

## UPDATE : POTATO P TRIALS UNDERWAY

November 2014

The planting season is upon us and research trials for the 'Innovative nutrient management for the Australian Potato Industry' project are well and truly underway. The aim of the project is to assess the ability of the Diffusive Gradients in thin film (DGT) test to predict a response in potato tuber yield from applying phosphorous (P) fertiliser.

A total of 12 replicated and demonstration trials have been established in recent weeks across the Mallee, South East and Kangaroo Island, making progress towards our target of 24 trial sites. Replicated research trials include 5 different P application rates (treatments), including a control plot with no P applied. These treatments are replicated 3 times, providing 15 individual plots for assessment; each plot is typically 6 mounds wide x 8m long. The P rates used at each site differ to reflect the current practice at the site, with previous fertiliser and management history also considered. Demonstration trials involve comparing the growers current practice to a single control plot with no P applied. All other nutrients being applied at the site in a base fertiliser are also applied to the research area at the same rates, including nitrogen, potassium, sulphur and the trace elements copper, manganese, magnesium, zinc and boron where used.



**Photo 1.** Planting potatoes through a trial site north of Naracoorte, SA. Treatment rates of 0, 40, 66, 110 and 183 kg of P/ha were used; the remainder of the paddock had 110kg of P/ha applied.

Rural Solutions SA staff Lyn Dohle, Rebecca Tonkin and Mel Fraser will be busy over the coming months establishing the remainder of the project sites and monitoring the existing trials. We'd like to sincerely thank the growers, consultants and contractors who are working with us to get these trials up and also acknowledge Elders Limited for the generous donation of fertiliser for the trials.

For more information on the project please contact Mel Fraser on mobile 0427 084 569 or email: [Melissa.fraser@sa.gov.au](mailto:Melissa.fraser@sa.gov.au)