

DROUGHT & ABOUT

May 2016

WELCOME TO DROUGHT AND ABOUT

Welcome to our very first edition of *Drought and About*.

This short newsletter aims to provide information from a range of sources to keep you informed about what is happening and what support is available for those affected by the difficult seasonal conditions.

We will provide links to a lot of information and a calendar of what is coming up but we also hope to provide stories of who is out there and what they are up to. And this is not just for farmers – it is there for service providers, government and businesses both in town and on the land.

In this first edition you will see a wonderful image from the recent 'Lights over the farm gate' fireworks event and we will provide a sneak preview to some water and pulse/art projects coming up in June.

If you think we are missing something or you have a story to tell please don't hesitate to contact us via email at simone.dalton@ecodev.vic.gov.au

AROUND THE TRAPS

Events are very much a part of our drought response and while many farmers have been busy in the paddocks getting ready for the coming season, nearly 1,000 people took time out earlier this month to see a huge free fireworks display at Natimuk in the Wimmera.

Titled 'Lights over the Farm Gate' it was organised by a group comprising Agriculture Victoria, Wimmera Uniting Care, Horsham Rural City Council and the Natimuk Showgrounds Management Committee. It was also part of the 'Look over the Farm Gate' campaign (see www.lookoverthefarmgate.com.au/)

The fireworks were conducted by students who have been studying with fireworks training provider Fireworks Australia at its Victorian campus based at Clear Lake. The Friday night event attracted an estimated 800 to 1000 people and was felt by one farmer in his tractor several kilometres away.

Not only was it a great gesture on Fireworks Australia's part to donate such a spectacular display but a great community effort to have volunteers helping to feed and entertain such a large number of people. Thanks to everyone involved.

Image courtesy Belinda Gilpin, Wimmera Uniting Care.



Spotlight on art and water

Workshops on water, weather, wealth and what to feed

Farmers wanting to start planning now for next summer's water needs are encouraged to dive into Winter Water Month with two workshops in Maryborough and Wedderburn in June.

Agriculture Victoria Drought Operations Coordinator Belinda Pritchard said the Winter Water Month workshops would feature discussions about water, weather, wealth and what to feed your livestock.



Topics would include animal nutrition, water security and seasonal forecasts, with information also available on farm finance and health. The interactive sessions will demonstrate some tools to help farmers prepare for the coming months.

Ms Pritchard said winter was the perfect time to plan for next summer with actions such as water reticulation, feeding systems and feed and water budgeting.

"It's all about building resilience and winter is a great time to undertake strategic planning for the coming season, when the pressures of hand feeding and water carting are not as demanding," she said.

Ms Pritchard said workshop speakers would include experts on seasonal forecasts and climate risk, animal nutrition, farm water management, groundwater, personal health and finance.

"Water security is an important topic we will cover, and this will include discussing securing stock water supplies and the benefits of farm water reticulation," she said.

"After last year's poor Spring, we'll also discuss getting ready for winter feeding and growing lambs – how much feed is required, where it will come from and managing animal nutrition."

Ms Pritchard said the workshops would also feature Agriculture Victoria's Seasonal Risk experts to provide a seasonal outlook.

The Maryborough workshop is on the 1st June and the Wedderburn workshop is on the 21st June. The workshops will be presented by Agriculture Victoria and supported by the Country Fire Authority. They are free to attend and a light meal will be provided. For more information and to register, phone 0408 342 593 or email belinda.pritchard@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

What to do when heavy rains fill dams with more than water

Recent storms have brought welcome inflows into many depleted dams but the challenge with such heavy rains is organic pollution in dams.

This information could help.

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/managing-dams/organic-pollution-in-farm-dams>

Also watch this video to learn how to set up a sediment trap

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/managing-dams>

Pulses racing as Beans Meanz Art project takes shape

Pulses will be racing as plans for a three metre pulse sculpture takes centre stage during a special open evening at Horsham's Australian Grains Genebank (AGG) on Wednesday 8 June.

The event, which is part of the Art Is... Festival will not only give people a chance to see some of the bank's 150 million seeds, but also discover how crop seeds are being used to create the special art work.

