

Minutes of CQ RAC Meeting – 19 March, 2009
Biloela Research Station, Biloela

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

A. Farquharson (Chairman), P. Durkin, S. Eden, G. Spackman, D. Jordan, R. Sequeira
Nominees: S. Cawley (QDPI), J. Sheppard (GRDC), D. Midmore (CQU), D. Lund (GRFL)
Guests: G. Rebetzke (CSIRO), J. Clark (GRDC), K. Gleeson (AGT), D. Howard (grain grower),
C. Dunne (grain grower)
Co-ordinator: N. Jensen

3. Apologies

M. Ballentine, L. Fairweather, N. Johansen, S. Moran, S. Chapman, A. Bate
The co-ordinator reported that R. Daniels and K. McKosker had resigned from the Committee.

4. Confirmation of Agenda Confirmed

5. Confirmation of Minutes (13 August, 2008) Confirmed

6. Business from Minutes

- 6.1. Northern Region RAC Coordination Arrangements for 2008-11
Co-ordinator's report received.
- 6.2. NR RAC Chair's Meeting with NP GRDC held 25th August 08 at PBI Narrabri NSW
Chairman's report received.
- 6.3. Industry Sorghum Midge Rating Scheme
Co-ordinator's report received
- 6.4. CSIRO to report on Long Coleoptile Wheat Varieties (Dr Rebetzke)
Dr Rebetzke made a presentation to the meeting about CSIRO's work in this area.
CSIRO have released to commercial wheat breeding companies sets of wheat germplasm that contain alternative height reducing genes – ones that result in a semi-dwarf final plant height, but that have long coleoptiles and/or long sub-crown internodes.
- 6.5. National R&D Research Framework – grains
Dr Cawley reported to the group (summary notes provided after the meeting – Appendix 1).
GRDC and DAFWA are the lead agencies for the National Framework for grains. The framework is still in very early stages, with organizations working out which areas they will 'Lead', 'Participate' or 'Link'. GRDC is doing a Capacity Survey to see where each of the research organizations stand (State DPI's, CSIRO, Universities).
Action item: make representations to QDPI expressing concern about research and extension for crops categorized by QDPI as 'Participate' or 'Link'.
- 6.6. Review of QDPIF Grains Research Facilities (Fresh Approach)
Dr Cawley reported to the group (summary notes provided after the meeting – Appendix 1).

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. NVT Review report

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).

Mr Clark talked through a number of points. He noted that about 50% of the NVT Review submissions had come from Queensland; GRDC spends approximately \$5m per annum on NVT and that NVT is one of GRDC's flagships; chickpeas need to be included in Queensland NVT testing; alternative service providers would be considered during the next round of tenders; the next round of contracts would be in place for winter season 2010.

Comments from RAC members included: that the previous NVT trials in the region had not been representative of the region's farming system; that it was hoped that QDPI would submit a tender during the next round; that the NVT Review Report should be released in full.

7.4. QDPI&F plans for wheat variety testing

Correspondence to/from QDPI noted.

Comments from the floor included that QDPI had done wheat variety testing very well in the past and that it is important for the State Government to have an independent trialling system. There was concern that the wheat variety testing capacity that used to exist within QDPI had been seriously reduced, and that it may be difficult to recover.

Action item: write to QDPI (copy Minister), expressing concern that the Central Queensland region will miss out on essential regional variety testing if QDPI don't engage. If QDPI are doing pre-breeding they should aim to maintain capacity by being involved with regional variety testing.

7.5. Wheat Variety Guide (WVG)

Correspondence to/from QDPI noted.

Disease testing information in the Guide is essential. It was noted that GRDC were in the process of negotiating disease screening through QDPI.

It was commented that the WVG this year contains lots of information but it doesn't help growers choose which variety(s) to grow. It includes varieties that should not be listed (not remotely suited to the region); it lists average yields, but no regionally-based comparative data. QDPI WVGs in the past would make recommendations, which were helpful.

It was noted that the current trialling system doesn't test at many locations (few trials), and therefore there is less data available than when QDPI ran the Regional Variety Trials.

