



2017 | GROWING EXPECTATIONS

A NATIONAL GROWER GROUP SUMMIT

17 - 18 AUGUST 2017 | PAN PACIFIC PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Twitter handle: [#2017ggagrow](https://twitter.com/2017ggagrow)

Growing Expectations is a National Summit hosted by WA's Grower Group Alliance. It will set the scene for national investment trends in the research, development and extension landscape and present the opportunities for regional and local economies through farming group networks.

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FOREWORD

The Grower Group Alliance (GGA) of Western Australia is delighted to welcome a strong and diverse contingent of representatives for the 2017 Growing Expectations Summit. This event is an unprecedented opportunity to foster the provocative discussion and bold thinking to drive the sector forward into the future. It is also an opportunity to build on the grower group network’s strong record of success and proud innovation culture to achieve tangible and transformational results to benefit growers and stakeholders across the supply chain.

The Growing Expectations Summit epitomises what the GGA is about – connecting grower groups to research, development and innovation across industry, agribusiness and the supply chain for the benefit of WA producers. Looking ahead, the direction of the GGA continues to evolve, as our focus shifts from increasing the capacity of grower groups beyond facilitating the delivery of high quality and localised research and development, towards ensuring grower groups are investment ready and best placed to capitalise on growing opportunities across the supply chain.

The phenomenal success of grower groups has not occurred by way of accident – but rather, as a result of the ongoing commitment and dedication of the many volunteers who are so passionate about the role grower groups play in their communities. While these groups often vary in terms of location, size and priorities, they share a range of common goals such as the need to identify local research, development, extension and innovation priorities, and to build social capacity within regional communities. Similarly, these groups are also united in their focus on the need to actively seek opportunities to improve the bottom line for farmer-members in an often challenging environment.

The future growth of Australia’s agricultural industry must emerge from increasing value of production rather than simply increasing volumes. At present, much of the State’s production is treated a generic commodity, offering limited reward to those who are attempting to tailor their production to meet market specifications, consistent quality and value adding potential. Optimising the supply chain requires an ongoing focus by grower groups to exploring value-adding opportunities. It may be as ingenious as grower groups working towards changing a bulk commodity into a bulk consumer product.

It is widely recognised that an important ingredient of innovation is a willingness to challenge the status quo and an openness to explore what is possible. If the sector does not embrace inevitable change and transformation, there will be no room for progress or improvement. In this regard, there is little doubt the grains and livestock sectors in Australia are undergoing rapid change. We are witnessing significant growth and diversification opportunities, and potential returns in a number of new potential and existing markets.

In a rapidly evolving business environment, open communication, processing and marketing information along with an ability and encouragement to act upon that information will have a dramatic impact on future competitiveness and ability to meet market demand of WA products. However, the future success of new strategic alliances will require significant cooperation from all stages of the supply chain from grower groups to processors, and marketers. There has never been a more important time for stakeholders from the supply chain to identify mutual opportunities with the private sector to drive the sector forward. For attendees interested in fostering opportunities to connect with open-minded, vibrant, motivated and passionate producers, the GGA serves as an important function as a conduit between the broader industry and 80 per cent of WA’s growers.

To realise the opportunities before us, the GGA recognises the need to facilitate conversations and networking opportunities. We also recognise the need to empower group groups to recognise their significant untapped potential to increase the value of agricultural products right across Australia. It is also imperative that industry players working alongside grower groups recognise their worth and the role grower groups can occupy as a foundation member of any advanced supply chain.

Kelly Manton-Pearce
Chair
Grower Group Alliance of WA



PROGRAM SUMMARY

WHERE DO FARMING GROUPS NEED TO BE IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

2017 Growing Expectations is a national summit hosted by the Grower Group Alliance (GGA) in WA. It will set the scene for national investment trends in the research, development and extension landscape and present the opportunities for regional and local economies through farming group networks.

The GGA is a farmer-driven initiative that has been connecting grower groups, research organisations and the agribusiness network across the broadacre, mixed farming and livestock grower groups in WA for the past 15 years.

Master of Ceremonies: Bridget Fitzgerald, ABC Country Hour WA presenter.

THURSDAY 17 AUGUST 2017

From 7.45am **Registrations. Tea and Coffee on arrival.**

8.30am National Summit Opening by Dr Kelly Manton-Pearce, Grower Group Alliance Chairperson
Welcome address by Hon Mia Davies, Leader of The Nationals WA

Session 1: Investment across the agricultural R&D supply chain – past, current and future

Extension frameworks for adoption of research and development in agriculture has evolved over time, as have farming groups across Australia. How have these developments influenced the current landscape for farming groups, their value and how will these networks fit in the future with increases in private sector extension investment.

