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MEDIA RELEASE

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HART 30 YEARS ON AND STILL GOING STRONG

Thirty years ago a group of farmers had a vision to do some trials on medics on a farm at Hart and throw open the paddock gate for a field day to share the results with like-minded grain growers.

Fast forward to 2012 and that same agronomy field day has grown at least twenty-fold and cemented itself as one of the most respected in Australia.

Come mid-September each year, dust thrown up off the dirt roads can be seen for miles around as they arrive in droves for the annual Hart Field Day.

Agronomist and consultant Dr Allan Mayfield has been involved almost from the beginning and says the Hart Field Day has become well-known and respected for its independent, non-bias trials and for giving farmers direct access to researchers, agronomists and other experienced growers.

Allan says the field day has grown with an impressive, permanent field site at Hart, north of Blyth, and a much greater variety of agronomy trials.

“The beginning was just a medic trial with a few herbicide treatments on Kevin Jaeschke’s farm,” he says.

“The trial was about 50 square metres - so small it would fit into a lot of people’s backyards. Now the trials cover more than 8 hectares of the 40ha site.

“The trials are now wide and varied, ranging from wheat varieties through to herbicides to seeding systems and crop management, and with the site now wholly owned by the Hart Field-Site Group – the only known group to have achieved full ownership of a trial site in Australia - it enables long term trials to be undertaken.”

While there have been many improvements and additions to the field day, Allan says some things – including its winning formula – have not changed over the past 30 years.

“Some things haven’t changed at all. The first trial is still there, embedded in a much larger legume by herbicide trial, meaning they’ve been able to study the results across different seasonal conditions over the years,” he says.

“And the big crowds we got in the 1980s are still attending, so it’s testament that the Hart Group are still providing the trials and information that farmers want.

“The group has maintained its focus and certainly the essence of it is still the same – providing high quality trials.”

Hart Field-Site Group chairman Matt Dare believes the independent agronomic advice is what keeps farmers coming back to the Hart Field Day.

“I think growers just know it’s somewhere they can go to get non-commercial, independent information about cropping,” he says.

”They come to Hart to get up to date with the latest results, all available in the one location.”

Matt says the group expected continued success for the Hart Field Day and the Hart trial site.

“Looking ahead, I believe the future for Hart is very bright,” he says.

“The major funding bodies value our ability to deliver relevant research outcomes and see us as a good way of extending information directly to growers.”

The next Hart Field Day will be held on Tuesday, 18 September.

Dr Allan Mayfield will be the lunchtime speaker at this year’s event.

The well-respected agronomist and consultant reckons he has inspected some 20,000 paddocks and opened about 12,000 farm gates over the past 20 years and has a wealth of agronomy experience as well as first-hand involvement in the Hart Field Day over much of its 30 years.

For more information about the event, 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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Dr Allan Mayfield has been part of the Hart Field Day almost since its inception 30 years ago and will be the lunch time speaker at this year’s event on 18 September.