

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Get your full serve of veggies at TIA's Open Day

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's Vegetable Research Facility, Forthside, will be opening its doors today for its annual open day.

The event will include field walks, presentations and displays from Irrisys, RMCG, Philmac, Second Bite, BMS LaserSAT and more.

Attendees will get an update on the latest research findings across a range of relevant topics including irrigation, precision agriculture, soil wealth and crop protection.

For more than 50 years TIA's Vegetable Research Facility has played a key role in the development of new crops, management practices and technologies in Tasmania.

Current research includes greenhouse gas emissions from vegetable cropping systems, precision agriculture, irrigation and nutrition, pea and bean variety trials and biochar.

TIA's John McPhee will give attendees an update on a Tasmanian Government-funded precision agriculture project, in which TIA is collaborating with TAPG and Serve-Ag. The project is using a range of mapped data, including NDVI images to monitor crop vigour, to demonstrate to growers how the information can be used to help crop management.

NDVI images can be captured from a range of platforms, including satellites, aircraft, UAVs or ground-based rigs.

NDVI makes the invisible visible. It can see things that are hidden to the human eye and can identify parts of the crop that are worthy of closer on-ground inspection.

Mr McPhee from TIA says there are a number of reasons why a crop may exhibit low NDVI values, including water stress, disease, presence of actively growing weeds etc.

"It is important to ground-truth the NDVI image by going into the crop to decide if remedial management is warranted or feasible," Mr McPhee said.

The time window for remedial management for some vegetable crops is very short compared to cereal crops.

"Cereal crops may provide a window of many weeks in which to capture and respond to NDVI images. The opportunity with some vegetable crops, such as green beans, may be as short as a few weeks if management responses are to be effective," Mr McPhee said.

NDVI has become a popular metric to map crop health, however, careful interpretation of NDVI values is very important.

Other highlights for the day include:

- The latest results from a national surveillance program on the tomato-potato psyllid, from Paul Walker, TIA;
- An update on the irrigation research being undertaken at TIA (Sue Hinton, TIA);
- Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection (Doris Bleasing, RMCG);
- Management of greenhouse gases from nitrogen fertiliser (Stephen Ives, TIA);
- Demonstration of subsoil manuring (John McPhee, TIA).