

JOB DESCRIPTION - NETWORK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Job Purpose:

The Network Development Officer (NDO) will take an active role in up skilling growers in new technologies and methodologies within broad acre cropping and fibre systems, utilising resources from within the grower groups as well as from industry, research and government bodies.

Main Responsibilities:

- Encourage, facilitate and enhance practical information sharing amongst members of the groups (AgVance Farming and Upper Namoi Cotton Growers Assoc - UNCGA) such that they may learn from one another and determine the likely applicability of the information to their farming systems (grain and cotton).
- Disseminate research and new farming practices to the members of the groups (and their advisors).
- Keep informed on technical developments and management techniques via networking, personal development and training and ensure this information is distilled back to growers: particularly in regards to current and improving technologies and methodologies within the grain and cotton farming systems.
- To engage new growers, inform them of services and support that is available as well as provide information as required
- To arrange and coordinate capacity building activities with the ultimate aim of increasing the productivity of all participants
- Report regularly to AgVance, UNCGA and CRDC
- Develop and maintain close relationships with Cotton Australian and the CRDC R&D team.

The aim of these activities is to up skill growers; keep them at the forefront of technology and research, allowing them to be more profitable and sustainable.

As part of this, you must try to avoid doubling up on what growers would receive from their agronomists or from newsletters from resellers

Activities to achieve the above:

- Communicate with the Ag Industry, specifically:
 - Members of AgVance and UNCGA
 - Cotton Australia
 - Agronomists/consultants – both ag resellers & private, encouraging them to be involved in meetings because it helps the growers in a number of ways:
 - through the great technical input of the consultants;
 - by growers and advisors both hearing the information it means they are both informed and can discuss the new ideas;
 - for growers that miss a meeting, the information can filter through via the consultant.
 - NSW Ag, CMA (LLS).
 - Cotton Seed Distributors (CSD)

- Growers not involved in the groups. If you know there is something interesting they are doing (both outside the Upper Namoi and within the Upper Namoi - contact them and seek information).
- Write weekly newsletter - take an in paddock practice/problem and give the growers view of this and then also reference science related to it.
- Organise and run Post Winter and Post Summer Crop season meetings
- Organise and coordinate farm tours – summer and winter crop
- Organise AgVance summer and winter crop judging competition
- UNCGA cotton grower awards – organise entries, take judges around to farms, organise a presentation about the crops for the awards dinner.
- Keep phone contact with members as well as infrequent on farm member visits.
- Be involved in CGA fundraising event.
- Communicate with sponsors.
- Work in with the CRDC/CSD funded RDO's (Regional Development Officers) in other valleys – attend conferences and fortnightly teleconferences. Keep in contact with the lead of this team.
- Set up trials and disseminate the results.
- Seek funding that would help AgVance financially and create useful learnings for growers
- Create and lodge funding reports to CRDC.
- Introduce new ideas to keep things 'fresh'.
- Attend relevant field days ie DPI, GRDC, Cotton Australia, CRDC R&D

Ways to communicate and achieve the above:

- Focus on drawing out what growers are doing, why they are doing it. Let their story be told with no assumptions. Take grower practices and cross reference them with research/science and with other growers – to see if other growers have had a similar experience or a totally different one.
- Ask very open ended questions in the hope that you might find out about something different someone is doing and also question, "Is there something you are doing that might be different to other growers?"
- Do not pass judgement on anything someone tells you that they are doing –creating an environment that growers are happy to tell you about any activities they are having a go at.
- Encourage the sharing of wins as well as muck ups.
- Share growers' experiences through the newsletter and meetings (including their names – having checked that they are happy to have comments published).
- Encourage people to be open to new ideas and to think a little differently.

Key Performance Activities:

- To identify the knowledge and information limitations with AgVance and UNCGA members around both farming systems.
- To organise a minimum of 4 field days for a 12 month period utilising industry experts, researchers and commercial operators as required.
- Report to AgVance and UNCGA on activities
- Attend relevant industry events and report on these back to AgVance and UNCGA
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of this joint project
- Evaluate attendees at field days and survey all members, collating and reporting on results.