

Minutes of DD RAC Meeting – 26 February, 2009

Hermitage Research Station, Warwick

meeting commenced at 9:30am

1. Chairman's Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the members and guests.

2. Attendance

W. Newton (Chairman; GRFL nominee), L. Berry, W. Bidstrup, C. Hornick, C. Joseph, S. Pfeffer, B. Warren, T. Jorgensen, S. Cook, J. Rochecouste, J. Thompson
Nominees: R. Williams (QDPI), J. Sheppard (GRDC), A. Peake (CSIRO), T. Jensen (USQ)
Guests: P. Grieve (QDPI), J. Franckowaik (QDPI)
Co-ordinator: N. Jensen

3. Apologies

R. Skerman, J. Boland, M. Burgis, J. Farrell, D. Freebairn, Z. Hochman, E. Schmidt

4. Confirmation of Agenda

Confirmed

5. Confirmation of Minutes (14 August, 2008)

Confirmed

6. Business from Minutes

6.1. Northern Region RAC Coordination Arrangements for 2008-11

Co-ordinator's report received.

6.2. Letter to / from GRDC regarding investment in Agricultural Engineering

Correspondence noted, and Mr Sheppard discussed the GRDC's Northern Panel visit to USQ. Mr Jensen told the meeting that following the letter from the RAC to GRDC that NCEA had submitted and e-Concept proposal to GRDC.

6.3. NR RAC Chair's Meeting with NP GRDC held 25th August 08 at PBI Narrabri NSW

Chairman's report received.

6.4. Industry Sorghum Midge Rating Scheme

Co-ordinator's report received.

6.5. NVT Review

It was noted that the NVT Review report had not been released but that J. Juttner (GRDC) had prepared some notes for the RACs (tabled).

The existing NVT service provider in Queensland will run the 2009 trials.

QPIF will undertake some pathology work for NVT.

6.6. National RD&E Framework

Dr Grieve reported to the meeting.

6.7. Review of QDPIF Grains Research Facilities (Fresh Approach)

Dr Grieve reported to the meeting.

There was concern expressed by RAC members that the Fresh Approach and the National RD&E Framework would focus largely on research, and neglect development and extension.

7. Correspondence and Business

7.1. QDPIF Field Crops Performance Report 2007-08

Report noted.

7.2. Extension of RAC membership term to September 09

Noted

7.3. QDPI Wheat Variety Guide (WVG)

Correspondence to/from QDPI noted.

There was concern about the quality of the yield data in the WVG, since the yield data comes from NVT trials. The RAC resolved to have individual members visit all of the NVT trial sites in 2009 and submit audit forms.

It was noted that GRDC are negotiating with QDPI to have some disease screening done.

7.4. QDPI wheat variety testing capacity

Correspondence to/from QDPI noted.

J. Sheppard declared a conflict of interest on this item and absented himself from discussion. QDPI has transitioned its wheat breeding activities to AGT (QDPI now only engages in "pre-breeding"). Under the terms of the agreement with AGT, QDPI had agreed to provide wheat variety testing services to AGT for one year as AGT made transition arrangements.

7.5. Barley Breeding Australia Review

Review process noted.

C. Joseph and T. Jorgensen agreed to participate in a Northern Region BBA Review consultative group.

8. RAC members' reports

RAC members reported to the meeting.

Comments included:

- Sorghum yields have been good.
- Midge has been a problem in sorghum crops with significant losses occurring.
- Lodging had occurred in some sorghum crops although the information provided about the variety(s) showed good lodging scores.
- The mung bean acreage may have been the largest ever.
- Chick peas had done well, but there had been some ascochyta blight late in the season.
- NRM groups are concerned about nutrient budgets in view of recent good seasons, and long term sustainability considering the significant nutrient export that comes with high yields.
- Root lesion nematodes (RLN) continue to be a problem in the region. Research continues in looking for cropping options to limit RLN damage.
- There are large volumes of grain stored on-farm.
- Notes from J. Farrell were tabled at the meeting (Appendix 1)

9. Guest Speaker

Dr J. Franckowaik made a presentation about barley breeding in the Northern Region.

10. Review of priority issues for the Darling Downs Region

The DD priority issues were reviewed and updated.

11. RAC nominees' reports

Dr Williams reported to the meeting and noted that a comprehensive written report would be provided by QDPI to the RACs.

Mr Peake reported to the meeting. He highlighted some of the research CSIRO is doing on irrigated grains and achievable yields. A written CSIRO report was distributed to members before the meeting.

Mr Jensen reported to the meeting.

