

**Minutes**  
**WDM RAC Meeting**  
**held Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2008**  
**Goondiwindi RSL**  
**Commencing 9.30 am sharp**

1. **Opening, Welcome by Chairman**

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 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests.
  
2. **Attendance**

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N Boland (Chair)	V French	Nominees:
M Duffield	D Hemming	QDPIF: D Poulsen
C Nason	E Hill	CSIRO: L McIntyre
A M Bach	P Banks	UQ: M Dieters
J Sturgess		GRFL: D Scanlan
		GRDC: B Yates

J Obst (RAC Coordinator)

Guests: J Harvey (GRDC), J Clark (GRDC), A Bedggood (NVT), R Hamilton (grain grower), R Cook (grain grower) C Cook (grain grower) R Clark (NSWFA) S Thorn (NE NSW RAC)
  
3. **Apologies**

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 J Crocker, A Coleborn, A Borrell, G Rennick, P Reading (GRDC) **Accepted**
  
4. **Confirmation of Agenda**

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**Confirmed**
  
5. **Confirmation of Minutes (25<sup>th</sup> March 2008)**

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**Confirmed**
  
6. **Business from Minutes**

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6.1 Letters to / from GRDC re NVT	<b>Noted</b>
6.2 Letters to / from Min QDPIF re Roma Research Station	<b>Noted</b>
6.3 2008 NR Priority Issues Paper	

The Coordinator reported that this 2008 report has been further upgraded to improve its standing as an important grain industry reference document for regional Priority Issues. Hard copies have been sent to all RAC members and to RDE Agencies. Copies were mailed to 300 active Queensland grain growers. The report has been posted on the GRFL Website and the report linked to approx 250 researchers and agronomists.

6.4 Acid Grass: Mr Nason reported that Acid Grass is specific to the Roma area.
  
7. **Northern Region Coordination Arrangements for 2008 -2011**

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 Funding arrangements with GRDC still being finalised.
  
8. **Correspondence and Business (not covered elsewhere on agenda)**

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8.1 Northern Region GRDC Investment Report 2007-08	<b>Noted</b>
8.2 QDPIF Business Plan 2008 - 2013	<b>Noted</b>
8.3 Letters to / from AGT/ LongReach re long coleoptile breeding	<b>Noted</b>
8.4 Commercial Uptake of Sorghum Staygreen germplasm	<b>Noted</b>
  
9. **RAC Members to Report**

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 Following is a sample of comments made by members.
  - Winter crop planting was a little late however the crop is now off to a good start.
  - Chick pea, wheat and barley all looking good.
  - Challenge to keep flea bane under control
  - Very good sorghum harvest with yields between 1 to 2 t/ac.
  - Concern developing about available infrastructure to handle larger crops.
  - Deep planted wheat off to good start.
  - Stripe rust spraying has commenced.
  - Another failure for long term weather forecasting.
  - Mice very active in the fields.
  - LYS showing up in Crusader
  
10. **GRDC NVT**

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 The Chairman invited Messrs Harvey, Clark and Bedggood to join the meeting. He referred to the NVT briefing paper which was prepared for RAC member consideration. The Chairman said that the first thing that growers looked for was the variety disease ratings. Generally yield differences are not spectacular. NVT will only compare 3 varieties at the one time. Concerned about planting slow and fast maturing varieties in the one trial. There has been concern over the general running of the NVT trials. Growers favour hard copy reports. You have to be wary of taking advice from people who are selling you a product. There is a strong preference for 'number' ratings over 'alpha' ratings. QDPIF has been running variety trials for many years and would get the splits and protocols right.

Mr Clark reported that GRDC has announced a review of NVT commencing in September 08. The public is able to submit to this review through a website posted survey form. The aim is to conclude the review by early 2009.

Mr Bedggood General Manager NVT presented on NVT and the improvement which are currently being implemented for website reporting. All trial data will be posted on the website by 31<sup>st</sup> January of the following year.

Mr Bedggood's presentation was followed by general discussion. Some concern was expressed over loss of integrity through linking seed company brochures to the NVT Website. There was particular concern over including varieties and pre-release lines which do not meet the state's minimum disease rating. NVT data is owned by GRDC.

Dr Poulsen reported on behalf of QDPIF. Disease testing is a 'top' issue in QDPIF. Collecting the data is very costly. When EGA was 'breeding' wheat it was easier to capture data from the 'breeder' trials. QDPIF is currently discussing future disease ratings with GRDC. Ratings need to be assigned by state based pathologists. All ratings need to be run through a national program for standardisation.

With regards to the Wheat Variety Guide Queensland, QDPIF will produce and distribute this guide in 2009. If yield data is used it will be from NVT as QDPIF will not be conducting yield trials. QDPIF will be supporting NVT during its transition. The 'hardcopy' format will be kept under review. Information could for instance be distributed through Ground Cover

Mr Harvey presented on the changing face of Australian wheat breeding.

