



### FarmBis Improve Queensland Subsidies

Increased FarmBis subsidies have recently been announced in Queensland. The subsidies for travel and accommodation now match subsidies available in NSW under the national FarmBis program. If you attend a course of 2 days or more duration you are eligible to claim up to a maximum subsidy of \$130 per day. Eligible participants attending training more than \$150 km from your home can receive a 65% subsidy if they are driving their car or flying to the training. If you travel by bus or train you are eligible for a 100% subsidy. The training course cost in both states remains the same at 65% reimbursement to eligible participants.

For more information call FarmBis Net workers on (07) 3239 0724 or visit [www.farmbis.qld.gov.au](http://www.farmbis.qld.gov.au)

### Management of a Dry Storage

Did you know when you first fill your storage after its been dry, you can lose in excess of 2.5 ML/ha of storage floor? A key recommendation from the Irrigation Association of Australia (IAA) is to manage your storage the way you would manage a dry field. You want to conserve moisture and reduce cracking. Therefore weed control is important. Growing a crop in your storage can cause significant drying and cracking in both the embankment and the floor and as such a significant loss of irrigation water. If the storage soil surface is allowed to dry and crack, soil evaporation losses increase and significant amounts of water can be lost as it runs down cracks and the dry soil soaks up the water. While the storages are dry is a good time to survey them and obtain an accurate depth to volume and surface area relationship. Often storages are not built to the “design” and actual volumes can differ by up to 20%. Over time, with a build up of silt and slumping of dam walls the dimensions of your storage will change as well. Ideally a storage survey should be re-done after any remedial construction work on the banks or any other changes to the floor or borrow areas. Additionally, it is worth considering doing an EM survey at the same time to differentiate the soil types within the storage.

While your storage is dry your local surveyor can easily survey your storage. If you have access to a GPS / Beeline you can survey your own storage and send the data to your local surveyor or engineering

consultant for processing. To do this, drive in at least two pegs at ground level located near an inlet / outlet point as reference points or bench marks. It is necessary to drive over these points several times during the survey to establish a good level as a permanent reference height.

It is also an ideal time to install a gauge board, or for greater accuracy you could set up a permanent storage metre. One that is readily available is the Irrimate Storage Metre which consists of a pressure sensor that has an accuracy of  $\pm 10\text{mm}$ . It's easy to install and continuously measures and records storage volume and water surface area. Knowing exactly how much water you have gives you the ability to fine tune its use and assist with water budgets. Storage meters can also be used to gain an accurate measurement of the amount of tail water and stormwater you recover and can be used to check pump capacity when pumping directly into your storage.

As we begin to receive some rain (with hopefully more to follow) in our catchment, care needs to be taken when filling a storage that has been dry for some time. To avoid potential problems such as erosion and blow outs, dry storages should be filled slowly.

*Article by Janelle Montgomery and Peter Smith – NSW DPI.*

### Alternative Crop Meeting

An alternative crop meeting is to be held in St George and Dirranbandi on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2007.

A breakfast meeting will be held in St George at the Balonne Skill Centre with a lunch meeting being held at the new motel in Dirranbandi. Due to the Bollgard II planting window about to close and the chance of late river flows it was thought opportune to discuss other planting options such as sorghum, maize, mungbeans, soybeans etc.

Speakers will include Gordon Cumming from Pulse Australia and Kate Reardon from Pacific seeds. An information flyer will be sent out early next week once all details have been confirmed.

Regards, Dallas King.