



# International Herbage Seed Group Newsletter

**Number 61**

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<p><b>IHSG</b></p>	<p><b>Editor's Note</b></p>
<p><b>President</b> Dr. Richard Chynoweth MacFarlane Rural Business, Ashburton, Canterbury New Zealand Email: <a href="mailto:Richard@mrb.co.nz">Richard@mrb.co.nz</a></p>	<p>Welcome to Newsletter No. 61. We are currently experiencing white fields of white clover in full flower in Canterbury, New Zealand and as seed producers in the southern hemisphere start harvest, we hope for more favourable harvest conditions than last year. Our northern hemisphere growers are looking back at the last season, mostly one where drought has impacted seed yields, and thinking about machinery maintenance and a break before spring activities start. A consistent comment from European attendees at the 12th IHSG Conference was how hard they are finding the transition to having few agrichemicals to work with and the options for managing weeds, pests and diseases.</p>
<p><b>Vice-President</b> Dr. Nicole Anderson Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) Landvik, Grimstad Norway Email: <a href="mailto:Nicole.anderson@nibio.no">Nicole.anderson@nibio.no</a></p>	<p>The 12th IHSG Conference in Tasmania was a great success and this Newsletter is largely focused on the Conference: some of the things we saw, the research work that was presented, and the impressions from two first time attendees. Continuing in our series of introducing new/young researchers we introduce Fiona Anderson as a new forage seed researcher with Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) in New Zealand.</p>
<p><b>Newsletter Editor</b> Dr. Phil Rolston Seed Industry Research Centre (SIRC), Christchurch, New Zealand Email: <a href="mailto:phil.rolston@outlook.com">phil.rolston@outlook.com</a></p>	<p>If you have a story or project update to include in a future Newsletter Edition, fill out our <a href="#">Form</a> or email us at <a href="mailto:internationalherbageseedgroup@gmail.com">internationalherbageseedgroup@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p>Wishing all our IHSG family a happy 2026. Phil Rolston</p>
<p><b>Communications Director</b> Dr. Hannah Rivedal, USDA Forage Seed and Cereal Research Unit, Corvallis, Oregon, USA Email: <a href="mailto:Hannah.Rivedal@usda.gov">Hannah.Rivedal@usda.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Contents</b></p> <p>Presidents Column .....2 Conference Highlights .....3 FAR's ARIA event (New Zealand) .....6 New Seed Scientist – Fiona Anderson .....7 Seed Drying &amp; Storage book 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition .....8</p>
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## President's Column: International Herbage Seed Group (IHSG)

As we close out 2025, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a truly memorable year for the International Herbage Seed Group.

First and foremost, congratulations to the Organising Committee and the Tasmanian Seed Industry Group (TSIG) for delivering an outstanding 12th IHSG Conference and Post-Conference Tour. Despite last-minute challenges with speaker cancellations and travel disruptions, the team pulled together a program that was both informative and engaging. The combination of technical sessions, afternoon field visits, and the post-conference tour provided delegates with practical insights and a chance to experience the diversity of seed production in Tasmania and Victoria. The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, and the networking opportunities were invaluable. Thank you to Robert Dent, Suzie Maier, Duncan and Bramwell Heazlewood, and Tony Butler for your dedication and hard work.

The post-conference tour was a highlight for many, offering a relaxed environment to connect with colleagues while visiting farms, seed companies, and research facilities. From innovative harvesting techniques for subterranean clover to matching species to environmental conditions and seed processing technologies, the tour showcased the expertise and innovation within our industry.

I would also like to extend a formal and sincere thank-you to the sponsors who made the 12th IHSG Conference possible. Your generous support ensures that we can deliver high-quality events at an accessible cost to delegates. We gratefully acknowledge the Tasmanian Government, AgriFutures Pasture Seed, ANYSORT Optical Seed Cleaners, DLF Seeds, Barenbrug, and Business Events Tasmania. Your commitment to advancing the herbage seed industry globally is deeply appreciated.

Looking ahead, I am delighted to see Denmark will host the next IHSG Conference in 2027. This will be a return to where it all began in

1987, and I am confident our Danish colleagues will rise to the challenge of building on the success of Tasmania. Mark your calendars now—this promises to be another exceptional event.

