



No recession in PA

Mark Branson, SPAA President

The SPAA PA Groups project is about to expand across the southern states. More details will be available on the SPAA website. Photo: SPAA

Easter is nearly upon us and it seems like the Christmas decorations have only just been put away. Since the last publication, the new SPAA management committee has been working with Executive Officer Kirstie Murphy to develop new project submissions and to deliver the Precision Ag and Vit Expo. At the same time committee members have completed harvest or vintage and gathered another layer of yield and for some quality data. Gathering and using quality data is a theme common to the first section of this issue of Precision Ag News.

EXPO

There was a real buzz at the SPAA and MacKillop Farm Management Group Precision Ag and Vit Expo in February. This was the first time SPAA had organised an event in the south east of South Australia. Over 150 participants attended from a range of industry sectors and about 20 per cent of the audience was from the grape industry. Considering the event coincided with vintage this turnout is an indication of how keen the grape industry is to embrace PA.

The range of exhibitors was excellent and we were pleased to welcome some new companies and look forward to their involvement with future SPAA Expos. The SE

Natural Resource Management Board was an event sponsor and SPAA looks forward to working with NRM boards to promote PA as an agronomic tool that can also help improve environmental management.

The next SPAA event and the AGM will be held in August 2009. The date, location and topics have yet to be finalised but will be e-mailed to members and posted on the SPAA website.

New projects

The highly successful PA Grower Groups project that SPAA has run with grain growers in SA for the past two years is about to expand. With support from the Grains R&D Corporation and working in collaboration with farming systems groups in SA, Victoria and New South Wales a network of PA groups and support mechanisms for growers wishing to adopt PA will be established. This three year project kicks-off in the new financial year. As more information becomes available it will be circulated to members and posted on the website.

SPAA is currently in discussions with the Grape and Wine R & D Corporation and the Limestone Coast Wine Industry Council regarding the development of similar PA groups for grape growers.

SPAA is also providing support to the MacKillop Farm Management Group which through Caring for our Country has received funds to establish six PA demonstrations sites. At the sites paddock scale demonstrations of currently available PA technology will be established.

Sponsors

Despite the economic squeeze SPAA has continued to attract new sponsors. Case IH has recently become a silver sponsor, and TOPCON and Rabobank bronze sponsors. Sponsorship agreements can be tailored to individual organisations needs and I encourage all organisations involved with PA or interested in the future of Australian farming to join SPAA as it is the only organisation in Australia dedicated to promoting the adoption of PA across all agriculture sectors.

Diary dates

The 13th Precision Agriculture Symposium, Armidale
10, 11 September 2009.

2009 CIGR International Symposium of the Australian Society for Engineering in Agriculture, Brisbane,
13-16 September 2009.

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