

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA



Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

More decisions with confidence from trials

ASVO 2026 Viti Seminar

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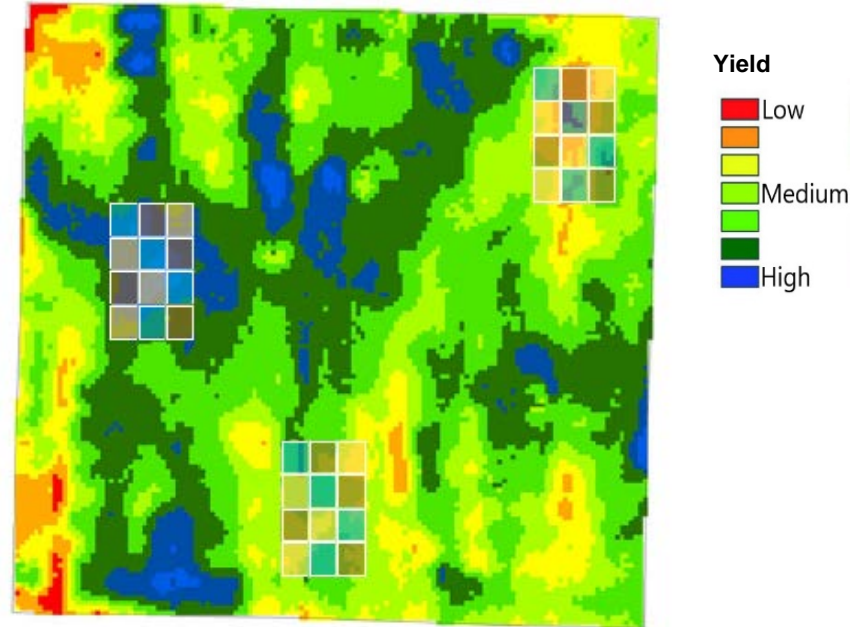
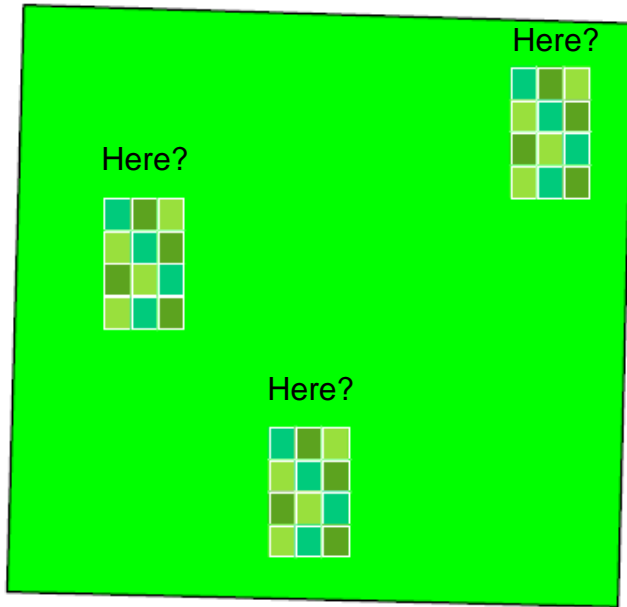
“What is the farmer to do?”

Suppe, F. (1988).

The limited applicability of agricultural research.

The Journal of Agricultural Economics Research 40:4–14.

Research to Practice: What's the gap?



Adapted from Bramley, R. G. V., Lanyon, D. M. and Panten, K. (2005) Whole-of-vineyard experimentation - An improved basis for knowledge generation and decision making. In: Precision Agriculture '05. Wageningen Academic, pp. 881-890.

For each variable site, a grower must decide:

- Right product
- Right rate
- Right place
- Right time
- Right equipment
- For the Right OUTCOME



