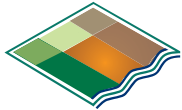




ADVISER



MANAGER



MAPPER

Goings on in the Back Paddock Software training proves popular



Rob Pauley, from SP Hay, and other attendees tune-in to the recent Back Paddock Software training in WA.

TRAINING sessions for Back Paddock Software continue to prove popular with producers and advisers.

Western Australian users of Back Paddock were able to further hone their skills when the first training courses were held in July.

Back Paddock National Customer Solutions Manager Warwick Date said the sessions proved to be a big hit.

"We ran three days of training including two in Perth and one in Borden, in the south of the state," he said.

"One of the days in Perth was for Manager and Manager Lite users, while the other was for Adviser software.

"It was a pretty intensive few days, but everyone was very happy at the end of each day. We had a real mix of users, from those who hadn't had any training at all to the more experienced.

"Like all Back Paddock training, we make it practical and as hands-on as possible. Users are encouraged to bring along their laptops and we also have a few computers set up that they can load their existing farm file onto.

"Licensed users were able to have two people take part, and we had a number of husband and wife partnerships in attendance."

Warwick said the mapping section of the training session appeared to be the most provoking.

"It is a new feature of the program, which involves downloading farm maps and producing mapping layers for things like crop types and fertiliser applications. It is a great way to play with precision agriculture without all the gadgetry and expense," he said.

"You can basically create hundreds of layers to cover all situations.

"Another strong message to come out of the training was the amount of time that producers and advisers can save by using Back Paddock software. Not a lot of people enjoy sitting at a computer all day, and many participants commented how quick and easy the program is to use and just how effective it is."

Continued overleaf



BACK PADDOCK
SOFTWARE

Warwick said training sessions would continue to be a big part of the customer support for Back Paddock.

"We plan to have similar training sessions in all states in coming months."

"Not only is training good for those who haven't had a lot of experience with the software, but, as a company, we also benefit because more experienced users often give us suggestions as to how we can improve the software."

One of the users who attended the Perth training session for the Manager software was Beverley farmer Dee Ridgway.

Dee, who together with husband Nooky runs a mixed farming enterprise that includes cereal grain and Merinos, said the session was invaluable.

"We are only new to the program having installed it this year," she said.

"It was a good introduction and very helpful to us.

"The practicality of the day was beneficial, and having inputted basic paddock information for our operation prior to the day, we had the option of going through it during the session.

"I am looking forward to getting the manual so we can continue to work through things step by step – hands-on is the best way to learn.

"Overall the training session gave us a real insight into what the program can do and what is available."



Dee Ridgway, Beverley, with Back Paddock's National Customer Solutions Manager Warwick Date during the training.



Neil Andriessen and Paul Hicks



Warwick Date chats with Nic Woodfield.



In training...

Back Paddock NSW agent travels far and wide

BACK Paddock Software agent Greg Hunt is strongly committed to the rural industry.

He has worked in agriculture for more than 20 years and enjoys dealing with farmers and rural consultants. And, as an agent for Back Paddock, he certainly gets to do plenty of that.

Greg started his career as an agronomist in broadacre and irrigated crops. He then worked for Incitec for many years in both the fertiliser and crop protection areas of the business in a variety of markets in eastern Australia. Later, he became involved in the development of a number of product quality and customer-focused systems for the company.

A few years ago Greg purchased a small property near Orange, where he buys in beef weaners to fatten and sell direct to feedlotter. It is here that he became involved with the Back Paddock software.

"About 18 months ago I happened to be speaking to Tom Cowlick and he mentioned that he was looking for people to help with the marketing of Back Paddock software. I asked if I could have a look at Adviser. What really impressed me was its simplicity and the quality of its reports. I was so impressed that I approached Tom to become an agent for the software," Greg said.

"I have been involved with the development of various software programs over the years. Apart from what the software does, simplicity is the key to whether a person will use software. Back Paddock Software has done a great job in developing a system that is both easy to use and delivers the goods in terms of information that consultants and farmers can use to make their job easier and more productive.

"There is a real need for a comprehensive program like this that farmers will find easy to use. Consultants especially love it."



Greg Hunt

He said he believed Back Paddock's softwares were great products that were getting better all the time. Customers benefit from this continuous product development by being able to update to the latest version at any time. Free HelpDesk support is invaluable.

"As an agent, you get to see a variety of different farming situations across the country and gain experience with a number of farming scenarios. The feedback and observations gathered help to improve the software to meet customer requirements."

"I am also an agent for Nutrient Management Systems. This involves training agronomists in how to interpret soil and plant tests using software such as SoilMate and, previously, Nutrient Advantage, and, on occasions, Back Paddock software."

Greg said his training role takes him across the country. "I've trained groups from Northern Queensland to Adelaide so far."

He is also being kept pretty busy on the home front renovating his house.

"As with most of these things it has been an ongoing project for a few years now, but I am hoping to finish it this year."

Greg can be contacted on (02) 6365 4361 or 0427 002 519

Support to NSW wheat competitions

BACK Paddock Software has thrown its support behind the Agricultural Society Council (ASC) of NSW's dryland wheat competitions.

A five-year sponsorship arrangement was announced recently, with a large financial commitment pledged by Back Paddock to the competitions.

The ASC has run the wheat competitions for the past eight years after taking over the role from the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW.

