

Vale Steve King

another quiet No-Till leader passes

BILL CRABTREE, GEOFFREY MARSHALL AND RAY HARRINGTON,
WANTFA HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

TWO MONTHS ago WA no-till pioneer, Steve King, passed away after a long illness. Like another quiet achiever from the Lakes area, the late Owen Brownley, we have lost another 'leader by example'. Their legacy is profound and we three Life Members hold their work in the highest regard, as do many more across the state and, indeed, the nation.

Steve spoke regularly across Australia at No-Till functions over the past 20 years. He shared his experiences freely and in a candid manner from his hard earned first-hand farming lessons. His sincere and gentle nature made Steve a very trustworthy source of information. It was very comforting to have someone like Steve to learn from when adopting something as new as No-Till was at the time. He farmed with his wife and family south of Lake Grace and he started no-tilling in 1991. We extend our sincerest condolences to his family who continue with his good work.

In 1992 Steve wrote an article for WANTFA entitled 'Boots and All'. This was all about his experience of going 100% no-till in year one. He had researched no-till and gained enough confidence to take the plunge. Ray Harrington was a strong mentor to Steve. He never looked back, even though Ray regularly advised people to never start with 100% no-till. This whole-hearted approach scared Ray, but it worked out fine!

Steve travelled with Ray, and Agmaster, across southern Australia telling others what he had learnt. WANTFA had several excellent field days on Steve's farm. They were exciting days and Steve was a huge part of Australia's No-Till teaching team.

So it is with thanks that we acknowledge the true agricultural gentleman Steve King for WA agriculture. We can be inspired by his desire to listen and learn and put into practice what is learned. The last decade of droughts would have been much harder for Western Australian farmers to handle without the encouragement and assistance of the likes of Steve King.

Many thanks Steve.



New Extension Officer for WANTFA Carbon Farming project

NIKKI DUMBRELL, WANTFA CFI EXTENSION OFFICER

I HAVE just completed a Bachelor of Science (Environmental and Natural Resource Economics) at the University of Western Australia. My fourth year Honours thesis was titled 'Using Best Worst Scaling to identify farmers' willingness to adopt carbon farming practices'.

This was an interesting area of study because transferring carbon from the atmosphere into soil and vegetation has been proposed as an important option for decreasing atmospheric carbon so as to limit the impacts of climate change. Carbon farming is attracting much attention in the policy arena but we didn't know what farmers' preferences were for adopting the practices that are supported through these policies.

I am interested in the synergies between sequestering carbon in the soil and improved soil quality, reduced erosion and a greater capacity to adapt to climate changes and improve productivity. This interest aligns with the WANTFA Carbon Farming Project that is attempting to break down the barriers to adopting carbon farming practices and promote the benefits of such practices, so I am excited to be on board.

I grew up on a dairy and beef farm near Walpole in WA. I like to get home to go fishing and eat Mum's rack of lamb as often as possible. I think agriculture has a bright future and I am excited to begin a career that will allow me to be part of a team working to achieve economic and natural resource sustainability for farming systems.