

GRDC's Albany RCSN travelled to Victoria and Tasmania during the period 5-8 February 2019. The aim of this tour was to visit a range of contemporary agricultural activities in order to further inform the work and decision making of the Albany RCSN. The tour comprised of three main sections: Victorian Tour, Tasmanian Tour and closed meeting activities.

The following members attended the tour and meeting: Mark Pearce, Jeremy Lemon, Scott Smith, Ben Ball, Mark Lawrence, Mark Sullivan, Kirsty Smith, Tim Mathwin, Peter Bostock, Glenn Ball, Ben Webb with apologies from Trent Parsons who was unable to attend the tour and meeting. The tour and meeting was guided and facilitated by Julianne Hill with RCSN project support by Cindy Power. Additionally, the following GRDC/Western Panel members attended: Andy Duncan, Albany Western Panel representative (farming at West River); Curtis Liebeck, GRDC Grower Services – West; and Peta Stockwell, RIRDC Horizons Scholarship winner.

All RCSN members completed a pre and post tour questionnaire and will share the information and learnings of the tour in their local areas, alongside using this knowledge and experience to inform their roles in the Albany RCSN.

Alongside the tour activities, the meeting included the following agenda items:

- Updates on the progress of RCSN ideas since the last meeting and GRDC general update.
- Identification of port zone top issues, including reviewing data collected from the Summer Sesh forums held in Dongara and Busselton held in January 2019.
- Review, discussion and expansion on the port zone top issues, leading to the identification of the issues to be further developed using the MAKAT process (see below).
- NVT committee updates.
- Meeting and tour evaluation and discussion of next meeting dates.

The Top 10 Issues and those that the RCSN further developed with a MAKAT (in bold) included:

- We are still not achieving yield potential and maximising profitability as growers are often not increasing their nutrition to match the yield increase
- Better information on how well new varieties compete with weeds, so that growers can better manage this issue
- Managing frost including improving knowledge on if a crop has been frosted so that growers can make earlier management decisions
- Long term results/comparison of harvest IWM methods to ensure growers are using the most efficient and effective weed seed management
- Non-wetting is still an issue in the Albany port zone
- High yielding package for cereals after soil constraints have been addressed
- **Lupin agronomy for yield needs to massively improve**
- Albany port zone growers are seeing acidic subsoils and want to know if the economic returns are there to justify the cost of improving this issue at depth
- Improved strategies to assist with dry seeding and early establishment of canola in non-wetting sands
- Managing resistance in barley for Net Blotch
- **Snails contaminating grain, particularly canola, making delivery at harvest problematic and costly**
- **Development of guidelines to address waterlogging in the Albany zone using drainage if economic**

The selected topics for the MAKATs included (as per bold above):

- Lupin agronomy for yield needs to massively improve
- Snails contaminating grain, particularly canola, making delivery at harvest problematic and costly
- Development of guidelines to address waterlogging in the Albany zone using drainage if economic

The Albany members then completed three MAKATS on the above topics, using the online GroupMap tool which enabled capture of ideas and information against the MAKAT framework. The MAKAT framework is the methodology upon which projects are then taken forward for consideration by GRDC.

The next meeting for the Albany RCSN will be 2-3 July 2019 in Kojonup. For further details, contact the RCSN Facilitator Julianne Hill on 0447 261 607 or email regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com or visit www.grdc.com.au or www.rcsn.net.au