

Implementation of NVT Review Recommendations – 14/12/2009

The NVT Review Process

The GRDC has a well established process for ensuring that major projects are established with pre-determined review points. In the case of NVT, at establishment of the program in 2005 a formal review of the program was scheduled to take place after the third year of NVT. That review was conducted in late 2008.

The NVT Review was conducted on a national level. It utilised targeted interviews and surveys together with an open submission process, to obtain representations from growers and key industry groups from all over Australia. These groups included grower representative bodies, rural advisory committees, plant breeding organisations, agronomists and consultants, extension professionals and seed marketers.

Key review findings and recommendations that will be implemented can be found in summary document on the GRDC website (www.grdc.com.au/director/events/onfarmtrials/nvtreview). The following document provides an update on progress towards implementation of key review recommendations including timelines for the tendering and contracting of NVT trial services and the formation of NVT Advisory Committees.

NVT Trial Operator Contracting

NVT contracts trial operators (Service Providers) to conduct variety trials according to agreed protocols. Current NVT Service Providers are:

State	Service Provider	Crops
Western Australia	Kalyx Agriculture Pty Ltd	Wheat and Canola
	Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA)	Barley and Lupins
South Australia	South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)	Barley, Canola, Chickpeas, Faba beans, Field peas, Lupins, Oats, Triticale and Wheat
Victoria (except north-east)	Agriculture Victoria Services (Victorian Department of Primary Industries – Vic DPI)	Barley, Canola, Chickpeas, Faba beans, Field peas, Lentils, Lupins, Oats, Triticale and Wheat
Victoria (north-east)	Agrisearch Services Pty Ltd	Barley, Wheat and Canola
	NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI)	Faba beans and Lupins
New South Wales	Agrisearch Services Pty Ltd	Canola
	NSW DPI	Barley, Chickpeas, Faba beans, Field peas, Lupins, Oats, Triticale and Wheat
Queensland	Agrisearch Services Pty Ltd	Barley and Wheat

The NVT review identified considerable variation in the quality of service delivered by service providers and noted that whilst most trial managers are doing a good job, evidence suggests there is a minority who are not. To address variability in trial quality GRDC will implement a formal auditing process for all NVT trials and amend future Service Provision contracts to strengthen performance-related payments schedules, termination clauses and penalties linked to the independent trial audits.

Following on from the review, GRDC will continue to contract Service Providers to conduct variety trials. **GRDC has called for tenders from experienced service providers to undertake the variety performance trialling component of the NVT program for the 2010-2014 cropping seasons. Tenders have been assessed and tenderers informed of the outcome of the tender evaluation and selection process. Currently, GRDC is negotiating service contract conditions with successful tenderers and will announce the names of successful tenderers once this process has been concluded.** The timeline for the selection and contracting of Service Providers is given in Figure 1.

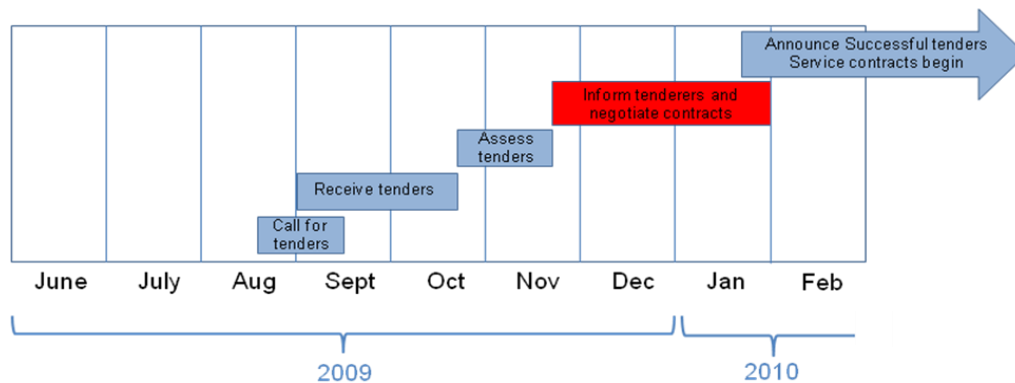


Figure 1. Timeline for NVT Service Provider contracting

Implementation of NVT Advisory Committees

One of the key findings arising from the NVT Review was the need for a more formalised advisory and consultative mechanism for stakeholder involvement in NVT operations. Consequently, the NVT review team recommended the establishment of an NVT Advisory Committee that should meet at least annually, be chaired by a GRDC representative, and include the NVT Manager, representatives from the breeders, growers, agronomists, plant pathology, statisticians, and service providers, and include an extension expert.

