

Minutes
Central Queensland RAC Meeting
held DNR / DPIF Building Emerald
on Wednesday 12th July 2006
commencing 9.30am

1. **Opening:** The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members
2. **Attendance:**
Members: L Fairweather, R Routley, S Saal, S Sullivan, P Durkin,
R Daniels, G Spackman, D Jordan, K McCosker, A Farquharson,
Nominees: K Heit (DPIF) S Chapman (CSIRO) D Midmore (CQU)
Coordinator: J Obst
Guest: D Howard
Apologies
Members: S Eden, J Sheppard, N Johansen, M Ballentine, J Bishop.
Moved S Saal **Seconded** A Farquharson that the apologies be accepted. **Carried**
3. **Changed RAC Coordination Arrangement**
The Chairman reported that Jack Twyford had indicated a desire to retire from the RAC Coordinator role and Agforce Grains was presently negotiating with the GRF to be the replacement with John Obst performing the Coordination role.
5. **Election of Chairman:**
The Coordinator took the chair and called for nominations for the position of chairman for the following 12 months.
A Farquharson was Nominated by P Durkin Seconded by S Saal. **Accepted.**
There being no further nominations Mr. Farquharson took the chair and thanked Mr. Durkin for his recent leadership.
6. **Confirmation of Minutes** (Meeting held 28th Feb 2006)
Moved L Fairweather **Seconded** P Durkin that the minutes be accepted. **Carried**
7. **Business from the Minutes** (not covered elsewhere on agenda)
 - 7.1 Recent Past RAC members were written to expressing thanks for contributions
 - 7.2 Letter was written to GRDC re Spray Application Technology for Central Queensland.
 - 7.3 Mung Bean Planting Seed Quality
The Coordinator advised that he contacted Dennis Logan of Aust Mung Bean Assoc regarding concerns about previous year planting seed quality. Mr. Logan explained that AMA has introduced an Accredited Seed Quality Scheme with independent 3rd party in-field inspections. This seed is clearly "tagged" as accredited. Also the variety Emerald had been reselected and only the new selection should be planted.
8. **Correspondence** (not dealt with elsewhere)
 - 8.1 Inwards Nil
 - 8.2 Outwards Nil
9. **Seasonal / Crop Report**
The following are some key points made by members:
 - Current crop issues weather related. Crop performance is very stripy.
 - Wild pigs increasing problem as more cropping area is converted to grazing.
 - Feather Top Rhodes remains a major weed problem.
 - A DC trial looking at deep application of P. Some visual differences are apparent.

- Heavy heliothis pressure in chick peas.
- Ergot major problem in late planted sorghum. Quicker varieties with good pollen production have lesser incidence.
- Has been further spray drift damage instances.
- Planting seed availability was a major problem resulting in poor match of maturity rating and time of planting. Also some wheat plantings excessively delayed simply because no seed was available.
- Some irrigators have used their limited water for winter crops.
- Paul Grundy DPI&F Biloela is reviewing heliothis threshold levels on chickpeas.
- Work being done in NSW implementing European technology targeting 8-10 t / ha from irrigated wheat.
- Low levels of ergot present in late sorghum.
- There is a need for a sorghum variety which does not produce late tillers as these are the ones most likely to be hit with mould and ergot.
- Need to research sorghum's value for ethanol production.
- More growers looking to value add their own cattle.
- Very little summer crop north of Emerald.
- Widespread wheat planting. Using starter fertilizer in CQSFS trial.
- Major spray drift damage problem in area. Training has helped somewhat overcome the problem but doesn't deal with the grower who refuses to undertake training.
- Putting more marginal land back to cattle.
- Securing farm labour a major problem.
- Dr. Elaine Engraham US Scientist and expert in biological farming is the key note speaker to an Emerald Workshop. Large attendance expected.
- Discussing with Burdekin Dry Tropics Catchment Group (Northern Highlands) the addition of bacteria/ fungi to soils. Hard to maintain during prolonged dry periods.
- A lot of research has been done on soil biota by CSIRO.
- Spray drifts still a major issue.
- Wheat planting seed supply was a major issue. Some growers had excess on farm stored un-selected seed that was offered for sale to suppliers however this was not taken up. Growers themselves were unable to sell to other growers as the seed was PBR'ed. This will have cost the industry considerably.
- Need to consider ethanol.
- A lot of growers using starter P & Zn.
- Have a large number of simple trials looking at the effects. Shallow and deep soil testing done. Surprised at low levels of available P.
- The sunflower disorder has been a major influence on growers not planting this crop. The current small research project inspected the small number of late planted sunflower crops and found widespread incidence of the disorder from mild to severe. 90% confidence level that the disorder is caused by tobacco streak virus spread by sucking insect vectors such as thrips. These over winter in winter weeds. The disorder is wide spread in India.

