

What layout and lettering will lift readership ?

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In 1992 a survey was conducted of graingrowers living between Dubbo, NSW and Emerald, Old. This was part of a larger GRDC funded project.

Growers nominated their preferences from different options of printed information as may be used on A4 newsheets to rural people.

The participant graingrowers were representative of a range of farm sizes, protein and yield status. They had volunteered to be part of the project.

The aim was to seek their preference in black and white information so that readership might be improved.

Results and discussionS

Type style and size. The majority preferred Serif lettering (the style normally used in the press and used here) that is at least 12 point and set out in single line spacing with no underlining. Copy was preferred with 2 columns to an A4 page. Definitely avoid print smaller than 8 point.

Illustration. Wherever possible use photographs and avoid illustrations that caricature farmers (especially if you want them to relate to your information).

Diagrams. There was no clear preference between using a simple diagram with minimum words (to relay information) and the same message in full text. Participants were equally divided in their preference for this style of information i.e. line, bar graphs or tables of figures.

Information sources. Abbreviated notes (extracts) in reliable magazines from unbiased government writers was the favoured source.

Field days, other farmers and rural newspapers were the next three preferred information sources. General Agribusiness literature ranked low while product labels were a more popular information source. The survey revealed very low membership of groups such as MEY. Landcare.