



Online platform to boost grower groups data sharing

The Grower Group Alliance (GGA) has recently been contracted to coordinate the trial data acquisition and support program for the Online Farm Trials (OFT) project in Western Australia.

The GRDC funded OFT project is being led by the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) at Federation University Australia in Ballarat, Victoria. The OFT project allows regionally based grower groups and researchers to host historical and current trial information on a central online repository. It also allows for users to quickly search, refine and analyse information from all available trials.

GGA Project Officer Tom Lamond has been appointed as the WA project coordinator for the OFT project. Tom said one of the challenges facing grower groups, researchers and the wider Agribusiness community is knowing what trial work has been conducted previously across the state and nationally, and what the results of these investments have been.

“With grower groups and research organisations becoming involved with this system we hope to see reduced duplication of trial work and a more comprehensive understanding of the scope and type of on-farm research being conducted across Australia,” Tom said.

The OFT system not only provides users with the ability to search from a wide range of different trial projects across Australia, but also allows for the download and analysis of trial data.

“The ability to download the results of multiple trials of a similar type and then conduct a desktop analysis on the a wide range of historical trial results will enable groups and researchers to possibly answer some research questions without having to undertake time consuming and costly field trials,” Tom said.

There are currently 460 Western Australian trials on the OFT system, originating from Liebe Group hosted trials and a number of recent Regional Cropping Solutions Network (RCSN) projects.

GGA will be coordinating the development of data sharing agreements with Western Australian grower groups which will include funding to assist groups in undertaking the historical data upload.

The GGA will also be providing localised training and technical support to groups wishing to undertake the initial upload of data.

The Grower Group Alliance is a non-profit, farmer driven organisation connecting grower groups, research organisations and agribusiness in a network across WA. The GGA project is currently funded by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

The OFT system can be accessed at www.farmtrials.com.au, or to hear OFT Project Manager Robert Milne discuss how the OFT system works you can download the GRDC *Driving Agronomy Podcast* here: <http://grdc.com.au/Media-Centre/GRDC-Podcasts/Northern-Weekly-Update/2015/07/089-north>

If grower groups or research organisations would like to get involved with the OFT system or would like to know how the platform could benefit them, contact Tom Lamond, T: 08 6180 5759 E: tlamond@gga.org.au



Photo Caption A: GGA Project Officer and Online Farm Trials Coordinator (West) Tom Lamond