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AG NOTE



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Introduction

Hello from everyone at Western AG and welcome to our first edition of Ag Note for 2011.

We are planning to resume the regular publication of this newsletter after a break in production last year.

The record rainfall late last year and then again early this year has been extremely testing for everyone. Yield and quality has been lost in many crops and

pastures which has been very disappointing.

The Wimmera/Mallee areas are set to benefit with good soil moisture levels. The Western District clients are hoping for a slightly drier end to the season.

In this edition, we have articles focusing on summer weed control, variety selection and seed quality. We have

also had a number of staff additions and business developments and, on a minor note, a change to our logo that we would like to let everyone know about.

We hope you find the information in this newsletter useful and we are all looking forward to a busy year in 2011 servicing both existing and new clientele.

Business Update

Western AG are very pleased to announce that Ashley Perkins and Troy Kollegger are joining Western AG to provide services to clients from a new branch at Bannockburn that is opening in March.

Ashley and Troy are very well known to all the farmers in the Inverleigh, Winchelsea, Bannockburn and surrounding areas and have a high level of experience & local knowledge.

Western AG now has a team of eight agronomists, supported by a team of ten people involved in finance, admin and logistics.

This new development will also help compliment the opening of



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the Horsham branch which occurred in May 2010.

Our recent business growth has allowed us to increase our level of expertise and experience in the group and further improved our purchasing power with Suppliers.

This ultimately improves the overall service we are able to provide to the clients.

All these developments would not have been possible without the ongoing support of our clients, for which we are always very thankful for.



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Summer Weed Control Reminders

Paddocks that have not been sprayed are supporting high populations of large thistles, loosestrife, hogweed, melon, marshmallow, heliotrope and volunteering crop.

Consideration needs to be given to weed size, the conditions at application and if the paddock is going to be grazed and/or burnt in preparation for seeding.

The "Green Bridge"

When weeds are allowed to grow through the summer months, they act as hosts for a whole range of different pests and viral diseases. The main diseases are the various rusts of cereals and root diseases such as Take All and Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus (BYDV).



Controlling summer weeds is very important for a number of reasons!

To prevent disease transfer from one year to another, the volunteering crop needs to be completely killed.

Machinery blockages

Weeds, such as wireweed, can cause big issues at sowing if left untreated over summer. Spraying early and avoiding the development of larger tougher plants is the key to reducing the risk of dragging and machinery blockages at sowing.

Moisture Conservation

Moisture conservation is also another important reason for controlling summer weeds in most years in all areas but not so much across the Western Districts this year with the ground already containing a lot of moisture.

Consideration also needs to be given to the timing of grazing and burning. Grazing is usually best done a week or so post spraying to allow for full translocation of the herbicides. To obtain an effective burn it may be necessary to wait a fortnight for weeds to lose enough moisture for a fire to carry in stubbles.

Boom Set Up and Spray Application considerations

Where Phenoxy products are used over summer, coarse to very coarse droplets are required to be used to reduce drift and meet the label requirements. Air Induction nozzles provide an excellent balance between drift control and coverage. Total Water Volume (TWV) required will be dependent on the type of herbicides being used.

It is generally best to spray when temps are < 28°C, the relative humidity is high and in winds between 3-15km/h. The Delta T can be determined using a chart or from suitable measuring equipment, such as Kestrel handheld meters and an acceptable range is between a Delta T of 2 and 8.

Achieving an acceptable Delta T is often difficult in summer with the early mornings and night quite often providing the best spraying conditions.



Watch out for Inversions

Temperature normally drops as you move up into the atmosphere. An inversion is when there is a layer of warmer air over cooler air at ground level. This can often be seen as a thin layer of cloud at 10m to 20m above the ground.

Inversions are dangerous conditions for spraying as they are often associated with the still conditions found early in the day during late summer and autumn times of the year. Under inversion conditions it is possible for fine spray droplets to travel large distances and damage sensitive crops & pastures.

Wheat & Barley Varieties for 2011

The wet finish to last season has made it difficult to compare the performance of varieties. We have attempted to provide a guide for this season for both the Western District (WD) and Wimmera Mallee (W/M) regions.

Western District Options

Kellalac still remains very popular with many growers. Our understanding of the fungicide timings has allowed us to continue to

grow this 'trusted' variety with some confidence in difficult years.

The 2010 NVT trials have put Kellalac at 11% above site mean in the Streatham area but only 1% above the Hamilton mean. Stem, stripe and leaf rust, along with yellow leaf spot (YLS) and *Septoria tritici* are all diseases that should be dealt with by applying fungicide to sowing fertiliser in a strategic foliar program. The marketing is APW limited.