There was general discussion on End Point Royalties. Comments included the following:

- EPRs are never going to work in the north unless a 'big stick approach' is used.
- A different approach such as an 'educational approach' is required.
- Doubt that 50% of eligible EPRs being collected. Need to get better compliance.
- State and national host organisations are under funding pressures and are changing their investment priorities.
- PBR legislation introduced to reward successful breeders. Only other seed right is 'farmer saved' seed.
- With a national wheat crop of 20 M Tonnes and an EPR of \$2 to \$3 tonne, this creates a \$40 to \$60 Million competitive market for breeders.
- Industry looking at ways to simplify EPR deductions through the marketers and handlers.
- Presently we have a culture of non-compliance. Need a culture of compliance.
- Presently there are 3 nationally competing wheat breeding programs. These are AGT, LongReach and InterGrain. Their only reason for being is to breed and commercialise wheat varieties.
- Presently GRDC is a shareholder in AGT, InterGrain and HRZ. Presently GRDC's investment position is to maintain the status quo.
- AGT is trialling 'Grower to Grower' seed sales in the southern region.
- Presently EPR varieties have approx. 50% of market share. This is predicted to increase by 10% annually.

Mr Clark, Chairman Northern Panel GRDC reported the following:

- Government funding is reducing for R & D investment.
- GRDC is focused on the strategic direction of the grains industry.
- The 2009 -10 Investment Plan is now posted on the GRDC Website.
- The 2009-10 funding allocations will be finalised in March 2009.
- The Northern Panel GRDC is meeting with the 8 Northern Region RAC Chairs on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2008.
- 2008-09 Northern Region Investment Report will be available shortly.
- Substantial amount of money becoming available through Climate Change initiatives.

The Chairman thanked Messrs Harvey, Clark and Bedggood for their attendances at the meeting.

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### **RAC Nominees to Report**

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11.1 DPI: Dr D Poulsen commented on the following:

- New Director General QDPIF to be appointed.
- P Grieve has been appointed Acting General Manager, Plant Science (Delivery)
- 3 new wheat varieties namely Stampede, Bounty and Kidman recently released.
- New barley variety along the lines of Grout being released.
- New oat variety with 10 to 15% more forage value released.
- 510 sorghum lines licensed over the past 6 years from Hermitage Research Station pre-breeding program.
- The maize pre-breeding program re-located to Hermitage RS with focus on tropical and dryland traits.
- A new Mung Bean variety namely Crystal released.
- 2 new Chick Peas varieties being released. One is a replacement for Moti in CQ.
- QDPIF at Hermitage Research Station lead agent in national frosting in wheat project.
- Stored Grain Insect initiative under leadership of Dr P Collins now in Bio-Security CRC.
- 20% of grain growers presently changing practices for improved WUE.
- Major CRCs with a wheat focus finish their funding cycle in approx. 18 months. R&D agencies are currently developing a new CRC application possibly based on wheat, barley and sorghum focusing on drought, frost, path to market for GM, breeding technologies and NUE. QDPIF working closely with CSIRO as core participants. The output will be improved germplasm for the private sector crop breeding programs.
- QDPIF has now licensed wheat breeding lines to AGT. Performance indicators have been included in this license. One 'indicator' is for Toowoomba to be retained as node for breeding with a breeder to be located there.
- QDPIF presently working with GRDC to develop a wheat pre-breeding initiative. Any released germplasm will be available to all wheat breeding companies.
- Minister has recently launched a *Fresh Approach* for QDPIF to do business in Queensland. This will include a review of research capacity & facilities for the purpose of ensuring that these meet the future

needs of the agricultural industries. Initial discussions have commenced with AgForce Grains for the grain industry. The aim is to have a position paper finalised by December 2008 for implementation over the next 3 to 5 years.

- Any realised capital from existing facilities will be available for investment in new facilities.

11.2 CSIRO: Dr L McIntyre tabled a written report on CSIRO activities.

- 2 major northern wheat initiatives finishing up. 2 varieties namely Zebu and Zulu recently released. Some promising lines are in a Billa Billa variety trial which will have a field day shortly.
- Research into fusarium in wheat continues.
- Climate Change and Agricultural sustainability will be 2 major research initiatives.

The Coordinator was asked to contact CSIRO to determine its policy on the commercialisation of fixed wheat lines / germplasm from its pre-breeding projects.

11.3 UQ: Dr M Dieters reported on UQ wheat pre-breeding:

- Developing good pre-harvest sprouting screening technique.
- Selecting for pre-harvest sprouting resistance in segregating and not fixed lines.
- Pre-harvest sprouting resistance is lost during thrashing.

11.4 GRDC: W Yates reported on GRDC issues:

- Nematode research needs to be a priority for investment.
- Phosphorus research needs to be continued.

## **12 Election of Chairman**

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Defer to next meeting.

## **13 General Business**

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Staffing of QDPIF Office Miles. Dr Poulsen undertook to discuss this with the Regional Director QDPIF.

## **14 Next Meeting (Date / Venue / Speakers)**

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Date: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008 (to be confirmed)

Location: Moonie Crossroads.

Invited Speakers: Dr B Pengelly CSIRO and V Sapin to present on Southern Queensland Farming System Project.

## **15 Closure**

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Meeting closed at 3.30pm.