



Southern Precision
Agriculture Association

Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Southern Precision Agriculture Association

Autumn 2007

New EO for SPAA

In late March, Kirstie Murphy was appointed as SPAA's new Executive Officer. Kirstie comes to SPAA with extensive experience in agricultural extension, sourcing and managing project funding and the facilitation of grower groups.

For the past four years Kirstie has been a self-employed consultant working across agricultural industries in SA. Kirstie is based at Strathalbyn. Her main contracts include: managing regional components of national extension programs such as InCalf and Dairy Moving Forward for Dairy Australia; event management and delivering extension programs for Dairy SA; and facilitating grower groups in the SheepPlus program funded by Australian Wool Innovation.

Among the positions Kirstie holds she has developed plenty of practice in writing and assessing project submissions, organising grower meetings and running field days and technical events. Kirstie is a current board member of the FarmBis State Planning Group and has a detailed understanding of training and extension programs available to agriculture.

Having grown up on a family farm in the Adelaide Hills, Kirstie has always had an active interest in agriculture. She attended the University of Adelaide, Roseworthy campus obtaining a Bachelor of Agriculture and has a Diploma in Business Management from the University of SA.



Kirstie Murphy, SPAA's new Executive Officer pictured with President Malcolm Sargent (c) and Treasurer Peter Cousins when attending the Ag Excellence Alliance Forum in late March.

Following University, Kirstie worked as an extension officer for the Departments of Agriculture in South Australia and Tasmania.

Kirstie looks forward to helping grow and develop SPAA as an association and to working with an organisation focused on the practical implementation of the latest agricultural technology.

Having already caught-up with some SPAA members at the recent Precision Ag Group meetings, Kirstie now looks forward to meeting many more SPAA members at the SPAA Expo and AGM to be held in Cleve on 14th August 2007.

The Executive Officers position is part time (0.5 FTE). Kirstie Murphy, SPAA Executive Officer P 08 8536 3958 E info@spaa.com.au

Diary dates to remember

2007

5th July	Birchip Cropping Group Expo - see you at the SPAA stand
16th-17th July	5th Controlled Traffic Farming and Precision Agriculture Conference, Perth, www.actfa.net/conferences/ctf2007/
28th July - 2nd August	13th Wine Industry Technical Conference www.awitc.com.au
14th August	SPAA PA Expo and AGM, Cleve
10th-13th September	Symposium pre-tour starting in Auckland, NZ (see page 2)
13th September	Fertiliser Application Technology, Palmerston North, NZ
14th September	11th Annual Symposium on Precision Agriculture Research and Application in Australasia, Palmerston North, New Zealand
25-27th September	Yorke Peninsula Field Days - visit us at the SPAA stand

2008

5-8th February	Global workshop on high resolution digital soil sensing and mapping, Sydney. www.digitalsoilmapping.org
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President's Report



I am pleased to report that more of the committee's work has come to fruition over the past few months. Having read the front page you will see we have recruited a new Executive Officer, Kirstie Murphy. Having been without an EO for nearly 12 months several committee members had taken on parts of the EO role and I am sure they will be more than happy to hand these back to Kirstie! Many thanks to the committee for their extra input over the past 12 months and welcome to Kirstie.

Thanks to all who completed the PA training needs survey. The need for greater skills in handling yield map data, especially data integration was clearly identified as a priority. This and other information from the survey will be taken into account when working with the PA Groups funded by the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry via the National Landcare Program (NLP) and the development of training resources, funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

You will see from the report on page 3 that seven PA Groups have been initiated across SA and one in Victoria. If you would like to become involved in one of these please contact Allan or your local

coordinator. Details of the trials being conducted by members of the PA groups will be reported in future newsletters.

I am delighted to announce that SPAA has received approval from South Australian Grains Industry Trust (SAGIT) for three years of funding. This will be used to establish three of the PA Groups and to support the SA groups after the NLP funds finish in 2008. These funds will also support our annual regional PA Expo.

Plans for the 11th Annual Symposium on Precision Agriculture Research and Application in Australasia are starting to firm up. It is proposed that a pre tour is held from Monday 10th to Thursday 13th September. This would include attending the workshop on Fertiliser Application Technology, which is a separate workshop prior to the conference. It is proposed that the tour starts in Auckland and travels south taking in some on-farm, technical and tourist visits before arriving in Palmerston North. Visits

would cover grain and grape industries. As soon as we have more details we will post them on the web, or contact Kirstie.

We have decided to take the annual SPAA Expo and AGM to Eyre Peninsula this year. Please put the date Tuesday 14th August in your diary. More details will be released in the July newsletter and will be posted on our website. The EXPO is always a great opportunity to see some of the latest equipment in action and to talk to specialists from across the industry.

For more information

Malcolm Sargent

SPAA President

P 08 8636 2565

E president@spaa.com.au


Industry News



It is not only SPAA that is working on training for PA users. John Deere has a comprehensive Ag Management Solutions (AMS) training program for dealers and personnel.

Chad Makin is one of 19 dealer employees who are AMS Consultants and specialise in high technology equipment, attending John Deere Masters training in Texas.

Leading the way in GPS.

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- 2007** — The AgGPS® EZ-Guide 500
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 - 2005** — T2™ Terrain Compensation technology
 - 2005** — AgGPS® Autosense
 - 2005** — AgGPS® Nav II Controller
 - 2005** — The AgGPS® FieldManager™ display
 - 2004** — Trimble AgGPS® EZ-Steer™
 - 2004** — The AgGPS® EZ-Boom™ 2010 automated application control system
 - 2004** — AgGPS® 252 multi-function receiver
 - 2003** — AgGPS® 170 Field Computer
 - 2003** — AgGPS® EZ-Guide® Plus
 - 2003** — Trimble AgGPS® Autopilot
 - 2002** — AgGPS® Autopilot DGPS

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PA Groups up and running

Eight precision agriculture groups have been set-up across south eastern Australia to progress the use of yield maps. Eighty five growers are involved with the project, so far. Many growers have several years of yield maps, while others have maps for up to 10 years. In addition to growers, several agronomists and PA specialists are involved. All participants see the groups as an opportunity to capitalise on the use of PA technology, improve their skills and to share experiences and knowledge.

