



RESEARCH SUMMARY

H115

FAST FACTS

PROBLEM

It can be difficult to attract skilled graduates to a career in applied grains research, development and extension (RD&E).

PROJECT

This annual regional internship offers graduate a year's training in applied grains RD&E with the Hart Field-Site Group based in the Clare region.

PARTICIPANTS

Hart Field Site Group:

Sarah Noack, Sandy Kimber.

Agronomy Solutions:

Sean Mason.

SARDI:

Kathy Ophel-Keller, Jenny Davidson, Kenton Porker.

Interns: Rochelle Wheaton, Dylan Bruce.

DATES

Start: 1 March 2016

Finish: 28 February 2019

REGIONAL INTERNSHIPS IN APPLIED GRAINS RESEARCH

The Hart Field-Site Group's annual regional internship program offers graduates the chance to build skills and experience in trial and experiment design, data collection and statistical analysis. There is also a strong focus on effective communication with growers and industry, identifying issues and sharing research findings.

This project has successfully trained two graduates in the basic skills associated with applied RD&E, ready for the next stage of their careers.

BACKGROUND:

Hart Field-Site Group manages a premier agronomic field trial site in South Australia's mid north.

As part of its commitment to supporting innovative, relevant agronomic research in the region, Hart's annual regional internship program is designed to better connect agricultural science graduates with the day-to-day realities and opportunities of applied crop research.

The opportunity helps interns move from university to the next stage of their career by demonstrating the range of options available to them, helping them develop industry networks, and teaching a range of practical skills.

This project supported two interns through research trial design, implementation, analysis and extension activities during 2016 and 2017.

RESEARCH AIMS:

The core objectives of the project were to:

- Encourage leading agricultural science students to pursue careers in applied research through a regionally based internship.
- Give students an overview of fundamental RD&E skills, with particular relevance to the grains industry.

IN THE FIELD:

Hart has successfully delivered two regional agricultural RD&E internships under this project, with the support of the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and SAGIT.

In 2016, University of Adelaide Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSc.Ag) graduate Rochelle Wheaton was selected for the program. She participated in research into nutrient stratification from chicken litter applications, working with Sean Mason from Agronomy Solutions; and fungicide management for blackspot in field peas, with Jenny Davidson from SARDI.



In 2017 the program attracted Dylan Bruce, a BSc.Ag graduate with first class honours from the University of Adelaide's durum breeding group.

Dylan brought a particular interest in cereal variety evaluation to his internship and his main research project aligned with Hart's long-season wheats research with Dr Kenton Porker from SARDI.

At Waite, Dylan took part in a small chamber growth experiment and dissections of wheat plants growth stems (apical meristems) collected in Hart field trials.

Both interns gained exposure to skills including background research and protocol development, identification of suitable trial sites, trial design and set up, spray applications, soil sampling and plant assessments.

RESULTS:

The interns had many opportunities to network with growers, advisers and researchers including participation in GRDC Updates, various field days and forums, a septoria workshop and PIRSA women in leadership course.

They were also involved in Hart's full program of events including the Hart Field Day where they introduced speakers, presented key findings from their own research programs and facilitated question-and-answer sessions

After completing her internship, Rochelle Wheaton worked with SARDI Minnipa and on the family farm before undertaking international travel. She is currently working back on her family's farm near Streaky Bay.

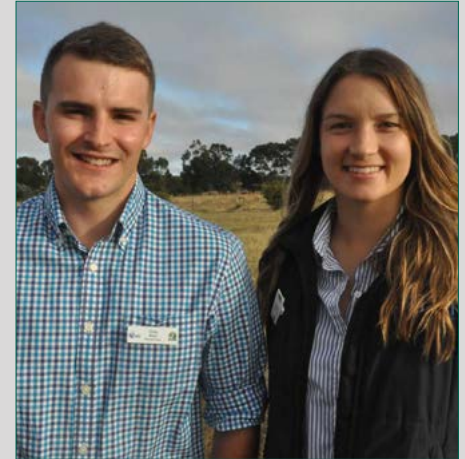
Dylan Bruce gained a position as a Technical Officer with SARDI in Clare. He has since progressed to Research Officer and has a strong interest in remaining in the Mid North to further his skills as a researcher then, longer term, as a project manager.

Following the success of this project, Hart gained SAGIT's support to train one graduate per year until at least 2023. Project H117 supported Hart interns Emma Pearse from March 2018, Jade Rose from March 2019 and Brianna Guidera from March 2020. The program has since been extended through SAGIT Project H120, which will fund an additional two-year internship from March 2021.

VALUE FOR GROWERS:

The work and activities of the interns has raised the profile of the internship program and, by extension, RD&E careers in the South Australian grain industry, including through newspaper and social media coverage.

This has a positive impact in attracting young people to careers in the industry, helping ensure the long-term resilience of South Australian grains research and production.



Hart Field-Site Group research interns Rochelle Wheaton (2016) and Dylan Bruce (2017).
PHOTO: Gabrielle Jones.

SAGIT DISCLAIMER

Any recommendations, suggestions or opinions contained in this communication do not necessarily represent the policy or views of the South Australian Grain Industry Trust (SAGIT). No person should act on the basis of the contents of this communication without first obtaining specific, independent, professional advice. The Trust and contributors to this communication may identify products by proprietary or trade names to help readers identify particular types of products. We do not endorse or recommend the products of any manufacturer referred to. Other products may perform as well as or better than those specifically referred to. SAGIT will not be liable for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying on the information in this communication.

CAUTION: RESEARCH ON UNREGISTERED AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS USE. Any research with unregistered pesticides or of unregistered products reported in this communication does not constitute a recommendation for that particular use by the authors or the author's organisations. All pesticide applications must accord with the currently registered label for that particular pesticide, crop, pest and region. Copyright © All material published in this communication is copyright protected and may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from SAGIT

MORE INFORMATION:

Dr Sarah Noack, Hart Field-Site Group

T: 0420 218 420

E: trials@hartfieldsite.org.au