Regional Network Meeting

20th March 2007
Ocean Centre Hotel, Geraldton
8 – 10 AM

Present:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Warr</td>
<td>Yuna Farm Improvement Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Forester</td>
<td>Casurina-Walkaway</td>
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<td>Mick Desmond</td>
<td>Casuarina-Walkaway</td>
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<td>Craig Morgan</td>
<td>WANTFA</td>
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<td>Rachel Bagshaw</td>
<td>MIG</td>
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<td>Liz Easton</td>
<td>NAAC</td>
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<td>Mike Kendall</td>
<td>MWDC</td>
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<td>Tim Wiley</td>
<td>DAFWA</td>
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<td>Paul Carmody</td>
<td>Local Farmer Group Network</td>
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APOLOGIES: Murray Preston, Greg Creasy, Gordon Wilson, Rohan Ford

ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST MEETING

Craig Morgan (WANTFA)
- New member to the WANTFA Committee
- Nothing to report on
- No active groups in the Three Spring area

John Warr (Yuna FIG)
- Fishing competition success
- Kununurra Trip for Group mid last year

Rachel Bagshaw (MIG)
- Best trials preview they have had was held earlier this month.
- Combined crop update:
  (am) grain marketing forum
  (pm) Five tables with focus topic at each.

Guest speaker: Jan Morris – Hockey Champion
- Soil Health
David Forrester (Casuarina’s – Walkaway FIG)
- Great Northern have sample key paddock for mapping soil pH variations
- Silver Fox (Ian Maling) to provide the group with update on biomass imagery.
- GIO props from Ian
- Murray Preston (AGDept Meeting)
- Bruce Garret work in ag memo
- Crop updates on Perth

Tim Wiley (representing NAG)
Grazing system study under way
Salinity management – geology is unique
- sub committee has been formed and a direct outcome of their activity is ‘Today Field Day’

27th March : Next Field Day – native spp. 30ha (MLA funds)
@ Binnu
- perennial
- stocking rak monitor
8 Farms in projects

20 March Tour in Morawa - Grain and Graze

Soil Health DAY WITH Fran & Dan from UWA, 35 attended
- Soil sample collect and some demonstration of activities.
Soil carbon trading scheme (launch in Katanning) this month
- Christine Jones steering this – who employed her ? - Based at UNE and website is Unknown RIRDC
NACC putting $20,000 to help in soil analysis

REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Liz Eaton : Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC)

Past Activities: 3 investment plan $3-4 million
- NLP 9 project successful
- Post June 08 funding
- Federal committed but State not committed.

Target investment plan (TIP) Southern parts of Northern Agriculture Region

Tim Wiley, Department of Agriculture and Food

Department has been reviewing what has happened last season – then plan what to do with this.

Drought the Focus for now and strategies coming out of it.

Beware of RSPCA – DAFWA wanting to identify farmers first before RSPCA take dramatic measures.
Department is visiting as many farmers as possible to prevent this.

Soil Conservation Act could be implemented on a number of properties due to severe erosion.
Policy of no stock on paddock with no cover!
Growers must act early, either - feed them, sell, or shoot them!
Opportunities now for determining how to level the paddocks
- but most will be sorted at the break
MLA, GRDC funding is tight
NACC more funding opportunities
Farming system project in
  - Coastal, Don Telfer
  - Sand plain, Caroline Peak
  - Heavy soils, Paul Findlater
Department is attempting to look at the region as a whole and gather a complete picture for the executive to see.
Linking it to the pastoral supply of stores.
Potential to develop cattle industry on coastal plain
Valentine Road still has many of the Department cropping trials and breeding plots on it.

**Michael Kendall (Mid West Regional Development Commission)**

  Regional Development Scheme – round has just closed – next September, these are to support small regional initiatives.
  Post farm gate is what we are keen to establish in the region.
  MWDC can assist group to take their product to market.
  Past projects with success have been carob and pearling industry
  MWDC assist people to go outside to look at markets.
  Export assistant to small business in the region
  RDS are dominated by community and tourism growths
  - we NEED more industries project out of agriculture
FOLLOW UP: Will ask the successful applicants – if OK. to gain access to their submissions.
  Biodiesel group haven’t used their RDS at this point due to a change in the economics of biodiesel. The group submitted an application for the publication on how to manufacture biodiesel. Funds are due to be returned
ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2007

Craig Morgan WANTFA

- Ian Brand (MIG) to have one site for the rotation trial looking at different cover crop options. Cunderdin is another site.