Bolac still remains a very controversial variety amongst growers with some higher screenings being the major agronomic issue. However in discussions with growers this year, there have been reports of low screenings (<5%) and good protein. Unfortunately, the grain sprouting has limited the opportunity to deliver the grain as AH.

Bolac certainly has a better disease package than say Kellelac, MR to both stem

and stripe rust but MS to leaf rust, and MS-S to YLS and MS to *Septoria tritici*. Bolac was 6% higher than the mean at the Streatham NVT site but only 3% higher at Hamilton. It is a variety that is still worth pursuing in that mid to late season maturity.

Derrimut would be an alternative to Bolac as an 'AH' variety suited to a later sowing. It is a shorter

season wheat (5 days earlier than Yipti) and has good resistance to stem and leaf rust but is MS-S for stripe rust. It is S to YLS and MS-S to *Septoria tritici*. The NVT site trials showed a 21% gain over the mean at Hamilton and 7% improvement at Streatham. It is also tolerant of boron toxicity.

The **Preston** variety was sown last year on the assumption that it would make APW standard, but testings late last season never gained that approval and was only able to be marketed as feed. Despite its' feed classification, Preston has yielded well in both Streatham and Hamilton NVT trials (127% and 120% respectively of site mean). Preston is an awned, semi-dwarf variety resistant to

lodging. It is R for leaf rust, MR-R for stripe rust, but S-VS for stem rust. It is S for YLS and MR for *Septoria tritici*. Potentially a high yielding feed variety and in years where the price differential between feed and APW is narrow, the extra yield potential of this variety is worth pursuing.

Frelon is a true winter wheat (requires vernalisation) and has been grown successfully in some areas for the last couple of years. It is a long season feed, red wheat with a high yielding potential. If sown early it can be grazed but seems to grow fairly slow during the winter and doesn't really take off until the spring. It has good resistance to both leaf and stripe rust but does get stem rust and

should be treated for prevention. It is MS for YLS and MR for *Septoria tritici*. At the Hamilton NVT site, Frelon was 151% of site mean, but only 105% of the Streatham site mean.

Beaufort is a red-grained, feed wheat variety suited for a medium to long growing season. It does not require a vernalisation period and should not be planted too early as frost risk is greatly increased. It has performed well in some areas but, reports have been that it doesn't handle extremely wet conditions as well as some other red wheat varieties.

The 2010 NVT trial results were outstanding for the Hamilton and the Streatham sites with yields of 144% and 118% respectively of the site means.

Beaufort is a very quick and upright grower and has good straw strength. It also has good resistance to leaf and stripe rust, but is also S-VS to stem rust, MR-MS to Yellow Leaf Spot and MS to *Septoria tritici*.

We would heed caution to *Septoria* this season, especially if it is wet and if the rotation is wheat, sown back to wheat.



Wimmera/Mallee Options

Wheat

Scout is a high yielding APW classified variety suited to the Wimmera/Mallee and in its first year of testing last year performed very well both in SA and Vic trials.

Scout has good CCN resistance and good grain size but is susceptible to YLS. It has got good stem and leaf rust resistance but some susceptibility to stripe rust. It has a medium to long Coleoptile, allowing deeper planting, with very good seed vigour and is medium in plant height.

Scout offers good protection from sprouting and black point and should be a consideration this season.

Derrimut has tended to be replaced in recent years but still keeps on producing excellent yields compared to other newer varieties. It produced the highest yield in an on farm comparison that included Frame and Lincoln North of Horsham last year.

Derrimut is very short straw with excellent CCN resistance. The main disadvantage of the variety is the lack of resistance to stem and leaf rust but these

diseases are proving to be effectively controlled with fungicides. This variety should be included in your cropping programs this year.

Barley

With **Hindmarsh** barley not making malt specifications last year a lot of growers have been asking what's the next best malt barley option.

Many clients grew bulk up areas of **Commander** last season. The results were favourable with many crops achieving malt standard, even with the rain that was received in December.

Commander has excellent CCN Resistance, a maturity that is suited to the Wimmera/Mallee and good seed size. **Commander** has better Spot Form of Net Blotch resistance compared to Gairdner but will have to be sprayed for Scald later in the season.

Combining the favourable agronomic traits of **Commander** and its' overall yield potential, it is expected that this variety will eventually replace Gairdner in the Wimmera and Mallee regions.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this AG Note is to be used as a guide only and specific information needs to be sought from the authors regarding individual situations. Western AG Supplies takes all care in compiling this information. However Western AG Supplies accepts no liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person who relies on this information.

Canola Varieties for 2011

There are a large range of varieties of Canola available this season, however, the supply of many newer lines are limited due to problems with seed production.



