

# THE HART FIELD DAY

The first Hart Field Day was held in 1982, attended by eighteen people – six seed producers, seven interested neighbours and five officers of the Department of Agriculture. Over the ensuing years, it has blossomed to become one of the most significant community-driven farming events in the South Australian calendar. This summary outlines its first 25 years

When the first Hart Field Day was held in September 1982, those attending probably thought this would be a 'once only' event. Due to the success of the day the Hummocks and District Soil Conservation Board and the Department of Agriculture Clare Office decided to make it an annual event. The first field day consisted of demonstration variety trials of medics, sub and rose clover and lucerne. (1984 was the only year that no field day was held because there was no Agronomist.)

Here was an opportunity to show, help and give advice to farmers in the mid north of South Australia to achieve sustainable farming practises.

In 1980 only one officer was stationed at Clare (Trevor Clark), but in 1981 with the formation of the Hummocks Soil Conservation Board, Fred Armstrong was appointed as Soils Officer.

In 1983 David Woodard was appointed as assistant to Fred to help in a new Soil Erosion Project (Magpie Creek Group Scheme) which required planning in the area of contour banks, dams, new waterways, new fencing and revegetation.

David became Secretary of the Hart Group Management Committee (for 17 years) and also Secretary of the Hummocks Soil Conservation Board (10 years). David was a tower of strength to both committees and must be complimented for his dedication, support and common sense attitude to conservation methods and to the future of the Hart Field Day.

In 1984 Barry Bull was appointed as Agronomist to the Clare Office.

In 1985 Allan Mayfield was appointed as Plant Protection Agronomist

These two Agronomists laid the foundations for the Hart Field Day, combining soils and agronomy, with emphasis on vetches, herbicide control in legumes and later on grain legumes.

When Barry took a new position as Agronomist with Hi-Fert Fertilisers in 1986, Tom Yeatman was appointed to the Clare Office, Department of Agriculture as an Agronomist.

Tom became Chairman of the Hart Field Day

Management Committee and his enthusiasm for the Field Day took it to a new high, e.g. 1,200 visitors attended in 1992. Allan Mayfield continued as Trials Manager (20 years).

During this time 1982-1999 the Field Days were held on the Jaeschke Family Farm (Murrumbreena) using paddocks close to the main road between Blyth and Brinkworth.

Because of the popularity of the field days, parking of vehicles and buses was becoming a danger problem. Visitors had to walk at least 1-1.5 km to visit the site.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Group in November 1999, held at the Brinkworth Hotel, a unanimous decision was made to buy a 40 hectare block of land west of the Hart Weighbridge (not far from the original site). The land was on 1 title and even though the price seemed excessive, it would be advantageous to own our own community site where we had adequate parking of vehicles, especially buses, plenty of space and a magnificent view of east and west ranges.

Approximately 10-12 hectares would be used for trials each year (4 year rotation) and the remainder sown to a commercial crop (hay and grain).

The Hart Field Site Group Inc was formed in February 2000, financed by the SA Local Government Finance Authority and Insurance (Local Government Risk Assurance).

Kevin Jaeschke was nominated as Chairman, Andrew Harding as Treasurer, Allan Mayfield as Trials Manager and committee members.

The Wakefield Regional Council was very supportive to our Group, especially CEO Phil Barry who spent a very busy Christmas-New Year period 1999-2000 arranging Finance Incorporation (Constitution) Insurance and change of land use.

The Council required 3 members of the Committee to act as guarantors to this agreement.

A planning meeting was held at the site early February to prepare for the first field day in 2000. Land would be set aside and fenced to regenerate remnant scrub, an area for native grass-

lands and a living herbarium to celebrate the 2000 Sydney Paralympics Games.

A local woman, Sue Twelftree a paralympian athlete would plant the first tree at the Living Hart Herbarium with help from primary school children from Blyth/Brinkworth.

At future meetings later in the month, Monica Trengove was appointed part time Executive Officer and Rural Directions, Clare as site managers.

When the Field Site Group Inc bought the property there was no reticulated water, no electricity, just a bare paddock with some remnant scrub.

The committee laid water to the site (thanks to neighbour David Zweck) and installed a tank. A weather station., donated by CCN Capital, a new shed has been erected (IKC Clare), suitable for meetings, rain water tank, notice board (donated by the Blyth Development Board) and signs (main road cross) and entrance to the site.

Signs were erected on the main road and entrance to the site. A notice board (donated by the Blyth Development Board) was also erected.

In 2005 the shed was erected and a weather donation (donated by CCN Capital) was installed.

This year a generator has been purchased to provide power to the shed and at field days and workshops. A chemical wash-down bay and permanent toilet have been installed.

All this work and planning would not be possible without sponsors.

Initial naming sponsor was Cavpower-CAT (challenger tractors and lexion headers and balers), Rocky River Ag Services/CASE have been our naming sponsors for the last three years. Industry support, GRDC and SAGIT.

Other main sponsors ABB Grain, AWB, Stock Journal, SANTFA, San Remo, Greenleaf Fertilisers and many in kind sponsors, who are always acknowledged in the Field Day Book.

Our new Site Managers are SARDI, Rob Wheeler, Larn McMurray, John Nairn and other helpers. Elizabeth Burns takes on media communications and Peter Hooper is the Trials Manager.

**From Hart Field Day booklet, 2007**

