

19 April 2006

EP TACKLES SOIL COMPACTION

By Geoff Thomas, SAGIT Project Manager

SAGIT is making a substantial contribution to investigating the problems of soil compaction on Eyre Peninsula.

The work will be joint funded by the EP Farm Systems Project and conducted by SARDI under the leadership of Brendan Frischke at Minnipa Agricultural Centre.

The initiative follows the results of a survey across Upper Eyre Peninsula which shows greater levels of compaction on cropped compared with uncropped land. It is thought to be a major constraint to production and can lead to increased erosion - the 14 farmer groups participating in the EP Farm Systems Project have identified it as a major concern

It is now important to find out how compaction is physically and financially affecting farm practices, and the options for managing it to improve profitability and sustainability.

The new project will investigate the extent and severity of compaction for the major soil types and farm systems, in physical, production and financial terms.

The impact of various farm practices will be assessed with the view to finding ways to reduce compaction and its effects.

Until now soil compaction has tended to be put "in the too hard basket" by farmers and advisers because it is unseen and expensive to address. One of the aims of the project will therefore be to increase the understanding of compaction and involve advisers and farmers in finding remedies.

The project is also an excellent example of how a complex issue can be better addressed by joint funding, in this case by SAGIT, GRDC through the EP Farm Systems Project and SARDI.

Furthermore, it is not just for EP benefit - the results will be shared across the low rainfall areas of southern Australia through the Low Rainfall Collaboration Project and the No Till Groups.

For Further information contact Geoff Thomas 0409 781469