

GRDC Foreword

On behalf of the Grains Research and Development Corporation, I have great pleasure in presenting the 2017 Eyre Peninsula (EP) Farming Systems Summary. This annual publication serves an important purpose in extending results and raising awareness regarding the outcomes and insights from the many agricultural research, development and extension (RD&E) activities conducted on the EP each year.

The 2017 season was a challenging one for many farmers in this region – an extremely dry start and variable conditions thereafter made for a trying year, and we can only hope that 2018 brings improved fortunes. The importance of targeted and regionally-relevant RD&E is often underlined during less than favourable seasons when access to knowledge and resources – pertinent to local farming systems – is critical for informed and timely decision-making.

The RD&E priorities of EP farmers are being addressed through a diverse and evolving range of investments and efforts by organisations including the GRDC, the South Australian Research and Development Institute, the University of Adelaide, the South Australian Grain Industry Trust, CSIRO, EP Agricultural Research Foundation, Lower Eyre Agricultural Development Association, EP Natural Resources Management Board and local farm advisers and agribusinesses who collaborate with great commitment and dedication to advance farming systems on the EP.

Whilst regional challenges remain around soil constraints; herbicide resistance; soil moisture conservation; seasonal climatic variability; disease, pest and nutrient management; mixed farming complexities and systems diversity; opportunities also continue to present.

It is therefore imperative that as new knowledge emerges from local RD&E activities, these learnings and advances are extended to growers and advisers as rapidly and effectively as possible to ensure on-farm practice change and adoption of recommendations and new technologies to deliver improved profitability. Much of the latest knowledge generated out of regionally-based research is captured and summarised in this publication and provides food for thought ahead of season 2018 and well beyond.

For the GRDC, the arrival of 2018 marks the beginning of what will perhaps be the most transformational period of grains RD&E investment in the corporation's history.

The GRDC has commenced development of the Strategic Research, Development and Extension Plan for 2018-23, with the plan's overarching objective supporting the GRDC's revised purpose of creating enduring profitability for Australian grain growers. Pivotal to the plan's development and future investment focus will be the feedback we receive from growers and other industry stakeholders. That feedback will be fed into the RD&E Plan to provide GRDC and broader industry with a sound and strategic framework for future investment - well beyond the next five years - geared to deliver profit-building outcomes for growers across the nation, including those on the EP.

To assist in capturing growers' priorities and in ensuring the objectives of the strategic plan are met, the GRDC has recognised the need for significantly greater regional presence and outreach to better engage and communicate with growers, the farm advisory sector, researchers, agribusiness and other important stakeholders. The skills, expertise, experience and knowledge of the regional staff we now have on board enables the GRDC to be more responsive and agile in identifying and responding to key issues affecting grower profitability. With regional staff in place, backed by the Southern Regional Panel and the Regional Cropping Solutions Network whose members are located on the EP and beyond, we now have a sound platform to deliver even greater impact from targeted GRDC investments in RD&E.

Maintaining an open dialogue is vital in ensuring issues of most concern to farmers on the EP are considered and appropriately addressed and so I encourage you to make contact with GRDC staff, Panel and RCSN members to raise any ideas or concerns you may have. In the meantime, I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to this summary, particularly the SARDI staff who have collated the publication. I encourage you take the time to review and digest the results presented and determine where they have applicability to your farming system and how they can be factored into your decision-making and future business management.



Craig Ruchs, GRDC Senior Regional Manager – South

