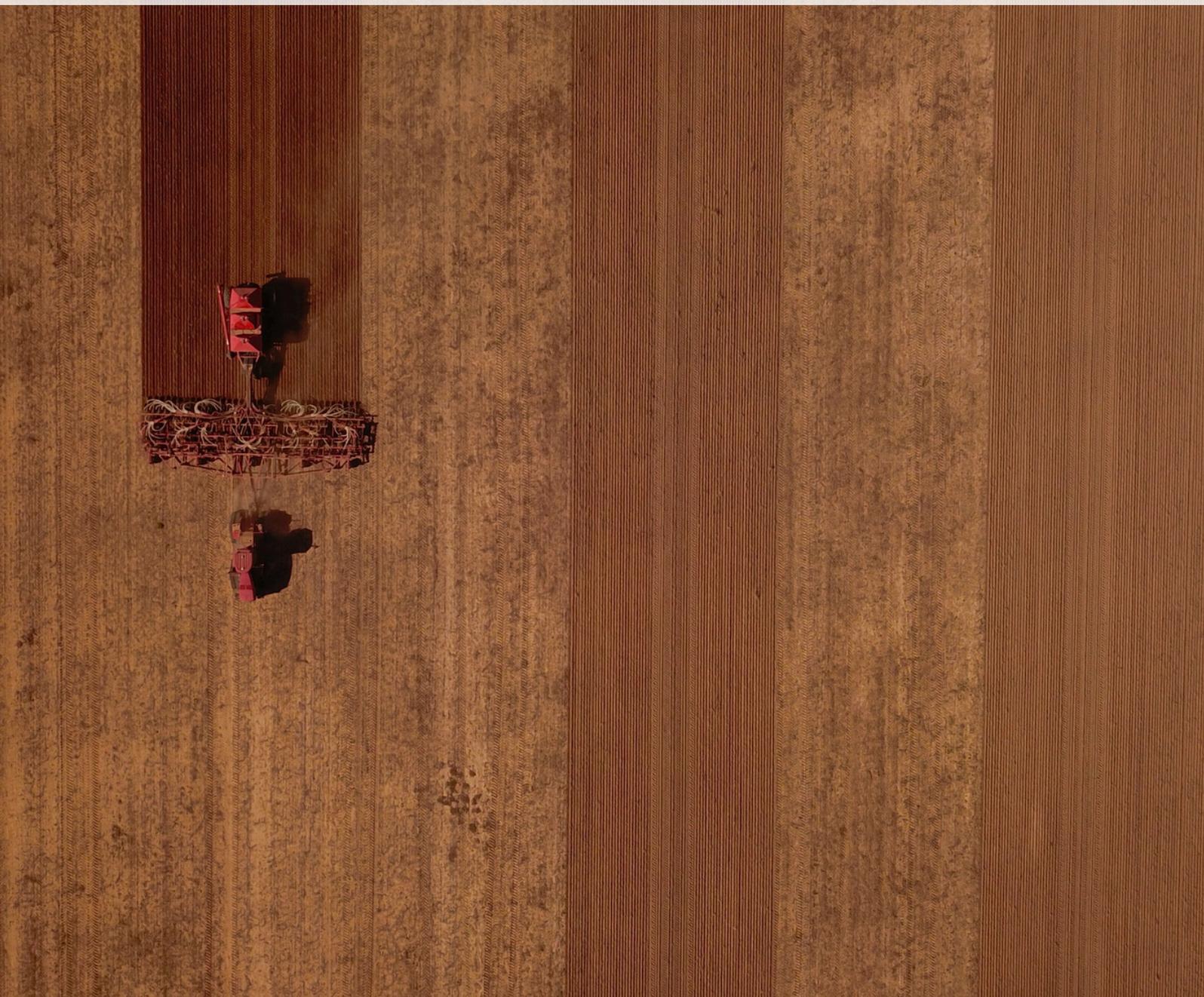


VOLUME 28 | ISSUE 1 | MARCH 2025

# LIEBE GROUP NEWS



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**SUCCESSION IS HARD  
AND WORTH THE PAIN**

**REGIONAL ROUND UP  
WITH EMMA PEARSE**

**MAKING BETTER USE  
OF YOUR LIME BUDGET**

*The Liebe Group mission is to facilitate grower prioritised research, development and extension to support our members to be profitable and sustainable.*

# LIEBE'S LEADERSHIP 2025

## R & D COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Casey Shaw

## WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Amanda Nixon

## BOARD

**Chair:** Brad McIlroy

**Vice-Chair:** Rebecca Wallis

**Secretary:** Chris O'Callaghan

**Treasurer:** Sophie Carlshausen

## BOARD MEMBERS

Boyd Carter

Dylan Hirsch

Wendy Sawyer

Emma Pearse

Blayn Carlshausen

Gavin Carter

Alex Keamy

## LIEBE GROUP PARTNERS

Liebe Group Partners are an integral facet of the success of the group. Since our inception the group has developed long and valuable relationships with organisations who have mutual interests to the Liebe Group. These strong partnerships have given the group diversity, a level of security and the capacity to build a sustainable and healthy future.

These partnering organisations are high profile agribusinesses with a keen interest in the healthy future of agriculture. They see the relationship with the group as a meaningful way to stay in close contact with the grass roots innovators of the industry and a way to invest resources into a group which is focusing on research and development for future agricultural sustainability.

## DIAMOND PARTNERS



## GOLD PARTNERS



## SILVER PARTNERS

**AgriMaster**

**Australian Grain Technologies**

**Bayer**

**Pioneer Seeds**

**FMC**

**Summit Fertilizers**

**InterGrain**

**McIntosh & Son**

**Nufarm**

**Watheroo Minerals Group**

**Nutrien Ag Solutions**

**Refuel Australia**

**Syngenta**

**Spraytec Australia**

**Bailiwick Legal**

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Happy new year and welcome to the first Liebe Group Newsletter for 2025.

Its been a busy start to the year, with harvest results from the local R&D activities coming in thick and fast over December and January, and staff working hard to get the book to the printers by the first week of February which is a fantastic effort. Collating these results in a timely manner is a real team effort, with so many authors, stakeholders and reviewers involved and staff needing to make sure the information is presented to a high standard with professional presentation.

As a team we aimed to have the books completed and available for the Harvest Review event, which would then allow members to review the full trial reports at that event and take the book home. We also hope members were able to get some value out of the interim reports that were released in November and December and they were able to assist in some of the early planning and decision making for 2025.

We have welcomed a new team member this year, with Georgia Keeffe joining as a Graduate R&D Officer. Georgia has recently finished her agriculture studies at the University of Western Australia and will be working on a program of farm demonstrations, allowing us to expand our R&D activities further. Georgia has provided a bit of her background and interests in this newsletter so be sure to have a read.

Our R&D Co-ordinator Daenia and the R&D Committee have begun working on the trial program for the Main Trial Site, with the first committee meeting held in early February. The site at the Cail's property is well set up for the year, coming out of fallow in 2024 and a slightly different soil type than last year's site, means it should allow for a nice range of trials. We have begun talking with NVT providers about locating some of the NVT's which will provide an anchor for the site as well as our existing partners and researchers about a number of topical ideas for 2025. We will also be continuing some of our longer term trials including the Riskwise nitrogen x crop rotation trial, brome grass management trial, soil amelioration trial, legume economics trial, bentonite clay trial plus we are in talks with the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative about a new long term glyphosate alternative trial.

Depending when you are reading this you have hopefully been to a few of the Group's events in February and March. The calendar has been jammed packed, with Harvest Review, Grain Automate, Perth Crop Updates, Liebe AGM & Season Launch, Carbon Farming Outreach Program and the Regional Crop Updates in Coorow which is being hosted by the Liebe Group. We plan to keep the events and workshop coming in 2025, and always welcome any feedback and ideas at any time! The Womens Committee have begun the planning efforts for the Womens Field Day for 2025, and I'm happy to announce International keynote speaker and safety advocate, Helen Fitzroy, will be joining us as the Guest Speaker! Further details will be announced on this event closer to the time.

On the strategic front, myself and the Liebe Board continue to look closely at our long term project planning. With a number of long-term projects continuing, including Riskwise, brome grass and grain legumes, we do have projects also coming to an end including the early sowing canola project and the stubble height project. We are looking at options to continue this work on the back of some interesting results in 2024, with host farmer Dylan committing to continuing the strip & disc trial going forward. We are also waiting to hear on a number collaborative applications submitted through GRDC tenders and the Future Drought Fund, which hopefully will bring some further investment into the region. The process of attracting investment is on going however, and relies on our growers being engaged in the group and providing ideas and drive to ensure they continue to deliver value to the region. Any members that would be interested in getting more involved either on the board, subcommittee or just to provide a few ideas are more than welcome to pop into the office and have a chat to the staff.

**Chris O'Callaghan, Executive Officer**



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# LIEBE GROUP EVENTS 2025

## GRDC RESEARCH UPDATES

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March | Coorow Town Hall**

This is an opportunity to hear from a range of invested agricultural experts, researchers and developers on the current state of play specific to the region, and see what work is in the pipeline to support our industry in the future.