- NCEA submitted an e-concept proposal to GRDC about re-engaging mechanization in agricultural industries
- NCEA is trying to increase the profile of engineering and mechanization in agriculture in high schools
- USQ may develop and Associate Diploma program in Agricultural Engineering (2 year qualification)

Mr Sheppard reported to the meeting.

- the Northern Panel is putting together an industry plan and exploring options for R&D for coming decades;
- the Panel is planning to run crown rot and root lesion nematode meetings before the end of the year to try to work out research strategies for overcoming these constraints;
- the Panel will visit Kingaroy and Coastal Farming Systems in the first half of the year;
- GRDC is still interested in GM – using lupins as an example, they are trying to get an idea of costing and pathways to market.

Mr Newton reported to the meeting

- although GRFL will no longer co-ordinate the NSW RACs, GRFL will endeavour to maintain linkages with the Northern Region NSW RACs.
- GRFL has a new Executive Officer
- John Obst has accepted a position on the GRFL Board

12. Next meeting

Date: 3 August, 2009 (to be confirmed)

Venue: Toowoomba

Speakers: TBD; Kerrie Gleeson (?), mustards (?).

13. Closure

Meeting closed at 4:05pm

14. Research Station Tour

Hermitage Research Station staff conducted a tour highlighting some of their work in biotechnology, physiology and sorghum breeding.

Appendix 1, DD RAC Minutes 26 February 2009

Notes provided by Julianne Farrell

The GRDC-funded mice research project ... The current project that was developed to find alternative rodenticide/s to zinc phosphide for broad-acre use has been extended until June 2009, with a possible further extension until December 2009, but with no further financial input from GRDC. This time scale is not long enough to design and complete the field trials necessary to put an alternative chemical forward for consideration of registration.

The on-going mouse monitoring on the Darling Downs and in central Qld for the maintenance of plague prediction models has ceased. I'm not sure how the models will be maintained without regular input of trapping results for the two regions. [Agforce may have incorporated mice monitoring in the Grains Best Practice section on their website].

The current mice situation in crops is that there are a few around, mainly in sorghum. Breeding is probably continuing due to warm, moist conditions and may lead to a build up during winter, but that will very much depend on weather conditions during the next few months. I can't be more precise than that as the regular monitoring has ceased.

My current position with DPI&F is with the Plant Pathology section and I'm involved in a nation-wide project developing a national diagnostic database for plant pests and diseases - those already here as well as those yet to arrive. The Plant Biosecurity Toolbox contains a collection of diagnostic protocols for Emergency Plant Pests and provides users with images, taxonomic and biological

information as well as identification instructions, diagnostic procedures and contact details for experts and accredited diagnostic laboratories. The web address is www.padil.gov.au .

Julianne Farrell also provided the following update from Dr Dave Murray, Senior Entomologist, DPI&F, Toowoomba:

The season has progressed pretty well with no major pest issues. Conspicuous by their absence were Rutherglen bugs which caused so many problems during the 2007-08 season. It may be a different story for spring 2009 if the good inland conditions persist through May-June to maintain vegetation that supports a number of migratory species. Locusts could also be a major problem over coming months.

We had the usual influx of corn earworm, *Helicoverpa armigera*, during November/December and early January. These were generally well managed in the sorghum crops using NPV. High larval numbers in vegetative soybeans caused some problems during January, but for the most part these were left untreated or NPV or Bt were applied, to save Steward for later crop stages. Only one Steward spray is permitted per crop. Disruptive products should be avoided during the vegetative growth phase to avoid flaring whitefly.

Whitefly have been relatively abundant this season on cotton, with silverleaf whitefly (SLW) extending south to Moree and Narrabri and for the first time requiring control. While for the Downs it looks like whitefly will not be a major issue this season, numerous whitefly are present in soybean crops. Sampling has indicated that most of the whitefly in Downs crops are greenhouse whitefly, and that parasitism levels are higher than in the 2007/08 season. Concern has been expressed that SLW could move onto late soybean crops when cotton is defoliated. Little can be done as there are no registered products for SLW control in soybeans. SLW is not a major problem for mungbeans.

Industry Certified Chickpea Agronomy Courses will be conducted during March at Narrabri, Goondiwindi and Emerald.

The QDPI&F Entomology team has a new project proposal with GRDC 'Northern Pulse and Cereal IPM' which combines the efforts of the Toowoomba and Kingaroy Entomology Teams. We are also collaborating with CSIRO (Dr Nancy Schellhorn) on a new project 'Pest suppressive landscapes: linking IPM and area-wide management'.