

SPREADING THE WORD IN AGRONOMY

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There has been concern within sections of the grain industry that communication and technology transfer are not working as well as they could (2). Rural Advisory Committees of the Grains Research Foundation believe that *R, D & E Providers have masses of information in their files which would be invaluable to farmers, if only it was summarised and made readily available* (2). As well, there is a concern among DPI clients that organisational changes have meant reduced help to them (3). Some farmers feel that plenty of information exists, but it is not readily available, is poorly packaged or research is not presented (1).

There are opportunities with agronomy projects to provide relevant timely information within the context of the farming system. The Broadacre Farming Information Network and Centre aims to provide more timely information to a wider range of clients, thereby spreading the agronomy word.

PROCESS

The Broadacre Farming Information Centre at Dalby is a DPI Information Centre with a particular focus on field crops and agronomy. The Centre contains leaflet information, software and videos on a wide range of topics. It provides an information service to clients.

- A Farmfax service provides up-to-date relevant technical information faxed 24 hours a day. Items include seasonal, pest and cropping updates and a list of events and trials. A collation of extension and research information is being established which will be accessible on line from agri-business offices and farmers' homes 24 hours a day.
- A seasonal publication, South Queensland Cropping, will update the industry on research findings and new initiatives, and a directory of research projects operating in DPI will be compiled.
- An information searching service is available whereby an up to date list of all publications from throughout the world is provided on a topic. Similarly, for a particular topic, the centre can provide updates of recent literature every 3 months.
- Media columns will outline new publications and reports, and follow up information on field days and seminars will be available.

Working with the Broadacre Farming Information Centre and providing copies of reports, talks, papers and poster summaries, can provide better access to agronomic information for a broader range of clients.

REFERENCES

1. Hamilton, N.A. (Ed). 1991. Southern Queensland Farming Systems: A survey of farmers' attitudes and behaviour. DPI Project Report QI91027. Dept. of Primary Industries, Brisbane.
2. Jones, R. 1994. Grains Research Foundation Priority Issues Paper No 2: Communication and Technology Transfer. Grains Research Foundation, Toowoomba.
3. Joyce, S. and Schmidt, J. 1994. A marketing promotional plan for the Department of Primary Industries Queensland - south region. Univ. College of Southern Queensland, Marketing Project Report, Toowoomba.