- Craig has just join WANTFA committee and welcome to the Network!

David Forester (Casuarina – Walkaway FIG)

- pH @ the subsoil and topsoil using variable rate lime
- Stephen Davies – To do work @ Murray Prestons
- Variable rate trial status for inputs on low, med, high is unknown.
- Waiting to meet with Ian Maling late April to sort out treatment area for their variable rate lime.

John Warr, Yuna FIG

- AGM Friday, 23rd March + Crop update afterwards
- Recovery from last year is in the main theme
- Trials - herbicide trials, Peter Newman
  - long term trial
  Crop Est field walk on usually post seed and spring time.

- Nothing else planned until AGM held.

Rachael Bagshaw (Mingenew-Irwin Group)

Field days x 3 (Sandplain, Harvey land and other)

Nested/cell grazing trial (until June 2008)

Composite of annual spps in this trial under grazing pressure.

Soil health mapping

Grain – market workshop end April 26th

Grain and Graze – Sarah from MIG conducting this 13th April

Enviro Projects - extend their EMS to other groups
REGIONAL ISSUES

ACTION: Plan to invite the next new Regional Manager to the meeting of group leaders in the district. (WHO: DAFWA & GGA rep)

Focus on the carbon trading would be a good topic. FOLLOW UP

Specific information what is required before the meeting – need to get participants to submit topics of interest well before the regional meetings.

Sponsored migration scheme, i.e. managed by MWDC

- RDC do have access to networks to fastrack migrant workers
- More information required

ACTION: Establish a regional forum focusing on availability of labor and training needs of farm labors for Farming (WHO: MWDC, FarmBiz & DAFWA)

Possible guest speaker Anissa Jones, Aussie jobs, who spoke at the Liebe Group Field Day in March 2007. Her contact details: 9325 2352, anissa@aussijobs.com.au

Rural enterprises have 200 farmers looking for staff. Contact Rural Enterprise to determine the problem. (WHO: LFGN)

PGA and WAFF are appropriate vehicles for establishing policies on access to labor in the region and to lobby Govt about migration.

Skill labour to use PA is an issue – casual/seasonal workers Staff don’t have the skill required.

ACTION: LFGN to create a contact page on the website with links useful to Employment Agencies and brokers. (WHO: LFGN)

Next Meeting: Late July early August to be hosted by a group before a group field walk???
REFLECTION:

1. **How did you communicate the outcomes of the last meeting to your group?**
   - At our last general meeting we discussed the topics from the LFGN meeting.
   - Communication – committee meeting discussion – Tracey Gianatti attended January meetings, came to discuss opportunities with GGA and LFGN amalgamation.
   - By phone and at our local tennis club – discussion:
   - Provided a summary to NACC of events and key messages

2. **In what way has LFGN helped your group achieve its goals?**
   - LFGN has helped our group find funding for different projects such as the soil workshop.
   - Providing contacts and workshops with our soil health problems. Trying to get the group to focus on our needs.
   - Improved extension network and communication across grower groups (particularly from big to small groups).
   - Spoke to Tracey about NRM funding (ie; NLP/NAP funding) for GGA/LFGN project
   - Invited Farmbis to talk to our last NRMO meeting (ideas for NRM training)

3. **How could this be improved in the new project?**
   - I don’t think you could improve LFGN may be more one on one with local groups.
   - Still provide the ongoing activities, provide information on these and funding availability. Networking amongst group.
   - Increased activities that encourage participation across groups (even if off-farm and non-agriculture related).

4. **Which are the most valuable parts of LFGN you would like to see continue?**
   - The most valuable activities would be the small group discussions such as the morning LFGN breakfasts and the correspondence such as emails.
   - The website and newsletter of the activities that are of use to the group and the problems we are looking at.
   - Newswire for updates on grower group activities.
   - Funding opportunities available/awareness
   - Meetings with the other grower groups to help remove the big group vs small group perception.
   - Ideas about what NACC needs to be doing more of and how?