

Joint release with GGA

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WESTERN

Research finds opportunity to reclaim \$300M in grain lost at harvest

Research measuring the scale of grain and profit lost during harvest has found Western Australian growers have an opportunity to prevent harvest losses which were estimated at \$300 million in 2021.

Findings from the 12-month Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) investment, led by Grower Group Alliance (GGA), have been compiled from a study conducted across 75 sites during harvest 2021.

GGA found the average losses in wheat and barley crops were around two and 4.6 per cent per hectare respectively. In canola, losses were measured at 3.2 per cent per hectare but were as high as 10 per cent at some sites.

Results indicate that, using receival figures from Grain Industry Western Australia (GIWA) and the price of grain at harvest, more than \$300 million worth of grain was likely left in paddocks last season from front and other machine losses across all crops grown in WA.

In comparison, industry wide loss benchmarks are less than 1 per cent per hectare for cereals and 2-3 per cent per hectare for canola but should be balanced with harvest capacity and machine running costs.

GGA Program Broker Mark Holland said that historically, growers had relied on visual assessment of grain on the ground to measure losses, but this method did not provide the accuracy needed for informed decisions about machine setup and setting changes.

“The importance of using drop trays to determine losses and calibrate loss sensors is critical,” Mr Holland said.

“In this study, growers using drop trays averaged 1.3 per cent machine losses across all crops, while those not using trays averaged 2.9 per cent.

“These benchmarks for grain losses at harvest support growers to strike the optimum balance between acceptable grain loss and harvest efficiency.”

Sampling was conducted by officers at Facey Group, Liebe Group and Stirlings to Coast Farmers, with protocols produced by Glen Riethmuller (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development), Peter Broley (Primary Sales) and Ben White (Kondinin Group). Mr White also analysed the data.

Results from the study will help to inform upcoming GRDC Western Harvester Forums beginning on 12 September.

Coordinated by the Facey Group in WA as part of a national GRDC investment, the forums bring together industry experts and local growers to speak on integration of harvest weed seed control options, harvester fire prevention and accurate measurement and management of harvest losses.

They will be led by industry specialists including Peter Broley (Primary Sales Australia), Ben White (Kondinin Group), Brett Aspher (Seed Terminator), Kassie van der Westhuizen (Harvest Specialist), Michael Bailey (Primary Sales Australia) and Peter Newman (Planfarm).

Forums are planned across the following dates and locations:

- [Tarin Rock – Monday 12 September 2022](#)
- [Frankland – Tuesday 13 September 2022](#)
- [Merredin – Tuesday 20 September 2022](#)
- [Buntine – Wednesday 21 September 2022](#)
- [Chapman Valley – Thursday 22 September 2022](#)

GRDC Grower Relations Manager West, Jo Wheeler, said that the baselines for harvest losses established in the study would help growers gauge the magnitude of their harvest losses, while harvester set up forums connected them to the industry experts to help optimise their machines.

“Often growers aren’t fully aware of the true extent of their harvest losses and the subsequent impact on their profitability,” Ms Wheeler said.

“Findings from this study confirm that measuring the grain thrown out of their harvesters is one of the single biggest things growers can do to put more profit in their pockets at harvest.

“These key GRDC investments bring together grower groups and industry specialists to support growers with machinery decisions to mitigate losses, share insights gained from previous projects and identify continued research needs in this area.”

Information on the [Measuring Harvester Losses in Western Australia project](#) is available on the GGA website.

To register for the GRDC Western Harvester Forums, visit the GRDC website or contact the Facey Group on (08) 9888 1223 or email innovation@faceygroup.org.au.

GRDC has a range of [harvest resources](#), including optimising harvest losses, available on the GRDC website.

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Image 1: Findings from a 12-month GRDC investment led by GGA have found that more than \$300 million worth of grain was likely left in paddocks last season from front and other machine losses. Image: Ben White

Image 2: GGA Program Broker Mark Holland said that using drop trays to determine losses and calibrate loss sensors is critical. Image: GGA

Image 3: Results from the harvester losses study will help to inform upcoming GRDC Western Harvester Forums beginning on 13 September.

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