Postgraduate conference brings students together

In mid August, Charles Sturt University’s Wagga Wagga Campus was host to the CRC’s 2010 Postgraduate Professional Development Conference. More than 30 students from around Australia converged on Charles Sturt University’s scenic National Wine and Grape Industry Centre at Wagga Wagga over two days from 17 to 19 August to talk about their research, and become more familiar with the CRC and each other.

On the first day, the students took to the lectern and gave presentations on the specifics of their research projects to an audience and a panel made up of FFI CRC board members academic and industry-based researchers and other people closely aligned to the CRC. After each presentation, panel members provided valuable feedback to the presenters.

Along with a forum on potential employment and further research opportunities, the conference provided students with a better understanding of CRC communications and the CRC weed risk policy, which included presentations by Communication Manager, Greg Lawrence, and weed risk scientist, Christine Munday (WA Department of Environment and Conservation). Guest presentations by Prof. Tony Peacock (Invasive Animals CRC CEO) and Prof. Andy Pitman (Co-director of the University of New South Wales’ Climate Change Research Centre) also gave students insights into the public perception risks associated with research and the expected impacts of climate change on south eastern Australia, respectively.

CRC Agribusiness Director and Leader of Program 5: Agribusiness and Education, Dr Scott Glyde, said students have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on how the review panels were conducted, including the detailed responses they received, and for how much they appreciated the opportunity to mix with industry and academics alike at the Conference.

Special thanks to Dr John Harper (CRC Education Manager) and Scott for their outstanding efforts in organising this well received event.
“These two day courses had the right narrative. They started with a half-day talk with a researcher and local farmer followed by an afternoon in the field – which helped participants gain a better feel for the principles mentioned earlier,” Ed said.

The next day, there was a half-day field exercise where each participant put together their own saltland pasture plan as part of a competition. Once the entries were in, a deconstruction session took place where the organisers and presenters discussed and evaluated each plan.”

Course participants received a complimentary ‘salt kit’ to help them with practical on-farm decision making. The kit included a salinity and pH meter, a SALTdeck species identification guide, economics calculation resources and other useful items.

Saltland Solutions was presented by the Saltland Pastures Association together with the WA Department of Agriculture and Food and FFI CRC, with funding from the Commonwealth Government’s Caring for Our Country Program.

For more information about Saltland Solutions courses tailored to your region, contact Nick Edwards (Saltland Knowledge Exchange Project Leader): Tel: (08) 8762 9184, Mob: 0427 012 810.

Native grass management will be the focus of an EverGraze Field Day at its Chiltern Proof Site, Victoria, on 2 September.

The day will feature presentations from researchers active at two EverGraze Proof Sites (Chiltern, Ms Meredith Mitchell and Dr Lysandra Slocome; Holbrook, Dr Jim Virgona; and Orange, Dr Warwick Badgery). During these presentations, the researchers will talk about various aspects of their research including managing native pastures for a ewe-lamb production system through fertiliser application, grazing management and integration with improved pastures.

The day will also feature an interactive session by FFI CRC Victorian Adoption Manager, Kate Sargeant, on the economics of using phosphorus fertiliser on native pastures as well as a series of hands-on workshops. These workshops will have a closer look at EverGraze tools for planning rotational grazing systems, show how to visually determine native pasture herbage mass and provide an update on the latest research into the native grass, Microlaena.

For more information or to RSVP, email Lysandra Slocome. To find out more about other EverGraze Open Days that are happening throughout September and October, go here.

EverGraze® is a Future Farm Industries CRC, Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation research and delivery partnership.

The WERO, NEWROC, SEAVROC NRM, Caring For Our Country Wind Erosion Project, which is using perennial-based farming systems to combat wind erosion, will be releasing application forms in September for farmers and other landowners wanting seedlings and seed for the 2011 planting season.

On offer are Oil Mallee, Swamp Sheoak, Saltbush, and Rhagodia seedlings and perennial pasture seed. If you would like to participate and are located within the North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (NEWROC), Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils (WEROC) or South East Avon Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (SEAVROC) of the Western Australian Wheatbelt, ring your local Shire Office and ask to speak to your local Natural Resource Management or Environmental Officer to get involved.

FFI CRC is currently conducting collaborative trials on the use of shrubs and woody perennials in the low and medium rainfall sites in the Central Wheatbelt of WA as part of the project.

For more information, contact Emma Wilson on (08) 9645 0236 or qshireclc@westnet.com.au, or visit the Project’s Facebook page.
For the next five years, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) will provide $5.5 million to fund the AHRI Centre located at the UWA Faculty for Natural and Agricultural Science.

AHRI will work closely with the WA Department of Agriculture and Food, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (Queensland), the University of Melbourne and the University of Adelaide to better understand the impact of herbicide resistance and coordinate a national approach to resistance management across Australia.

For more information about AHRI, visit: www.ahri.uwa.edu.au

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**Coming Events...**

EverGraze Chiltern Proof Site Field Day  
2 September, Chiltern, Vic  
Further information: Lysandra Slocombe

**NFF National Congress**  
5-7 September, Melbourne, Vic  
Further information: www.congress.nff.org.au

**Focus 50 Workshop National**  
7 - 8 September, Perth, WA  
Further information: barbara.williamson@futurefarmcrc.com.au

EverGraze Hamilton Proof Site Open Day  
8 September, Hamilton, Vic  
Further information: Lisa McIntyre

**Agriculture Outlook 2010**  
13 - 15 September, Sydney, NSW  
Further information: www.terrapinn.com

**Farming Ahead Conference**  
22-23 September, Sydney, NSW  
Further information: debbie.boxall@kondinin.com.au

EverGraze Ararat Proof Site Open Day  
5 October, Ararat, Vic  
Further information: Rob Shea

**Sheep CRC Conference**  
20-21 October, Adelaide, SA  
Further information: www.sheepcrc.org.au

**Forestry and Forest Science Conference**  
30 September - 2 October, Melbourne, Vic  

**New Rural Industries Australia: From Passion to Profit Conference**  
28-30 November, Gold Coast, Qld  
Further information: www.nria.asnevents.com.au

**ESA Biodiversity Conference**  
6-10 December, Canberra, ACT  
Further information: www.esa2010.org.au

**GREENHOUSE 2011: The Science of Climate Change**  
4-8 April 2011, Cairns, Qld  
Further information: www.greenhouse2011.com

**2011 Western Australian Natural Resources Management Conference**  
23-25 August 2011, Perth, WA  
Further information: www.isde7.net

**5th World Congress of Conservation Agriculture**  
26-29 September 2011, Brisbane, Qld  
Further information: www.wcca2011.org

**8th International Workshop on Sulfur Metabolism in Higher Plants**  
22-27 November 2011, Creswick, Vic  
Further information: www.sulphyton.org

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