



**Grower Group Alliance
Annual Forum
Thursday, 21st August 2014**

Proceedings

The Grower Group Alliance Annual Forum was proudly sponsored by Department of Agriculture and Food, AEGIC, CBH Group, MLA and Grain & Graze 3

Front Cover Image: Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network (RAIN) Spring Field Day 2013

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1. Introduction

The Grower Group Alliance Annual Forum is the premier event for interaction between farmer groups, researchers and industry to inspire participants with new ideas and perspectives, and provide opportunities to develop collaborative partnerships.

On Thursday, 21st August 2014, the GGA again held the annual event. The 2014 forum, 'Striving for profitability beyond agronomics', aimed to take grower groups out of their comfort zone through championing innovation and showcasing concepts and ideas beyond the traditional 'grower group project' box.

Traditionally grower groups have focussed on activities to increase grower profitability through RD&E that addresses on-farm production issues. This will continue to be a core activity of grower groups, however, the GGA, State Government, funding bodies and industry believe there are key opportunities to increase profitability of farm businesses 'beyond agronomics', including along the supply chain and in capacity building.

Purpose of the day

The forum's speakers and activities are intended to inspire and challenge attendees, and provide networking and collaboration opportunities.

The purpose for grower groups was to:

- Gain fresh ideas and skills,
- Learn about current and proposed research and innovations, and
- Boost relationships with other groups, researchers and industry.

The purpose for industry partners was to:

- Meet grower groups from around the state, developing key connections,
- Gain perspective on the grower group operating environment, and
- Interact and discuss the best way to engage with grower groups in collaborative projects.

2. Grower Group Alliance

Background

The Grower Group Alliance is a not-for profit farmer driven organisation linking growers with researchers and industry in a network across Western Australia and nationally.

The GGA was formed in 2002 by five grower groups with an overall objective to communicate and collaborate, and now engages with more than 40 grower groups. The current Grower Group Alliance, supported by the Department of Agriculture and Food, provides one network servicing all groups in WA regardless of size, one set of communications to network members, a united face for grower group representation and a wider network for grower groups, while being more streamlined for industry partners.

The GGA acts to support effective, relevant and sustainable grower groups with expanded operational and networking capacity and greater involvement in collaborative RD&E projects with other grower groups, industry partners and the wider research community.

Role of the GGA

The GGA intends to:

- Expand the network of grower groups and their partners to allow the exchange of knowledge, ideas and research results between members;
- Enhance the participation of grower groups in collaborative projects developed between grower groups, research providers and industry; and
- Support grower groups to work towards becoming more efficient and effective as a group.

Grower groups

The majority of WA farmer groups aim to increase the production and profitability of their farm businesses through the adoption of new production technologies while minimising impact on their environment. Groups are mainly broadacre farmers of the WA grain production zone located from Binu in the north, to Bodallin in the east and Esperance in the south east. The network includes more than 40 grower groups involving about 2500 farmer members, which is about 50 per cent of WA farmers.

GGA Roles and Responsibilities

Operational Support

- Governance support (operational and financial)
- Policies and procedures support and guidance, developing constitutions and running meetings advice
- Increase group capacity/strategic thinking through targeted training
- Funding notification and support
- Advice on the business of running a grower group
- Continue capacity building (financial support and targeted opportunities) and networking opportunities for staff and committees

Networking

- Staff and grower tours – to create and nurture intrastate and interstate relationships to influence practice change
- Increase interaction between groups and localised groups activities, networking to develop working relationships, support and encourage groups to communicate
- Work more closely with ag colleges, universities and interstate grower groups
- Linkages and networks of researchers, agribusiness, industry and funders
- Once or twice per year EO meetings, GGA Annual Forum

Training

- Shared professional development – executives and boards
- Governance, group skills, facilitation, trials training and more
- Peer group development for EO and R&D staff and managers, new staff training and exchanges, study tours. Cross pollination of staff to learn from other groups
- Better understanding of post-farm gate – links to AEGIC and CBH

Event support and opportunities

- Event awareness and financial support for attending non-grower group events
- Support on running events, assistance with guest speakers, Event Handbook
- Calendar of Events

RD&E network, project brokering and collaborations

- Better coordination of grower groups in regards to funding opportunities
- Negotiate with funders to better spread funding to 'join' groups on some projects
- Continue practical assistance (networks, calendar, funding guidelines)
- Be the glue between DAFWA and groups, industry and groups
- Assisting with collaborations, including facilitation, brokering partnerships
- Support for project development and writing
- Well connected and advocating groups to GRDC, MLA and other funding bodies

Communication/Extension (influence and interaction)

- Encourage direct two-way communication between growers to government, researchers, industry, funders
- Bigger voice for grower groups (not political)
- Assistance with developing extension and communication plans and media releases
- Calendar and Newswire, social media and grower group updates
- Sharing key successes – enabling further success

3. List of Forum Participants

Grower Group Representatives

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** Indicates member of the GGA Strategic Advisory Group.*

