



Chairman's foreword



What a difference a few months make! Rain; cereal prices heading in the right direction; green grass everywhere; and the likelihood of a promising irrigation season.

This edition of the *Farmers' Newsletter* covers a broad range of topics to help you, the grower, make informed decisions in our changing environment.

At the time of writing, high security allocations are at 95% in the Murrumbidgee Valley and 70% in the Murray Valley. This augurs well for a general security allocation announcement in September, and heads to high hopes for a bumper summer crop.

The GRDC Irrigated Cropping Update hosted by IREC at Griffith in early August was a very successful day, with an agenda of topical topics.

There was a presentation on cotton growing in the region, by Hillston growers Mick and Rick Storrier.

The spring locust situation was covered by Chris Adriaasen, Director of the Plague Locust Commission, and an outline of the locust threat to farmers by Peter O'Shannassy, Senior Ranger Riverina Livestock Health & Pest Authority. The message on locust is **"be informed, stay informed"**.

Shane Bilish (Scientific Officer for the Snowy Precipitation Enhancement Research Project) with Snow Hydro Limited, presented research results on cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains with very successful results.

Peter Botta, specialist in grain storage and solutions, gave a timely reminder that farmers today are "food producers" and need to treat their grain with the highest of quality standards.

Mark Moore, Policy Analyst with the NSW Irrigators Council, presented the state and national perspective on the future of water allocation in the Murray Darling Basin, Basin Plan and its impacts.

A big thank you to David Shannon, Southern Panel Chairman of GRDC and Matt McCarthy for the program management of the day.

A very successful Ricegrowers' Association Conference was held in August at Leeton, showcasing young irrigators as guest speakers. It was refreshing to hear from passionate young farmers so willing to take on the challenge of irrigated agriculture. The following day, SunRice hosted mill tours with high praise for employees and the products produced.

The drought in Russia has sent the world wheat market in a spin, giving Australian producers opportunities not thought possible two months ago. The dilemma of sowing at 'break even' at best, highlights the need for producers to look more broadly when planning rotations and budgets on their farms. We live and operate in a global market; 'stock to use' ratios have become much tighter in recent years, so we can expect prices to fluctuate more widely. Look for marketing options that give you the most flexibility.

I would like to thank Hayley Wordsworth, IREC's Administration Officer, for all her hard work, and a special thanks to local businesses who support the *Farmers' Newsletter* through advertising, and to the *Farmers' Newsletter* Editor Lucy Kealey for making it all possible.

I wish you well for the coming season.

Alan Walsh
Chairman IREC

