

BIEDO Next Gen Farmers Project Newsletter

Final Issue June/July 2011

This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under "Australia's Farming Future"

'Next Gen Farmer' program concludes

Our 'Next Gen Farmers' program is now wrapping up with funding concluding during June. The project has been a great success, with 18 young farmers completing training in areas which will assist them to become 'Champions' for climate change and sustainability in their communities. Just some of the workshops they've attended include: Soil Biology, Private Forestry, Land Management, Climate Variability and Maximum Achievement Training.

Although funding for the 'Next Gen Farmers' program has concluded, the investment in knowledge will continue to be utilised under the *Clean and Clever* program. The foundations have been firmly laid for these young farmers to become 'Champions' in the agriculture sector whereby information will be shared through relationship networks and word of mouth.

BIEDO looks forward to receiving reports from the participants on how they are sharing their knowledge within their community and industry. We will continue to bring you updates on outcomes and participants reports through the *Clean and Clever* Newsletter and Fast Facts. If you are seeking a mentor or would like to tap into the new knowledge base of the 'Next Gen' farmers please contact Grace Gibson at BIEDO on 07 4169 7854.

Fresh start for the soil at Cherbourg Fresh

Soil Systems Australia's 'guru', Adam Willson, dedicated a day in June to sharing specialist soil knowledge with the staff of Cherbourg Fresh. This unique opportunity was made possible by BIEDO's 'Next Gen Farmers' program and was aimed at shaping a new organic future for Cherbourg Fresh.



Scott Jones, Produce Manager, said his staff participated in the two day work shop with Adam last month and were inspired to put theory into practice.

"Our staff came back hungry for even more knowledge, so it was a great opportunity to have Adam and the Cherbourg Fresh team spending the day in the field together testing the soils, assessing the current operation and considering practical changes;

Flooding earlier in the year inundated the paddocks and robbed the enterprise of valuable crops. The disaster also impacted on the health and viability of the soil. We are basically starting from scratch to bring our soils back into good condition. With Adam's insights we can assess where we're at and plan a better way forward to grow the high quality produce we're aiming for."
(from Scott Jones, Produce Manager)

Duncan Hegarty, Cherbourg Fresh Supervisor, says he found the day very informative and really enjoyed the opportunity.

"I got so much out of the time spent with Adam. He's helped us understand a lot more about how our soils work and how plants react to different conditions. Cherbourg Fresh is looking to expand its current production (which includes parley, shallots, silver beet, cabbage and broccoli) to include rockmelons, watermelons and pumpkins. We're trying to move away from fertilisers and pesticides and go totally organic, so this has helped us towards this goal."
(from Duncan Hegarty, Cherbourg Fresh Supervisor)

Red Brangus breeder focuses on environmental performance



Funding available under BIEDO's 'Next Gen Farmers' project has allowed Carly and Grant Burnham, participating Red Brangus breeders in the Monto region, to gain assistance in formulating their own Environmental Management Plan.

Grace Gibson, Sustainability Officer for BIEDO, sourced the *Australian Land Management Group* (ALM Group) to work with the Burnhams to continuously improve their impact on the environment. The plan will aid in improving environmental outcomes, farm productivity, and the protection and responsible utilisation of vital natural resources.

"The ALM Group trainer and Carly have worked together to incorporate their individual situation and the general issues of soil health, vegetation, biodiversity, water and climate change in the environmental management plan."

(from Grace Gibson, BIEDO Sustainability Officer)

This participant will be able to implement an environmental management plan that complies with internationally accepted management standards and takes account of regional priorities and strategies whilst supporting biodiversity conservation.

Carly and Grant Burnham may find environmental performance to be the differentiating factor which strengthens future competition within the industry beyond product quality, safety and price. Further information on Red Brangus breeders will be covered in BIEDO's *Clean and Clever* Newsletter and Fast Facts.

'Next Gen Farmers' consider future in Private Forestry

Two of the landholders registered with BIEDO's Federally funded 'Next Gen Farmers' program have commenced a five day training course with *Private Forestry Southern Qld* (PFSQ) as they consider diversification of their current land

use. The course aims to equip the participating grazier and apiarist (i.e. beekeeper) with the required range of knowledge and skills, appropriate management systems and an understanding of policy and regulatory environment to enter the Private Forestry industry.

