

Catchment and Agriculture News

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Innovative farmers encouraged to apply for Muller Award

Innovative producers with conservation farming goals are being urged to apply for the \$3000 Wimmera Conservation Farming Association Muller Award.

The award, a legacy of association founding member James Muller, recognises significant contribution to conservation farming practices.

WCFA Coordinator Greg Antonoff said it provided a financial incentive for the winning farmer to pursue or investigate their particular innovative direction in conservation farming.

"It could be on-ground works, field demonstrations, farmer-based trials, travel, education, conference attendance, innovative machinery and any other means that will promote innovative conservation farming practices," Mr Antonoff said.

The recipient must use funds within two years and provide a report to WCFA board and members.

"The award is open to all Wimmera farmers and agricultural industry participants with a passion for conservation farming, a drive to pursue innovative or new approaches and a commitment to promoting conservation farming," he said.

The 2007 award winner Damien Holmes from Nurrabiel has been testing soil ameliorants to increase the rooting depth of crops in his sodic subsoils.

"I've been using trace elements, as well as brown manuring cover crops to allow plant roots access to stored water in the subsoil," Mr Holmes said.

"I hope that this will then allow summer crops such as sorghum to be an option to increase the water use efficiency of my paddocks..

"The WCFA Muller award provided me with an opportunity to learn and invest in techniques to improve soil management that will carry on into the future.

"Not only did it provide the financial incentive but it provided a group of interested farmers in WCFA who assisted me to pursue and explore my conservation farming ideas. I encourage others to apply for this award."

WCFA 2009 James Muller Award nominees can submit a letter detailing current activities and plans on how they will use the funds to benefit conservation farming.

"You can nominate yourself or another person," Mr Antonoff said.

Nominations close on August 31, 2009 and after an interview process the winner will be announced later this year.

Muller Award nominations can be sent to; WCFA Project Officer, Greg Antonoff, DPI private bag 260 Natimuk Road Horsham 3400. For further information please contact Mr Antonoff on 0427 688 716 or WCFA President Michael Speirs on 0427 808 601.

