Beyond Water Smart - IrriPasture Field days Tasmania

Often important irrigation decisions such as start-up time, scheduling interval, irrigation depth and system performance (uniformity and energy efficiency) are determined by simple rules-of-thumb or gut feel estimates. Research in Smarter Irrigation for Profit Phase 1 (SIP1) found that conducting annual system checks including pumps, getting the start-up time right and avoiding the 'green drought', increased energy and water use efficiency as well as overall whole farm productivity and profitability by 30- 40% on some sites.

Smarter Irrigation for Profit phase 2, (SIP2) continues to work in this space with five optimised dairy sites across northern Tasmania. During September Tasmanian Institute of Technology (TIA) hosted three field days in northern dairy regions. These field days focused on IrriPasture, the new and free water budgeting and irrigation scheduling tool that has been developed through the SIP2 project. These field days saw participants take part in a range of different activities centred around irrigation and the IrriPasture tool.

These field days included a presentation from Dr James Hills on the value of measuring soil moisture and effective irrigation scheduling, both of which are important in achieving high irrigated pasture growth rates. They were also a great opportunity for people to learn from each other, and to share experiences.

Farmer Matthew Lester said, "*IrriPasture allows us to easily access the data needed to justify or improve our irrigation management decisions*"

These field days were really hands on, participants were able to get out in the field with James and the TIA staff involved in the SIP2 project and learned how to assess the readily available water (RAW) of their soil. Understanding RAW and how it impacts irrigation decisions is important. More information on RAW was presented in a webinar by James Hills earlier this years and is available on the SIP2 website.

Australian Government
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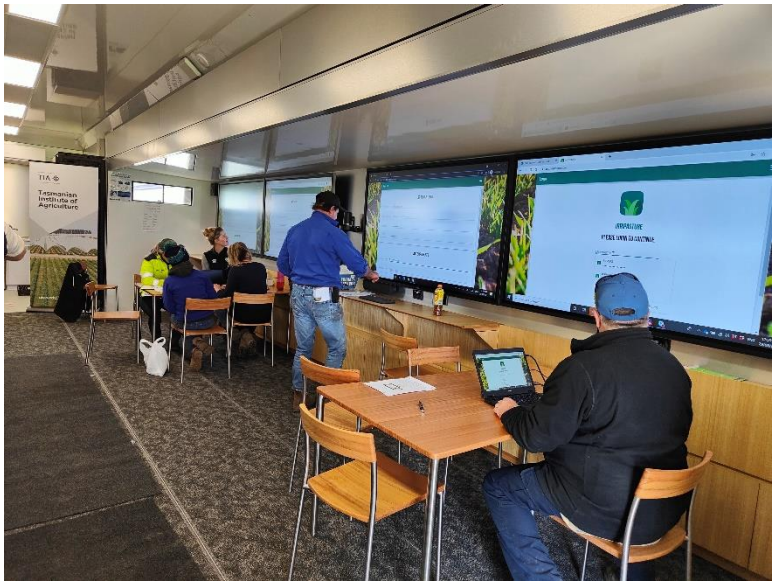
Utilising the technology in University of Tasmania's Mobile Interactive Learning and Engagement (MILE) truck, the field day participants also had the opportunity to set up their own farm or farms in IrriPasture for the upcoming irrigation season. This means that they are ready to make steps to improving their irrigation efficiency and to improve their pasture productivity.



Isaac Korpershoek participated in the field day activities and said, "*My team and I all agreed that the field day was a really good mix of new technology and practical activities and IrriPasture is something we will be using this season"*

This range of field day activities provided an engaging blend of practical, theoretical, and technological learning experiences.

As Rohan Borojević, Industry Development Officer at TIA said *" It was great to be able to use the MILE truck to help farmers get their farms set up with IrriPasture for this coming irrigation season"*

For anyone who missed out on setting your farm up at the field days, you can set IrriPasture up by visiting the link **https://irripasture.com** or scan the QR code included.

The Beyond Water Smart - Advancing Dairy Irrigation System Performance project is centred around five optimised dairy irrigation sites linked to satellite farms across Northern Tasmania. These optimised dairy irrigation sites are providing an opportunity for farmers and service providers to work with researchers to identify and demonstrate the farm scale costs and benefits of using good irrigation practice and supporting technologies. The aim is to identify and address the yield gap resulting from poor irrigation system performance and irrigation scheduling practices.

For more information on dairy irrigation research being done under the SIP2 the project visit:

Smarter Irrigation for Profit » Beyond Water Smart: Advancing Dairy Irrigation System Performance

Smarter Irrigation for Profit » What is my Yield Gap Optimised Dairy Sites

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