

IHD Northernlink agronomy conference—Tamworth

The IHD member Northernlink Agronomy conference was held in Tamworth from the 15th to 17th March. Pursehouse Rural agronomists from New South Wales and Queensland were out in force and keen to learn new industry information, updates for the year ahead and network with over 45 agronomists. The agronomists present were based from the Atherton Tablelands to the central west New South Wales.

Keeping farmers updated was the primary goal of the conference, with a strong focus on the challenging years experienced across Australia and the future for agriculture. The program included speakers from across Australia to discuss topics including precision agriculture, quality assurance, dryland rice, pastures for animal production and spray drift management. Time was also set aside for group discussion which were benefited junior agronomists by allowing them to learn from those that have been in the industry a long time.



The PR Ag Services Agronomy Team from left to right: Andrew Jakins (Allora) Jeff Stone (Pittsworth), John Nott (Gunnedah), James Urquhart (Quirindi), Adrian Nelson (Quirindi), Sara Winston-Smith (Quirindi), Nick Park (Gunnedah), Callen Thompson (Coonabarabran), Adam Bensch (Mullaley), Josh Hack (Quirindi), Matt Roseby (Gunnedah), Hugh Urquhart (Narrabri), James Cheetham (Quirindi), Mick Fing (Melrose) and John Hegarty (Pittsworth). Absent: Ben Thrift (Clifton)

After 13 years, Quirindi Opti-crop agronomist Dave McRae has left Pursehouse Rural and moved on to a fertiliser sales and technical role still within the Liverpool Plains. Dave pioneered the Opti-crop intensive agronomy program at Pursehouse Rural in 2000 and has been influential in some major farming improvements to opti-crop members.

Pursehouse Rural has appointed James Cheetham to carry on the Opti-crop program at Quirindi. James has been with Pursehouse Rural since 2007 and has a very keen interest in farming systems on the Liverpool Plains. James and Nick Park (Opti-crop Gunnedah) have some new and exciting plans for the Opti-crop program and are looking forward to working together to provide superior service to Opti-crop members.

James can be contacted on mobile 0428 216 137 or the Quirindi Branch.

Opti-crop update



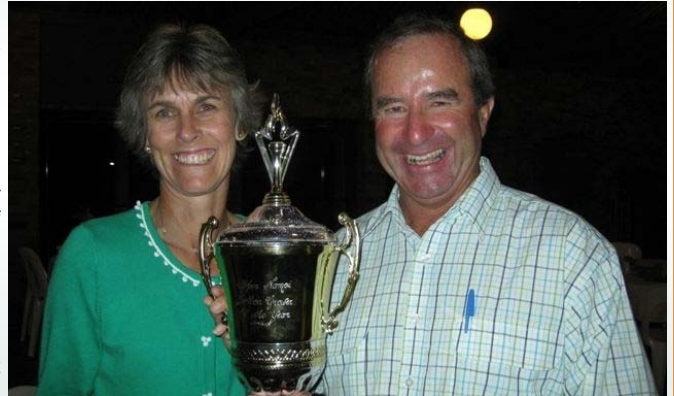
Above: New opti-crop agronomist— James Cheetham

Upper Namoi Grower of the Year

Congratulations to Andrew and Cindy Pursehouse of "Breeza Station" who have won the annual Upper Namoi Cotton Grower of the year competition. The crop entered was a 50ha field of Sicot 71BR, planted on the 12th October. Andrew's current crop is 100% Bollgard II, with about a 50-50 mix of Roundup Ready Flex to Roundup Ready cotton. Andrew's crop had 3 in crop irrigations with some good falls of rain to back it up. The irrigation deficit was 65mm for the initial irrigation and subsequent irrigations at 85mm based on neutron probe readings. With the good early rainfall to get the crop away, the intense heat over January into February, coupled with low insect pressures, led to very high fruit retention and good boll counts, which has helped the crop push through to defoliation earlier than in previous seasons. The crop had no pre plant residual herbicides, with a roundup application pre sowing. The Roundup Ready cotton had a roundup ready herbicide application over the top at the four true leaf stage. This was followed by a shielded spray and minimal chipping for some flea bane. The Roundup Ready Flex varieties had three applications of Roundup Ready herbicide at varying stages with the last over the top application at 16 nodes.

The average plant stand across Andrew's crop was 11.5 plants per metre. The majority of nitrogen was pre applied up front, with a side dress and some water run urea to top up a couple of fields. Most of the crop was long fallowed out of wheat into cotton. As far as insects were concerned, a mite spray in early January of Pegasus and organophosphate application at the end of the season for green veggie bugs was all that was applied. At this stage the crop has had its first pass defoliation, using a Dropp liquid and Finish mix, with picking expected to commence early to mid April.

For more information on cotton or this fantastic effort, contact John Nott at Pursehouse Rural Gunnedah.



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NLIS Update on sheep and goats

The National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) Sheep & Goats is Australia's system for identifying and tracing sheep, lambs and farmed goats. Although introduced in 2006, it has only been since 1 January 2009 that NLIS tags are required for sheep and farmed goats prior to stock movement



This national livestock identification system enhances Australia's ability to maintain access to key export markets and helps to quickly contain a major food safety or disease incident. It is being implemented by industry in partnership with governments across Australia.

From 1 January 2009, **all** sheep must be ear tagged before they are moved from any property to a saleyard, abattoir or another property. The tag must be printed with the property identification code (PIC) of the property the sheep are moving from. A movement document ('national vendor declaration' or 'transported stock statement') must be fully completed and accompany the sheep. If the mob is non-vendor bred or mixed and contains tags with different PIC's. **All** PIC's must be written onto the movement document.

Visually-readable tags that have successfully completed three-year retention trials under the NLIS (Sheep & Goats) Program are granted full accreditation.

These tags are fully accredited:

- Allflex Flexi Tag
- Allflex Flock Tag
- Allflex Lightweight HDX RFID Tag (accredited as a visual tag only)
- Arlunga Strong Tag
- Drover's Ay-One Ezy Tag
- Leader Multi Tag
- Leader Original Laser Tag
- Tally Tag
- Tally long Tag

There are also tags that are conditionally accredited. NLIS Tags for cattle, sheep and goats can be ordered at any Pursehouse Rural branch.