

## **Stock Journal Article due 17 August 2006**

### ***SAGIT FUND PROVES ITS WORTH***

***By Geoff Thomas, SAGIT Project Manager***

The recent GRDC/SAFF Grower updates clearly demonstrated the value of the SAGIT fund to SA farmers.

Not only did SAGIT sponsor the updates but many of the issues discussed came from research which SAGIT has funded. This includes everything from no till, to precision agriculture, to weed control and disease management.

South Australia is the only state to have a fund like SAGIT, dedicated entirely to the benefit of SA grain producers.

The 16 cent per tonne levy on all grains, along with the revenue from investing the reserve provides a pool of funds with which to support research and extension. The fact that almost all levys are collected and that farmers continue their strong support for SAGIT is a fair indication of its worth

On average about \$1.2 million is spent annually, with about \$400K on new projects each year.

New projects can be in any facet of grain production and marketing provided they benefit SA farmers.

SAGIT prides itself on supporting innovation and sometimes backs "long shots". A good case in point was the support for the work by SARDI on DNA analysis of root diseases which has revolutionized our understanding of the diseases and decisions by farmers for their control

There is a preference for projects with short to medium term outcomes, and with more direct application to the farm.

SAGIT will in future take a more market-oriented approach to project selection in which there are clear pathways for research results to the farmer, rather than treating research and extension as separate functions. The clear aim is to get the results to farmers in a form they can use, faster.

Being a relatively small fund, SAGIT is also putting greater emphasis on how to get leverage support from other funders for joint projects. This has met with recent success with large joint initiatives with GRDC and the Australian Research Council.

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