

Soil seminar proves success

BY RACHEL SIMMONDS

More than 60 farmers flocked to Winchelsea to learn more about sustainable farm practices at a healthy soil workshop.

An expert panel equipped with a wealth of knowledge connected with the region's farmers on Wednesday to discuss sustainability.

Corangamite CMA regional agriculture landcare facilitator Karen O'Keefe said the event proved valuable for farmers who wanted to learn more about effective practices.

"The event went really well with over 60 participants including sheep and cattle producers, mixed farmers, and dairy farmers.

"The majority of farmers are well aware that sustainable farm practices are key to the long-term viability of profitable farm businesses, and that the health of our natural resources including soil, water and native vegetation are key to this," she said.

"Several Australian agriculture industries, including the beef industry, have developed industry sustainability frameworks that include economic, social and environmental goals.

"Farmers can demonstrate how they are undertaking best practice sustainability of natural resources and ensure supply chains, markets, investors, consumers and other farmers



HEALTHY SOILS: A "healthy soils" workshop kicked off at Winchelsea to discuss sustainable on-farm practices. Pictured from left are Karen O'Keefe, Simon Falkiner, and Lisa Miller.

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are aware of these," Ms O'Keefe said.

She said the day started with a demonstration of a "pasture paramedic" tool, which aimed to form rapid assessment of

pasture condition.

"The tool is used in the paddock to measure the quality and quantity of available pastures and identify requirements for pasture renovation or rejuvena-

tion," Ms O'Keefe said.

Farmers also listened to discussions about cover cropping in the region, enhanced grazing and soil management, and dung beetle monitoring.

The event came as part of Federal Government funding, in partnership with Corangamite CMA, Southern Farming Systems, and Murdeduke Angus.

Authority announces wishlist

Better roads and rail, improving liveability in rural areas and supporting jobs are on the Victorian Farmers Federation's wishlist for the November state election.

The farmer body has released its state election platform, outlining issues it will pursue when pressuring politicians.

VFF President Emma Germano said she was proud to present a positive agenda that focused on delivering for farmers and regional communities.

"The VFF has pulled together a policy platform that doesn't just speak to the issues farmers are facing, but the issues faced by all regional communities," she said.

Ms Germano said the VFF was seeking commitments for critical investment into regional road and rail, housing, healthcare, biosecurity, jobs and environmental management.

"Whether it's how we work together to maintain the profitability of industry, how we deal with a changing climate, or how we continue to sustain thriving communities with a lifestyle envied by those in Melbourne - farmers are well placed to identify the issues that matter to all regional Victorians and to offer solutions."

Ms Germano said farmers would be active in lobbying candidates ahead of the election.

"The VFF will be active across the

state during this election. Where we can, we will be on the ground in marginal electorates pushing the message that regional Victoria deserves a fair go."

"Marginal seats like Ripon, Polwarth, Bass, Nepean, Eildon, South Barwon, Mildura and Shepparton are all on our list of target seats."

Ms Germano concluded by encouraging farmers to take a stand and make their voices heard at the election.

"We are committed to ensuring regional Victoria is front and centre at this election, and equally to working with all parties and candidates to deliver a better future for our state."



Emma Germano

Fungicide tips for growers La Nina weather phase has finished... for now

Experts are urging grain growers to increase their knowledge of fungicide resistance risks and optimal fungicide management in their cropping systems.

The Grains Research and Development Corporation has released three new videos to help growers understand how fungicide resistance develops and how they can prevent it from becoming an issue in their cropping programs.

Dr Fran Lopez-Ruiz from the Centre for Crop Disease Management says the alternative to integrated disease management is a very adverse situation.

"Growers could see fungicides start to fail, which would require increased chemical inputs with negative implications for grain yield and quality and for the environment," he said.

"If we can keep disease levels lower, that reduces the inputs required to control them."

Growers can view the videos through GRDC's YouTube channel.



PICTURE: GRDC

Dr Fran Lopez-Ruiz.

The Bureau of Meteorology has announced an end to the 2021-22 La Niña weather pattern, but says there's a 50-50 chance of a La Niña event forming again during 2022.

Most of the bureau's observations and climate models show that neither La Niña nor El Niño are likely to persist during the southern hemisphere's winter.

The country remains on a La Niña watch.

The Bureau of Meteorology's head of long-range forecasting Dr Andrew Watkins said the bureau had been monitoring this trend of a weakening La Niña over recent weeks.

"A La Niña watch does not change the outlook of above-average rainfall for most of Australia over coming months," Dr Watkins said.

"The bureau's long-range outlook remains wetter-than-average, consistent with model outlooks from other global forecast centres, reflecting a range of climate drivers including a developing negative Indian Ocean Dipole and warmer-than-average waters around Australia," he said.

"Sea surface temperatures are currently warmer than average for much of the Australian coastline, particularly to the north and west. This pattern is likely to increase the chance of above-average winter-spring rainfall for Australia."

Currently, the Indian Ocean Dipole is neutral, but climate model outlooks suggest a negative IOD is likely to form in the coming months, bringing above-average winter and spring rain across eastern and southern Australia.