10. PIPn 2006

This annual report has been finalized and submitted to research provider and funder organizations. Copies have also been sent to individual agronomists and researchers. The PIPn 2006 is posted on the GRF Website. It was agreed that the PIP should concentrate on the major issues and their prioritization but providing enough specific detail to give a clear directive.

11. Report on RAC Chairmen / N Panel GRDC

P Durkin advised that he attended this meeting representing the CQ RAC. The meeting was held in Brisbane on 7th June 2006. There was a full attendance by the N Panel and the 8 RACs. While Mr. Durkin was not able to attend, the RACs representatives met the GRDC Board the following day. Points discussed included:

- Maize becoming a rotational option for cotton irrigators.
- Ethanol becoming a potential market for grain
- PH wheat still the major winter crop focus in CQ
- Need for regional representation in independent plant variety testing
- Spray drift and application technology priority issues for CQ
- Feather Top Rhodes Grass a major weed problem in zero till.
- Need to research cropping and cattle production systems.
- CQ commencing to develop a BMP for grain production.
- Carbon credits, biofuels, labour shortage and technology transfer were discussed

The Coordinator was asked to establish if the N Panel is visiting CQ in September 2006.

12. Crop production profile for C Qld Region

The Coordinator said that it would be helpful to him but also to the RAC's task of prioritizing issues if the RAC could establish a Crop Importance Profile for the CQ region. It was understood that these would be "ball park" figures to be used as a guide only. The crop importance profile would be reviewed from time to time. Importantly the RAC will be asked at some future time to forecast what the crop profile might look like in say 2113. The following is the average value nominated by those completing the form.

CQ Crop Importance Profile (draft)

Crop	Winter Crop			Summer Crop							TOTAL		
	Wheat	Barley	C Pea	Sorg	Maize	Sunf	M Bean	S'bean	P'nut	N'bean			
	M	D	F										
RAC Estimate	28	2	3	1.5	7	48	5.5	1.5	3	0	0	0.5	100%
Y 2011-2016													100%

For Wheat M = Milling D = Durum F = Feed

13. Brief discussion on macro-factors which will / could influence future crop production in CQld region

The Coordinator said that with the nature of research being about the delivery of future technology it was important for the research program to take into account possible future influences and opportunities. These should also be considered by the RAC when determining priority issues for RDE. The task is not only about focusing on 'today's problems' but also about being 'strategic' in considering priority issues.

Some possible future influences and opportunities:

- Climate change eg hotter and dryer
- Market demand for quality and quality eg. feed grains , biofuels, international competition
- Carbon sequestration eg. carbon credits
- Community Expectations and Environmental requirements eg BMP
- Prec. Agri and Mechanisation eg. labour shortages
- GMOs eg sorghum
- Biological farming eg soil health
- Research capacity and capability eg. shortage of scientists, agronomists

14. Spray Drift in CQ: "Where to from here"

G Spackman reported on developments since the last meeting. He said that spray drift and registration of 2,4-D amine remains the single biggest threat to zero till in CQ. The recent review of 2,4-D registration has removed most ester formulations. The APVMA conclusions on the registration review of amine formulation of 2,4-D have not yet been released. It is anticipated that will be at least some tightening of the rules for using 2.4-D amine. The local CHNDG is considering making a submission to APVMA. Things

are moving quickly and it is difficult to remain in the loop. Local growers are now largely considering wind speeds and achieving correct droplet size. The few slow adopters are posing some threat to the industry. There is some concern over droplet fines from aerial applicators. There are ongoing discussions on supplying coarse nozzles to growers and placement of more weather stations in the Comet River Valley. Mr. Spackman said he attended a meeting with GRDC / CRDC in Narrabri. GRDC recognizes the problem. G Betts and B Gordon are developing education packages on spray application within the next 6 months. A lot of workshops and seminars have already been conducted and recent attendance numbers have tapered off. Needs to be more research on efficacy with large droplets and just how far the barriers can be pushed with respect to weather conditions using such technologies. How do we encourage compliance. Mr. Fairweather said it is hopeful that TTI nozzles will go a long way to resolving the drift problems. Agforce Grains is investigating bulk purchasing opportunities.

15. Pathway to Prosperity: Busting the Sorghums Yield Barrier:

The Coordinator said this key note paper was presented by Prof Graeme Hammer to the recent Australian Sorghum Conference. He believed that the "way forward" proposed by Prof Hammer supported what the CQ RAC has been saying about sorghum production limitations.

