

Silicon to save wheat industry

EHSAN Tavakkoli has the potential to save the Australian wheat industry millions of dollars.

His research involves using silicon to enhance disease resistance in wheat and could dramatically reduce costs through a reduction in herbicide and fungicide treatments.

The Iranian postgraduate student at the University of New England has established a collaborative relationship between his School of Rural Science and Agriculture and a government department in Iran.

The Department of Soil and Water Research at the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture has made its laboratory facilities available to Mr Tavakkoli in the hope that his research will help Iran to increase its grain yield.

"Silicon has been used for centuries in the prevention of plant diseases in agriculture," Mr Tavakkoli said.

"We are only now working to acquire a more precise understanding of



Ehsan Tavakkoli, an Iranian postgraduate student at the University of New England, is looking at the potential of silicon in wheat to enhance disease resistance.

Photo: SUBMITTED

its role in plant physiology and in disease prevention."

"Wheat farmers could easily incorporate silicon in their disease management strategies.

"This would mean an increased resistance to plant diseases and a reduction in the need for fungicides.

"Integrating silicon application into fertiliser treatments would be very cost-effective.

"Silicon can reduce wheat farmers' costs, increase their profit margins, and help them meet growing pressure for more environmentally friendly, sus-

tainable agriculture.

"So far I have studied the disease-resistant response to silicon application of a wide range of Australian and Iranian varieties of wheat. I now plan to investigate the mechanisms through which silicon enhances plants' de-

fence against disease, and to examine the response of wheat to different silicon sources."

He said that the keenly awaited results of his research would be available to governments and farmers at the conclusion of his PhD project in 2009.

Rain staying on the plains

ARMIDALE Rural Lands Protection Board's drought status has remained unchanged despite widespread rainfall in the past six weeks.

Half of the local RLPB has been in drought since the March figures from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) were released and upgraded some areas into marginal drought conditions.

The area of NSW in drought has fallen to 80.3% and widespread rain has seen optimism return to some areas of the bush, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said.

"Rain across NSW is finally beginning to make a dent in this one in 100 year drought," he said.

"Paddocks that were once dust bowls have been revitalised by widespread rains over the last 3-4 weeks ... in fact nearly 100 per cent of NSW received average rain.

"And while the rain has been falling the mood in the bush has been steadily rising - it's been a while since our farmers have something to

smile about."

Division D and part of Divisions A and C of the Armidale RLPB are considered in drought conditions while part of Divisions A and C are considered to be in marginal state.

Minister Macdonald said the area of NSW considered marginal is 10.4 per cent (up from 9.8 per cent) the satisfactory area is 9.3 per cent (up from 6.9 per cent), while drought is down to 80.3 per cent (from 83.3 per cent).

"In May most of NSW received falls of 25-50mm and this follows decent rain during the previous two months.

"However, during the last two weeks rain has fallen in narrow bands across the State. Some areas have missed out on great falls."

Minister Macdonald stressed that the State Government's range of drought measures would remain in place and urged producers needing assistance to contact the drought hotline 1800 814 647 or go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/drought.

In Brief

Steakholders unite

EBOR Beef is holding a 'Steakholders Forum' for anyone involved in the beef industry.

The forum will feature a presentation titled 'From Soils to Sales' by Michael and Louisa Kiely, founders of the Carbon Coalition and principals of Carbon Farmers of Australia. With the increasing focus and media attention on global warming and climate change, the Kielys' presentation is a must see.

Bill Hoffman and Alistair Rayner, NSW Department of Primary Industries, will be presenting 'Understanding business performance including cost of production' along with producer perspectives provided by Trevor Jorgensen, Delungra and Rob Perkins, Ebor.

Finally, Wendy Voss, senior analyst, food and agribusiness research at Rabobank, will be presenting 'Beef - A Global Perspective'. Wendy will provide up-to-date analysis of matters affecting the global beef industry.

The 'Steakholders Forum' will be held on July 4 at 9am at the Armidale City Bowling Club. To reserve a place contact Matt Meehan or Sally Lynam, Rabobank on 6771 3644.

Future for fleece

THE final report of the Land, Water and Wool project has shown woolgrowers see a green future for their golden fleece.

The five-year, \$40 million research project, a collaboration between Australian Wool Innovation and Land & Water Australia, was the wool industry's biggest ever research project into natural resource management.

