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## Hart regional internship planting the seed for careers in grains research

A regional internship program being offered in the state's Mid North is offering agricultural science students a kick-start in a career in applied grains research.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Hart Field-Site Group – one of Australia's leading agronomy trial and research organisations - has offered an internship, this year growing the program to two-years to allow the latest career starter a chance to really dig his heels into grains research and development.

Supported by the South Australian Grain Industry Trust (SAGIT), Hart and SARDI, the 2021-2022 Hart regional intern is Declan Anderson.

Declan joins the Hart team from his family's cropping and sheep property at Ouyen, in the Victorian Mallee, having completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at Adelaide University.

Already two-months in to his two-year internship, Declan (pictured right) has been working alongside the Hart research team, and said he had already gained valuable knowledge and skills, which he was looking forward to expanding.

"With some trials already being sown at the field site, there are a few specific trials that have already really piqued my interest," he said.

"Improving vetch biomass is one that I've taken on, and we are investigating the best ways to improve vetch growth for grazing or hay end use situations.

"I've also been given the responsibility of managing the long-term seeding systems trial at Hart, which is now going into its 22<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year.



“Also, the pre-emergents for annual ryegrass control trial where we test new chemistry against currently-used chemicals for the improvement of annual ryegrass in farming systems. The focus is on annual ryegrass as it is one of the biggest weed species in agriculture, Australia-wide.”

Hart Field-Site Group research and extension manager Dr Sarah Noack said the regional internship program was not only helping kickstart a career in applied grains research for its participants, but equally, was strengthening Hart’s work in the industry.

“Each intern has been different in terms of their background and knowledge and what they have wanted to achieve while at Hart,” she said.

“It’s a great sense of accomplishment seeing our interns continue their careers in grains research and communication with farmers – we’ve seen our interns move on to roles in SARDI and other related employers or further pursue an academic path to gain a PhD in a related field.

“On the other side, it has strengthened our collaboration with SARDI by being able to have our intern working on a field trial at Hart, and then pairing it with a more laboratory-based component with SARDI.

“Each intern has also been given the freedom to work on their own extension trial, and through our interns we’ve been able to extend the communications being offered to farmers through different mediums such as blogs and videos, giving a behind-the-scenes look at the Hart operation and updates on how research is progressing throughout the year.”

Hart’s 2020 regional intern Brianna Guidera has experienced first-hand the benefits of the Hart regional internship, joining the team as a post-graduate student in February last year.

She has recently completed her internship with the Hart Field-Site Group and has now moved on to further employment in the agricultural industry on Eyre Peninsula.

Brianna said the regional internship developed her skills and opened up a wide base of industry networks.

“I gained so many valuable skills as a researcher, such as understanding how to plan and manage trials, and I also became much more confident in my abilities as a young researcher as well as gaining some great connections in the agricultural industry,” she said.

“The internship gave me a really solid start to my career and it has certainly been advantageous, both in terms of finding employment and also in gaining skills.

“Undertaking the Hart Regional Internship in Applied Grains Research showed me there is so much more to research and extension than you would probably expect.

“It was a fabulous opportunity to work with a great group of people, and it sets you up well for a career in agriculture.”

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