9am Richard Heath, General Manager Research, Australian Farm Institute
9.20am Ruth Nettle, Rural Innovation Research Group, University of Melbourne
9.40am Jan Paul van Moort, Principal, Acil Allen Consulting
10am Peter Cooke, Director, Agknowledge
10.20am Audience Q&A

10.30 – 11am **Morning Break**

Session 2: Strategies for increasing Australia's return on ag-industry R&D Investment

A "fireside" discussion on strategies for increasing returns on investment in R&D within the agriculture industry. What is the future of R&D investment and strategies to maximise adoption across private industry, government and for RDCs and the role of farming system? What collaboration models are needed to improve extension and adoption on farm by producers to better translate research and development outcomes and maximise return on this investment? An keynote overview and facilitated Q&A covering:

1. Delineation of extension for organisations
2. Roles organisations have in relation to extension and future policies on extension and strategies to maximise producer profitability through extension of R&D investment.
3. Delivery mechanisms that will achieve extension strategies and how is this will be coordinated

11am **Key Participants**

Dr Steve Jefferies Managing Director, Grains Research and Development Corporation
Ralph Addis, A/Director General, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Michael Crowley, General Manager Producer Consultation & Adoption, Meat and Livestock Australia
Caroline Welsh Chairperson, Birchip Cropping Group
Sue Middleton Facilitator, WA Grassroots Development
12.10pm Audience Q&A

12.40pm Chris Reichstein, Mt Burdett Farming Company, Nuffield Scholar, Grower Group (SEPWA) & Grower Group Alliance Strategic Advisory Group Member

1-2pm **Lunch Break**

Session 3: Role of farming groups in business, governments and community

Farming groups have become central to local and regional communities. In the absence of core support networks these agri-clusters of farming groups provide integral services to their economies. Hear how groups can evolve to build business through collaboration while maintaining the social structures they support.

2.10pm Cindy Cassidy, Chief Executive Officer, Farmlink
2.30pm Liam O'Connell, General Manager WA Open for Business, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
2.50pm Brendan Nicholas, Esperance Manager Agriculture & Food, Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development
3.10pm Audience Q&A

3.20-3.50pm **Afternoon Break**

Session 4: Innovation and disruption for farming group networks

There is increased focus on innovation and accelerated investment combined with significant interest from commercial fund managers looking for opportunities in the agriculture sector. In this session, hear about cutting-edge research and innovation that will influence future technologies for mixed farming enterprises and the industry.

4.00pm Mat Regan, General Manager People, Technology & Innovation Organisation, CBH Group
4.20pm Annie Brox, Managing Director, Origo
4.40pm Nathan Cattle, Managing Director, Clear Grain Exchange
5.00pm Audience Q&A

THURSDAY EVENING 17 AUGUST 2017

6.30pm Origins Restaurant Cocktail Dinner, WA Grower Group Award & Network Showcase Evening address by Leadership WA, Chief Executive Officer Robyn McClellan

8.30pm Announcement of the 2017 Grower Group of the Year Award, sponsored by the Grain Industry Association of WA
Close

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2017

8.30am **Registrations. Tea and Coffee on arrival.**

Session 5: Co-ops and partnerships to maximise adoption

Across the ag-extension communities of Australasia there are contemporary collaborations leading the agri- industry sector in adoption. These range from profit partnerships directly linking industry and farmers in the pre & post competitive spaces, collaborations accessing specific markets to creation of “value” to support management decision making in the abundance of precision agriculture data. Hear about how others in the industry are collaborating across the sector to drive productivity.

9am Richard Fitzgerald Project Manager – Extension Design, Red Meat Profit Partnership (NZ)
9.20am John Foss Founder & Chairman, The Chia Co
9.40am Chris Sounness Chief Executive Officer, Birchip Cropping Group
10.00am Audience Q&A

10.10 – 10:40 **Morning Break**

Session 6: Changing the model but maintaining the integrity

How can the model of farming groups evolve? Change is inevitable but the integrity of peer to peer extension networks can be maintained. These networks are the closest line of sight for industry and investors to access farmers so how can these be optimised? This session shares options for agri-clusters with proposed and existing models of regionalised operating hubs.

10.50am Ruth Klingner Farmer & Board Member, Central West Farming Systems
11.10am Dr Christine Kershaw Chief Executive Officer, Stirlings to Coast Farmers
11.30am Niki Curtis Executive Officer, SEPWA & Elisa Spengler Executive Officer, RAIN
11.50am Audience Q&A

12 – 1:00pm **Lunch Break**

Session 7: Connecting the supply chain

Shortening the relationship between farmers and industry within the supply chain will lead to greater transparency and clearer market indicators for the industry. Hear from industry about the benefits of having a coordinated supply chain for industry, what this translates to for producers and is there a role for farming groups?

1.10pm Professor Simon Cook Western Australia’s Premier’s Fellow in Agriculture and Food, Curtin and Murdoch University & Food Agility CRC
1.30pm Dale Miles Supply Chain Manager, V&V Walsh Shyamala Vishnumohan Lupins Project,
1.50pm Larissa Taylor Chief Executive Officer, Grain Industry Association of WA
2.10pm Audience Q & A

Session 8: Future directions

2.20pm The final session of the Summit discusses key learnings from the Summit with audience participation
Audience Q&A
3.00-3.30pm Next steps moving forward for farming group and ag-extension communities across Australia.
3:30pm Summit close



BRIDGET FITZGERALD | Presenter, WA Country Hour, ABC
Master of Ceremonies

Bridget began presenting the WA Country Hour program on ABC Radio after working as a rural reporter in Gippsland, eastern Victoria and Bunbury in south west WA. Originally hailing from Melbourne, she began her career as a journalist with Fairfax and a producer with ABC Melbourne, later joining the ABC Rural team, looking for an adventure. She loves exploring rural and regional Australia, meeting wonderful people and telling their stories. She is passionate about rural journalism and believes it is vital as a means to connect Australians living in major cities with the third of their peers that live in the bush.



