

## Keys stories for your region

### Julianne Hill, RCSN western region coordinator

Harvest is well and truly underway throughout the State. I hope it is progressing well at your place and I look forward to seeing some of you around the traps soon.

It is the time of year for implementing harvest weed seed control (HWSC) tactics, and I encourage those of you interested in implementing or refining your strategies for future seasons to look at two recently published GRDC publications compiled by Planfarm.

'Investigating the harvest weed seed control tools chaff lining and chaff tramlining (chaff deck) in the Esperance area' and 'Investigating harvest weed seed control tools in low biomass crops in the Kwinana East Zone' are available on the GRDC [website](#) and the WA RCSN [website](#), and were instigated following demand from RCSN groups.

For those of you unable to attend the GRDC RCSN Open Forums held in the WA grainbelt earlier this year, and interested to find out the issues raised, I encourage you to go to the WA GRDC RCSN [website](#) to look at summaries for each of the five RCSN zones.

All issues raised at the Open Forums will continue to be tracked by the RCSN groups and have been forwarded to the GRDC, which will feed a number of the issues into existing or future initiatives.

You can contact me for news and information about the western region RCSNs - Julianne Hill: 0447 261 6077, [email](#), or [Twitter](#).





### Esperance Port Zone: Chaff lining put under the microscope

Chaff lining has taken off in a big way in the Esperance zone, and Esperance RCSN members are keen to see just how effective this harvest weed seed control (HWSC) technique has been.

GRDC has contracted Planfarm to summarise what is currently known about chaff lining. This newer practice involves making a narrow windrow of chaff only in the middle of the harvester, with weed seeds being concentrated in that zone and straw spread as usual. Among the project's outcomes will be a review of the grazing value of chaff lines, and what happens to the viability of weed seeds in chaff lines.

The aim of the project is to increase the number of growers using HWSC measures and to provide them with confidence that the method they use at harvest is effective and efficient for their situation.

According to Planfarm consultant Peter Newman, who is also the western region extension agronomist for the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative (AHRI), Australian grain growers are increasingly adopting HWSC tools that do not require any burning - such as weed seed destruction technology, chaff tramlining and chaff lining. There is also ongoing use of chaff carts, particularly for mixed growers who also have livestock.

'Investigating the harvest weed seed control tools chaff lining and chaff tramlining (chaff deck) in the Esperance area: An initiative of the Esperance port zone Regional Cropping Solutions Network' is available on the GRDC [website](#) and the WA RCSN [website](#).

**GRDC Project Code:** PLN00013-B

**More information:** Peter Newman, Planfarm, 0427 984 010, [peter@planfarm.com.au](mailto:peter@planfarm.com.au).

**Caption:** *Chaff lining involves diverting just the chaff into a narrow windrow in the middle of the harvester.*  
**PHOTO:** GRDC

### Kwinana West port zone: Promising results from compaction trials

From nine trial and demonstration sites established as part of a soil compaction project in the Kwinana West and Albany port zone areas, eight demonstrated yield improvements in 2017 following deep ripping.

Soil compaction is a high-ranking issue identified by the Kwinana West RCSN, and members are keen to provide growers with knowledge about practices that maintain or improve soil structure, and increase the profitability of cropping on difficult soils.

Albany port zone RCSN members have likewise singled out compaction as a priority issue for growers in their region.

To address these concerns, a targeted GRDC investment project has in recent years been led by consultancy group agVivo.

agVivo farm consultant Philip Barrett-Lennard says DPIRD has previously estimated 13 million hectares (70 per cent) of WA's agricultural soils have moderate to high susceptibility to subsurface compaction. These hard layers slow, or in extreme cases prevent or restrict root growth and access to water and nutrients.



The project aims to develop best bet management options for growers in the Albany and Kwinana West port zones on compaction mitigation options for a range of soil types, as well as strategies to help growers move into controlled traffic farming (CTF) technology.

Phil says that in the nine compaction project sites, depth of ripping had an impact on the degree of yield responses at some sites, but the response was variable.

At the fully replicated trial site established on Rob, Dan and Vern Dempster's Goomalling property in 2017, treatments that year included deep ripping, very deep ripping, inclusion plates, mouldboard ploughing, conventional ploughing, delving, spading and combinations of these strategies - with and without lime.

Yield increases at this site were 500 to 800 kilograms per hectare for the very deep ripping treatments, 400 to 600 kg/ha for mouldboard ploughing, but only 0 to 100kg/ha when standard ('shallow') deep ripping and conventional ploughing treatments were employed.

More information about the Dempster trial site results are available on the Online Farm Trials (OFT) [website](#). Other 2017 results from the project's sites are also available on OFT by searching 'compaction' and 'agVivo'.