## WOMEN'S FIELD DAY

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June | Dalwallinu Recreation Centre**

The Liebe Group Women's Field Day is an event designed to build the management capacity of rural women to make a difference to their family, farm business and the agricultural industry.

## POST SEEDING FIELD WALK

**TBA July | Main Trial Site (Nugadong)**

This annual event provides a comprehensive overview of the trials being conducted at the Main Trial Site for the season, including trial research progress and predictions. The following sundowner provides great networking and social opportunities for growers and industry.

## SPRING FIELD DAY

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September | Main Trial Site (Nugadong)**

The Spring Field Day is an interactive field day that showcases the latest local research and development, which has been coordinated on one convenient location at the Liebe Group Main Trial Site. This Main Trial Site is rotated annually to different farming properties in the Liebe area.

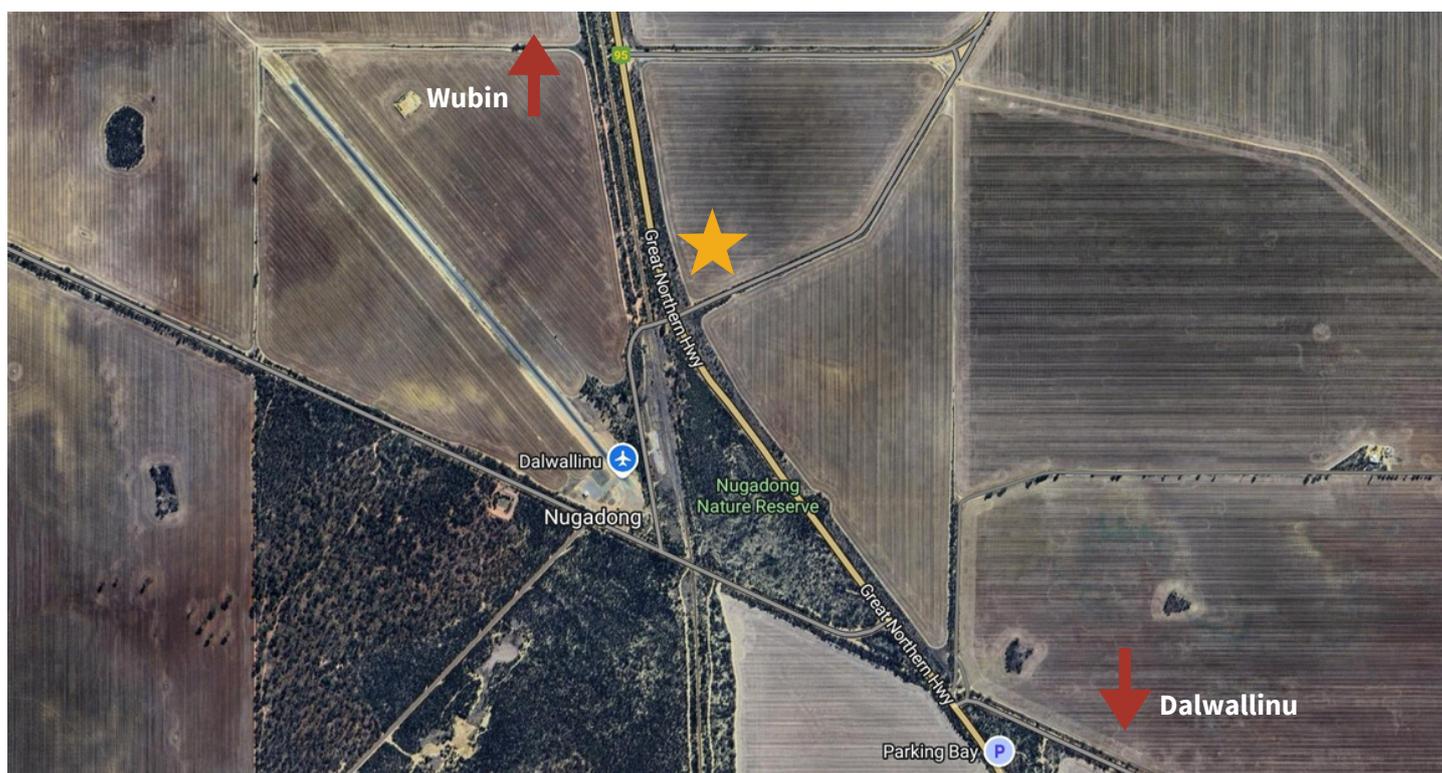
## GRDC HARVESTER SET UP WORKSHOP

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September | TBC Carnamah**

Hear from industry experts and local growers on the integration of harvest weed seed control (HWSC) options, harvester fire prevention, accurate measurement/ management of harvest losses and harvest storage.



# 2025 MAIN TRIAL SITE HOSTS



**Photo 1.** 2025 Main Trial Site Location, Cail property, Nugadong

The Liebe Group is excited to announce the 2025 Main Trial Site will be located north of Dalwallinu in Nugadong, along the Great Northern Hwy in one of the Cail family paddocks, which will represent the 28th annual site since the groups inception in 1997.

Colin and Ruth, along with their three sons, Michael, Darren and James will host the Main Trial Site for the first time. This particular block of land in Nugadong has been in the extended family for generations, with Colin and Ruth having farmed it for approximately 10 years. The soil is characterised as grey loamy sand over gravel with moderate sub-soil acidity. The paddock was in chemical fallow last year, which will allow for both cereal and canola trials to again be in close proximity. The paddock has had one spray application this year for summer weeds and currently has recorded no rainfall for the year.

Liebe Group and the R&D Committee are currently planning trials for next year, therefore if you have any ideas or suggestions of what you would like to see – please get in touch!

SCAN HERE FOR MAP  
LINK TO MAIN TRIAL  
SITE LOCATION



SCAN HERE TO  
SUBMIT A TRIAL EOI



**Photo 2.** Harvest time with the Cail Family

# INTRODUCING NEW LIEBE TEAM MEMBER GEORGIA!

Hello!

My name is Georgia Keeffe, and I am joining the R&D team at Liebe this year.



I have just graduated from Agricultural Science and AgBusiness at UWA. I am from a family farm near Watheroo where I have worked for my Dad and Uncle Jack throughout most of my uni breaks. I have spent most of my years looking forward to harvest, eager to spend time at home and involve myself in the farm.

Last year I was lucky enough to go on exchange in Norway, to their University of Life Sciences (NMBU), south of Oslo. I arrived in their cold, dark January winter which proved to be quite a shock! Eventually I got used to the number of layers which were needed to just step out the door and got to enjoy the snow and ice for a few months.



I travelled to the very north of Norway above the Arctic Circle to see the northern lights in winter and ran the Midnight Sun half marathon - at midnight but in broad daylight.



I completed economics and greenhouse units at NMBU, which took me on excursions to large greenhouse producers. It was fascinating to learn about the extent to which inputs are controlled to mass produce food, while avoiding diseases. The greenhouse managers were able to manipulate light, temperature, soil and water pH to produce the desired plants - which was enviable, while facing their own challenges.

I met so many incredible people from various backgrounds all over the world, who I am lucky enough to still be in touch with. My favourite experiences were most definitely the time I got to spend with my friends (in the sun, once it eventually came out - and then never set) and the travel that we were able to do throughout Europe. Of course, seeing Taylor Swift in Sweden was a huge highlight.

I have loved sport my whole life, mainly playing netball or hockey, as well as rowing during high school, so am eager to get involved in the Dally sport wherever I can!

I am really looking forward to my time in Dalwallinu to meet lots of new people and gain new perspectives of farming and coordinating the farmer demonstrations. I can't wait to meet you all!

Contact Georgia on 0437 188 399 or [georgia@liebegrp.org.au](mailto:georgia@liebegrp.org.au)

# REGIONAL ROUND-UP WITH EMMA PEARSE

**Farmers (family):** The Pearse family comprises Emma Pearse, Neil Pearse, and Leanne Pearse.

**Location:** Miling

**Average rainfall:** 347mm, Average GSR: 288mm

**Enterprise mix:** ~90% cropping (70% wheat, 15% Lupins, 15% canola), ~10% sheep.

**Tell us about your business. What is the enterprise mix, and who is involved? How long have you been farming, and what is your role in the business?**

The Pearse family operates a mixed cropping and livestock farm. 'We're probably 80% cropping, 20% livestock, or even 90/10,' Emma explains. The livestock side of the enterprise focuses on sheep, primarily utilising land unsuitable for cropping.

Emma has been back on the farm for four years and works alongside her parents, learning about running the operation. 'I'm the farm worker, apprentice to my parents, and trying to learn all the ins and outs of everything,' she shares.

Neil and Leanne Pearse oversee the farm operation; the family also relies on a casual worker who has been with them for many years. 'He's semi-permanent, semi-full-time, and really good,' Emma adds.

**In one word, describe the 2024 season.**

'Surprising,' Emma describes, noting, 'It was surprising in a lot of different ways.'



**Photo 1:** Leanne, Neil and Emma Pearse ready for harvest

**What were the main challenges and highlights from last season?**

Emma notes that the 2024 season was filled with many challenges. 'The main challenges came from the very start and the very end,' she explains—a late break with no rain until mid-June delayed germination and created difficult seeding decisions.