The program's final report titled Managing for Sustainable Profit, identified new ways in which woolgrowers can increase profits and productivity, while at the same time managing the environment to ensure the industry remains sustainable.

Details can be found at www.landwaterwool.gov.au

Keep Australia free

LOCAL graziers are urged to contact their vet if any cattle or sheep display unusual behaviour so suspect animals' brains can be used to prove Australia remains free of mad cow disease and scrapie.

Any change in the mental status, sensation, posture or movement could indicate brain disease in animals. Signs to look for include muscle tremor, nervousness, staggering gait, falling, blindness and paralysis.

Producers will receive an incentive payment of \$150 for cattle and \$25 for sheep that meet the clinical signs.

Graziers who notice any of these symptoms should report cases to their NSW Department of Primary Industries or Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB).

Milestone for Trangie

NSW Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) beef cattle research herd at Trangie - internationally renowned for its role in high calibre, innovative research - has received official recognition for a remarkable milestone in its own history.

With 75 years of continual membership of the Australian Angus Society, the Trangie herd joins an elite group of only seven organisations to have notched up this record and the only government herd to achieve the status. Further information can be obtained from Dr Robert Herd at NSW DPI's Beef Industry Centre at Armidale, 6770 1808.

ARBITAGE & BUCKLEY

CLEARANCE SALE

A/C JOHN & MEG LOVE

**SUNDAY 1st JULY 2007 AT 10.00AM
ON SITE AT 103 TULONG ROAD
ARMIDALE**

Comprising: John Deere 100 Series 42" cut ride-on mower; Stihl Farm Boss chainsaw; Makita cordless drill with batteries & charger; Kango hammer; Laser Level; Air Compressor; 1 antique dumpy level; spray gun; safety harness & lanyard; rattle gun; bolt cutters; boxes of mechanical tools; 4 sliding 'G' clamps; 2 boxes concreting tools; ¾ ratchet & fittings; electric welder with rods & helmets; 3 pair stilts; set of oxycetaline & rods; numerous hand saws; 1 screw jack; 1 bird aviary; gas light; gas cooker; antique wardrobe, antique kitchen dresser with leadlights; Mongoose bike; antique ice chest; antique set scales; 2 director chairs; 3 kitchen stools; tuckerbox freezer, bar fridge; 1 Hebel block saw; assorted concrete & metal cutting discs; numerous cupboard hinges; numerous nails & screws; fencing gear; plumbing fittings; PVC water fittings; weephole fittings; 1 240 volt water circulating pump; paint drop sheets; 2 ramset guns; assorted electrical fittings; Kambrook heater; assorted safety helmets & ear muffs; firefighting pump; assorted hand planes; rotary hoe (needs repair); long electrical cords; bathroom cabinet; saw stools; assorted garden tools; post driver; roll of safety mesh; rolls of shade cloth; chains; various lengths of 150x50 & 100x50 cypress pine; assorted lattice work; sand filter; three planting plots; 1 concrete mixer; 2 water heaters; 2 hand mowers; trestles; various step ladders; 2 wheelbarrows; pool table with accessories; chest drawers; electric urn; 2 large BBQ settings; 3 wrought iron garden sets; old cedar church pew; marble look coffee table & plant stand; 6 seat dining setting; older style bedroom setting; kitchen pine dresser; 1 small twin tub washer; microwave oven; plants & pots; garden ornaments; copper tub wood box; corner tv unit; old picture frames & mirrors; stereo; kitchen stools; copper kettle; dozens of boxed household effects, and other items too numerous to mention

A/C OTHER VENDORS: Foldout table tennis table & accessories; leather saddle; bridle; Karrie car luggage carrier; teak veneer buffet; 1 mens road bike; 1 boys BMX bike; bike rack; Simpson oven; ceramic toilet bowl; large bamboo blinds (various widths); sliding door frame; new carpet offcuts; kitchen wall tiles; large tent; curtains; registered box trailer (reinforced with bike well) Reg No AN4813 - registered 30/1/08; Yamaha 80cc trail bike; wooden louvered doors (2 full size, 1 smaller); double stainless steel sink; lamb baa bucket, and other items too numerous to mention.

**Refreshments & toilet facilities on site
Outside entries invited**

**ARMITAGE & BUCKLEY
ARMIDALE'S AUCTIONEERS
PHONE VICTOR 0413 014 443
JAI 0413 488 732**