

# Frost was the word

By *CAMRON SLESSOR, NORTHERN ARGUS*

Frost Seminar held at the Clare Country Club 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014.



**GRDC Southern Regional Panel member Bill Long (left) of Ardrossan with Tom Hawker, Anama (Clare) and Lindsay Price of Paskeville pictured on the Anama property which was visited during the GRDC frost workshop.**

Farmers from the Clare Valley were treated to a workshop last Friday that focused on frost management in the region.

A strong crowd of about 100 agronomists, advisers, consultants and growers attended the event held at the Valley's Lifestyle Centre, offered by the Grains, Research and Development Corporation.

The aim of the workshop was to help people in the region to better identify frost, frost mechanisms and develop frost management strategies following the frost events throughout South Australia this year.

GRDC Southern Panel Member, Bill Long has valuable experience in the industry as a farmer and agricultural consultant from the Yorke Peninsula.

He has extensive experience in the grains sector, from research and extension to working with agribusiness for more than 30 years.

Mr Long said frost has had a critical impact on crops in the region this year, the worst seen in two decades.

"So many farmers in the mid north, lower north and in much less cases, Yorke Peninsula have been affected by severe frost in early August," Mr Long said.

“There has been an enormous amount of crop damage; we haven’t seen a frost event like this for a long period of time.

“It’s been 20 years since an event like this has occurred and the landscape has changed in terms of planting crops.

Mr Long shared the main idea behind the Technical Workshop and what the aims were for organisers and farmers.

“The workshop was really to share ideas and knowledge with what’s happening in frost research and what options are available,” Mr Long said.

“It’s also important to recognise there’s still a long way to go this season and we could have more frost events occur.

“This workshop will hopefully help growers recognise when these events might occur.”

There were a number of specialists speaking at the event on different issues in the industry and Mr Long said the workshop helped everyone learn from each other’s experiences.

“We discussed damage frost symptoms and gathered some experience from what others are going and trying to learn from one another and explore as many options as possible.”

Presenter and Senior Agronomist with Kerin Landmark Rural, Steve Richmond spoke about frost in pulses and said in general only small areas of pulses have been affected by the early August frost event.

“If growers are likely to have frost affected pulses at harvest they are encouraged to store their harvest on farm and then arrange for sale based on quality.”

Mr Richmond said the workshop held on Friday allowed growers to develop strategies to both reduce their personal frost risk for the future and also how to recover/value add to their frost loss from this year.

“Recognising potential frost losses early and identifying other potential income opportunities from frost affected crops is part of a post frosted crop strategy,” Mr Richmond said.

“No one answer will suit every grower in every situation, however growers are now aware of the options available to them and can choose the best strategy for their personal situation to give them the best outcome and financial return.”

Agrilink Consultant, Jeff Braun said his presentation aimed to help growers identify potential frost hot spots on their farms and how they can potentially be managed.

“I also aimed to present some data on early sowing of crops and frost risk and how this can be managed by growing varieties of different maturities and development patterns,” Mr Braun said.

Mr Braun said an event like this helps by getting people thinking about the risk of frost damage and management strategies that can be employed to minimise risks.

“I hope that the information provided will also allow those that have been affected by frost damage to best manage the situation to ensure that some income is generated from such an unfortunate situation.”