



ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY - IAN PAYNE



RICEGROWERS' ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA INC



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

IAN PAYNE – MCDONALD ROAD CLUSTER GROUP, COLEAMBALLY

In today's changing environment, traditional farming methods are being replaced with activities that address environmental concerns. The challenge for farmers is ensuring that these new practices not only incorporate a responsible environmental approach, but also increase on-farm productivity resulting in strong economic returns.

As part of the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia's (RGA) Environmental Champions Program (ECP), farmers have an opportunity to work together to find innovative ways to meet these important challenges and be recognised for their results.

Coleambally farmer, Ian Payne, is an ECP participant with the interest and drive to look beyond the established farming methods and investigate the integration of emerging technology into day to day activities. Recently, Ian developed his own on-farm facility where he converts cooking oil into biodiesel to power two of his vehicles.

FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW

Ian Payne is a second generation farmer and has been a member of the McDonald Road Cluster Group for almost three years, working with other members to discuss on-farm ideas and share information and experiences.

As part of the ECP, the RGA looks to create opportunities to provide farmers with up to date information on a range of issues.

A few years ago, Ian attended an ECP field day at Conargo that focused on innovative practices including the use of biodiesel.

As a result of the field day, Ian decided to explore this further and after some detailed research, he established his own biodiesel facility by recycling a waste product. "That encouraged me to actually give it a go and now we're, on a small scale, processing biodiesel from used cooking oil."

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Ian sourced a processing machine from America that turns used cooking oil from fish and chip shops and other chemicals into clean useable biodiesel. Each litre of cooking oil is turned into a litre of biodiesel and it's proving to be cost effective to produce at only 33 cents a litre.

At the moment the operation is on a very small trial scale that Ian may look to develop further down the track. "We run two vehicles on biodiesel and efficiency wise its power and fuel consumption is very similar to diesel."

A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

As a result of the ECP, the McDonald Road group has become more aware of environmental issues and water management options through the cluster group structure. In addition to his biodiesel work, Ian has a strong focus on sustainable farming practices and through the Coleambally Irrigation's Land and Water Management Plan is preparing to develop a water storage dam complete with a recycle system on a new farm. "We've also had biodiversity as in native plantings and locking up areas for birdlife and to enhance the overall look of the place as well."

In the future, the established ECP network will assist group members to share information and discuss strategies to manage developing environmental issues and meet new legislative guidelines. Ian has already found the ECP to be particularly useful in helping group members to become compliant with chemical management requirements.



RECOGNITION AND A SHARE OF VOICE

With the current global focus on climate change and water restrictions combined with issues such as the rise of fuel prices, it's through the activities of ECP members like Ian that will help the farming community to adapt to new pressures and find sustainable solutions to emerging challenges.

The ECP framework provides individual members with a structure and a disciplined approach where advancements and achievements can be recognised by Government bodies and the wider community.

Farmers who work together to create positive, workable and innovative solutions through the ECP will give the farming industry a vital share of voice as the environmental debate develops. Group members will also recognise that they are protecting and enhancing their farmland on behalf of their community and for future generations.

The Environmental Champions Program is an initiative of the Australian Rice Industry.

Find out more by contacting us or visiting our website

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