



Precision Agriculture Association

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

May 2010

Prepared by:  **Bessen Consulting Services**

ABOUT SPAA

An Association focussed on optimising agricultural management

The Precision Agriculture Association (SPAA) promotes the development and adoption of precision agriculture technologies as means of enhancing the profitability and sustainability of crop production systems.

Current members of the Association include people involved in the production of grains, wine grapes and horticultural crops, such as growers, consultants and researchers. The membership reflects the Association's view that the management of all crop production systems is subject to of the inherent variability of the land.

Precision agriculture provides the means for measuring the variability observed in crop yield and quality parameters. Precision agriculture tools also provide the means for site specific crop management and when combined with traditional agronomy tools, can lead to improved crop yields, quality and efficiency of crop production. Precision agriculture will be an important innovation on Australian farms in the future, with potential for quantum increases in production efficiency.

In the grains industry, Australia has experienced a rapid rate of adoption of guidance and autosteer systems for machinery; however the adoption of variable rate technology has been much slower. Similar trends are observed in other parts of the world, including the USA and Europe. Improving technology and continued research will improve the adoption of variable rate technology both in Australia and overseas.

The use of precision agriculture technologies within the grape and wine industry is commonly referred to as precision viticulture. Following the introduction of precision viticulture tools such as global positioning systems, grape yield monitors, airborne remote sensing, and soil sensing instrumentation to the industry in the late 1990's and associated research during the intervening years, grapegrowers and winemakers are now recognising the magnitude of within-vineyard differences and the causes of that variation.

The Association also sees opportunities for precision agriculture technologies within the sugar industry in the near future.

SPAA publishes a regular newsletter for its members, holds field days and seminars, and is active in the promotion and conduct of demonstration and experimentation on members' properties.

SPAA 2010 COMMITTEE

SPAA Committee Executive

Mark Branson President markb@spaa.com.au	Livestock and Grain Grower	Stockport South Australia
Ed Cay Treasurer edcay@spaa.com.au	Technician gps-Ag	Kangaroo Flat Victoria
Randall Wilksch Vice President randallwilksch@spaa.com.au	Grain Grower	Yeelanna South Australia

SPAA Committee Members

Sam Trengove	Agricultural Consultant	Clare South Australia
Leighton Wilksch	Product Development Agronomist Landmark; Manager Agbyte	Paskeville South Australia
Ashley Wakefield	Grain Grower	Urania South Australia
John Heap	Research Scientist SARDI	Adelaide South Australia
Grant Pontifex	Grain Grower	Paskeville South Australia
Hans Loder	Viticulturist Wingara Wine Group	Coonawarra South Australia
Neale Postlethwaite	Grain Grower	St Arnaud Victoria
Guiseppe Cuteri	Grain Grower	Leeton New South Wales

Executive Officer

Nicole Dimos
Email: nicole@spaa.com.au

OUR VISION

SPAA will become the leading advocate for precision agriculture in Australia.

SPAA will be a broad based organisation that covers a range of primary industries. It will act as an umbrella group, supporting precision agriculture initiatives within industries that have the funding and capabilities to explore and adopt new technologies. The grains industry will be the springboard for adoption and expansion, with viticulture, horticulture and sugar continuing as areas for further expansion.

The organisation will have an Australia-wide focus, achieved by partnering with other organisations and becoming part of national and industry alliances. SPAA's activities will include a triple bottom line emphasis on sustainability. It will provide an independent source of advice on new concepts and equipment, recommend equipment manufacturers for greater compatibility between systems and components and encourage adoption in innovative areas such as variable rate technologies.

Training will be organised for researchers, growers and advisors, and information will be shared through communication channels, field days, demonstrations and the internet.

OUR MISSION

SPAA will be a facilitator for increased research, extension and adoption of precision agriculture.

OUR VALUES

SPAA is committed to the following values:

- independence;
- credibility;
- member focus;
- collaboration;
- financial responsibility.

OUR KEY GOALS

The key goals for the organisation are to:

- Increase grower adoption of precision agriculture across Australia;
- Be a growing information source on precision agriculture in Australia;
- Maintain and grow a stable and professional organisation.

This Strategic Directions document will apply for the period 2010 to 2013.

OUR STRATEGIES

The strategies adopted are:

Goal One: Increase grower adoption of precision agriculture across Australia.

Strategy 1: Provide relevant extension activities to growers.

Strategy 2: Increase the collaboration and skills of the PA support industry.

Goal Two: **Be a growing information source on precision agriculture in Australia.**

Strategy 1: Maintain an up-to-date Website, with links to and from other appropriate sites.

Strategy 2: Maintain an Editorial Panel to ensure the quality and accuracy of all content.

Strategy 3: Form partnerships with research and new technology providers to act as an information delivery vehicle.

Strategy 4: Continue regular communication to members and provide communication to rural media through magazine and newsletters.

Strategy 5: Establish and maintain an expertise register.

Strategy 6: Establish and implement a process for reviewing the member satisfaction of SPAA newsletters, magazines and Website.

Strategy 7: Regularly measure the uptake of PA information.

