

# New funding confirmed

Malcolm Sargent, SPAA President

SPAA is delighted to announce that it has been awarded funding for a Priority National Project to 'Increase the adoption of precision agriculture in South East Australia', from the Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Managed by SPAA and working with the Hart Fieldsite Group, SANTFA, Victorian No-Till Farmers Association and Birchip Cropping Group, the SPAA component of the project will establish and support five, regional precision agriculture (PA) discussion groups and variable rate trials. The objective of the groups is to help growers understand and apply PA data to change input rates using management zones and to assess results using yield maps. The project is a logical progression from the trials conducted over the last four years.

Other parts of the project will relate to paddock demonstrations of integrated PA technology, including combining use of Yield Profit by paddock zone and in-crop sensing to manage nitrogen inputs.

SPAA is also working with the Australian Centre for Precision Agriculture (ACPA) in the development of training resources for producers, agronomists and PA

equipment providers who want to improve their understanding and application of PA. Funded by GRDC this project will produce training modules that can be accessed on-line or delivered in various combinations as a workshop. The development team that consists of Brett Whelan, James Taylor ACPA, Malcolm Sargent and Alan Mayfield on behalf of SPAA and Emma Leonard, AgriKnowHow, met recently to establish the topics and contents of each module.

Sadly our application to GRDC to continue the variable rate and in-crop sensing work was put on hold for 12 months due to drought impacts on the GRDC's budget.

We are still hopefully awaiting a decision by SAGIT on our application for continued funding. This project is especially important to us as it helps support the executive team.

We are embarking on a round of interviews for the Executive Officer position. Three strong candidates will be interviewed on 9th March. We are all looking forward to having an EO in place to manage SPAA's affairs.

Allan Mayfield has done a tremendous job putting together

project applications and writing reports. It has been a critical period for SPAA and we certainly appreciate his work.

I draw your attention to the date of the next Annual Symposium on Precision Agriculture Research and Application in Australasia. This will be held on 14th September in Palmerston North, New Zealand. This is a great opportunity to hear from PA researchers from across the region. The program is still being developed but is exploring the opportunity for pre-or post farm tours. On the previous day a 'Fertiliser Application Technology Workshop' is being held at the same venue. More details will be available in our newsletters and as they are released on the SPAA website ([www.spaa.com.au](http://www.spaa.com.au)).

**11th Annual Symposium on Precision Agriculture Research and Application in Australasia**

**14th September 2007**

**Palmerston North, New Zealand.**

**Anyone interested in proposing a presentation or display should contact Brett Whelan ([b.whelan@usyd.edu.au](mailto:b.whelan@usyd.edu.au)) or Ian Yule ([I.J.Yule@massey.ac.nz](mailto:I.J.Yule@massey.ac.nz))**

*James Taylor, Brett Whelan and Malcolm Sargent recently met together with Allan Mayfield and Emma Leonard to develop training resources for producers, agronomists and PA equipment providers, a project funded by GRDC.*