CBH GROUP PROUDLY SUPPORTING GRAIN GROWING COMMUNITIES.

WA growers and their communities are the lifeblood of our industry. No-one understands this better than the CBH Group. That's why every year, CBH invests more than \$1.5 million to contribute to the vitality, development, wellbeing and safety of these regions.



Key Speakers

HON MIA DAVIES MLA

Leader of The Nationals WA



Mia was first elected to represent the Agricultural Region at the 2008 State election. At the 2013 State election, Mia successfully contested the seat of Central Wheatbelt for The Nationals WA. In November 2013 Mia made history when she became the first female party member to be appointed Deputy Leader of The Nationals WA. A month later she was appointed to Cabinet as Minister for Water; Forestry and in late 2014 added the Sport and Recreation portfolio to her Ministerial responsibilities. She has a particular interest in education and health and has been working to improve these services throughout the Wheatbelt region.

Prior to entering Parliament, Mia worked as a policy adviser for the Leader of the Parliamentary National Party, executive officer at the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and as a communications consultant. Mia holds a Bachelor of Marketing and the Media from Murdoch University. She is a member of the Northam Chamber of Commerce, Avon Tourism Board, Wheatbelt Business Network, Avon Community Development Foundation, Country Women's Association, Youth Advisory Council, Country Arts WA and the Royal Agricultural Society. Following the 2017 State election, Mia was elected Parliamentary Leader of The Nationals WA.

1. RICHARD HEATH

General Manager of Research, Australian Farm Institute



Richard grew up on a family farm on the Liverpool Plains in north west NSW and he managed the cropping operations of the farm for nearly two decades. Crops grown included wheat, barley, chickpeas, faba beans, canola, sorghum, sunflowers, mung beans and cotton. Richard has been an early adopter of new farming technologies and travelled on a Nuffield Scholarship in 2003 researching precision applications of fertiliser. He has had extensive off-farm consulting roles including working with the Grains Research and Development Corporation advising on research priorities for Australian grain growers.

Richard is now the General Manager of Research for the Australian Farm Institute where he is responsible for carrying out research projects and compiling reports on a range of farm and agriculture-related issues. Previous to this role Richard held an academic position with the University of Sydney as Associate Professor of Agronomy and Farm Management responsible for the management of the Universities North West farms group. Richard also is a director of Nuffield Farming Scholars Australia.

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- Module 3:** How do I take my business to the next level?

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- eBook** – Go to www.grdc.com.au/FarmingTheBusinessBook for the Apple iTunes bookstore, and download the three modules and sync the eBooks to your iPad.

2. RUTH NETTLE

Associate Professor, University of Melbourne



Following an earlier career in agricultural extension, Ruth leads the Rural Innovation Research Group (RIRG) at the University of Melbourne in the Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences.

The group conducts research, development and teaching associated with the critical issues of innovation and change in agriculture and in rural communities and the management of human and natural resources. The work of the RIRG ensures people and social issues are viewed by industries and policy-makers as 'core business' to innovation through applying engaged research practices.

Ruth supports agricultural industries and natural resource management agencies design, implement and evaluate research, development and extension programs and was the national research leader for The People in Dairy program (Dairy Australia).

Ruth's research work into the changing role of public and private sector extension and farming networks has attracted interest from many primary industries, culminating in a current project within the Federal governments Rural R&D for Profit program regarding research into agricultural extension systems in Australia in collaboration with six rural industries and two state governments.

3. JAN PAUL VAN MOORT

Principal, ACIL Allen



Jan Paul leads ACIL Allen's agribusiness where he specialises in facilitating, developing and evaluating the strategies, collaborative structures and finance pools underpinning industry development. He has a deep understanding of both strategic and operational dimensions of primary industries, public policy, regional communities and associated challenges and opportunities based on 25 years' of consulting and public sector experience.

Jan Paul has been integrally involved in developing the case for change requiring support and partnerships with multiple industry and Government stakeholders from regional to national levels.

Jan Paul works extensively with local group to develop structures linked to national systems. This includes scoping industry biosecurity funds, transferring irrigation schemes to community ownership, re-establishing cotton extension networks and creating a new dairy herd improvement service.

He recently developed the successful Export Wine and Regional Support Package business case. Last year he reviewed the 263 agricultural levies operating across Australia to support industry RD&E and biosecurity. Jan Paul also developed the northern WA beef industry infrastructure plan and reviewed MLA.

Jan Paul started his career as a development officer working on agricultural productivity, farm planning and natural resource management with farmer groups for the WA and NSW governments.

NOTES



Key Participants



1. SUE MIDDLETON

Panel Moderator

Sue with her husband Michael manage a diversified farm in WA Wheatbelt growing grains, oaten hay and pork. They have also developed Moora Citrus, a 210 ha citrus orchard in the new horticulture growing area near Dandaragan and through their businesses they employ over 30 fulltime staff.

As well as managing the finance, administration and human resources hub for the farming businesses, Sue manages a rural community development consultancy which provides facilitation, project development and planning services to regional communities and groups.

Sue has been actively involved in many leadership roles across industry, leadership, agriculture and rural community development. Current roles include board member of Landcorp and National Chair of the Landcare Advisory Committee.

Sue is passionate about the future of agriculture and the growth potential for the industry and the supply and value chains and has a clear vision for its development. She has 'skin in the game' with investments across a number of agricultural sectors, and has a deep commitment to the growth of agriculture in Western Australia.

