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Farmer Johns have two Viticulture/Horticulture Agronomy Sales Job Vacancies available.

If you have a desire to join a diverse and progressive independent rural merchandise business, one of these roles may be just the job you are seeking? One viticulture focussed role is based in the Barossa Valley and the other viticulture and citrus agronomy role is Riverland focussed.

Essential personal capabilities and qualifications for these roles will include:

Tertiary qualifications in ag are essential, complemented by past experience with wine grape production and associated soil, nutrition and pest management.

You will be a self-motivated, reliable team player and capable of working unsupervised with highly developed interpersonal and communication skills.

You will have a commitment to delivering outstanding customer service.

Please send your resume via email to gavin@farmerjohns.com.au if you believe you're the right fit for either of these opportunities.



I reckon the squawking baby magpies are the most reliable sign of seasonal change! We are well into spring, which will see the summer horti crops fire up and obviously business of the

hay and grain harvest.

Recently a number of our team completed their Agsafe update. Agsafe oversees a number of stewardship programs behind the ag retail industry. Agsafe accreditation is focussed on the safe handling, storage and transport of agchem, but in effect people and communities.

The approaching, potentially very big grain harvest also brings on the day-to-day issue of farm safety and fatigue management.

The "Harvest Rush" should be tempered a little to ensure that all involved are able to enjoy the close of the season without hurting themselves, their staff or their equipment.

From the outside looking in, some farmers manage the busyness of harvest and the associated fatigue really well. Unfortunately, others seem to be much more accident prone, especially in the later stages of

harvest. Most farm businesses have a high sense of awareness to safety.

However, a major farm accident can cause serious grief and have a long-term impact on a business and its people.

If a dangerous activity, even routine tasks, are performed several times without a consequence they easily become normalised.

The additional financial pressures resulting from a few poor seasons and higher cost of fuel and inputs might also see an added work load on growers unable to afford additional labour.

Fatigue during harvest especially toward the last weeks of the harvest has the potential to re-introduce the real dangers on farm. Most of you will recall an incident in your communities that was completely avoidable but still took place.

None of us need to live under a military style code of safety. Perhaps a practical walk around the farm on occasions with a different set of eyes specifically focussed on safety might alert any dangerous activities that inadvertently have become "normalised behaviour"?

Greg Schubert

Quote of the Month

"Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard."

— Tim Notke

Viticulture

Fungicide spray programs will begin in the next couple weeks as warmer weather rapidly pushes vines past budburst into early growth stages. As well as the routine review of the season's fungicide program an annual check over of the spray plant will ensure the machine will perform to expectation. Obviously, a key component in this inspection is nozzle integrity. Worn or damaged nozzles should be discarded and replaced. A recalibration of the sprayer should be undertaken at the beginning of the season. The goal in all spray applications should be to accurately deliver the required volume of across the entire targeted canopy. Calibration and coverage efficiency should be checked at each growth stage over the course of the season.

All viti growers have tightened the reins on their inputs as a consequence of the industry's challenging environment at the moment. It therefore makes sense to ensure that accuracy across the entire operation doesn't erode a tightened operations budget.

Early sulphur sprays will provide adequate protection against powdery but will need to be reapplied after any rain events. However, should the weather play out over the next few weeks as forecast, rain events could ramp up disease pressure across all viticulture regions. With this scenario in mind, some consideration needs to be given to using one of the more robust fungicide activescont page 2

Seasonal reminders

- Call us to sort all silage and net wrap twine supplies for the hay season and grain protection products in readiness for the rapidly approaching harvest. We have grain bags available for additional on farm storage!
- Make sure the harvest loads are safe and secure - full range of tie

down chain, dogs and rated straps and load binders in stock.

- All Castrol oils in stock ready for the busy harvest service jobs. Call any of our stores for all oil quotes and to arrange deliveries of 200ltr drums.
- Clean out stock troughs and make sure supply lines, float valves and troughs are all in order for a long, hot summer season.

