

*Leading Edge, supported by the Society for Engineering in Agriculture and the Australian Centre for Precision Agriculture, provides a local and worldwide window on engineering and PA research.*

## Strippers caught on video

By Gary Alcorn

**C**lever people – forerunners of today's agricultural engineers – were active in Biblical times mechanising the harvest of grain crops.

They used person-power to knock the heads of cereal crops into a wheeled wooden box bearing spikes and pushed ahead into the crop by a draft animal (see illustration).

This innovation was first reported by Roman historian Pliny around AD 70.

Present day ag engineer Dr Graeme Quick has visited areas in Gaul (today's France, Belgium and southern Germany) several times in recent years to gather content for his latest educational video presentation, *Amazing Agricultural Machines*.

"I travelled through the old Celtic colonies to capture images related to this ep-

ochal 'stripper harvester' which influenced harvester designers 1800 years later," Graeme said.

"It was the direct inspiration for the legendary Australian strippers made in South Australia," he said.

This four-part DVD/video series has four volumes – History and Development, Modern Machines, Outdoor Power Equipment, and Safety, Cost and the Operator.

Volume 1 covers the evolution of farming tools from simple hand-powered iron implements to the latest high-tech harvesters and tractors including the 900 hp Big Bud.

"Although the series was prepared primarily for use in schools, I believe farmers and contractors will also learn a lot about the many clever solutions that have been invented to meet the need to produce and harvest more food more effectively as populations grew," Graeme says.

"Other issues covered include a pictorial record of traditional farming techniques from various countries and how labour shortages and the need to lighten the work

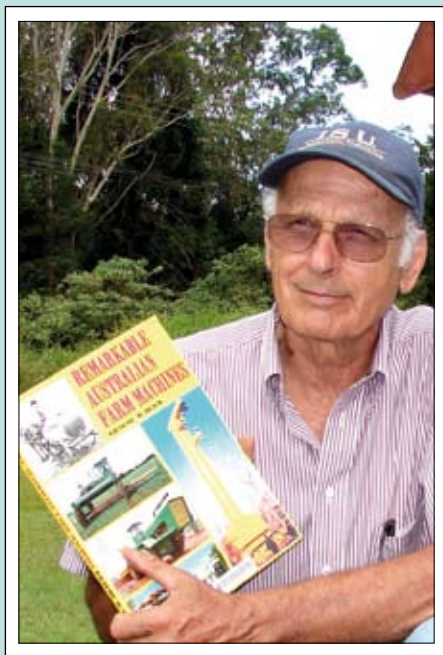
load on individuals promoted mechanisation," Graeme said.

Volume 2 documents the development of today's sophisticated agricultural machines and sustainable agricultural practices to reduce losses, maintain and protect soil structure and fertility.

Precision farming is becoming an industry standard using modern technologies to increase crop yields while protecting soil resources, saving fuel and reducing operator fatigue.

"We cover laser-guided steering, GPS navigation, video-assisted operations and controlled traffic farming. Australian farmers and engineers are up there with the best in developing and adopting these innovations," Graeme said.

**The two-DVD four-part information package, sells for \$A400 and can be obtained from Dr Graeme Quick. Readers who send Graeme unique stories and photos about tractors that are suitable for his current work in progress – *Tall (but true) Tractor Tales* – will be given a free copy of one of his recently-published books. Ph: 07 5494 9920 or email: g.quick@bigpond.com**



Dr Graeme Quick is offering a copy of one of his recent books including *Remarkable Australian Farm Machines* to readers who send suitable stories and photos of unique tractors for his latest work.

## WORLD'S FIRST WHEELED MACHINE

The Roman Vallus or Gallic Stripper – a harvesting machine, as reported by historian Pliny in AD 70, but discredited for centuries.

This drawing is an artist's reconstruction based on stone fragments from Roman sarcophagi found only last century.

