

"A healthy and productive Murrumbidgee catchment and its communities working together – Yindymarra"

Murrumbidgee Photographic Exhibition at Harden Shire Council

The beauty and diversity of the Murrumbidgee catchment has been captured in the 26 winning images of 'The Bidgee from Behind the Lens' photographic competition that will be displayed at the Harden Shire Council from Monday 19 December, 2011.

The theme of the 2011 competition *Beyond the Drought* attracted creative images reflecting the spectacular landscapes, wildlife and plants of our region reborn after the drought. The images will be on display in Harden and the local community is welcome to visit the exhibition. Local residents may be inspired to enter the 2012 'The Bidgee Behind the Lens' competition and copies of the 2012 Murrumbidgee CMA calendar, displaying the images, will be available at the exhibition.

A display of the 26 top images from 'The Bidgee from Behind the Lens' competition will be showcased in the foyer of Harden

The NSW Landcare awards were held in Parkes at the 2011 NSW Landcare & Catchment Management Forum. Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group is pleased to advise that **Danny Flanery**, was winner of the **2011 Rural Press Primary Producer Award**.

This award was presented to a primary producer for their significant contribution to Landcare, shown through many years of sustained implementation of sound management practices resulting in improved productivity and environmental outcomes. Congratulations Danny, he will now be NSW state entry in the National Awards to be held next year.

Congratulations to **Terry and Antonia Brown** winners Murrumbidgee section of the Conservation Farmer of the Year Award 2011.

Community input needed in review of Native Vegetation regulation The NSW Government is currently reviewing the regulation that underpins the Native Vegetation Act and seeking community input. The survey will be open until 30 March 2012 and your responses will inform the review of the Native Vegetation Regulation. You can also register your interest in the review and receive updates, including notification of consultation documents and announcements.

To register please send an email with your details to: native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au

On the 26th of September 2011 the **5th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture** was held in Brisbane. Over four days a broad range of speakers covered numerous topics relevant to our goals as Landcarers and conservation farmers. Adrian Roles & Sarah Simms received support to attend this conference and will present their observations at the AGM in March, 2012.

"I was glad I was able to go. The conference provided me with a tremendous learning experience. The international flavour of the conference was also very valuable in opening my eyes to the experiences in other countries, and allowing me to see that although there are many differences, there are also many similar challenges that farmers everywhere are facing.

The highlight, was the keynote presentation on the last day by a Liverpool Plains farmer and Nuffield Scholar, Richard Heath. His talk was titled 'Have the good years become the bad years?' and he spoke of how through conservation agriculture techniques he had been effectively able to drought-proof his property, so the dry years were no longer the disaster they used to be, but how the wet years that they once looked forward to were now providing the most problems, in the form of disease, quality downgrades, etc. There was also an interesting presentation on mining vs agriculture, specifically looking at the coal seam gas issue"

BINALONG LANDCARE Subgroup of Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group

LANDCARE MEETING & END OF YEAR GATHERING BINALONG HOTEL

MONDAY 19 DECEMBER, 7.30PM

Members and guests are invited to attend the last meeting of the year to celebrate **our success in gaining funding** to explore the implications for carbon management in our area! The first part of the CFI comes into operation this month so we can look at opportunities that many exist on how to make money out of carbon.

Updates on the Native Grass Pastures Project, HMLG activities, etc will be included.

Please bring a plate of your favourite Christmas goodies and your ideas for carbon management!

Enquiries: George Elliot 6227 4289

Donna Reid 0412 660 057 or 6227 4237

Alternative Fertiliser Trials Update

Binalong Landcare and NSW DPI, Yass, have successfully completed the third year of pasture and soil monitoring on the alternative fertiliser trial sites in the Binalong and Bookham area.

The trial work began in Nov 2008 when baseline soil test measurements were taken. Since then we have measured pasture biomass and soil chemical and biology levels for the last three years following the various fertiliser treatment applications each autumn. The results collected for the first two years indicate that alternative fertilisers can have an impact on soil nutrient status and spring herbage mass. Products like single super, agriash, pig manure, YLAD compost mineral blend and BioAg Blend have already shown some positive increases in pasture growth. We are aware that some products may take a number of years to induce change hence it is important to continue monitoring the trial. Increases in spring herbage mass under some treatments appear to be highly correlated to increases in soil phosphorous and sulphur as these are two of the most limiting nutrients. In spring of this year we also collected a full set of pasture quality data across all treatments at the 3 sites.

