premier Agri-Innovation Program

Are you a startup, farmer, or researcher looking to make your mark with an agrifood and agtech innovation? **HARVEST**, Western Australia's leading business development program, is your gateway to accelerating the commercialisation of your innovation.

### Why HARVEST?

- Immersive Experiences: Dive deep into the agricultural sector with a program designed to offer hands-on, in person, and face to face experiences.
- Valuable Opportunities: Enjoy the chance to be part of an interstate or international delegation.
- Comprehensive Professional Development: 2-day intensive business bootcamp, in-person masterclasses, and webinars led by industry experts.
- Networking and Exposure: Direct introductions to key stakeholders in the ag sector, showcase your innovations and pitch at exclusive events.
- Simplified Process: A short application form stands between you and the opportunity of a lifetime.
- Completely Free: This program valued at over \$10,000 and comes at no cost, and no equity.

**Exciting News:** Thanks to the Royal Agricultural Society of WA, one lucky HARVEST participant will be awarded a **\$2,000 Innovation Scholarship**.

Hear from Dean Phillips of Xsights Digital, a proud member of the 2023 HARVEST Cohort: "HARVEST was an unparalleled opportunity to connect with industry leaders. The insightful discussions on innovation and opportunities in the WA agricultural sector were invaluable. If you're looking to innovate in agrifood and agtech, HARVEST is a must for your 2024 plans."

Don't let this incredible opportunity slip through your fingers. For more information about the HARVEST program, please call us on 9786 5233.

**Applications close 25th March 2024**

[Click HERE to Apply](#)

## Facey Group GRDC Harvester Set Up Workshop

Save The Date

12st September 2024



**PRIMARY**  
SALES AUSTRALIA



**GRDC**  
GRAINS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## AgriFutures Weather Station Installation

Facey Group has taken delivery of our weather stations from our supplier, Origo, and the three 6m weather stations were quickly installed by Alasdair McCleery, Origo's Head of Operations during the week. The positioning of these three 6m stations have been strategically placed to monitor all weather events but namely a frost and an inversion strip situated within the group's membership base stretching from Yealering to Harrismith.

Facey Group has also purchased seven 2m weather stations which will be situated alongside trials predominately with the ability to be easily moved in future seasons with these to be installed and functional soon.

With the funding provided by AgriFutures for this project, three of our weather stations will also have soil moisture probes attached to them to increase the data set we can capture going forward. Thank you to our host growers, Lindsay, Denise and Sarah Corke, Tim Fleay, and Clinton and Lauren Mullan, for allowing us to install these stations on their farms.

Any interested growers are encouraged to contact Maree Dougall, Innovation Coordinator, if you are interested in installing weather stations on your farm, as our preferred supplier and sponsor, Origo, is offering a 10% discount to Facey Group members.



*Above Left: A Rain Gauge.*

*Above Centre: Installation of 6m stations at Clinton Mullan's.*

*Above Right: Installation of 6m stations at Tim Fleay's.*

*Left: Staff training with Alasdair McCleery, Origo, for the 2m stations.*

# Industry NEWS

## GRDC releases guide on water use for dryland cropping

MANAGING for increased water-use efficiency on dryland cropping enterprises requires sound agronomic decisions based on the latest research for variable soil and crop types, understanding factors such as soil moisture that cannot be seen, and pre-empting rainfall forecasts that are uncertain.

An understanding of these challenges helped drive Grains Research and Development Corporation investment in a new Water Smart Farming publication, designed to simplify the complexities of all aspects of dryland cropping water management. Read full article [HERE](#)

## Australian agriculture “moving confidently into 2024” - Rabobank annual outlook

Australia’s agricultural sector is “moving confidently into 2024”, with an overall positive outlook for the nation’s farmers and agribusiness industries in the year ahead, Rabobank says in its newly-released annual outlook.

The agricultural banking specialist says a combination of better-than-expected seasonal conditions and lower input costs has helped set up the sector for a strong year. And, while agri commodity prices are “well down on the highs seen over the previous two years”, the bank’s price forecasts point to “continued positive farm margins in key agricultural sectors in 2024”.

