

Vegetable Farm Productivity and Resource Use Management Strategic Investment Advisory Panel meeting summary

Date: 24th August 2017

Attendance: Jeff McSpedden, Michael Radcliff, Rachel Lancaster, Andrew Craigie, Rob Hinrichsen, Sharron Windolf, Bill Bulmer, Mike Keller, Calum Wilson, Jessica Lye, Sam Turner (Hort Innovation), Will Gordon (Hort Innovation), Anthony Kachenko (Hort Innovation) Sarah Robins (Hort Innovation)

Location: Bureau of Meteorology, Level 9, 700 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Next Meeting: TBC

Overview

Hort Innovation convened a meeting of the Farm Productivity, Resource Use Management Strategic Investment Advisory Panel and the offices of the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Melbourne.

The key purpose of this meeting was to:

1. Update the FPRUM SIAP on the vegetable R&D program implementation
2. Meet and discuss projects and weather forecasting with BOM staff
3. Seek advice from the panel on:
 - a. Concept proposals received by Hort Innovation
 - b. New concepts proposed by the panel.

The SIAP was given a tour of the Bureau of Meteorology facilities and witnessed the daily weather brief. The panel was then given an update from the BOM's newly formed Agriculture Program team and were given the opportunity to ask questions of BOM staff. Members of the BOM agriculture program were interested in the needs of vegetable growers and the role that the BOM plays in their businesses.

1. The SIAP received an update from BOM researcher Debra Hudson on the 'Multi-week and seasonal forecasting for horticulture' (VG13092) project. This project aims to improve the accuracy of seasonal forecasting for key vegetable growing regions.
2. The panel also received update on the program as follows:
3. The current financial position of the fund (Financials available here {Link}).
4. Consumer alignment focused projects currently underway.
5. The Lockyer Valley Young Growers supply chain study tour. This was a \$12,000 investment and supported 24 participants under the age of 30 to be involved in a tour of the Brisbane vegetable supply chain.
6. The current R&D program including the progress towards commercialisation of vegetable robotics.
7. BOM staff then ran a brainstorming session with the panel. The outcomes of this were twofold:

- For the BOM to get a better understanding of the challenges that growers face and the role that the BOM plays in their businesses to help continual improvement.
- For the SIAP to identify weather/weather forecasting related concepts for further investment.

The panel was then given a brief overview of sections of the vegetable Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and were briefed on the next steps for this document.

Finally the panel then assessed a number of concepts including:

- Chemistry to enhance root exudates to improve plant nutrition
- Solar powered pumping technology
- IPM strategies to control TPP
- Study tour coinciding with the International Horticulture Conference 2018

Anyone seeking further information on Hort Innovation's Vegetable R&D investments should note that a full list of projects, together with an overview of the program financials will be available on the vegetable webpage of the Hort Innovation website.

Next steps

Hort Innovation is currently working to progress the SIP

The next panel meeting will be arranged to coincide with the publishing of the SIP, this is yet to be decided.

Contact

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