Back Paddock's National Customer Solutions Manager Warwick Date said the company was excited at coming on board as a co-sponsor of the competitions.

"There are about 50 different competitions held across NSW and we are now a proud sponsor of all of them," he said.

"Working with some of the best wheat growers in NSW is something we are really looking forward to.

"Each local competition winner will receive a one year license of the Manager Back Paddock software, plus the offer to attend one of three half-day training sessions.

"Group finalists in each region will receive a Whopper Cropper software 12-month license, and the use of our Adviser software is also offered to any judge or association coordinator to use to document entries and produce the required report.

"We will generate a report of each entry from each competition, which would equate to 10 entries per competition – so there are 500 paddocks that we are able to provide gross margins for.

"The judges can then consider those gross margins and use them in their decision making."

Warwick said sponsorship over five years was a long-term commitment and he was hopeful of setting up similar crop competition support in other states.

Competition organiser Allan Hockey said it was exciting to have a sponsor such as Back Paddock on board.

"They are making a large contribution to the competition and it is a unique prize package that they are offering," he said.

"Back Paddock is also giving us access to a worksheet that will contain information on each crop and provide us with the gross margins of each crop, which adds another element to the competition."

Allan said the competitions held across NSW usually attracted 420-600 entries depending on the season.

"Everyone has the opportunity to win."

"Each local competition winner will receive a substantial prize, while group finalists

will also be rewarded with Back Paddock software products."

Allan said judging would take place in late September, and if anyone required further information on the competitions they could ring Zoe Richard at ASC on (02) 9879 6777.

Planning protects the bottom line

PLANNING is becoming increasingly crucial in today's farming enterprise. With so many uncontrollable factors that can potentially affect the bottom line, it helps to have well-organised, easy to understand contingency plans in place.

More and more farmers are finding that Back Paddock software is a vital component of their operation and planning processes.

Back Paddock's National Customer Solutions Manager Warwick Date said farmers should really be planning six months ahead before implementing a cropping or livestock program.

"They need to sit down and analyse what the program will entail and how best to maximise production," he said.

"As we all know, in farming things can change pretty quickly, but if farmers are organised and plan well they can often meet those changes head-on and adjust their programs accordingly and, more importantly, achieve the maximum returns.

"A real strength of the Back Paddock software is that it is very flexible and can be adjusted quite easily."

Warwick said for 2007 winter cropping programs, planning should commence in late spring before everyone jumped on headers.

"Planning should take into account everything concerning the cropping program, including combating weeds, diseases and pests, what types of crops to grow in which paddocks, prices and yields expected," he said.

"Back Paddock can do all that and also produce a predicted cash flow statement that can be presented to financiers. For instance, in parts of WA that are currently suffering from drought, we are already seeing that financiers want to know how their clients are going to spend next year's money. In many cases, refinancing is conditional upon a detailed plan and Back Paddock is delivering what is required and making life easier for everyone in tough times."

Warwick said the software considers all facets of farming programs.

"The beauty of the program is that it can be applied to just about any production system, which is important with more diversity creeping into farming practices today."

"You are able to record pasture and fallow paddocks and production expected from those, which really helps the livestock operation.

"It covers most cropping enterprises from citrus crops to irrigation and obviously broadacre."

He said Back Paddock helped save a lot of time at crucial parts of the year.

"With a good plan in place when the break of the season comes, you can be ready to go straight away and the whole program is mapped out," Warwick said.

"It is no coincidence that the best crops in each district are ones that have been well planned.

"You also see in crop competitions, those crops that have been planned early usually come out on top."

Tamworth consultant planning programs for 'city' farmers



Ted Tomlinson

TAMWORTH producer Ted Tomlinson is a long-term user of Back Paddock Software.

Ted was a large-scale farmer in his own right, cropping 4,000-8,000 hectares a year and running 1,000 cattle, but recently he has moved into the consultancy business. Ted is now working with investors from the city and assists them in setting up farming programs.

He said the Back Paddock software was a key part of his planning and production systems.

"I have been using the software for close to 10 years now," Ted said.

"I previously used it as part of my own farming operation, and, since starting the consultancy business this year, have continued to use Adviser to assist our clients."

He said he focused mainly on setting realistic production processes for clients to follow.

"I am dealing with people who do not know a lot about farming, but Back Paddock enables me to present them with very readable reports about the production capacities of their property."

"I am able to nail down programs paddock-by-paddock and present that to the clients in a report they will understand."

Ted said Back Paddock Software offered versatility in planning for various situations.

"Due to the nature of our business we need to plan for a number of different farming programs, whether it be cropping, livestock or both," he said.

"Back Paddock gives us the scope to adjust to each of those situations and come up with the best production systems."

"The key to it all is to plan ahead and put down on paper what the requirements are, and then the software can be used to set that into an organised and readable report."

Ted said with cropping programs, Back Paddock was "as good as it gets".

"The features it comes with, such as being able to use satellite imagery and so on, makes the planning process so much easier."

"The best thing is that it you are able to get some sort of a handle on various scenarios."

"I have found it very useful in maximising production in a bad year. Anyone can get through a good year, but it is those bad ones where you really need to be efficient to get the most out of them – and this software assists in that."

Next Issue

- ® User manual underway
- ® Major Mapping upgrades
- ® Training session dates
- ® Old and WA Agents appointed
- ® Using "Manager" case study

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