

**Project No.:** SANT 1/99

**Project Title:** Executive and Scientific officer to facilitate successful implementation of No-Till farming in SA.

**Project Supervisor:** Dr Rohan Rainbow, Executive & Scientific Officer . . .

**Contact Details:** Ph: (08) 8842 4278  
Fax: (08) 8842 1875  
Mob: 0418 422 482  
Email: admin@santfa.com.au

### **Executive Summary**

SANTFA has over its 8 years of growth, since it began in 1998, successfully raised the profile of the benefits of no-till farming systems and conservation farming in general and now has over 1100 financial members across South Australia and Victoria. SANTFA has identified a clear need to improve the interaction of the various farming systems groups across South Australia, as all have the common goal of improved conservation farming.

Participation in no-till farming by SA grain growers is forecast to increase significantly in the next five years to over 75% adoption across SA. This prediction results from a State-wide survey of grain growers conducted for the SA No-Till Farmers Association by the CRC for Australian Weed Management, funded by SANTFA and the Australian Government Envirofund.

Driving the move to no-till is, principally, the desire by farmers to minimise soil erosion. There are however, other important reasons behind the greater adoption of no-till including:

- Improvements in soil structure, moisture conservation and organic matter levels.
- Shorter seeding time and better seeding timeliness (ability to sow on less rain).
- Better yields and the benefits to sustainability resulting from stubble retention.

Other commonly cited reasons revealed in the survey included savings in input costs such as machinery wear and tear, fuel and labour.

During this project, SANTFA has held 8 to 10 crop walks across all regions of SA each year. Over 16 no-till workshops on no-till farming, controlled traffic and spray application management were also held across SA. During the project SANTFA have expanded the production of a quarterly 16 page full colour SANTFA newsletter to a 24 page magazine 'The No-Till Journal' with research and farmer articles specifically on management of no-till sowing systems. In 2004, SANTFA produced a 28 page full colour book 'The Essential Guide to No-Till Farming'. These have been widely distributed to all SA government schools teaching agriculture, copies sent to all SA Ag Bureau groups and also widely distribute in NSW, WA and Victoria.

Formation of an the Conservation Agriculture Alliance of Australia and New Zealand CAAANZ took place in October 2004. CAAANZ provides a collective group of 4000 plus conservation farmers to deal with conservation farming issues of national significance. SANTFA is a key partner in CAAANZ. Mr Steve Ball was the founding chairman and Dr Rohan Rainbow the founding secretary for the alliance.