

Supplementary submission to the House of Representatives Agriculture and Industry Committee Inquiry into agricultural innovation

Introduction

We have provided this additional submission to provide some more information arising from the questions posed at the inquiry. I remain of course at the disposal of the Committee for any further questions.

Extension and adoption

There is no simple solution to better adoption of research outcomes leading to improved innovation. One of the Strategies of the Australia Grape and Wine Authority (AGWA) strategic plan is to improve the adoption of research outcomes:

Strategy 3.1: Adopting research outcomes ²

- Increase the rate of adoption of R&D outcomes in the Australian wine community. ²
- The revised National Primary Industries Research, Development and Extension Framework – Wine Sector Strategy is implemented. ²
- Measure the impact of RD&E investments. ²
- Report to stakeholders on the impact of RD&E investments

Over the past few years, we have found that the National Primary Industries Research, Development and Extension Framework – Wine Sector Strategy has been important in improving the coordination of extension activities. As extension resources become scarcer, this permits common material to be unrolled across the country. However, the framework is still not working as effectively as it should and greater support from States and the Federal Government is necessary to maximise opportunities. In particular, the integration of cross –sectoral strategies into the framework is required.

The regional programs undertaken by AGWA also allow the development of targeted activities. However, we still see relatively low levels of adoption of research outcomes.

Our discussions with the sector lead us to believe that innovation and adoption are more likely to happen if they are demanded by practitioners in the regions. Probably the best way of is through the use of field trails (for viticulture) or winery trials (for winemaking) so that those involved in the industry are actually involved in developing and managing activities. Even stronger, is when a region can come up with an idea, which can then be developed in to a trial /experiment. This type of approach engages the interest of the industry in the region and permits them to use their expertise translate research results into innovation.

Leadership capability

Building leadership and capability in our industry is also a key strategy of AGWA:

Strategy 8: Building capability Developing people

To drive the sector forward and build value through innovation, it is imperative that we develop our leadership skills base and human resource assets. We will maintain our investment in developing the capability and capacity of those working in the grape and wine community – researchers, winemakers and grapegrowers. For researchers, this will include support for PhD, Masters and Honours scholarships and the offering of opportunities to extend knowledge through global collaboration. For the broader sector, the investment will result in a suite of activities that are designed to meet the identified needs of the sector, to facilitate collaboration and to encourage development of, and in, thought leaders, innovators and game-changers.

Programs such as future leaders have been tremendously important in broadening the horizons of younger industry members and showing them the opportunities of leadership. However, it is becoming clear that development of leadership skills is only part of the solution. This probably needs to be coupled with improved business skills training and corporate governance training. Industry leaders (who are also more innovative and entrepreneurial) need to have this basis to make better leadership decisions. As they rarely have extensive business experience at this stage, this provides them with the balance to be better business people and make more informed decisions.

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