Spring 2011 pasture and soil samples are currently being processed by the laboratories. Once all the soil and pasture data is received it will then be statistically analysed by a biometrician. We will not have final results for the public until sometime in autumn 2012. A field day will be held to present the 3 years worth of results sometime in late autumn. We plan to continue the trial for a further 2 years where we will continue to measure spring pasture biomass. Depending on further funding availability we may try and do some more soil testing in 2013.

Fiona Leech, District Agronomist, Yass. 62262199

HMLG Moisture Meter update

Due to unforeseen technical hitches the meters have not been installed this year and it is anticipated they will be operating by sowing in 2012.

Biodiversity Fund applications are now open.

Under the first round of the Australian Government Biodiversity Fund, more than \$30 million will be allocated to activities this financial year to help farmers and other land managers to store carbon, enhance biodiversity and increase resilience across the Australian landscape.

The Biodiversity Fund will facilitate investment in three main areas:

- **Biodiverse plantings:** Funding will help farmers and other land managers expand native habitat on their property through planting mixed vegetation species appropriate to their region. This will help build landscape resilience and connectivity.
- **Protecting and enhancing existing native vegetation:** Funding will support farmers and other land managers to protect, manage and enhance high conservation value native vegetation on their land for its carbon storage and biodiversity benefits.
- **Managing threats to biodiversity:** Funding will support farmers and other land managers to control the threat of invasive pests and weeds.

The Biodiversity Fund, like the other key land sector measures, is intended to be an ongoing part of our clean energy future plan.

The application round is now open and will close 5pm AEDT Tuesday 31 January 2012

For more information about the Biodiversity Fund or to access the program guidelines, visit www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture or call the information line on 1800 008 678

Hydrogeological Landscapes

Jugiong Creek Catchment

As a component of the Murrumbidgee CAP Assessment Project, the Office Environment Heritage CMA Support & Programs Unit in partnership with the Scientific Soils Division-Soils Section carried out a pilot Hydrogeological Landscape (HGL) study in the Jugiong catchment to investigate the influence and behaviour of salinity in the landscape. Based on landform, geology, soils, climate and salinity characteristics, *HGL's provide a means to spatially prioritise landscapes, define management areas and to make appropriate recommendations on how to best manage salinity in those areas.*

The pilot HGL study identified and described 16 different HGL units at a sub-catchment scale. These have varying salt land, salt load and stream salinity impacts. Effectively managing the areas in the Jugiong sub-catchment with the greatest salinity impacts will have positive salinity outcomes for the Murrumbidgee catchment as whole.

To test the applicability of the HGL methodology for property planning purposes, property-scale trials were carried out on several properties. At this more detailed scale, satellite image and air-photo interpretation, on-ground assessment and liaison with landholders were required. It was found that individual properties can be described within the overall catchment context as well as at a property scale to inform property planning processes.

Results were part of a field afternoon held at "Clearview" in November. Many thanks to John, Marg, Adrian & Julian Roles, George & Lauren Cowdan, Heather & Robert Worner who provided pilot sites for this work.

Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group & FarmLink Stubble trials—project update

The stubble trial has three demonstration sites at five locations at Mirrool Creek, **Harden**, Junee Reefs, Henty, and Holbrook. The trial has looked at various methods to reduce or handle stubble loads and their ability to improve trash flow at seeding and crop establishment.

Treatments included mulching at high and low heights; high and low harvest heights, burning, grazing, and cultivation. Treatments were implemented post harvest and crops were established using a range of farmer owned equipment including disc seeders, tyne seeders, converted combines and other modified machines.

Results have been varied depending on stubble load, crop types and machinery used. In general any treatment that reduced the stubble load, improved machine trash flow or placed the seed away from the stubble improved emergence.

Table 1 highlights the impact of stubble load on crop emergence. Both sites were inter row sown on 12 inch spacing's, knife point press wheel. Reducing stubble load resulted in better plant establishment and tillering. Burning resulted in the highest establishment counts, followed by mulching, then standing stubble. Whilst both machines got through the standing stubble, it was not without its difficulties, with stubble balling up and causing partial blockages in areas. Harvest height and mulching certainly reduced the risk of blockages, but straw and chaff needed to be spread evenly and may impact on pre emergent herbicide efficacy.

