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Grain growers and grains agribusinesses are being urged to have their say on the future direction of research, development and extension (RD&E) at a forum in Toowoomba on April 22.

The Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) and Conservation Farmers Inc (CFI) will host the forum to give growers and agribusiness an opportunity to address some key issues for the industry and to prioritize strategic issues to form an industry-driven strategic plan for grains RD&E in the Northern Region.

GRFL chairman Damien Scanlan said grains RD&E is facing some big challenges in the Northern Region with research funding in decline, scientific capacity being reduced and an acute shortage of students.

Mr Scanlan said there would continue to be significant changes to RD&E in the coming years and growers and agribusiness need to have input into a plan for the future.

“One thing we are sure of is that RD&E underpins the grain industry’s future profitability and competitiveness,” Mr Scanlan said.

“Therefore, it is essential for grain growers and other grains industry investors to have a say in developing an RD&E plan for the future.”

CFI chairman Pete Mailler said the forum would enable the grains industry to participate in an open process for considering issues and genuinely engage grain growers in defining and prioritising the input for a strategic plan for RD&E in the Northern Region.

“The output from the day will then be taken to research and funding organisations including state agricultural departments, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), CSIRO, universities, seed companies and agricultural chemical companies to assist them in formulating their own plans,” Mr Mailler said.

“Growers and grains industry representatives from Queensland and north of Dubbo in NSW are encouraged to attend.”

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