



# Rural Solutions SA: showcasing solutions for the wine industry



*Looking after the environment is good for business in more ways than one: think productivity, sustainability and marketing.*

The Australian wine industry knows that its future success is closely linked to sound environmental management. And **Rural Solutions SA** is coming up with the goods to help them do it.

**SaltSmart**<sup>®</sup>, **REMS**<sup>™</sup> and **Wastewater Management** are three products being showcased by **Rural Solutions SA** at the 2004 Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference and Trade Exhibition.

**SaltSmart**<sup>®</sup> mapping is a powerful tool to help manage salinity. Reliable information about soil characteristics and variation is

vital to developing effective salinity management strategies – and **SaltSmart**<sup>®</sup> helps deliver that information.

**REMS**<sup>™</sup> is a planned approach to environmental management that helps producers get a handle on their particular piece of the world. **REMS**<sup>™</sup> (using a **Review, Establish, Monitor and Service** approach) improves understanding of property issues to optimise production while caring for the environment.

With success comes responsibility and the Australian wine industry takes it's responsibility to manage wastewater seriously. **Rural Solutions SA** offers expert technical advice and support in all aspects of **Wastewater Management**.

**More information:**  
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**Rural Solutions SA** can tailor the use of these products and others to maximise the benefits to your enterprise. Naturally they will be delivered by expert consultants who, in many cases, are also the developers of the technology. Read more about each of these products inside.



# better Environment bigger Profits



Smart solutions for better management

## *SaltSmart®: taking the guess work out of soil mapping*

'Soil is the key to yield' said **Rural Solutions SA** Senior Consultant Terry Evans, 'and having access to good information about soil is invaluable in managing your production area to achieve its best.'

The wine industry has embraced the technology with **SaltSmart®** mapping being used to survey thousands of hectares of vineyards to produce detailed, accurate maps of soil variation.

Maps are then used to determine optimum locations for soil pit sampling. Sampling results are then used to build a complete picture of the soil.

Accurate information needs to be expertly interpreted before it can be used effectively and **Rural Solutions SA** has that expertise – in bucketfuls. This is where **SaltSmart®** management comes in.

**SaltSmart®** mapping uses an EM38 salinity detector towed by a quad bike for cost-effective surveying.



'Interpreting soil maps allows us to identify areas that would benefit from treatment such as adding gypsum, or varying irrigation practices. Catchment management plans can be developed to take into account specific attributes of the production area,' explained Terry.

Sound soil and water management strategies include an emphasis on good environmental management – essential to sustainable production.

*'Soil variation identified by SaltSmart® mapping has also proven to be a reliable way of predicting yield' added Terry. 'In very general terms, saline areas tend to be lower yielding, while deeper soils produce better yields.'*

Mapping the variation in soil and grapevine salinity using **SaltSmart®** and the implications for irrigation management is the focus of a workshop being presented by Terry at the 2004 Wine Industry Conference.

**SaltSmart®** is one of a suite of products offered by **Rural Solutions SA** – helping to maximise productivity while minimising environmental impacts.

**More information:**  
Terry Evans (08) 8568 6417

## Wastewater management- the sweet smell of success

Odour is a big issue in the wastewater management business – but the right management strategies can prevent wastewater ending up 'on the nose'.

**Rural Solutions SA's** Senior Consultant Howard Hollow is at the leading edge of research and technology in the area of waste and reclaimed water, with plenty of hands-on experience providing practical solutions for the wine industry.

'We can help plan and design systems to manage both untreated and reclaimed wastewater,' said Howard. 'For example, piping untreated wastewater to a woodlot disposal site. However, the job does not finish at the end of the pipeline. We develop irrigation management drainage plans and soil management recommendations to minimise a range of environmental impacts including soil, groundwater and odour.'

Sites need to be monitored to make sure that management plans remain effective over time. **Rural Solutions SA** can plan and conduct the right monitoring programs and, on the basis of results, prepare and present reports to demonstrate compliance with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) requirements.

'Treating wastewater on site may also be an option,' said Howard. 'We can provide planning and technical support to engineers constructing treatment plants and then help manage and monitor the use of the reclaimed water on the property.'

