Agriculture-related books in big demand

Sales of agriculture-related books are booming, defying the shift to digital e-reading, according to Dr Cameron Archer, Principal at the Department of Primary Industries Tocal College.

“Sales of books from Tocal have never been higher and are up significantly on last year,” Dr Archer said.

“In 2013 Tocal printed and distributed 13,000 publications Australia-wide and internationally on agriculture and related matters.

“The range of books includes more than 100 titles, covering topics as diverse as Organic Farming, Weed Management and Electric Fencing to mention a few.

“Sales have gradually grown over the years through both strong demand and the addition of new titles.”

Six new national publications were produced in 2013. These were the titles ‘Managing Weeds’, ‘Using Compost in Agriculture’, ‘A Field Guide to Four-Wheel Driving’, ‘Machinery Hygiene’, ‘Pig Production: The Basics’ and ‘Grasses of the NSW Tablelands’.

The top selling books for Tocal in 2013 were Bee Agskills, Tractor Agskills, Beef Agskills and Grasses of coastal NSW.

Dr Archer said the books were used in a wide range of applications and were of great value as educational tools.

“One of our titles ‘Photography for field work’ has been used for a training course on Pest and Disease Collections as part of a research project on mangoes in Cambodia,” Dr Archer said.

“Most of our other titles are helping to improve the knowledge and skills base of our farming community.”

Dr Archer said 65 DPI e-publications were also currently available through the Apple ibookstore.

“We are certainly part of the growth of digital media but there seems to be the need to have both - and the book certainly is not dying,” he said.

“Tocal College has been able to combine its publications program in association with its distance learning program and this strategy commenced over 20 years ago has worked well.

“We are now combining our publications into our e-Learning and digital media.”

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