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**2010 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS**

Australian Dairy Conference	Horticulture Australia Limited
Australian Processing Tomato Growers	Landmark
Dairy Australia	Meat & Livestock Australia
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Nuffield Australia Queensland Branch
Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation	Rabobank
Grain Growers Association	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Sidney Myer Fund

Friday 23 October 2009

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2008**

## Nuffield Scholarship for Riverton grain grower

South Australian grain grower Stephen Ball will tonight be awarded a scholarship in Australia's leading research program for primary producers, the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship Program.

Mr Ball is one of only 18 Australians to receive a 2010 Nuffield Scholarship. He will be presented with his scholarship tonight at the Innovation in Australian Farming Awards dinner at the Hawkesbury Race Club, which is part of the four-day Nuffield Australia Spring Tour being held in the NSW Hawkesbury region.

Nuffield Farming Scholarships, each worth \$27,000, give young Australian farmers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1400 Nuffield scholars worldwide.

Mr Ball will use his scholarship, sponsored by the Grains Research and Development Corporation, to investigate zero-till disc seeding systems in high rainfall growing zones and its impact on soil biology and nutrient cycling.

Stephen and wife Nikki Hannaford farm 600ha in the Gilbert Valley, at Riverton in South Australia's lower-north region. They produce cereals, legumes and oilseeds using no-till methods and have recently destocked the property of sheep entirely to advance to zero-tillage and improve soil health. They also have a 2300 head commercial rabbit enterprise.

"We should be able to produce a lot more grain than we do with our current rainfall," Mr Ball says. "We average 500mm rain a year in our region, and I believe there is potential for greater yields than the 5.5 tonnes we have been able to achieve. There is a lot of unused, or under-utilised rain that is either being lost from the system, or converted to vegetative growth rather than grain.

"I am particularly interested in the techniques and equipment being used to conserve moisture in Brazil and Paraguay, where they have been using no-till and zero-till strategies since the 1970s and have been able to refine the equipment to handle greater levels of stubble."

Nuffield Australia CEO Mr Jim Geltch says many Nuffield Scholars go on to become active leaders in agriculture and the community, and sharing their research findings is an important part of the scholarship program. "For many, the scholarship experience changes their lives by opening their eyes to the wider world and giving them the confidence to pursue their goals," he says.

The 2010 Australian Nuffield Scholars will leave Australia in February, June or September 2010 for a compulsory Global Focus Program. This will involve travel to China, North America, South America, Middle East, India and Europe investigating agricultural marketing and trade issues, environmental issues and experiencing the different social and cultural aspects of each region.

Following the initial six-week program, the scholars will go their individual ways to pursue specific study programs in the country or countries of their choice. Mr Ball plans to visit Chile, Paraguay and Brazil in South America as well as Canada, the United Kingdom, Spain and France.

**More information:**

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A high-resolution photograph of Mr Ball can be downloaded from the link  
[www.coretext.com.au/communications\\_images.php](http://www.coretext.com.au/communications_images.php)