

**National Forum of the Managing Climate Variability Program
'Climate Connect 2006'
29 & 30 March 2006**

Feedback Summary

Please find listed below some of the key sentiments from the feedback forms:

- From the minimal number of responses we received the majority of comments were responses from Landholders/Farmers. Please note these findings give a limited representation of delegate views as we received only 27 responses from a potential 120 attending delegates.
- The overall response to the conference was "Very Useful". Comments included that participants were able to get achieve a good overview of the programme, useful take home information and that a good balance of strategic and ground level information was presented.
- *Value in Forum Session*
"MCV has done a fantastic job of drawing together the full range of people from heavy duty science types through extensive, application & farmer types"
"Way of synthesising lots of information in an efficient way"
"Professionalism, high level of skill/knowledge/expertise grower involvement (the "relevance" factor)"
- *What could have been added or changed to make the forum sessions even more useful;*
 - A separate farmer's forum if their feedback was wanted.
 - More time looking at models
 - Workshop sessions on Day 1 / better structure & facilitation on Day 1
 - A glossary of acronyms!
 - Fewer speakers allowed to speak for longer would have enabled deeper insights and more time to ask questions
- *Do climate forecasting tools assist you in making better decisions and what would improve such decision making tool to better meet your needs?*
Overall response was a hearty YES. Requests for a web based one stop shop for forecasting data was a common request along with increased skill & longer lead times.
"Straight weather forecasting not the models derived for annual cropping and grass grow"
"A birdseye/helicopter view of all the tools & their applicability & benefits. i.e. a systems" map of CV in Ag tools"
"Improved forecast systems (obviously). Very little effort has been put into improving forecasts for the southern rangelands of WA"
- *Comments on Handouts, Fact sheets etc.*
The content of the fact sheets were highly praised with several requests that it would be helpful for delegates to have this information prior to the commencement of the forum. Several delegates requested copies of the presentations as a resource tool. A CD-ROM is currently being produced which will contain pdf's of the fact sheets, speaker presentations and a delegate list of those who attended.
- *New ideas or insights that you have you gained by participating in the two days?*
 - Overview of MCV program.
 - Contacts/Networks.
 - "Need to pursue Yield Prophet capabilities in a variable climate"
 - "I wasn't aware of the revolution in climate science since the 90's. I assumed that there had been a gradual progression of knowledge and applications- not an explosion. I still think that the need for producers to realistically understand existing climate variability is just as important as seasonal forecasting & climate change. In terms of applications & producer decisions - understand current variability is critical"
 - "New idea - opportunity to apply existing technologies to the sugar industry. Insights - Huge "climate variability in ag" program exists in that is internationally recognised"
 - "Better understanding of Global Circulation model. Good to hear silo is tackling wind"
 - "The need to explore APSIM & WHOPPER CROPPER more"
 - "Lots more adoption in states other than Queensland. Seasonal forecast development not well founded"

- *Are you planning on following up or doing differently (or what current plans have been reinforced) as a result of what was covered in the forum?*

Delegates seemed enthusiastic and proactive in following up and adjusting their approaches.

“Will seek more info on forward seasonal info. Will look at current and future predictive modelling tools”

“Continue to work with Melissa's team to assist my business to make smart climate decisions.”

“Follow up with LWA re both total research \$'s and proportional sources - that is that those who demand a particular outcome must be prepared to pay more”

“Moving from the "false certainty" to probability based. Limitations of statistical forecasting models”

“Better use of Rainman to explain probabilities to land holders”

“Need to get soil PAWC worked out to utilise APSIM & WHOPPER CROPPER”

“To keep planning flexible and focus on opportunity based decisions”

- *What are the major future research, development & adoption priorities for Climate forecasting Research & Development?*

- Understanding the needs of producers. Drought, floods, frosts, late breaks, dry periods are all costly events; if there is a way of indicating any or all of these communications is needed and it must be accessible by land owners & managers

- Accuracy and trustworthy longer term climate forecasting – 1, 3, 6, 12 months

- Concepts like Yield Prophet i.e. Web access to model. Understanding on how to get the most out of the websites

- Applicability of forecasts to land managers at a landholding scale. Then the extension staff available to take this "on the road"

- *How we can continue to meet your needs in accessing information about managing climate risk?*

CLIMAG - 32%

Publications - 32%

Website - 64%

Workshops - 52%

National Forums - 60%

Involvement in BoM - 32%

Other - 16%

Other suggestions included:

Requests to continue to work to maintain the networks, the collaboration and the communication.

Grain Growers Groundcover Quarterly would be ideal to indicate trends/changes

An E-newsletter

Tools on the website

- *Final Comments*

- As a general consensus the concurrent sessions on Day 2 were more popular than the structure on Day 1. Many delegates felt that fewer speakers on Day 1 would have been advantageous to allow more time for in depth discussions and allow for more question time.

- Requests for more time to look at models.

- Good catering! An important contributing factor to the success of a forum.

- Numerous requests for the production of a list that includes delegate names, organisations, email and phone to facilitate follow-up contact and also copies of the presentations.

- ***What we have learnt from the feedback for next time***

Less focus on evolution of Climate Science and more focus on demonstrating how Climate variability tools can be used for managing risk by resource managers.

Opportunity for farmers to meet as a peer group to discuss forum and present their thoughts and needs to the scientific community.