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Natural Resources
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



The BIGG Bulletin

June 2017

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BIGG Annual General Meeting- ALL WELCOME!!
Tuesday 18 July 7.30pm
Please RSVP georgie@biggroup.org.au

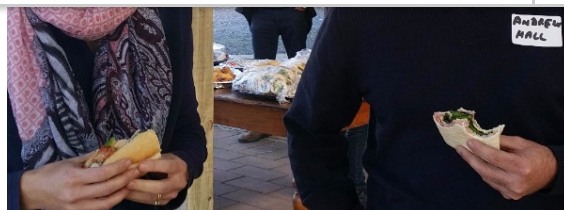
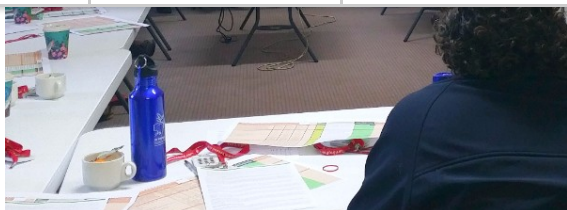
Maximising Profit in a Variable Climate



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Last Thursday, twenty-three Barossa producers learned how to maximise profit in a variable climate at a half-day BIGG workshop in Moculta.

The sold-out workshop featured La Trobe University Livestock consultant and researcher Jason Trompf, SARDI climate applications scientist Peter Hayman, Nuffield scholar Robin Schaefer and BIGG's Brett Nietschke, with facilitation by Georgie Keynes.

Peter started the day explaining the current outlook for a drier than average winter and the facts of the changing climate, before producers completed a Flexibility Indicator exercise with Jason to assess their capability to manage variable seasons. Brett explained the exciting new BIGG project to combine soil moisture monitoring data with weather forecasts to provide producers with information to assist decision making. Robin discussed his learnings from his Nuffield project where he travelled the world to learn all about weather forecasting.

The workshop concluded with Georgie facilitating a Q&A panel with the four speakers. It provided a great opportunity for producers to prepare for the coming season, learn about tools and opportunities to improve business flexibility and also to network with other producers.

To view the presentations delivered at the workshop please click the link below. Please note we are still waiting on presentations from Jason to be uploaded.

[Click to view presentations from the workshop](#)

This initiative is supported by MLA and the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and NRM levies.

BIGG Pasture Demonstration Sites up and running for 2017!

BIGG's MLA Producer Demonstration Sites are well underway for the Project's second year, demonstrating pasture varieties which respond to the variable climate.

This second year is certainly shaping up to be much different to last year with lack of moisture being the major challenge, compared with waterlogging causing germination issues last year. With the high levels of soil moisture early in the season,

the three sites were sown earlier than last year, all getting in by the end of May. Plants have germinated, however the moisture stress is certainly becoming evident.

Thanks to Heritage Seeds and Coopers Mt Pleasant for their management of the Eden Valley and Keyneton sites, and Farmer Johns and Pasture Genetics for the Koonunga site.

Pasture measurements will begin in July, demonstrating varieties which germinate and grow with very little rain- so please watch this space!



Eden Valley Perennial Site: Due to the waterlogging and weed competition last year the majority of the Eden Valley perennial site was re sown this year, however there is still some regenerating subclovers from last year.



Keyneton Annual Site: Cereals, ryegrasses, brassicas, clovers, vetch and peas



Koonunga Site: perennial grasses and Lucerne planted in 2016, regenerating legumes, regenerating oats (right) and ryegrasses (Centre), newly sown forage barley (left), ryegrasses and brassicas.

Exploring 2017 Pastures

The second year of the MLA Producer Demonstration Site Project provides the opportunity to delve down into what is actually happening on-farms to demonstrate how pasture varieties are performing in a paddock scale. Each month we will feature

a different farmer and pasture option

Utilising winter feed to maximise lamb growth rate

Matt Neldner- Marananga

Matt Neldner of Marananga made the most of the high soil moisture levels and 40mm of rain in April to sow a Moby Barley crop to provide winter feed for a twin lambing mob. Matt's main aim is to sell his lambs in early spring so ensuring he has winter feed is important, particularly for the twin lamb mob. The forage barley, which exhibits early growth and vigour, was sown at 65kg/ha one week after the rainfall event and now, after 10 weeks is measuring 3 tons of dry matter. Despite having a good germination, the lack of moisture has slowed it's growth. Interestingly the plants growing in the chaff rows from last year's harvest, demonstrate a 1 ton of Dry Matter/ha increase as a result of the increased soil moisture in these areas. Russian wheat aphid is also evident with approximately 3% being affected. Matt will use grazing to control the aphid and has found once grazed, the population is low enough that it does not reinfest the crop. Matt will graze the barley down to 1 inch, approximately 1 ton of Dry Matter/ ha before spelling it. Grazing will open the sward and allow sub clovers and barrel medic, which are present as a background population to grow. Depending on the season, the pasture will receive another graze and then be locked up for hay.