The training in plantation establishment and management to maximize productive and environmental outcomes is being delivered in staggered blocks to the Nanango and Mundubbera landholders. PFSQ is providing the training in accepted best management practices in order to achieve the social, environmental and financial aspirations of the landholder and the Australian Forestry Standard.

It is anticipated that these 'Next Gen' farmers will be equipped to build educational knowledge and provide support to other landholders in the Burnett Inland considering entering Private Forestry.

'Next Gen' farmers 'got the dirt' on soil

Funding from BMRG through Australian Government's 'Caring for our Country' and the BIEDO 'Next Gen Farmers' projects supported a recent workshop which focused on soil biology and its management.

The two day *Soil Biology* workshop at Brian Pastures during May was delivered by Adam Willson of *Soil Systems Australia*.

Seventeen participants gathered from around the Inland Burnett and from as far as Dalby to gain 'hand ons' knowledge through practical sessions specifically designed for primary producers.



Just some of the 17 people who attended the soil workshop which featured guest speaker and soil guru, Adam Willson (rear centre)

The group included broad-acre and lucerne farmers, cattle producers and staff from the market garden at Cherbourg. Case studies specific to their industry were considered helpful and relevant.

BIEDO hopes the knowledge and understanding gained during the workshop will be shared with, and benefit, other primary producers in the area.

Climate change was the hot topic at Wondai and Eidsvold workshops

“Best workshop ever”

- Dean Rockemer, ‘Next Gen’ farmer



Workshopping options to enhance climate opportunities and overcome climate challenges drew a variety of Burnett Inland agriculturalists to the RM Williams Centre and Wondai State School during June. Guest speaker, Dr Jeff Clewett, Principal Scientist with *Agroclim* and developer of climate software ‘*Rainman*’, delivered a package of information specific to the Burnett Inland climatic conditions.

“The sessions were an opportunity to share information on the climate history of the Burnett region as well as factors causing climate variability and change. Dr Clewett also guided participants through a consideration of the science, history, future, uncertainty and use of short and long-term climate forecasts including seasonal forecasts based on MJO and ENSO.”
(from Grace Gibson, BIEDO Sustainability Officer)

All participants were encouraged to focus on factors most directly related to their enterprise and make choices based on risk assessment models. Participants agreed that discussions on links between climate, management and sustainable production would aid in future planning.

“The adaptation strategies and growth projections of native pastures will definitely give us something to consider from a graziers point of view.”
(from Dean Rockemer, ‘Next Gen’ farmer who attended the Wondai workshop)

The workshop was supported by the *Burnett Mary Regional Group* and BIEDO, through funding from the Australian Government’s ‘*Caring for our Country*’ project and the ‘*Next Gen Farmers*’ project. The goal was to arm

participants with information to make a decision to continue business as usual, trim their business strategy or take their operation in a bold new direction.

Hospitality teacher and leader of Wondai State School’s ‘*Green Team*’, Rae Brown, and her students, presented a selection of food to satisfy participants’ appetites at the Wondai Session. The refreshments for the day were greatly enjoyed and included ingredients produced in the permaculture garden on site. The garden is auspiced and maintained by the Wondai State School; designed and developed in partnership with BIEDO’s *Community Gardens Program*

‘Next Gen Farmer’ Profile - Jeff and Sue Trott (Mundubbera)

Jeff and Sue Trott own and operate a beef production enterprise on “*Thooruna*” eighty five kilometers west of Mundubbera. Jeff and Sue purchased the 4 616 ha property from Jeff’s parents who drew it as a ballot block in 1968. After forty plus years of family operation the property is reasonably well developed and the pair are proactive in their approach to its future development and operation. The Trotts believe that the future of beef production is reliant on sustainable and efficient production practices. It is Jeff and Sue’s desire to include their two sons in their business which motivates them to expand their operation in a sustainable and efficient manner.



Both Jeff and Sue have participated in numerous workshops and field days relevant to their industry and are active members of a local group of young progressive beef producers. The Trott family has enthusiastically participated in the activities funded under BIEDO’s ‘*Next Gen Farmer*’ project with the aim of applying their new knowledge to their operation in a practical sense.



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry



Burnett Mary
REGIONAL GROUP
Practical Solutions for Natural Resource Management



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



BIEDO
Nanango, Kingoonya, Wondai, Proston, Murgon, Cherbourg,
Goomeri, Kilkivan, Biggenden, Mt Perry, Gaydah, Mundubbera,
Eidsvold, Monto, and Towns and Districts