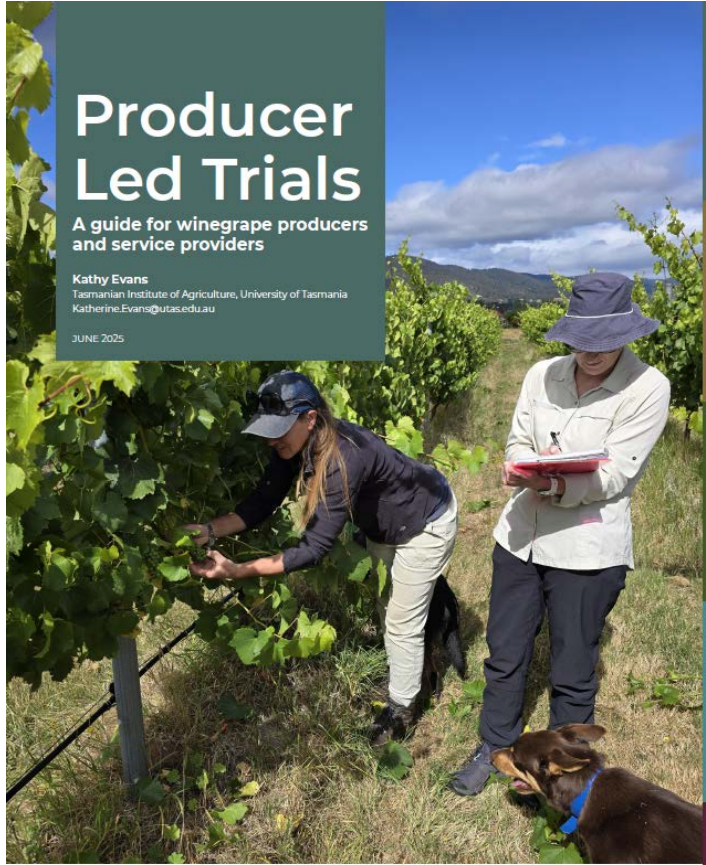
What would assist in getting things RIGHT?

Producer Led Trials

A guide for winegrape producers and service providers

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The producer has ownership of the trial process and results, intended to support a business decision.

Available for free here:



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



Future
Drought
Fund



TAS FARM
INNOVATION HUB
Growing Climate Resilient Communities



TIA
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

A practical, sustainable system for in-business learning

Vineyard manager and staff



Data storytelling (trial outcome)

Advisors

Technical experts

Decision maker (\$, risk, priorities)

Evans KJ and Higgins V. (2026). Toward systemic scaling of producer-led trials: evidence from a structured, adaptive and supported approach in vineyards. *Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research*, in press.

13 wine businesses
23 trials in 2 seasons:
2023-24 and 2024-25



Trials focused on disease management

Botrytis bunch rot (mainly)
and powdery mildew

Why?

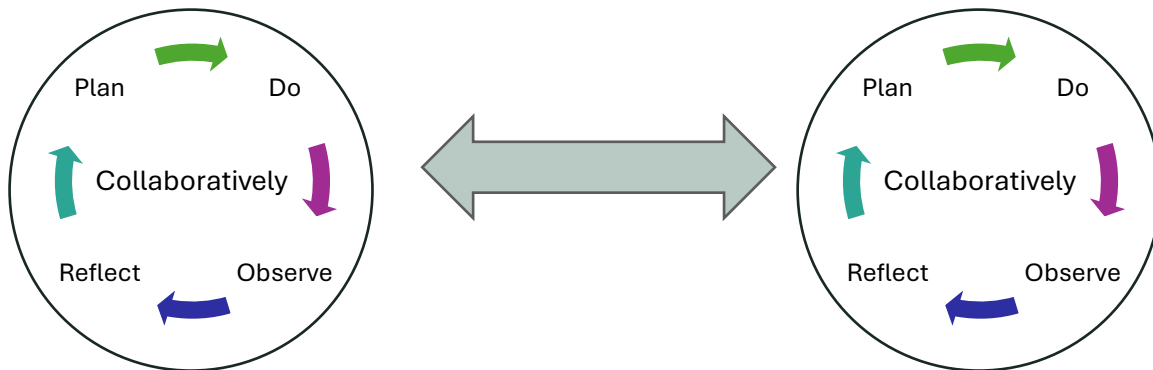
Processed value of wines from Tasmania
could be up to 24% higher if costs due to
botrytis were recuperated



Project ADF001

Supported by the Tasmanian Government's Agricultural Development Fund

Growers shaped the approach; we learned together



Iterative, adaptive trial cycles

Workshops, knowledge sharing

Phone calls, emails, site visits



Growers shared trial results and their viti wisdom



“We all want to learn and it is easier when we learn together”

Botrytis Project Trial Results

Producer-Led Trials

Method available here:



Why

A reliable supply of high-quality fruit from Tasmania is needed to sustain and grow premium wine brands.

Effective management of botrytis bunch rot (BBR) means more high-value wines with fewer costs; i.e., less crop and juice loss, labour and processing costs.

Effective BBR management depends on selecting and tailoring the right management tools to suit the production site, seasonal conditions, operational budgets and the end use of fruit.

How

We guided 13 wine businesses through the [Producer-Led Trials](#) approach whereby they designed and completed 23 trials of various cultural, chemical and biological control tactics for the management of BBR and/or powdery mildew as a BBR risk factor.

