



NSW SUSTAINING THE BASIN *Border Rivers-Gwydir*

Update Bulletin 1

January 2010

Introduction

Welcome to the first update bulletin for NSW Sustaining the Basin: Border Rivers-Gwydir.

The Bulletin is designed to give an overview of the project and the progress made to date.

For more detailed information on any aspects of the project please send an email to gwydir.info@industry.nsw.gov.au to contact the project staff directly. Contact details for each staff member can be found at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

REMINDER

Participating irrigators are reminded to contact one of the approved consultants to engage them to conduct an Irrigation Farm Water Use Efficiency Assessment (IFWUEA) as soon as possible to meet the tender deadline of 12 March 2010.

You are encouraged to contact a number of consultants on the list as each has differing expertise and cost structures and should be selected according to the project you are considering.

The list of approved consultants can be found at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Funding for IFWUEAs will be allocated on a first in first served basis with a maximum of two IFWUEAs per farm business.

Project area extended

On the 4 December 2009 the project area was extended by the Australian Government to include the Border Rivers Water Management Area as well as the Gwydir Valley Water Management Area.

Consultation Meetings

A range of consultation meetings were held across the Border Rivers and Gwydir regions in December to update irrigators, irrigation consultants and agribusiness advisors on the project.

The meetings were well attended and the feedback was positive. Fourteen irrigation consultants, 65 irrigators and 17 agribusiness advisors attended the meetings with some consultants representing up to ten clients.

Generally, there was concern about the timeframe for works to be completed and significant hesitation to giving back water without a premium to current market value.

However, there was overwhelming support for completing IFWUEAs to assist in future planning to improve on-farm water use.

Approved irrigation consultants

Irrigation consultants were invited in November 2009 to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to provide services to irrigators participating in the project.

A list of six irrigation consultancy businesses were approved on the 8 December 2009 and the information was made available to participants.

The list of approved irrigation consultants can be found at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Expressions of interest from irrigators

Irrigators were invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate in the project by 11 January 2010.

Fifty three Expressions of Interest were received in total with 49 of these being accepted.

Gwydir Valley irrigators indicated they are predominantly considering undertaking storage works and conveyance works.

Border Rivers irrigators indicated they were predominantly considering undertaking conveyance works and changing their irrigation system.

Support for undertaking an IFWUEA was high.

Fourteen irrigators indicated they had already undertaken an assessment of some components of their irrigation system such as storages, conveyance systems or field systems. However, all approved EOIs indicated they would engage a consultant to undertake an IFWUEA.

Requests for training

As part of the EOI process, irrigators were asked to indicate their training needs.

Interest was strong for all of the 11 courses being offered.

To assist irrigators and facilitate the development of their tender, the 'Water Trading', 'Centre Pivot and Lateral Move', 'On-farm Storage and Distribution' and 'Surface Irrigation Performance Assessment' courses will be delivered before the close of tenders on 12 March 2010.

Participating irrigators will be notified of the training once the dates for delivery are set.

A training calendar will be made available shortly on www.industry.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Technology Demonstration Sites

The Cooperative Research Centre for Irrigation Futures (CRCIF) has been engaged to establish sites to demonstrate the new technologies of IrriSATSMS scheduling service, furrow automation and the application of monolayers on storages.

A series of field days are planned during the life of the project for irrigators and consultants to see these technologies in a working situation. They will also be used to deliver key training programs to participating irrigators.

A field day on metering was held at 'Keytah' Moree by Irrigation Australia Limited and the Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association on 26 November 2009. This is a key demonstration site for the project. While project technology at this site was not featured at this event, the interest of the 85 irrigators in attendance was high.

A 'sneak peak' of the furrow automation site at "Auscott" was held for irrigation consultants on 20 January and a follow up field day for irrigators will be held on 5 March 2010.

A field day to look at the site where monolayer application for storages and the IrriSatSMS scheduling technology is being demonstrated will be held on 16 February 2010.

Participating irrigators will be notified of further details soon.

Further information on the upcoming technology demonstration events can be found at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Further Information

Further information on the progress of NSW Sustaining the Basin: Border Rivers-Gwydir can be found at :

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

by sending an email to gwydir.info@industry.nsw.gov.au

or contacting the Moree Office of Industry & Investment NSW on (02) 6750 6300

or the Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA on (02) 6757 2550.

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