For her work, Sue has been awarded the Centenary Medal for Service to Regional Australia in 2002 and was awarded the 2010 RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year for Australia and Western Australia.



1. CAROLINE WELSH

Chairperson, Birchip Cropping Group & Grain Farmer

Caroline is Chair of the Birchip Cropping Group (BCG), a farmer led research and extension organisation in the Wimmera Mallee region of Victoria. BCG specializes in on-farm research trials, variety trials, risk management, precision agriculture, and crop forecasting and managing climate variability for cropping and livestock farmers.

Caroline is a partner in the family grain farm, a board member of GWMWater and has a degree in Agricultural Science and a Master of Marketing (Agribusiness).

She worked in the Irrigated Horticulture Section of the Department of Primary Industries (Vic) for 19 years in the areas of industry development, export marketing, extension, irrigation and climate. Caroline received a Churchill Fellowship in 1998 to investigate markets and competitors of Australia's fresh stone fruit exports.



2. DR STEVE JEFFERIES AM

Managing Director, Grains Research and Development Corporation

Steve has more than 32 years of experience working in the Australian grain industry predominantly in research management. From its inception in 2002 until June 2016, Steve was the CEO of Australian Grain Technologies (AGT), Australia's largest and market leading wheat breeding company. From 1996 to 2002 Steve was a wheat breeder, barley breeder and Senior Lecturer with the University of Adelaide. From 1984 to 1996 Steve held several positions in research management and Ministerial liaison in the State Government of South Australia. In July 2016 Steve commenced as Managing Director of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

Until taking his current position at the GRDC, Steve was also a non-executive Director of Birchip Cropping Group, non-executive Director of Barley Australia, Chairman of the Australian End Point Royalty Steering Committee, member of the Waite Institute Strategic Leadership Committee, and member of the Australian Wheat Quality Classification Council reporting to Wheat Quality Australia and responsible for managing the wheat quality class system in Australia. In June of 2016 Steve was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's birthday honours list for significant services to primary industries.



3. RALPH ADDIS

A/Director General Primary Industries and Regional Development

Ralph brings a wealth of experience from the private, not-for-profit and government sectors to his new role as the Acting Director General of Primary Industries and Regional Development. He has a natural affinity for regional WA having grown up on a farm at Cranbrook and spent much of his working life in Kununurra, where he worked across business and farming. Ralph was the founding chief executive of the Wunan Foundation, an Aboriginal development body set up in the East Kimberley in 1997, and the chairman of the Kimberley Development Commission for more than two years, contributing to progressive strategies in housing, education, employment, and welfare reform. In addition, Ralph has held a range of commercial, not-for-profit, and local government board positions. Since November 2014, Ralph has been the Director General at the Department of Regional Development where he has driven an outcomes based approach with a focus on jobs and economic growth. Ralph's immediate focus is delivering significant reform agendas to bring the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in to operation from 1 July 2017. Ralph is a Chartered

Accountant, holds a degree in Commerce, a Master of Agricultural Economics and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



4. MICHAEL CROWLEY

General Manager - Producer Consultation and Adoption, Meat & Livestock Australia

Michael joined MLA in February 2009 to manage the Meat Standards Australia program. In 2012 he moved with his family to Brussels taking on the role of International Business Manager for EU and Russia with MLA. He returned from Brussels in 2015 as the Program Manager – Meat Standards Australia. Michael is now General Manager Producer Consultation and Adoption, with this business unit responsible for MSA, Genetics, Adoption and the Regional Consultation Model. Prior to joining Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA),

Michael ran his own business marketing livestock, running beef processing for branded beef exporters and he held his own meat export license. Michael has held a range of commercial positions in the meat industry including livestock procurement, processing plant quality assurance, supply chain management and processing plant management. Michael was raised on a beef cattle property at Barraba in northern New South Wales, where his family run a stud and commercial beef cattle operation. He has a Bachelor of Rural Science through the University of New England and a Graduate Certificate in Business Administration from QUT.

CHRIS REICHSTEIN



GGA Strategic Advisory Group member and farmer

Chris is a member of the Grower Group Alliance of WA (GGA) Strategic Advisory Group as well as farming north east of Esperance.