On a topical note, this edition of the newsletter highlights several important developments in our sector and has something for everyone:

- The ongoing transition in Europe to reduced agrichemical use and the challenges this poses for weed, pest, and disease management.
- Exciting new technology such as the Grady Sensor for rapid moisture testing in grass seed, which will soon be available globally.
- Research updates from FAR's ARIA event in New Zealand, including work on red clover seed yield limitations, ryegrass canopy management, and fungicide strategies for stem rust.
- The release of the second edition of *The Drying and Storage of Grain and Herbage Seeds*, a valuable resource for anyone involved in seed handling and storage.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the contributions of our members and sponsors who make these activities possible. Your support ensures that IHSG continues to provide a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration across the herbage seed industry.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable festive season, and I look forward to working with you in 2026 as we continue to advance our shared goals.

With warm regards,

Dr. Richard Chynoweth

President, International Herbage Seed Group



## 12<sup>th</sup> IHS Conference 2025 Highlights

Congratulations to the Organising Committee and the Tasmanian Seed Industry Group (TSIG) for pulling together a great 12th IHS Conference and Post-Conference tour. Let's start by acknowledging the Organising Committee:

- Robert Dent, who was a driving force on getting the IHS to Tasmania, was in hospital for the start of the Conference, but managed a couple of brief appearances. We wish you well for your recovery;

- Suzie Maier, TSIG who was the go-to person during the Conference.



*Suzie Maier*

- Duncan Heazlewood, local seed grower, and seed cleaner

- Bramwell Heazlewood, seed grower and a regular IHS attendee at past conferences with Robert Dent

- Tony Butler, Pasture Trial Network.



*Robert Dent, Bramwell Heazlewood, Duncan Heazlewood*

The Organising Committee had to scramble to reorganize the programme in the days before the Conference as three speakers from the USDA-ARS were unable to travel, another speaker was unable to travel after an illness and with flight cancellations resulting in some of the NZ contingent, including a speaker, being delayed and missing day one. Some local speakers were roped in to fill gaps, with Cameron Spurr of SeedPurity giving an enlightening talk on the development of hoverflies (*Eristalis* sp.) as crop pollinators that pollinate in cooler conditions

than honeybees. These pollinators are very effective on open flowers, but not legume flowers that need to be tripped. Duncan Heazlewood also gave an engaging overview of the history and prospects of the Tasmanian seed industry, from a grower's perspective. All appreciated Cameron and Duncan stepping up to fill in with high quality performances.

The conference was attended by 140 delegates from 15 countries, plus 27 local seed growers on Day 4 the Grower's Day. The accompanying persons programme had a further 21 people who enjoyed the local cuisine, cafes, wineries and sights around Launceston. The IHS have a number of seed growers especially from New Zealand, Oregon, the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark and France that are regular attendees that have become an important feature of IHS Conferences.

Conferences can only deliver well priced events with sponsorship. The 12th IHS Conference was supported by the Tasmanian Government, AgriFutures Pasture Seed, ANYSORT optical seed cleaners, DLF Seeds, Barenbrug and Business Events Tasmania.



*The Albert Hall, Launceston*

Three past-IHS presidents attended and gave presentations; John Hampton from Lincoln University, New Zealand (1986-1989); Don Loch from University Queensland, Australia (1989-1993) and Phil Rolston, Seed Industry Research Centre, NZ (2013-2017). John and Phil also attended the 1st IHS meeting in Denmark in 1987. Don presented the only tropical seed

paper with a case history of Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*).

Launceston is a UNESCO City of Gastronomy and the quality of the food served at the Conference lived up to that title. The Conference dinner at The Albert Hall was a great historical setting with an unforgettable meal.

The Conference format consisted of paper presentations in the mornings followed by a field tour in the afternoon. This is a format that has been adopted in recent conferences and is popular with delegates. The papers selected, the afternoon field visits and the Post-Conference tour all included a focus on alternative and emerging species. We saw chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), coloured brome (*Bromus coloratus*), subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterranean*), phalaris (*Phalaris aquatica*), and learnt about summer active continental cocksfoot and tall fescue and their cousins the Mediterranean winter active/summer dormant types.



Delegates looking at perennial ryegrass with closing dates at Bramwell Heazlewood's

One attendee Guiqin Zhao, from Gansu Agriculture University, China said "I teach in forage breeding and work with seed companies in the Hexi Corridor to produce seed of our oat cultivars. I attended the IHSG Workshop in New Zealand in 2013 for the first time, then went to the one held in Argentina in 2017. I could not make the one in Oregon and finally attended the 12th IHSG Conference in Australia. I have attended many international conferences in the last 20 years, but the IHSG is the one I like best! It is not a big meeting but with lots of practical techniques and information, especially the field trips. I think the field trip and visiting local

companies are the highlights of the conference. I am looking forward to the next IHSG."