Read full article [HERE](#)

## Are you EID Ready?

Sheep EID and the shift to mandatory tagging continues to be a major talking point across the country.

It will be mandatory in Australia for farmers to tag sheep and goats with electronic identification (EID) tags from January 1, 2025.

Sheep producers now have the golden opportunity to use electronic record keeping to update their operation, opening the door to high-level data collection and the potential to streamline business operations and improve profits.

States are starting to roll out rebate schemes to support farmers navigating mandatory EID, and Gallagher have compiled a handy guide to help!

Visit their website [HERE](#)

## Farmers fear impacts of Federal ‘ute tax’

Australia’s peak farm body has today called for amendments to proposed vehicle emissions standards – warning the Government’s preferred policy could lump farmers with impacts such as price increases.

NFF President David Jochinke said farmers could be penalised for not having low emissions vehicle options available.

“We’re working hard as a sector to lower our emissions, and we’re all for more efficient low-emissions vehicles,” Mr Jochinke said.

“The fact is there is currently no substitute for the internal combustion utes we currently rely on – not when you consider demands like towing capacity and all-day range,” Mr Jochinke said.

Read full article [HERE](#)

## New malting barley varieties gain accreditation

GRAINS Australia has announced the successful malting barley accreditation of Commodus CL and Minotaur.

Commodus CL was submitted for accreditation by InterGrain and was accredited as Malting Barley following evaluation by the Malting and Brewing Industry Barley Technical Committee (MBBTC), under the Grains Australia malting barley accreditation program.

Commodus CL is an imidazolinone tolerant, medium fermentability barley variety. It is intended to be grown in the Mallee environments of South Australia, Victoria and Western Australian grain growing regions. Growers seeking Commodus CL seed are encouraged to contact InterGrain.

Read full article [HERE](#)

**SECURE YOUR SPOT TODAY!**

TUE 26 MARCH | 12PM - 1.30PM

### ONLINE FARM SAFETY SHORT COURSE

THIS ONLINE SHORT COURSE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS, RISK MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR OWN FARM SAFETY RISK REGISTER, Q & A SESSION.

REGISTER [RURALEGE.ORG/EVENTS](https://ruralege.org/events)

SPONSORED BY: CBH GROUP

**RURAL EDGE**



# Industry NEWS Cont.



## Making the big decisions around sheep - numbers, composition, type

Sheep? What the? WALRC are hearing it a lot lately and reckon its fair to say there's a lot of people out there frustrated by the perfect storm of impossible-to-find shearers; live trade conundrums, less-than-attractive prices for some stock classes and limited opportunities to sell others. We reckon our response to that is a decent gathering of sharp minds to map out the various options and make sure we have all the information available to us to make the right decisions. We're in the midst of designing a big day to do all of that - which will take place at Lynley Anderson's farm at Kojonup. So, mark **Tuesday June 25** in your diary for a very good **Livestock Matters** day out once the crop is in and you're starting to think about next mating plans.

To help us get the right mix of discussion, we're really keen to know what your current plans are for your sheep enterprise. What changes are you planning on making? Who do you always 'keep an eye on' to see what they're doing on the decision making front. If there's someone you respect (local or interstater - maybe even someone you follow on twitter) who might they make a good speaker on this subject, let us know.

We won't make you do another survey - but if you have sheep, could you drop us a line by emailing [eo@walrc.com.au](mailto:eo@walrc.com.au) and give us your download. Even just a couple of dot points would do! We're particularly interested in what you're doing with Merino wethers at a given age/weight range. But really - we just want to know what you're thinking.

Lynley has promised to lay it all on the line for you in terms of the steps she's going through to make future sheep decisions in this current and predicted future environment. Your comments will help influence the shape of our program.

Contact Esther Price, WALRC Executive Officer, on 0418 931 938 or email [eo@walrc.com.au](mailto:eo@walrc.com.au) for further information.

# WEB WEDNESDAY

## Check Your Weather Stations Day

You've heard of Good Friday and Easter Monday, well just before both, we introduce ...

