

## 2011 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

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Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010

## **DROUGHT PUSHES NEW NUFFIELD SCHOLAR TO STUDY THE FUTURE OF MARGINAL FARMING AREAS**

Craig Duffield from Ramco in South Australia, will tonight be awarded a prestigious Nuffield Scholarship, supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Craig is planning on studying the future of the family farm in marginal areas.

He says the inspiration for the topic has come from experiencing drought in six of the last seven years, raising questions such as 'are the seasons changing with climate change?' and 'can we survive farming in a low rainfall area?'

Craig says "farmers are increasingly battling high input costs and low commodity prices while the deregulation of the grain industry has led to greater confusion and more problems for farmers in selling/marketing their products."

Other issues that interest Craig include the limits to crop varieties, lack of early feed for livestock and the aging population of farmers.

Craig believes there are opportunities for family farms to improve their situation by joining forces such as in collaborative machinery-share arrangements. He says "farmers could also consider things like break crops, zero-till systems for better water use efficiency and soil biota, and more focus on grain marketing opportunities."

His farm is approximately 2200 hectares in total, of which 1400 hectares is continuously cropped cereals under a no-till system.

He is planning on visiting Canada, USA, Brazil and the UK during his scholarship year.

Nuffield Australia is an organisation which provides an opportunity to Australian farmers to travel overseas on an agricultural research scholarship. It is a 16-week program which consists of both group and individual travel. The next group will be travelling through New Zealand, North America, Brazil, Mexico and France in February-March 2011.

Craig is available for interviews to talk about his planned study.

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A high-resolution photo of Craig is available for download from [nuffield.com.au/gallery.html](http://nuffield.com.au/gallery.html)