Trials were conducted in 2023-24 and 2024-25 across a diversity of business types, vineyard sizes and grape varieties in the North-West, Tamar Valley, East Coast, Coal and Huon Valley regions of Tasmania.

Trials were designed to support a business-specific decision and production context. Individual trial results may not be broadly applicable.



This project was supported by the Tasmanian Government's Agricultural Development Fund (Project ADF001).

KEY FINDINGS

- The weather in both seasons was relatively benign for BBR development. Even so, fruit in 10 of 23 trials had BBR severities likely to impact grape yield and quality.
- There was a diversity of findings across a broad range of trial topics and crop inputs (Figure 1).
- Various techniques for leaf removal ('plucking') in 11 trials demonstrated benefits for BBR management in some trials, little or no gain in others, or benefits in one season and little gain in another.
- Double-sided leaf removal by machine in mid-November in Riesling roughly halved mean BBR severity relative to no leaf removal in Trial 13 (5% and 10-12% mean BBR severity per trial strip, with and without leaf removal).
- The consequence of omitting a synthetic fungicide during flowering in Riesling in Trial 6 was clear: 0.6% and 3.2% BBR severity per trial strip, with and without spraying.
- The benefit of adding or omitting a biological product appeared to depend on the extent of BBR development in the trial.
- Results were often similar for fungicide product substitutions.

Trial results and case studies available here:



Scroll down to 2026 Project Updates

“I just think that this is a very worthwhile methodology for, not just viticulture, but for, certainly, primary industry research, generally. To have this as a way of doing a business of innovation and change. I think many people are motivated towards improving their productivity, reducing their environmental impact, and then having a structure for that. You have a thought about these things, but then having a structure for it and an intervention is what gets you there.”

Evan Rolley, Heriots Point Vineyard



Key features for success

- “*Not too onerous*”, minimise data collection
- Results interpreted readily and with confidence
- Evidence to justify change or ‘no change’
- In-built accountabilities to motivate trial effort
- Create a culture of shared learning
- Build skills, confidence and motivation for future trials

Producers want trials to continue over more growing seasons to fully understand impact on production.

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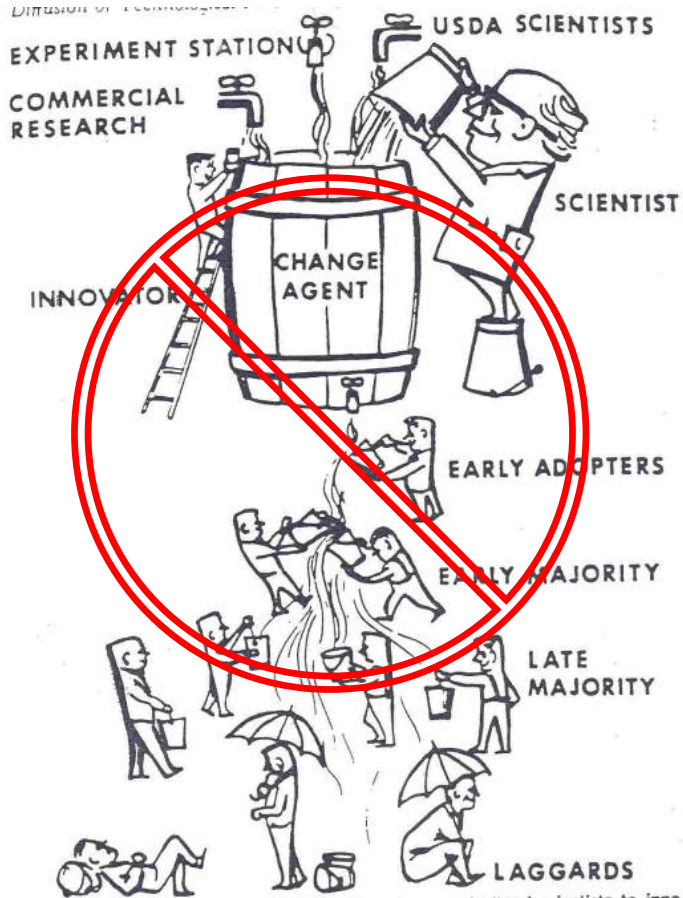


Figure 13-2. Agricultural innovations diffuse from agricultural scientists to innovators and then to later adopter categories.

Let's flip the model and do it right!

- Scale out
- Reach more producers
- Build capacities
- Apply clear principles:
 - Producer ownership
 - Simple design
 - Peer accountability
 - Expert guidance

Acknowledgements

To every grower who showed us the way!

