



**Grains Research &
Development Corporation**



Victorian Farmers Federation

Victorian Research Advisory Committees

ISSUES UPDATE

Prepared for: Grains Research and Development Corporation

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Key Findings

- More training is needed in management of stored grain in particular regarding phosphine usage and hygiene.
- Growers are in need of varieties that are resistant to the most prevalent and problematic weather conditions in recent times - frost and drought.
- There is still a pressing need for accurate weather prediction.
- Growers would like more training regarding the use of no-till systems and canopy management.

Opportunities for GRDC

- There is an opportunity for GRDC to develop drought and frost-resistant varieties.
- The VFF would welcome the chance to organise training in conjunction with GRDC to help growers get the most of GRDC's research efforts.
- The VFF would like to work with GRDC to promote the need for Government funding to improve forecasting by the Bureau of Meteorology.
- GRDC could provide an update on the release of the lime-tolerant lupin.
- GRDC should look at research and providing comprehensive information regarding on-farm grain storage.

Foreword to Issues Paper

The aim of this paper is to summarise the issues raised during recent Victorian Research Advisory Committee (VRAC) meetings. The growers who attended were given the opportunity to provide input to the GRDC on the current issues facing Victorian farmers.

Introduction/Overview

The meetings were held prior to the VFF Grains Group Crop Nights around Victoria in August. They were intended to be brief and convenient for people already attending the Crop Nights to discuss topical issues facing their different areas.

At each meeting the VFF gave a brief run-down of the purpose of the meeting and facilitated discussions.

Those present were asked to provide their thoughts on pressing post-sowing or production issues.

The presentations at Crop Nights covered financial planning, the DPI's GPS Network, climate change and the possibility of El Nino and also chain of responsibility and the new fatigue laws presented by VicRoads.

Discussion

Research Advisory Committee meeting - Tungamah

Chemical resistance

It was relayed that difficulties were being experienced with phosphine resistance and also lack of boron-resistant varieties.

There is a pressing need for frost and drought-tolerant varieties to be developed.

Dichlorvos may be taken off the market – industry wants label change – dichlorvos resistance is an issue.

Training

There is a belief that GRDC funds could be spent on helping growers further understand no-till systems.

Productivity versus profit – research has historically focussed on productivity gains by increasing yield – but increased yield does not always lead to increased profit. Growing productivity needs to be supported by other measures to increase profit that aren't dependent on yield.

Growers feel there is not enough research getting to the ground – for example Melbourne University researches to compete with other universities rather than to assist growers in this region. Research should be market-driven.

Training on canopy management in relation to production growth is desired.

Production

It was raised that genetically modified legumes could be successful.

Of use would be research into more accurate weather forecasting and in defined regions.

Research Advisory Committee meeting - Rupanyup

On-farm grain storage

The topic most discussed was on-farm grain storage and phosphine resistance.

Due to the changing market place since deregulation more grower training is needed regarding appropriate storage practices and chemical application as it relates to market access.

Input provided to GRDC

The question was raised of how input provided by growers reaches GRDC.

Research Advisory Committee meeting - Ultima

Research could be done on legumes that are suitable for low-rainfall area

Again the growers expressed a desire for more accurate seasonal forecasting

Diseases

- Yellow leaf
- Rust research

Testing based on Phosphorous management – greater understanding needed

More accurate soil testing

Boron-tolerant varieties needed even in legumes

Weeds

The wild radish weed is becoming a problem - Products to control them are about to become unavailable.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is currently reviewing a number of chemicals. There needs to be more widespread knowledge of the processes currently being undertaken that will lead to the discontinuance of a widely used chemical.

New varietal release

Again growers stated the need for frost and drought-tolerant varieties to be developed.

There was some concern about releasing varieties in an untimely manner, causing some to be almost obsolete by the time they become available.

Closely linked to this is weed control as weed-tolerant varieties are often superseded by high-yielding varieties.

Growers would like an update on when the lime-tolerant lupin will be released.

Systems work

Work could be done on identifying different system approaches, for example one legume crop every 5-6 years may be ideal to achieve certain outcomes.

Trials on chickpeas and nitrogen would be beneficial.

Outcomes

- The VFF would welcome the chance to assist GRDC with any of the above suggestions including meetings with growers to discuss the APVMA review.
- The VFF believe it would be of benefit to both GRDC and the promotion of the RACs if a couple of GRDC factsheets were highlighted as being GRDC VRAC issue factsheets. This would raise awareness amongst growers as to ways of getting an issue taken up by GRDC, give them some ownership.