



MEDIA RELEASE – Monday 28th July, 2014

Dealing with a difficult harvest guide

Harvest is one of the most stressful times of the year for grain growers.

In a bid to address some of these issues, reduce the stress levels and improve the quality of WA grain, the South East Premium Wheat Growers' Association (SEPWA) has developed a "Dealing with a Difficult Harvest" guide book.

The book, which was funded by the Council of Grain Growers Organisation (COGGO) research fund, was officially launched at the SEPWA Ladies Day in Esperance last week (Friday 25th of July).

SEPWA Executive Officer, Niki Curtis said there are a lot of things that can go wrong at harvest – break downs, rain and wet grain, fires, hail, staffing issues, lack of storage and grain quality issues.

All these issues severely impact on farmers with downtime in dealing with them along with stress, a reduction in yield and grain quality, and hence profitability at the end of the day", Niki said.

The Dealing with a difficult harvest book focuses on managing yourself, your staff, your business, your crops at harvest, your harvest and disaster.

It highlights industry research undertaken by experts and features farmers who have adopted innovative practices associated with harvesting issues and crop management.

Niki said there are a lot of things that farmers can't change at harvest time yet they have to find a way to address them in, in order to get on with the job.

She said this guide will help farmers arm themselves with the information so that when they are faced with a problem, they can do something about it.

"It doesn't matter what business you operate in today's world, managing the tensions and stresses that knock us down along the way is the primary key to our sustainability.

"We as an industry need to make our businesses, our families and ourselves individually more resilient so that we can deal with the pressures that we can't change immediately, said Niki.

The SEPWA Dealing with a Difficult Harvest guide covers effective decision making during busy times; managing stress at harvest; employing staff; workplace health and safety; mobile apps at harvest; grain marketing; biosecurity threats during harvest and weeds and pests.

It also covers barley straw strength and head loss; desiccation; sprouting; frost; pre-harvest preparation of machinery; high moisture harvesting; swathing; silo bags for on-farm grain storage; managing insurance risks and premiums and safe harvesting practices to stay ahead of crop fires.

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A number of farmers also share their experiences on farm which cover on farm safety and fatigue management programs; farming with innovation – communication and a paperless office; drying grain to keep harvest rolling; swathing – a tactic in the race to complete harvest; grain storage and aeration systems on farm and bagging – a good harvest.

Two thousand copies of the guide will be distributed through the Grower Group Alliance and COGGO to grower group members in Western Australia's southern agricultural region during spring field days. It will also be available on the SEPWA website electronically.

The SEPWA Dealing with a Difficult Harvest guide was funded by the Council of Grain Growers Organisation (COGGO) with technical support from the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA).

For further information about the project, contact SEPWA Executive Officer Niki Curtis on 9083 1125.

Photo – The SEPWA Dealing with a Difficult Harvest guide is now available for WA grain growers.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Niki Curtis
SEPWA Executive Officer
Ph 9083 1125
Mobile 0447 908 311

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