

GRDC RCSN | Geraldton Port Zone | RCSN Meeting 21 July 2016

The Regional Cropping Solutions Network (RCSN) Meeting for the Geraldton Port Zone was held on 21 July 2016 from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm in Northampton. The venue for the meeting was the Northbrook Farmstay (5800 N W Coastal Hwy, Northampton). This closed RCSN meeting followed on from three Open Meetings which were held in Coorow (19 July 2016), Mingenew (20 July 2016), and Northampton (20 July 2016). The Open Meetings provided information/ideas that formed part of the closed meeting discussions. This was the second RCSN meeting for 2016.

Presentations at the meeting included: **Neil Bennett, Bureau of Meteorology** who presented on climate and tools - use of in-season monitoring and knowledge for management decisions: water, heat, frost, soil amelioration AND **Bindi Isbister, DAFWA Research officer** who presented on Compaction/CTF - trials of soils amendment/deep ripping; deeper ripping demos; best return for lime input (rapid); and fine tuning inclusion plates. In addition to the above presentations, **Mike Ewing** (Deputy Chair of the GRDC Western Panel) and **Roger States** (Grower Services Manager, Western Region, GRDC) also provided a GRDC and RCSN general business update. Presentations provided additional information to assist with meeting discussions.

Those who attended the meeting included: Andrew Sandison, Chad Eva, Craig Topham, Dale Pearse, Jason Stokes, John Flannagan, Karl Suckling, Kathryn Fleay Rohan Ford, Tony Rosser, Greg Creasy, and Geoff Fosbery, Julianne Hill (Coordinator) and Cindy Power (Project Support). Guests who attended the meeting included: Cameron Weeks (Planfarm), Mike Ewing (Western Panel), Roger States (GRDC), Julia Easton (GRDC), Roxanne Mostert (Horizon Scholarship Holder), Darren Hughes (GRDC), Adrian Rossi (DAFWA), Megan Abrahams (DAFWA), Bindi Isbister (DAFWA) and Neil Bennett (BOM).

The current projects funded by the RCSN were also reviewed including projects from 2015-2016 and more recently funded projects from 2016-2017. Please contact the RCSN Coordinator for more information on the current funded projects. A key part of the meeting was the review of all issues from the February 2016 meeting, along with the data collected from the open meetings. The inclusion of the GroupMap tool data meant that members were able to review data more comprehensively in order to consider and then vote on key areas that may be taken forward for RCSN funding in the 1-3 year time frame or that would be forwarded to GRDC for consideration in longer funding period timeframes. From this, members then identified five top areas that they believed are impacting on profitability in their region and identified activities to address these issues, for possible development of project scopes. The top five priority areas and their general discussions included:

Ranked	Issue	Discussion
1	Seasonal variability	Evaluating methods to help manage higher temperatures and variable rainfall.
2	Lupins	Break crop agronomy for low rainfall beyond the work underway on canola.
3	Compaction	Soil compaction not really well understood by many growers, particularly on red loamy soils.
4	Nitrogen	Are there any soil nitrate testing machines that may be suitable for in paddock use, so we can understand what is happening with soil nitrogen during the season?
5	Seasonal weather conditions	Improving the accuracy of yield predictions using probes, weather forecasts and the various models. Developing a reliable package.

Other issues were also brought up but were not as highly ranked. A full list is available from the RCSN Coordinator. All issues raised at the RCSN meetings will continue to have presence at the RCSN discussion table and have been forwarded to the GRDC Western Panel for continued visibility as port zone related issues that feed into existing or future initiatives.

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The next meeting of the RCSN will be a combined meeting with all port zones on 1-2 March 2017.