

Minutes
Central Queensland RAC Meeting
held QDPIF Research Station Biloela
on Tuesday 20th March 2007
commencing at 9.30am start

1. Opening & Welcome by Chairman

At Mr Farquharson's prior request who was not able to attend, Mr Durkin chaired the meeting

2. Attendance

P Durkin (Chairman)
M Ballentine
R Daniels
S Eden
N Johansen

S Moran
S Sullivan
G Spackman
R Routley
D Jordan

Nominees

J Sheppard NP GRDC
S Chapman CSIRO
D Midmore CQU

Guests: S Buck, R Collins, P Grundy (all part of meeting)

Coordinator: J Obst

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from A Farquharson, K McCosker, K Heit (being represented by R Routley), D Howard. Moved D Midmore Seconded S Sullivan apologies be **Accepted**

4. Confirmation of Agenda

Confirmed

5. RAC Coordination

The Coordinator advised that following Twyford and Associates' (T&A) request to withdraw from the current GRDC funded Northern Region RAC Coordinator Project arrangements were agreed to replace T&A with Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) commencing 1st July 2006. Mr Obst being an employee of GRFL will undertake the RAC Coordination. The current project ends 30th June 2008.

6. Confirmation of Minutes (12th July 2006)

Moved R Routley Seconded N Johansen minutes are true and correct

Carried

7. Business from Minutes

7.1 Spray Technology Report:

A member reported that of the spray drift incidents this season none were attributed to ground rig applications. There has been a reasonable response by applicators to very coarse / extremely coarse nozzles with very good weed control and virtually no drift. Still too many not using them or complying with 2,4-D label requirements on droplet size. A series of trials has confirmed efficacy with some research to continue. The Comet/ Southern Highlands network of weather stations (13) have been installed. Growers can tap into this weather station information by telephone. FBA are hoping to provide funding incentives in 07/08 to upgrade nozzles in association with training and linking with BMP. The first BMP module is Spray Application.

7.2 NVT Trialling:

A member reported that following the last meeting, NVT met with him to discuss trial concerns. Others also commented that they had been contacted by NVT to discuss the 2006 CQ NVT trials.

Resolved to write to NVT requesting details on the NVT trials in CQ in 2007 and involvement of the Reference Committee.

Action Required

7.3 Sorghum Workshop-Bribie Is:

The Coordinator reported that 4 representatives of the RACs attended the August 2006 Sorghum Research Workshop. RAC priorities on sorghum were presented. He indicated that this invitation represented a very positive relationship between scientists and growers. Dr Jordan said that the workshop will be held again in August 2007 and RAC representation will be invited.

8. **Correspondence and Business** (not covered elsewhere on agenda)

8.1 In: GRDC Northern Investment 2006-07 and Ethanol Report

8.2 Out: Letter to GRDC / NVT

Inward and Outward correspondence noted.

9. **RAC Members to Report**

Following are some key points made by members:

- Poor winter crops around parts of Dawson Callide (DC) and little summer crop. Limited sub soil moisture going into this winter.
- Excellent wheat & chick pea crops last winter in Central Highlands, with current sorghum limited to fallow areas.
- Some wheat hit by frost and high screenings
- Concern over ergot in late sorghum
- Record wheat crops north of Emerald with high protein. Good chick pea crops. Good rain post Xmas with full moisture profile leading into winter.
- Feather Top Rhodes (FTR) looming as a major problem across CH
- Concern over major differences between Kennedy seed lines **.Action Required**
- Mung beans in DC not going well due to dry conditions. Some failures
- A lot of growers in the DC going back to cultivation using trash workers to control FTR. Aerial spray control not effective. FTR likes zero tillage but can't emerge from depth. G Lotz only person working on FTR.
- Current research looking at thresh hold levels for Rutherglen Bug (RGB)in sorghum
- Could be a new sorghum receival classification for Honey Dew which causes sticky grain.
- Kennedy didn't perform well in the northern Highlands this past season with excellent performance by Strzelecki and Baxter.
- Growers concerned about restriction on seed sales of PVR varieties and favour grower to grower sales.
- Stored grain insect management is becoming an increasing concern
- Inability to predict tillering in sorghum is a big issue with a lot of strategies employed to try to manage tillering.
- Application being made for restricted permit use for 2 years for grain sorghum spray-out with glyphosate at higher application rates for ground rigs and within in certain shires.
- Tobacco Streak Virus may have been detected for the first time in Mung bean in Central Highlands (since confirmed).

10. **RAC Nominees to Report**

10.1 CSIRO

- Sustainable Eco Systems CSIRO not present in CQ
- Plant Industry CSIRO has 2 projects in CQ
 1. Selecting traits for wheat grown under drought conditions using CIMMYT lines looking for high yields, large uniform seed and thus low screenings.
 2. Looking for resistance to Fusarium (Crown Rot and Head Scab)
- More trials will be grown in CQ this year. Looking at row spacings from 25 to 50 cm. Have a low tillering gene which produces 3 to 5 tillers per plant

10.2 DPI&F (refer to attached notes)

- EGA has selected Pacific Seeds as its preferred commercial partner for the Q & NSW DPIs northern wheat breeding programs. While this is not a 'fait accompli' the target date for finalisation is June 07. The NSW DPI durum breeding project and possibly the QDPI feed wheat breeding project will not be included in the commercial joint venture.
- The feed wheat breeder position will possibly be re-advertised following the transfer of the recently appointed breeder to a leadership role.
- While the RDCs formed Pasture Australia to fund pasture research across the beef, sheep and grain industries no funding has been allocated north of Dubbo.
- The current CQ SFS Project finishes on 30th June 07. It has been funded for a further 3 years with a slightly reduced budget. Growers and RACs have been involved in preparing the objectives for the new project. Project will:
 1. continue on with past work
 2. explore new avenues including determining what is yield potential in CQ given that BRS reported that growers in N Aust are only achieving 40% of potential yield.R&D themes will include nutrition, WUE, weeds, climate change & variability.
- A 2 day Forum /Grower Update will be held in Emerald on 24 / 25th July 2007. Prof Tim Reeves GRDC Board member will be a key note speaker.