Harvest also presented challenges. 'With the dry September, the crops fell away from their potential,' Emma shares. 'We had high screenings, which meant we had to bring in a seed cleaner. It was about problem-solving and accepting that's how it was going to be.'



**Photo 2.** Wheat harvest underway

Despite the challenges, there were highlights. 'It was incredible to see the potential of our cropping systems. Even with the late start and low rainfall, the crops looked so healthy until mid-September,' Emma says. 'It was a big learning experience, seeing what we could achieve with limited rain.'

Emma reflected that while the season was below average, it was an incredible learning opportunity with little room for error.

**Looking forward to the 2025 season, what are your plans and goals? Do you have a special focus this year?**

The Pearse family plans to stick with their current systems while focusing on small improvements. 'We plan to keep doing what we're doing and improve those little 1% things that sometimes get forgotten,' Emma explains.

They aim to maintain a well-organised 'tight-ship' operation and make informed, science-based decisions. 'We want to control what we can and let go of what we can't,' she says.

### **How do you make decisions about your rotations and enterprise mix each season?**

Emma and her father use a system that considers their diverse soil types. 'We've got sandy soils in the northern area and heavier soils in the south,' she explains. Medic and legume pastures are rotated on the heavier soils with crops to support their sheep enterprise. The Pearse family has developed optimal rotational plans for each paddock to improve disease and weed control and add nutrients to the soil.

'For the heavier soils, we try to avoid breaks longer than four years between the medic phase, with three years being ideal,' Emma says. 'For the sandy soils, we ensure enough wheat is in the program while rotating canola and lupins to give paddocks a break.'

This approach balances soil health and financial needs. 'It's about ensuring everything has a break and grows the best it can,' she concludes.

### **Are you looking to trial or adopt any new practices or technologies this year? Are these risky or safe adoptions?**

In 2025, the Pearse family plans to reintroduce deep ripping on their sandy soils. 'We have done it in the past, but it's been about 10 years,' Emma says. 'We're going to trial it in a wheat paddock with compaction issues and drainage problems.'

While Emma acknowledges some risks, like wind erosion, she considers deep ripping a proven practice. 'It's about getting the full potential out of those paddocks,' she explains.



**Photo 3.** Medic rotation

### **What do you do outside of farming?**

Emma enjoys a mix of activities depending on the season. 'In summer, I love swimming and going to the beach whenever I can,' she says. 'In winter, I play hockey for Miling, walk my dog, and try to catch up with friends.'

While she admits farming keeps her busy, Emma enjoys time for hobbies and relaxation. 'It's good to have balance, even though farming takes up a lot of time,' she shares.

### **What are your expectations for the year ahead?**

Emma is approaching 2025 with cautious optimism. 'I'm expecting a lot more learning. You never know what you're going to get,' she says. 'I'd love an early break and plenty of rain, but I've learned not to expect too much too early.'

Emma is focused on staying adaptable. 'Every year is busy, and you just have to take it as it comes,' she's focused on continuing to learn through whatever the season throws at them.

### **What opportunities do you see in the agricultural industry for young people?**

Emma sees plenty of opportunities for young people in agriculture, from operations to research and business. 'There's always going to be a need for young people on the operations side because the average age of farmers is so high,' she says.

She also highlights opportunities in research. 'It's essential for the succession of knowledge. Emma explains that you don't want expertise to disappear when someone retires. 'It's great to see more young people getting into research now than when I was coming through.'

She encourages young people to bring fresh perspectives to agriculture. 'Combining new ideas with the knowledge that's been passed down is so important,' she says.

Emma reflects that she has great respect for the knowledge and experience of the previous generation and hopes to bring her fresh perspective back to the farm as a positive addition.

# HARVEST REVIEW DAY WRAP UP By Amber Martin, Liebe Group

The Liebe Group has kicked off 2025 with great momentum, starting with releasing their annual Research and Development Book and successfully running their first event—The Harvest Review Day on February 13th. The event brought together local growers for an interactive afternoon of learning, discussion, and planning for the season ahead.

The day featured trial presentations and an engaging discussion on falling numbers, hectolitre weights, and varieties led by Dion Nicol (DPIRD).

Industry experts presented key topics, including canola establishment with Living Farm, fertiliser toxicity in canola with CSBP, and managing wheat yield penalties from IBS herbicides with FMC. Summit Fertilizers shared insights on wheat nitrogen and potassium application rates, and Nutrien covered herbicide combinations to combat glyphosate-resistant ryegrass. These sessions provided valuable takeaways for growers, offering practical strategies for applying trial findings in their operations.



**Photo 1.** Emily Hyde, Nutrien presenting Breaking Resistance Exploring Herbicide Combinations for Glyphosate Resistant Ryegrass

Another key focus of the event was agronomic decision-making for the upcoming season, presented by Liebe Group staff and leading experts, with discussions around rotational strategies (Riskwi\$e project), stubble management, and early-sown canola.

Chris O'Callaghan, the Liebe Group's executive officer, and Yvette Oliver (CSIRO) led a discussion on the Riskwi\$e trial, exploring the decision-making behind rotational strategies. Amber Martin, the Liebe Group's projects assistance officer, and John Broster (CSU) presented stubble height management, covering its impact on moisture retention, crop yield, and disease carryover. Deania Dundon, the Liebe Group R&D coordinator, provided insights into early-sown canola, highlighting key findings from the 2024 trial.

The Liebe Groups Administration officer, Tannyth Shackell, commented, "Liebe members were able to take a deep dive into the 2024 trial results, taking away information to help them prepare for the upcoming season."

The event also included a presentation from Maya grower Brendon McAlpine (Elserae Agriculture), who shared his experience with soil amelioration using a Horsch Tiger. He outlined the findings from the farmer-scale trial conducted beside the Liebe main trial site in 2024, providing valuable on-the-ground perspectives for those looking to implement similar practices.

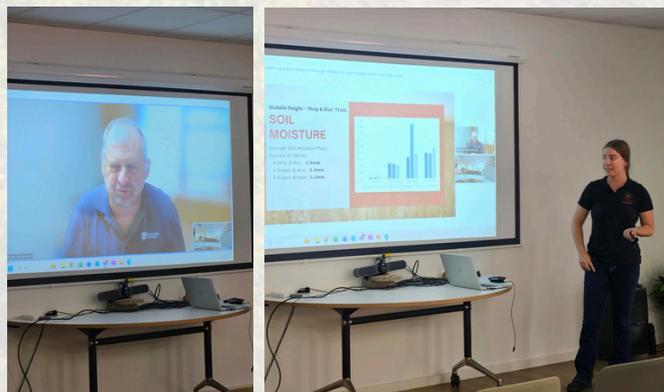


**Photo 2.** Brendon McAlpine, Elserae Agriculture presenting Farmer Scale Soil Amelioration

When sharing his thoughts on the day, the Liebe Group executive officer Chris O'Callaghan said, "The day was very informative and a great way for our members to connect with industry and research partners."

The day wrapped up with a sundowner, offering attendees the chance to continue conversations, ask follow-up questions, and network.

The Liebe Group would like to thank all the members and industry representatives who attended the day for sharing their expertise and helping to make the day a success.



**Photo 3 & 4.** John Broster and Amber Martin presenting the Impact of Stubble Height on Cropping Systems



**Photo 5.** Reducing Risks to Canola Establishment - Depth of Sowing and UAN Rates and Placement presented by Andrew Wherrett, Living Farm

# GERMINATION TESTING OF RAIN AFFECTED CROPS IN THE LIEBE

## AREA **By Amber Martin, Liebe Group**

Over the last couple of months the Liebe Group have been conducting germination testing on rain affected wheat and lupin samples provided by local growers. This research has provided reassuring results for wheat growers concerned about the impact of harvest rain. Despite the grain tested receiving 56 to 66mm rainfall during harvest, the wheat germination remained unaffected. Germination results for Vixen, Calibre, Anvil, and Havoc all exceeded 90% with an overall average germination rate of 96%, with no difference between varieties.

Importantly, while moisture can impact grain viability, the falling numbers for Anvil and Havoc were 350 and 370, respectively, with moisture levels below 10%, indicating that these samples were not significantly affected by the rain. The Vixen sample had a falling number result of approximately 310, although this number varied greatly (270 to 372 for the sampled paddock and the adjoining paddock). The calibre was taken from a mixed sample with

falling numbers varying from 260 to over 400. Research has shown that if falling numbers drop below 300, germination can be compromised, as this suggests the grain has begun sprouting (DPIRD WA, Riverine Plains).

Unfortunately, there was not a reliable germination result for lupins due to high variability within treatments.

These findings highlight the importance of germination testing following a wet harvest, ensuring confidence in seed viability ahead of the next cropping season.

### References

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD WA). (2023). Factors affecting grain crop seed germination. Government of Western Australia. Retrieved February 20, 2025, from QR code here>>



Riverine Plains Inc. (2024). Issues with rain during harvest. Retrieved February 20, 2025, from QR code here>>



# DO YOU HAVE A WEATHER STATION OR AUTOMATED RAIN GAUGE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD TO THE LIEBE NETWORK?