**More information:** Howard Hollow  
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*Replacing exotic and pest species with native grasses helps reduce weed load and maintenance.*



## **REMS™ :** *Environmental planning for profit*

A successful, profitable business growing top quality wine grapes with little or no adverse environmental impacts - that was the clear vision for Paul and Michelle Edwards when they started planning their new vineyard in the Adelaide Hills.

They enlisted the help of **Rural Solutions SA's** Senior Consultant Wayne Brown for practical help to achieve their vision. Using the **REMS™** approach to environmental management, Wayne and his team were able to tailor an environmental plan for Serendipity, the Edwards' property.

'Planning is the key to success,' said Wayne. 'We were able to take a holistic approach that allowed us to manage impacts on surrounding properties as well as the vineyard itself. All facets of the new vineyard's interaction with the environment were discussed and explained with the owners prior to the establishment of the vineyard. For example buffer zones between Serendipity and adjacent properties were established to minimise chemical spray drift, to maintain habitat for birds and other small animals and to provide effective windbreaks.'

*Buffer zones around 'Serendipity' minimise chemical spray drift, maintain habitat for birds and other small animals and provide effective windbreaks.*

Water management issues concerning the property's dam and the creek bisecting the property were identified. Strategies were then developed to manage these issues including the potential for ground water movement to affect other parts of the catchment, and maintaining a healthy habitat to prevent problems such as algal bloom in the water bodies.

Sound environmental management is far from being a one-way street. The Edwards' benefit from improved grape quality and production and a reputation for being environmentally responsible – an important point of difference in a market developing an assurance towards best environmental stewardship.

Environmentally savvy strategies also positively impact the bottom line as all processes and activities are assessed and managed for optimum efficiency.

**Rural Solutions SA** worked with Serendipity staff to identify any gaps in their skills, and to educate them about management changes resulting from implementing the **REMS™** system.

*'We believe the people that manage the property need to have ownership of the management plan, believe in what they are doing and understand why they are doing it. The results then reinforce their belief in the system.'*

A huge strength of the **REMS™** system is the people who deliver it, presenting a practical approach that is easily understood by the customer and staff. **Rural Solutions SA** has the ability to draw on a pool of highly skilled and experienced people from across the business to come up with the right blend of expertise for any enterprise.

**More information:** Wayne Brown 0408 813 628





# Food Safety drives Market Access

## Safe food top priority in the marketplace

*The demand for safe food is now driving market access for a range of primary products. This means producers need to 'get with the program' – the food safety program. Those wanting to get with it but unsure where to start need look no further than Rural Solutions SA.*



*Blue Lake Milling production staff Lynn Taylor and Ben Kells.*

A HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) based food safety program developed by David Pocock of **Rural Solutions SA** and used extensively in the viticultural industry is now being adapted for use across other industries.

### HACCP - Key Points

- pronounced "hass-up"
- Controls the food production process
- Objective: safe food

'Milling oats is just one example,' said **Rural Solutions SA** Senior Consultant Tom Yeatman, who has teamed up with David to provide training for around seventy suppliers to Bordertown's Blue Lake Milling. 'These programs are no longer about proactive growers wanting to demonstrate that they are doing the right thing – the market is quite simply demanding it.'

'HACCP is a widely recognised system that opens doors in the marketplace,' said Eddy Waaldyk, CEO of Blue Lake Milling. 'We now have much better control over our processes and as far as costs go, our investment in food safety programs is small compared to the potential cost of a product recall.'

Blue Lake Milling specialise in producing cereal and niche food products for the Australian and international food industry sector with a product range including quick cooking, instant and rolled oats, oatbran/oat flour and various other cereal flakes and flours. And they are serious about quality. They themselves are HACCP certified and recognise that the quality of their product can only be as good as the quality of the raw product being supplied.

They now want their suppliers trained to manage the quality risks while growing, harvesting, storing and transporting their grain - and to keep the records

that prove it. **Rural Solutions SA** is their trainer of choice.

'While broad quality assurance systems have been developed across many primary industries and they have their place, our system is easy to use and specific to food safety,' explained Tom.

Food safety risks such as chemical and physical contamination (think about bandaids or bugs in your porridge) are minimised by the food safety system that identifies and minimises risk at critical points in the production process.

'**Rural Solutions SA** has the knowledge, experience and track record to design and deliver these programs,' said Tom. 'In partnership with industry, we have shown that we can put together the right people to deliver the right product – one that growers find easy to use and meets market requirements.'

**More information:**  
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