

# Research management, institutional arrangements and the quest for integration in mixed-farming innovation: the emergence of point-of-practice integration

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## Abstract

Modern science and contemporary research and development programs are characterised by societal, managerial and political expectation that they be integrated. For some this means paying attention to the principles of the triple bottom line; for others it is about taking a holistic approach to finding solutions to complex problems; whereas for yet others it is about maximising co-investment, partnerships and collaboration and focusing these on the problems of the day. Each of these aspirations involves integration, although in very different ways. Grain & Graze attempted to deal with all these forms. With highly specified objectives and targets dealing with economic, environmental and social outcomes, 66 partners involving three scales of governance as well as science and community collaborators, and multidisciplinary research teams working across 50 or so research projects, integration was the catchcry of Grain & Graze. At its core the program dealt with cropping and grazing farming systems, adding yet another dimension of integration to the mix. This paper explores each of the forms of integration and the institutional arrangements in Grain & Graze that either supported or limited their success. It finds that frameworks for integration are highly challenged when these several forms of integration take place simultaneously, particularly when the expectations among diverse stakeholders about integration are unclear and when there is scant expertise and experience in operating within integrated frameworks. Under such situations, point-of-practice integration becomes a critical form of integration, a form which can and should be planned for at the commencement of complex research programs involving an on-ground adoption expectation.

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