## By Rebecca Wallis, Liebe Group

Liebe Group weather station network was initiated in 2021 with project funding and support from the National Landcare Program, the network comprises of 13 weather stations and soil probes, along with an additional 10 standalone rain gauges. Over the last four years, the data from the network has been available to all Liebe members through the Wildeye app. From 2024, the network has been internally funded by the Liebe Group for 2024, with the investment also covering a 12-month trial of the Pairtree platform, aimed at enhancing data integration and presentation.

The data from these devices has promoted a lot of discussion about factors such as stored soil water throughout the season, rainfall patterns across the district, understanding optimal spraying conditions, frost mapping and seasonal decision making for seeding and nitrogen applications.

After feedback from the host growers of these devices, it was proposed that exploring a more user-friendly dashboard to display the data would be beneficial. The relationship with Pairtree was initiated in July and is now available to all Liebe members to view.



Pairtree is a universal computer dashboard to centralise all farm data into a single log in space. You can view, navigate and analyse all data, no matter the source or device type, across a farm operation, or in Liebe's case, a district network.

To access the Liebe Group members network on Pairtree use the QR code with the password details below.



USERNAME: [liebegroup24@pairtree.co](mailto:liebegroup24@pairtree.co)

PASSWORD: Liebegroup2024

Pairtree is currently being trialled by the Liebe Group until July 2025. There is an opportunity to add additional weather stations onto this network during this time. Devices can be from any manufacturer – ie Wildeye, Metos, Origo etc. Please contact Rebecca Wallis if you would like to become involved in the network  
E: [rebeccawallis01@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawallis01@gmail.com); M: 0400 681 054

# 2025 RELEASE UREA SUSTAIN OFFERS HIGHEST NBPT CONCENTRATION

By Peter Rees and Gustavo Boitt

## New and improved Urea Sustain coming in 2025

Next year Western Australian growers will have access to CSBP’s new and improved Urea Sustain. Through our continued investment in research and data gathered through local trials, we have identified that Urea Sustain can perform better for WA growers with a higher concentration of N-(n-butyl) thiophosphoric triamide (NBPT), added.

Next season, CSBP will use a coating containing NBPT at a rate of 566 mg/kg, up from the 259 mg/kg used in 2024. This means the new and improved Urea Sustain will have the highest rate of NBPT available in the WA market.

While CSBP will be increasing the rate of NBPT used in Urea Sustain next year, the nitrification inhibitor used in the original formula, 3,4-Dimethyl pyrazol Phosphate (DMPP), will be removed. Going forward CSBP will continue to investigate nitrification inhibitors that provide the best fit for WA agricultural conditions.

## Where have we come from and what’s happening next?

Urea Sustain was introduced to the Western Australian market by CSBP in 2023, and has proven effective in reducing nitrogen (N) losses, increasing N use efficiency (NUE) and enhancing yield. These results were extensively shown in CSBP’s field research program in the 2022 and 2023 growing seasons, and summarised at the [2024 GRDC Research Updates \(Rees et al., 2024\)](#).

In our continued effort to improve NUE of farming operations in WA and boost grower returns on their fertiliser investment, CSBP conducted a series of field and laboratory experiments to investigate the mechanisms underpinning N loss and the benefits of enhanced efficiency fertilisers.

The results of these experiments are compelling and have informed CSBP’s decision to improve what was already a well-established, and proven high-efficiency nitrogen source.

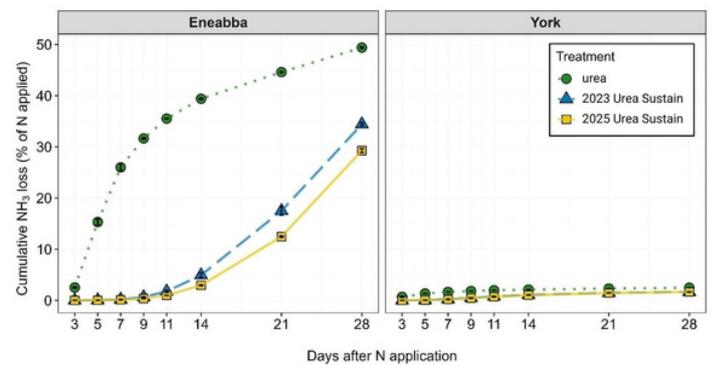
## Studying the original and new Urea Sustain formulas

Laboratory studies compared urea, the original formulation of Urea Sustain (2023 Urea Sustain), and CSBP’s new formulation of Urea Sustain (2025 Urea Sustain) treated with a higher rate of NBPT. These tests (following the method described in Hearn et al., 2023) measured gaseous N losses by quantifying the ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) volatilisation potential on light and medium soils. Soils (0-10cm) were collected from paddocks at Eneabba (sand) and York (loam), WA.

The new formula for Urea Sustain was also tested in field trials at Dandaragan throughout 2024.

## Urea Sustain Trial Results

NH<sub>3</sub> volatilisation losses depended on the soil type. Cumulative N losses for urea were nearly 50% for the Eneabba soil, but only 2.5% for the York soil (Figure 1). After two weeks, the 2023 Urea Sustain reduced volatilisation losses by 80% on the Eneabba sand, while the 2025 Urea Sustain reduced losses by nearly 90%. After 28 days, CSBP’s 2023 Urea Sustain reduced the cumulative NH<sub>3</sub> losses by 30% compared to regular urea, while the 2025 Urea Sustain further reduced the cumulative NH<sub>3</sub> volatilisation by an additional 10%.



**Figure 1.** Cumulative ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) volatilisation, by soil, from the treatments tested as a percentage of the N applied.

The field trial at Dandaragan supported these findings and CSBP’s previous research. At this trial N treatments were top dressed on wheat at Z22 onto moist, sandy soil, with no follow up rain occurring for six days. These conditions were conducive to ammonia volatilisation,



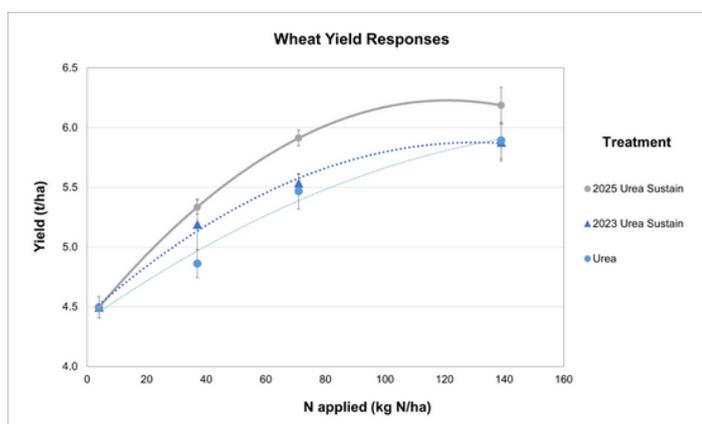
and consequently there was good response where inhibitor products were used.

Visually, the plots with 2023 Urea Sustain had less biomass and greenness compared to the 2025 Urea Sustain (Figure 2). This was also supported by plant testing, where 2023 Urea Sustain had 15% less N uptake than 2025 Urea Sustain.



**Figure 2.** Improvements in biomass and greenness were visible when comparing 2023 Urea Sustain (LHS) with 2025 Urea Sustain (RHS). Both plots were supplied with 135 kg/ha N.

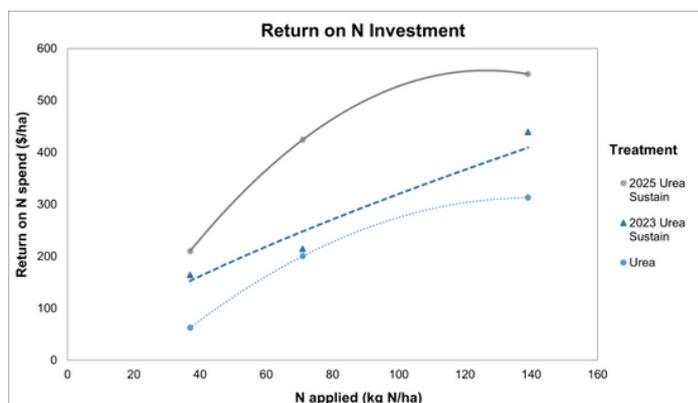
At harvest, the trial showed the 2023 Urea Sustain increased wheat yields by an average of 2.3% over urea at all N rates, and up to 6.7% at 37 kg N/ha. However, the 2025 Urea Sustain boosted yields by an average of 7.5% at all N rates, and 9.7% at 37 kg N/ha (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Wheat yield responses (t/ha) to N applied as urea (blue dots), 2023 Urea Sustain (blue triangles) and 2025 Urea Sustain (grey dots) at Dandaragan. Each dot represents the average of three replicates. Bars indicate standard errors.

### Improving grower returns

In this trial, using the 2025 Urea Sustain increased grower returns by an average of over \$200/ha compared to urea, and more than \$120/ha compared to the 2023 Urea Sustain. (Figure 4). These gains were driven by improvements in both yield and protein.



