

### Guest Speaker a big hit!

Growers in the Wickepin regions have been inspired to do great things in 2011 by the keynote speaker Patrick Hollingsworth at the recent Facey Group Trials Presentation Evening. The event was presented in partnership with Summit Fertilisers Dept Ag Food WA and GRDC as part of the Regional Crop Updates program.



90 farmers, industry partners and researchers converged on Wickepin to discuss the presentation on 2010 trial and demonstration results as well as forecasts for the season ahead. Members were keen to see the results from the trials they had seen the Facey Group Spring Field Day in September and the mid season events.

The Facey Group Rotations for Profit Demonstration completed its 7<sup>th</sup> year and was once again a popular presentation as the group push the boundaries of crop rotations while assessing the economic viability of each decision. David McCarthy Farmanco Narrogin and Graeme Manton Facey Cropping Group Coordinator presented that the most profitable rotation in 2010 was Lupin/wheat/canola/wheat/ barley/ lupin/ wheat with the most profitable rotation across the seven years was the lupin/wheat/ barley rotation. David also stressed the importance of growers assessing profitability and gross margins per hectare rather than just assessing the tonnes per ha.

Among the other presentations were results from trials such as Integrated Pest Management in Australian Grains , Precision Agriculture, Long Term Phosphorus trial and Dr Ben Biddolph's Frost Trial at Cuballing. Further to the research work presented and in light of the challenging season experienced in 2010 the Facey Group added some industry experts to the agenda to assist growers in decision making for the coming season. Garren Knell ConsultAg Narrogin outlined that growers must get "back to basics" in 2011 with all decisions accounting for the three R's – Risk, Reality and Return on investment. Garren urged the growers in the audience to be responsive to the season for example set trigger dates by crop, decrease or increase canola sown area according to the break and be tactical with your nitrogen. James Skerritt from Planfarm Narrogin presented a retrospective of the 2010 livestock enterprises whilst red flagging some potential issues for sheep in 2011 relating to whole farm profitability. James indicated that going into 2011 without a reasonable stocking rate will bring into reality a loss from the drought on the sheep enterprise and a reasonable response for those in this position would be plant more cereals, "when in doubt plant wheat " was a clear message. James also indicated that he doesn't see sheep gross margins dropping away that quickly and is encouraging longer term phases so less year in year out rotations.

Given plenty to think about from the presenters for the coming season the attendees were then introduced to Patrick Hollingsworth a high altitude mountaineer. The Facey Group invited Patrick to discuss his climbing career which peaked with a successful climb of Mount Everest in May 2010, with the hope that his story would motivate and inspire local growers to climb their own personal Everest's in 2011. Patrick's presentation enthralled the farmer audience as he took them on the journey up Everest with him through his story, photos and video. His story left our growers with a lasting impression of what can be achieved by surrounding yourself with the "right" team, proper planning including a healthy approach to risk management and a passion to do what you love to do. These themes resonated with the growers in the room as they attempt to dust themselves off from a tough 2010 on the land and refocus and re-energise for 2011.



Above: Graeme Manton & Patrick Hollingsworth