# WEB WEDNESDAY

CHECK YOUR WEATHER STATION DAY

**27 MARCH 2024**

A day to check that piece of equipment that tells you when to seed your crop, lets you know it's okay to spray and gives you the confidence to throw out a bit more fert.

Be it a 'fancy pants' weather station or a humble rain gauge, we encourage you to get on board and dedicate this March 27th to cleaning out the cobwebs, calibrating, straightening or simply replacing your weather station to give you the best data this year!

- Check equipment is level and free of damage
- Brush away all cobwebs and wipe with a damp cloth
- Spray with residual bug spray
- For digital rain gauges; check tipping spoons are free to move and clear of dirt
- For digital weather stations; check wind speed sensors are free to move

For more resources head to:  
[www.scfarmers.org.au/webwednesday](http://www.scfarmers.org.au/webwednesday)



This program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and Stirlings to Coast Farmers.



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development

Protect  
Grow  
Innovate

# Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program – Round 3 now open

## Access financial assistance to start a carbon farming project

The program supports landowners in the South West Land Division to:

- Develop new revegetation, agroforestry or soil carbon farming projects.
- Access financial assistance to establish a project with a minimum 30% cash co-contribution.

Regional workshops are available to assist farmers to plan a project and prepare a successful application.

Applications close at 12 noon on Monday 20 May 2024.

A003-24 MAR 2024

Scan the QR code to  
learn more or visit  
[agric.wa.gov.au/CF-LRP](http://agric.wa.gov.au/CF-LRP)





# CONGRATULATIONS KRISTY PRESCOTT

You are the **Grand Prize Winner** of our **2023 Photo Competition** thanks to this gorgeous photo you captured of your future generation & their love of the land, farming and family!

You have won a **FREE Facey Group Membership** for one year!

Thank you again to everyone who submitted photos!



# Podcasts of the Month



## GRDC Podcast Longevity Benefits After Soil Amelioration

Almost six million hectares of WA's sand-plain soils in the medium and high-rainfall zones feature multiple constraints, including water repellence, acidity, and compaction. An estimated 250,000 hectares of those six million have been ameliorated, typically involving strategic one-off deep tillage. A GRDC investment is helping to determine the longevity benefits following soil amelioration, looking at crop rotations, species choice and seedbed preparation. Hear from Dr. Stephen Davies from WA's Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, on the project's initial findings.

[Listen HERE](#)



## The SW WA Drought Hub Podcast - Dry Season Resources Benefits of Confinement Feeding and Deferred Grazing

In this episode of the South-West WA Drought Hub's Dry Season Resources podcast, Shannon Beattie interviews Congellin farmer, Sandra Fowler, and DPIRD Senior Field Veterinary Officer at Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development, Anna Erikson.

They discuss the benefits of confinement feeding and deferred grazing during a dry season and things to consider when implementing this type of system.

[Listen HERE](#)



## BOOTS OFF LOG ON! Episode 41: Business Skills are Now the Secret to Farm Business Success with Pete Newman

In this insightful episode as we sit down with Pete Newman, a seasoned consultant from Planfarm based out of Geraldton, Western Australia. Pete brings a wealth of experience and expertise in farm business management, agronomy, and agricultural consulting.

In this engaging conversation, Pete shares his insights on the crucial importance of farm business management skills for the incoming generation of farm managers. With multi-million pound farm businesses becoming the norm, Pete delves into the essential business skills necessary for success in the modern agricultural landscape.

[Listen HERE](#)



# NEWS from Our Partners

## WA communities to host Rabobank's farm financial skills workshops

Western Australian primary producers have the opportunity to expand their knowledge, free of charge, at a series of Rabo Client Council workshops designed to help provide the financial skills essential to managing an agricultural enterprise.

The communities of Scaddan, Munglinup, Dowerin and Bunbury will host the practical Financial Skills Workshops – providing farmers with an opportunity to both upskill and network – in mid-March.

The initiative has been spearheaded and funded by food and agribusiness banking specialist Rabobank's Rabo Client Council, a group of the bank's farming clients who volunteer their time implementing programs that contribute to the sustainability of rural and regional communities.



