

COLLABORATING FOR DROUGHT RESILIENCE: RIVERINE PLAINS AND THE SOUTHERN NSW DROUGHT RESILIENCE ADOPTION & INNOVATION HUB

Riverine Plains continues to collaborate with the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption & Innovation Hub to deliver practical, farmer-focused solutions aimed at improving drought resilience. Working with other Hub partners, Riverine Plains ensures local farming priorities shape Hub projects, fostering region-specific research, trials, and extension activities.

Over the past four years, our joint initiatives have established multiple demonstration sites to evaluate soil management strategies, resilient pasture systems, and effective on-farm water management.

OPTIMISING SOILS AND WATER MANAGEMENT

In collaboration with the Hub, GRDC and CSIRO, Riverine Plains led the *Improved Drought Resilience through optimal management of soils and available water* project. This project built on the work of Dr John Kirkegaard's Southern Farming Systems Project and established 12 demonstration sites across southern NSW, including locations in Wagga Wagga, Rand, Howlong, and Mulwala in collaboration with Central West Farming Systems, FarmLink, Southern Growers, and Charles Sturt University. The project evaluated strategies such as diverse legume rotations, early sowing of slower-maturing crops, and nitrogen banking. Findings indicated that legume rotations could significantly increase residual nitrogen levels, while early sowing practices helped widen planting windows and reduce frost risk.

ENHANCING PASTURE RESILIENCE

The *Changing landscapes with drought-resilient pastures* project focused on improving pasture systems' resilience to drought. Demonstration sites at Barooga and Savernake tested various lucerne-based systems under different grazing management practices. Results highlighted the benefits of rotational grazing and optimal lucerne seeding rates in enhancing pasture persistence and quality, contributing to more reliable feed sources during dry periods.

ON-FARM WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Recognising the critical role of water in farming, Riverine Plains supported the *On-farm water management planning* project. This initiative assisted farmers in developing comprehensive water management plans through workshops and one-on-one sessions. The plans aimed to help farmers assess their current and future water needs, improve water quality, and implement efficient storage and delivery systems to bolster drought resilience.

Throughout the past year, Riverine Plains has facilitated numerous workshops and field days, disseminating findings from these projects to the farming community. By fostering collaboration between farmers, researchers, and industry professionals, Riverine Plains ensures that practical, evidence-based strategies are accessible and adoptable, strengthening the region's capacity to withstand future droughts.