4. GGA Annual Forum Agenda, 21st August 2014

Time	Topic	Presenter/Format
8.15	Registrations, welcome and coffee	
8.45	Introductions and format of the day	Rebecca Wallis, GGA
8.50	Opening address	Rob Delane, DAFWA Director General
<i>Increasing profitability through opportunities in the supply chain</i>		
9.00	An obsession with cutting out the middle man! Can broadacre agriculture learn from horticulture?	Brad Plunkett, DAFWA
9.35	A glimpse into shifting wheat market dynamics	Barry Cox, AEGIC and Mark Pearce, Lake Grace farmer
10.10	MLA Restructure Overview	Richard Norton, MLA
10.20	Morning tea	
<i>Increasing profitability through R, D & E 'beyond agronomics'</i>		
10.45	New tables & introductions	
10.50	WA Grain Industry 2025+ Strategic Plan	Ian Longson, GIWA
11.00	Funding bodies panel session: R,D&E funding and partnership opportunities.	Panel: Peter Roberts - GRDC, Richard Norton - MLA, Brendan Nicholas - DAFWA/Royalties for Regions, Ingrid Smith - APC
11.30	Making Difficult Decisions – Using Story Telling in Farmer Groups	Nigel McGuckian, Grain and Graze 3
12.15	Lunch	
<i>Innovative action: Grower groups harnessing innovation to increase profitability</i>		
13.15	Concurrent Session 1	Choose two options to attend: Grower Group presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grains (Nigel Metz – SEPWA, Erin Green - Yuna FIG) - Livestock (Audrey Bird – Facey Group, Brad Wooldridge – SDIRT) - Technology (Darrin Lee – MIG, Clint Della Bosca – WANTFA/FEAR Group)
13.55	Concurrent Session 2	
14.35	Afternoon tea	
<i>Increasing profitability through gaining efficiencies in the business of farming</i>		
15.00	New tables & introductions	
15.05	The global grower: Opportunities for WA farm businesses and how grower groups can be proactive in these future opportunities.	David Capper, CBH
15.40	A consultant's view of the drivers of farm business success and cross learnings for the grower group business model.	Consultant panel – Greg Kirk, Rob Sands & Ross Kingwell
16.20	How to create time: The BASIC strategy to self-invest and achieve more.	Mark McKeon
17.15	Close and CBH Networking Sundowner	

5. GGA Annual Forum Opening

Rob Delane, DAFWA Director General

Rob Delane is the Director General of the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia. During 2008-09, he was Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity Services Group with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. He is a keen promoter of regional, State, national and international cooperative initiatives and government-industry partnerships to both deliver innovative outcomes and apply innovation to more efficiently and effectively deliver services and outcomes. Rob has travelled regularly to China, other Asian destinations and the Middle East to foster market and trade development, and research and development collaborations.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Grower Group Alliance Success	Vitally important to agriculture in Australia – strongly supported by DAFWA
Growing improvements	How to enable producers; new technology, new methodology, trying to achieve something better
Partnerships are vitally important	Strategic partners – organisations committed to cooperating – discuss problems that are occurring – working to resolve Continue to work out how to work better together, including international markets
Strong GGA future	DAFWA committed to supporting GGA throughout the next four years, including project collaboration

6. An obsession with cutting out the middle man! Can broadacre agriculture learn from horticulture?

Brad Plunkett, DAFWA

Brad Plunkett has been with DAFWA since 1996, after a variety of occupations, including positions in rural industries, mining and education. His work is largely focussed on industry and business analysis, including producer owned firms. Over the years he has consulted to a range of WA co-operatives, interstate firms such as the Organic Dairy Farmers Co-operative of Victoria and internationally, bodies such as the National Dairy Development Board of India. He has published several papers on the topic of producer entrepreneurship including business case studies. He has found that ‘simple, open, transparent’ can be good descriptors of successful producer owned firms

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Typical horticulture market structure	<p>Intense competition</p> <p>Series of separate markets that are not well coordinated</p> <p>Value chain leaders earn the most</p>
Changing retail landscape	<p>Fastest growth in history</p> <p>Major importers (across Australian state boundaries)</p> <p>Competition is on cost and quality</p> <p>Australian producers = vulnerable because they lack brands</p>
Broad strategic options	<p>Quality + price + volume + brand</p> <p>Product leadership Customer intimacy Operational excellence</p> <p>Understanding customer needs, finding solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retailer customer – must be able to work with the customer - Final consumer – know the customer and what they want <p>Branding strategies must be used, people more likely to buy the product if the brand is well known and trusted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Banana’s – marked banana’s not able to be used and sold – rebranded as ‘smoothie’ banana’s – now able to sell banana’s <p>Store product in different non-perishable form – e.g banana’s into banana bread; apples into cider</p>