Western District Varieties

The wet summer has meant that pests such as slugs have been able to build up to high levels in the soil which will make them difficult to control in Canola. Where possible stubble habitat should be removed and the monitoring of populations, using traps, should be undertaken before sowing. In some severe situations, the insect pressure could place the crop at too greater risk and a better option may be to plant something else instead.

Blackleg was at high levels last year and Flutriafol (Impact) treatment on the fertiliser offers very cost effective disease control and used in combination with Jockey seed dressing. The Flutriafol can be ordered on starter fertiliser or also applied on farm.

Conventional (Con) Canola Varieties

Garnett has been widely grown and has continued to yield well and produce good oil levels. It has held up well to Blackleg, even in areas where it is intensively grown. It is mid maturing, medium in plant height and moderately resistant to Blackleg. Seed supply is adequate.

Another good conventional canola variety is **Hyola 50**. Unfortunately, due to production problems, there is no seed available in 2011.

Triazine Tolerant (TT)

Three better canola options this year are **Crusher**, **Thumper** and **Thunder**.

Crusher is Garnett that has the TT trait, mid-maturing, has a blackleg rating of moderately resistant (MR) and is suited to a wide range of environments. It performed well in trials across the Wimmera, Mallee and South Australia. Seed supply is limited.

Thumper is a mid-maturity variety with a provisional blackleg rating of resistant to moderately resistant (R-MR). It has good flower uniformity, medium plant height and has a good stand ability. Yields were similar to Crusher in trials. Seed supply is limited.

Thunder, an older mid to late maturity variety, performed very well in the Skipton area last year and is enjoying renewed interest. New seed supply is available but will be limited.

Clearfield (CL) Varieties

The main variety grown last year was the hybrid **46Y78** and this variety has been replaced by **46Y83** which is slightly earlier and has better Blackleg resistance. Seed supply is good at this stage.

Pacific Seeds have two new hybrids available this year, **Hyola 575** and **Hyola 676**, that handled the very wet conditions and blackleg pressures well last year. **Hyola 575** is medium in maturity and **Hyola 676** is medium to late in maturity. Seed supply is very limited for both.

Roundup Ready (RR)

The main varieties grown last year were the hybrid **46Y20** and the non-hybrid **Mustang**. Both handled the very wet conditions and blackleg well, and produced good yields and oil.

Pioneer has available two new slightly shorter season hybrid varieties to replace 46Y20, **45Y21** and **45Y22**. The 45Y22 is suited to medium to high rainfall and is a slightly longer variety than 45Y21 which is suited more to medium rainfall areas. The varieties should have slightly shorter plant height, better stand ability and better Blackleg resistance. Seed supply of 46Y20 is fine at present, 45Y21 & 45Y22 supply is very limited. There are also some supplies of Hyola 502 and Hyola 601 available from Pacific seeds.

Wimmera/Mallee Varieties

Garnett (Con), Crusher TT, 46Y83 (CL) and the 45Y21

and 45Y22 (RR) are also some of the best Wimmera options.

The other canola option is **Hurricane TT**, a Mid / Early variety that has been producing good yields & oils when compared to Cobbler. It is MR for Blackleg and has medium to short plant height.

For low to medium rainfall areas there is a new short season CL variety **43C80**. It is the shortest CL variety on the market and is useful in that it can tolerate Sulphonyl Urea residues in the soil.

Speak to your agronomist to work out which variety best suits you!

Using Weather Damaged Seed

The wet harvest has had a large effect on Cereal grain and Canola seed quality and the suitability for use as seeding seed. The moisture has had the effect of starting the process of converting starch to sugars and therefore reducing the germination percentage and vigour. Often Canola is more adversely affected than the Cereals.



Correct plant population is critically important.

Having the correct plant population is critical to the success of the crop and the sowing low germination percentage and vigour seed can be made worse by pre-emergent herbicides and seed dressings that place additional establishment stress on the plant. If possible use seed that has been harvested from crops before the rain or try to

obtain seed that has been carried over from last year.

Use a Commercial Seed Testing Service.

It is still possible to use weather damaged seed and the outward appearance and falling numbers test is not a reliable indicator of a seed's suitability. Germination tests can be done at home on cotton wool or in soil. However, the most accurate way is to use a commercial testing service. These services are quick and relatively inexpensive. They are able to provide a 1000 seed weight test that can be used to calculate a seeding rate to provide a suitable target plant population.

We have bags available for submitting samples so please organise your samples with your agronomist.

If you need more planting seed, a number of the seed supply companies have a commercial quantity seed offers available for orders greater than 10 tonnes.