

Minutes
Darling Downs RAC Meeting
held Thursday 8th March 2012
BMO Accounting
Drayton Street East Dalby (off Hogan Street)
commencing 9.30 am

1. Opening, Welcome by Chairman

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members.

2. Attendance

W Bidstrup (Chair) C Hornick, B Warren, S Pfeffer, D Sherman, B Coleman, L Berry, C Joseph, M Burgis,
Nominees: V Green (NP GRDC) Z Hochman (CSIRO) M Sutherland (USQ)

Coordinator: J Obst

3. Apologies

W Newton, Dr J Thompson, B O'Mara, Dr R Williams (DEEDI)

4. Confirmation of Agenda

The Coordinator said that no Guest Speaker had been arranged and that this segment would be used to discuss future grain industry consultation.

5. Confirmation of Minutes 18th August 2011

Minutes were confirmed as true and correct.

6. Business from Minutes (not covered elsewhere on agenda)

Nil

7. Correspondence and Business (not covered elsewhere on agenda)

Nil

8. RAC Members' Reports

Each RAC member (not Nominee) commented (max 5 minutes) on crop performance, current & emerging production issues limiting profitability and any emerging opportunities. Following is a summary of comments.

- Growers experiencing problems with GPS accuracy leading to difficulty in exactly matching wheel marks. Growers reluctant to invest more to use this new technology.
- High yielding wheat crops suffered from high screenings.
- Excellent sorghum yields of 5 to 7 tonnes ha.
- Mid September planted sorghum crops (with added frost risk) yielded higher than October plantings with yields of up to 10t / ha.
- INCITEC Community Service Website good source for technical information <http://incitecpivotfertilisers.com.au/>
- Sorghum yield differences of 2.4 t/ha with additional 150 units Urea
- Need better information on applying Zn and S (immobile elements) to zero till systems.
- Regional weather forecasting very unreliable. Need better reference points for grain growers. Consider inviting BOM representative to next RAC meeting.
- Small grain enterprises need additional financial incentives to invest in equipment to utilise Murray / Darling Scheme water more efficiently Agreed to refer this issue to AgForce Grains.
- Wild pigs becoming a major problem across the Darling Downs cropping region. Agreed to refer this issue to AgForce Grains.
- Southern and Eastern / Central Downs remains reasonably dry.
- Considerable amount of wheat classified as ASW due to low protein.
- Shatter cane seeds in a popular line of commercial hybrid sorghum seed first sold for the 2011 season is causing considerable concern (yield loss and future weed infestation). While some growers are aware of the situation on their properties there are others who are not aware. AgForce Grains has alerted its members to this problem via a newsletter. Concern was expressed that shatter cane seed could be dispersed to neighboring properties by water / soil etc as a result of some growers unawareness of possible contamination. Agreed to refer committee's concern to AgForce Grains asking them to ensure that all growers planting this batch of seed are made aware of the potential threat from spreading shatter cane.
- Gregory wheat yielded up to 6.5 t /ha.
- Shepherd barley yielded up to 8t /ha.
- High populations of crickets in summer crops with some damage to soybeans.
- Weed populations very high due to recent flood waters.
- Spray drift continuing problem with some growers still not adopting industry best practice.

- Delta T is a useful tool for determining correct weather conditions for applying pesticides. Refer <http://www.bom.gov.au/info/leaflets/Pesticide-Spraying.pdf>:
- OCF good Website for Weather Forecasting. http://www.australianweathernews.com/OCF/OCF_041.HTM
- Major problems developing with Feathertop Rhodes Grass (FTRG)
- NGA leading approach to FTRG management solutions on Darling Downs.
- Weeds and Diseases control measures are the biggest current threats to profitable grain growing on the Darling Downs.
- Very large cotton crop on Central Downs
- Transporting of grain to markets is becoming a major issue for growers. Grain needs ongoing access to rail.
- Dryland maize lines showing promise in dryland cropping. Maize offers some benefits over sorghum. Big future for maize and strong interest from feed grain users.
- Growers need up to date information on nutrient management for mung beans for more recent high yielding varieties particularly in favourable moisture situations.
- Will be big N issues following recent heavy rains.

9. Review of DD RAC Priority Issues

Members divided into 3 Groups. Each group determined up to 5 major current and emerging issues threatening or providing opportunities for profitable grain production.

10. Industry Consultation on Priority Issues

The meeting had a general discussion regarding the options for industry (particularly grain growers) guiding and influencing the RD&E planning and investment program.

11. Finalising Highest Priority Issues for 2012

Each one of the 3 Groups reported on the outcome of the exercise under Item 9. Refer to attachment 1. The Coordinator undertook to relate these conclusions to the 2011 Priority Issues paper and amend where necessary.

