As we slowly wrap up the 2 no-till into pastures projects that have been running in the Mallee for the last 3 years, we are pleased to deliver one of our major milestones – the fact sheet!

“No-till into pasture ground – Making it work” brings together all the major findings and provides a step by step recipe to maximise success when looking to no-till into pasture ground.

Around 70% of Mallee farmers have both cropping and livestock and better integrating the 2 enterprises is a high priority for many. No-till seeding into pasture ground can be challenging and these projects have identified the management practices that need to be in place to make sure no-till crops establish well following a pasture phase.

“No-till into pasture ground – Making it work” brings together all the major findings and provides a step by step recipe to maximise success when looking to no-till into pasture ground.

“Planning for no-till begins in the pasture phase”, says project officer Tanja Morgan. “Chemical summer and autumn weed control are also critical and last but not least is setting everything up for no-till in the cropping phase”.

The fact sheet is an excellent summary of the what works and why and will be a useful tool for farmers looking to improve no-till crop establishment following pastures.

The two projects have worked with 6 farmers across the Mallee with different rotations, pasture and soil types. Even with such diversity the same principles to preparing for no-till into pasture have applied.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our farmer collaborators – Peter Blacket, Wynarka, Daniel Evans, Wunkar, Ray, Gary and Dale Bald, Ettrick, Wayne Molineaux, Tarlee & Jabuk, Jeff Hyde, Parilla and Lachie Singh, Alawoona.
Even though both projects have now officially finished, a demonstration paddock at Lachie Singh’s at Alawoona is still being monitored with some fantastic results.

Lachie has switched to no-till for the first time this year after purchasing a John Deere Conserva Pak, sowing into both crop and pasture ground. This demonstration paddock has been a little bit different as Lachie was already implementing all of the practices recommended when sowing in to pasture apart from the no-till seeding system.

The Singh’s typically practice a 2 year crop pasture rotation and the keys to success have been excellent early grass control in the pasture phase as well as chemical summer weed control across the entire farm and keeping autumn a “weed free zone”.

The demonstration paddock has looked at cultivation versus no-till across 3 different soil types – sand, midslope and flat. So far no visual differences between the two treatments have been observed at any time during the growing season.

Root disease monitoring has shown a slight increase in Rhizoctonia symptoms on the roots in the no-till area (see graph) but visually there is no difference in the crop growth.

So far what we are seeing is fairly consistent with rhizo observations taken at other sites where crop on no-till may show more early symptoms of root disease but as more N becomes available through mineralisation later in the season the no-till crop will recover.

The research from the projects has confirmed that the main benefit of cultivation is from the flush of nitrogen at seeding and not a reduction in rhizoctonia inoculum. Therefore if nitrogen is not limiting in the no-till system early, no-till crops should perform as well or in most cases better.

We will wait and see if the same can be expected from a first year no-till crop but all indications are pointing to a good yield across the board, set up by a grass free medic pasture in 2012 and good fertiliser inputs this season.

Lachie expects an average yield from this paddock of 1.8t/ha, however in the best years has reaped up to 4t/ha. We will continue to monitor this paddock through to harvest and compare the final yield from the cultivated vs no-till areas.

Lachie sowed around a trial marker leaving a missed strip on the mid-slope. It’s a great example of the excellent medic regeneration with no grass weeds.

Early grass selective weed control in the pasture phase has set this paddock up for cropping in 2013.
MSF Karoonda Field Day

Tuesday, 3rd September 2013 – 9:00am till 5:00pm
MSF Research Site, Loller Road, Lowaldie, South Australia

The field day program includes:
- Barley agronomy – new barley varieties and their management (nutrition and weed competitiveness)
- New medic pasture options for Mallee farmers
- Crop sequencing and how long can break effects last?
- Effects of summer stubble management, weed control and break crops on soil disease and biology
- Evaluation of weed competitive ability of barley varieties

Guest presenter Graham Brodie (University of Melbourne) will discuss progress on using microwave technology to combat herbicide resistance.

When: Tuesday 3rd September 2013, 9:00am to 4:30pm
Including free BBQ lunch sponsored by AWB
Where: Peter and Hannah Lollers’ Property, 1010 Loller Road, Lowaldie SA
RSVP: For catering can you please RSVP to MSF on (03)50219100 or email steph@msfp.org.au

How to get there
From Karoonda take Loxton Rd 10km, turn right at Lowaldie onto Loller Road then proceed another 10km, the trial site will be on the right hand side near the corner of Loller Road and Wood Road (1010 Loller Rd)

To view a Google map on the internet please follow this link http://goo.gl/maps/s29GV or head to www.msfp.org.au

After the field day, enjoy a barbeque dinner at the WD Lewis store in Karoonda and check out the latest in precision farming
Upcoming Events 2013

Ovine Johnes Disease Roadshow— Tuesday 27 August, 10am Murray Bridge Golf Club.
Tea & Coffee supplied, free entry. RSVP Kira 8539 2112.

MSF Mildura Field Day— Wednesday 28 August, 9am to 5pm, Matt Curtis’ property.
The day will include trial site inspections and cover topics on soil moisture monitoring, nitrous oxide emissions, optimising legume nodulation and how to market your pulses. To find out more go to www.msfp.org.au or phone MSF on 03 5021 9100.

MSF Karoonda Field Day—Tuesday 3 September, Lowaldie.

Salinity Concepts and Management Workshop—Tues 10 & Wed 11 September, Murray Bridge NRM Office & field walk.
Free workshop, morning/afternoon teas and lunch provided. Gain a greater understanding of the cause, effects, impact and management of dryland salinity. Local, State and interstate speakers. Results from the current research and farmer experiences. RSVP to Andrew Harding by Friday 30th August on 08 8842 6231 or 0417 896 835 or e-mail: andrew.harding@sa.gov.au

Natural Resources Management Weed & Vermin Forum—Wednesday 18 September, 2pm onwards, Meningie Golf Club.
Topics include roadside control, weed awareness, weed and vermin control in parks, New Zealand Fur Seals - friend or foe, NRM explained & managing CLLMM plantings. Come along and have your say. BBQ tea to follow. RSVP Helane Norman by 12 Sep for catering purposes. E-mail: helane.norman@sa.gov.au

Also included in this envelope is a survey on Seeps and Salinity — If this is a concern to you, please fill in and return the survey and a Rural Solutions SA consultant can visit your property to look at your problem sites.