**Figure 4.** Return on nitrogen investment (\$/ha) for N sources at Dandaragan. Free In-Store grain and fertiliser prices as at 26 November 2024, assumed \$40/t to convert to farm gate prices.

### Continued investigations – Best advice

The CSBP Agronomy and Field Research team is awaiting the results of another field trial at Grass Patch and some tracer studies using urea enriched with the stable N isotope (15N) to track the fate of applied N with and without inhibitors under field conditions. The team looks forward to sharing these results once they are available.

### CSBP's extensive infrastructure network primed to despatch Urea Sustain

CSBP has invested significantly in its coating infrastructure and has the capability to despatch it at several locations across WA – Geraldton, Kwinana, Albany and Esperance. CSBP's coating capability at the point of despatch provides improved efficiency and customisation for growers seeking NS/NK/NKS blends.



[www.csbp.com.au](http://www.csbp.com.au)



## SEED DESTRUCTORS IN WET HARVEST ENVIRONMENTS

By Eric Nankivell, Director Farmanco

### Key Points

- Seed destructors can be economically costly in high harvest-weather-risk environments.
- Be sure to assess the trade-off costs of this technology.
- Maybe adapting destructor use to the higher weed risk parts of the rotation can still maintain the benefits while reducing costs.
- Developing destructor technology is moving toward optional use.

With any agriculture system we implement there are challenges, opportunities and trade-offs.

At the base of it, when you're instigating a seed destructor in the system (for example) the main aim is to do a better job at destroying weeds and to pre-preparing the paddock for the following year's crop, by not having to go back and manage residues after harvest.

In this way you're taking more time over harvest but the reason is to set things up well for the coming year.

The risk of the slower harvest rate is that the crop is exposed to a longer period in the environment and the risk of downgrading or weather damage increases.

As a result, the adoption of seed destructing activities tend to be more successful when you have a relatively dry harvest environment; that is, we expect to see weather downgrades in two or less in every five years. But if you are in an environment where weather downgrades are more than two, three or four years in a five-year period the cost downgrade can significantly outweigh the benefit of weed control.

I have clients in two camps here with really different discussions in different locations. Clients (predominantly in Western Australia) who are fully committed to the process, prepared to slow down harvest and see that it's setting up the process well.

They are happy to have that step down in speed for the seed destructor and gain weed control in the process. These are generally lower weather-at-harvest risk environments.

In some of the higher rainfall zones, more so in the east, there are a number of locations that have had between three and five wet year harvests in the last five. In this environment, if you committed to slow down for a seed destructor you're costing yourself a lot in yield, quality and price because of these rainfall events at harvest.

As a result, some guys who've been using seed destructors now for five years have decided that the downside risk is too high. These are fellas who know the plan and have been the early adopters of the technology. There is some industry pressure over this discussion – with almost religious zeal: 'how can you possibly question this technology?'

Because it's a newer and evolving technology it is still a bit clunky. It is fiddly to remove from the machine easily and challenging to put back on. Therefore, even if you want to use the seed destructor for certain periods it might not be practical or convenient to do so.

This could be changing with (for example) the ready-cop destructor in the back of the X9. This is set up so you can bypass the destructor and not have to use it all of the time. This would be a significant advantage in a higher rainfall risk environment because it's easy to make that decision not to destruct all of the time.

There are of course different times and parts of the rotation where the seed destructor may or not be as useful.

For example, if you're harvesting canola and spraying over the top, while it is handy to have a backup for any escapes, the portion of escapes is very low and working the whole program with the seed destructor may not



always be necessary. Speeding up the canola program is a key in reducing weather yield loss and downgrade in cereals.

Destructors also work very well in some crops like barley, particularly if it is dense and competition with ryegrass forces the ryegrass to be more erect. Using the destructor in a barley environment works quite well also because newer barley varieties are shorter and therefore have less straw, so this is an advantage in slowing down the machine less.

I'm not sure how to measure this, I don't have any empirical evidence, but it certainly seems that ryegrass has evolved. Ryegrass is not being picked up on destructor, particularly later in the cereal harvest, where ryegrass has matured. Those grasses that have bent over and matured earlier are left behind and created a seed bank and the effectiveness of the seed destructor doesn't seem to be nearly as good as it was five years ago. It would be good to see some research around this space to answer the question.

When you look at other trade-offs you get examples where harvesting wheat at 26 t/hr and 100% engine load turns into a 60% engine load and 45t to the hour when the seed destructor dropped off.

This may be an extreme example, and it's frustrating that the machine has dropped off but that's the magnitude of difference. The implications for speed, fuel use, repairs and depreciation are becoming more significant as the machines get more expensive.

Where are we at with the destructor technology? In my mind, it would be good to have some evidence to support this but it is quite successful in dryer environments where the risk of harvest rain is low. It is much more challenging and expensive in lots of other ways if you've a high probability of harvest rain events.

It is hard to know of course. You can look back over 30 years and see that your rainfall probably is two years in five, so you can answer yes or no. But then it becomes challenging if in the last five years you've had five wet

harvests in that period. That suggests a whole different level of risk. We don't know if this is a short-term weather problem or a long-term change. The risk, however, seems to be higher in some areas.

What we do know is the magnitude of the yield loss and downgrade cost.

This alone suggests that you still need to look at all other options, including mechanical for control of (particularly) ryegrass, which doesn't necessarily require the destructor in every phase. We need every tool to beat ryegrass.

I think it's like the evolution of any technology. There are situations where it works and where it doesn't. Environments where it does and doesn't. The ability with new inbuilt technology to be selective about when you use it or don't, improves opportunity and reduces some of the risks.

Your planning needs to be focussed around what part of the rotation and what ryegrass risk you have in terms of when you use the destructor. Clearly, you need to prioritise this based around your own issues, prioritising where the risks are low.



**Photo credit:** Redekop

## NUFARM TERRAIN FLOW - BENEFITS & CONSIDERATIONS

### By Nufarm Australia

With sowing approaching in coming months across the Northern Ag Region (NAR), it's time to think about pre-emergent herbicide selection. Nufarm Terrain Flow was used over large areas of wheat pre-planting in WA in 2024 and is being included in many crop plans again this season. Here we share key learnings from last season to help you get the best out of this flexible, high performance pre-emergent herbicide option.

### **Excellent mix partner for increased residual control of broadleaf and grass weeds, strong resistance management tool**

Offering strong early residual control of both wild radish and annual ryegrass, Terrain Flow is a great mix partner option for improved pre-emergent programs handling our top WA weeds. Consisting of 480 g/L Flumioxazin, Terrain Flow is a Group 14 herbicide that offers a different mode of action to most current pre-emergents to include in your mix. In 2024 we saw Terrain Flow go out predominantly with Pyroxasulfone but also in combination with Trifluralin and other pre-emergents, adding another option to 'Mix and Rotate', as promoted in the Weedsmart Big 6 Herbicide Resistance management approach.

Chris Wilkins from Synergy Consulting said from the 2024 season he observed Terrain Flow to be a flexible pre-emergent mix partner.

"Terrain Flow has very good residual radish control as well as very good ryegrass control when mixed with trifluralin, and excellent ryegrass control when mixed with Sakura. There were reduced wheat seedling numbers when used dry on low OM sands with little stubble cover," Mr Wilkins said.

"For the 2025 season, Terrain Flow is a good alternative MOA to Callisto for residual radish control and it adds extra ryegrass control to pre-emergent mixes. I saw excellent results at 125 mL/ha but be cautious on low OM sands, especially when sowing dry, although it is very safe on heavy soils."

### **Logistics benefits, before and after seeding**

The residual weed control mentioned above means no

rushing back to your wheat crops for early post-emergent spraying of Terrain Flow treated paddocks, a huge benefit when people and machinery power are in high demand.

Depending on the tank mix partner, Terrain Flow has up to seven days after spraying before it is required to be incorporated by seeding. Another huge logistical benefit.

### **Considerations for your farm - what we learned in 2024**

Terrain Flow gave pleasing levels of weed control in 2024. Here are some key considerations to assist you in confidently using this popular option this season and beyond.

#### *Seeding system:*

Like other pre-emergent herbicides, seed and treated soil separation is essential to avoid crop damage from Terrain Flow. Knife-points and press wheels should be used while disc seeders are not suitable. There should be enough soil throw out of the furrow with the seeding operation to throw treated soil out, but not so far that it moves into the adjacent furrow. Conversely, if not enough soil throw is achieved, weed seeds may sit on the soil surface and not be covered by treated soil.

As Terrain Flow works through root and shoot uptake, the weeds need to germinate in the herbicide treated band for the best chance of a lethal dose.

#### *Stubble coverage:*

To achieve the best weed control Terrain Flow should be applied to standing stubble or where there is 40% or less ground coverage (scan QR code for label). Very heavy stubble loads, or chaff patches and header trails, can result in inadequate incorporation of the herbicide.

#### *Soil type, moisture and seeding depth:*

Moist soil is preferable as Terrain Flow is bound more tightly to moist soil and it also helps avoid furrow collapse (herbicide-treated dry soil falling back into the furrow, or dust settling in the furrow). Soil type can also affect this (see [label](#) for comments on soil type).

