



Thursday, February 27, 2020

Gladigau to throw open gate giving Hart attendees a sneak peak at farm operations

Northern Mallee farmer John Gladigau will 'open his farm gate' to attendees of the Hart Getting The Crop In seminar in Clare on March 11, giving them an insight into his farming operations.

John and wife Bronwyn farm a 8500-hectare property at Loxton and Allawoona in a collaborative farming partnership between the Gladigau family and Robin and Rebecca Schaefer.

They are both established farming families in their own right; the Gladigau family has been farming in the district since 1956, while the Schaefers are one of Loxton's pioneer families, farming since the early 1900s.

The enterprise, Bulla Burra, is a continuous cropping operation with a cereal / legume rotation, growing wheat, barley, oats, chickpeas, lentils, lupins and field peas in the 275-millimetre annual rainfall area.

In 2008 John was one of the founding partners of Collaborative Farming Australia, which provided the framework and guiding principles under which Bulla Burra operates, he is also a founding director of Farmers Mutual Limited (FML), a risk protection model created by farmers, for farmers.

"In 2009 we joined together with the Schaefers to create "Bulla Burra", a collaborative family farm formed by the merging of two existing family farms, and the leasing / sharefarming of additional land to create the efficiencies and economies of scale we believed were needed for a more profitable and sustainable future," John says.

"So, 2019 was the eleventh season of Bulla Burra's operations, cropping 8500 hectares to cereals and legumes in a model focussed not only on efficiency and economics, but also passion, relationships, professionalism and promoting a positive image for the industry."

Not immune to the drought, John will share some of his experiences in managing the dry.

"We have just been through three years impacted heavily by frost and drought," John says.

"In 2017 we were severely impacted by frost, low rainfall and a cut off spring.

"Then 2018 was the third driest growing year in 116 years, and 2019 was worse.

"The impact environmentally, financially and emotionally on our property and ourselves has been significant."

Having recently returned from an intensive Nuffield Scholarship leadership course in the United Kingdom, John has some valuable insights to share both from there and the United States, including the importance of people and relationships.

“We as farmers – in Australia, the UK and USA – tend to view the world through the prism of our own experiences, and probably need to take a more balcony view of the world,” he says.

“We often feel we are the ones who are ‘right’ when it comes to our views on such things as ag technology, GM, food safety, animal welfare, when there is great value in taking to time to understand the other point of view, without necessarily having to agree with it in any way.

“I think it’s really important we also try to find ways to effectively ‘tell our story.’”

Hear more about John’s Bulla Burra farming operations, collaborative farming, managing the drought, as well as managing soil types at the Getting The Crop In seminar on March 11.

The free event kicks off with breakfast from 8am, with sessions starting at 8.30am through until 12.30pm at The Influencers Church, Stradbroke Road, Clare (northern end of the racecourse).

To register for Getting The Crop In and for more information see the Hart Field-Site Group website www.hartfieldsite.org.au

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