

GRDCs Regional Cropping Solutions Network (RCSN) meeting for the Geraldton Port Zone was held on 25 August 2017 from 8.00am to 4.45pm in Three Springs at the Three Springs Barracks Motel meeting rooms. This closed RCSN meeting followed on from two Open Local Forums which were held in Mullewa and Three Springs on 24 August 2017. The Open Local Forums provided information/ideas that formed part of the closed meeting discussions. This was the second RCSN member meeting for 2017, after the combined RCSN meeting on 1-2 March 2017 in Perth.

Meeting attendees included: Andrew Sandison, Chad Eva, Dale Pearse, Karl Suckling, Jason Stokes, Kathryn Fleay, Rohan Ford, Greg Creasy, Geoff Fosbery, John Flannagan, Julia Easton, Charlie Thorn, Greg Rebetzke, Bonnie Jupp, Adrian Rossi, Dean Diepeveen, Wayne Parker and Wayne Pluske, along with Julianne Hill (Coordinator) and Cindy Power (Project Support). Apologies were received from Craig Topham and Tony Rosser.

The meeting included the following presentations:

- **Wayne Parker (DPIRD):** Current DAFWA soils projects – current work, outcomes & further work.
- **Wayne Pluske (Equii); Julia Easton and Charlie Thorn (GRDC):** GRDC investments.
- **Greg Rebetzke (CSIRO):** Varietal work around coleoptile length, heat tolerance.
- **Dean Diepeveen (Curtin):** Improving the quality of research/science from GRDC funded activities.

In addition to the above presentations, Julia Easton & Charlie Thorn (GRDC) 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 two Geraldton 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 (M = Mullewa; TS = Three Springs)	Where did the idea originate?
GER1	<i>Sclerotinia: TS - How to manage sclerotinia in canola and lupins, rotation options, M - Sclerotinia is an increasing due to tightening rotations, lupins and canola are carriers, are legume pastures hosts? Sclerotinia resistance currently in mustard in India, would like to see it in our canola here. Sclerotinia biggest issues is reseeding paddocks with sclerotes with the seed. We need to work on eradicating or sterilising sclerotes</i>	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs)
GER2	<i>3e Lupins: Seed size of lupins, does it have an effect on how deep we can sow lupins? Further work needed on managing weeds in lupins. Growers are struggling and there doesn't seem to be any new ideas or practices coming through. Clethodim is not working, dry sowing is very problematic. Lupins hugely important for mixed farming business, more so than in an all-crop system.</i>	RCSN ideas at beginning of Closed meeting
GER3	Farm Profitability and business decision-making: How to remain profitable with low prices and high inputs - more discussion about different business ideas and how successful farmers are doing well. M, TS - Farm business management decision making. TS - Improving profitability with low grain prices and high input costs- how do we make better business decisions. TS - Increasing skills in understanding farm business management, collaborating with university researchers	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs)

ID number	Idea (M = Mullewa; TS = Three Springs)	Where did the idea originate?
GER4	<i>Improving deeper sowing: How deep can we go with wheat and barley, what are the best techniques, ie press wheel pressure, fertiliser placement, seed dressings, how high do we need to increase seeding rate for effective plant establishment, what soil temperature is too low/high for deep sowing. Best grain type for sowing deep. We know that growers are sowing barley at 125mm deep. TS - Deep sowing of cereals to access moisture and improve establishment. Explore the extremes with the timings and available varieties as these are currently outside of available knowledge. There is a need to match this with the expected variability in season. TS - Establishment - very early crop establishment by split seeding depth and soil levels. TS -Deep sowing for early crop establishment, M - Very Early Crop Establishment and the ability to sow deeper. Confidence around very early sowing regarding frost, varieties</i>	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs) & RCSN ideas at beginning of Closed meeting
GER5	Management of inverted soil: Nutrition, chemicals, and levelling.	RCSN ideas at beginning of Closed meeting
GER6	<i>Compaction: Issue with crop not emerging on heavy soils...long time to wet up. M - Compaction - lime incorporation in the same pass and more information on soils</i>	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs)
GER7	Deeper sowing/longer coleoptile: M, TS - Improving coleoptile length to access water. Short season long, long coleoptile wheat with yield comparable yield to mainstream varieties	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs)
GER8	<i>Methods to help manage higher temperatures and variable rainfall: M, TS - Seasonable variability pre-season and within season. newer varieties. Higher temperatures and effect on crop development. M, TS: How much does a 1 degree increase in daily average temperature increase the rate of development of my crop. Improving accuracy of yield predictions using probes, weather forecasts and models.</i>	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs)
GER9	Soil constraints: including non-wetting soils	Open meeting ideas (Mullewa, Three Springs)
GER10	<i>Chaff lining: Lots of interest and questions. What happens if you graze paddocks that have been chaff lined? Will the chaff lines cause seeding problems eg block seeders, reduce crop establishment?</i>	RCSN ideas at beginning of Closed meeting

The RCSN members were split into groups of three to work up the six chosen priority areas as identified by the RCSN in **bold and italics** above. Members in each port zone 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/ (like us!) as well as a dedicated RCSN website – www.rcsn.net.au. Follow us on Twitter @Julianne_Hill, or visit GRDC 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.

The next meeting of the RCSN will be 20 and 21 February 2018 in Adelaide to coincide with the Adelaide GRDC research updates.