For me the post-conference tour is a must-do activity for the opportunity to spend time and networking with other delegates in a more relaxed situation either on the bus, or at places visited or over a beer or coffee. Also, for the range of geography seen and the crops grown. There were 85 participants on the tour that started with the overnight ferry from Tasmania to Geelong (west of Melbourne), Victoria – 515 km and 10 hours sailing. The Bass Strait has a reputation for producing rough seas, but our crossing was relatively smooth and we enjoyed time in the early evening to socialise. We spent a night in Bendigo (historic gold mining area) and Albury (NSW) criss-crossing the Murray River. Our stops for field visits included seed company research stations, seed processing facilities, and distribution stores (DLF, RAGT, Barenbrug, AGF Seeds and Baker Seeds) with lunches and morning or afternoon teas included. A highlight for many was the visit to the 2,400 ha seed and arable production farm of Corowa Seeds. Wheat harvest had started and we were able to view the use of the seed terminator mill (Seed Destructor) for destroying weeds seeds in the offal, a tool that is

important in managing herbicide resistant weed species. They also had moved from fenceline spraying to cultivating a 2.5 m wide strip as part of the weed management



Seed destructor mounted on a Claas Lexion combine, Corowa Seeds, VIC

strategy. We saw the surface-irrigation systems used for some crops on laser-levelled fields.

Lucerne (alfalfa) seed was being grown and pollinated with honeybees and achieving yields that ranged from 100 to 600 kg/ha.



*Bede McCloy & Mark O'Hara (NZ) looking at sub clover burs, Corowa Seeds, VIC*

Sub clover is the major legume used in dryland pastures of Australia. After flowering it buries the seed burs into the soil. Traditional harvesting involves lifting stolons and loosening the soil to suction

harvest the seed burs. This is slow and very dusty. Corowa Seeds explained they had developed new harvesting processes that were much friendlier on the environment and the operators.

In summary, we had a great Conference and Post-Conference tour, with a mix of presentations and field visits, topped off with great food and friendship. This will be a challenge to Denmark 2027 our next Conference hosts.

To read abstracts from this conference and all those held previously, visit the IHSG Conference proceedings webpage:

<https://ihsg.org/publications/conference-proceedings/>

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**Thoughts from Two 1st timers at IHSG**

**Hannah Cummins**

I work as an agronomist for Ben Lomond Agriculture, based in Northern Tasmania. Ben

Lomond Ag is involved in seed production and provides fee-for-service agronomy.

We look after ryegrass, clover, chicory, hybrid carrot and hybrid canola seed production for a number of seed companies. Agriculture is very diverse in northern Tasmania, therefore our agronomy ranges from vegetable crops such as green peas, onions and potatoes to pasture management and livestock finishing crops.

It was a privilege for Tasmania to host the IHSG Conference for 2025, and I am pleased I was able to attend.

Highlights included afternoon field visits and presentations in agronomic advances, and innovation and technology sessions. It was exciting to learn about new technology such as the Grady Sensor for moisture testing.

The conference was a great opportunity to get a snapshot into how seed production looks in other areas of the world. The sessions were wide-ranging in crops, technologies, and approaches to challenges.

I encourage others to attend this conference in future as it provides a unique opportunity to learn, share conversations and make connections with people from various roles in industry and from across the world.

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**Fiona Anderson**

As a First Timer at an IHSG Conference, my main impression was a feeling of being welcomed into one big happy international family. I have attended a few conferences, particularly during my time as a PhD student, and found that while enlightening, networking could be challenging. This was not the case at IHSG in Tasmania. Every person I interacted with was friendly and enthusiastic to make a connection. The sharing of ideas flowed as quickly as the hospitality, and I came away from the days in Launceston brimming with inspiration.

I was part of the contingent from Foundation for Arable Research and SIRC and our main office is based in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was fascinating how similar the climate was between Launceston and our Canterbury Plains. This meant that while the crops grown were familiar, it was evident that the systems had different priorities to others. It was interesting to see how yield differed depending on the extent of legislative restrictions on inputs. This was perhaps highlighted during one of the sessions where researchers were describing their insecticide programme, which was met with a hushed gasp from EU attendees that no longer had some of these practices available. The widespread representation of different production systems by the delegates in attendance was perhaps one of the conference's greatest strengths. It reminded me that in seed production we are all contributing to one big diverse market and each country has its own unique way of adding value to their product.

It was an incredibly valuable experience to see all of the research presented. I took the opportunity to familiarise myself with what each country is doing, and what their priorities are. I would certainly recommend this conference as an excellent opportunity for any researcher, agronomist or grower looking to collaborate internationally and connect with very passionate people looking to add value and quality to seed production around the world.