7. A glimpse into shifting wheat market dynamics

Barry Cox, AEGIC

Barry Cox is the program leader for the Market Requirements and Opportunities at the Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre (AEGIC). Prior to joining AEGIC, Barry has had a diverse career in agriculture. For the first 15 years of his career he worked with the Grain Pool of WA where he learnt many facets of grain accumulation, marketing, shipping and regulatory/technical aspects. Barry then moved to the canola processing industry, followed by roles in plant breeding, seed commercialisation and government through employment with Nuseed, the Council of Grain Grower Organisations (COGGO) and the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
AEGIC	National and independent 'innovation centre' for Australia's export grains industry
World Wheat Markets	<p>China</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importing 5-6 million tonnes wheat – from Australia, Canada, US - Preference for white wheat flour - Preference for ASW wheat – may need to look into market education - Import wheat value dependent on domestic crop <p>Japan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importing 5-6 million tonnes wheat – from Australia, Canada, US - Majority of Australian wheat imported in Japan comes from WA - Opportunities: Millers interested in considering contract growing <p>Saudi Arabia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importing 2.5 million tonnes (Canada, Germany) - Phasing out domestic wheat production - Reliant on imports - Food security vital - Government plan to continue controlling wheat imports and regulating flour mill sector - Opportunities: Closer relationships with government, Opportunities for 'soft' wheat <p>Phillippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US major supplier - 3 million tonnes import - Opportunities - Educating mills on Australian grain

Mark Pearce, Lake Grace Farmer

Mark farms with his wife Lisa and three children at Tarin Rock, West of Lake Grace. They run a mixed farming enterprise growing Canola, Wheat, Barley and Oats as well as running a sheep enterprise made up of merino ewes mated to Samm rams and 1st cross Samm ewes mated to White Suffolks. In September 2013, Mark went on a study tour with nine other farmers from the WA Grains Group and three wheat researchers from Murdoch University who are involved in the Australia China Joint Research Centre for Wheat Improvement. The tour consisted of visiting flour mills, research facilities and government procurement bodies in Beijing and Zhengzhou in the Henan province where 25% of China's wheat is grown. Mark will provide a grower perspective of the Chinese market and what it means for the WA growers into the future.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
There needs to be improvement in the marketing of the Australian grain industry	<p>Large number of external factors that impact on Australian export wheat markets</p> <p>Focus on product quality, food safety, market maintenance, higher value and new market options</p>
How we can better meet Chinese market needs	<p>Want dough with good dough strength and elasticity – Australia not testing for what the market wants</p> <p>Most Chinese farms = 1 hectare</p> <p>Used to buy a lot of wheat from Australia – break down of communications, wheat blends not what they want</p> <p>Food safety is the big issue</p> <p>Demand for more protein – majority comes from pork and poultry</p>

8. The MLA Restructure

Richard Norton, MLA

Richard Norton joined Meat and Livestock Australia as Managing Director in June 2014. The fifth generation of a beef and sheep family in Monaro, NSW, Richard has spent more than 20 years serving livestock producers as a stock agent and auctioneer across NSW, where he still farms beef. His drive to see Australian agribusiness thrive has led him to hold various executive positions, including Head of Livestock and International Trade and then Managing Director of Landmark.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Restructuring MLA	<p>RD&E on farm – levy payers understanding how they interact with MLA (ie. Beef levies come into MLA, they only go out on beef)</p> <p>MLA will be changing to an annual call for RD&E projects, rather than taking open tenders at any time.</p> <p>MLA currently have more than 3000 current small projects – fewer, larger projects to achieve adoption on farm are required.</p> <p>New group in WA will be tasked at collecting local priorities and feeding them up to MLA to influence RD&E investments (similar to a GRDC Western Panel). Consultation to start in late 2014 – keen to engage with WA producers.</p> <p>Collaborative research and funding is the way of the future - MLA plans to work more closely with GRDC & AWI</p>

9. WA Grain Industry 2025+ Strategic Plan

Ian Longson, GIWA

Ian Longson is a business development consultant in agriculture and food and a contractor to the Grain Industry Association of WA (GIWA). Prior to June 2009 he was on the Executive team of the Department of Agriculture from 1995 to 2004, finishing up as Director General of the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food for five years from 2004 to 2009. Prior to joining the Department of Agriculture's executive team in 1995, Ian was senior consultant and manager of the Perth Office of ACIL Consulting. He has also worked for the Dairy Industry Authority of Western Australia, the Asian Development Bank and early in his career as an extension adviser with the Western Australian Department of Agriculture in the South West. Ian is Chair of the Western Australian Integrated Fisheries Advisory Committee and AusChem Western Australia, and a non executive director of SeaFarms Ltd and the Southern DIRT Grower Group.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Grain industry strategic plan	<p>Objective: Develop a strategy to double the value of the industry by 2025</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optimise and future proof the grain handling and transport infrastructure 2. Reduce government regulation and red tape 3. One industry voice 4. Grain quality systems to underpin Australia's reputation as preferred supplier 5. Effective biosecurity strategies 6. Develop mechanisms to access, and hold, high value markets 7. Sectoral analysis of on shore value adding opportunities 8. Provision of essential technology to ensure maximum efficiency in the industry 9. Building farm business resilience 10. Clear path to market for new technologies 11. Skilled industry personnel 12. Farm productivity R&D
Elements for industry growth and success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to capital and increased investment 2. Access to skilled people 3. Focussed R&D 4. Effective adoption of tailored knowledge 5. Access to high value markets 6. Efficient and competitive salary chains supportive of growers needs