**GRDC Project code:** AVP00003-A

**More information:** Philip Barrett-Lennard, AgVivo, 0429 977 042, [pbl@agvivo.com.au](mailto:pbl@agvivo.com.au)

**Caption:** An example of soil compaction. PHOTO: GRDC.



## Albany port zone: Snail resources address priority issue

The management of snails and slugs remains a high priority for many growers across WA's southern coastal areas. Recognising this, the RCSN initiative has instigated the production of a GRDC case study booklet highlighting the experiences of growers who are successfully managing snails, slugs and slater contamination issues on their properties.

This booklet, that is being produced by the Stirlings to Coast grower group, will be finalised in coming months and available on the GRDC and WA RCSN websites. As well as featuring growers from the Albany and Esperance port zones, the publication will contain sections on the biology and life cycle of these pests, current recommended control options and examples for grain cleaning/processing and reducing snail contamination at harvest time.

Other recent materials that can help guide growers about snail management include the GRDC Paddock Practices article 'Tips and tools for reducing snails at harvest' available [here](#), that includes harvest management strategies as well as post-harvest tips, and a GRDC video 'Snail baiting as part of an integrated pest management strategy' available [here](#).

**GRDC Project Code:** SCF1804-002SAX

**More information:** Alaina Smith, Stirlings to Coast, 08 9842 6653, [alaina.smith@scfarmers.org.au](mailto:alaina.smith@scfarmers.org.au)

**Caption:** DPIRD entomologist Svetlana Micic and Mt Barker grower Iain Mackie, who feature in a recently produced GRDC video about snails. PHOTO: GRDC.

## Geraldton port zone: Focus on profitable lupin production

Harvest has progressed well in the Geraldton zone, though there have been reports of split seed in some lupin varieties. This issue, raised by the Geraldton RCSN group, seems often worse on sandy soils in seasons where a dry spring is experienced, and in many later sown crops. As increasing the area and tonnage of lupins ranked highly during the August round of RCSN Open Forums in the Geraldton port zone, we encourage you to take a look at the GRDC western region Lupin GrowNotes™ available [here](#), which includes in-depth information about all aspects of lupin production.

In coming months also look out for a new GRDC case study publication 'Making lupins profitable again in the northern wheatbelt: A Geraldton port zone Regional Cropping Solutions Network initiative', that is being produced by CussonsMedia. As well as wide row lupin production, this publication will address other agronomic issues including seed size, sowing depth and weed control.



**GRDC Project Code:** CMP1802-001SAX

**More information:** Kelly Cussons, CussonsMedia, 0407 231 549, [kelly@cussonsmedia.com.au](mailto:kelly@cussonsmedia.com.au)

**Caption:** Information to help guide profitable lupin production is contained in the GRDC western region Lupin GrowNotes™ resource and a coming GRDC case study publication. Photo by CussonsMedia.



## Kwinana East: Flaxleaf fleabane

Late rains could see summer weeds germinating soon. Even though summer weed control may coincide with harvest - one of the busiest times of year - it is important to stay on top of these weeds.

The Kwinana East and Geraldton port zone RCSN members recognise the impact of summer weeds.

They are keen to help growers understand the economic importance of early and effective control of

summer weeds, and to help them better identify locally occurring species at all growth stages (particularly earlier stages) to enable targeted and effective management (including chemical and non-chemical options, spray rig set up and innovative tools).

Accordingly, summer weeds workshops will be delivered in the Kwinana East and Geraldton port zones this summer. To make sure you are abreast of the best information that is currently available, get along to one of these workshops. They will be run by Andrew Storrie, of AGRONOMO and the Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group (AGSWG). When finalised, details of the events will be available [here](#).

Information about summer weed management is also available in the GRDC 'Summer Fallow Weed Management' reference manual available [here](#).

**GRDC Project Number:** ARN1811-001WSX

**More Information:** Andrew Storrie, AGRONOMO, 08 9842 3598, 0428 423577, [andrew@agronomo.com.au](mailto:andrew@agronomo.com.au)

**Caption:** Well established flaxleaf fleabane on WA's south coast region during summer, posing difficult questions for management decisions. Photo by AGRONOMO.

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For more information about the RCSNs in the western region, contact

Julianne Hill, RCSN western coordinator

0447 261 607

[regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com)

[www.rcsn.net.au](http://www.rcsn.net.au)

[@Julianne\\_Hill](#)

PO Box 89, Brunswick, WA 6224, Australia



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Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC)  
Level 4, East Building, 4 National Circuit, Barton, ACT 2600  
PO Box 5367 KINGSTON ACT 2604 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: (02) 6166 4500 Fax: (02) 6166 4599  
[GRDC Ref: 4910]