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**Thank you to the Conference Organizers, the International Herbage Seed Group Executive Board, and all our Conference Delegates for making the 12<sup>th</sup> International Herbage Seed Group Conference a huge success! We will see you in 2027 in Denmark for the 13<sup>th</sup> International Herbage Seed Group Conference. More information to come.**

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### **FAR's ARIA event 26 November 2025**

Nine delegates from the 12th IHSG Tasmanian conference, representing growers from the UK and Canada took the opportunity to cross the Tasman Sea to attend FAR's (Foundation for Arable Research) major field day for the year in New Zealand.

FAR's ARIA (Arable Research in Action) field day is held at its Chertsey arable research site in



*Attendees listening to field talks at FAR ARIA Day, 2025*

Canterbury. The event typically attracts 300 to 400 people to view trials and listen to talks.

Speakers included Sean Weith of FAR on understanding limitations on seed yield in red clover seed crops. In New Zealand, red clover seed yields often fall short of their biological potential, typically producing 200-500 kg/ha, a range lower and more variable than those seen internationally. To investigate factors influencing realised seed yield, 16 commercial red clover crops across South, Mid and North Canterbury were surveyed during the 2023-24 season. The gap between potential and realised seed yield suggests that late insect damage or harvest losses are underestimated and may represent a major barrier to achieving maximum yields.

IHSG president Richard Chynoweth, formerly of FAR, and Nick Davies, of the AgResearch division of the Bioeconomy Science Institute, talked about research into fungicide programmes for managing stem rust in perennial ryegrass

crops. Perennial ryegrass is the most common grass seed crop in New Zealand, particularly in Canterbury, which accounts for the majority of the nation's 18,000 ha of ryegrass seed crops.

Ben Harvey of FAR and Guilherme Barcellos of PGG Wrightson Seeds discussed canopy management for some newer forage varieties of perennial ryegrass. Bred to have excellent summer forage quality, these varieties are low aftermath-heading and the decrease in reproductive tillers appears to be linked to a reduction in seed yield. Efforts to improve seed yield in low aftermath-heading varieties have focused on grazing management and closing date, with future work also investigating plant growth regulator (PGR) rates.



Nicole Anderson, IHSG vice president, with the Grady sensor

Nicole Anderson, of the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research and formerly of Oregon, outlined the development of a portable sensor for the rapid measurement of moisture content in grass seed. The Grady Sensor is now publicly available in Oregon and will be available

worldwide soon. Over the last two years multiple sensor prototypes have been developed and their performance validated through field tests in Oregon and New Zealand.

Other topics at ARIA included factors in achieving high wheat yields, growing milling wheat crops that meet bakers' needs, functional biodiversity plantings and integrated weed management.

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## New Seed Scientists at FAR



Fiona Anderson

Fiona Anderson joined FAR in November 2025 as a researcher in the herbage and vegetable seeds team. For the last three years she has pursued a PhD at Lincoln University and defended her thesis in early December. Fiona's thesis on "The growth, development and nitrogen dynamics of white clover seed crops" focused on aspects of crop agronomy, physiology, nutrient cycling and modelling. Her PhD was funded by the Seed Industry Research Centre (SIRC) and Lincoln University. Prior to her doctorate, she completed FAR's graduate-intern programme, which was an 18-month experience within New Zealand's arable industry. This cemented Fiona's enthusiasm for crop production and all of the interesting factors which contribute to this vibrant and often challenging sector. Fiona is pleased to have returned to the industry with new skills and understanding and hopes to contribute to grower productivity and profitability. Fiona appreciated the opportunity to attend the IHSG Conference in Tasmania in her third week at FAR.

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# **The Drying and Storage of Grain and Herbage Seeds: Second Edition, Revised and Updated, 2025**

The drying and storage of grain and herbage seed was first published in 1999. The book comprises six chapters that cover grain characteristics and their reaction to climate, the importance of seed moisture, the drying system, the storage environment, storage pests and their control, and construction considerations. These have been edited and updated by Prof John Hampton (Lincoln University) and Anna Heslop (Foundation for Arable Research FAR) and FAR staff, as well as independent experts from the original chapters written by the late Murray Hill.

This second edition provides valuable New Zealand-specific information on grain and seed handling and storage and is a must for all arable growers and industry personnel involved in the drying or storage of grain and seed crops. I hope that you will find the book a valuable resource to support your production of high-quality crops. The book can be downloaded from the FAR website:

<https://www.far.org.nz/resources/the-drying-and-storage-of-grain-and-herbage-seeds>

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