“The aim of these groups is to improve the farm economic and environmental returns using yield maps and other data layers,” explained Allan Mayfield who is coordinating the project.

“ This can be by the more appropriate use of nutrients or other inputs across paddocks (variable rate) or simply by learning more about increasing crop production using on-farm trials.”

At group meetings growers learn from each other as well as from specialists who have the skills to process maps or design and analyse trials. Group members will also hear from growers from other regions on how precision agriculture is improving their bottom line.

There is an opportunity to gain assistance with the processing of historic data. This is being done by Sam Trengove, Michael Wells and others in SA and Cherie Reilly and Ben Jones at Birchip, Victoria.

Many growers in these groups will do on-farm trials that will be assessed using yield mapping. Examples of trials include:

- increasing fertiliser rates (vs a standard rate) in more responsive areas, such as sand hills.
- using phosphorus fertiliser according to last year's yield pattern across the paddock.



Ashley Wakefield shares some of his yield mapping experience with members of the Yorke Peninsula PA Group and with Allan Mayfield.

- comparing crop production where chicken manure was spread compared with normal fertiliser.
- increasing sowing rates in non-wetting sands or in thicker weed patches compared with normal sowing rates.

Growers will meet again in July to discuss how trials are progressing and to learn how to clean-up yield data, to combine yield data from several years into a single map and to add other data layers.

If you wish to be involved, in a group contact your regional coordinator or Allan Mayfield.

This program is being funded by the Australian Government NLP program and SAGIT.

The broad regions of these groups and contact details of the coordinators are:

Project Coordinator

Allan Mayfield
P 08 8842-3230,
E mayfield@chariot.net.au

Lower Eyre Peninsula

Randall Wilksch, Yeelanna
P 08 8676 5050, M 0427 865 051,
E faithfield@bigpond.com

Eastern Eyre Peninsula

Graeme Baldock, Buckleboo
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E baldockgj@bigpond.com.au

Northern

Brian Tiller, Warnertown
P 08 8634 3053, M 0408 810 068,
E btiller@bigpond.com

Central

Mark Branson, Stockport
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E marknola@bigpond.com.au

Yorke Peninsula

Ashley Wakefield, Urania
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Upper South East

Craig Bell, PIRSA, Murray Bridge
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E Bell.Craig@saugov.sa.gov.au

Murray Mallee

Peter Treloar, PIRSA, Loxton
P 08 8595 9147, M 0427 427 238,
E Treloar.Peter@saugov.sa.gov.au

Victorian Wimmera and Mallee

Cherie Reilly, BCG, Birchip
P 03 5492 2787, M 0427 809 668,
E cherie@bcg.org.au

Research and Industry News . . .

Reference station density questioned

The Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information (CRCSI) is working on a range of research projects that may benefit agricultural users of PA technology. One project is to determine whether a greater 'reference station density' will improve accuracy and reliability. This project is being undertaken by OmniSTAR.

This study aims to demonstrate that two to five centimetre accuracy, rather than the current 10cm accuracy, is achievable as a result of a higher density network(s) of reference stations.

Further information on the CRCSI is at www.crcsi.com.au

Weedseeker in SA

Rotech spraying has introduced the first broadacre WeedSeeker® to South Australia as part of its spray contracting business.

For more information
E sales@southernprecision.com.au

Sugar looks at PA

CSIRO's and SPAA committee member Rob Bramley is working on a project funded by the Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) to identify the opportunities, advantages, limitations, risks and costs of the range of technologies that would be applicable to implementation of PA in sugarcane farming. At the same time he is flying the SPAA flag further north.

New tools for Pastures from Space

New variable rainfall and feed-on-offer tools have been added to the remote pasture monitoring system Pastures from Space.

For more information
<http://pfs.landgate.wa.gov.au> or
www.pasturesfromspace.csiro

New software features

RINEX's new software has several new features include guidance which allows an operator to follow the same path previously completed;

zone management for spraying; and a real time multi-system mapping and guidance that operates with up to four vehicles working in the same paddock.

For more information
www.rinex.com.au

Advances in implement steering

AgGuide has developed an 'open architecture' policy allowing RigGuide 2cm GPS implement steering to be fitted to any make of the RTK system and used independently of tractor steering.

For more information
www.agguide.com.au

Remote diagnostics

Case IH is working on remote diagnostics to allow systems to be serviced over the wireless internet.

Remote diagnostic technology will eventually allow for PA components to be serviced via wireless technology. This would mean immediate and fast diagnosis of issues and easy access to system upgrades.

SPAA membership offers you the opportunity to contribute to the development and adoption of PA technology in Australia.

For only \$82.50 per annum members receive four newsletters and two editions of Precision Ag News, the unique publication on precision agriculture. In addition, SPAA organises expos, conferences, and field days, provides a forum for the exchange of knowledge and innovation between producers, researchers and advisers in the PA industry, conducts on-farm research and PA training activities. More information about SPAA and membership can be found on our website www.spaa.com.au

If you or a friend would like to become a member of SPAA please complete this form and send by fax to 08 8536 3734, by e-mail info@spaa.com.au, or by post to PO Box 83, Strathalbyn, SA 5255.

Name _____

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Southern Precision Agriculture Association

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