



Phil Hawker
0427 367542

AG NOTE

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Derrinallum (Head Office)

P (03) 5597 6622 F (03) 5597 6773
E admin@westernag.com.au
W www.westernag.com.au

Horsham

P (03) 5382 2488 F (03) 5382 3288

Bannockburn

P (03) 5281 2840 F (03) 5281 2894

Nhill

P (03) 5391 3386 F (03) 5391 3584

Introduction

From everyone at Western AG, a big welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter.

At the time of writing, there are currently areas of the Victorian Mallee and Wimmera that are desperate for rain and crops are going backwards. This situation is so disappointing after such a good start. In the meantime, our Agronomists and Managers are here to assist in any way we can to help clients to make the best farm management decisions possible.

In this edition of our newsletter, there are articles on fodder crop and Lucerne varieties, canola disease, cereal disease and fungicide options, non-herbicide options for ARG reduction, alternative fence line spraying, pulse and legume topping, 'Timerite' spraying, spring grazing animal health implications, and finally an article "Maximising Personal Performance" by guest editor Dennis Hoiberg. Dennis was one of our guest speakers at a Roadshow of farmer meetings that we organised last month.

The Roadshow meetings also covered of foliar disease, herbicide resistance and management strategies for the rest of this season and next. Peter Newman from the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative (AHRI) put the challenge to the group that the time of relying on herbicides for control of weeds is coming to an end and the future is the use of weed seed set control strategies. He presented some excellent research findings on the importance of row spacing, direction of sowing and seed set control. Our job is successfully integrating these findings into our farming strategies.

Crops and pastures develop quickly in Spring and the build-up of insect pests, disease and weeds can be rapid. It is important to monitor paddocks closely and hopefully the articles in this edition cover of some of the more critical risks. In the meantime, we have everything crossed for more rain to finish the season.

Roadshow Success

As everybody is aware, Western AG run a Farmer Meeting Roadshow every year that encompasses our Nhill, Horsham, Derrinallum and Bannockburn branches and areas.

This event was highly successful again this year with over 160+ clients attending the meetings.

These Roadshows are a critical part of the Western AG calendar and show our commitment to the local farming community and clients. We would like to not only thank the many clients for attending, but also the companies that support Western AG and make these meetings possible.

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Gerard O'Brien
0419 801485



Ashley Perkins
0458 822066



Brad McLean
0438 976557



James Jess
0419 801650



Michaela Alexander
0428 976555



Matthew Barber
0488 298170



Matt Witney
0488 298621



Tim Hofmaier
0488 298222



Trudy McCann
AgInvest
0438 725008



Aaron Starick
0428 909252
Animal Health &
General Merchandise

Septoria - The New Wheat Disease Threat (by Michaela Alexander)

Now that crops have dried out from the wet July to early August period, it is important to follow up with a well-planned fungicide program with a possible broadleaf spray. Important considerations are crop growth stage, current climate conditions and latent period of specific crop diseases, especially Septoria. '*Septoria tritici*' has become the major disease of wheat in Western Victoria, with the inoculum level increasing rapidly over the last 4 years. A sound fungicide approach needs to be implemented and consideration must be given to the rotation of fungicides such as with herbicides to reduce the occurrence of resistance that is currently occurring in the UK.

Using an upfront fertiliser treatment such as Flutriafol on your fertiliser will reduce the incidence of early disease infection. At the high label rate protection should last up to 3-4 months. Using this product is seen as an excellent strategy as paddocks are not often trafficked during winter and therefore fungicide applications can be delayed exposing susceptible crops to early disease infection.

Triazole fungicides have curative abilities and Stobilurins (Stroby's) have protective activity, therefore Stroby's, when added to a Triazole can broaden the disease control spectrum, maximise green leaf retention and yield.

Using high dose rates, particularly with fungicide mixtures, gives more robust disease control, protects against yield loss due to disease and may help to prevent further resistance development. Effective disease control is likely to restrict spread of resistant populations throughout the district.