10. Funding Bodies Panel Session: funding and partnership opportunities for non- agronomic R,D&E

Peter Roberts, GRDC

Peter Roberts, who farms at Dunn Rock, in the Esperance Port Zone, has been a member of the GRDC Western Panel since 2008 and was appointed Chairman in April, 2011. A key focus for Peter as Panel Chairman is for the panel to have a strong level of engagement with the WA grains industry. Peter was Chairman of the South East Premium Wheat Growers Association for three years before joining the GRDC's Western Panel.

Brendan Nicholas, DAFWA/Royalties for Regions

Brendan was appointed to Esperance to conduct soil survey and land evaluation and then worked on a number of catchment planning and natural resource management in the Esperance Area. Brendan has been the Esperance Manager for the Department for the last 8 years and in this role has worked with a number of Grower Groups on the South Coast, particularly SEPWA and RAIN. Recently he has been involved in development of Royalties for Regions Business Case for Agricultural Sciences Research and Development Fund.

Ingrid Smith, APC

Ingrid Smith is the Manager of the Agricultural Produce Commission (APC). APC works with industries to form Producers' Committees to enable these industries to identify and fund initiatives for the benefit of the industry. The APC currently has 10 Producers' Committees providing a wide variety of services to Fee for Service paying producers. Some abilities of Producers' Committees are compensation schemes, market forecasting and promotion & advertising.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
GRDC	<p>Western panel – mixed group of researches, farmers, industry representatives</p> <p>Western Panel Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frost - Weeds - Non-wetting soils - Subsoil constraints - Water use efficiency - Profitable legume rotations - Crop agronomy - Break crops - Crop protection - Precision ag & variable rate technology - Profit drivers & business skills - Nitrogen management
Royalties for Regions	<p>Agricultural science research and development fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Substantial amount of money for grower groups - Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity Supply chains Development of agrifood market opportunities
APC	<p>Ability to form producer committee's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently excludes broad acre cropping and grazing – wanting to remove exclusion - Have opportunity to develop an APC producer committee for R&D if exclusion is removed - To be on the committee you must be a producer <p>Currently have 10 producer committees – may only do one identified thing or may do many</p> <p>Very flexible</p> <p>Controlled by what the growers want</p> <p>When looking for funding APC gives the government a better view and options to give the funding to the committee – a position of power</p>

11. Making Difficult Decisions – Using story telling in farmer groups

Nigel McGuckian, Grain and Graze 3

Nigel has worked as a consultant with farmers, farmer groups and businesses for over 25 years. His work is all about the decision making process. He works with small family businesses to large groups of people helping them make decisions which will create positive change and improve their working relationship. He has run discussion groups for many years and is a strong believer in the power of farmers sharing their stories for making difficult decisions. Originally a sheep and pasture specialist, he now is part of three farmer boards of large agricultural businesses in beef, grains and pork production. This presentation will encourage attendees to think about how they make decisions and how they use their neighbours, friends and family to make the big, difficult, complex decisions, which guide their organisation or farm business towards long term success.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Success in business is about making the best decisions you possibly can at all times	The decisions that producers on the ground and people running businesses make are vitally important. How to become more confident about business decisions – less confusion
Complex decision making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simple – one right answer – easy 2. Complicated – one right answer – difficult 3. Complex – many answers – difficult Farming decisions are complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many variables - Many unknowns, uncertainties and risks - Many people involved
How can we make the decision making easier?	Develop rules of thumb from past experience Trust intuition and gut feeling Do “big picture” sums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using data over 10-20 years – understanding the ‘story’ or long term trends in these numbers Use models to understand variables Story telling
How do the groups work?	Open honest story telling Ground rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidentiality Strategic decisions 6-10 businesses Complementary to other services
The opportunity for WA	Network of grower groups Strong body of consultants Smart keen farmers Changing complex environment

12. Concurrent Sessions

Grains

Erin Green, Yuna FIG

Erin Green farms with her husband Brady at Yuna, in the Chapman Valley Shire, 50km NE of Geraldton. They farm 8500ha, all of which is cropping using controlled traffic technology. Their farm business is in the midst of succession to them and is managed with the assistance of an Advisory Board. Erin was the secretary of the Yuna Farm Improvement Group from 2009-2012, and is currently the WA coordinator for Partners in Grain.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Grower to grower	Peer to peer – YFIG working as a community group as well as a farm group and being able to develop the town and help the school as well as farming practices
New ways of thinking in farming	Getting rid of livestock Controlled traffic farming system Advisory board on farm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet quarterly - Strategic decisions Machinery schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan up to 5 years ahead what machinery you have/what you need to purchase or what needs to be replaced - Never get swayed by machinery dealers Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff meetings - Inductions - More professional