*Steve Kelly - Regional Manager, Rabobank*

Offered free of charge to participants, the interactive workshops provide practical, hands-on advice for understanding financial statements and banking requirements and explore topics such as taxation versus management accounting, essential business management ratios and understanding key components of a business's financial profile.

Western Australia Rabo Client Council member and Neridup-based mixed grain and sheep farmer, Megan McDowall said financial skills “are an extremely useful part of the skills toolkit for farmers and future farmers”.

“The workshops will give an introduction to financial statements including profit and loss, balance sheets and cash flow,” Ms McDowall said. “During this series of workshops, participants will gain an understanding of how to read, interpret and use these reports for farming businesses.”

Ms McDowall said the workshop content will build on this understanding by taking an enterprise-focused approach, separately looking at grains and livestock enterprises. “Participants will consider cash flow implications of a variety of enterprise choices. And also focus on preparing annual cash flow budgets,” she said.

“There will also be a focus on understanding how your bank assesses a loan, and some good tips for managing this process in a professional manner.”

Rabobank regional manager Western Australia Steve Kelly said farmers who had attended previous Rabobank Financial Skills Workshops have told the bank the knowledge provided is valuable – “useful information they can walk away with and apply in their operations”.

Mr Kelly said for primary producers, having a better understanding of their enterprise when approaching financiers can also help when applying for any additional finance requirements or to fund a new initiative.



# NEWS from Our Partners

## WA communities to host Rabobank's farm financial skills workshops - Cont.

“Since launching these workshops in 2018, the Rabo Client Councils have presented this learning opportunity to more than 3,300 farmers across Australia and New Zealand,” he said.

“If you're interested in attending these workshops, keen to meet other producers in the agri sector and increase your financial literacy and skills – confirm your place before the courses are fully allocated.”

The workshops – which will be limited to 30 participants each and are not restricted to the bank's clients – will be presented by Director of Hudson Facilitation, Tony Hudson.

Workshop dates and locations are:

- Monday, 11 March 2024 – 8:30am – 3:00pm – Scaddan (Module 1)
- Tuesday, 12 March 2024 – 8:30am – 3:00pm – Munglinup (Module 1)
- Thursday, 14 March 2024 – 8.30am – 3.00pm – Dowerin (Module 1)
- Friday, 15 March 2024 – 9.00am – 4.00pm – Bunbury (Module 2)

To register to participate, please [click here](#)

Morning tea and lunch catering will be provided.

To find out more about Rabobank, contact the bank's Narrogin team on (08) 9890 0600.



# Rabobank

## 1974 - 2024 Celebrating 50 years of Partnering with Planfarm



**Andrew Jones**  
Farm Business Consultant  
0456 688 171

Succession has become a hot topic, and this has been covered previously in Landline articles. These have dealt predominantly with the process and strategy required to initiate the process and get results that should meet the outcomes that will ensure succession of your business.

Have you considered what is being asked of the next generation, and if they are equipped for the task.

This article is to raise the questions:

- How ready is the next generation to take on the responsibility?

- Do they possess the maturity to balance life and business?
- Has the succeeding generation grasped the concept; they are taking responsibility for the retention of the family wealth.
- Do they understand the business is the income earning capacity of all generations (older and younger) who are reliant on the cashflow?

I am reminded of a personal experience in the Hunter Valley managing an irrigated lucerne hay farm in my early 20's. The place was owned by a group of absentee owners, and it was my first management gig after graduating from college. The family next door were dairy farmers, and his son, Richard, was of similar age to me. As we were both guilty of being 'young men still behaving like boys', if we were working alongside each other, we often chatted over the fence. The usual standard ego boosting conversations common at that age.

On one of these occasions, I was 'talking

up' the onerous reporting process I had to complete periodically, and with great bravado Richard said; "Tell them to shove it, none of that will help turn that shit show around and make them any more money!"