- Please flag your preferred Canola seed requirements for the 2027 season. We are compiling forecasts.
- Insects and crawling pests will get active over the early weeks of spring. Use Ficam residual insecticide to thwart the invasion around the house and sheds.
- Strategically place fly traps around the farm yard to reduce populations.

"with you in the GROWING business"

from page 1/.. that will generally offer better protection and more favourable spray intervals of up to 21 days during these challenging environmental conditions.

Our agro's have also observed a number of **Phomopsis infections** in blocks across our viticulture regions. Phomopsis should be treated with an appropriate preventative fungicide early in the season to reduce its impact on new emerging canopies.

Please check in with our viti agro's to finalise any outstanding program reviews and to rejig your early season protection if the inclement weather persists in the weeks ahead as forecasts suggest.

Finally, although we don't expect any product supply issues, it would be prudent to hold a couple sprays in your shed on farm. Our broadacre clients have just experienced a very high pressure broadacre fungicide season subsequent to the "drier than average" three monthly forecast. They have experienced the frustrations of product deliveries and know full well the impact of supply pressures and the knock-on effect that has to both timely spray applications and crop health! It would be far better to have product on hand so that timely spray applications can be made when they are required on your blocks.

Nutrition supplements should be strategically included in the vineyard management program over the course of the season and will provide additional value to the developing grape crop. It is also important to continually monitor the range of nutrients that are available to vines by both soil and petiole sampling. Many growers have wound back fertiliser applications historically included in cover cropping programs and spring broadcasting when those cover crops were mulched. Products such as ZM, MegaKelp P, OmniBoost K and Pura Kelp can safely included in the fungicide tank mix prior to flowering to improve initial fruit set. Check in with our agro's for more specific recommendations for your blocks!

Weed control has been a focus for most primary producers over the last few months as spring rainfall totals favour both crops and the full range of invasive weed species.

Glufosinate herbicides (including Kelpie G-Phos) are ideally applied in spring when temperature and humidity levels increase as its activity within the plant is enhanced in these ideal conditions. Glufosinate provides efficient broad spectrum weed control as an alternative active to glyphosate in weed resistance management. We have discussed the paraquat situation and growers are generally aware that new labelling will exclude all horticulture applications in the future. However, paraquat and diquat products can still be used up until June 2028 if the product has the old label attached to the drum. This does provide an opportunity to use any stock you may have in your sheds.

Soil moisture levels are ideal with recharge penetrating past 120cm into the subsoil. This obviously sets up a solid start to the growing season this year and is certainly well in front of our last two seasons.

Anyone wishing to pursue a more robust soil moisture management program this season might also be interested to discuss soil moisture monitoring options with our agro's.

Orchard and Horticulture

Flowering is well and truly under way in citrus across Riverland orchards, most have white buds showing with flowers opening. Recent more mild summers have seen increased populations of earwigs and snails. Baiting remains as the most effective method of control. Transcend Molluscicide and Insecticide will provide good control of snails, slugs, earwigs and slaters.

As the flowering period continues in the weeks ahead Thrips, Katydid, Light Brown Apple Moth and Citrus Gall Wasp.

Recent monitoring has identified low levels of young Light Brown Apple moth. An early insecticide may need to be considered if these populations increase to critical thresholds. Some consideration should be given to the beneficial and pollinator insect numbers prior to insecticide applications.

Citrus Gall Wasps are typically targeted in November. Their presence has also been increasing during the past few seasons.

Orchards should be monitored early to avoid any tree and crop damage.

Please discuss all your insecticide options well in advance of your intended application timing with either Gordon Childs or Georgie Pater.

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Broadacre

Both pulses and cereals have continued to rapidly mature with ideal conditions continuing in all regions. Recent rain events have been very valuable as cereals are flowering and now well into grain fill. Crops on shallow soils with poorer water holding capacity peaked out a little over the last couple of weeks and have definitely benefited from late rain events.