Nigel Metz, SEPWA

Nigel Metz grew up in the farming region of the central south cost of WA and attended Curtin Universities Muresk Institute of Agriculture. After a short time on the family farming business Nigel started working with grower groups and has been with SEPWA for the past 10 years. During this time Nigel has worked on, earlier harvest through high moisture handling, barley varietal purity testing, Precision Agriculture, water use efficiency, and enzyme brewing for barley market development into Asia.

Livestock

Audrey Bird, Facey Group

Audrey farms near Wickiepin 230km south east of Perth with her husband Peter and eldest son Daniel. The family farming business consists of 2100ha of land and another 2730ha of lease country which is mainly cropped. 2000 dorper ewes and 600 merino border leister first cross ewes complement the wheat, barley and canola plantings. This year Audrey has started branding and selling their dorper lambs. Audrey was part of the Grain & Graze 1 & 2 Steering Committee, is currently the Secretary for WA No-Till Farmers Association & served a four year term as President of the Facey Group of which she is still a committee member.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Facey Country Lamb beginnings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce a 'product' not a commodity 2. Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pricing the product Cuts – how much do they cost? Too costly for wholesaler to sell – he imports as it is cheaper 3. Sells to local markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers markets - Events 4. People want to support farmer direct
New Zealand study tour	<p>Little known about farmer direct in New Zealand</p> <p>Lamb is seen as 'too expensive' to source for restaurants in NZ</p>
Future of the business	<p>Selling direct to consumer – higher margin</p> <p>2000 dorper lambs on farm this year – will be happy to sell 30% which will be around 300 lambs</p> <p>Why will the business work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmer direct - Exclusively dorper lamb - Family owned and operated - Free range, hormone free and antibiotic free
Grower group positive influences	<p>Support from local grower group, the Facey Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - broaden knowledge base - discuss similar topics <p>Programs were very useful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Myers Brigg courses - Rabo executive development program

Brad Wooldridge, Southern DIRT

Brad Wooldridge was at the beginning of the Pastures from Space Technology 15 years ago and since then has teamed up with Landgate to take it to a whole new level. He now uses LITE (Land Imaging for Technical Analysis) to analyse how pastures have performed over the last 8-year period and then explore how they could have performed given the season. Quantifying seasonal variation has allowed pasture performance predictions and matching stocking rate to the seasons predicted potential. Brad maintains the driver is management, not inputs.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Using technology to know what feed you have available for livestock	LiTE Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work out how much feed biomass is on your farm at any point - work out where sheep have been and from this determine when to move sheep and where to move them to - Determine stocking rate optimums - Reflect what could have been grown and calculate the percentage of this that was grown - Dry matter predictions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Estimating livestock condition score over summer months ahead ➤ Estimating how you may be able to finish your lambs, with knowledge of your current and future feed availability

Technology

Clint Della Bosca, WANTFA

Clint Della Bosca farms in the far Eastern Wheatbelt in Southern Cross. He has been farming with his family for 26 years on holding of 9500ha spread out 100km north/south in the Yilgarn shire. He grows Wheat, Canola, Oats, pasture and sheep. Clint is a Board member of WANTFA, and a member of the RCSN Kwinana East Group and the FEAR group.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Current technology use on farm	Machinery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No-till since 1997 - Auto steer GPS, seeding, spraying, harvest - Yield mapping and variable rate technology Plant genetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wheat: Cobra, Corrack, Mace and Trojan - Canola: Sturt Barley: Litmus Animal genetics (Sheep) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moved from Merino to Composite (Samm, Merino, Finn) - Run self-replacing flock and mated to Poll Dorset - Mature ewe tailing of 130% - Mate maidens at 40kg/6-7 months
New Technology being evaluated	Soil moisture probes Yield prophet Focus benchmarking business group Wesley wheel
GRDC RSCN/Fear Group Project	Evaluate moisture probes Link actual data to yield prophet for fine tuning Conducted by Frank Ebden, PAA & Caroline Peek, DAFWA Probes worth between \$5000 and \$7000 Why this technology is needed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More knowledge of what's in the soil - More knowledge of plant interaction with the soil
Future needs of technology in the Eastern Wheatbelt	Control traffic Variable rate Using moisture probes and yield prophet GM technology in grains Boomspray with weed seeking tech. Drone technology? Segregated cropping system Increased weather monitoring tech. eg. Doppler radar etc.

