

GRDCs Regional Cropping Solutions Network (RCSN) Meeting for the Esperance Port Zone was held on 28 July 2017 from 8.00am to 4.00pm in Hopetoun at the Hopetoun Community Resource Centre. This closed RCSN meeting followed on from three Open Local Forums which were held in Cascades, Salmon Gums and Hopetoun during 25-27 July 2017. This was the second RCSN member meeting for 2017, after the combined RCSN meeting in Perth on 1-2 March 2017.

Meeting attendees included: Brenton Leske (DPIRD), Peter Roberts (Western Panel), Kevin Norman (GRDC), Leigh Nelson (GRDC), Rick Horbury, Matt Williss and Craig White (Bayer), Bill Ryan, Jessica Murray, Quenten Knight, Ben Hyde, Craig Brown, Leon Bowman, Bevan Tuckett, Collin Penny, Andrew Fowler, Peter Daw, Kirk Jeitz, Tristan Cornwall, Nathan Mudie, along with Julianne Hill (Coordinator) and Graham Mussell (Project Support). Apologies were received from Ryan Meldrum and Holly Meiklejohn.

The meeting included the following presentations:

- **Brenton Leske (DAFWA):** Current frost work and any learnings from last year.
- **Peter Roberts (GRDC):** GRDC frost investment.
- **Dr Leigh Nelson, Manager Pests (GRDC):** GRDC weeds, pests and diseases investment. (How much, where, who).
- **Rick Horbury and Craig White (Bayer):** Hard to control weeds (included Live video hook-up with Harry Strek, Bayer Plant Scientist, Germany).

In addition to the above presentations, Peter Roberts (Western Panel Chair) and Bill Ryan (Western Panel) also provided a GRDC and RCSN general business update. Presentations provided additional information to assist with meeting discussions.

The RCSN members then considered and voted on all ideas that had been gathered from the three Esperance port zone Open Local Forums, plus their own incoming ideas and ideas from the five growers they liaise with prior to each meeting. The top 10 ranked issues are listed in the table below.

ID number	Idea (H = Hopetoun; S = Salmon Gums; C = Cascades)	Expansion on ideas	Where did the idea originate?
ESP1	H, S, C: Snails, Slugs and slaters	<i>Nematicides?? Use and impact on slug pests. H: Hard to kill insects - slaters, Vegie beetles, slugs and snails. Not much registered to control them. S: Slug snail and slater. More prevalent than general understanding. Lack of registered insecticide/products. The impact of lime and gypsum applications. C: Slugs, snail and slaters on the rise. What controls can we use? Is there a possibility of BT canola? Biosecurity measures need to be taken by everyone to reduce spread, particularly machinery/product movement. African black beetle also increasing as a pest in cereals. How do we control them?</i>	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)
ESP2	H, S, C: Legumes	<i>H: Legume choices to improve quality of the crop rotation, S: Pulse agronomy, S: Profitable legumes. Lentils. Legume for shallow clay soils. Rotations. Early breeding programs in area for lentils. April sowing lentils. S: Early generation screening of lentils suited to April sowing, C: Legume choices - rotations - what are the best (profitable) rotations for this area.</i>	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)
ESP3	H, S: Frost	H: Frost, S: Frost and varieties which can handle frost better	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)

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ESP4	H, C, S: Waterlogging (and salinity)	S: Waterlogging and management in the Esperance area. Ways to improve oxygen availability, H: Waterlogging, drainage tools to decrease water logging in soils especially to stop salt incursions. Better crop varieties that grow in saline and waterlogged soils. Salinity is a big issue for whole of Ravy shire, C: Drainage tools and the effect of deep ripping on water logging	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)
ESP5	H, S, C: Early sowing	H: Early sowing varieties to enable us to capture advantages of longer growing season, hyper-yielding winter cereal agronomy. S: Early sowing opportunities and using the best varieties to make the most of these. Winter wheats suited to the area and different crop types. C: Sowing is becoming earlier and earlier, especially when early rainfall event. Taking advantage of this situation. We need to know more around herbicide and fungicide options.	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)
ESP6	C, S, H: Soil constraints - gypsum, acidity, etc	H: Soil constraints, more research on nutrient depletion on different soil types especially lighter country, S: High magnesium soils and how they respond to gypsum. S: Despite good soil moisture crops aren't fully utilising it. Is this disease nematodes or trace elements or all of above? S: Soil Constraints - Responsiveness to gypsum, economical and more strategic application. C: Gypsum soils-identifying gypsum soils, C: Soil constraints - as per the description plus managing soil acidity, non-wetting soils, hard pan. What effect will ripping of shallower soil types have on the growth of crops? (Eg. maximising use of moisture on dome clays), C: Soil constraints/pH testing	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)
ESP7	More work on long winter wheats suitable for early sowing in dry and wet areas		RCSN ideas at beginning of Closed meeting
ESP8	H: N efficiency and variation between seasons. Variation both in mixed farming and continual cropping systems. What is driving or causing the variation.		Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)

ID number	Idea (H = Hopetoun; S = Salmon Gums; C = Cascades)	Expansion on ideas	Where did the idea originate?
ESP9	<i>H, S, C: Glyphosate on everything - alternatives?</i>	<i>H: Lack of glyphosate alternative. Growing glyphosate resistance in ryegrass. Limited options available we want to know what options we do have., S: Glyphosate alternatives. Resistance. Paraquat last tool., C: Lack of glyphosate alternative - need to educate people about using glyphosate wisely so that we do not lose it as a weed management option, C: Glyphosate alternative - Using glyphosate on everything. Work on sow thistle and it's resistance to chemical</i>	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)
ESP10	C, S, H: Summer and Hard to kill weeds	C: Weeds - understanding the suite of tools to manage hard to control weeds such as stemless thistle and marshmallow, C: Hard to control winter and summer weed, add stemless thistles. Look at residual herbicide options eg lontrel, S: Controlling Weeds. Marshmallow, status, fleabane, caltrop, double gees, onion weed, portulaca, melons, ryegrass., H: Summer weeds as described including melons, fleabane, prickly lettuce, caltrop and other problematic summer weeds	Open meeting ideas (Cascades, Salmon Gums & Hopetoun)

The RCSN members were split into groups of three to work up the six chosen priority areas as identified in ***bold and italics*** above. Members in were asked to further refine these top issues, considering the following:

- **IMPORTANCE AND SCALE** – geographical area, crop types, frequency, cost of control.
- **CURRENT SITUATION** – what do you currently do to manage this situation/issue?
- **END RESULT** – what & where would you like to see work happen (R, D or E)? What needs to change for this to happen?

Other issues were also brought up but were not as highly ranked; however, all issues including the high ranking issues that were further developed by RCSN members 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.

**Connect with Us.** GRDC now have a Facebook page – [www.facebook.com/theGRDC/](http://www.facebook.com/theGRDC/) (like us!) as well as a dedicated RCSN website – [www.rcsn.net.au](http://www.rcsn.net.au). Follow us on Twitter @Julianne\_Hill, or visit GRDC [www.grdc.com.au](http://www.grdc.com.au).

**Further queries?** Please call Julianne Hill (GRDC Regional Cropping Solutions Network Coordinator) on 0447 261 607 or email [regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com)

**The next meeting of the RCSN** will be in the week commencing 5 February 2018 in Canberra to visit agencies including GRDC, CSIRO and other places of interest.