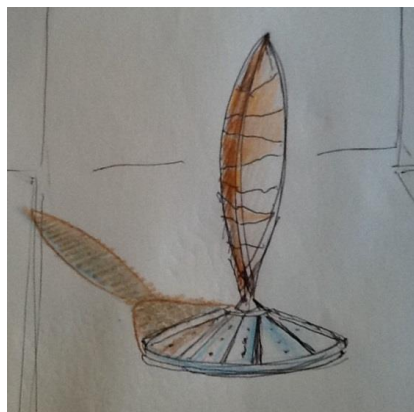
The Beans Meanz Art Project, which is supported by Agriculture Victoria, PB Seeds and Pulse Australia, aims to celebrate the International Year of Pulses in a very artistic way.

It will include a three metre tall sculpture representing a seed and covered with a colourful and diverse array of crop seeds from across Australia.

Farmers who grow these seeds will also be involved in the sculpture's production during a series of community Beans Meanz Art afternoons held across the region.

Agriculture Victoria Regional Drought Coordinator Simone Dalton said the project aimed to combine science, agriculture and art.

"It will double as a drought and art project – warming the farmers' winter with some creativity in local halls as the communities turn four panels on the giant sculpture into the



four seasons.

"The means of telling this story will be thousands of peas, chickpeas, lentils, oats, barley, wheat and, of course, beans.

"People attending our Beans Meanz Art Open Evening on 8 June will get to see a miniature version of the sculpture and hear from artist Glenn Critchley on his design and inspiration so far.

"But that won't be the only story to be told, with Janine Sounness from PB Seeds outlining the amazing tale of the Wimmera's pivotal role in the development of Australia's lentil industry over the past 25 years.

"Janine, who has worked with lentils since 1993, will recount how farmers, breeders and industry participants travelled the world and worked collectively to turn a fledgling industry into a multi-million dollar commercial crop.

"People attending will dine on a meal made with local pulses, have a chance to hear from Genebank leader Sally Norton and take a tour the facility, including its giant minus 20 degree freezers."

People wanting to attend must RSVP for catering to (03) 5381 0297 by Monday 6 June. The free event runs from 5-7.30pm and includes a barbecue tea.

AGG is at 110 Natimuk Road, Horsham.



What's coming up

At Agriculture Victoria we have an extensive 'events calendar' which will ensure you don't miss out on any events.

Date	Event	Location	Contact
1 June	Accounting for Drought Financial Literacy workshop - improving your general understanding of Farm Financial Literacy	Boort Resource and Information Centre, Boort	5341 6100 info@meridian-ag.com.au
1 June	Farm Water Management Workshop – Whiteheads Creek Session 2. Developing a water budget, water assessment, estimate dam depth and capacity, farm water strengths and risks, options for water management.	Whiteheads Creek	Karen Brisbane-Bullock P: 03 5822 7734 E: karenb@gbcma.vic.gov.au
3 June	Accounting for Drought Financial Literacy workshop- improving your general understanding of Farm Financial Literacy	Ararat Visitor Information Centre, Ararat	03 5341 6100 info@meridian-ag.com.au
3 June	Developing UAVs for Agricultural Research – What's Next? Seminar with Dr. Daniel Cooper, Visiting Fellow. Spatial mapping of evapotranspiration using LIDAR, and later configuring sensor packages for use on drones.	DEDJTR Horsham (Grains Innovation Park) 10 am	Eileen Perry at eileen.perry@ecodev.vic.gov.au
3 June	An evening with the Old Fella (Retired farmer and comedian, Rod Gregory). Free event for people aged 18 and over	Warracknabeal Hall Vic. 8-10 pm	M: 0455 212 227
4 June	An evening with the Old Fella (Retired farmer and comedian, Rod Gregory). Free event for people aged 18 and over	Dooen Public Town Hall 8-10 pm	M: 0455 212 227
5 June	An afternoon with the Old Fella (Retired farmer and comedian, Rod Gregory). Free event for people aged 18 and over	Sea Lake 2-4 pm	M: 0455 212 227
5 June	Womens Empowerment Day - Prepare to be pampered	Edenhope Football Club 11am-4pm	Carolyn Middleton M: 0407 579 961 carolynmid@hotmail.com
6 June	Implement Animal Health Control Programs (from Certificate III in Agriculture Dairy Production) Day 1 of 3-day course.	9 am – 3 pm; NCDE, Princes Hwy, Terang	Bec Huth Ph: (03) 5592 2437 Or 0407 552 011

For all farmer workshops and other events go to:
<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/drought-preparedness/farmer-workshops>.

Handy link

To find out about all the measure in the Victorian Government's Drought Response Package go to:

www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought

For more information call the Drought Information Line: 136 186