

# IrriGate

Sustainable Irrigated Landscapes - North East – Mid/Upper Goulburn Broken

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Season start up

Welcome to the first quarterly edition of IrriGate a newsletter to update landholders on irrigation topics, present case studies and highlight services and grants in our local regional area.

## The team - Sustainable Irrigated Landscapes

Sustainable Irrigated Landscapes (SIL) deliver services aimed at profitable and sustainable irrigated management practices in the North East and mid/upper Goulburn Broken. We can assist landholders make informed decisions for their irrigated business. Our previous projects Water for Growth 2001 - 2004 and Water Smart Farms 2005 - 2007 were successful in implementing water use efficiency through landholder training and funding.

### Dennis Watson

Irrigation specialist  
DPI Rutherglen Centre  
(02) 6030 4567  
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Expertise: Irrigation system choice, irrigation economics, soil moisture monitoring equipment, irrigated fodder crops and pasture grazing management  
Career span 16 years.



### Ian Gamble

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Expertise and job role: Agriculture - irrigation, pastures, grazing management, cropping, salinity, drought management, whole farm planning and revegetation.  
Career span 15 years



### John Hunter

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Expertise and job role: Agriculture - pastures, salinity and revegetation



### Wendy Paglia

Project Support Officer  
DPI Ovens Centre  
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Expertise: Project administration - grant payments, database management, field/event coordination and promotion.  
Career span 7 years



## Landholder Grants

Grants upon application are available in the North East Catchment. Grants in the mid and upper Goulburn Broken Catchments' are yet to be confirmed. Grants available for;

- Purchase of soil moisture monitoring equipment - 50 per cent cost reimbursement up to \$4,000 per landholder
- Implementation of an Irrigation Drainage and Environmental Plan (IDEP) - 50 per cent cost reimbursement up to \$4,000 per landholder.

What would you like to see in a quarterly newsletter?

Help the environment and subscribe by email to [wendy.paglia@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:wendy.paglia@dpi.vic.gov.au)

## Soil Moisture Monitoring Equipment (SMME)

Sustainable Irrigated Landscapes offers extension services and grants to assist landholders;

- Purchase the appropriate soil moisture monitoring equipment and software for your site.
- Assist with installation and data assessment

*Right: Example tensiometer, one of the many SMME types.*



## Irrigation Planning

Extension services are provided for improving irrigation systems. A full scale Irrigation Drainage and Environmental Plan (IDEP) with a topography and/or soil survey can be undertaken or it may be more specific to individual needs such as matching up irrigation allocations with an irrigation area and location on farm. Grant assistance is available.

## Irrigation System Performance checks

It is relatively simple to check if your system is operating adequately.

An inadequate system will be costing you money, fuel, water and production.

We offer assistance with determining just how efficient your system is and offer advice and information for better performance or system upgrade.



## Ready Set Go – Irrigate, don't be late

It does not seem to take long before the irrigation season is upon us again, most likely because the reduced rainfall is making the irrigation season longer. It is crucial for irrigation to start before the crop begins to get moisture stressed. With the failed springs we have been experiencing the previous few years, the time to start has been earlier. Disappointingly it is not unusual for farmers to be two weeks or more too late before even realising.

What does it matter if you are late?

The consequence of starting irrigation late differs depending on the crop type irrigated and the irrigation system used. Irrigated ryegrass pastures can suffer a yield loss of 65 kg of pasture per ha each day irrigation is delayed from the ideal start up time. This may not seem like much but consider if you are late by two weeks irrigating 20 ha this is a production loss of 18.2 tonne. Comparing this to hay at \$250/tonne it is a loss of \$4,500.

The above example is assuming once you do irrigate that you refill the soil to eliminate further stress. If you do not refill the soil you will continue to suffer yield losses. With spray irrigation refilling the soil profile may be difficult to do. Two weeks late you may have to apply 60 mm to refill the soil; yet your irrigation may only be able to apply 15 mm a day. Hence you have to run the system for five days straight, four to catch up and one to replace the loss over those four days.

Those on unregulated river systems have the incentive to start on time as it will maximise the amount of irrigation before rostering occurs and can ensure your soil profile is full before rostering begins.

How do you know if you are late?

There are a number of ways to gauge when the irrigation season should start.

- Dig a hole and feel the soil
- Monitor weather patterns (evaporation and rainfall)
- Install soil moisture monitoring equipment
- Copy a neighbour who has soil moisture monitoring equipment

Don't wait for signs of plant stress, if it looks stressed you are too late.

For more information please contact Dennis Watson at DPI Rutherglen Centre on (02) 6030 4567

Authorised by the Department of Primary Industries, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000

ISSN: 1837-4077

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Published by the Department of Primary Industries  
Sustainable Irrigated Landscapes, September 2009

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