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PRESS RELEASE

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BIG TURN OUT FOR HART FIELD DAY

By Gabrielle Hall

Picture perfect surroundings reflected an excellent start to the cropping season and a tinge of renewed optimism amongst grain growers at the 28th annual Hart Field Day last Tuesday (September 21, 2010).

About 600 growers and industry researchers and representatives attended the event from as far away as Western Australia and Buckleboo on Eyre Peninsula.

Hart Field-Site Group chairman Matt Dare said attendance was up by about 20 per cent on last year's crowd and he was "absolutely stoked" with the success of the day.

"The site looks magnificent, it's a really good season so far, everyone is looking forward to a good finish and good crops and the quality of speakers and the trials have made the day a huge success," he said.

"There's more optimism around because we're going into spring with a lot of moisture under the crops and prices are historically high.

"We've just got a few hurdles to get over to get us home such as the uncertainty of locusts, the possibility of a wet harvest and hopefully prices stay up, so we're not over the line just yet but things are looking really good."

Former Mid North farmer, CBH Group chairman Neil Wandel, who now farms a 17,000 hectare farm at Esperance in Western Australia, was the guest speaker for the day and had some positive messages particularly for young farmers heading forward in the industry.

Mr Wandel gave his thoughts on change in the grains industry as well as some of the biggest challenges the industry will face in moving forward.

It was an entertaining insight into his personal experiences, with Mr Wandel also sharing his "five golden rules" for success on the farm including;

1. look after your wife/partner
2. look after your soil
3. don't borrow money on any machinery unless it earns you money
4. be a leader but don't be a gambler
5. don't waste a good year – put some money aside for a bad year.

A special presentation was made to three former Hart Field-Site Group members for their tireless efforts and personal backing for the future of the site, in founding chairperson Kevin Jaeschke, Linden Price and Phil Harris.

Two tonnes of seed were given away as a gate prize on the day, with Shawn Rayson of Princess Royal Station, Burra, winning 1T of certified Scout wheat seed and David Parker of Long Plains winning 1T of PBA Gonyah field pea seed.

A number of new varieties of seed were also launched at the Hart Field Day including Scout, a high yielding wheat variety bred with good stem and leaf rust resistance and well suited to alkaline soils.

Other new seed varieties included PBA Gonyah field peas, and PBA Twilight peas, as well as a new lupin variety known as Jenabillup.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the day was the wide-ranging series of trials on show and industry speakers giving a first hand insight into the trials and answering questions from attendees.

Among the trials and topics discussed were pulse and oilseed herbicide tolerance, an update on climate change, fenceline weed control, soil acidity, canola varieties, revegetation and windbreaks, barley, oat, triticale, lentil, pulse and pasture varieties, plus a huge range of others.

Static displays were on show at the Hart field site, including a machinery display by the event's principal sponsor, Rocky River Ag Services. Gold sponsors for the event included Viterra Ltd, Stock Journal, Landmark, Australian Grain Technologies, Megafert, CBH Grain, Rabobank and Grain Assist.

Vital industry support was also provided by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), Caring For Our Country, Woolworths, Landcare Australia and the Northern & Yorke NNRM Board.

Come along and see how things are developing on the Hart field site as we approach harvest, with the free Spring Twilight Walk on Thursday, October 21, 2010, at 5pm.

For more information take a look at the Hart Field-Site Group website www.hartfieldsite.org.au

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