Treatment	Wheat into Wheat		Barley into Wheat	
	Plants/ m2	heads/ m2	Plants/ m2	heads/ m2
Standing Stubble	90	540	63	591
Stubble Mulch Low	99	587	82	654
Burnt	111	576	98	746

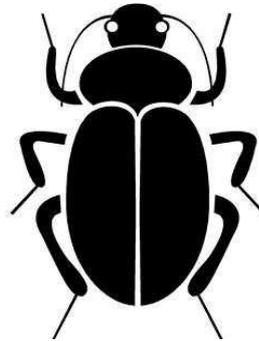
FarmLink is currently planning a trial investigating the impacts of incorporating stubble with nutrients. This is following on from work by Clive Kirkby from CSIRO, which suggests shallow incorporation of crop residues with additional fertiliser can increase soil organic matter levels, whilst still maintaining some ground cover benefits of stubble cover. This idea challenges the rules of zero till farming. A new strategic tillage collaborative project between NSW DPI, CSIRO, E H Graham Centre and FarmLink will aim to quantify the benefits and costs of different cultivation methods to long term no-till paddocks. This is an exciting new project which aims to provide information to increase the flexibility of our farming systems.

Action on the Ground grants under the Carbon Farming Futures. Applications open 11-1-2012 close 8-2-2012.

<http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground>

There will be a 15% refundable tax offset for specific new conservation tillage equipment under Farming for the Future and administered via ATO. Details on the link below.

<http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au/landuse>



The role of native vegetation in pest control on crops

Native vegetation patches in our agricultural landscapes act not only as habitat for birds, but may also be an important home for beneficial insects (e.g. ladybeetles,

spiders, lacewings) that can travel into farmers' crops to eat some of the pests. For the last two years a national GRDC funded research project has been looking at pest and beneficial insects to determine the relationship they have with native vegetation. Researchers from CSIRO and state departments have been using agricultural regions in Western Australia, Queensland and here in southern NSW as real-world "study sites". Local farmers near Harden and Bethungra have been helping out by allowing the researchers to sample insects in crops, pastures and native vegetation patches on their properties.

The researchers aim to find out what species of both pest and beneficial insects are present in each patch, in what numbers, and when they arrive in the crops during the season. The data will be used to answer questions about where pest and beneficial insects live when crop fields are fallow, do they move from native vegetation patches into crops at the start of the season, and can we identify features of the landscape that improve pest control services?

The results so far suggest that some patches of native vegetation function as nurseries for the beneficial insects, and some weeds, such as Patterson's curse, which may be found anywhere from crop edges to road sides, may harbour some pests. Further analysis of the large data set collected is required to tease out the details underlying the patterns of abundance observed for pests and beneficial insects. If beneficial insects are occurring in crops early in the season, then perhaps the use of less insecticides or "softer" insecticides may be enough to keep pest numbers in check.

Watch out for further information coming out from this project in the next six months. Preliminary results were presented at a field morning hosted Harden Murrumburrah Landcare Group in November

For further information please contact Mick Neave, CSIRO (mick.neave @ csiro.au) MOB:0428567379.

Dates for your diary

I have copies of the "Plain English" summary of the proposed Basin Plan in the office if you would like a copy, just drop in.

Rye grass seed bank management – a demonstration of techniques to manage rye grass seed bank at harvest time including windrow burning and the Harrington Seed Destructor. This is a travelling demo from Western Australia contact Tim Condon (0263862118) or myself

Saturday 17 December – 2pm at Wonga, Back Jugiong Road.

Let us know...

If you are interested in receiving regular updates about field days, training courses, funding opportunities or Landcare activities via email, please send a request email to: Louise.hufton@cma.nsw.gov.au

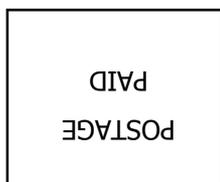
Wishing you and your families a very merry Christmas and prosperous 2012 Many thanks for the support you have given me in 2011 and please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information on anything contained in the Newsletter. – Louise



www.murrumbidgee.cma.nsw.gov.au

1. Take the Jugiong Road out of Harden @ 15 km
2. Take Back Jugiong Road on Left – on sharp right hand bend – go straight ahead. Signs for "Garangula"
3. Road turns to dirt @ 2 km – past Polo facilities on right
4. Follow this road @ 8 km – hills and bends – narrow in spots so take it steady.
5. Approx 1 km past Kanimbla Entrance on left – Turn into "Wonga" on the right.

Directions to Field Demonstration



Saturday 17–2pm at Wonga,

a demonstration of techniques to manage rye grass seed bank at harvest time including windrow burning and the Harrington Seed Destructor. This is a travelling demo from Western Australia contact Tim Condon (0263862118) for further info.

Rye grass seed bank management



HARDEN, NSW 2587

PO Box 145

MCGMA Natural Resource Officer

If undeliverable return to:

For further information:

Murrumbidgee CMA Natural Resource Officer

Louise Hufton

Phone: 02 6386 3954

Mobile: 0428 863954

Email: louise.hufton@cma.nsw.gov.au

Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority

Harden office _ Harden Shire Council

East Street, HARDEN 2587



Australian Government



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY