

\$4,400 grant for sustainable agriculture research

SANTFA has won a \$4,400 grant for research into the benefits of using biochar and compost in dryland cropping systems.

The SANTFA grant is one of 17 totalling \$150,000 awarded in the latest round of funding from the Woolworths Fresh Food Future program, run in conjunction with Landcare Australia, to help farming groups develop or implement sustainable farming practices.

Research and Development Manager Greg Butler said the Woolworths grant funds will be used to demonstrate the effects of using a combination of biochar and compost on fertiliser rates and crop water use efficiency.

He believes the demonstration trial will encourage members to explore the benefits of new technologies such as biochar and adopt practices that will ultimately reduce the carbon footprint of their farming systems.

“This funding will enable us to establish a field trial on the Eyre Peninsula to demonstrate the synergy of hybrid biochar-compost and help farmers in the region realise the benefits it can have for them,” Mr Butler commented.

Pat McEntee, Woolworths General Manager Fresh Food, believes the Fresh Food Future grants will provide opportunities for farmers to learn more about new technology and practices that are available to help improve the sustainability of their businesses.

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PAT MCENTEE, WOOLWORTHS GENERAL MANAGER FRESH FOOD.

Woolworths Fresh Food Future program are fantastic examples of what farming groups across Australia are doing in the sustainable agriculture sector,” he said.

“Investing in the future of Australia’s food production and supply is hugely important to Woolworths. An investment like this enables knowledge to be shared and improvements to be made that will

have a lasting effect on agricultural operations.”

More than 175 projects around Australia have received funding from the Woolworths Sustainable Agriculture program since it was established in 2007 as a partnership with Landcare Australia.

Projects supported by the program have provided training for growers, supported development of new technology and validated farm management options, Mr McEntee said.

“Specific issues explored include grazing management in beef production, climate adaptation responses in mixed farming, evaluation of new crop and orchard species and low-rainfall pasture cultivars, fertiliser and stubble management, aspects of precision agriculture and carbon mitigation in horticulture and dairying.

“The Fresh Food Future Program is an ongoing investment from Woolworths to fund and promote new projects that improve the sustainability of the food supply chain.”

The 2011 grants are part of a \$2.1m commitment by Woolworths to identify risks and trends impacting on the sustainability of the supply chain, increase productivity, provide training and leadership and improve consumer awareness about sustainable food production.

For further information about the Woolworths Fresh Food Future program and the projects supported in the latest round of funding, visit www.landcareonline.com.au



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