

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Digging up the dirt on nitrogen fertilisers at the Hart Field Day

Nitrogen efficiency fertilisers are generating plenty of interest among grain growers, but if you are keen to learn more about them, which one to use and when, head along to the Hart Field Day on Tuesday, September 17.



The University of Melbourne's Associate Professor Helen Suter (pictured below) will be there to provide an insight that will help arm grain growers with the knowledge and confidence to make on-farm decisions about the use of enhanced efficiency fertilisers.

"It is important for growers to know what enhanced efficiency fertilisers actually do," Helen said.

"There's a number of different types of products available on the market, but sometimes I think there's a lack of clarity about why you would want to use one over the other."

Deciding whether to use urease inhibitors, nitrification inhibitors or controlled release fertilisers can be confusing, but Helen said she hopes to help highlight their different benefits and share some research results.

"A urease inhibitor is used primarily to reduce ammonia volatilization from surface application of urea," Helen said.

"A nitrification inhibitor is primarily used to reduce nitrous oxide emissions - which is a greenhouse gas - and nitrate leaching losses.

"And controlled release fertilisers slow the release of nutrients from the fertiliser they are applied to and therefore are designed to better match the plant needs.

"We do know that some of these products work very well, but how well they work is influenced by where they are used in terms of climate, soil types, and the land



management practices that are occurring – for example, whether people are applying their fertiliser on the surface or deep banding.

“There’s lots of impacts from the environment influencing how well they’re going to work.”

Helen and The University of Melbourne team have been researching nitrogen efficiency fertilisers, their use and inhibitors for almost 20 years.

In 2025, Helen and The University of Melbourne will partner with Hart to expand the research to the Hart field-site through an Enhancing Efficiency Fertilisers trial, funded by the GRDC.

It will be the first South Australian site for the research project.

“Through this project we’re trying to demonstrate to growers what things will work and what won’t work and their impacts on the efficiency of nitrogen use within the crop,” Helen said.

“We’re not just interested in looking at what the losses might be, we’re interested in how they would work to enable growers to maybe reduce nitrogen rates and have the same amount or an improvement in yield.”

Helen said she hoped through information-sharing and continued research, grain growers would also be well-prepared for the future.

“It’s important for growers to think about what might be coming in the future in terms of will there be any regulations or incentives, such as the carbon emissions reduction fund, that will require them to be using some of these products?” she said.

Helen’s sessions will be in the newly-upgraded Hart Research Hub (formerly ‘the shed’) throughout the day’s rolling program. Check the website for program/session times.

The Hart Field Day will be held on Tuesday, September 17, with gates open at 9am.

Admission is \$45 (students \$15), including access to all sessions and guest speakers, as well as a Hart Field Day Guide with articles and information from each of the sessions.

The Hart trial site is 10 kilometres north of Blyth, just off the Blyth to Brinkworth Road.

For tickets, or for more information head to the Hart Field-Site Group website [www.hartfieldsite.org.au](http://www.hartfieldsite.org.au) (look for Events/Hart Field Day in the main menu), or contact Sandy Kimber on 0427 423 154, or email [admin@hartfieldsite.org.au](mailto:admin@hartfieldsite.org.au)

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