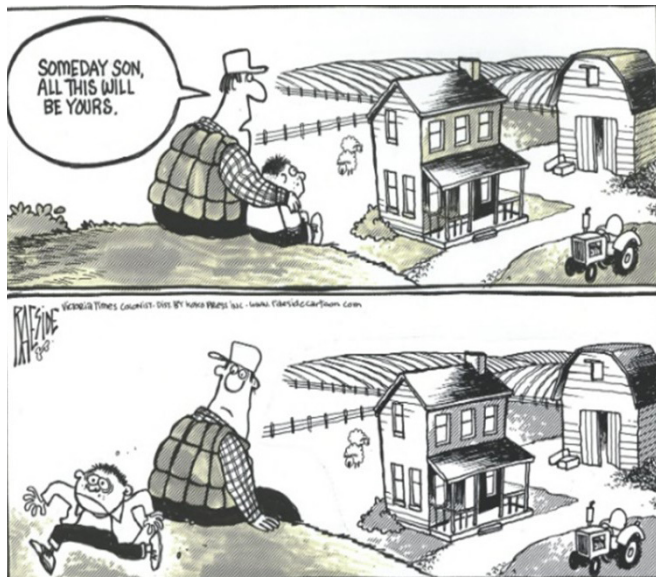
Firstly, I took that as a personal challenge, and was even more determined to show him I could turn 'that shit show around', but more importantly I realised there was a significant flaw in his advice. The owner had in-fact entrusted me with the task of making sufficient money from the farm to at least cover costs and hopefully make a return on the investment, which in turn justified paying me. I replied with some suitable 'ego protecting' response about doing what you need to, to continue get paid.

Richard thought about that ever so briefly and said, "Well, I hope the old man never passes this on to me. I'm happy to drive the gear and do the irrigation (irrigation), but I'm not getting up at 4 in the morning to push cows

around, wash udders and do the books – he can have that”.

Richard had a complete disconnect between why he wanted to be there and what was required for him to stay there.

We remained good mates for the 2 years I was there, but it was clear business succession was not on his radar.



Eventually their farm was absorbed by a larger dairy farmer who was assisted by his daughter (Rebecca) who was also our age and Richard thought was fair game. Good looking and smart, Rebecca is now the principal of that business which has grown to be a large, successful, and influential dairy operation in the Hunter Valley. As far as I know, Richard is working in the Coal mines in his 60's, possibly still dreaming about Rebecca.

The point of the story is, Richard didn't really understand my 4 opening questions, or what it takes to succeed in management of the farm business. He thought it was all about the field work. He missed the memo that there is an enduring link between the 'fun stuff' and the need to take on the responsibilities to make the business function.

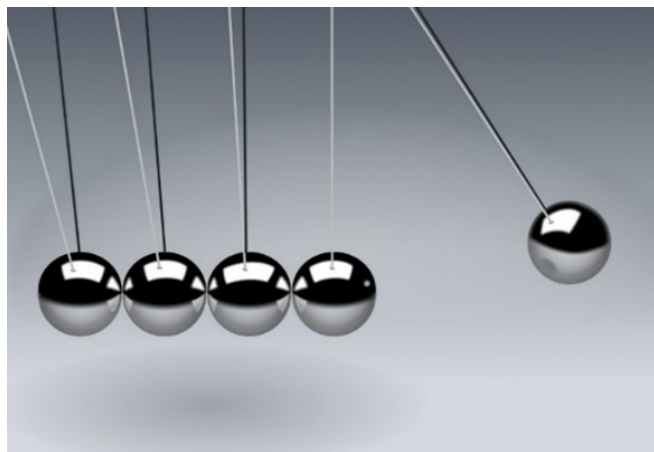
As a further note on the experience, I must have done all right there, as the owner had a much bigger dryland operation further inland with much bigger problems, and they moved me there to 'fix that cash flow' next.

The pressures I experienced during this latter period took a toll on my humour, something that led my father to remarking to me: "You're getting surly and unpleasant, and you should take a good look in the mirror."

