

NSW SUSTAINING THE BASIN *Irrigated farm modernisation*

Update bulletin 11

This bulletin provides updates on the NSW Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation (STBIFM) project. This project is funded by the Australian Government's 'Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure' Program.

The bulletin will keep interested stakeholders informed of key dates and activities for the duration of the project. It will also alert you to opportunities for training and learning more about emerging issues and technologies.

DPI encourages you to be involved and stay informed using this service. You can, of course, unsubscribe at any time.

For more detailed information on any aspects of the project please send an email to IFM.info@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Spotlight: There have been five projects from Round 1 completed with final payments made.

There's more to STBIFM than just incentives!

There are three major points of difference between STBIFM and other irrigation incentives programs – fully subsidised training, project planning and new resources to provide irrigators the information they need to plan and improve their irrigation management and their bottom line.

Want to know more about the training on offer, the knowledge and skills of the DPI trainers and what else participating in STBIFM can offer you? Then read on . . .



Participants at the recent Centre Pivot Lateral Move training course recently held in Tamworth. Image: J. Montgomery

Training gives you the edge . . .

Irrigation professionals all agree that undertaking relevant training definitely gives irrigators an edge on achieving water use efficient and profitable irrigated enterprises.

Peter Smith, Irrigation Development Officer at Tamworth points out that new infrastructure in itself does not guarantee reduced water use or improved productivity.

“Over the years I have seen many irrigators invest heavily in new infrastructure, including centre pivots and lateral moves, and be disappointed at the end result.”

“Mainly, because you can have the best system possible and still be inefficient and unprofitable if you manage it poorly.”

“Attending DPI training allows participants to access knowledge and experiences from both irrigation professionals and other irrigators,” he said.

“We often find that learning the traps from other irrigators provides the best outcome for participants.”

“We try to have a range of other irrigation professionals on hand to give irrigators the best experience possible and expose them to the latest thinking and technologies.”

“The courses we deliver are current and focus on the needs of irrigators with a blend of ‘classroom’ type activities and field based activities.” Mr Smith said.

DPI encourages all eligible irrigators to make the most of the fully subsidised training on offer through the STBIFM program.

Check out what the [ProWater®](#) training series can offer you.



Peter Smith, DPI Irrigation Development Officer instructing irrigators on centre pivot evaluation at a recent day held at Breeza. Image: S. Bray

Always something to consider



Bruce Sherwood and Nick Harry, Tamworth looking at GDot telemetry at the recently held Irrigation Scheduling course. Image: S. Bray.

Bruce Sherwood and Nick Harry were very interested in the [GDot scheduling tool](#) demonstrated at the recent Irrigation Scheduling course held in Tamworth.

GDot is a soil moisture display advice that can be read at a glance from up to 15m away.

Bruce Sherwood said they were pleased they attended the course.

“It made us aware of the tools out there to assist irrigators to apply the right amount of water at the right time,” Mr Sherwood said.

Look at this - can you afford not to?

The 22 participants of the [Centre Pivot Lateral Move \(CPLM\) training course](#) experienced a 60%-80% increase in skills and knowledge including their knowledge in selecting sprinkler packages, having confidence with discussing CPLM with retailers and the management of new systems.

The 18 participants of the [Irrigation Scheduling course](#) experienced a 47%- 80% increase in skills and knowledge including their knowledge of irrigation scheduling tools, determining crop water requirements and analysing soil moisture monitoring data.

The cost to do the two courses outside of STBIFM - \$1065 per person.

STBIFM provides fully subsidised training to eligible irrigators and Approved Irrigation Consultants.

Planning – often overlooked

A key aspect of the STBIFM project is the IFWUEA financial incentive to support irrigation planning.

Upgrading on-farm irrigation infrastructure is a costly, high risk business. Undertaking relevant investigations and seeking advice from irrigation professionals will minimise the risk of upgrading infrastructure.

The IFWUEA incentive has definitely supported irrigation planning for many of the successful irrigators from Rounds one and two.

DPI project staff have also seen many examples where the best projects were underpinned by good IFWUEAs and robust planning.

What successful applicants say:

“We spent a lot more than the incentive on investigations because we couldn’t afford to get it wrong.”

Macquarie Valley irrigator

“My IFWUEA was invaluable in helping me to develop my project. I now have confidence to continue with my on-farm developments.”

Peel Valley irrigator

“The IFWUEA and work done by my consultant was excellent. We couldn’t have developed either of our projects without that input. It confirmed that we were on the right track.”

Namoi Valley irrigator

IFWUEAs in a nutshell

- 88 IFWUEAs completed
- 52 successful projects supported by an IFWUEA
- Encompass 17,949ha of irrigated land
- Identified 15,366 ML of water savings.

Curious about what an IFWUEA is? [Here’s one we prepared earlier.](#)



Leading a horse to water . . .



Stuart Bray filming at a recent CPLM training day. Image: J. Montgomery.

Our man in the field Stuart Bray spends much of his time producing videos and case studies to bring the latest ideas and opinions on irrigation to STBIFM irrigators.

Communications and the delivery of useful information is a key component of STBIFM to ensure that irrigators have the best information possible to help make decisions when planning infrastructure projects.

Stu’s videos include the opinions and experiences of irrigators and irrigation professionals for the irrigation industry to draw on.

Here’s some food for thought with more to come shortly.

- [Oxigation of sub-surface drip irrigation](#)
- [Commissioning your pressurised system](#)
- [Diesel gas conversion](#)
- [Energy assessment on farms](#)

There are also a lot of useful [video and podcast resources](#) on a wide range of irrigation topics related to infrastructure planning on the STBIFM website and an [irrigation channel](#) on the DPI YouTube site.

[Let us know what you think](#) or if there are other topics of interest.

Meet the newest team member

With more than 30 years experience in the agricultural industry, Edward Joshua has worked for the NSW DPI for 26 years in a range of technical roles and has recently been appointed as the Irrigation Development Officer based in Dubbo.

Edward is no stranger to the world of water. Many of you will remember him in his previous role of coordinating a team of Water Use Efficiency Officers and the presentation of 'WaterWise on the Farm' to Macquarie Valley Irrigators.

Most recently, Edward was based at Dubbo as the District Livestock Officer (Sheep & Wool) and the Sheep Ectoparasite Control Coordinator for NSW.

Edward will be a key member of the STBIFM team in Dubbo.

"I am looking forward to working with the STBIFM team and the broader irrigation industry to deliver useful and relevant programs," Mr Joshua said.

Edward can be contacted in the DPI office in Dubbo on 02 6881 1275 or Edward.joshua@dpi.nsw.gov.au



*Edward Joshua at a recent team meeting in Orange.
Image: DPI*

How can I participate in STBIFM?

For more information or to register your interest in STBIFM, please contact your DPI regional project staff member, send an email to IFM.Info@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit the website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin



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