



## Groups

### Pistachio Information and Technology Groups.

#### **Pistachio Orchard Walk and Presentations November 2016**

The 5<sup>th</sup> round of PITgroup meeting occurred in November 2016 in weather much more conducive the meeting held the same time last year. 21 growers attended the two meetings – the first on Thursday November the 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Nangiloc Football Clubroom then onto Rodney Hands property for an orchard walk and demonstration of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and the second meeting at Bob Hodgson's property the following day Friday the 4<sup>th</sup>, at Renmark. I thank all the growers who took the time to attend these presentations and orchard walks. I also sincerely thank hosts' Bob Hodgson and Rodney Hand for allowing the use of their properties for the meetings or orchard walks.



#### **SA Pistachio growers listening to Darren Crabbes talk on Orchard Sanitation.**

We had an excellent list of speakers and topics covered which included: Pistachio Orchard Sanitation delivered with enthusiasm by Darren Crabbes from ConNexus Global who challenged the audience to alternative methods of disease control. . . Phil Lyons from Falcon UAV gave an insightful talk on the benefits of using unmanned aerial vehicles for the early detection of problems, whether water, fertilizer or insect based through Near Infra Red monitoring via drone mounted cameras. Two UAVs were discussed the AgEagle fixed wing and the AgFalcon hexacopter of which there was a demonstration at Rodney Hands orchard in

Nangiloc. For both systems the NIR images are converted to NDVI. NDVI or Normalized Difference Vegetation Index, all plants both absorb and reflect radiation. In the near infrared band, there is a specific colour range that indicates a healthy plant. Outside of this, is a plant 'under stress'. An NDVI image can identify those problem areas. By having this imagery of a crop or field, allows a farmer or agronomist, to go directly to that section that is a problem. Quite often these are not easily seen from the ground and as the NDVI image can detect plant stress before the human eye - preventative treatment can be applied, saving dollars and increasing yield.

The PGAI President Chris Joyce also gave a detailed overview of the chilling requirements – and the lack of – for the 2016/2017 season highlighting the fact that the majority of districts did not reach the required chilling levels for the present season. The lack of chill was ameliorated in many cases with well-timed sprays.

I sincerely thank the speakers for the great input they contributed to the meetings.



**The AgFalcon hexacopter about to take flight at Rodney Hands orchard in Nangiloc.**



**Growers at Nangiloc learning about NDVI.**

The sausage sizzle provided at both venues proved popular again and this time we even manage a potato and pasta salad!

The next round of PITgroup meetings will be held after harvest in April 2017. I look forward to seeing you there.

Please keep an eye out for the dates and venues for the April meetings and please give my contact details to anyone who is not receiving these emails.

For more information please ring Craig Feutrill on 0437 307 590 or Trevor Ranford on 0417 809 172.