There has been reduced efficacy with particular Triazole products used against Septoria in Australia. Similar resistance is now a serious problem in the UK, and with this information we are able to learn from their mistakes, which in turn allows us to get on the front foot to effectively manage crop losses from the disease, prolong product life and thus its ability to work successfully.

Further to associated problems with Septoria resistance issues, particular strains of leaf scald and powdery mildew in barley are also known to have 'mutated' and adapted to some certain fungicide products that have been used repetitively in the past.

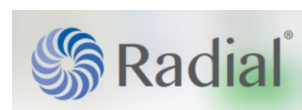
Although not registered on label, it is widely accepted that both Epoxiconazole (Accord, Soprano, Opus) and the mix of Prothioconazole + Tebuconazole (Prosaro) are recognised as probably the best fungicides for Septoria Tritici. There

is a risk of the Epoxiconazole not working as well due to increased tolerance of the fungus due to high use history. The risk of this is hard to quantify.



A sound fungicide strategy would be to either use Accord or Prosaro up front followed by 'Radial', which is an Epoxiconazole and Azoxystrobin mix. Although the Radial still has the 'Epoxy' component, you get the back up of the 'Stroby' aiding in resistance management as well as the documented 'greening effect' that a Stroby offers. All of these products will continue to offer excellent control of stripe rust should it occur. Prosaro would still be the best choice of fungicide to cover off on the major barley diseases.

Please consult with your agronomist as to which products and applicable rate is suitable for your particular situation.



Sclerotinia in Canola (by Brad McLean)

White Leaf Spot and Sclerotinia in Canola are increasing diseases in Western Victoria. Ideal growing conditions over the last few seasons are the main cause for the large increase in disease inoculum.

White Leaf Spot also known as Light Leaf Spot is not a very common disease and some paddocks are affected more than others. The symptoms of the disease look very similar to Blackleg but this disease does not have the black fruiting bodies within the lesions. Also, the white lesions tend to be smaller than that of Blackleg. Continual showers and rains are favourable for the disease to spread.



White Leaf Spot Lesions

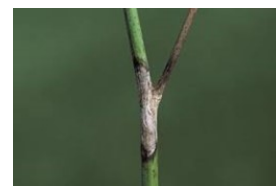
The disease spreads from the oldest leaves first, slowly moving up the canopy with affected leaves eventually defoliated.

The decision to spray is difficult but if new leaves become infected prior to bud run this would be a great time to spray as this stage as it will give you an indication on the spread of the disease. Early flowering is at the 'late end' for spraying.

Sclerotinia was widespread last season in Canola crops with crops showing dead plants or parts of plants in the crop late in the season. This was quite evident amongst the green plants in the crop.

Wet, humid conditions at flowering are the key to the spread of the disease as petals become infected from spores released from 'Sclerotinia' (rat dropping like bodies) in the soil. The infected petals then fall onto the stem of the Canola plant causing infection. Without these conditions, the disease cannot spread, so the decision to spray can be quite difficult.

The ideal timing to spray for Sclerotinia is from 20 to 50% flowering. Yield losses from the disease can be up to 25%, if 50% of the crop is infected with Sclerotinia.



Sclerotinia Stem Lesion



Sclerotinia Seed Damage

If conditions are favourable, or you simply wish to discuss this disease in more depth, please consult with your Western AG Agronomist.

Timerite (by Matt Witney)

With Spring approaching, it is now a good time to think about monitoring and controlling Red Legged Earth Mite (RLEM) as well as other insect pests in pastures, vetch and other legumes.

The optimum spraying time in Eastern Australia is between mid September and mid October for RLEM, after they lay their last winter eggs and prior to laying their 'diapause' eggs. The diapause eggs survive the hot dry summer as protected eggs inside the cadavers of the adult female mites. Therefore, it is important to kill the adult mite before they lay their last winter eggs to prevent the diapause eggs surviving. This will be best achieved with a residual insecticide.

