



Youthful approach

ATTRACTING quality young talent into agricultural science in general and the grains industry in particular is critical for the future sustainability and profitability of Australian agriculture, according to Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) executive manager, John Harvey.

“By 2050, world population will exceed nine billion and we’ll need to produce more food using fewer available resources, including cropping area and water, so the grains industry must innovate and encourage the leaders of tomorrow,” he said.

Mr Harvey emphasised that building and sustaining research capacity for the future was a critical role for all GRDC program teams, but especially for Varieties, Practices and New Products.

Addressing a science communicators meeting at GRDC in Canberra, he said capacity building was closely aligned with GRDC’s lines of business and he outlined a range of initiatives and sponsorships to encourage young people to enter agricultural careers.

“Each year the GRDC supports three Nuffield scholars and awards 25 to 30 undergraduate and post-graduate scholarships, as well as visiting fellowships,” Mr Harvey said.

Agricultural training awards and



Future of grains: Grains Research and Development Corporation executive manager, John Harvey, says attracting quality young talent into the grains industry is critical.

travel support are also available.

The National Youth Science Forum (NYSF), sponsored by GRDC and the Federal Government, offers students beginning Year 12 the opportunity to sample a range of science-based activities so they can pinpoint their areas of interest for tertiary study.

NYSF places 300 students a year and a similar program begins in Perth in 2010.

Dr David Russell at the University of Tasmania manages the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education (PICSE), a national program linking schools and universities through primary

industry.

Mr Harvey said GRDC also supports the BHP Billiton Science Awards, CSIRO Plant Industry Summer School, Australian Rural Leadership Program and a one year pilot of a Grain Growers Association initiative, the Australian Future Leaders Program.

The science education initiatives were based on three principles: national availability, meeting the needs of science students and addressing falling capacity.

For further information log on to www.grdc.com.au.