This was an early warning that the responsibilities of that job on me as a young man, was extinguishing my humour and tolerance, and it was adversely affecting my character. On reflection, that was a message delivered painfully well, but sympathetically enough for me to learn and grow. He was a wise man who was protecting me from his own experience.

Farm business managers (men and women) can often be seen as tough, hard, and typically straight shooters. There is no risk, these are traits that are needed to carry on the business in a timely fashion, often in adverse conditions. They manage complicated logistics and work against the elements of mother nature with a great deal of agility.

In addition to these management skills, they are responsible for large transactions and financial commitments in advance with no tangible guarantee of recovering that investment. In the present era the balance sheets have grown to a point where they exceed most small business tests. The retention of the family wealth will be almost completely dependent on the successful and profitable operating of that business.





It is undoubtedly a huge responsibility to thrust onto someone in their 20's or even 30's. So how well prepared are they to take on these tasks without falling victim to the pressure and possibly falling foul of the character test.

Like a Newton's Cradle the knock-on effect of business pressures has a resonating effect on other equally important parts of life, with the path of least resistance giving way to the pressure on the other side.

It becomes a fine balance and delicate art in communication to get the next generation to stop and think of the long-term needs of the business. To stop and understand the need to think before engaging 600 Hp and 40 tonnes of equipment, but at the same moment, have them understand there is no time to 'back off' in the production department. The business and the commercial pressures of the agribusiness world won't wait for them.

Whilst the younger generation seems to take the technical aspects of the business in their stride, as if they were born hard-wired for IT and technology, there is no substitute for learning the fundamentals of business through raw exposure.

So, as a parent, and a responsible business director, how do you gauge the preparedness of the next generation to take on the business?



Like the delicate example of Newton's Cradle shown – it's too easy to over burden a young mind with responsibility and turn a robust instrument into a dangerously fragile situation. The individual's appetite for responsibility will emerge in their fields of competence.

In the Hunter Valley example, Richard had the competence in the field operations and no understanding or inclination to master the business needs. On the other hand, Rebecca was interested in the money making and the retention of wealth. Whilst she understood the need to have high protein green-chop post-milking and the storage of silage for the winter and all the fun things, she was more competent at mastering the pointy end of the business. Efficiencies in the milking shed, marketing the milk effectively to the dairy company and remaining viable to absorb smaller target operations.

As the title of this suggests – Someday this will all be yours, is a challenge. Preparing the young minds for the complexity for business succession is as important as instilling a good work ethic.

So – that's the problem – what are the solutions?

1. Engage all the succeeding generation early – giving them an appreciation for both sides of the business environment. (Income vs Expenditure: Physical vs Financial. Production vs Sustainability)
2. Provide early exposure to all aspects of the business. Interest in some disciplines may come from unexpected quarters.
3. Pass responsibility of baseline decision early making under a watchful eye.
4. Engage them in meetings with professionals so they learn to seek specialist advice.

The successors of the business must want to succeed so badly they are prepared to commit to learning the hard stuff.

The successors will need to earn the right to be handed over the income earning capacity of the previous generation.

The preceding generation won't allow their lifetimes work loose unless the successors show both competence and confidence with production, commercial decision making and

understanding the financials.

How will you gauge the readiness of your successor/s? The complexity today far exceeds the humble beginnings of preceding career, but the principles remain relevant.

**Every aspect of the business needs to be learned and managed – not just the fun stuff.**



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# GETTING GOOD LEGAL ADVICE



As land prices increase, along with the cost of machinery, fertiliser and other inputs, it's important to ensure you are thoroughly reading your contracts before signing, particularly as we enter a new season and another busy period of farming.

Farmers enter into contracts on a daily basis, and often without giving much thought to the actual terms of the agreement they're entering into. More often than not these contracts involve large amounts of money or involve a significant decision, and over time it can become easy to give a contract a quick read-through without taking time to properly consider what's actually written in it. However, it's important to always be aware of what you are agreeing to, and what your obligations will be under a contract. Beyond always knowing what you are signing, you need to know what it means for you and your business, particularly if things go pear-shaped.