7.6. Barley Breeding Australia Review

BBA Review process noted.

CQ RAC would not nominate a member for the consultative group formed by members of Northern Region RAC, but they would support the consultative group.

It was acknowledged that for many years there hadn't been a barley variety that performed well in CQ, and that the reason for that was there had been no breeding focus to develop a variety for CQ.

It was resolved that there is a continuing need for barley variety testing in CQ.

8. Guest Speakers

8.1. J. Clark, Chairman GRDC Northern Panel: GRDC Northern Panel update

Mr Clark made a presentation to the meeting covering topics such as the National RD&E Framework for grains; attracting students into grains research; a potential increased role for GRDC in extension as traditional providers move out of extension; keeping existing scientists and succession planning.

8.2. K. Gleeson General Manager AGT Seeds.

Mr Gleeson made a presentation to the meeting about Wheat Breeding and Variety Commercialization for CQ.

During questions, an RAC member noted that the national royalty collection system was “an absolute bug-bear for growers”, unnecessarily complicated, and that paperwork did not arrive until months after grain had been delivered.

9. RAC members' reports

RAC members reported to the meeting.

Comments included:

- winter crop was fairly good;
- chickpeas suffered early frost damage but seemed to grow out of it;
- the appearance of Ascochyta blight was a concern;
- some very good sorghum varieties are available for CQ conditions
- sorghum acreage will decline if no effective control is found for Feathertop Rhodes grass;
- the next phase of the CQ Farming Systems project is being developed;
- soil nutrition research had shown that existing soils tests were not accurately identifying nutrients availability to plants;

Feathertop Rhodes grass was mentioned on multiple occasions as a serious concern in the region. Its continuous and aggressive spread requires widespread trials and research into its control.

10. Review of priority issues for Central Queensland Region

The CQ priority issues were reviewed and updated.

11. RAC nominees' reports

Dr Midmore reported to the meeting. He noted that his replacement would be a joint CQU/QDPI appointment to a chair in farming systems grains research.

Mr Lund reported to the meeting.

Mr Sheppard reported to the meeting.

- the Northern Panel is putting together an industry plan;
- two new durum breeders have been appointed (Tamworth and Adelaide);
- the Panel will visit Kingaroy and Coastal Farming Systems in the first half of the year;
- GRDC is still interested in GM: they are trying to get an idea of costing and pathways to market; report may be finished in June, but it is unlikely to be a public document.

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

Although Dr Chapman could not attend the meeting, he provided a CSIRO report for the meeting (distributed to the Committee members before the meeting).

12. Election of Chairman

Andrew Farquharson stepped down from the role of Chairman.

Graham Spackman was elected unanimously and unopposed as Chairman for the coming year.

13. Next meeting

Date: 20 August, 2009

Venue: Emerald DPI

Speakers: to be determined. Consider Steve Jefferies or a summer crop issue.

14. Closure

Meeting closed at 4:15pm

DPI&F Update CQRAC 19 March 2009

WINTER CEREALS

1. The **Cereals CRC** bid has made significant progress and will be aiming for submission in Round 12 in October. The bid will focus on abiotic traits
2. Four pre-breeding projects post-EGA (commercial wheat breeding) are currently being contracted with GRDC.

The projects are:

1. **Staygreen in wheat** - which will provide information, germplasm, selection techniques and strategies for breeders to develop high-yielding stay-green wheat cultivars for Australian growers via a research strategy examining root and shoot architecture, molecular markers and computer simulation modelling to identify optimum combinations of traits.
 2. **Recurrent selection program** - 4 recurrent selection programs in wheat –pyramid adult plant resistance (APR) genes for leaf rust, stem rust and stripe rust within a high-yielding, adapted background; plus one program targeted to each of 3 the Australian wheat-growing regions.
 3. **Adaptation of winter cereals to northern and coastal Queensland** - Identification of high yielding adapted cereal varieties and their optimal sowing dates in northern and coastal Queensland and preliminary development of sustainable cereal production "packages" for these areas. Monitoring and identification of potential pest and disease constraints to winter cereal production in northern and coastal Queensland. Monitoring of feed grain quality and milling wheat quality and preliminary Genotype X Environment investigation of grain quality in northern and coastal Queensland
 4. **Wheat pathology in the Northern region** - development of rapid screening methodologies for wheat diseases of importance - The aim of this project is to develop rapid tools and techniques for introgressing disease resistances into parents for use in wheat breeding programs supporting the northern grain growing region. Covering CR, CRR, RLN and YS.
3. PO6 - Appointment of new principal winter cereal pathologist to lead the whole winter cereal pathology team,. Prof Stephen Neate is currently working at North Dakota State University heading their barley pathology research. He is an Aussie, did his PhD in Adelaide on minimum till and root diseases of wheat before working with CSIRO and heading up GRDC's national Rhizoctonia program and was a program leader for the CRC for soil and land management. In North Dakota his research has primarily been on foliar and head pathogens of barley including rust and head scab. He will begin work at LRC on Monday 2nd March.

DPI&FS A FRESH APPROACH (and Infrastructure)

DPI&F and the grains/cotton industry (based on the industry consultation being coordinated and led by AgForce and GRF) is currently reviewing DPI&F's science infrastructure, to ensure Qld is well placed in regards to long-term agricultural R & D capacity.

This reform is part of DPI&F's wider **Fresh Approach** initiative; which to date has resulted in the integration of the Australian Agricultural College Corporation within DPI&F; new mobile "bus" services; a new Biosecurity strategy; and a new \$13M partnerships with James Cook University in tropical biosecurity; plus significant R & D re-investment.

DPI&F is undertaking its R & D reform in a staged approach.

- In Sept 08, the Minister announced a \$8M Atherton tablelands initiative which will result in a co-location of Training and R,D&E at Mareeba
- In Nov 2008, the Minister announced a \$33M reinvestment into Qld Beef industry, based on new; or upgraded infrastructure funded thru agreed disinvestments.

- The next stage of this reform involves R & D infrastructure supporting Qld grains and cotton industries.

There are some key elements in this reform:

- Absolute agreement by DPI&F to work with industry through out the process;
- Industry will co-design the outcome
- This is about creating a modernised and more effective R & D infrastructure
- All funds to be re-investment back into modern or more relevant science capacities;

Grains/cotton update WITHIN Fresh Approach

- Consultation commenced in June 08;
- Lindsay Krieg appointed as AgForce coordinator
- Industry (AgForce & GRF) visits to DPI&F sites resulting in a AgForce discussion paper (provided last week).
- Regional industry briefing
- DPI&F has completed a series of science workshops to scope future options (Sept - Dec 08), including industry co-participation.
- Anticipated finalisation of data exchange in Feb/March, with formal negotiations commencing in April (negotiations will take as long as required to ensure an agreed position).

NATIONAL RD&E FRAMEWORK

This is a national initiative across R&D Corporations, State Ag Departments and major research organisations like CSIRO. The rationale is to try and make scarce R&D dollars go further through improved efficiencies and reduced duplication.

There are 3 categories 'Lead', 'Participate' 'Link' does not necessarily equate to levels of investment, but rather role that organizations could play in a national context.

On the table provided in meeting notes it has a break down of what industries are aligned to who in the various roles

Earlier drafts of the table used 'tropical' & 'temperate' instead of 'summer' & winter' & this made more sense.

The statement about 'winter pulses' mainly refers to lentils, fabas, field pea, lupins & the like. Our chickpea work is highly valued & unique w.r.t CQ. It also supports a valuable commodity for QLD & provides N & sustainability benefits.

Summer Pulses

Peanuts:- all Breeding work now done by Peanut Company of Australia (PCA). DPI&F remain involved in some of the pathology/biometry/ agronomy/systems/modelling work

Soybean:- breeding work led by CSIRO. DPI&F interest in general agronomy work in relation to soybeans in cane systems.

Mungbean:- DPI&F still leading/conducting the National mungbean improvement program in collaboration with GRDC & the Australian Mungbean Association. The ~20% yield gains from our current releases.