LOCAL GROWER GROUPS BAND TOGETHER

While a severe lack of rain shrinks WA’s total grain harvest, graingrowers have been urged to band together to help each other through these tough times.

Richard Guinness of the Corrigin Farm Improvement Group said that everywhere growers looked they were confronted with reports of ‘doom and gloom’ outlining the terrible season that most of the wheatbelt was experiencing.

“Growers need to get together to talk about issues, so that they realise they aren’t alone and that other growers are in a similar situation.

“By socialising, attending field days, field walks and grower group meetings, growers can help each other get through such a tough start to the season.

“We can share local knowledge and also learn from the recent experiences of our eastern states counterparts, who have battled severe droughts,” he said.

Mr Guinness joined six other growers, who represent different local groups, in Northam to discuss local issues with representatives of the Avon Catchment Council and the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) at one of four recent Local Farmer Group Network (LFGN) breakfast meetings.

The LFGN is funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation and based at the University of Western Australia and held meetings in Geraldton, Katanning, Merredin and Northam to bring local grower group leaders together to discuss regional and local issues.

LFGN Co-ordinator, Paul Carmody said the meetings successfully introduced many of the groups to neighbouring groups, to the Catchment Council and the Regional Development Commission.

“Some growers didn’t know that Catchment Councils existed in their region or how they could utilize their resources.

“Many growers, whose farms are in the same areas, had never met before and these meetings provided this opportunity and also encouraged future interaction.

“The larger groups, such as Facey Group and Corrigin Farm Improvement Group, were already interacting with other groups, however many of the smaller local groups had limited interaction with other groups in their region. The LFGN regional breakfast meeting provided a forum to help them to communicate more efficiently.

“Future group interaction will increase the productivity of trials and value-add group research and development projects,” Mr Carmody said.
LFGN encouraged growers to work together to improve productivity and sustainability and Mr Carmody was particularly impressed by an exchange of intellectual property at the Merredin meeting.

“After that meeting, Scott Dixon of the Kellerberrin Demonstration Group gave Mike Kalajzic of the Duli Farm Improvement Group his group’s trial template.

“The Kellerberrin Group has invested considerable time and money developing its trial template and by giving it freely to another group shows how willing WA growers are to help one another achieve the common goal of a more productive wheatbelt,” Mr Carmody said.

www.lfgn.org.au

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