

March news from Anna Binna



## ANNA BINNA update

### News from Anna Binna: March 2016

2016 has certainly got off to a cracking start. We have received 100mm of rain so far. The long-term forecast predicts a high probability of a La Niña weather pattern developing, which will hopefully deliver an above-average winter and spring rainfall. The 2015 growing season rainfall was the lowest we've received since 2006. We worked hard all year to set up for a dry season and it's a testament to our farming systems to have produced as much grain as we did on so little rainfall.

With 60mm of rainfall in November and this year's dumping of rain, we've had a huge task to control the summer weeds. Marco and Danny have been hard at it and have sprayed our entire program twice since harvest. Summer weed control is essential to conserve subsoil moisture and to limit the carryover of root disease.

### Global Outlook for our Sector

The Australian grain market is now completely



Danny & Marco have been busy spraying summer weeds



Derek & Tim overseeing seed cleaning

deregulated and Australian farmers are competing in the global market. Since the GFC, many countries are not in a position to carry large stocks of grain and they typically buy just in time to meet their needs. Overall, this has increased the volatility in the commodity market and this is another factor that we need to manage. Last year, we enjoyed lentils selling at record prices with a world supply shortage. This year, the area sown to lentils in Canada has increased by 500,000 acres. This is larger than the entire area of Australia's lentil crop. This is likely to increase the supply of lentils and the price will likely return to traditional levels.

Internationally, wheat and barley are currently priced at 10-year lows due to the last three seasons of above-average global production. This has resulted in high stocks of cereal grain being accumulated throughout the world. As a result, consumers have benefited from a reduction in the price of food. On a positive note, we have been fortunate with the recent fall in the Australian dollar, which helped insulate us from some of the downside on cereal pricing.

### **Seeding Preparation**

Simon has been in the workshop and the air seeder is ready to go. We will continue to work through the rest of our kit so we are ready to roll in mid-April. Derek has been carting the last of our grain to the silos as we finalise this year's cropping program, and he has overseen the cleaning of our seed. He is currently carting gypsum and then will start on our fertiliser.

### **Employment and Training**

Our staff members are our most valuable asset and we are always looking to increase their skills. Last year, we all updated our training in the operation of Front End Loaders, Telehandlers and Forklifts, and we all refreshed our First Aid Certificates. Derek, Tim and Danny also completed their Working at Heights & Confined Spaces training. We have also taken on



Simon has the seeder serviced and ready to roll



Loading gypsum at Lake Fowler

Ciaha Smith, who is a Year 12 Student from Maitland Area School. Ciaha is doing a work placement with us for the next six months.

### **Fire Lessons Learnt from Pinery Fires**

After the recent catastrophic events at Pinery in the mid-north, we are again looking at how we can best prepare if we are faced with a bushfire. As we remap paddocks, we will look to increase our firebreaks to 2 metres around property boundaries. We have also reviewed our harvest procedures. Our harvest fire action plan includes two fire trucks, fire units on both chaser bins and fire suppression systems on our headers. We have a weather station at Anna Binna which provides live data direct to our mobile devices. We conduct all operations as per the harvest code of practice and we are a primary contact with our local CFS on fire ban days.

### **Ongoing Property Maintenance**

We strive to continually improve the properties we manage. This program is ongoing and often involves the removal of stone heaps and unserviceable infrastructure through to cleaning up around farmyards and buildings. It is our aim to both protect and improve properties. If there is anything you would like to see improved on your property, please let us know.

### **The Season Ahead**

We are all looking forward to the new season with seeding only four weeks away. Thank you for choosing us to manage your property. Our aim has always been to lead in the practice of sustainable agriculture and to promote sound land stewardship values.



Ciaha Smith - work placement from Maitland Area School



Re-assess fire risk after Pinery fires



Tim shifting stone heaps