Seeding depth is important and should be no less than



3cm (see Terrain Flow label, extract below). In 2024, anticipating wind after seeding and worried about furrow fill and wheat having to emerge from too deep, some farmers in the NAR seeded between 1-2cm. Instead of the wind, 70-80mm of rain fell. The very dry conditions prior to and at seeding, followed by heavy rainfall meant that typically tightly-bound Terrain Flow was washed off dry soil and into the wheat seed germination zone. Atypically, more crop effect was observed last year than in over ten years of research and development by Nufarm with Terrain Flow. In some cases and conditions, we saw necrosis (death) of oldest leaves and early crop biomass reduction.

While soil type and condition (moisture levels, stubble coverage) are key in minimising the risk of early crop effect, things no-one wants to see their wheat crop go through, trial and commercial results show, even if this does occur, it is not the end of the crop by a long shot! In every known case including the replicated field trials conducted by SLR in 2024, early crop effect from Terrain Flow did not result in a significant reduction in yield when the label instructions were followed. This highlights the importance of always adhering to the label to minimise the risk of crop effect.

### Trial data from 2024

Results from three trials in WA conducted by SLR

**Table 1.** Terrain Flow in a tank mix with Pyroxasulfone resulted in significantly greater yields than the untreated control and no significant yield difference from equivalent pre-emergent herbicide treatments at all locations despite early crop effect.

Trial Location	Soil Type	Rainfall (mm)		Yield (t/ha)	
		14 days prior to IBS Treatment	14 days after IBS Treatment	UTC	Terrain Flow@ 125 ml/ha + Pyroxasulfone @ 118 g/ha
Goomalling	Gravelly sand	0	16.6	3.53	4.14
Dalwallinu	Sandy loam	41	15	1.39	1.84
Kellerberrin	Gravelly sand	30	12.5	3.08	4.19

followed a similar pattern with increased early crop effect observed in trial locations where there were dry soil conditions at sowing followed by significant rainfall. In all three locations, early crop biomass reduction and loss of oldest wheat leaves did not result in a significant yield loss compared to the untreated control and a wide range of other pre-emergent treatments.

These learnings, as well as first-hand farmer experience, is why Nufarm is confident Terrain Flow will continue to grow in popularity throughout the region.

Peter Horwood, Mingenew Farmer, used Terrain Flow for the first time in 2024.

“Terrain Flow’s advantages for me included its extended incorporation time and enhanced ryegrass control when used as a mixing partner. Additionally, it also has added broadleaf suppression, taking pressure off early broadleaf control, is a different mode of action, and can be used in some pre-sowing situations ahead of legumes and field peas.”

“It is definitely a product that you want to understand first before using as it has the potential to be really helpful when used accordingly, so reading the label is key here,” Mr Horwood said.

Scan here to view label



# MAKING BETTER USE OF YOUR LIME BUDGET

By Alisa Bryce and Wayne Pluske

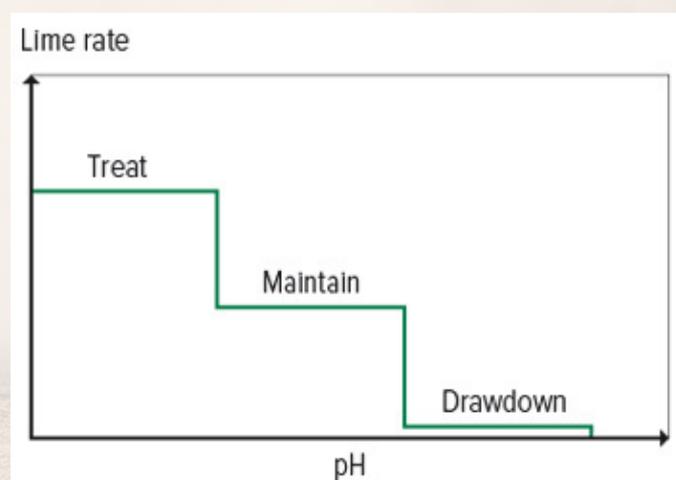
Lime is a long-term investment, necessary to counter the ongoing acidification of agricultural soils. Although lime is often viewed as a variable cost it is better viewed as a capital expense – to maintain or improve a fixed asset (the soil) for future benefit.

Without lime, soil continues to acidify, eating away at yield potential and limiting rotations available to farmers. The costs compound because as the acidity yield gap increases so does the cost to close it. Lime is a necessary expense and is usually cash flow negative for the first few years, but a bit of reframing and budget management can make the investment more palatable to implement.

## Treat, maintain, draw down

The ideal situation is to be in a liming maintenance phase (Figure 1). In the maintenance phase, soil pH is above the set targets to at least 30cm depth. For many years now the industry has targeted a pH of at least 5.5 (CaCl<sub>2</sub>) in the topsoil (0-10cm) over a subsurface of pH of at least 4.8, although many growers are now setting their standards higher (for example, 5.8 – 6.2 over 5.2 – 5.5).

When pH is in the maintenance range, lime applications are only needed to mitigate ongoing acidification. The maintenance phase is where pH is good to depth and only maintenance applications of lime (typically 1 – 2 t/ha every 3 – 4 years) are needed to counter annual acidification caused by cropping and to ensure alkalinity continues to move down the profile to protect against subsoil acidity long-term.



**Figure 1.** For soil pH we want the treat phase to become the maintenance phase. Once in the maintenance phase, avoid slipping back into the treat phase.

If the pH is well above the targets (typically inherently alkaline soils) the soil is in the drawdown phase and lime is not required unless pH levels creep down towards the minimum target levels.

When pH levels are below the targets, lime is needed to both decrease acidity (which in turn will increase yield) and to mitigate ongoing acidification (which will otherwise slowly erode yields further if adequate lime has not been applied). This ‘treat’ phase is the most expensive due to the high rates and costs of lime needed and the ongoing yield gap. In the treat phase, yield is penalised every season.

This treat, maintain, watch approach for lime is similar to how the fertiliser industry has long explained applications of fertiliser, especially phosphorus fertilisers. They have also used the terms “capital” and “build up” to explain fertiliser applications when in the treatment phase.

## Moving from treat to maintain

Treating acidic soil and moving into a maintenance program requires higher rates of lime and more than likely incorporating lime to depth. Maintenance applications can be topdressed but because lime can take many years to move deeper into the soil, soil acidity needs to be ‘treated’ by putting the lime at depth where the acidity is.

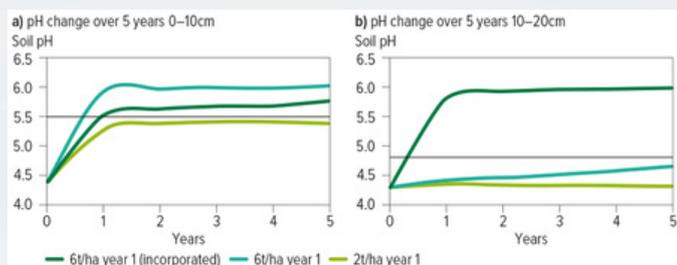
This requires soil testing to at least 30cm, in a minimum of 10cm increments. Soil pH can vary in the top 10cm so it is a good idea to check a few 0-5cm and 5-10cm samples to make sure that a 0-10cm soil test is not masking a more acidic subsurface layer.

Figure 2 compares soil pH for three scenarios:

- Applying lime at 2 t/ha in year 1
- Applying lime at 6 t/ha in year 1
- Applying and incorporating 6 t/ha of lime to 20cm

The data, derived from iLime scenarios, used a sandy earth soil with pH of 4.4 in 0-10cm, 4.3 in 10-20cm, and 4.2 in 20-30cm.

2 t/ha was not enough lime to put soil pH in the maintenance phase. 6 t/ha moved the topsoil from treat to maintain, but 10-20cm was still below the recommended minimum pH. Only incorporating lime moved the top 20cm of soil from treat to maintain.



**Figure 2.** pH change over 5 years in a sandy earth soil in 0-10cm (top) and 10-20cm (bottom) using three different liming strategies (data from iLime). Targets for minimum pH are marked with a black line. pH below the black line is in the ‘treat’ phase; above the black line is in the ‘maintain’ phase.

### Only use the vegemite strategy where appropriate

Lime rates need to be high enough to treat acidity at all depths, not just the top 10cm. The vegemite approach – a set amount of lime spread at low rates over a large area has little value. It does not treat the acidity, the yield gap remains, but the costs of lime application and spreading are still worn. Using the vegemite strategy in the treatment phase means staying in the treatment phase. The vegemite strategy is more appropriate in the maintenance zone.

### Making better use of the lime budget

To get the most out of the lime budget, treat fewer hectares properly with higher lime rates and incorporate where necessary. Incorporation or strategic tillage often has co-benefits of removing other soil constraints such as compaction and mixing of water repellent topsoil and stratified nutrients.

Consider the following two scenarios:

1. Using the vegemite strategy with 2 t/ha over 2000 ha.
2. Treating 300ha by incorporating lime at 6 t/ha.

Ameliorating a smaller area properly (Scenario 2) costs less overall (\$164,400 vs \$305,600). The yield boost in the treated area will last for multiple seasons while other areas are ameliorated. Figure 3 compares yield for 5 years from these scenarios, using a back-to-back wheat rotation (data derived from iLime). The small yield boost from 2 t/ha has been lost by year 5.

