




RICECHECK LIFTS FINLEY DISCUSSION GROUPS YIELD AND WATER EFFICIENCY

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Ricecheck: Update (1)

- Ricecheck is a farmer participatory crop package which benchmarks farmer crops to identify best practices linked to high yields and water use efficiency
- Ricecheck is communicated to farmers by discussion groups
- Major player lifting yields by 29% from 1987 to 2002
- B/C was 18:1 and value \$64m
- Farmers lost interest in Ricecheck during the 2003-2010 drought

Ricecheck: Update (2)

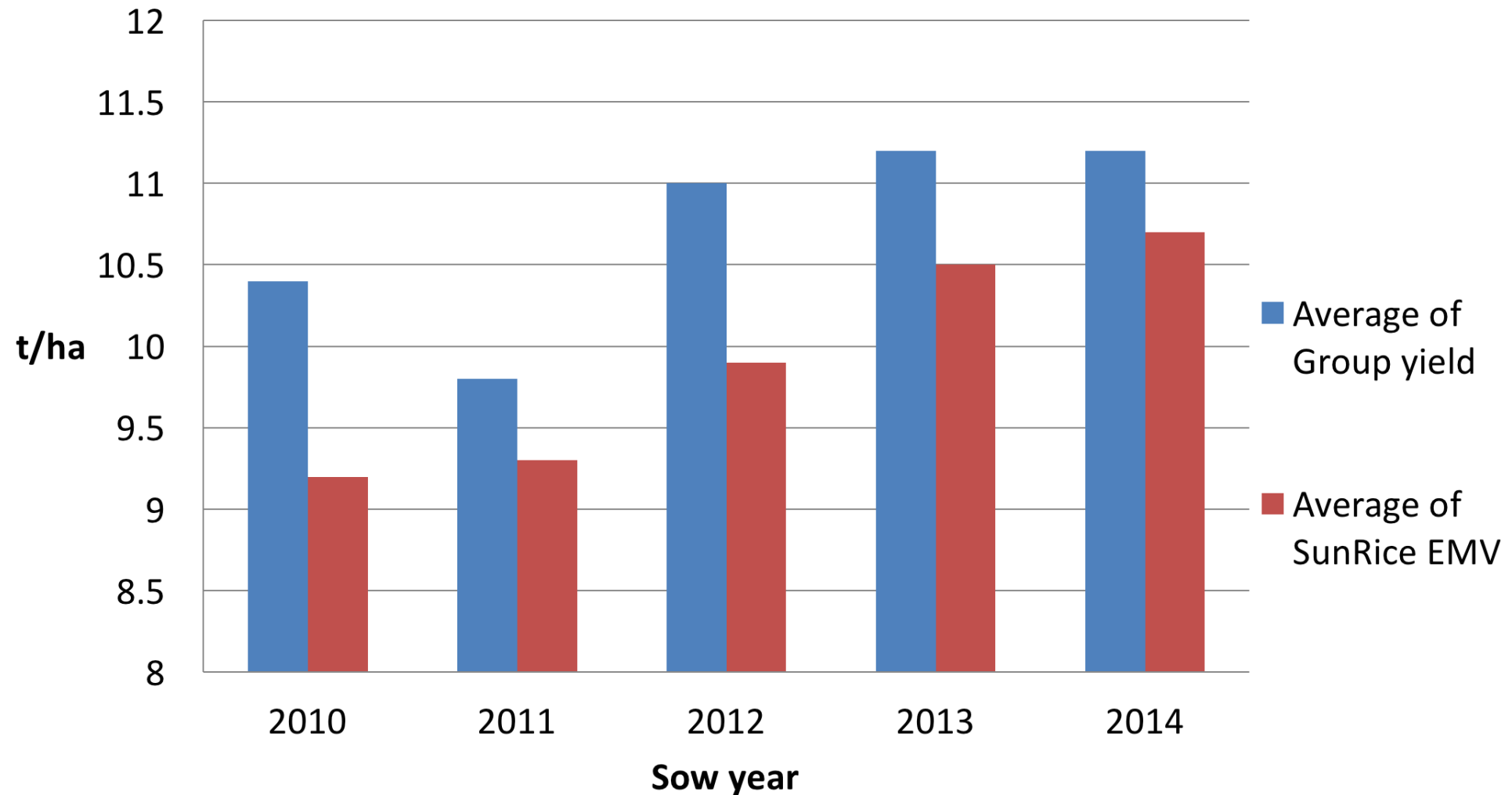
- In 2011, I retired to Finley and restarted the discussion groups for rice and winter crops as a consultant
- In 2012, NSW DPI cut the extension service so no more groups or extension officers
- New Rice extension services –RGA extension agronomists, Local land services agronomists and commercial agronomists