12. Nominees Reports

Each Nominee reported on their Research Agency operations with a focus on Activities and Outcomes relevant to the Darling Downs grains region)

- 12.1 CSIRO: Dr Z Hochman
- Dr J Whish – nematodes
 - N Dalgliesh – soil moisture sensing
 - Dr L Bell – Grain and Graze
 - Mr A Peake – maximising wheat yields in irrigated crops
 - Dr Z Hochman – adding value to NVT
 - Proposal developed to provide natural gas industry and Australian communities with evidence based understanding to underpin sound decision making.

- 12.2 USQ: Dr M Sutherland
- USQ has appointed a new Vice Chancellor - Prof Jan Thomas.
 - University continues to support agriculture research.
 - Approx \$1.8 M internally sourced. \$4.6 M externally sourced.
 - New glass houses completed and labs being upgraded.
 - Most universities finding it difficult to attract agricultural students.

- 12.3 GRDC NP: V Green
- GRDC is replacing the 4 Lines of Business structure with 6 Investment Themes –
- Theme 1: Growers Meeting Market Requirements
 - Theme 2: Improving Crop Yield
 - Theme 3: Protecting Your Crop
 - Theme 4: Profitable Farming Systems
 - Theme 5: Maintaining the Farm Resource Base
 - Theme 6: Building Skills and Capacity Foundational Activities
- Growers are encouraged to give feedback on the Themes and the forthcoming 5 Year Plan by 18th March 2012.

13. Next Meeting

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| 13.1 | Date: | 23 rd August 2012 |
| 13.2 | Venue | USQ Toowoomba |
| 13.3 | Speakers | TBA |

14. Closure

<i>Group A</i>	<i>Group B</i>	<i>Group C</i>
<i>Grass control is becoming a major problem and threatening Zero Tillage practices. Grasses include Feather Top Rhodes, Windmill, Barnyard and Native Rhodes. Better management options need developing to include knockdown and residual herbicides, IT sorghum, and rotations.</i>	<i>Develop management practices to effectively control Feather Top Rhodes and other emerging resistant weeds particularly in a Zero Tillage system. Need to be proactive and implement a strategy to include meetings engaging growers, researchers and other industry sectors with a focus on farming systems, weeds (eg Barnyard, Shatter-cane, Johnson, Windmill grasses and Fleabane) bio-security.</i>	<i>Develop and extend management practices for the control of weeds in fallows. Major concern over is over the development of resistance to glyphosate .Feather Top Rhodes and Fleabane are weeds of major concern.</i>
<i>Need to develop and extend better information about management strategies for nutrition, particularly for N requirements following prolonged / heavy rainfall and for strategies for the economical deep banding of P and Zn based on Dr M Bell's research findings.</i>	<i>Develop and extend better options for grower to management plant nutrition. This includes soil testing, application methods and extension trials.</i>	<i>Provide genetic resistance in winter cereals and develop management practices for effective control of diseases (Crown Rot, Rusts, Net Blotch)</i>
<i>Need to develop and extend better agronomy management practices for pulses (ie for chick peas and mungbeans) especially for the newly released varieties. For example what is the cause of yellowing in Mung Beans and what management practice is required. More emphasis needs to be placed on management practices for high yield potential situations.</i>	<i>Research effects of Coal Seam Gas extraction on underground water supply and quality, feedlot water availability, fracturing, logistics and weeds.</i>	<i>Continue to breed and trial GMO crops and gain community support.</i>
<i>Growers need better access to timely agronomic information developed from research programs.</i>	<i>Need a review the quality classifications of the various grains and the adoption of consistent national standards.</i>	<i>Develop and extend benefits from adoption of Precision Agri. Need accuracy improvements.</i>
<i>Dryland maize has the potential to become an important crop for Darling Downs growers. More research is required for end use suitability, higher & stable yield, lower plant population to reduce planting costs(multi-cobbing)</i>	<i>Need to continue research, development and extension for the major diseases of the major and important crops (ie Nematodes, Crown Rot, Rusts, Charcoal Rot)</i>	<i>Breed and develop pulses which maximises production of nitrogen and with grain quality suitable for the premium food market</i>
<i>Research and development needs to be undertaken to determine management strategies to minimise possible interactions between diseases in sorghum and maize and Fusarium Head Blight in winter cereals.</i>	<i>Continue to research, develop and extend practices for the control of grain storage insects (eg resistance, sealed silos, aeration)</i>	
	<i>Continue to develop and extend management practices for the safe application of in-crop pesticides.</i>	