

HART

MEDIA RELEASE

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HART GIVES NEW PERSPECTIVE ON FARMING

Farming: from a different perspective is the theme for the 2014 Hart Field Day on Tuesday, September 16.

A rolling program of 21 half-hour sessions presented by 30 of the cropping industry's top researchers and personnel, will give attendees access to the latest agronomy and variety research, information and advice as well as the opportunity to seek information directly from these experts.

Special lunch time guest speaker University of Sydney Australian Centre for Field Robotics senior research fellow Dr Robert Fitch will speak about the future of robotics in agriculture, as well as present two sessions throughout the program on robotics and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

Dr Fitch believes robotics will "transform the way food is grown, produced and delivered".

"What robotics will bring is more emphasis on system-level optimisation," he says.

"Not just automating the current operations, but instead using information and automation to change the operations. We call this 'thinking beyond the robot'.

"The farm of the future will likely involve a 'system of systems' where teams of relatively small robots and sensors work together to collect information and perform mechanical tasks."

There will be UAV demonstrations throughout the day.

Hart Field-Site Group vice chairman Damien Sommerville says Dr Fitch's research is cutting-edge and he is excited to hear about the prospect of robotics changing the face of agriculture.

"I'm looking forward to hearing where he thinks agriculture is going with robotics and where we can get productivity improvements in the future," he says.

"It's pretty exciting stuff."

CSIRO Agriculture Flagship research director Dr Mark Peoples will speak about his research into the effect of legume break crops on nitrogen (N) levels in subsequent cereal productivity.

Other key presenters will include CSIRO scientist Dr James Hunt speaking on the time of sowing, University of Adelaide's Dr Tim March speaking on frost in wheat and barley, and SARDI leader of entomology Greg Baker speaking on insect management: aphids and grubs.

There will be sessions on pulses, oats, wheat, barley and canola, pasture production, controlling grass weeds, plus more, as well as machinery and static displays.

Participants in the durum varieties and agronomy sessions at 11am and midday will receive a ticket in a draw to win 1 tonne of seed for a new variety of durum that will be officially released and named by Jason Able from the University of Adelaide at the Hart Field Day.

Partners in Grain (PinG) will have a marquee, with Susanne Richards speaking on South Australian native bees in her session titled “Come here honey! Why we shouldn’t be wishing the bees would just buzz off” at 11am.

At 2pm in the PinG tent, Judy Wilkinson will present a session titled “Is the grass really greener on the other side? Making your business look like a business and your family look like a family”.

Dr Mark Peoples will also run a special Q&A session on why break crops are used in a cropping rotation.

Hart Field-Site Group vice chairman Damien Sommerville says with the season looking good for those not affected by frost, farmers in the district are looking for a couple of good rains to finish off the growing season and the Hart Field Day is an ideal venue to see how different varieties are faring.

“The Hart Field Day covers such a large spectrum from low rainfall to high rainfall, it really is very applicable for any farmer north of Adelaide to come along and assess the varieties,” he says.

“September is an ideal time see the varieties at head emergence stage and get a good feel for how the crops are performing in this area.

“We’ve got rye grass, herbicide and weed trials and the results are quite clear by this time of the year so I’d encourage everyone to come along and see how they’ve performed.”

Sponsored by Rocky River Ag, the Hart Field Day gets underway on Tuesday, September 16, with gates open at 9am and an official opening at 10am. The first session starts at 10.30am sharp.

Admission is \$30 (students \$5), with entry entitling visitors membership to the Hart Field-Site Group and a copy of the comprehensive Hart Field Day guide.

Full catering is available throughout the day (cash sales only) and a refreshment tent will operate after the event.

The Hart Field Day will be held 10 kilometres north of Blyth, just off the Blyth to Brinkworth road and is well signposted.

Bus and group tours are welcome.

For more information, and to see the full program for 2014, take a look at the Hart Field Site Group website www.hartfieldsite.org.au or contact Sandy Kimber on 0427 423 154 or email admin@hartfieldsite.org.au.

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