## **Review of Contracts**

Contracts can be deceptively complex, and while it's tempting to save the money and review a contract yourself or rely on the representations made by an associate of what the document says, a lawyer can point out potential loopholes and pitfalls that may not be obvious. It's a good idea to engage a lawyer when you are dealing with an entity or area that is new to you, the contract is particularly valuable, or the contract has the potential to have long-ranging consequences. Examples could be the purchase of brand new machinery, entering into a lease for land or entering into some form of share farm arrangement.



Although you may believe you understand your position clearly, unfortunately a lot of the main content of contracts is skimmed over being deemed as 'legal jargon' that is not overly important. This couldn't be further from the truth. The consequences of not seeking assistance for a review of these contracts before signing could be costly, significantly more so than the money you may spend on engaging a lawyer to review the documents in the first place.

## **Engaging a professional**

You often seek the advice of a doctor when you are feeling ill or an accountant when you have a tax issue, so why wouldn't you engage a professional in the area of reviewing commercial matters.

When you do, it's important that you provide them with all of the information about the situation– remember they're there to help you get the best outcome. Ensure you provide them with all of the relevant documents, including previous communications and negotiations, and make time to have an in-depth conversation if needed.

It's also important to engage a professional with expertise in your area or industry. Whilst contract law may seem like a common practice area, not all lawyers will have the specific skill set required to provide the best assistance possible. Engaging a lawyer who specialises in agribusiness / rural law will no doubt provide a better result.

## **Be proactive**

It is always best to put arrangements into writing where possible, even if initially discussed and agreed to verbally. The agreement is likely to continue beyond your lifetime so it's important the next generation is clear on what are the rights and obligations.

It is best to foresee issues and work out how to best face them, rather than to react once an issue has arisen. A good example is farm leases – make sure your lease addresses all of the issues in the document, and how the lease might end, rather than leaving things to chance. Seeking legal advice once may save you thousands, or tens of thousands of dollars in the future.

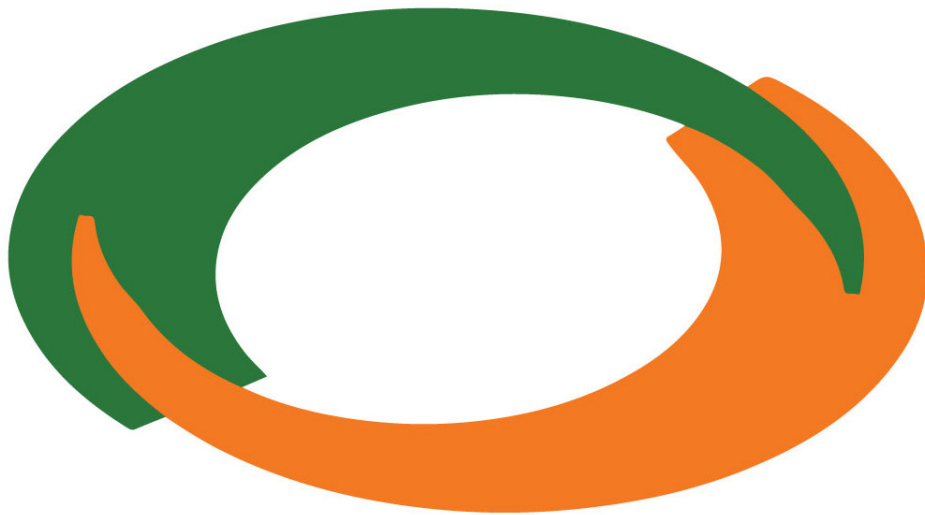
We have more than 20 years' experience specialising in helping farmers with a whole range of commercial matters. If you would like more information about your contract or legal assistance in general, please contact Bailiwick Legal on (08) 9321 5451 or by email at [office@bailiwicklegal.com.au](mailto:office@bailiwicklegal.com.au). For further information about other legal services we provide, please visit our website at [www.bailiwicklegal.com.au](http://www.bailiwicklegal.com.au).

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The above information is a summary and overview of the matters discussed. This publication does not constitute legal advice and you should seek legal or other professional advice before acting or relying on any of the content.

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