

GRDCs Geraldton Regional Cropping Solutions Network (RCSN) met for the first closed meeting of 2019 as a combined meeting with the Kwinana East port zone. This joint meeting was held 11-12 February 2019 across two days and included a day of tours to the Australian Herbicide Resistance at Initiative at the University of Western Australia, Optus Stadium, and High Spirits Distillery, followed by the closed meeting at the International on the Water, Ascot.

The meeting also included a joint dinner on the evening of 11 February 2019 with guest speaker Rochell Walker who is a grower from Newdegate and agricultural social media personality. The following members attended the meeting: John Flannagan, Chad Eva, Geoff Fosbery, Raylene Burns, Murray Thomas, Jerome Critch, Andrew Cripps and Phil Smyth with apologies from Jason Stokes and Greg Creasy who were unable to attend the meeting. The meeting was also attended by a number of GRDC members and facilitated by Julianne Hill with RCSN project support by Graham Mussell, Helen Ablett and Gilly Johnson.

#### The meeting included the following agenda items:

- Seasonal updates and reflections on 2018 harvest.
- Guest presentation by Andrew Bates of Swarm Farm.
- 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.
- Guest presentation by Jerome Critch of PlanFarm and also a Geraldton RCSN member on a new decision-making tool that has been trialled/introduced which provides a responsive MS Excel tool to a review of how investments can affect priority areas, using a set of variables.
- 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 evaluation, discussion of next meeting dates and formal meeting close at approximately 4.45 pm.

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

- 'Social licence' is impacting on the wellbeing and long term potential profitability of growers
- **Geraldton port zone growers are looking for a high yielding package for cereals after soil** constraints have been addressed as current practices don't match the new yield potential
- Growers are unsure what the best option is for Harvest Weed Seed control in their system over time
- Further testing and identification of products and factors associated with testing of lime, Morrell lime and other products to ensure return on investment of product
- **Weed management and pre-emergent herbicide efficacy after cultivation and deep ripping**
- Subsoil pH is markedly lower than top soil pH levels but growers are questioning the economics of lifting these more acidic subsoils
- Harvest losses in cereals and lupins need to be quantified so that growers can manage these losses accordingly
- Growers are wanting to better understand the synergies between Nitrogen and Potassium to make best use of nutrition inputs
- Lupins yields are plateauing while canola yields are continuing to improve in the Geraldton port zone, leading to greater area of canola sown as the break crop in rotations
- **Blue lupins are becoming an issue in narrow leaf lupins, increasing the cost of inputs and making growers less interested in growing lupins**

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

- **Geraldton port zone growers are looking for a high yielding package for cereals after soil** constraints have been addressed as current practices don't match the new yield potential
- **Weed management and pre-emergent herbicide efficacy after cultivation and deep ripping**
- **Blue lupins are becoming an issue in narrow leaf lupins, increasing the cost of inputs and making growers less interested in growing lupins**

The Geraldton 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 Geraldton RCSN will be 5 July 2019 in Geraldton. For further details, contact the RCSN Facilitator Julianne Hill on 0447 261 607 or email [regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com) or visit [www.grdc.com.au](http://www.grdc.com.au) or [www.rcsn.net.au](http://www.rcsn.net.au).