



SPAA Society of Precision Agriculture Australia
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Using Precision Agriculture to navigate good seasons and bad

Farmers, advisers and researchers will share the latest information about precision agriculture at the SA Precision Ag Expo in Loxton on Thursday, March 25.

The Society of Precision Agriculture Australia (SPAA) event was postponed from last year because of the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown.

SPAA executive officer Nicole Dimos said the postponement was disappointing, but it was exciting to be able to return to face-to-face events with this half-day expo at the Loxton Hotel.

“This is a great opportunity for farmers to learn about technologies that will help them make efficiency gains and savings,” she said. “We’ve put together a program that ensures there will be something of interest for everyone, whether they’re involved in the cropping, livestock or horticulture industries or land management. Precision agriculture is not just about improving productivity, it also brings environmental benefits that help ensure farms remain sustainable.”

The expo kicks off with a special interactive morning session for agriculture and business students from high schools in the region.

This will be followed by the half-day practical workshop designed for farmers, advisers and anyone interested in learning more about precision agriculture.

Speakers include Joe Koch, a sixth-generation farmer who has experienced two of the best seasons and two of the worst seasons in the past four years in the Upper North of South Australia.

“With my wife, Jess, and parents, Robert and Joy, we crop 1800ha at Booleroo and Georgetown, and have 1200 self-replacing Merinos producing fine wool,” Mr Koch said. “Using data and technology to improve efficiency is at the core of management decisions for both the cropping and livestock sectors of our business.”

Joe and Jess combined their experience from years of trying and testing PA techniques and their passion for the concept to open Breezy Hill Precision Ag Services, a PCT AgCloud dealer offering mapping and consultancy services. They also recently started a Reefinator contracting business.

Joe will speak on the theme: Just keep swimming – using Precision Ag to navigate the good years and the bad. He will explain how he uses electronic identification (EID) tags to collect data and manage the flock, discuss the “expected and unexpected” advantages of a protein meter at harvest, and provide an update on using data layers for management zoning.

Other speakers include:

- Wade Nickolls – a fourth-generation grain grower who farms with his wife, Danielle, and brother, Chad, south of Pinnaroo, near the South Australia-Victoria border. Nickolls Partners was among the early adopters of variable rate technology, first implementing it in 2003.

- Damon Grace – an environmental engineer who is a key part of the team that established both the Mid North Mesonet and the newly-launched Riverland and Mallee Mesonet.
- Sam Trengove – an independent consultant who has been investigating improved methods for predicting phosphorous responses across paddocks to enhance variable rate phosphorous applications.
- Greg Hall – national horticulture sales manager for Precision Agriculture, who will discuss the challenges and opportunities for precision agriculture in horticulture.

There will also be presentations by Food Agility CRC innovation manager Hugh Ong, John Deere digital specialist Thomas Dewhurst and Sean McColley, who is AFS product manager for Case IH Australia and New Zealand.

The SA Precision Ag Expo is being run as a COVID-safe event, which means seats are limited and no tickets will be available at the door. Book online at www.spaa.com.au/events

Entry includes lunch and afternoon tea. Tickets are \$20 for SPAA members and \$30 for non-members.

This project is supported by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board and the SA Grains Industry Trust through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the landscape levies.

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About SPAA

SPAA is a non-profit membership-based group formed in 2002 to promote the development and adoption of precision agriculture (PA) technologies and techniques. SPAA provides independent, timely and relevant information about PA to the grains, sugarcane, horticulture and livestock industries. To date more than 2000 members have benefited from our events and publications. These members have in turn helped drive research, development and extension that delivers on-ground benefits to farmers. Access to quality information and opportunities for sharing ideas is a critical element of progressive and resilient farming communities. Our motto is: Guiding you to farming success.

