

New field site for sustainable farming

A new field site for innovative agricultural research has opened at Charles Sturt University's Wagga Wagga campus.



Credit: Maree Crowley

The site, which is run by the university's E.H. Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation, demonstrates the Centre's research outputs. It is intended to improve communication between researchers and agricultural industry stakeholders, and inform the wider community about the challenges faced by farmers affected by climate change.

'In the last 20–30 years, agricultural industries have made enormous progress towards improved sustainability,' says Graham Centre Director, Professor Deirdre Lemerle. 'Our farmers must be rewarded by the government and consumers for the real cost of sustainable food production.'

The field site will be a focus point to engage growers, advisers and researchers in an ongoing dialogue about sustainable food production. Prof. Lemerle says it will help to develop and maintain profitable, resilient and robust farming systems, by getting information out of filing cabinets and into the hands of people that need it. It will also help identify and focus research resources on emerging problems.

Demonstrations at the site include biochar for increased productivity, integrated weed management, forage crops for feed gaps, controlled traffic, crop herbicide tolerance, a soil pit to assess variability in soil physical properties, and genetic gains from plant improvement. A natural wetlands ecosystem on the site is also helping improve understanding of how crops and farm management practices affect wetlands.

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