Darrin Lee, MIG

Darrin Lee is the managing partner in their family farming operation "Bligh Lee Farms". He farms in conjunction with wife Steph, Brother in law and Sister in Law, Peter and Lorraine. Together they farm 6500 ha approximately 15km North East of Mingenew. The farm is predominantly red loams, lighter loams and grey heavy clay, and receives 300mm annual rainfall. They grow Wheat, Barley, Lupins, Oats and Canola, and run approximately 4500 merino sheep for both wool and wheat production. Darrin is a Board Member and R&D committee member for the Mingenew-Irwin Group, and also sits on the Growers Advisory Council for CBH.

13. The global grower: Opportunities for WA farm businesses and how grower groups can be proactive in these future opportunities

David Capper, CBH

David Capper was appointed General Manager of Operations in July 2013 and is responsible for leading CBH's world-class storage and handling, logistics, engineering and shipping services. As General Manager of Operations David's main focus is creating and returning value for growers by ensuring an efficient and cost effective supply chain from paddock to port and maximising the competition for and value of growers grain delivered to the network. David has held positions of Manager of Operations and Strategy Manager, Operations since returning to Western Australia from Indonesia where David managed a 2,500 tonne per day flour milling operation as Operations Director of PT. Eastern Pearl Flour Mills. David is a graduate of Muresk Institute of Agriculture (Bachelor Degree in Agribusiness (Marketing) and maintains the family farm East of Beverley.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Farmers lifestyle and business	<p>'Gamble' huge amount of money into the ground</p> <p>Communities tightly entwined into season – bad season, bad feel in community; good season, good feel in community etc.</p> <p>Wants kids to see things/get qualification before they choose to come back to the farm</p> <p>Financial pressure felt during a below average year</p>
Grower Groups role in assisting farmers	<p>Understand why you're here</p> <p>Understand who your serving</p> <p>Understanding where the value is coming from</p>

14. A consultant's view of the drivers of farm business success and cross learnings for the grower group business model

Greg Kirk, Planfarm

Greg Kirk, Managing Director of Planfarm Pty Ltd has been consulting to some of the state's leading grain growers for over twenty years. He has a keen interest in all things agricultural and in particular those unique characteristics that make top performing farm businesses so successful. His firm provides management consulting, agronomy, grain marketing and property management services for both local and overseas investors across the state.

Rob Sands, Farmanco

Rob Sands joined Farmanco in 1991 and operates from the Mundaring Office. He consults his own clients throughout the Central Wheatbelt. Rob has clients throughout the Central Wheatbelt. Rob has a corporate role of developing and maintaining various Business Analysis, and Marketing Software. Rob has expertise in developing Spreadsheet and Database Applications for Clients. Rob has specialist knowledge in business analysis, commodity marketing, and farming systems including grain and livestock enterprises. Rob is also the chairman of the Rural Business Development Corporation.

Ross Kingwell, AEGIC

Ross is a respected agricultural economist; the author of more than 100 journal articles and book chapters, and more than 220 conference papers and policy reports. He is a professor in the School of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UWA. Ross serves on a DA Expert Advisory Panel and chairs the Australian Farm Institute's (AFI) research advisory committee. He has been a co-editor of the Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AJARE), and is a former president and distinguished fellow of the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES).

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Supply Chains	20% of the FOB wheat price is the cost of getting the grain from the receival point to the ship Large per hectare cost farmers have to pay for Low cost efficient supply chains are required
Farm business success drivers	Think like a CEO Plan to succeed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are you going to approach situations as they arise? - Planning process is as important as the end goal Get the important stuff done Cost control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you produce wheat \$10/t cheaper? This could put you ahead of the competitors - Set up cost structure in regards to average yield - Spend your money in the right spot Risk assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Just because you don't see the risk doesn't mean it's not there - Good average price through time – don't shoot for the top price when you may not be able to hold out - Resilience in your business Have a good team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation – sometimes missing in the family farm business model Communicate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People drive business – you have to communicate well - Issues in succession planning Use professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand your knowledge base rapidly - They see a lot of businesses – more information - Have to be a team that you get along with Business relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You are dependent on your suppliers - Trust and willingness to work together
The biggest difference between farm businesses is the people	Not the farm or rainfall that is having the big impact on farming – management is a very large part of succeeding
Small changes in production cost and price can have large effects on farm profits	How to change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need a goal - Need to take first step
Adopt best practise to the point where we are the best low cost dry land farmers in the world	Attention to detail have a large impact on profit Pick one area to start on – give yourself a goal/timeframe Don't accept second best Adopt the culture that we want to be the best Export oriented - Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compete with farmers around the world - We are unsubsidised - Dry land

15. How to create time: The BASIC strategy to self-invest and achieve more

Mark McKeon

Mark McKeon is one of Australia's leading work-life balance writer and speaker, runs his own company which provides conference, training and coaching services to organizations around the world, but still works only 30 hours per week, and takes 10 weeks annual holiday. He has been able to achieve this by becoming the master of his own time. He spent 18 years in the AFL as a player, fitness coach and motivator, he acted as Collingwood's runner for over 250 games, and at age 41 he was a member of the winning team in inaugural AFL Triathlon. He is the author of two successful books, and a regular magazine and newspaper columnist. His quality information and entertaining style have been rewarded with a short-listing to present at the U.S. Million Dollar Round Table, one of few Australians to be awarded this honour.

