

Driving adoption of RD&E findings in our industry

Driving adoption of new and existing technologies is one of the key initiatives that SRA will focus on to improve the production, profitability and sustainability of businesses of our members and levy payers.

The development of SRA's new draft Adoption Strategy has been based upon feedback provided by a wide range of participants who represent the diversity of the SRA membership.

To confirm that the strategy will meet the needs of the growing and milling sectors, we are conducting a comprehensive consultation process.

Delegates were recently involved in a series of webinars in which the strategy was explained in detail.

The delegates also had the opportunity to provide their feedback, and overall the strategy was well received by this group.

Further consultation with SRA members and levy payers, industry representative bodies and key stakeholders such as the productivity service sector will take place.

The strategy comprises three main elements

1. Development Officers will spend approximately half of their time providing discipline-based expertise across 12 technical areas.

Working with researchers they will also package the latest findings to produce extension materials for use by all extension providers.

The other half of their time will be spent working collaboratively with local industry, including our grower and miller members, levy payers and extension providers, to identify productivity constraints, and develop tailored regional solutions to overcome them.

To ensure equity among the regions, the officers will be spread throughout the industry with an allocation of one officer for each four million tonnes of cane produced.

This will create a new position in the Herbert – already filled – and another position added to the Southern region.

2. The concept of Adoption Support Officers will also be piloted. These graduate positions will initially be recruited into two regions and will work alongside local extension providers to conduct on-farm trials and evaluations with interested groups of growers. Trial activities will be identified locally through consultation with industry.
3. SRA will accelerate adoption and develop capacity within productivity service groups and other extension providers by providing competitive funding for Regional Applied Research (RAR) projects.

Each project will be supported with funding of up to \$100,000 to enable extension practitioners and growers to develop experience by trialling and evaluating new technologies over two to three years.

You can read more about two new RAR projects related to improving cane losses during harvesting by SRA Development Officer Phil Patane later in this edition.

The success of this strategy will be measured by the return on investment achieved in response to the level of investment made in the strategy. This will be determined through a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation program.

I look forward to receiving your feedback on the proposed strategy and working with everyone involved the industry to make this a success.

Dr Andrew Ward

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