

R-CV 3: Building an Agricultural Innovation Movement

Develop and implement a multi-partner innovation strategy (incl. an innovation network), providing the agricultural community with access to knowledge, technical support and opportunities to connect with others trying new ideas.

This strategy delivers on these Regional Themes	Biodiversity	Biosecurity	Coastal Systems	Sustainable Industries	Water
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
This strategy delivers on these Strategic Outcomes	Supportive, policies, plans and regulations	Collaborative, adaptive planning and action	Traditional Owner Benefits	Sustained and diverse resourcing	Community stewardship, values and action
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outcome	<p>Delivering strategic support for agricultural innovation in the region will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative farmers feeling empowered and enabled to share their ideas and experiences amongst themselves, as well as the broader community. An increase in the number of farmers who are inspired and enabled to adopt innovative practices. Greater community awareness and appreciation of the innovative approaches that are being applied in this region, and the benefits these are providing the whole community.
Justification	<p>Agricultural land holds the future – however to build greater resilience (environmental and economic), transformational change is required in the way we go about managing the land for food production, and innovation is key. Providing support for farmer innovation is a priority to fast track change. Support such as easy access to knowledge, case studies and a non-judgemental, open minded space for sharing experiences will not only support those individuals that are trying new things and responding proactively to change, but also build a culture of experimentation and adaptation in the agricultural sector. There are already some excellent examples of innovative and engaging extension and knowledge brokerage initiatives in this region – ones that go far beyond traditional extension, and are independent from organisations promoting particular products.</p>
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Develop a region-wide, multi-partner Innovation Strategy, to identify the most effective and feasible ways to support innovative farmers to network and learn, building on existing industry arrangements. Need to use multiple delivery platforms incl. case studies, field days, annual forums, practical and research trials, videos, story maps, access to technical expertise, etc). 2) Build a central, accessible, moderated, credible place for finding information/research findings/ideas/contacts etc. (e.g. the Wet Tropics Plan). This hub should help farmers to make the most use of existing information (e.g. science, outcomes of trials, BOM forecasts). 3) Strengthen the connection between farmers and researchers through regional research partnerships, enhancing the capacity to run trials for verification (including economic analysis). 4) Develop and disseminate communication products to tell the good news stories about the efforts of innovative farmers, and the multiple benefits that they bring to the communities in the region.

Feasibility considerations

- ✓ There are highly innovative, productive farming enterprises achieving gains for the environment and making a contribution to climate mitigation and the story is now getting out there.
- ✓ There is increased interest from the community in more sustainable food (farm gate, food miles, organic).
- ✗ There is a disconnect between producer and consumer - farming is misunderstood by community and there is no immediate, visible impact on 'me' from industry decline. Farmers can be seen as the problem not the solution.
- ✗ Community demand for cheap produce is driving 'perverse' situation for farmers.
- ✗ Farming can be seen as less enticing to younger generation, partly connected to community perception and loss of pride in farming.