Some **fungicide applications** are still finding their way onto later sown crops in higher rainfall later regions but most crops will now be past recommended WHPs. If rain events continue to pass through be mindful that lentils will likely require another fungicide to protect the pods from *Ascochyta* infection. Be aware that the preferred fungicide Chlorothalonil has a 14-day harvest WHP but also has a 63-day ESI for livestock grazing on stubbles after harvest.

Our agro's can assist with a crop assessment on any paddocks that do have some WHP wriggle room remaining.

The FJs agro's have been busy **monitoring pulse and canola crops for insect activity**. Sweeping some canola crops has proven a challenge this season when crops are 1.80m high! Native budworm continue to hatch in pulse and canola crops. Critical thresholds are quickly being reached requiring a timely insecticide application. Both Native Budworm and Diamond Back Moth will infest canola crops. Current high canola prices will reduce critical threshold calculations meaning earlier treatment will be required. Unfortunately, these pests need to be controlled with two different actives. Both insecticides can be tank mixed in those situations where pests have co-infested canola paddocks.

Heliothis are also active across all our regions and should be treated once numbers reach critical levels to avoid damage

and subsequent yield loss. Our agro's have observed pulse crops where grubs have made their way into early developing pods.

Aerial application of insecticides has been a preferred option in some heavy crops to avoid physical damage that might otherwise occur from a ground spray rig. We are also mindful that some aircraft will be taken out of the ag space in the next few weeks as operators fulfill their obligations to summer bush fire duties.

Please contact us in advance to plan any aerial spraying to avoid application delays.

Given the **challenge all primary producers have with controlling ryegrass** each year and the anticipated serious increase in seed set this year, FJs encourage all growers to test some paddocks in preparation for the 2027 winter cropping season. Plant Science Consulting is open to receive Weed Seed Samples of any species from the current 2026 growing season for Herbicide Resistance Testing.

Talk to any of our agro team about collecting and lodging a sample for testing as ryegrass plants mature in the next few weeks Plant Science Consulting are offering a pre-emergence discount bundle for ryegrass, testing the 12 most commonly used herbicides for their resistance levels in our cropping systems.

Fertiliser prices are an unknown at the moment, with many moving pieces in play around the globe. The Middle East continues to be the main driver of constrained supply coupled with an acute sulphur shortage. Sulphuric acid, which is largely sourced from the Middle East is a key ingredient in the manufacture of phosphates. Current high prices have cooled global fertiliser demand in the short term which has somewhat stabilised our price. On a positive note, a urea vessel from Fertiglobe has passed through the Strait of Hormuz in the last week bound for Australia.

Reporting any known locust activity will assist authorities manage a potential escalation in their movement into southern cropping regions. Checking areas that were known egg beds and subsequent hatchings of hoppers will assist in tracking locusts in the weeks ahead. Advise observations including dates, location (GPS referenced if possible), life stage (adults or hoppers), density and size of the affected area and a brief description of the habitat where they are present. **Ph - 1800 084 881 and via their PIRSA web link - <https://sersforms.pir.sa.gov.au/p-report-plant-pest>**

Pasture

Silage and hay production is at full pace across the state. Despite a dry long-range forecast, recent wet weather has interrupted some programs. At this point in time rainfall totals haven't caused too much anxiety!

Some hay stands have been treated with a herbicide prior to cutting to preserve the quality of the fodder. Hay freezing with glyphosate will assist when time constraints might lead to deteriorated quality but will also provide the upper hand in summer weed control as well.

Spray topping pastures to reduce seed set of grass weeds has been a bit of a challenge as barley and brome grasses rapidly mature. Higher rates of herbicide can also be useful in preserving the entire stand for standing feed. Treated paddocks can be grazed over the next of couple months while feed integrity remains. Strip grazing will also allow stock to clean up weeds as well as the more palatable pasture species. Lamb producers will be concerned about the prolific growth of grasses this season and the penalties that they may in turn suffer at sale time. Catch up with one of our agro's to discuss your pasture and lucerne cleaning options in the short term.

