



Micro-irrigation workshop

– a new course for farmers with pressurised irrigation

Kerri-Anne Keely

MIA EnviroWise Education Coordinator, Murrumbidgee Irrigation

The strive for more productivity and more efficient water use has led to many irrigators installing micro-irrigation systems, primarily for horticultural crop production. Micro-irrigation systems present operators with a new range of management requirements.

In response to irrigator requests, Murrumbidgee Irrigation has been running one-day workshops to help them to get the most out of their micro-irrigation system. Murrumbidgee Irrigation has worked with consultancy firm Goodfellow and Associates to develop a short course designed to assist horticultural irrigators understand more about their micro-irrigation systems. The course came about as a result of requests from many Horticultural FarmWise evaluation sheets. The Horticultural FarmWise course run by MIA EnviroWise covers the basic components of a drip irrigation system, as well as looking briefly at considerations that need to be made when putting in a pressurised system. The Micro-irrigation Workshop builds upon this knowledge and is structured to cover all components of the system, from the pump shed to the scheduling of irrigations.

The Micro-irrigation Workshop is conducted on a farm where a drip irrigation system is fully functional. The workshop is broken into four major topics that are all practical and conducted on farm.

Topics covered

System monitoring

Flow rates, operating pressure, main filtration, field pressure, valves, field filtration, lateral pressures. This starts at the pump shed where the pump, filtration and fertigation systems are reviewed.

System maintenance

Filtration (loading material), seasonal and periodic maintenance, flushing, chlorination and acid injection

Understanding your controller

A brief Question and Answer session is carried out looking at Micro-Master and Netafim controllers. General questions on other controllers are also discussed.

Scheduling


Using soil moisture probes as a scheduling tool.

Small groups, big advantage

The groups participating in each workshop are restricted to twelve people. The small number allows a highly interactive workshop

allowing individuals to discuss their own set up, problem solving strategies and have the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process. It also provides the perfect opportunity for farmers to network amongst each other.

The interest in the course has been very high with the three days already being offered this year. The next course is 16 October and if numbers exceed 12 attendees another day will be offered.

For shareholders of Murrumbidgee Irrigation, the full cost of the course is claimable through the MIA EnviroWise Education incentive allowing farmers to stay in the local area to receive training in their area of need. Murrumbidgee Irrigation is working to develop further short courses that will be run in the local area and are industry specific. 

Further information

Kerri-Anne Keely

MIA EnviroWise Education Coordinator
Murrumbidgee Irrigation, Griffith

T: 02 6962 0200

M: 0427 228 492

E: keelyk@mirrigation.com.au

Education programs

For information regarding the current education programs conducted by Murrumbidgee Irrigation go to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation website at <www.mirrigation.com.au/EnviroWise/Education_courses.htm>.



Figure 1. The Micro-irrigation Workshop is conducted on a farm where a drip irrigation system is fully functional