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# The BIGG Bulletin

April 2021

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## Soil Health and Grazing Workshop

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BIGG are excited to welcome Dr Christine Jones to the Barossa for a Soil Health and Grazing Workshop!

**1st June 2021**  
**Stockwell, followed by two local on farm visits**  
**9.00am- 4pm**

Dr Christine Jones is an internationally renowned and highly respected groundcover and soils ecologist. She has a wealth of experience working with innovative landholders to implement regenerative land management practices that enhance biodiversity, increase biological activity, sequester carbon, activate soil nutrient cycles, restore water balance, improve productivity and create new topsoil. Christine has organised and participated in workshops, field days, seminars and conferences throughout Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Western, Northern and Central Europe, Central America, USA and Canada and has a strong publication and presentation record.

This soil health day will include an indoor presentation with Christine Jones, focusing on how we can stimulate and improve our soil health using grazing, unlocking P within the soil, alternative animal health products and improving organic matter in lower rainfall environments.

The afternoon will visit two local grazing properties, one who has been implementing polycultures for nearly 10 years, and one who is just starting out on their journey.

For further information please contact Georgie Keynes,  
[Georgie.keynes@biggroup.org.au](mailto:Georgie.keynes@biggroup.org.au)

**[Click to Book your Ticket!!](#)**

## Two years of feed in three months



Earlier in the month (April 8) BIGG held an Autumn Pasture Walk, with attendees visiting out of season forage crops and also a centre pivot.

First stop of the pasture walk was John Tuesners at Keyneton, where last September John sowed a paddock of forage brassica (Leafmore). Between December-March, approximately 4.0t dry matter/ha was grown, which provided three separate grazings for his ewes and lambs. Even given the cost to establish the brassica, this level of production compares very favourably to feeding out a similar quality feed source such as vetch hay.

Next stop was Rocland Estate at Nuriootpa where wastewater from the winery is being managed with a centre pivot. Winery manager, Ian Craig gave an overview of the pivot and associated water management, which covers a 3.5ha area. In late March, Keyneton farmer, Michael Sagenschnitter sowed a winter wheat crop (DS Bennett), which later in the year he plans to cut for silage and then hay. This is the third year a crop has been sown under the pivot and is a smart way of managing wastewater whilst value adding to local agriculture.

Final stop of the pasture walk was Tracy Bonython's of Bon Chevon at Ebenezer where last November a paddock of forage brassica (Greenland) and millet (Shirohie) was sown. The pasture mix has 'hung in there' but unfortunately hasn't reached its potential given the later than planned sowing date and dry summer.

local grazing systems, including their production potential (two years of feed in three months!) and soil and animal health benefits.

Thanks to BIGG sponsors/local agronomists; Craig John, Coopers Farm Supplies and Peter Wendt, Farmer Johns for their support and valued input on the day. In addition, BIGG sponsors, Barenbrug and AGF Seeds attended the pasture walk. AGF Seeds also donated a bag of tillage radish as a 'lucky door prize', which was won by BIGG chair, Ian Koch!

*This pasture walk was supported by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the landscape levies*

## Containment Ewe Project Update



The BIGG/ MLA ewe containment producer demonstration sites is continuing for the second season. 10 sites have locked up ewes with varying numbers as a lot of producers came into summer with more ground cover than previous years.

Unfortunately the lack of rainfall so far in 2021 has meant ewes are being let out onto full supplementary feed in most cases leading up to lambing. In most sites, containment has gone well this year – however there has been some ewes with lower than required condition scores due to coming in lighter than required, possible worm burdens and competition within pens. Results will be available for sites once

### Condition Scoring Project

In addition to the producer demonstration sites, this year an honours student; Alex Turner, from Adelaide University, is undertaking a condition scoring project. This project is linked with the Pregnancy Scanning project which is being run by Forbes Brian.

Alex is looking closely at a group of 150 twin bearing merino ewes contained at Keyneton Station to assess individual condition scores over the containment period. This will be linked to individual lambing and weaning results, through DNA parentage, Shepherd collars and pedigree matchmaker and we will be also assessing the effectiveness of these methods of getting accurate parentage. We will also be recording ewe and lamb deaths through autopsy to determine cause of death.

Keep an eye out for an lamb autopsy workshop which will occur in June, depending on how the season is looking!

## BIGG's New Team Member!



BIGG are excited to welcome Jane Evans as a new facilitator/ community liaison officer to the BIGG team!

Janie works on a working sheep and cattle property near Eden Valley, with her husband Michael and two daughters Jessica and Rosie. She has a background in health and law. Since 2018, she has been actively involved with ascertaining the growing need for increased access to water security for our region. Janie also sits on the Barossa Water Allocation Plan Advisory Group.

From 2018, until present, Janie has voluntarily been attending industry leaders

Valley region, and increased water security access for the Barossa Valley region. These discussions have been led by government, and industry experts such as BGWA and PIRSA, with Janie's level of involvement being as a Barossa community water representative/ liaison.

In 2019, Janie initiated and co-facilitated the Barossa Community Water Forum, with over 150 community attendees, with industry experts, local, state and federal government. In 2020, she facilitated a round table discussion with Mr Tony Pasin MP Member for Barker and The Hon. Keith Pitt MP Minister for Water Resources and Northern Australia, with Barossa industry experts and local government.

Janie will be working with the community on water projects, with an aim for BIGG to provide a communication and collaboration network for local graziers, vigneron and wineries. We look forward to bringing more information and events to you in the coming months.

## Smart Farms- Water Infrastructure Grant



BIGG have secured funding through the Smart Farms National Landcare Grant Scheme to deliver a project for the Barossa on improving on-farm water security.

This grant run over two years, starting in June 2021, and will support a range of

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and technical feasibility of different options for improving on-farm water security.

We will be working closely with PIRSA's Brian Hughes to help deliver this project for the community!

## From the Inbox

- Sheep Connect- Sheep Health, Vaccinations, Pneumonia and Arthritis- Wednesday May 12 7.30pm [Webinar](#)
- Visit the new AgEx Alliance website for information on what's happening with other grower groups across the region! [Ag Ex](#)
- Livestock SA will be hosting an informal meeting on Sunday 6 June at Keyneton Station 1057 Stott Highway, Keyneton at 4pm. Bring a chair and join a number of current Board members for a chat regarding current issues which will conclude with a light supper. Book at Livestock SA Admin [admin@livestocksa.org.au](mailto:admin@livestocksa.org.au)
- BIGG and the Angaston Ag Bureau still have plenty of wood available \$300 (ex GST) delivered to your door! Please contact Bigg's [Chris George](#) to pop in your order!

## Your BIGG Contacts

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