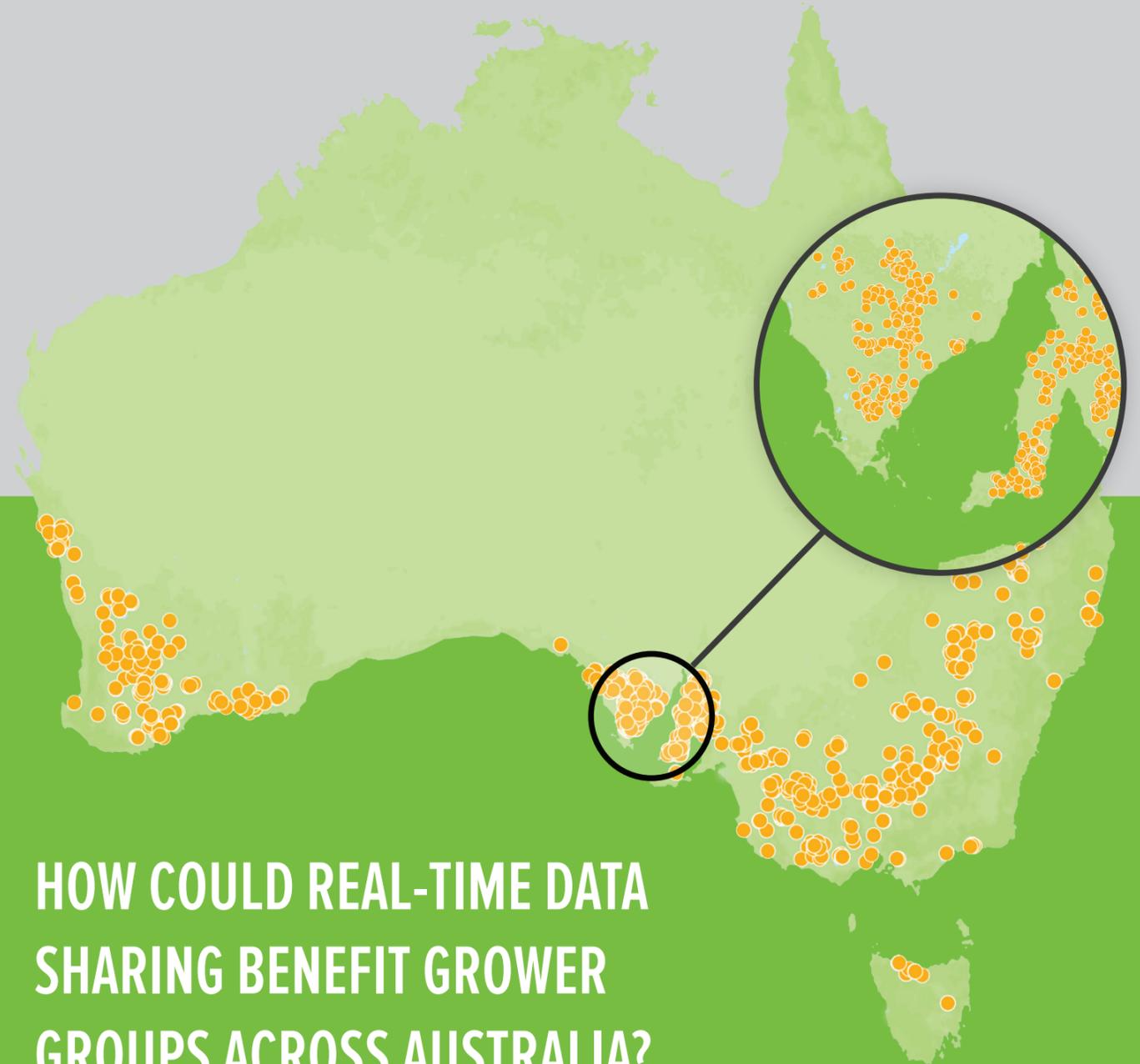
The farming operation comprises 4500 hectares of grain production in a cereal, pulse and oilseed rotation with an emphasis on best practise, productivity and sustainability.

Chris is passionate about the agriculture industry and the role of growers groups and has been an active executive member of South East Premium Wheat Growers Association (SEPWA) for many years.

Among numerous industry roles, Chris also undertook a Nuffield Scholarship in 2014 looking at how to extend the results of research to bring about practice change.

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SESSION THREE

The Role of farming groups in business, government & community

Key Speakers

1. CINDY CASSIDY



Chief Executive Officer, FarmLink

Cindy is currently chief executive officer of FarmLink, a not-for-profit farming systems group based in the Riverina in southern NSW. FarmLink undertakes RD&E activities to facilitate adoption of research outcomes on farm and in the farm businesses. The group has eight staff, 800+ members representing 300 farm businesses over 1.2million hectares of arable land.

FarmLink has an annual turnover of \$800k-\$1mill and it also manages the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre with an annual turnover around \$500k.

Prior to FarmLink her career included roles as Executive Officer of Wheat Quality Australia and Industry Development and Technical Services Manager with AWBI (Australian Wheat Board).

Cindy has a Science degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and a Master's Degree in Agriculture in Crop Breeding. She is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).

In 2015 Cindy was named RIRDC NSW/ ACT Rural Woman of the Year and used the award, in part, to examine international approaches to agricultural extension with a view to understanding successful policy frameworks, investment strategies and practices which could inform activities implemented at a local level.

Cindy currently sits on the NSW Primary Industry Ministerial Advisory Committee and the Graham Centre Industry Advisory Panel.