Some **summer forage crops** have been sown into paddocks that have irrigation available or where recent rain events have lifted soil moisture rates to a level that will provide adequate supply over the period of establishment. We have a range of suitable seed available for summer forage crops if this might still be on your radar?

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We have regular enquiries about **Pinkeye**, a common problem in both sheep and cattle grazing enterprises. Young stock are particularly susceptible to infections. Pinkeye is a contagious infection of the eye caused by bacterium *Moraxella bovis*. Flies, dust, grass seeds and other irritants all exacerbate pink eye infections. It is more likely to occur in summer through to autumn when these conditions favour its spread. High paddock feed loads are also likely to see a rise in infections in the coming months. Piliguard from Coopers Animal Health can be administered to susceptible cattle 3-6 weeks prior to the Pinkeye season as an aid in the prevention of pinkeye.

We have mentioned hay production earlier in our newsletter. Hay yields are particularly heavy this season which will also equate to large volume of fodder advertised for sale. **Hay Feed Tests results** should be seen as a priority this year when hay is traded. Feed values from hay tests are the only fair way to compare hay on offer and should always be used to ensure the fodder you are purchasing will suit your livestock production requirements. Results will clearly show protein, energy, digestibility, sugars and other important trace element levels.

Grain testing can also be carried out where stored grain is intended to be sold into the stock feed market or intended to be used on farm in your own feed lotting. Please contact any of the FJs branches to arrange a feed or grain test and for assistance in reviewing the subsequent test results.

Recent humid and wet weather has promoted a lift in fly activity – around the back door, over the BBQ, in pet housing and of course in the sheep flock! No doubt **sheep blow flies will be a problem at some stage over the coming months**. Flocks should be treated with a robust fly protection product such as Extinosad or Clik to offer long term fly protection, particularly over the busy weeks of harvest. The last thing you need to be doing after a busy spell on the header is running down a badly blown, smelly old ewe!

Fly protection is a relatively straightforward operation using one of these backliner treatments. Gas powered applicators are also available to make the job even easier.

Call our store staff to discuss the most appropriate product for your situation.

Check that you are harvest safe. We stock a large range of applicable safety products including warning beacons, "oversize" signs, banners and flags.

Authorities are always on the lookout for those attempting the "it will be ok just this once" trip and have no hesitations in handing out heavy fines!

Most importantly is a thorough check over the fire-fighting unit and accessories to ensure they are ready for action if necessary. We have a **full complement of fire safety accessories** - extinguishers, fire rakes and hoes etc and of course all stores have fire-fighting pumps, tanks, hoses, reels and nozzles.

Check out the range of pre-assembled fire units that we also have in stock. The most popular are the 400ltr and 600ltr units couple with a Honda powered pump and hose reels.

Please give any of the FJs stores a call to discuss any of these matters in more detail and for all other farm merchandise query you may have!

We have historically focussed on agronomy in crops, pastures and in horti crops. However, we also have a **range of home and commercial turf (parks, ovals and tennis courts)** products in our portfolio.

Barricade is a pre-emergent herbicide that controls grassy weeds in established turf, garden beds and potted plants providing control for up to 6 months.

Estate broad leaf herbicide will control hard to kill species such as bindii and white clover in most cool climate turf species including Kikuyu, Buffalo and fescues.

Acelepryn provides season long protections against invasive insect pests including African Black beetle, Argentinian Stem weevil, Scarab and Billbugs.

Primo HG is the only turf growth regulator registered for home garden use in Australia. It will promote greener, more dense resilient lawns with reduced leaf height growth to make maintaining the turf easier.

In addition, we have a range of fertilisers specifically made for lawns, commercial turf and ovals such as **Turf King** and **Sudden Impact** and trace elements to keep your grass healthy throughout the growing season.

Give FJs a call and kick your lawn and garden into gear for the spring and summer BBQ and outside living season!

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