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FarmLink Research Report 2018



GRDC Northern Pulse Check Project

Trial Site Location GRDC Northern Region

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Introduction

GRDC has invested in Pulse Check groups across its northern region. FarmLink has been engaged to deliver Pulse Check projects in 5 of the 11 sub-regions, including South West NSW, South East NSW, Central West NSW, Central East NSW, and the Liverpool Plains. FarmLink is subcontracting other farming systems groups where they exist (Riverine Plains, Central West Farming Systems, Irrigated Cropping Council, Irrigation Research Extension Committee, and Southern Growers) and using consultants (Heuston Agronomy Services) and Local Land Services where they do not, to help deliver the Pulse Check initiatives.

The purpose of this investment is to realise the potential long-term farming system and financial benefits of pulse crops in the South East region through targeted expansion of lentils and chickpeas into new areas and sustainable intensification of pulse crop production in existing areas.

Project Partners



Funding Partners



Project codes – FLR1809-002SAX, FLR1809-003SAX, FLR1809-004SAX, FLR1809-005SAX, FLR1809-006SAX

Aim

By January 2020, growers and advisors in the southern region will have improved skills and knowledge relating to profitable pulse crop production and agronomy allowing them to exploit the systems and financial benefits of pulse crops in a sustainable manner.

Growers and advisors will have improved confidence in the agronomic management of key pulse crops for their sub-region; an awareness of the major risks associated with production; and appropriate management strategies in place to mitigate risks identified.

A much broader and extensive network of existing experienced independent and agribusiness advisors and growers will have an enhanced understanding of the latest developments in pulse crop agronomy through more targeted and intensive extension and communication of the outcomes of relevant GRDC R&D projects and existing industry practice.

Discussion

Late in 2018 the projects commenced with a planning meeting held at Temora. Facilitators reviewed planning to ensure consistency across the region and mapped out delivery of meetings as well as communications for the 11 pulse check groups which will be established.

Following this meeting the first Pulse Check gatherings started to be held across the south east NSW and central western regions of NSW.

FarmLink, in collaboration with Pulse Australia and Riverina Local Land Services, facilitated the first post-harvest wind-down Pulse Check for the Central West region in West Wyalong. Included in the discussion was a panel of experts in the field, including Helen Burns (DPI), Geoff Minchin (LLS), Phil Bowden (Pulse Australia) as well as experienced local pulse producers Roger Bolte and Lyndon McNab, who shared their experiences and insights on growing pulses in the region. Agronomy advice relative to growing region has

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been difficult to find locally – with attending growers seeking the advice of agronomists in South Australia for information as well as further north in NSW. Knowledge needs to be adapted to soil/climate type of this region.

Attending producers indicated that many locals have not yet seen the potential value of pulses in continuous cropping systems to increase soil fertility. Many look to more immediate short-term solutions such as urea. Growers also mentioned

the need for a more objective standard for grading the quality of pulse crops. This was described as often being a limitation that puts off many potential growers as it creates uncertainty when growing pulse crops.

Pulse Check Groups will operate across New South Wales and Queensland until 2020. Locations of FarmLink co-ordinated GRDC Northern Pulse Check Groups are outlined in *Table 1*. ■

Table 1 - GRDC Northern Pulse Check Group facilitators and locations

GRDC Sub-Region	Group Location	Facilitator
Liverpool Plains NSW	Gunnedah	Heuston Agronomy Services
	Quirindi	
Central West NSW	Condobolin	Central West Farming Systems
	West Wyalong	FarmLink
	Lake Cargelligo	Heuston Agronomy Services
Central East NSW	Cowra	LLS
	Gilgandra	Heuston Agronomy Services
South West NSW	Barham	Irrigated Cropping Council
	Griffith	Irrigation Research and Extension Committee
	Finley	Southern Growers
South East NSW	Corowa	Riverine Plains
	Temora	FarmLink