Goal Three: **Maintain and grow a professional organisation.**

Strategy 1: Maintain an effective planning framework.

Strategy 2: Enhance financial viability.

Strategy 3: Implement corporate governance processes.

Strategy 4: Build organisational capacity.

OUR ACTION PLAN

Goal	Strategy	Action	Outcomes
1: Increase grower adoption of precision agriculture across Australia. Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double membership to 400 by 2012. • Retain 60% of growers in grower groups from start to finish. • Increase new attendance at grower groups by 25% by 2012. • 30% transition from no spatial information to some (yield, biomass, soil). • 30% transition from some spatial data to variable rate application. 	1: Provide relevant extension activities to growers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what viticulture growers want from SPAA (research, extension and information). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 30 September 2010, a short, written review of viticulture grower expectations of SPAA presented to the Committee. • Survey at WineTech 2010 and survey existing viticulture members with their renewal forms
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run relevant training courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete at least one course per year with each grower group; location depends on demand.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and expand regional discussion groups for the grain industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the current sixteen grower groups with three meetings per year for Year 2 and beyond; • Feasibility study established for five new groups.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide input to regional technology groups in the viticulture industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a pilot viticultural group in 2010.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run at least two major forums per year for the promotion and application of new technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPAA Annual Conference rotating through regions; • Grower Group Forum in Feb/March each year, rotating through regions. • Focus on demonstrations incorporated into every grower group schedule.

Goal	Strategy	Action	Outcomes
	2: Increase the collaboration and skills of the PA support industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted training, extension courses and follow- up support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One course per year and phone call to follow up.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate visiting PA experts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One per year.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate collaboration opportunities for mutual benefit with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grower groups, commercial industry, research providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility review of opportunities by September 2010, identifying priorities for each target group.
2. Be a growing information source on precision agriculture in Australia. <i>Target:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive growth in all information outlets. 	1: Maintain an up-to-date Website, with links to and from other appropriate sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain content and appropriate Web links, through regular review and updating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief report to Committee meetings (Executive Officer).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a database of members' equipment experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database established by October 2010.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Web skills and provide training if required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One source of appropriate skills available at all times (Executive Officer).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post e-versions of SPAA publications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One issue in arrears always available (Executive Officer and Publishing Coordinator).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee review of Website effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reports to Committee.

Goal	Strategy	Action	Outcomes
	2: Maintain an Editorial Panel to ensure the quality and accuracy of all content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Editorial Panel and a Panel Chairperson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functioning and empowered Panel deciding on content (Communications sub-committee; quarterly); PAN publication material refereed prior to publication or release to third parties (Editorial Panel). News releases, eNews approved by Communications subcommittee.
	3: Form partnerships with research and new technology providers to act as an information delivery vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify partners as regular contributors of material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least three regular providers of articles committed to SPAA publications (Executive Officer, Editorial Panel, Publishing Coordinator).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal or documented confirmation (Executive Officer).
	4: Continue regular communication to members and provide communication to rural media through magazine and newsletters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the communication contract as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four e-News newsletters and three magazines per year, delivered on time (Committee).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a list of appropriate rural media for distribution of current newsletter and magazine for their use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased requests for stories and information; Increase in SPAA stories published.
	5: Establish and maintain an expertise register.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all Committee members have completed the matrix. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee member profile on file (Executive Officer)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any new Committee members or targeted practitioners to complete within three months of contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current expertise register maintained.

Goal	Strategy	Action	Outcomes
	6: Establish and implement a process for reviewing the member satisfaction of SPAA newsletters, magazines and Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once every 2 years, implement a survey process to follow newsletter release; ie: random phonecall from the Committee to members (10 – 20). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief report to each Committee meeting (Executive Officer).
	7: Regularly measure the uptake of PA information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website hits, Expo / Conference attendance, e-News subscription, Membership, Grower group attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reports to Committee.
3: Maintain and grow a professional organisation.	1: Maintain an effective planning framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an annual operating plan that is fully budgeted and communicated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present plan with budget, prior to June 30 each year.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually and quarterly review of outcomes from Operational Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Plan adjusted on a quarterly basis.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three year review of Strategic Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Strategic Plan confirmed before 2013.
	2: Enhance financial viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all Committee members have comprehensive figures on the financial position of SPAA (prepare annual budget, track YTD and present quarterly). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee members with a complete understanding of the financial position of SPAA.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase corporate sponsorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsorship contributing 30% overall revenue.

Goal	Strategy	Action	Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase membership to 400 by end of 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership to 400 by the end of 2012.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually maintain at least 60% of current members.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain expenditure of budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure maintained within 10% of budget.
	3: Implement corporate governance processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to and annually review policies and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant and appropriate policies.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All committee members actively participating in sub-committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective subcommittees.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing review of required positions and performance review of individuals in the role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective roles and performance assessments Base analysis of needs.
	4: Build organisational capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend options to build the capacity of the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costed options for Committee by September 2010 (annually).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually identify the capacity needs of the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity needs tabled prior to AGM.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain skills audit of Committee members, prior to AGM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills audit completed, prior to AGM.