10.3 UCQ

- A research report on foliar fertilizer application will be published shortly.
- Project on aeration of irrigation water on lucerne and melons continues. Also looking at flood irrigation water.

10.4 GRDC

- Reduced levy income from past winter crop drought will reduce new research investment in 2007
- Keen to ensure that the younger scientists remain in the business
- There have been operational cuts in GRDC due to reduced income.

10.5 GRFL

The notes attached to the agenda were noted.

11 Guest Speakers

11.1 John Sheppard Recent Overseas Wheat Collection

Mr Sheppard reported on his recent wheat collection tour of Tajikistan using his recent Grain Industry Award provided in the memory of the late Bruce McClelland.

11.2 Dr Dave Jordan New Sorghum Research Program

Dr Jordan reported on the core sorghum breeding project which is focusing on widening the genetic pool for trait selection by introducing diverse material while still focusing on midge resistance and stay green. Material has been identified with some resistance to ergot.

11.3 Dr P Grundy Heliothis in Chick pea / S Buck Subsoil Constraints

Dr Grundy and S Buck reported on their heliothis and sub soil constraints projects.

11.4 R Collins reported briefly on the BMP project in CQ.

12 Review List of Opportunities and Threats

To ensure that the RAC was considering the future direction of the regional grain industry when determining current and emerging priority issues, it discussed the most likely opportunities and threats. Those of most importance included:

- Future Markets
- International Price Outlook

- Labour & Skills
- Supply & Price of Inputs

13 Review Crop Importance Profile 2005-08 and 2015-2018

The RAC members completed a Crop Importance Profile for now and in 10 years time based on profitability and sustainability taking into account the major opportunities and threats identified in 12 (above). Based on this the crop options were categorised as follows:

Importance Category	Crop	Forecast Change by 2015-18	Comments
Dominant	Sorghum	Stable	Sorghum is by far the most dominant crop in CQ
	Wheat	Reasonably stable with reduction in milling and increase in feed supply	Wheat is the dominant winter crop with milling remaining the main focus however there is a move to producing for the domestic feed markets. There is limited interest in durum
	Chick pea	Stable	Chick pea is proving to be a key crop for its rotational value. Lack of stubble is a limitation
Important	Maize	Possible slight increase	Growers are showing an interest in dryland maize to widen the summer crop planting window
	Mung bean	Stable	Opportunity summer crop requiring expert management
Other	Barley	Possible slight increase	Some interest in producing barley for the domestic feed markets
	Sunflower	Stable	Only small interest in sunflower due to TSV, freight , low stubble

14 Review List of Priority Issues

The members broke into 3 groups to review nominated Priority Issues for CQ taken from the PIP 2006. Each group was asked to review, add, amend, combine & delete and prioritise the issues based on the pre-meeting re-prioritisation results and the discussions that had taken place in the meeting so far.

Groups were encouraged to think strategically, removing broad sweeping issues and replacing with specific detail where possible, keeping the issues in "grower speak" and to prioritise on economic impact from profitability and environmental considerations. Each group reported back to the members on their results and following any amendments, additions, deletions and re-prioritisation the Priority Issues for 2007 were agreed to. This included identifying the highest priority issues. The complete list of the 2007 Priority Issues for CQ RAC is attached.

Highest Priority Issues 2007

Varieties	Sorghum	Breed varieties suited to CQ conditions with wide row adaptation, increased root vigor, tillering range responding to population density, standability under stress, large uniform grain size, improved digestibility and palatability and ergot resistance. Quality also suitable for ethanol
		Develop sustainable combinations of varieties and spacing management systems suited to CQ (genetics x row x stubble retention etc)
	Wheat	Breed for higher & stable yield under limiting moisture

		conditions, longer coleoptile length with black point and pre-harvest sprouting with quality suitable for the feed, industrial and milling markets High yielding feed wheat required .Minimum disease resistance standards are required before approved release of varieties
Practices	Spray Technology	Provide more demonstrations and increased awareness of known technology (field trials) . Improve compliance through accreditation / BMP (or wait for legislation!)
	Soils	Determining appropriate management and crop selection for sub-soil constraints & extension of current knowledge
		Develop cropping systems to include a pasture phase for situations where high-cost inputs are not appropriate
	Systems	Better understand the interaction between current farming systems and the soil environment. Specifically matching the soil fertility to water availability to improve WUE.
	Climate	Better analyse climate variability and climate change to develop strategies to manage production risk
	Weeds	Develop BMP to minimise the risk of herbicide resistance developing
Precision Agri	Continue the development of applications for PA technologies to help manage spatial variability and to improve the efficiency of use of inputs.	
Communications & Customer Rel.	Grower Groups	Make greater use of Grower Groups for experimentation and extension particularly using BMP

15. Topics for detailed discussion at next meeting

Not dealt with

16. General Business

It was agreed that more time needed to be allocated at future meetings to the task of identifying and prioritising issues

Action Required

17. Date & Venue for next meeting

Date: Thursday 9th August 07. Venue: QDNR Emerald

18. Closure

Meeting closed at 3.15pm.

Project inspections: The meeting was followed by inspections of pigeon pea breeding. mung bean breeding and sorghum breeding