

THE NATIONAL PRIMARY INDUSTRIES RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION FRAMEWORK

Why have a framework?

Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) in primary industries is a key factor for increasing productivity and ensuring sustainability. RD&E across Australia is a very complex web of research providers and investors who are independent operators with strong interconnections. The 16 rural R&D corporations and industry-owned companies (RDCs) are an integral component of this web, as well as the state and territory governments, CSIRO, universities and private providers. If Australia's primary industries are to improve their productivity and sustainability they cannot afford a fragmented or duplicative RD&E system. Nationally, RD&E investment in primary industries, which exceeds \$1 billion annually, needs to be focussed, used efficiently, effectively and collaboratively.

Background

In April 2005 the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) endorsed the concept of 'National R with Regional D&E'. The concept recognises that basic and strategic research (R) can be provided from a distance, with regional adaptive development (D) and local extension (E) required to improve the uptake of innovation by industry.

Subsequently, in April 2006, PIMC agreed to a set of principles to facilitate further cooperation between agencies and industry for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the national RD&E capability. These principles emphasise cooperation, information sharing, maintaining funding, access to capability and reporting (attachment A).

The notion of collaborative RD&E between agencies is now well established and in April 2007 PIMC agreed to develop a National Research, Development and Extension Framework as a broad national plan to provide a more comprehensive, structured approach within an agreed timeframe.

On 6 November 2008, PIMC endorsed the National Primary Industries Research Development and Extension Framework (National RD&E Framework) including the development of an overarching inter-governmental agreement. PIMC also acknowledged the significant contribution and progress that has been made by agencies, RDCs and peak industry bodies in developing the fourteen sectoral and seven cross sectoral industry strategies.

What the framework will look like

The Framework spans 14 primary industry sectors (including new and emerging industries) and seven cross-industry sectors. These are:

- primary industry sectors: beef, cotton, dairy, fisheries and aquaculture, forests, grains, horticulture, pork, poultry, sheepmeat, sugar, wine, wool, and new and emerging industries
- cross-industry sectors: animal biosecurity, animal welfare, biofuels and bioenergy, climate change and variability, food and nutrition, plant biosecurity and water use in agriculture.

To build the Framework each industry sector and cross-sectoral issue will be explored for its RD&E capacity, research priorities, emerging needs and opportunities. This involves consulting with relevant collaborators (including universities) in each sector to identify resource requirements and implementation issues.

What we can expect from the framework?

When the Framework is fully implemented, it is expected:

- research capability will become more collaborative, specialised, have larger critical mass and will be less fragmented across the nation. Efficiency and effectiveness of RD&E will be markedly improved overall, although some additional costs could be incurred providing national linkages and to support delivery of regional development and local extension.
- agencies will retain and build capability in fields strategically important to their jurisdictions and industries. At the same time, it is expected agencies will collaborate with others to provide for a more comprehensive national research capability.
- the national research capability will be an integral component of a wider innovation agenda, supporting development and extension. To encourage rapid uptake of new technologies, research developed in one location would be available nationally for the whole industry.

By ensuring the substantial resources invested by government and industry in research are managed cooperatively, a more efficient, effective and comprehensive capability will be possible.

What will success look like?

There will be a more coordinated and collaborative approach to rural RD&E, national research capability will be focussed, used efficiently, and effectively to achieve the best outcome and uptake by primary industries.