

Insect Pest Management in Sweet Corn

(Project VG 97036)

Milestone Number 3 Report



All major stakeholders in the sweetcorn industry have been identified and a mechanism for information exchange has been developed.

Due Date: 31/8/98

Introduction

Communication between team members and stakeholders is critical for ensuring the project continues to address the needs of stakeholders.

“The Sweet Corn Ear” newsletter and targetted news releases provide team members with an opportunity to share their news and results with a wide range of stakeholders around Australia without having to publish, maintain a database and distribute individual newsletters. “The Sweet Corn Ear” is also sent to rural newspapers and magazines, providing a mechanism for communicating with a wider audience.

Annual workshops involving all team members and some stakeholders allow us to see the project’s work as a whole, share ideas and plan future work together. Email provides a quick and effective link between team members for maintaining communication when face-to-face contact is not practical.

This report describes the communication infrastructure set up to ensure that quick, effective communication takes place between team members and industry stakeholders, a vital element in conducting an efficient and effective industry focussed and regionally disperse project.

Part 1. A list of names, addresses, etc of the project team and other stakeholders has been compiled.

An Access database has been developed containing names, postal and email addresses, phone and fax numbers of sweet corn stakeholders in eastern Australia. Team members around the country have identified stakeholders in their region and provided details to the database. Newsletters and newspaper articles have provided a means for other stakeholders to have themselves added to the database.

The database is regularly up-dated and continues to grow, with over 250 contacts currently listed (see Appendix A). It includes more than 120 growers, 60 researchers, 30 chemical company representatives and distributors, 25 seed company representatives and 10 processors. The database is maintained and regularly backed-up by Larissa Bilston, RDE Connections, The University of Queensland.

Part 2. The first yearly meeting of all stakeholders has been arranged in a growing region in Australia.

The first yearly meeting of all stakeholders was held in Gatton, Queensland during 19-20 May 1998. All stakeholders were invited to attend through the first project newsletter "The Sweet Corn Ear."

All project team members from all States attended the workshop, and were joined by five growers (including one from NSW and one from Victoria), four chemical company representatives, a seed company representative, a biological control producer and two other researchers.

Participants shared information on research results to date and the implications of that work. They also discussed future work plans, and worked together to modify their plans so that all work was complementary without unnecessary duplication of effort. Considerable effort was expended developing protocols for conduction of small plot trials, commercial scale trials and data collection for spray application evaluation and plant architecture data.

Proceedings from the workshop were published (Appendix B) and have been distributed free of charge to all stakeholders listed in the database. Copies were also distributed at the NSW Vegetables Conference, August 1998 in Bathurst, and are available upon request.

Part 3. A mechanism, such as fax/email/newsletter is in place, for the exchange of information between each yearly meeting of stakeholders.

The mechanism for the exchange of information between stakeholders throughout the year involves mailing newsletters called "The Sweet Corn Ear" whenever the project has something newsworthy to report. Colour letterhead paper containing a title banner and

the project logo has been printed for the publication. QDPI plans to publish all editions of the Sweet Corn Ear on its Web site beginning in late 1998.

Two editions of the newsletter have been published to date. The first (April 1998) provided an overview of the project and team members while the July 1998 issue focussed on workshop outcomes, current practices, and Best Management Options trials.

Planned future editions of the Sweet Corn Ear include:

- NSW Scouting Workshops and scouting protocols, September 98
- Beneficial insects in sweet corn production, November 98
- Pesticide application in sweet corn, February 99
- Heliothis Area Wide Management results, resistance, Lepton tests, etc, March 99
- Sweet corn cultivar testing, May 99
- BMO & small plot trial results, July 99
- Other topics as timely.

Report covers which can be customised for publication of all workshop proceedings, the project summary and other project reports have been printed. The project summary will be distributed to all stakeholders listed on the database during September 1998.

Email is the main method for communication between team members in between annual workshops. Larissa Bilston maintains an up-to-date email address book which is available to all team members. Johnny Anderson, QDPI, is investigating the possibility and usefulness of establishing a listserver for sweet corn pest management researchers.

The print media have also been used as a communication mechanism for the project. Three news releases have resulted in numerous articles in rural magazines and newspapers (Appendix C). Good Fruit and Vegetables requested an article on pest management utilising beneficial insects and biological insecticides which has been accepted for publication (Appendix C).

APPENDIX A – Confidential report of stakeholder database contents (Not for distribution).

APPENDIX B – Proceedings of Workshop No. 1.

APPENDIX C – Sweet Corn Ear newsletters, News Releases, Media Clippings.