Finley Discussion Groups

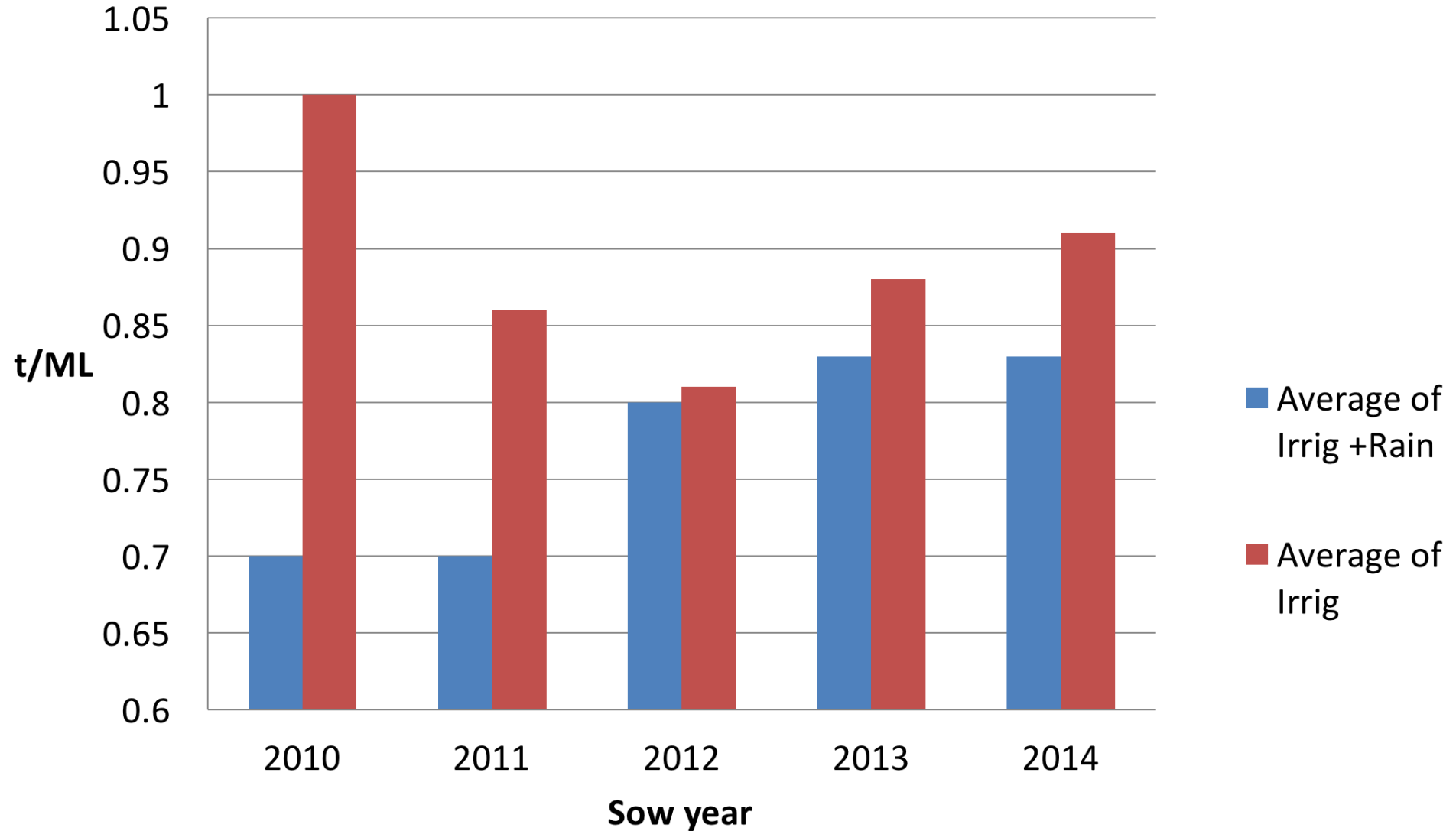
- Reformed 4 groups-Blighty, Berrigan, East and West Jerilderie
- Meetings- rice establishment, PI, draining, feedback, pre - season (winter crops)
- Attendance 8-30/group
- Meet at host farms
- Morning tea/BBQ



Discussion group rice yields



Group water use efficiency



Value Of The Groups

- Farmers learn and share knowledge
- Range of learning tools
- Action learning
 - issue, action, review
 - adoption new practices
e.g. dry broadcast sowing
- Discuss new varieties / research results



Records To Results To Adoption

- Farmers record practices at meetings
- Practices →
 - spreadsheet →
 - yield and WUE
- Ricecheck results booklet
 - crops/varieties
 - in order yield
- Discuss results
- Farmers update practices



Farmer Generated Learning Tools

- Fact sheets – e.g. do's and don'ts drill sowing
- Gross margins
 - farmer costs, incomes and water use
 - compare sowing methods
 - gross margins/ML water
 - compare to winter crop GM/ML
- Surveys – establishment / R, D and E needs

Conclusions

- Ricecheck uses farmers' vast knowledge to improve profits
- New farmer or research practices are assessed locally
- Farmers enjoy the groups
 - **Ricecheck** is still relevant
- New Ricecheck
 - Project – IRRI India target
 - 1m farmers

