

## Biological Farming Tour to Australia

SA Biofarm Institute has organised a farmer's tour to Australia, which will take place from 7 to 18 September this year. Two Harrismith biological farming consultants, John Fair & Wilhelm Joubert, will lead the tour. The focus will be on improving the biological and mineral fertility of soils. Tour members will learn from their Australian counterparts how this not only results in increased crop yields but also in improved animal fertility and growth rates. Remarkably, this is achieved at lower annual input costs than is required by conventional farming practices.

Biological farming is built on three main pillars. These are; (1) soil mineral balancing, (2) intelligent tillage practices and (3) management of soil life. Tour members will visit farmers who are achieving remarkable success by building their farming enterprises on these three pillars.



The first farm stop will be in Wellington, which is 300 km West of Sydney. This region has an average annual rainfall of 600mm. Rob & Mary Sutherland farm on a 1640ha farm, Budgalong. They have won the Australian Golden Canola award for highest yield and quality of dryland canola (3.7 tons/ha) for quality. Their normal dryland wheat crop ranges between 5 and 6 tons/ha. The Sutherlands hold the record for the highest yield in their area – 7.2 tons/ha! (Nitrogen inputs vary between

40 & 70kg/ha). The Sutherlands run 2800 ewes from which they market 4000 slaughter lambs. Lambs grow at the rate of 8kg/month (266g/day). They also run a herd of Shorthorn cows. Calves are sold to feedlots at 14 months of age at a weight of 430kg!

Besides running his own farm, Rob Sutherland also consults on biological farming. He has a number of highly productive farms lined up for the tour group.

The second week of the tour will be spent in Western Australia. Neil Ballard, an international pasture consultant is organising the tour programme. Neil has been to South Africa several times and is, in fact, currently engaged in research and development on legume pastures in the Eastern Cape. The tour coincides with a farming field day in Narrogin, which promises to be enjoyable and informative. Neil has a number of excellent new legume pastures to show the group. Once again the immense benefits of alternating crops with pastures will be seen on numerous farms.



John & Wilhelm say that farmers who go on tour will undoubtedly come back excited with a new and motivating vision on how to farm more profitably and sustainably.

For the full itinerary – Go to the Tours and Events page on the website – [www.sabiofarm.co.za](http://www.sabiofarm.co.za)

Or for further details & full itinerary contact John (082 376 5227 or 058 622 3585) or Wilhelm (082 452 5496).