

7. PTN Field days and stakeholder engagement at trial sites

7.1 Purpose

The Pasture Trials Network (PTN) coordinates a network of variety evaluation trials across temperate Australia to support productivity gains through improved cultivars across key grazing production zones.

Communication of the purpose, function, and value of the PTN trials to the broader industry to support program awareness, industry stakeholders, and improved pasture agronomy is central to adopting the PTN trial outcomes. The industry should use the trials as objective seasonal pasture production data to inform purchase decisions.

7.2 Strategy

- *PTN trial sites can be accessed by investing stakeholders and individuals approved by the PTN Executive Officer.
 - *Trial visits and persons attending are to be notified and approved by the PTN Executive Officer.*
 - *The trial co-operator to ensure a sowing map is available.**
- *Field days are ideally to be centred around core regional sites that align with the conditions below as accepted by the PTN Technical Working Group (TWG), Communication Working Group (CWG) and PTN Board.*
- *Target audiences include, but are not limited to:
 - *An advisor who wholesales information to clients*
 - *Agribusiness – awareness of PTN and benefits*
 - *Producers in temperate Australia*
 - *Seed resellers – that commercially sell seed to producers independent of seed companies.**
- *At a minimum, the number of attendees to be recorded and which aspect of the above industries they best align to.*

7.3 Site selection

Criteria for trials that can be selected for active field day input are to align to:

- *Ideally, trials operated by independent trial co-operators demonstrate no perceived bias from the industry.*
- *The site is to be of tidy presentation, with low to no background weeds in plots and surrounding buffers.
 - *Suppose pest pressure is observed and represents sound agronomic results and the impact of pest pressure that demonstrates the value of species selection and endophytes. In that case, this is a discussion point at the field day.**

- *Ease of access and safety for attendees to park and transverse the site, and the site adheres to biosecurity protocols.*
- *Hosting at perennial trials (3-year trials) is to only occur in the final year or post-trial (preferable).*
- *Trials are to have been audited approximately 6-months before the field day.*

7.4 Field day timing

The event's timing is strongly recommended to be held in Spring, ideally between September and November in most cases for all species. However, the event's timing can be varied to coincide with local key grazing constraints, for example, addressing the autumn feed gap.

It is recognised that some species may be at differing levels of 'maturity' in plant development. The site is to be harvested between two (2) and three (3) weeks before the field day, and a nutrient application is to occur between the harvest and field day.

7.5 Unblinding of plots

Criteria of lines to be unblinded include:

- *Only commercial lines are to be unblinded.*
- *All reps of a line are to be unblinded.*
- *Breeder's lines are to be communicated as "breeder lines" with no inference supplied on the breeding organisation.*

Unblinded plot signage for COMMERCIAL LINES is to comprise the following where relevant:

- *Company name.*
- *Cultivar name.*
- *Ploidy (diploid or tetraploid).*
- *Endophyte*
- *Sub-species (Continental, intermediate or Mediterranean, etc.).*
- *Lucerne dormancy.*

Unblinded plot signage for BREEDER LINES is to comprise of:

- *A label stating Breeder Line.*
- *Ploidy (diploid or tetraploid) where relevant.*

Plot signage is to align to Policy: Data Transparency.

7.6 Field day communication plan

General field day discussion points are to be led by the trial co-operator with support from the PTN, which potentially include the following discussion points:

- *Background to the PTN and its formation, including the transition from PVTN to PTN and objectives.*
- *Recognition of funding stakeholders.*
- *The PTN tool and seasonal data can be used to support purchasing decisions.*

- *The general operation of the trials and quality expectations.*
- *Agronomy of pasture systems:*
 - *Value of improved cultivars with no focus on cultivar specifics.*
 - *Value of alternative species if trials are present, for example, the role of cocksfoot, fescues, etc., within the local grazing systems.*
 - *Local pests or issues have arisen during the trial.*

In addition to the PTN program, make potential awareness of:

- *Variation in flowering timing and the impact of grazing quality in all species.*
- *What is the value of endophytes in assisting pasture persistence and variation in animal impact?*
- *Consultants can discuss and interpret the data and trial value in a local productivity performance context.*

All delivery materials must:

- *Reference the [MLA eTools platform](#) and [Dairy Australia FVI](#) programs, and **must** be included on handouts or, at minimum, made available to producers.*
- *Unblinded cultivars are to be identified by markers within the ground.*

7.7 Data presentation

No raw/unanalysed data will be presented on the field day.

- *Published trials from the region are to be made available to promote the eTool.*
- *An overall trial mean can be communicated for active trials, i.e., average yield per harvest event, total season, or annual production. **No individual cultivar values are to be communicated.***

These steps are to ensure good messaging on cultivar performance of active trials is to be communicated to the target audience.

7.8 Review

The policy is to be reviewed annually in partnership with the TWG and CWG and approved by the PTN Board.