Treating a smaller area properly increases the chances of a positive cash flow on the investment in the shortest timeframe.

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
<b>Current yield (t/ha)</b>	1.6	1.6
<b>Area (ha)</b>	2000	300
<b>Lime rate (t/ha)</b>	2	6
<b>Total lime (t)</b>	4000	1800
<b>Lime cost (t/ha)</b>	80	80
<b>Total lime cost (\$)</b>	320,000	144,000
<b>Mixing cost (\$/ha)</b>	-	140
<b>Total mixing cost (\$)</b>	-	42,000
<b>Yield change (%)</b>	1	10
<b>Post lime yield (t/ha)</b>	1.62	1.76
<b>Yield change value (\$)</b>	7.2	72
<b>Yield benefit (\$)</b>	14,400	21,600
<b>Total cost (\$)</b>	320,000	186,000
<b>Cost minus yield benefit</b>	305,600	164,400

### Don't slip back into the recovery phase

Maintenance applications are critical so acidity does not slip back into the treatment phase. When acidity builds up, hydrogen ions leach deeper causing subsurface and subsoil acidity which is more expensive to treat.

### Treat other issues

Of course, if there are other soil limitations to root growth like ag-induced compaction (lighter soils) or high bulk density, structureless, blocky soil (duplex and heavier soils) these need treating too. Treating acidic soil will only have a limited impact if other constraints continue to hinder root growth.

Reviewed by Steve Carr (Aglime of Australia) and Chris Gazey (DPIRD).

*This article was produced as part of the GRDC 'Maintain the longevity of soils constraints investments and increase grower adoption through extension - western region' investment (PLT1909-001SAX). This project is extending practical findings to grain growers from the five-year Soil Constraints - West suite of projects, conducted by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), with GRDC investment.*

# THE MYTH OF NET-ZERO IN AGRICULTURE

By Sarah Melville Maguire, Senior Manager, ESG

**As a sustainability advisor, it's always exciting to hear climate change becoming a focal point in agriculture conversations. However, whether intentional or not, these discussions often bring pressure on farmers to reduce carbon emissions.**

At RSM, we work closely with farmers to measure and understand their carbon emissions, often for the first time. This pressure farmers are facing becomes evident in our conversations with them. Once we have completed our calculations and analysis, and shown farmers their carbon emissions, we often hear a telltale question: "How much will this cost me in carbon offsets?"

Considering the increasing focus on climate change, it's an obvious question, and understanding the implications of a carbon number through a cost lens can be a helpful approach. But this question highlights the problem with our current conversation – it's creating an impression that net zero is an imminent goal for farmers, and responsibility for it falls squarely on their shoulders. This is far from the truth.

Farmers aren't expected to buy thousands of dollars' worth of carbon offsets every year. In fact, even under optimistic scenarios, modelling shows agriculture emissions will only be reduced by about 20 per cent by 2050. This demonstrates a truth we must be pragmatic about: **there is no expectation that Australian farmers and the agriculture industry will achieve net zero carbon emissions in the near future.**

So, if we aren't expecting our farmers to achieve net zero, why are we always talking about it? The answer is in one simple word: **opportunity**. The ag sector is home to some of the most significant climate opportunities in our economy, accounting for around 55% of Australia's land use and nearly 17% of national emissions.

## **How can farmers take advantage of the net zero conversation?**

There are two primary levers available to the farming community to benefit from this conversation: offsets and reductions.

**Carbon offsets** are a mechanism to compensate for emissions by removing carbon elsewhere, and the resulting offsets can be sold to companies looking to offset their emissions. And they present the opportunity for new income streams for farmers. Farmers can develop carbon offsets through programs such as soil carbon projects and planting non-arable land, and the resulting carbon credits can be used to lower their own emissions or create a new income stream.

Farmers also have a significant opportunity to **reduce carbon emissions**. There is growing market for lower carbon agriculture products, particularly in export markets, which can provide a price premium. There are several mechanisms that farmers can use to achieve reductions, such as improving livestock management approaches, altering feedstuff, and reducing fertiliser use.

Whether you're looking into offsetting, reducing, or both, the first step is understanding your own emissions profile.

Ultimately, it's easy to get caught up in the intensity of the conversations around carbon emissions, especially when it is the topic of every conference and event. Our focus needs to be on a pragmatic approach to reducing emissions through identifying the easy-wins and big opportunities for each farm.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you're interested in any of the carbon opportunities on your farm, please reach out to your local RSM adviser today.



# National Industry-Led Carbon Farming Outreach Program

## Project Overview

The National Industry-Led Carbon Farming Outreach Program (CFOP) unites 39 farming groups, representing 20,000+ farms, to deliver over 160 workshops and 50 events across Australia.

Empowering 3,500+ farms with carbon reduction tools and training 130 'train-the-trainer' participants to support ongoing knowledge sharing.

Partnering with local advisors to deliver tailored sessions, build sector capacity, and ensure access to independent advice on low emission farming.

## Objectives

- ✓ Helping farmers reduce emissions with informed decisions.
- ✓ Training trusted advisers to provide credible, independent advice.
- ✓ Ensuring clear, consistent, and culturally appropriate information on carbon farming and low-emission practices.

## Outcomes

- ✓ Supporting farmers to make informed decisions to lower emissions.
- ✓ Boosting knowledge of emissions management in farming.
- ✓ Equipping advisers with skills and resources for ongoing support.



[gga.org.au/carbon](https://gga.org.au/carbon)

[carbon@gga.org.au](mailto:carbon@gga.org.au)

# APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR 2025 RABOBANK BUSINESS PROGRAMS – OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADING AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND FARMERS



Rabobank

Applications for the 2025 intake of Rabobank’s Business Management Programs – the Farm Managers Program (FMP) and the Executive Development Program (EDP) – are now open.

Designed for farmers at various career stages, the two available programs – the Executive Development Program for farm business owners or senior managers and the Farm Managers Program for emerging farmers – aim to provide participants with the latest insights in business management.

Announcing the opening of applications for 2025, Rabobank regional manager Australia and New Zealand Mark Wiessing said more than 1400 primary producers from both sides of the Tasman had participated in the Business Management Programs across the past 25 years.

“The programs are incredibly valuable for primary producers as they allow the opportunity to take a step back from the day-to-day operational side of their businesses and spend time developing strategies to help ensure that their operations remain resilient into the future,” he said.

“The programs also provide participants with networking opportunities with like-minded primary producers from different sectors across the two countries and, in many cases, relationships started on the programs continue far beyond the completion of the course. Previous participants tell us these ongoing relationships are a key benefit of the course and we help to foster these via our regular Business Management Program alumni events across Australia and New Zealand.”

Mr Wiessing said Rabobank’s long-term support of the Business Management Programs, was aimed at assisting farmers to grow and build resilience. “And in this way, the bank also contributes to strengthening rural communities – with rural and regional communities benefiting from a financially-healthy local agricultural sector,” he said.

“The program will help participants enhance their leadership and operational skills to prepare themselves for future management roles, and includes sessions on topics including communication and influencing skills, conflict management, sustainable farm business planning, financial management and managing people.”

Mr Wiessing said the Executive Development Program, which runs as two one-week long residential modules approximately a year apart, will be held at Macquarie University in Sydney, with the first module running from August 24 to 29 this year and the second scheduled for late July 2026.

“The EDP helps participants build strategic planning capabilities and commercial management skills to help drive business growth,” he said.

“Key topics covered on the program include formulation and implementation of long-term strategy, applying effective economic rationale to goal setting and decision making, and effective leadership skills.

“Between the first and second modules of the program, participants are also tasked with developing a management project which explores opportunities to make improvements within their own farming operation.

“This element of the program gives participants an opportunity to immediately apply the skills and knowledge from the first EDP module and, over the years, we’ve had some fantastic ideas outlined in these projects which have resulted in significant positive benefits for our participants’ farming businesses.”

EDP alumni and winner of the 2024 Dr John Morris Business Development Prize – a prestigious trans-Tasman business prize awarded annually as part of the program – Stuart Tait believes the course was exactly what he needed to continue to develop his career and management skills.

“I applied for the Executive Development Program with the aim of developing a strategic plan for the next 10 to 15 years for our beef-cattle breeding and trading, and dryland winter cropping business, and to learn how to identify and analyse various opportunities which may present themselves,” he said.

Mr Tait, based near Mandurama on the NSW Central Tablelands, said the course allowed him to remove himself from the day-to-day workings of the business and to gain an arm’s length view of the enterprises and where they are heading.

“The EDP was very well organised and structured, each and every session was well aimed to complete the strategic puzzle for a modern farming business,” he said.

“The course provided the tools to really break down the intimidating goal of creating a strategic plan into simple and actionable tasks,” he said. “It was a positive environment to be involved in, with over 30 successful and progressive farmers to learn from.

With numbers on each course limited to maintain group dynamics, positions on the programs are set to be highly contested, with farmers selected to attend from a wide range of commodities and geographical regions across Australia and New Zealand.