In addition to the barley, Matt is saving a cavalier medic pasture for the lambs to go onto at weaning. It is hoped this will maximise their growth rate during the weaning period. Matt sowed the cavalier medic pasture in 2012 and with good management it continues to provide 100% ground cover, with very few weeds. Matt allows the cavalier to set seed opportunistically or will harvest it to spread in other paddocks. He also follows it in summer, predominantly as a method of paddy melon control, but it also helps with the hard seededness. This year the medic germinated in April, and was grazed by the twin lamb mob in early June. To prevent the risk of bloat, Matt planned to only allow them short periods within the pasture, however he found that by providing grain and hay access in the neighbouring paddock, they self-regulated themselves, spending only a few hours when the gate was first opened and slowly building up the time they spend grazing the medic. The pasture was grazed to 1 ton Dry Matter/Ha before it was shut up to be saved for weaning in August.

These pastures will continue to be monitored through the season to measure the pasture growth rate and utilisation and lamb growth rate.



Matt's Cavalier Medic, planted in 2012, still providing great opportunities for weaning lambs.



Matt made the most of early soil moisture with this Moby barley crop planted in April.

Farmer Johns Phosphate Trial

Anthony Ellis, Agronomist- Farmer Johns



With challenging weather patterns and an increasing interest in the fate of phosphate applied to pasture, we at Farmer Johns wanted to look in to different ways of

supplying phosphate that would provide the pasture crop with the right level of nutrition in a controlled and sustainable way, that doesn't leach or get locked up. One of the products that appeared to tick the boxes for us was Reactive Phosphate Rock (RPR). RPR is a slow release form of phosphate rock that meets minimum standards for solubility and plant availability. This makes it a very good base product to provide a range of nutrients alongside the phosphate. BioAg Pty Ltd have been supplying RPR products into Australia for a number of years with great success. As such, we have set up a fully replicated trial in conjunction with BioAg to measure the yield, feed value and economic value of using a variety of RPR based products vs a more conventional treatment such as Single Super Phosphate. Being as RPR is a slow release product it can be applied in alternate years so the trial will be running for a minimum of 2 years.

PRODUCTS:	Active Ingredients	Formulation
Single Super Phosphate	Phosphate, Sulphur, Calcium	8, 11, 19
Superb	Phosphate, Sulphur, Calcium	8, 5, 27.
BioAg S10	Phosphate, Sulphur, Calcium	11, 10, 31
B.Ag S10/Trace E'mts//Lime	Phosphate Sulphur, Calcium + Zn, Cu, Mo, Boron + CaO	11, 10, 31 + TE's

The project is being held near Eden Valley and is aimed at growers in the Adelaide Hills who are in higher rainfall and slightly more acidic country. We hope to produce some really worthwhile data with regard to phosphate use efficiency and feed quality in the region. Its early days yet so watch this space!

More information please contact Anthony@farmerjohns.com.au



From the Inbox...

- Limestone Coast Red Meat Cluster Webinar- Enhanced Abattoir

Surveillance and Rib Fractures in Lambs. THIS WEDNESDAY 5 July 17.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

- New tool which helps with decision making-[AskBill](#)- more info contact [Brett Nietschke](#)
- Check out SA MDB NRM's new [Land and Farming webpage](#) with plenty of great tools and information.
- Take part in the [Lambing Density Survey](#) to help support the AWI, MLA Lambing Density Project
- Mount Lofty Ranges World Heritage Bid Survey- [Available Here](#)
- Save the Date- [SA Community Landcare Conference](#)- Clare Sept 11-13

Your BIGG Contacts

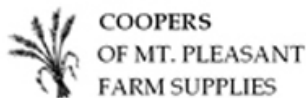
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