



CHAIRMAN'S ARTICLE

Matt Toscan – Chair IREC, Irrigator, Darlington Point

QUICK TAKE

- Chairman's article for this year's Autumn Edition with lots happening in the crops around the region.



IREC UPDATE

Iva Quarisa – Executive Officer, IREC

QUICK TAKE

- IREC Machinery Demo Day a huge success
- RiskWi\$e project comes to an end
- Action packed calendar for IREC in 2026



DRONES OFFER FLEXIBILITY AND PRECISION BUT GROWERS MUST UNDERSTAND THE SMALLPRINT

Kevin Stenberg – Chair, SOS Riverina Valleys

QUICK TAKE

- Drones have many useful applications in cropping production systems, moving beyond their pioneering role of crop scouting and mapping.
- Applying pesticides by drone is a new opportunity for greater precision of input use, and greater flexibility when field and weather conditions are unsuitable for ground rigs and aircrafts.
- The operational capabilities of drones are advancing faster than the regulatory framework and scientific validation to support the use of the technology in commercial agriculture.
- Growers must be fully aware of the responsibilities and potential impacts of the services that they engage on their property.

To be able to read the full article you must be a member of IREC.

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DRONES ON THE FARM: WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU SPRAY OR HIRE

Civil Aviation Safety Authority

QUICK TAKE

- The operation of drones in a farming business is a regulated aviation activity and must comply with safety and legal requirements overseen by the Australian Government's Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).
- To use small drones (up to 25kg) on their own farm, farmers need to obtain operator accreditation (no charge) and register their drone (fees may apply). Standard operating rules must be followed.
- A professional drone operator requires a remote pilot licence (RePL) and a remotely piloted aircraft operator's certificate (ReOC), both issued by CASA.
- A licence for applying pesticides by drone is required by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority.



COMPLIANCE FROM THE SKY: MEETING YOUR OBLIGATIONS WHEN SPRAYING WITH DRONES

NSW Environment Protection Authority

QUICK TAKE

- A crucial role for every drone pilot applying pesticides is to protect the surrounding environment, people's health and neighbouring properties.
- Users who apply pesticides from a drone must hold a remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) Applicator Pilot Licence issued by the NSW EPA and must keep appropriate records. This requirement also applies to farmers spraying on their own land and irrespective of the size of the drone.
- Businesses that use drones to apply pesticides on other people's land, must hold a remotely piloted aircraft operator's certificate (ReOC) issued by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and an RPA Applicator Business Licence issued by the EPA.
- If the label allows for aerial application from fixed wing aircraft only, applying pesticides with a drone is now allowed – including fixed wing drones.



EVALUATING IRRIGATED WHEAT AND BARLEY VARIETIES UNDER LOCAL CONDITIONS, HILLSTON

Rachael Whitworth & Barry Haskins – Ag Grow Agronomy and Research

QUICK TAKE

- Longer season wheat varieties Anapurna, RGT Enebro, Triple 2 and the durum wheat varieties Patron and AGT-Rimfire were the standout performers in the irrigated wheat trial – with all yielding more than 12t/ha.
- The top performer in the barley trial was Neo CL, yielding 12.1t/ha.
- The average grain protein of the wheat trial was 11.76% and the barley trial was 13.16%. In both trials, lower-yielding varieties had higher grain protein.

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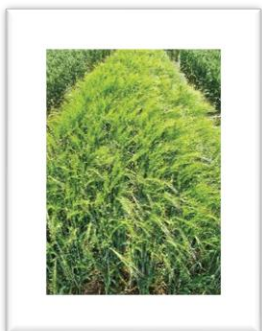


KEEPING COMPETITIVE WITH LOWER GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Aaron Simmons – Technical Specialist, Agriculture Life Cycle Assessment; LEIFS Project Leader, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Taree

QUICK TAKE

- Understanding and reducing greenhouse gases emissions helps growers stay competitive in global markets and meet growing community expectations.
- Increasingly, manufacturers are undertaking legislated or voluntary reporting of greenhouse gas emissions associated with their manufacturing activities – which include the emissions associated with the production and transport of the raw material they source.
- The cotton and grain industries have instigated a new project to demonstrate strategies to reduce emissions, as well as enhance the greenhouse gas reporting capabilities of grain and cotton growers.
- One particular focus technology will be urea coated with nitrification inhibitor, to reduce the loss of fertiliser nitrogen and address the largest greenhouse gas emission pathway associated with irrigated cotton production.



SEED TREATMENTS AND FOLIAR FUNGICIDES FOR STRIPE RUST MANAGEMENT

Stephanie Chappell – Executive Officer, Southern Growers Inc, Finley NSW

QUICK TAKE

- Combining seed treatments with foliar fungicides significantly reduced stripe rust severity in wheat under trial conditions at Finley.
- Two foliar fungicides, applied at GS32 and GS 39, provided better disease control than a single later spray.
- Some seed treatments improved disease suppression but may reduce early crop vigour, highlighting the importance of product choice.
- In barley, seed treatments and foliar fungicides improved yield despite minimal disease pressure at the trial site.



MOTH VINE ON THE MARCH

Vito Mancini – Vice-Chair, Griffith and District Citrus Growers Association

QUICK TAKE

- Moth vine is spreading rapidly across the Riverina, posing a growing threat to orchards, vineyards and mixed farming systems.
- Once a garden escapee, moth vine now smothers crops, spreads widely by seed and is difficult to eradicate.
- Infestations reduce yields, damage canopy health, and increase labour, compliance and workplace safety cost for growers.
- Early detection and coordinated management between neighbours, councils and agencies are critical to slowing moth vine spread.



GROUNDHOG DAY OR A FRESH NEW DAWN

Perin Davey – Water Policy, Ricegrowers' Association of Australia

QUICK TAKE

- The Basin Plan has shifted from a broad national water-security vision to a narrow focus on environmental water recovery.
- The theory and modelling diverged from reality, promoting the creation of the Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL) Adjustment Mechanism and ongoing debates about constraints.
- The MDBA's initial SDL assessments have revealed a series of shortcomings, including limited environmental gains from further water recovery without addressing physical and operational barriers.
- The Basin Plan Review is a pivotal moment for Basin, and communities are urged to engage as the Basin moves from water recovery toward outcome-focused water management.



VALE DR MAARTEN STAPPER

QUICK TAKE

- Maarten was a highly talented and motivated farming systems agronomist, and a world leading irrigation agronomist. His work had huge impacts on the productivity and profitability of irrigated cropping in the Riverina, and on dryland cropping across southeast Australia.

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