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Key Speakers

ANNIE BROX



Director, Origo

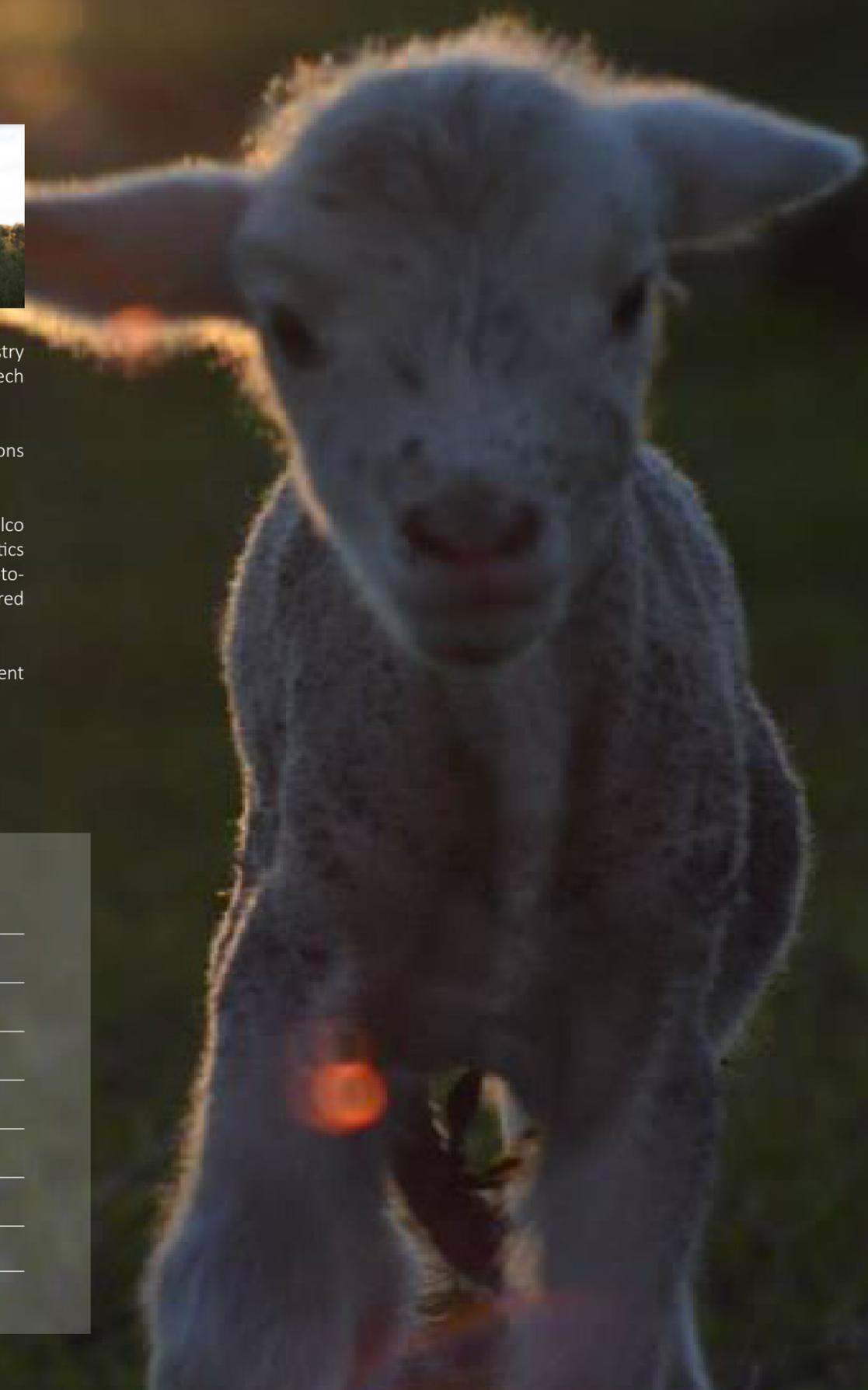
Annie has spent 28 Years in the Information and communication technology (ICT) and telecommunications industry both in Australia and overseas. She is the founder of Origo, a WA Ag Tech services company now providing ag-tech solutions in Queensland, Victoria and WA.

Annie grew up on a mixed farming, grains and dairy farm in Norway and her family have been in farming for generations in Germany as well as pre-communism Romania.

In the past she has held executive and managing roles in operations and business support systems in large Nordic Telco operations, analysis of business processes and implementation of value chains for large ICT Services and Fiber Optics to the Business Internet services, product management and development of one of Scandinavia's largest business-to-business communications services, founder and managing director for an internet security operations business acquired by an international ICT Company.

She was also program manager for the global United Nations environmental network and involved in the establishment and operations of a global satellite based Internet dedicated to environmental data and services.

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SESSION FIVE

Coops, partnerships & opportunities

Key Speakers

1. RICHARD FITZGERALD, NZ



Project Manager – Extension Design, Red Meat Profit Partnership

Richard currently works within the Red Meat Profit Partnership as the Extension Design - Project Lead. This is an industry and crown funded collaboration of ten organisations aimed at improving the profitability of the New Zealand red meat sector. He leads a nationwide pilot involving 75 farms which are testing different extension approaches, in order to establish a national extension system for the Red Meat Sector.

Formerly, he was the chief executive officer for New Zealand Young Farmers and the Primary Industry Capability Alliance, where he established a number of new capability development programs, such as AgriKids, TeenAg, Get Ahead, and the Rural Business Network.

He holds a non-executive directors position on the electricity transmission network co-operative Electricity Ashburton, is a trustee of NZ Rural Games and a member of Beef and Lamb NZ Farmer Council. Recently Richard has become involved in an aid project in southern Malawi.

Richard is also a NZ Nuffield Scholar and graduate from the Royal Agricultural University Institute of Agricultural Management Leadership program.

He is married to Ruth where they run an intensive 253ha, irrigated mixed cropping property near Methven on the Canterbury Plains of the South Island of NZ. They have three children Megan - 21, Rhys - 19 and Samantha - 15. They finish sheep and cattle, rear bobby calves and grow cereals and small seeds. Ruth runs the farm with sporadic assistance from Richard. In his spare time Richard is refurbishing a 1972 Mk4 Triumph Spitfire convertible.