Presentation Highlights	
Key Points	Further Information
Addicted to adrenalin	Find ways to get it back again If you don't let yourself wind down then you will burn out
Get in the GO zone	The ability to have three gears – you choose which gear you are in Go zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear desk (1 min of deep breathing to start and finish) - Adjusted – mental and physical application - Prioritised 'to do' list. Get back to the list as soon as you can - Non-negotiable target that is within your control - Go until the timer/buzzer rings - Repeated habit up to 4 days a week - 1-2 hour time frame - No distractions, no excuses - Always finishes with your own debrief Slow zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't make your big decisions in this time - Answer emails, general admin - Productive but not stressful - Pay bills - Routine tasks - Footy tips! - Productive but not stressful No Zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get out of the office - Switch off your phone - No work, not thinking about work - Refresh, recover and do something for you

	- Don't feel guilt about being in No Zone
Don't just focus on the end goal, focus on what's in your control	Have a time limit imposed on yourself
Essence of mental toughness	Stress is not the problem, the problem is lack of recovery
Endure or enjoy?	Careers or even just life
Four factors in aging well	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take holidays 2. Sleep well <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't doze on the couch - Need your list – whatever's worrying you, write it down - No heavy food at night - One hour transition to sleep 3. Passions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doing what you love to do 4. People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay connected to people - Good friends give you support - Too easy to get isolated
Four ways to create time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outsource 2. Delegate 3. Efficiency 4. Sleep better

16. Evaluation Results

What speaker, activity or idea stood out to you today?

Mark McKeon

- Perfect way to end the day – inspired and motivated
- Good life skills
- It was a nice touch to end that day and leave it on a different note that's not so agricultural
- Excellent – other groups could use him
- Very applicable
- Personality
- Great personal development and awareness of self-core plus professional productivity
- The go zone!
- Great how GGA brings in an outside of Ag speaker

Erin Green

- YFIG and family board setup
- Community/farm business
- Great story of her family farm process

Nigel McGuckian

- Great insight
- Share the story, why, what's to be gained etc...
- So relevant to all farmers and very important
- Decision making is sometimes overlooked in a discussion

What did you enjoy?

- Good time was allowed to introduce and network
- Loved the mix of speakers and moving tables
- Loved the allocation to tables to facilitate networking
- Speakers and networking
- Meeting people
- The interaction of the speaker and the audience
- Farmers stories – sometimes organisations don't rate/dismiss the problems and obstacles have in implementing ideals or adopting solutions that organisations think are good/obvious
- Panel sessions provided contrast interest
- Open sharing of ideas, processes, farmers
- Hearing about a farm app of tech and the efficiencies it brings
- Concurrent sessions – great snapshots from real farmers
- Really enjoyed the livestock presentation in the concurrent sessions
- Mix of presenters and opportunity to meet a wide variety of people
- Positive thoughts motivate you to go home and make a difference
- Grower stories of success/failure/new adventures – all reflected to the central theme
- Get in the "Go Zone"
- Hearing from actual growers about their experience with international contacts
- Diversity of information, not just agronomic
- Diversity of topics was fantastic
- Ideas that link to boosting business skills for R 4 R
- Moving tables for each session is great – ensures you meet more people
- Negotiation and business focus group
- Networking, variety of speakers, relevance to agriculture

- ***What was your key take home message?***
- Recognise go, slow and stop phases of my day and adjust behaviours to reflect
- Stress management techniques
- Farming is complex but there are ways to cope – talk about it!
- Collaboration is still the number one priority over coming 12 months
- Don't be constrained by your own limitations
- Sharing info is good on all levels
- Communication and planning critical to ensure success
- Recovery time!
- Manage stress recovery
- Network in the GGA is great and need to utilise this
- We have to understand our businesses better
- #gozone
- How do we match “bulk commodity’ against potential for ‘branding’
- Power of story telling
- Plan, take time to consider, balance
- Get organised, plan goals, work towards them, involve others
- Use the Go Zone
- Farming is a complex business and there are so many people blazing new paths in doing things better
- Story telling – the importance of it
- Look after myself and think about how to make decisions
- People need to work together and value each other not compete. A lot of people are now thinking like that
- Collaboration, networking, interaction
- Importance of networking
- Apply a business approach to farming
- Stress less
- Go zone, slow zone, no zones
- Different models for successful farm business
- Story telling
- More communication between the seller of the product and other countries
- Managing time
- Continue making contacts
- Thinking about creating time efficiently
- Coordination/collaboration is key
- Good info on farm businesses
- Make time for oneself with good planning
- Sleep better
- Good contacts other groups around can help
- Be efficient, strive to have best system possible
- Get involved with your grower groups
- Value time for efficiently
- Importance of community, valuing it in your business
- Understand what the end user of a grain product currently wants now and what the future needs maybe. So that can be fed back down the supply chain
- Business discussion group and actions to regularly sit down and understand the numbers in our business
- Start negotiating by the process of: differentiation, exploration, ____ argument based on offers
- Collaborate more on research projects

What will you apply to your group/business/organisation?

