

Key GRDC decision-makers tour southern Qld

The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) National Panel met with southern Queensland growers, researchers and grain end-users during August as part of its regional tour schedule.

James Clark, GRDC Northern Panel chair said bringing GRDC senior executives and regional panel chairs to grain industry hubs for the National Panel's annual round of meetings was proving highly successful.

"GRDC panelists and key decision-makers are always keen to meet with growers and researchers to discuss where the \$100 million grains industry research and development investment should be directed," James said.

"The tours also give us a good overview of current grains industry issues and opportunities."

The National Panel met with researchers, academic staff and students at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ), Toowoomba before attending the GRDC Update at Dalby where the focus was on summer crop production.

Local grower and northern region panelist Rob Taylor showed the tour group through Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) wheat variety trials being run on his property by fellow panelist and wheat researcher, John Sheppard.



Kevin Roberts (pictured right), director, Sandalwood Feedlot, Dalby with GRDC National Panelists Neil Young, GRDC Western Panel chair, David Shannon, Southern Panel chair and Greg Fraser, executive manager Practices.

The Panel also visited the Dalby Bio-Refinery Limited (DBRL) which will begin sorghum-based ethanol production in November after a record Australian sorghum crop.

Dalby district crops reached yields of up to 13 tonnes per hectare and 58 per cent – or 2.14 million tonnes – of Australia's total 2007–08 3.7 mt sorghum crop was produced in southern Queensland.

The plant will use close to 20,000 tonnes of sorghum per month and is currently contracting growers to supply the plant in future years.

A GRDC publication by former consultant and now DBRL commodities manager, Peter Wylie called *Managing Sorghum for High Yields* is available for download on the GRDC website, www.grdc.com.au.

Also on the itinerary was Kevin Roberts' Sandalwood Feedlot north of Dalby where the group discussed the role of feedlot manure as a soil improver and supply of feed grain for intensive animal industries.

GRDC funds QDPI&F research by soil scientist Mike Bell, Kingaroy which shows feedlot manure (which is selling for about \$20 per tonne unscreened) may be a useful alternative to traditional phosphorus fertiliser due to rising input costs.

A meeting with Pacific Seeds, Toowoomba completed the tour.

James says ensuring GRDC decision makers are accessible and well-informed is a major priority for the Corporation.

He urged growers, advisers and other grains industry professionals to consider standing on the eight northern region Research Advisory Committees (RAC) which begin a new term in 2009.

"Input from the RACs shape how GRDC's invests grower levies and Australian Government funds in the future of the grains industry," he said.

For more information, visit the Grains Research Foundation website: www.grf.org.au.

The newly-appointed GRDC Northern Panel will tour Central West NSW grain growing districts during September.



Peter Wylie, Dalby Bio-Refinery commodities manager recently hosted the GRDC National Panel, including Rob Taylor, GRDC Northern Panelist and James Clark, GRDC Northern Panel chair. The Australian-owned ethanol plant is due to begin production in November 2008.