**Applications for the FMP and EDP close on Monday, March 31.** Further information and applications can be

found on the Rabobank website, or at <https://www.rabobank.com.au/agribusiness/business-management-programs>

To find out more about Rabobank, contact the local team in Moora and Dalwallinu on (08) 9690 8500.

Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world’s leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 125 years’ experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank is structured as a cooperative and operates in 38 countries, servicing the needs of more than nine million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1000 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group is one of Australasia’s leading agricultural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the region’s food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 87 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.



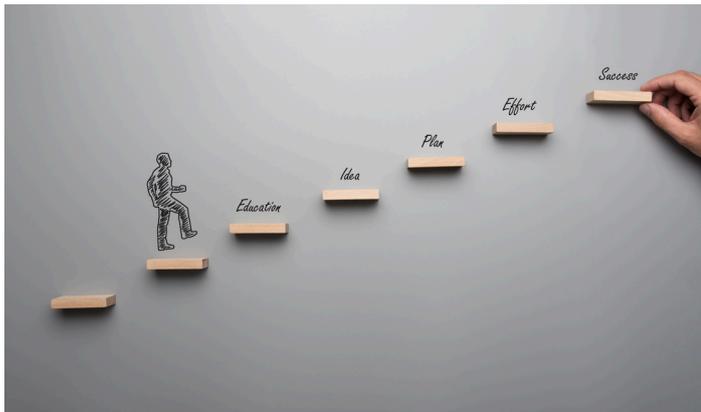
**Photo:** Stuart Tait, Mandurama, NSW, based farmer and Rabobank Executive Development Program (EDP) alumni and winner of the 2024 Dr John Morris Business Development Prize with Rabobank regional manager Australia and New Zealand Mark Wiessing.

# SUCCESSION IS HARD AND WORTH THE PAIN

By Dr Kate Burke, ThinkAgri

Farming families tell me they want their succession planning to deliver something like:

*"A happy extended family that farms well together, can spend important family occasions together, makes money, has enjoyment, creates wealth for those involved and continues to build opportunities for the future generations".*



What I usually encounter is one of three scenarios:

1. There is no plan
2. There is a plan (Well done!)
3. There is a plan AND an implementation pathway (Super Well Done)

The implementation pathway is the instruction manual for an enduring succession process.

New systems are put in place to manage communication and farm records, expectations on working hours, roles and responsibilities are clear. The strategic, tactical and operational jobs get managed. The risk is balanced with reward. Families can still have Christmas together and farming is enjoyable.

An effective succession implementation pathway consists of ANSWERS, DIALOGUE AND ACTION.

## ANSWERS

***Does the succession plan actually solve the underlying problems?***

Are there unspoken problems that require answers sooner rather than later?

For example, part of a succession plan may be to purchase more land to sustain an extra family entering the business. There is an unspoken problem. The farm is underperforming in its current state due to poor timeliness of operations. Acquiring more land won't address that problem. It will just exacerbate it by creating a bigger underperforming business with higher levels of financial risk.

In this case, the first part of the answer is to talk about the unspoken problem and rectify the timeliness issue to improve profits. It could be that plant and equipment is long over due for an upgrade or that are other aspects of the business such as contracting are preventing the home farm tasks done on time.

## DIALOGUE

***Dialogue among the family is the key ingredient for firstly identifying the issues that need to be addressed, creating solutions to address those issues then ensuring that the solutions are implemented.***

In any business, honest, open and respectful communication underpins success. The trouble is most of us haven't been taught how to have difficult or courageous conversations and it's easy to inflame a situation inadvertently.

Facilitators, independent Board Chairs or a Business Consultant can often assist families to have more constructive dialogue. Scheduled meetings rather than adhoc interactions also help promote constructive dialogue. Scheduled meetings don't need to last long, they reduce time wasted in adhoc discussions and they save unnecessary phone calls.

## ACTION

***Strategic action converts answers and dialogue into results.***

Consider the Jones, they've put a sophisticated succession plan in place with robust business structures. There's a plan for Jane to transition into the farm business to join mum, dad and brother Joe and his wife. Months ago, it was identified that communication of day to day tasks could be an issue as dad and Joe are used to

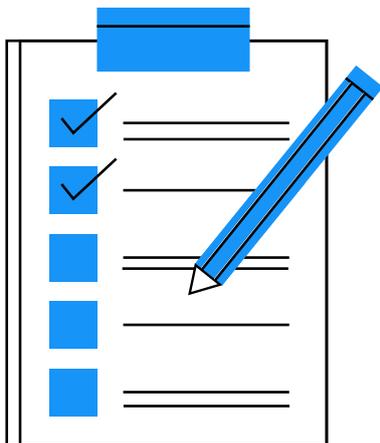


working together and just get up and go. Nothing was ever implemented to address that concern and Jane's never really sure what she should be doing day to day. She's not game to ask as she doesn't want to step on Joes toes. Joe feels like Jane isn't pulling her weight and their relationship is suffering.

A simple solution is to nut out which tasks Jane will be responsible for and to put a system of communication in place, like a quick catch up first thing of a Monday. Simple action to avoid a lot of angst. Succession implementation does not have to be hard, it just needs an investment of time and attention.

The reward for effort of a functional business and a functional family will be above and beyond some of the urgent but not so important daily operational chores that seem to grab our attention and take priority. Good luck.

The following Succession Implementation Pathway Checklist provides a few critical actions than can be the difference between succession distress and success:



- Our succession plan ANSWERS the critical issues that will drive the continued success of our multigenerational farm business.
- We have processes to identify what's working well, what challenges we have and how we can address them.
- Our implementation plan allows for critical DIALOGUE to ensure strategic and operational activities are well executed.



- There is clarity about the timing of one generation stepping back and the other stepping up in farm business decision.
- Leadership and operational roles and responsibilities are clear.
- We have communication processes for allocating operational tasks.
- There is deliberate and sustained ACTION to ensure the succession plan is implemented.
- We have a succession plan strategy and a task list.
- We have periodic strategic check-ins and check up on our succession planning implementation progress.

Happy implementing!

Kate



**Photo:** Dr Kate Burke, ThinkAgri

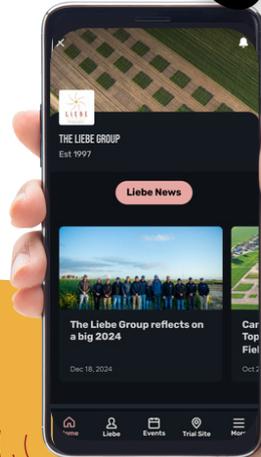
# EXPLORE CONVENIENCE WITH LIEBE'S NEW MOBILE APP!



# COMING SOON!!

A new mobile application is on the way, designed to keep Liebe members informed in a convenient, all-in-one location!

- Our app is designed to keep growers in the Liebe Group area connected, offering easy access to research, resources, and event updates to help with on-farm decision-making and innovation.
- If member have ideas on features you would like to see on the app please let us know!



WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD SOON



## CALL FOR FARMER DEMOS

We are reaching out to farmers who are interested in hosting a farmer-scale trial on their property.

These trials could focus on testing new varieties, evaluating various products, farming practices or a topic of your choice.

If you would like to see these trials conducted on your farm, we would love to hear from you.

For more details or to discuss further, feel free to drop in or get in touch.

Georgia

0437 188 399

[georgia@liebegrup.org.au](mailto:georgia@liebegrup.org.au)

# Steps to Manage Fatigue on Farms

## All farms must have fatigue management within their safety plan.

While there is no one-size-fits all solution, there are steps that can be taken to reduce the risks.

The Safe Work Australia Guide for Managing the Risk of Fatigue at Work has a wide range of actions that you should consider.

SCAN HERE FOR  
WORKSAFE WA



SCAN HERE FOR  
FATIGUE SELF  
ASSESSMENT CHART



### **STEP 1**

As part of the safety induction with workers and contractors, discuss how you manage fatigue on your farm, including identifying signs of fatigue and reporting procedures.

### **STEP 2**

Structure work rosters to reduce potential for fatigue-related issues. This can include the length and timing of shifts and breaks, the number of shifts in a row and the days off between shifts.

### **STEP 3**

Check to ensure workers have got enough sleep (you could use the fatigue self-assessment wall chart as a start). Have specific actions about what will happen if a worker has not had enough sleep.

### **STEP 4**

Build on your discussions (STEP 1), workers watch for signs of fatigue in themselves and others. Have clear steps to allow control measures to be put in place when fatigue signs are reported to reduce risk.

### **STEP 5**

Recognise fatigue and take steps to limit risks including (where practical):- working in pairs, changing tasks, moving safety critical and monotonous tasks to daytime, increasing breaks, napping, increasing frequency of checking on workers fatigue.

### **STEP 6**

Use your experiences to provide feedback on fatigue and to keep improving your fatigue system and controls.

# LIEBE GROUP TEAM

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## ON THE COVER:

Birdseye view

Photo credit: Geoff Ure

*Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Liebe Group staff, Board or members.*

*Disclaimer: Mention of trade names does not imply endorsement or preference of any company's product by the Liebe Group, and any omission of trade names is unintentional. Farmer experience may not work for all.*