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2. CHRIS SOUNNESS



Chief Executive Officer, Birchip Cropping Group

Chris has spent twenty years in development and extension to drive innovation and research on the farm.

Chris grew up on a family farm in WA, however he has worked in the Wimmera Mallee region of Victoria since 1992, firstly in private breeding canola research and then a long stint with Victoria's agricultural department. During this time he worked with farmers and their advisers to increase uptake of agricultural research particularly through building farmers knowledge and skills in agronomy and seasonal climate risk. In 2014 he joined the Birchip Cropping Group (BCG) as chief executive officer.

BCG is a not-for-profit agricultural research and extension organisation led by farmers from the Wimmera and Mallee regions of Victoria. Recognised both nationally and internationally by the industry as a credible independent and innovative organisation, BCG's research and communication activities provide evidence, support and tools for improving farm management practices and profitability. BCG has been integral in the adoption of new agronomic technologies and farming practices and continues to help farmers make decisions, develop risk management strategies, increase profits and operate sustainable farming operations.

Chris Sounness is on the provisional board of the High Performing Soils CRC. He is an Advisory Member of the Farming Together Program, the Federal Government's Agricultural Competiveness White Paper on agricultural co-operatives. He is on the Mallee Sustainable Agricultural Strategy development supported by the Mallee CMA and on the steering committee of the Farming Smarter CRC.

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Key Speakers

1. RUTH KLINGNER

Executive Board Member, Central West Farming Systems (CWFS)



Ruth runs a mixed enterprise farming business in partnership with her mum, sister and brother with a total area of just over 2000 hectares.

Their farms are located near Forbes and Cudal in New South Wales where they run Ridgehaven Poll Dorset stud, one of Australia's largest Poll Dorset studs with around 1000 breeding ewes, a prime lamb enterprise, self-replacing commercial merino flock, Poll Hereford cattle herd and cropping enterprise, being mostly cereals and canola.

Ruth is currently Vice Chairman of the CWFS executive board and has been an executive board member since 2015. She is also a member of the Central West Livestock Exchange Advisory committee since 2015, secretary and treasurer for the Central Western NSW region of the Australian Poll Dorset Association since 1997.

Ruth is also a wife to husband Graeme and mum to their four children - three boys and one girl - aged from 6 to 11. She is also actively involved in the community through local church, sporting groups and other community organisations.

3. NIKI CURTIS

Executive Officer, SEPWA



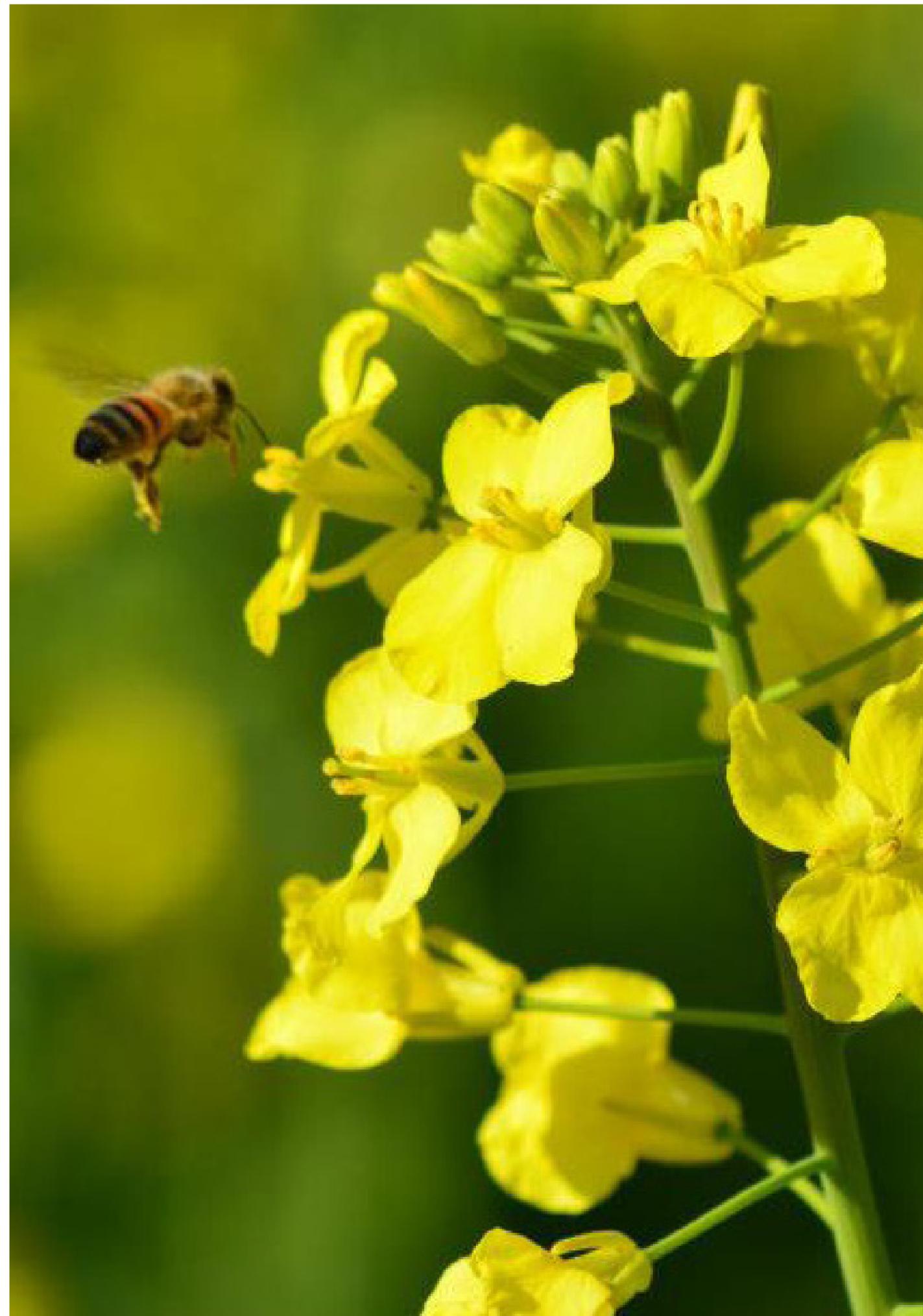
Born and raised on a cattle property near Esperance in WA, Niki Curtis began her career as a rural reporter at the Countryman newspaper before working as a general news reporter at West Australian Newspapers.

