



SOUTHERN NSW
Innovation Hub



Charles Sturt
University

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

June 2022

Collaboration key to building drought resilient soils and landscapes for Southern NSW

A vast area of Southern NSW will benefit from three grants totalling nearly \$3 million which were awarded to Charles Sturt University in leading the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

The Saving Our Soils During Drought; Creating Landscape-Scale Change through the Promotion of Resilient Pasture Systems; and Improved Drought Resilience through Optimal Management of Soils and Available Water projects will be conducted by a number of Southern NSW Innovation Hub partners with the expertise, industry experience and on-ground networks to ensure impact for southern NSW communities.

Project summaries -

Saving Our Soils During Drought - \$1,000,000

The project demonstrates for farmers the use of Stock Management Areas (SMA) as a drought resilience strategy. The project will improve drought resilience by working with farmers to maintain groundcover across rested paddocks, so recovery from drought is quicker.

The project includes practical, hands-on training, case studies, 20 field visits across 6 demonstration sites, 20 workshops, expert modelling and follow up support, provided to at least 400 farmers in Southern NSW.

The project is a partnership between farming system groups Holbrook Landcare Network, FarmLink Research, Central West Farming Systems and Riverine Plains; NSW government (5 Local Land Service regions), Charles Sturt University and the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub.

The project will be conducted throughout the Local Government Areas of Bathurst Regional, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional, Dubbo Regional, Lachlan, Lockhart, Orange, Parkes, Wagga Wagga, Yass Valley.

Creating landscape-scale change through the promotion of resilient pasture systems - \$983,950

The project will establish local demonstration sites for modern pasture species combinations and management practices known to build drought resilience. These practices can potentially protect soils and support productivity during and following droughts across 82 percent of NSW land area.

The project involves up to 10 farmer demonstration sites and 5 farmer reference groups across the mid to high-rainfall zones of central and southern NSW. Outcomes of these demonstrations can then be applied to farm and landscape scales using advanced modelling, ensuring regional applicability.

Southern NSW Innovation Hub Knowledge Brokers will translate information to local audiences and support social learning between farmers. A series of workshops, publications, case studies and on-farm consultations with farmers will be also used.



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The project is a partnership that includes Charles Sturt University, the Holbrook Landcare Group, Central West Farming Systems, Riverine Plains, FarmLink Research, Monaro Farming Systems and the NSW DPI and Local Land Services. The project is supported by the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub.

It will reach the Local Government Areas of Cabonne, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional, Cowra, Federation, Greater Hume Shire, Hilltops, Junee, Snowy Monaro Regional, Snowy Valleys and Wagga Wagga.

Improved drought resilience through optimal management of soils and available water - \$997,600

The project demonstrates practices from 3 farming system strategies that improve drought resilience. These non-conventional strategies include: 1. Diverse legume rotations (to increase organic carbon, nitrogen and other soil elements) 2. Early-sowing of slower-maturing crops (to increase water holding capacity) and 3. Measuring residual nitrogen (to prevent excess application, increasing profitability & decreasing runoff into waterways)

The project involves 12 farmer demonstration sites with a broad range of soil types, environments and land uses across Southern NSW & North Eastern Victoria, reaching the NSW Local Government Areas of Berrigan, Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional, Cowra, Federation, Greater Hume Shire, Hilltops, Junee, Lachlan, Lockhart, Narrandera, Temora, Wagga Wagga, Weddin plus Victorian LGAs of Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Indigo and Moira, spanning approximately 18 million hectares. Each demonstration site will hold 1 field day/year to showcase the practices, reaching a network of around 3300 farmers.

Outcomes will be communicated using 12 case studies and a range of communication channels. These are expected to reach over 10,000 community and agribusiness professionals. The project will also share outcomes with Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, universities, State and Federal governments, and other key influencers such as the NFF, RDCs, rural consultants and rural resellers.

The project is a collaboration between industry and research organisations, including GRDC, CSIRO, NSW DPI, Riverine Plains, FarmLink, Central West Farming Systems, Southern Growers & Charles Sturt University. It is also supported by the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub.

Director of the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub, Cindy Cassidy is looking forward to seeing the collaboration between organisations which will lead to real on-ground outcomes for agriculture across Southern NSW.

“Southern NSW Innovation Hub is excited to bring a range of skilled and connected organisations together to work on projects that have been designed by our farmers for our farmers,” Ms Cassidy said.

“This is key to ensuring this vital research works for our farmers and producers.”

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