

Open Meeting Summary

The Regional Cropping Solutions Network (RCSN) held the first RCSN Open Meeting on 24 June 2015 at the Lake King Golf Club for the Esperance Port Zone. This was the first of a series of open meetings that are being held the day before the main RCSN meeting and offers the general public of the port zone an opportunity to come and share the issues that are affecting their profitability. The meeting was facilitated by Julianne Hill, Coordinator of the RCSN in the Western Region. A total of 22 general public guests attended the open meeting, in addition to a number of GRDC, guest speakers and RCSN members of the Esperance Port Zone. Members of the general public were able to register for the Open Meeting at the RCSN website at www.rcsn.net.au and were also able to submit an issue should they be unable to attend. In total, 41 people were in attendance with the following GRDC members available for meeting attendees to talk with:

- Peter Roberts – Chair of the Western Panel
- Bill Ryan – Member of the Western Panel and RCSN Esperance member
- Roger States – GRDC Regional Manager West
- Julia Easton – GRDC Regional Coordinator West.

The meeting also included a presentation from Kirsty Smith (Landmark) and Craig Brown (RCSN Member) on their early seeding work trial in Holt Rock. This presentation was very well received and generated a number of questions and discussion points.

A key part of the open meeting was the opportunity for participants to share the top five issues affecting their profitability and to be part of the group discussions on identifying the top 10 issues affecting the group as a whole. Members were then able to vote on these top 10 issues, and complete a further group discussion on the top four ranked issues. The aim of these discussions was to provide growers with direct input into the analysis of current local priorities affecting productivity and profitability to guide the next round of short term projects and feed into the GRDC external investment plan. The following table represents the top 10 issues, ranked top four issues and the outcomes of how these issues were taken forward at the main RCSN meeting the next day. Each meeting member was able to vote on three issues.

Top 10 Issues (Group)	Top 10 Issues (Ranked by Votes)	RCSN Meeting Actions
Herbicide resistance and weed management	Herbicide resistance and weed management (22%)	Existing national initiative on this area. However, potential for 1-3 year RCSN project activities to support this priority. RCSN booklet published - www.rcsn.net.au
Less rainfall – weather forecasting	Soil biology and health/soil acidity (18%)	Further discussion on potential 1-3 year RCSN project activities to support this priority.
Input costs	Profitable break crops (13%)	Existing national initiative on this area. However, potential for 1-3 year RCSN project activities to support this priority.
Frost	Less rainfall – weather forecasting (12%)	Existing national GRDC work on this area.
Soil biology and health/soil acidity	Input costs (10%)	Further discussion on potential 1-3 year project activities to support this priority, particularly around VRT.
Disease (soil/STNB)	Frost (10%)	Existing national initiative on this area.
Profitable break crops	Marketing and pricing (6%)	No further discussion at this time.
Non wetting soils	Labour and machinery costs (5%)	No further discussion at this time.
Marketing and pricing	Disease (soil/STNB) (2%)	Included in soil biology discussions.
Labour and machinery costs	Non wetting soils (2%)	Existing national initiative led by Steve Davies on this area. RCSN Booklet published - www.rcsn.net.au

In addition to the above issues, the issues of communication and internet access/reliability was also raised, along with enterprise mix and farm sustainability. These issues will continue to have presence at the RCSN discussion table.

Thanks and Further Details. Thank you to all members who attended the Open Meeting and contributed to the detailed discussions. For further details on the RCSN, please visit www.rcsn.net.au or contact the RCSN Facilitator, Julianne Hill on regionalcroppingsolutions@gmail.com or via 0447 261 607.