

GRDC Local Forums in the Southern Region in 2018

Objectives –

1. reach and build connections with a new audience of growers and industry stakeholders;
2. strengthen connections and encourage growers and industry stakeholder participation in R,D&E;
3. explain and promote investment of grower levies in R,D&E to create enduring profitability;
4. promote the role of GRDC Southern Panel and RCSN members so that growers and industry stakeholders to know the local member(s), GRDC staff and RCS Leads who provide a two-way conduit between growers and industry stakeholders and the GRDC;
5. growers and industry stakeholders have confidence in the network of GRDC RCSN and Southern Panel members and systems to capture the important constraints and opportunities for the long term profitability of grain growers in the region;
6. growers and industry stakeholders are able to check/validate existing issues and identify any other important issues for the GRDC to consider;
7. growers and industry stakeholders learn about the R,D&E activities, learnings and have input into future R,D&E for focus issues (listed below);
8. growers and industry stakeholders have the opportunity to hear about a selection of R,D&E investments addressing locally important issues;
9. growers and industry stakeholders have the opportunity to raise issues and questions, have direct conversations which will influence GRDC deliver R,D&E which will provide the greatest benefit for grain growers.

Six forums were held across the low, medium and high rainfall zones of the GRDC Southern Region in mid-June to early July. Further details are outlined below.

Rainfall Zone	Location and district	Focus topic(s)
Low	Pinnaroo, Mallee, SA	increasing the productivity of sandy soils
	Lalbert, Eastern Mallee, VIC	understanding any potential risk of herbicide carryover in soils and potential implications for the emergence and productivity of subsequent crops
Medium	Kapinnie, Lower Eyre Peninsula, SA	managing weeds and herbicide resistance in retained stubble systems
		managing insects and insecticide resistance in retained stubble systems
	Dookie, North East, VIC	strategies to optimise yield and profitability of growing canola
High	Derrinallum, South West, VIC	nutrition to fill the yield gap and optimise return on investment in fertiliser
		mid-row banding of nitrogen fertiliser
	Sale, Gippsland, VIC	nutrition strategies to increase production and profitability
		sub-soil amelioration to increase infiltration, water holding capacity and plant available water

Outcomes -

1. validated that the important issues for the long term profitability of grain growers across the Southern Region have been captured by the GRDC's RCS networks and systems;

2. a number of new or additional issues have identified, prioritised and submitted to the GRDC investment planning process;
3. engaged, built and strengthened GRDC connections with grain growers and industry stakeholder;
4. growers and industry stakeholders welcomed a GRDC event in their local area which enabled participants to talk directly with R,D&E specialists, GRDC staff and local representatives;
5. growers and industry stakeholders appreciated the opportunity to have their say on the important issues and put forward their ideas for R,D&E

Evaluation -

More than 190 individuals participated in the forums and a summary of the evaluation surveys are listed below –

- 85% of respondents rated the effectiveness of forums to enable growers and industry stakeholders to check and identify important issues that affect grower profitability and need to be considered by the GRDC as good or excellent
- 80% of respondents rated the effective of the forum to enable growers and industry representatives to learn about and have input into the future R,D&E of the focus topics as good or excellent
- 84% of respondents rated the effectiveness of the forums to enable growers and industry stakeholders to hear about a selection of other GRDC R,D&E investments as good or excellent
- 79% of participants rated the forums as good or excellent in meeting their expectations.

Constraints and opportunities for the long term profitability of grain growers captured -

A total of 144 issues important constraints and opportunities for the long term profitability of grain growers were identified at the six GRDC Local Forums. These issues were considered as part of the Southern Region RCSN and are categorised below -

- 18 new/additional issues plus 5 additional issues specific to irrigated cropping enterprises
- 16 issues were incorporated into existing issues which were re-defined or described
- 96 issues that have already been captured and thus validated that these are important issues
- 12 issues deemed to be outside the mandate of the GRDC (and referred to relevant organisations)