GRDC will establish the NVT Advisory Committee system in early 2010 (**Please note that the call for nominees for NVT Advisory Committees has been delayed**). Previously, GRDC had indicated that it would establish committees by crop type. However, following feedback from industry and stakeholders GRDC may seek to develop regional committees as opposed to the aforementioned 'crop-based' ones. This change would ensure that Committees could focus upon regionally important issues and would ensure best use of participants time. It is envisaged that each regional committee will still contain four regional representatives (nominees) as previously indicated (Figure 2).

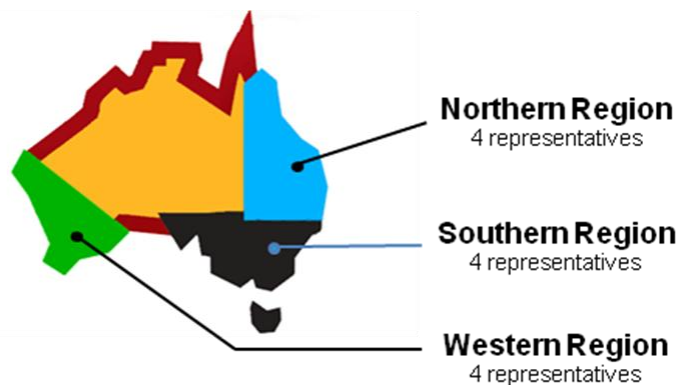


Figure 2. Grower representation on NVT Advisory Committees

Nominations will be called for early in 2010 with an updated timeline to be provided in the near future.

NVT Disease Screening

Since the inception of NVT, GRDC has contracted pathologists to provide disease resistance ratings for lines entered into the NVT program. In 2008, GRDC expanded the network of regional pathologists contracted to provide rust resistance ratings in recognition of the regional differences in rust ratings associated with different production environments. Following the NVT review, and in response to review recommendations and stakeholder feedback, the GRDC has further expanded the network of regional pathologists to encompass each state of mainland Australia and to address a greater range of diseases. Given the importance of disease ratings to growers making variety selections, GRDC will continue to contract regional pathologists to screen NVT wheat and barley entries for resistance and/or tolerance to a range of diseases. Current NVT contracted pathologist services are:

State	Organisation	Diseases
<i>Western Australia</i>	DAFWA	Wheat – Stripe, leaf and stem rust
<i>South Australia</i>	SARDI	Barley – common root rot (CRR), covered smut, scald, spot form net blotch (SFNB), net form net blotch (NFNB), barley leaf rust, powdery mildew Wheat – crown rot (CR), CRR, bunt, flag smut, yellow leaf spot (YLS), Septoria tritici blotch (STB), stripe rust, leaf rust, root lesion nematodes (<i>P. thornei</i> and <i>P. neglectus</i>), cereal cyst nematode.
<i>Victoria</i>	Vic DPI	Wheat – YLS, stripe rust and leaf rusts
<i>New South Wales</i>	NSW DPI	Wheat – STB, stem and leaf rusts
	University of Sydney, Cobbitty	Wheat – Stripe, stem and leaf rusts
<i>Queensland</i>	QDPI	Wheat – CR, CRR, YLS, leaf, stem and stripe rusts and root lesion nematodes (<i>Pratylenchus thornei</i> and <i>P. neglectus</i>)

In addition to these direct NVT pathology contracts, NVT collects disease resistance and tolerance data from a range of other sources to extend through the NVT network. For example, pulse pathology data collected from GRDC-funded national breeding programs, whilst Canola Blackleg resistance data and additional barley disease data is collect from other GRDC-funded projects.

Other Screening

Stakeholder surveys and submissions received during the NVT review highlighted a number of traits for which growers/advisors would like to see data collected and extended through NVT. Two of the most common requests from NVT review survey respondents, were for the provision of acid soils tolerance ratings and coleoptiles length scores for NVT wheat and barley entries. In response to these requests, GRDC has contracted NSW DPI to collect acid soils tolerance and coleoptile length data on NVT wheat and barley lines.