



The BIGG Bulletin

March 2014

** STOP PRESS ** BIGG takes out State Grower Group Award!

BIGG was honoured with the 2014 [Ag Excellence Alliance Sustainability Award](#) at the annual Ag Excellence Alliance forum dinner, held on Monday 17 March. Mark Grossman, Chair of BIGG, accepted the award from Allan Holmes, Chief Executive of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR).



From left: Trent Potter (Chair, Ag Ex Alliance), Mark Grossman (Chair, BIGG), Allan Holmes (Chief Executive, DEWNR)

The Ag Excellence Alliance supports South Australian grower groups through innovation and leadership. The theme for this

year's Forum was 'Ten Years of Ag Excellence' with BIGG being recognised as an outstanding locally-based grower group, for its achievements in delivering greater NRM outcomes.

The \$2000 prize won by BIGG can be spent on any group activity that addresses the connection between production and natural resource management. Congratulations also to [Partners in Grain](#), who received the Sustainability Award for their achievements as a larger regionally-based grower group.

Soil Moisture Monitoring Workshop – April 11

Soil moisture monitoring information is used regularly by vignerons to assist their management decisions (and is becoming more common with cropping farmers) - but can this information be used to help producers better manage their dryland pastures and livestock enterprises?

BIGG is holding a workshop to help answer this question. The workshop will be held on **Friday April 11, 1-5pm (rego from 12.30) at Keyneton Hall**. It will introduce participants to

soil moisture monitoring and water use efficiency, and include learnings from soil moisture monitoring in broadacre crops and vineyards.

Participants will also visit a local pasture paddock where soil moisture is being measured and learn how to access and interpret monitoring information from weather stations located at Keyneton, Flaxman Valley and Koonunga.

A line up of leading industry experts will be speaking at the workshop, including Tony Craddock (Rural

Directions), Peter Toome (EnviroPro Dielectrics), Adam Pietsch (Farmer Johns) and Callum March (Balaklava farmer). The workshop will be relevant for producers (and advisers) who have livestock, cropping or vineyard enterprises. See this [flyer](#) for the workshop program.

The workshop is free (including afternoon tea and drinks at the end of the day) but please register your attendance by clicking [here](#) or contacting Brett directly on 0432 804 389.



YiAg participants at BIGG's soil moisture monitoring demonstration site, Keyneton

With a roll up of 55 people to Barossa Young People in Ag's (YiAg) Agtastic Conference, the young people in the Barossa and surrounding areas demonstrated they were enthusiastic and motivated to network, get involved and learn from each other to improve agriculture in the region.

A jam packed afternoon included Wasley's Ashmore white suffolk stud owner and chair of the neighbouring Mid North Young Gun's Group, Nette Fischer, who discussed the use of innovations to remain profitable. This included the use of genetics through Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) and the implementation of rotational

grazing to improve winter pasture production where they have achieved a nine times return on investment in the first year.

A sticky beak bus trip followed which included a 'dung beetle wine tasting' at Phil Lehmann's Eden Valley Property, which, with an expert panel of judges, proved that areas with dung beetles not only improve the soil but also make the wine taste better!

The trip also provided an opportunity to observe local ag related projects including BIGG's soil moisture monitoring project at Keyneton and Ian Koch's polyculture paddock at Moculta.

The conference concluded with dinner at Yalumba and key note speaker Sam Trethewey who motivated the attendees to be 'joiners' and get involved with agriculture to ensure a future filled with opportunities.

The real highlight of the day was the networking which occurred between the future generation of local farmers. To continue building these opportunities YiAg are running Friday Night Catch Ups with the first being at Greenock Tav on 4th April ([Further Info](#)). Thanks to the sponsors, Angaston Ag Bureau, RDA Barossa, AMLR & SAMDB NRM Boards, Barossa and Mallala Councils and Agrifood Services.

From the INBOX

Silver leaf Nightshade

The declared plant, Silver Night Shade has recently been identified on various properties in the Barossa area. For further info about the plant, including its identification see this [factsheet](#)

Hogget Competition

Angaston Ag Bureau is holding their annual hogget competition on 26 March at Keyneton Park. For further info contact Ian Koch bunyara@bigpond.com

Lambex Conference

Registration is now open for the 2014 Lambex Conference, being held in Adelaide July 9-11. Early bird registration available, for more info visit the [Lambex website](#)

Further Information

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