Following her career in media, Niki was the executive officer at Farmsafe WA and then communications officer at the Department of Agriculture and Food WA for seven years.

For the past six years she has worked as SEPWA's executive officer where she is responsible for managing the group's staff, sponsorship, membership, publicity, event organisation, liaising with industry partners and providing support for the SEPWA executive which is made up of a team of farmers and consultants from the region.

During her career, Niki has also edited and published numerous books and other publications relating to all aspects of farming.

Married to Ben Curtis, a local farm consultant, they have four children and live on a small property just outside of the Esperance town site.



2. CHRISTINE KERSHAW



Chief Executive Officer, Stirlings to Coast Farmers

Christine joined Albany-based Stirlings to Coast Farmers in February 2016, bringing more than 20 years of agriculture, fisheries, NRM and management experience to the role.

Christine has worked closely with various agricultural groups, including the North East Future Farmers group (NEFF), Tasmanian Famers and Graziers Association (TFGA) and more recently, the National Farmer's Federation. Christine has also worked for the Departments of Fisheries, Agriculture and Premier and Cabinet as well as having several years' experience as an agribusiness consultant.

She holds a PhD in Agricultural Policy and Economics, undertaking research focused on decision making processes for the allocation of public funds.

Christine is currently working with the SCF board and staff to achieve their goal of becoming a self-sustaining group through the development of new innovative projects and seeking opportunities through collaboration and partnerships. Since joining SCF, the SCF team has grown from three part-time staff to ten full and part-time staff.

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Key Speakers

SIMON COOK



Western Australia's Premier's Fellow in Agriculture and Food, Curtin and Murdoch University & Food Agility CRC

Simon is the inaugural WA Premier's Fellow in Agriculture and Food at Curtin and Murdoch Universities. His activities in digital agriculture go back to the 1990s, when he led the CSIRO Precision Agriculture Research Group which pioneered the development of precision agriculture and on-farm experimentation in Australia.

Subsequently he has spent many years in international agricultural research, specializing in the use of information to support change in agriculture and sustainable land management. His current role is to identify and develop pathways for digital agriculture in WA agribusiness and to support research within the Food Agility CRC, which aims to re-align Australian agriculture with rapidly emerging market opportunities.

NOTES

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

DALE MILES



Supply Chain Manager, V & V Walsh

Dale is the supply chain manager at V&V Walsh, one of Australia's leading red meat processing and export facilities. The company is a family owned Western Australian business operating from its state of the art processing facility in Bunbury.

V&V Walsh is a supplier to major domestic retail markets and continues to grow its export opportunities with unprecedented market access for both chilled lamb and beef products to the fast-emerging China market. In his role with V&V Walsh, Dale is involved in the dynamic alignment across the value chain from supplier, through to processing and end market and whole-of-procurement strategy development and implementation.

Dale has a degree in agricultural economics with over 12 years' experience in business, agriculture, market development and supply chain integration.

He has worked as a market analyst with the Northern Beef Futures team at the former Department of Agriculture and Food (WA) where he was responsible for the diversification and transformation of the WA northern beef industry through improving markets and foster opportunities across the supply chain to develop a sustainable beef industry

Dale continues to develop strategies in partnership with sheep producers, industry groups and the business team from V&V Walsh to build the confidence for growth and diversification across the WA sheep industry adopting a concept of dynamic alignment across the value chain to improve feedback and information up and down the chain between producer, processor and the market.

LARISSA TAYLOR



Chief Executive Officer Grain Industry Association of WA

Larissa started her career in the corporate sector in management consulting with McKinsey & Co, moved to a consulting & research role with Dutch agribusiness bank Rabobank.

Larissa has also work worked in executive development, business development and community development roles with the UWA Business School and BHP Billiton Iron Ore before joining the Grain Industry Association of Western Australia in 2014. Originally from a farming community in WA's Great Southern, Larissa has lived and worked in Canberra, Sydney, Houston, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Perth. Larissa holds a BA (Asian Studies) from ANU, an MBA from the AGSM, UNSW, is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and the Australia Indonesia Business Council.

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The GGA is a farmer-driven initiative that has been connecting grower groups, research organisations and the agribusiness network across the broadacre, mixed farming and livestock grower groups in WA for the past 15 years.

