



# What farmers need forum 2011

Thursday 19th May 2011

CSIRO Discovery Centre

9.30am – 4.30pm

Cost: FREE

Morning and afternoon tea, lunch and tea and coffee provided

**“What Farmers Need” is an opportunity for NSW and ACT farmers, extension workers, policy makers and researchers to come together to discuss NRM information and support needs.**

**Eight farmers with different lifestyles and experiences will showcase their personal experiences with natural resource management in relation to their farming business.**

The two major questions being asked are:  
What motivates landholders to undertake NRM work?  
What resources / information do they think they need to help them continue this work  
(or begin it in the first place)?

Following each presentation will be an extended discussion time, and you as the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions and put forward your views in relation to these questions. These discussions will be recorded and compiled for distribution so please bring along your ideas!

**Enquiries: Lori Gould, Ph 0439 030 058 or 02 6253 3035  
lgould@act.greeningaustralia.org.au**

**•RSVP Essential •Places are limited**

**Greening Australia**

# What farmers need forum 2011

Hosted by Paul Gibson Roy

Paul has been involved for some years on research into the restoration of wildflower grasslands and grassy woodlands. He heads the Grassy Groundcover Research Project (GGRP) run by Greening Australia & University of Melbourne in partnership; a Victorian multiregional research project focusing on the restoration of complex grassland or herbaceous understory by direct seeding. Paul was a member of the National Committee for the Australian Network for Plant Conservation for several years and is actively involved with issues of sustainability within the broader horticultural industry through his ongoing involvement with Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA).

## Presenters

### Sam Archer

A fifth generation farmer, Sam and his family run a mixed farming system based on livestock, cereal production and native pastures. He has worked on strategic planning and sustainability initiatives with the farming sector, indigenous groups and corporates for the past 25 years. Sam is Chair of Murrumbidgee Landcare, a non-executive Director of the NSW Farmers' Association, a member of the Australian Farm Institutes' Research Advisory Committee and a recipient of a Nuffield Farming Scholarship.

### Isabel Jirasek

Isabel and her husband Simon manage a 160ha property near Murrumbateman, NSW which they have owned since 1998, fulfilling a life-long dream to own land and live in the country. Over the past 12 years they have transformed Bundidgerry into a productive, conservation oriented property with a focus on cattle breeding and native seed production.

### Chris and Margot Shannon

Chris and Margot along with their family, run a large sheep production enterprise near Yass, NSW. They are fourth generation farmers, and run around 12000 sheep across 2 properties in a rotational grazing system which has proven to benefit both the sheep and the environment. Chris and Margot have undertaken extensive landcare works which they say gave them hope through the drought and something positive to focus on. It was also during the drought that they helped to successfully pioneer 'Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation', a new innovative program that merges production and conservation.

### Maryke Booth

Maryke has a passion for the environment. She runs a business called "Earth Basics" that sells a large range of environmentally friendly products, she drives a Prius, her company's superannuation scheme is with Australian Ethical Trust and the business is accredited as part of ACT Smart Business & Office Recycling Program. Maryke owns a rural residential block in Royalla (over which she has put a VCA), and founded the Royalla Landcare Group in 2001 which she continues to Chair. She is Treasurer of the Molonglo Catchment Group and the Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee and was ACT Individual Landcare of the Year in 2009.

### Hamish Sinclair

Hamish Sinclair and his partner Janice Firth run the 450ha Freshford Station and Freshford Equestrian Centre in the ACT. They agist horses, alpacas and sheep. Diversification has been a cornerstone to the successful redevelopment of the property, especially after the entire property was burned in the 2003 Canberra bushfires. Over 35,000 native trees have been planted and major riparian works have restored heavily eroded areas. Hamish has a background in town planning and NRM, is ACT President of the Planning Institute of Australia and lectures on Development Control at University of Canberra.

### Vince Heffernan

Sheep farming has been in the Heffernan family for the past 160 years. Vince and his wife Janet produce bio-dynamic lamb on "Moorlands" near Gunning NSW. They use sustainable farming techniques without using pesticides, antibiotics or growth promoting hormones. Bio-Dynamic practices focus on ensuring healthy, living, well-structured soil, resulting in healthy plants and animals.

### Sherry McArdle English

Sherry and her husband Gavan moved from city life to a 450 acre hobby farm as a lifestyle change after Gavan was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 1998. This change was to herald the unexpected development of a very new primary producer industry in Canberra, which is Canberra's first successful Truffle Farm and are moving toward their fourth harvest season with great expectation.

### Geoff Hyles

Geoff is the owner and manager of a 530 ha farm on the west bank of the Murrumbidgee River at Tharwa in the ACT where he breeds Hereford and Angus cattle, grows winter wheat and undertakes a significant amount of landcare work. Geoff's previous work in rural development programs with AusAid and other agencies has seen him span the globe from Papua to Pakistan.

Brought to you by the ACT Government & Greening Australia, Capital Region

 **Greening Australia**

