



# Australian Pecan Growers' Association

Winter 2012 Newsletter



## **Annual Conference and General Meeting –**

### **Macksville, NSW, 25th & 26th August 2012**

Our program includes presentations on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August at the Macksville Ex-Services Club, Pacific Highway, Macksville (parking at rear).

We will have the pecan judging and cook off on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August.

On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August we will visit David and Sandra Robinson to see the results of the drastic pruning in recent years. This will be instructive for all of us as large trees and shading become problems in all pecans orchards eventually.

As usual we will have an informal evening meal on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August to provide members with the chance to chat and share their knowledge. This is your chance to ask questions on issues of concern to you in an informal setting as well as just a great social occasion.

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## **Upcoming Events –**

### **18 July Pecan farm walk and talk with Gary Zimmer**

On the 18th of July Debbie and Geoff Bugden will be hosting Gary Zimmer (American Organic farmer and Author) for a three hour farm walk and talk on their farm. The day starts off at 8am at Wollongbar TAFE for a briefing on Biological Mineral balancing for farm productivity. 10.15 at the farm for morning tea then farm walk and talk.

### **Reclaiming Wellness seminar with Graeme Sait – 21st June 1-5pm Wollongbar TAFE**

Graeme is a well known author and educator, founder of Nutri-tech Solutions and leader in soil, animal and human nutrition.

### **Banking on Biology with Graeme Sait – 9am-5pm Lismore Workers Club, 22nd June**

Bookings are essential for all three events.

Contact Debbie Bugden 02-6624 3085.

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## 'Action on the Ground' - Kaye and David McNaught

In January, we (Kaye and David as Tweed River Pecans) started to put in an application to increase soil carbon on our pecan plantation, using a grant from the Commonwealth Government's Carbon Fund. The idea grew and with the help of the Tweed Shire's Sustainability Agriculture Officer, we set up the Tweed Sustainable Agricultural Network which embraces a diversity of farms: orchardists, vegetable growers, dairy, cane and banana farmers.

The application has just been successful, and from 1st July, thirty farms will participate in the *Increasing Soil Carbon in Tweed Valley Farmland* project. The project will run for 3 years, and aims to demonstrate that carbon levels in various landscapes and soil types can be increased by applying compost, a biochar/compost blend and animal manure and using legume cover crops.

This project means to us that we will have an on-farm trial on 10 acres of orchard, applying compost and legume cover crops for three years, replacing our previous regime of nitrogenous fertilisers. There will be annual soil testing, demonstration days to allow interested groups to learn about our practices, and sharing of knowledge and results amongst Tweed Farmers and participating organisations such as NSW Department of Primary Industry, Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the community.

This program to capture more carbon in the soil and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has received a \$586,000 grant from the Commonwealth Government. We are delighted to be farming in this sustainable way and are hopeful that these trials will lead to an even more productive pecan orchard and demonstrate a better way to farm in Australia.

Of course David and I will keep other pecan growers informed of the trial and its outcomes.

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## APGA Website

Dawn Thornton manages our pecan growers website – [www.pecangrowers.org.au](http://www.pecangrowers.org.au)

The website has proved very effective in a number of areas. Firstly it is a great way for people to find us. This has led to:

- New members
- Sales enquiries and sales of pecans and pecan trees, domestically and internationally, for those businesses listed in the suppliers section
- The ability to send pecan 'wannabes' to the website for real research, information and links to start their journey. This means less hours talking about very basic information for committee members and more targeted questions when they come.
- Non-members getting in touch to sell equipment and real estate agents buying information packs to help them to sell pecan farms.

The website has information on pecan growing with links to pecan research and advice.

The website also provides a great opportunity for you to reach others with information about

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your business. The website enables suppliers and buyers of pecan nuts, tree growers with tree to sell and those with surplus pecan equipment to list their details for free. If you wish to be listed please contact Dawn for the format for the web information.

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### **Deane Stahmann scholarship – Applications now open**

The Deane Stahmann scholarship was established in 2008 to provide Australian pecan growers and industry participants with the opportunity to attend the Texas Pecan Growers Short Course at Texas A & M University. The course gives access to extensive American research and expertise on the planning, establishment, management and marketing of pecans.

Applications are now open for the scholarship which will be awarded at the 2012 Australian Pecan Growers Association Annual General Meeting to be held on 25th August 2012. Previous winners are Frank Boyle and Boyd Johnson.

The winner of this scholarship will participate in the 5-day Texas Pecan Growers Short Course at the Texas A&M University. The course is held in the last week of January each year and covers such topics:

- orchard site selection
- tree physiology
- cultivar selection
- orchard design and spacing
- planting & establishing pecan orchards
- fertilization
- weed and disease control
- crop load management
- tree pruning, thinning and hedging
- irrigation systems and scheduling
- storing and handling
- leaf tissue analysis
- cracking and shelling
- marketing and cost & return analysis

Each scholarship comprises \$2000.00 plus course fees. Applications close July 30<sup>th</sup> 2012.

Application forms and further information can be obtained on the website and from Dawn Thornton, Secretary of the Australian Pecan Growers Association on 02 6564 8747 or email [bellbowra@bordernet.com.au](mailto:bellbowra@bordernet.com.au)

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### **Call for Committee Members –**

Our Association runs through the efforts of our committee member. We want enthusiastic new members to help us. Many hands do make light work as we can share specific responsibilities around.

Being a committee member is a great way to contribute to your industry but also to increase your knowledge and contacts within the industry and the broader tree nut industry.

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## Industry Handbook for Safe Processing of Nuts

The Grocery Manufacturers Association USA (GMA) have some great information for those involved with processing of nuts. A range of documents and checklists are available at their website:

<http://www.gmaonline.org/issues-policy/product-safety/food-and-product-safety/manufacturing-processing-and-regulatory-support/preventing-foodborne-illness/preventing-salmonella/>

This webpage also contains checklists for the design of processing facilities and another for the design of equipment. These will be useful when considering the design and layout of your on farm pecan handling.

The Industry Handbook for Safe Processing of Nuts is an important reference for those thinking of cracking nuts to produce kernel or other products. It also includes important information on good agricultural practices in nuts orchards through its addendums. The Handbook can be found at the webpage above.

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## Equipment for Sale

Modern Electronics pecan cracker \$4,500.

Meyer pecan cracker \$4,000.

7 x 0.5t open topped pecan drying bins with electric blower/heater \$1,800 the lot.

Contact John or Sue Leverett on 07-41266243

### 2011-2012 Committee:

**President:** Scott Clark 02 66243378 [lagoongrass.pecans@gmail.com](mailto:lagoongrass.pecans@gmail.com)

**Vice-President :** Terry Bates 02 6564 8747

**Secretary:** Dawn Thornton 02 6564 8747 [bellbowra@bordnet.com.au](mailto:bellbowra@bordnet.com.au)

**Treasurer:** Debbie Bugden 02 6624 3085

#### Committee members:

Richard Genest 07 4699 9452 (ANIC Representative)

Kaye McNaught 02 66721483

Geoff Bugden 02 6624 3085

**Australian Pecan Growers Association:** PO Box 590 Lismore, NSW 2480