

**W**HEN the dust finally settles on the 2023/24 season, current estimates put total winter and summer crop production at around 50 million tonnes. For those of us who have been around the weighbridges for a few years, you would reckon that 50 Mt is a pretty respectable result. After all, it took us a couple of hundred years to deliver the nation's first ever 60 Mt plus grain crop.



That happened in 2016 when a bumper crop was harvested off a bit over 24 million hectares. But for the next three years the best the nation could do was 42 Mt across the scales. Our previous 5-year production average to that point in time was around 45 Mt. So happy days – in terms of averages, 50 Mt last season would appear to stack up well.

But let's have a quick look at the national numbers over more recent seasons.

Total grain deliveries across the past five seasons have averaged almost 57 Mt – or 25 per cent better than the 2012 through 2016 period and off about the same planted area (an average of 24 million hectares). That's an awful lot of additional grain – and dollars – washing through the system.

Deserved beneficiaries of these extra dollars include hard-working farming families, associated service industries and our regional economy generally. The coffers of our Grains Research & Development Corporation have also enjoyed a massive boost thanks to a combination of much higher levy revenue, returns from investments as well as the 'linked' federal government contribution which makes up roughly 40 per cent of total contributions each year.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the GRDC had a total combined income of \$419 million – its highest ever and a record breaking total for the third year in a row. This has led to a very strong current equity position for the GRDC of almost \$630 million.

### So, what's happening with all of this money?

In each of the past two financial years, around \$177 million has been spent directly on more than 800 individual Research, Development and Extension projects across the country. And according to the budget forecasts in the GRDC's RD&E 5-year Plan (2023–28), this spending will increase by around 30 per cent to \$230 million a year. In other words, the Corporation expects to spend more than \$1 billion in R&D investments across the next five years.

Whether it's through the collection of grain levies or income tax, most of this is grower's money. So it's vital that GRDC investments hit the regional and national targets that growers want them to hit and for a time period that allows for meaningful research outcomes. It's also good to see plenty of GRDC (i.e. your) money being spent on infrastructure investments for various research bodies and grower groups.

It's a good time to get into the ear of your local GRDC contact to make sure some of your levies and taxes come back home.



## In this issue...

### Pest control with precision

Each season, growers and agronomists face important choices in how to best manage pests. Insecticides are a crucial tool, yet there is an increasing dialogue about the significance of beneficial insects, which play a vital role in keeping pest populations below economically damaging levels.

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### An update on new pre-emergent herbicide options

When devising a weed control strategy, pre-emergent herbicides can be a valuable additional tactic to help drive weed numbers down. This article includes an overview and discussion of new pre-emergent herbicides now available to the grains industry.

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lan provides us with another fascinating glimpse into his world of Lanz Bulldogs, when he was a field representative for Lanz Australia Pty. Ltd., back in the 1950s.

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### Nitrogen cycling and making better decisions for your farm

Cropping soils are declining in natural fertility as the time since conversion to cropping from previous land uses increases. At the same time, improved agronomic practices continue to increase grain yield of both cereal and pulse cropping systems.

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### Weevil Weevil Rock You: Introducing our favourite weevils

Why are weevils such wicked weed warriors? And how did we end up with a weevil collected by Darwin? Let's soar like a weevil and get to know some of these snouty beetles.

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