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## Advisors workshop evaluation



Attendees: 70

Feedback surveys completed: 48 (inc four from aerial sprayers)

### SUMMARY

The workshop was very well received and 100% of ground spray advisors indicated they completed the day feeling more confident to provide advice about the set up and operation of spray systems.

Half of the day's participants rated their knowledge about spray set up and operation before the day as average.

Interestingly, most advisors regularly advise on product choice and rate, water rates and weather, but most do not regularly advise on nozzle selection, travel speeds and boom height. This suggests the time spent in the field with Dave Farmer was very worthwhile.

All ground spray operators responded positively when asked if the workshop would help reduce off-target spray drift in the valley. Only three people were unsure if accreditation of advisors would be valuable.

The winner of the \$100 Dan Murphy voucher was Graeme Callaghan of Delta Ag.

Findings from each question are outlined below.

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1. Please rate the quality of the information provided at today's workshop. (tick one box)

- 75% rated exceptional
- 100% of ground spray advisors rated 4 or 5 out of 5

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2. How would you describe your knowledge about **spray set up and operation** before today?

- 50% rated their knowledge average
- 90% rated their knowledge average or well informed

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3. Before today, how often would you have offered advice to growers, spray operators or contractors on the following? (please tick one box for each row)

Product choice and rate	Regularly	67%
Water rates	Regularly	65%
Water sources and suitability for spraying	Sometimes	43%
Preferred spray quality- ie fine/medium/coarse	Regularly	50%
Nozzle selection - type, size	Sometimes	41%
Travel speeds	Sometimes	46%
Boom height	Sometimes	43%
Ideal weather parameters for spraying, e.g. Delta T, temperature	Regularly	46%
Limits to conditions suitable for spraying- "no go conditions"	Sometimes	48%
Specific techniques and actions to minimise off-target drift	Sometimes	43%

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4. Will today's workshop increase your confidence in providing advice about the setup and operation of spray systems?

All 44 ground spray advisors said yes. The four aerial operators said no.

Reasons why people answered Yes to Q 4 were largely due to an increased level of understanding; refreshed or new knowledge and the benefits of reminding advisors to talk more about set up and go into more detail with their clients. A few stand-out comments were:

- "I originally passed on the responsibility regarding nozzles and travel speed to growers but am getting frustrated at spray jobs and now feel confident in nozzle types, etc to recommend to growers."
- "I realise I need to pick up my game with details with clients about spray rig set up. I will aim to do some more pre-season checks and discussions."
- "Gained improved understanding of what to do and what not to do - this will improve the advice I give growers."
- "The spray plan is a good way to work through with a client and question how they apply and what they should do."

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5. How much difference do you believe consistent information and guidance from advisors could have on changing the behaviour of spray applicators?

- 61% said this would make a significant difference
- 83% scored 4 or 5 out of 5 for this question

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6. Do you believe today's workshop will help reduce the occurrence of off-target spray drift in the Macquarie Valley?

- 26% answered definitely
- 76% scored 4 or 5 out of 5 for this question
- All ground spray operators responded positively to this question (possibly to definitely)

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7. Do you believe there would be value in a formal accreditation program for advisors trained in spray application?

- 76% scored 4 or 5 out of 5 for this question
- 43 of the 46 respondents answered possibly through to definitely
- Only three people were unsure if accreditation would make a difference

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8. Do you think it would help reduce off-target spray drift if SOS provided a spray calibrator and nozzle pressure gauge to every advisor in the valley?

- All 46 people surveyed responded positively
- 43% said it was possible the calibrator and gauge would help reduce off-target spray drift

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9. If responses to Q8 suggest this would make a difference, SOS will offer each advisory business one SpotOn spray calibrator and pressure gauge for \$100 (RRP \$340).

- 33 people said they would be keen to order a kit  
– this represents 27 eligible organisations or offices.

### **Suggestions for future activities for SOS to consider:**

- Perhaps each agribusiness ought to hold their own day to allow advisors to open up.
- A group of cheat sheets would be good for speed range.
- Would be good to repeat or refresh, possibly as part of a follow-up talk about spray plans.
- This needs to be ongoing (annual or biannual) using advisors to trickle info to growers as well as informing them direct.
- The Five Commandments or similar sounds like a good initiative - might have been good to have these prepared or workshopped at the meeting.