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Exciting times for growers willing to think 'outside the square', according to EP farmer

If there was ever a time to think outside the square and 'challenge the status quo', it is now, according to Eyre Peninsula farmer Mark Modra, who will speak at the *Getting the Crop In* seminar in Clare on March 11.

With big things just around the corner for the future of farming, Mark says there will also be great opportunities for farmers willing to try something new.

"We need to be prepared to challenge the status quo, look at the big picture and not just do things because that's how we've always done it. But farmers already do that very well across a range of areas," he says.

"I see some huge opportunities for us in agriculture once we get agrobotics technology on-board.

"Robotics won't take over in agriculture, but it will certainly be a very handy tool once it gets going, especially in terms of labour shortage issues and a move away from chemicals."

Thinking outside the square is something Mark knows only too well, having moved out of livestock on his 2000 hectare Lower EP farm, Seaero, and going into a continuous, no-till cropping regime in the early days of this style of farming, then back to stocking sheep again on some of the less productive areas.

With his wife Tamara, two daughters, and semi-retired dad, Theo, who is a whizz in the workshop, Mark runs his properties at Greenpatch, North Shields, Eddillie, and Cummins/Yeelanna.

Mark is a Nuffield Scholar and was last year invited to be part of the Rabobank Global Farmers Master Class, and is excited to be sharing some of his first-hand experiences with guests at the Hart Field-Site Group's *Getting the Crop In* seminar.

"I've learned so much by travelling overseas and meeting other like-minded people," he says.

"I think it's given me an insight into the bigger picture of how agriculture works in the world and found that farmers face similar issues regardless of where they're from and regardless of subsidies.

"One of the biggest issues coming out of last year's Master Class was the realisation that we have to double food production and the challenges of how we are going to do that."

The Getting the Crop In seminar will be held at The Vines Christian Church, Stradbroke Road, Clare (northern end of the racecourse) 8am-12.30pm, 11 March, 2015. Registrations close on 6 March. For more information and registrations, see the Hart Field-Site Group website www.hartfieldsite.org.au

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