S Saal, A Farquharson and D Jordan commented to the meeting on their consideration of the paper. Mr. Farquharson said that starch levels also needed to be considered as there is a substantial drop off under moisture stress situations. Dr Jordan reported that there was already research built around the Hammer proposal and there was considerable excitement about yield increase prospects. Some of the stay green material progressing through the sorghum improvement program is showing signs of lesser tillering.

It was agreed that the CQ RAC would write a letter of support to Prof Hammer and that S Saal and A Farquharson would prepare a draft letter.

Some discussion was had on the opportunities for a GM approach to sorghum improvement. Presently there was some GM work being done at UQ on sorghum seed quality. There are no obvious traits yet available to work on for GM sorghum.

16. CQSFS Update

R Routley reported on this major CQ Project. This project which has been running for approx 10 years at a current annual cost of approx \$ 2 Million is due to end 30th June 2007. Project is 1/3 GRDC funded and 2/3 DPIF funded. The project is closely aligned with the current CQ RAC priority issues. GRDC will commence a review of the project shortly. DPIF will now commence preparing a project proposal to commence at the conclusion of this current project. Mr. Routley asked for comments.

- There was general agreement that the project was held in high regard by growers.
- Lesser recent project activity in the southern region.
- Future project should consider cattle / cropping mix.
- On farm trials and variety testing important.
- Yield bars or benchmarking should be established.
- There is still a lot of published information available and need to transfer it to growers for adoption.

17. BMP Project:

K McCosker reported on the current Best Management Practice (BMP) initiative. He said that this is a joint initiative involving Fitzroy Basin Assoc, Agforce Grains and DPI&F with the aim to compile a BMP manual based on current good CQ farming practices. A further aim of the project is to ensure that the manual can be adaptive for the remaining Northern Aust. grain region. There will be on-going consultation with the cotton industry due to its extensive experience in BMP. A principle is that the manual will be industry developed and owned. There is a need to have linkages between the CQSFS project and BMP. Also thought needs to be given to the "due diligence" aspects

of a BMP manual as the finance and real estate industries could use such a document in valuing property.

18. Reports by RAC Nominees: DPI, CSIRO, CQU, GRDC

DPIF: K Heit reported the following

- WUE Project Officer has been appointed to Emerald
- DPIF will commence a feed wheat breeding program as a component of its Feed Grain Strategic Initiative. This initiative includes wheat, barley, sorghum. An additional wheat breeder has been appointed (Dr Rex Williams). Without the need to select for milling quality it is expected that yield increases will be achieved. Target date for release is 3-5 years for selections from existing lines and 5-8 years from lesser developed lines.

CSIRO: S Chapman reported the following

- CSIRO is working in pre wheat breeding
- Long coleoptiles for wheat of 12-15 cm are achievable and which will not produce leaves until emergence can be developed and back crossed into existing varieties.
- PhD student researching genetic control of wheat tillering with range of 1 to 10 tillers.

Cent Qld Uni: Prof D Midmore reported the following

- Restructuring occurring within CQU
- Presently no RDE on grains. Working mainly with horticulture
- Finding increased crop yields using aerated irrigation water
- Where will agri get future RDE people from
- CQU looking at Tas / WAust program to encourage students into tertiary agri studies.

19. GRF Update: J Obst reported the following

- GRF Restructure Bill presented to Parliament in July 06. Could be voted on in August 2006.
- GRF target date for incorporation is 1st January 2007
- GRFL Draft Constitution posted on GRF Website
- GRF Website in process of being upgraded
- Still to commence forums on Website
- GRF Newsletter published approx 3 monthly
- GRF still asking RAC members to nominate a reference group of approx 5
- Current eSurvey on Stored Grain Insect Control

20. General Business

NVT in CQ. GRDC advice had been received in Dec 2005 that 4 NYT trials would be planted in CQ in 2006, located at Capella, Rolleston, Moura & Bauhinia. The Capella and Moura trials would include durum and barley.

Concern was expressed that a least one NVT trial planted at Springsure this year was well below the standard that growers expected. This concern had been expressed to ACAS when NVT was first proposed. CQ growers were then strongly supportive of CQ variety trials being managed by CQ people.

It was agreed that the CQ RAC write to GRDC

- Asking for information on the location of 2006 CQ NVT trials
- Asking what consultation arrangements are in place
- Asking what are the arrangements for field walks to inspect the trials
- Expressing some concern over the state of the Springsure trial

Australian Agronomy Conference: Mr. Routley advised that the CQSFT project is offering sponsorship for up to six growers to attend the Australian Agronomy Conference to be held in Perth in September 2006. Application Forms are available.

21. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next CQ RAC meeting be held at Biloela Research Station on 1st March 2007.

22. Meeting Closure The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.