

Looking back and forward

Malcolm Sargent, SPAA President



Welcome to the first issue of the new style Precision Ag News. I hope you will spot that it is not just the design that has changed.

For those of you who did not make it to the AGM, no you are not experiencing 'déjà vu', I am back in the chairman's seat.

Although 2006 is a harvest most grain growers would rather forget, I do not think we should walk away from it too quickly as there is probably much to be learnt. With very little rainfall since the break of the season, crops have survived on stored water. This year's yield maps will be a strong indication of areas with better plant available water, so don't switch off the yield

monitor in disgust; let's salvage something useful.

It has been a busy year for SPAA and with an estimated 70% of producers using some form of guidance the opportunities for the future are expanding.

In August the SPAA committee held a strategic planning day to review the future direction for SPAA. Some proposals in the plan are listed below. The committee is meeting regularly to establish and implement a plan of action.

SPAA will become the driving force for precision agriculture in Australia.

SPAA will be a broad based organisation that covers a range of primary industries.

The key goals for the organisation are to:

increase grower adoption of precision agriculture across Australia;

become a significant source of precision agriculture information in Australia;

maintain and develop a stable and professional organisation.

From a technical perspective, SPAA will address three key areas:

- provide an independent source of advice on new concepts and equipment;
- lobby equipment manufacturers for greater compatibility between systems and components;

- facilitate research in innovative areas such as variable rate technologies.

None of this will be achieved without a capable and dedicated committee and executive team.

Many thanks to Brian Tiller for his great contribution as SPAA chairman over the past two years. Brian and I have agreed that we don't intend to rotate as chair and are delighted to welcome some new faces to this year's committee.

A complete list of the committee, their positions and contacts is found below. Many thanks to retiring committee members: Allen Buckley, Brendon Frischke, SARDI and viticulturist Grant Yates, for their contribution to SPAA.

Following four and half years of dedicated service to SPAA, Rohan Rainbow's resignation left SPAA with

a big role to fill. The position of Executive Officer will be advertised in the near future (for more details please contact the SPAA office). One of the tasks of the new Executive Officer will be to expand the work of SPAA into other industry sectors for example potato and cane industries.

this year's yield maps will be a strong indication of areas with better plant available water

Thanks must go to our Treasurer Peter Cousins and Administration Officer Pam Pilkington for taking on many of the tasks previously managed by Rohan.

Training and research are a central part of SPAA activities. During 2006 SPAA organised the second successful autosteer demonstration

day, a PA training day at Birchip and an owner training day for those using variable rate with Kee Technology equipment. SPAA also supported the 10th Annual Symposium on Precision Agricultural Research and Application in Australasia.

SPAA is currently involved with four research trials (See page 6) and has made submissions to National Landcare Program and GRDC for two projects that relate to the implementation of variable rate technologies in broadacre cropping. Many thanks to Allan Mayfield for all his work on these submissions.

As a membership based organisation we want to hear from you. If you have any suggestions regarding research or training needs or are willing to share your PA experiences we would be delighted to hear from you.

SPAA Committee 2006/07

Executive

Malcolm Sargent,

SPAA President

Farmer, Crystal Brook SA.

E president@spaa.com.au

P 08 8636 2565, **M** 0407 395 075

Mark Branson,

SPAA Vice President

Farmer, Stockport SA.

E marknola@bigpond.com.au

P 08 8528 2412, **M** 0417 832 776

Brian Tiller,

SPAA Immediate Past President

Farmer, Warnertown SA.

E btiller@bigpond.com

P 08 8634 3053, **M** 0408 810 068

Peter Cousins,

SPAA Treasurer

Agricultural Consultant,

Crystal Brook SA.

E treasurer@spaa.com.au

P 08 8636 2649, **M** 0408 210 893

Allan Mayfield,

SPAA Research Coordinator

Agricultural Consultant, Clare SA.

E research@spaa.com.au

P 08 8842 3230, **M** 0418 818 569

Committee members:

Rob Bramley,

Principal Research Scientist - CSIRO,
Adelaide SA.

E Rob.Bramley@csiro.au

P 08 8303 8594, **M** 0417 875 803

Randall Wilksch,

Farmer, Yeelanna SA.

E faithfield@bigpond.com

P 08 8676 5050, **M** 0427 86 5051

Craig Humphris,

Farmer, Jamestown SA.

E humpo@bigpond.com

P 08 8665 3264, **M** 0407 586 640

John Heap,

Senior Research Scientist - SARDI,
Adelaide SA.

E Heap.John@saugov.sa.gov.au

P 08 8303 9444, **M** 0428 833 119

Matt McCallum,

Agricultural Consultant,
Ardrossan SA.

E matthew@agconsulting.com.au

P 0438 895 167

Richard Turner,

Farmer, Snowtown SA.

E rpturner@bigpond.com

P 08 8865 2167, **M** 0428 652 167

Ashley Wakefield,

Farmer, Urania SA.

E ashley@netyp.com.au

P 08 8834 1219, **M** 0408 606 177

Colin Hinze,

Viticulturist, Taylors Wines,
Auburn SA.

E colinh@taylorswines.com.au

P 08 8849 1171, **M** 0404 819 330