- Continue the “social” sides of all events – so important!
- Go zone
- Time out – no/slow/go zone thinking
- Go Zone throughout office
- GO ZONE!
- Creating time – time management and separating work/social commitment of energy
- Time management
- Value of open honest discussion
- Peer to peer learning is ok – not at all second role, encourage more sharing
- Good networks to continue to grow my business and development my project
- Need to continue on profitability focus rather than productivity
- Try to collaborate more
- Follow up the technology opportunities
- Use of story telling
- Personal efficiency
- Technology
- Contacts
- Make contact and talk
- Go zone
- Openness of finances to build trust
- Not sure yet, all of it in some ways, a lot to mill over
- Planning – the go zone
- Collaborations/networks and how important they are
- New contacts, time management
- How best to share stories
- Noted improvements as much as possible in the next few months
- More collaboration with other groups
- Time management
- Group trials from other groups – get results
- Reduce stress
- Structure and bringing professionals
- Time management
- Better planning
- How to create time
- Contacts
- Better time management and prioritisation of relationships and tasks in line with industry needs
- Firm constructive communication and requesting commitment to goals and phases with business partners to get the best out of all of us
- Manage workload
- Keep our focus on business skills, planning and cost discussions
- Research links made through networking

What new benefits could you introduce to grow value for your sponsors?

- Link our farm and farmers stories with our corporate partners to achieve mutual goals
- Put money value on farmers and committees in kind contributions
- Better negotiation
- Work a little closer to identify their best long term outcomes. What would they like to achieve over 5 years as a sponsor? Can we add value to this
- Time management
- Start checking our website for grant opportunities e.g. GRDC for our group
- Share the story
- More collaboration – fruitful
- More information on untapped research
- Efficiencies of transport
- Better collaboration
- Emphasise the importance of planning and taking ownership of their research
- Give them opportunities to present
- Bring more useful ideas and advice on agriculture predication

How do you see your role and the role of your grower group in being a conduit for industry conversation on issues of strategic nature?

- Our role is a vital one – our membership and committee is representative of industry so are well placed to take part in strategic discussions
- Productive farms and successful businesses rely on sustainable natural resource base – they are intrinsically linked and I think (other than Erin Green’s talk) that as lacking today
- Help bring topics to the core
- Key! Growers need to drive the conversations!
- If we know in advance what info is required from our group we can ask at next meeting and report back to industry body ie. Not a separate meeting
- NRM regional structure and funding on sustainable ag can be better integrated with ‘ag’ sector
- Strong link to provide two-way communication
- Grower group is of huge importance role to convey info of situation in area and should be first point of contact
- Important in extension, collaboration and partnership in R, D & E
- Can see what are industry issues and grower issues
- My role – to drive conversation and raise awareness of the importance of this
- Systems development
- Good opportunity to contribute and should be done through groups
- Communication conduct, recognising opportunities – thinking strategically about the industry as a whole. Getting growers to think that they are a business that ensures them to enjoy lifestyle.
- Motivator ad reinforcing the need to be strategic
- Recognising opportunities
- Important for 2-way transfer/sharing of info
- Engage with industry – talk to byers, processors, end users – engage with supply chain
- Keeping it real
- Help determine local focus – but need to engage with industry to feed it back – ensure smaller under resources groups are helped to do this though
- Networking and creating contacts

Other Comments:

- Let's keep talking!
- Overall another great forum! Well done!
- Thank you – fantastic event!
- Great valuable two days, thanks so much
- Thanks for a great day
- Great event. Well worth coming and well organised. Thank you
- Good job
- Well done, great day
- Excellent guest speaker selection
- Good mix of growers and advisors, to the point

Suggestions for the GGA (operational support, networking, training, event support, RD&E network, project brokering and collaborations, communication/extension):

- Continued grower group representation in the R4R negotiations and discussions
- HR and our health plans?
- Promote and run business management training and upskilling opportunities
- You are doing excellent work
- This event should be held in July as August is too busy
- Recognising synergies and ideas that overlap and strengthening groups by value adding to their projects or idea
- Linking groups, projects and funding
- Assisting groups to be proactive and stay ahead of the game
- How to engage with the farmers not attending grower groups or areas without one
- More collaboration in NRM networks – was indicated today, GGA is a very small group who do a great job – but could improve their reach by collaborating more broadly
- Meet with Landgate to get more information on their agricultural services
- Good stuff. Well done look forward to next one
- Getting the groups to work together, a lot have similar aims, values, etc.
- Staff tour to visit other grower groups
- Scientists meet grower groups day