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Natural Resources
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



The BIGG Bulletin

March 2017

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BIGG's FIRST WEBINAR.....

Preparing Perfect Pastures

Wednesday 29th March 8.00 - 8.40pm

Join BIGG's first webinar with Greg Mitchell presenting on planning and preparing annual and perennial pastures for the upcoming year.





For all technophobes, this is a simple and easy process involving a few clicks of the mouse before you can sit back, learn and enjoy practical pasture information.

[MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER CLICK HERE!](#)

Perfect, Perfect Pastures Conference



BIGG's sold out Perfect Pastures Conference held on the 16th February was a complete success. 50 producers attended the day at Lambert Estate in Angaston, which began with a seminar style session covering new pasture varieties coming out of SARDI pasture principles workshops and a producer case study focusing on

... and, pasture principles, networks and a producer case study, networking and benchmarking and setting realistic goals.

This was followed by a bus trip visiting acid soils (and a very noisy herd of cows), the Jaeshke family lucerne, and learning about innovative tools to measure pasture.

The day concluded with a networking dinner, with key note speaker Ken Solly, who provided the motivation required to action some of the learning opportunities taken from the day. One of the highlights was the opportunity to network with other producers, including 13 producers from the Eyre Peninsula who attended the dinner session.

Thanks to the speakers and all who attended the day, helping to make it such a success.

MORE>>>>

- To read about the Jaeshke family lucerne see the [Stock Journal Article](#)
- See the [presentations delivered on the day](#)

How much grass grew in 2016?

The results from the BIGG/MLA/Farmer Johns/Coopers Mt Pleasant Producer Demonstration Sites were presented at the Perfect Pastures Conference, providing interesting insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with the 2016 season which included a late break, extended spring growing season and plant available moisture throughout summer (Figure 1).

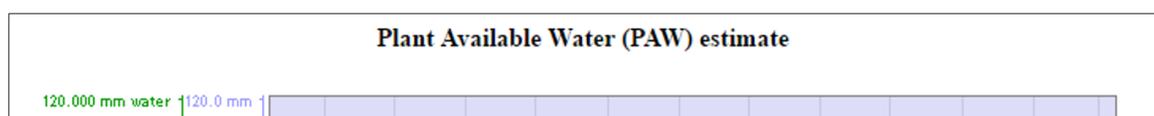




Figure 1: Plant available water at the Keyneton site 2016/17

Considering the season, the key messages resulting from the results so far are:

- Early sowing is imperative before a cold wet winter
- Annual brassicas or turnip varieties can be utilised within a pasture mix for quick, early winter feed opportunity, particularly in colder conditions when other varieties may not be growing.
- Cereals provide a good opportunity for early feed with the added benefit of harvesting grain which can be feed in summer when other feed availability can be low
- Selecting varieties for later maturity will provide increased feed in an above average spring growing season
- For livestock production, it is important to consider the dry matter and energy percentage of feeds, not just the production potential.
- The balance of cereal, legume and brassica is a delicate balance. Consider complimentary species that balance out the bell curve of feed availability.

For further insights and results, the complete booklet is available on the [BIGG website](#).

The pasture demonstration sites will be repeated this year, to continue to determine how the 2017 season effects pasture varieties. In addition, this year will focus on working with individual producers to investigate how varieties are responding on a paddock scale and will include livestock production measurements.

If you would like to trial a different pasture variety, or are interested in being involved please contact georgie.keynes@biggroup.org.au

The next step for BIGG Soil Moisture Monitoring



BIGG are pleased to announce that we have received a grant to further develop the information recorded from BIGG's three-soil moisture and weather stations located in pasture paddocks across the Barossa.

The grant will allow the development of tools to help facilitate decision-making for producers, by linking the actual soil moisture and climate data (e.g. rainfall, temperature, relative humidity, wind speed) from the stations with forecasting information from the Bureau of Meteorology. This will then be used to model pasture growth and production so to assist feed budgeting and stocking rate decisions.

Other applications of the climate data generated from the weather stations are plans to link it with forecast data to predict conditions of; livestock chill and heat risk, frost risk, harvest fire danger risk and sheep blowfly risk.

BIGG will engage the services of Mr. Peter Toome of [TOIP](#) who will develop the prediction models and provide technical advice throughout the project.

The project has been supported by the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board's Sustainable Agriculture Industry Support scheme, and is funded by the NRM Levy.

BIGG's soil moisture and weather stations; located at Flaxman Valley, Keyneton and Koonunga were established in 2013 and represent the first time a farming systems group in Australia has demonstrated soil moisture monitoring in pastures. The current weather and soil moisture status at each station can be viewed for free on the [BIGG website](#).

Stay tuned for more information.....



Government of South Australia

Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
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Sub-Clover Root Disease Project

BIGG's three year MLA Producer Research Site which was looking into sub-clover root diseases has now been completed, but we have some information on the Project on the website:

- Recent learnings from the sub-clover root disease project have been published in [MLA's February/March 2017 Feedback Magazine](#)
- In addition, BIGG is a co-author on a scientific paper published in February 2017 by the University of WA on the extent and severity of soil borne root diseases in southern Australia sub-clover pastures. This includes information which was sampled on local Barossa properties..... [MORE INFO](#)

From the Inbox...

EVENTS:

- Angaston Ag Bureau HOGGET COMPETITION March 24th!
- Coopers Mt Pleasant Cattle Reproactive on Farm Field Day 7 April [MORE INFO](#)
- MLA Southern Business EDGE Workshop is occurring across SA- great opportunity to benchmark and learn more about your business. Visit [Rural Directions Events](#)
- SA MDB NRM Netherton Soil Workshop- learn about the visual identification of soil limitations/ composting and NRM services- contact Tony.Randall2@sa.gov.au
- Free Work Health and Safety Workshops- specifically designed for farmers. More info Safe Work [website](#)

OTHER INFO:

- BIGG would like to extend a huge congratulations to local Keyneton farmer James Graetz who won the SA Citizen of the Year Award. [Read more!](#)
- Check out the [MLA website](#) for great info on Autumn feeding options

Your BIGG Contacts

YOUR BIGG CONTACTS

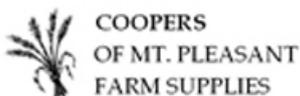
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Department of Environment,
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