Lucerne flea can also lay 40 – 200 eggs in late spring which are protected by gluey mass which enables the eggs to carry through the summer to autumn the year following, so it can be important to control these at the same time.

The optimum Timerite date for controlling RLEM varies by region (see table).

Spraying should be conducted within a two week timeframe prior to the "Optimum Date" listed. You can get your spray date by contacting the Australian Wool Ltd Helpline on 1800 070 099, or typing in your latitude and longitude of your property on the TIMERITE website found at www.timerite.com.au

The best insecticide to use is generally Omethoate 290g/L (LeMat). Omethoate can also control Blue Oat Mite, Lucerne Flea, Pasture Mite, Bluegreen Aphid, Cowpea Aphid, and spotted Aphid. It can also be used on oilseed and legume crops so Omethoate is a great option.

This year, we have experienced very high Lucerne Flea numbers in cereals and canola following legumes, which may be due to us controlling grubs and RLEM with our Alpha-Cypermethrin sprays, but not controlling Lucerne Flea!!

Omethoate has little effect on natural predators, rhizobia or earthworms and is a repellent to bees for 3 days, but toxic to them if sprayed directly on them.

Therefore, it is best sprayed in the late afternoon when bees have left and the mites are most active. The bees can then resume pollinating after three days with no ill effects.

Spraying Omethoate improves plant numbers, seed yield, pasture and hay yield, quality, digestibility, palatability, has residual control and only has a 1 day grazing withholding period.

Town	Timerite Optimum Date
Horsham	< 23 rd September
Goroke	< 27 th September
Nhill	< 21 st September
Hopetoun	< 14 th September
Stawell	< 1 st October
Willaura	< 9 th October
Derrinallum	< 12 th October
Brimpaen	< 2 nd October
Hamilton	< 15 th October
Bannockburn	< 16 th October
Streatham	< 13 th October

Summer Crop & Lucerne Options for 2014 (by Matt Barber)

When looking at spring sowing summer crop or Lucerne there are many different options and varieties to choose from. Before any decisions can be made, preparation is the first step. This involves weed management, fertiliser choice, application rates and paddock preparation. This also includes cultural decisions as to whether to cultivate or direct drill. It cannot be emphasised enough that all aspects of preparation are critical for successful fodder crop establishment.

Summer Crop Varieties for 2014

Following are some varieties of Forage Brassicas which we would consider as appropriate for your 2014 summer crop program. Most Forage Brassicas will give an amount of grazing throughout the Summer period but, from experience, the varieties below give excellent grazing throughout the Summer period, as well as Autumn and Winter grazing production.

As a guide, sowing is generally best at rates of 3-4kg/ha seed with MAP or DAP @ 100-120kg/ha.

Stego Forage Brassica

Stego is a high yielding, hybrid forage brassica which is ideal for prime lamb, sheep, cattle and dairy systems. Maturity is 10 to 12 weeks with excellent feed

quality and gives production throughout the summer, autumn and winter period. This variety is suited to a rainfall of 500mm to 700mm.

Sub Zero Forage Brassica

Sub Zero is a hybrid leafy rape (Kale x Turnip). It is a quick maturing and faster to first grazing than most other types (8 to 9 weeks). It also has excellent feed values with a high leaf to stem ratio. The variety also has good tolerance to frosts and cold temperatures, as well as good tolerance to stressful (hot and dry) conditions over Summer. This variety is an excellent choice if feed is needed quickly and will go right through to Autumn and Winter production.

Winfred Forage Brassica

Winfred is a cross between turnip and kale and is one of the older varieties on the market. This variety still performs as well, or if not better than, some of the newer varieties on the market. Winfred's maturity is around the 10 to 12 weeks, but will also push production into Autumn and Winter. If it has to be grazed due to Diamond Back Moth (DBM) pressure, it seems fine if grazed early without any palatability issues. This variety is also suited in both high and lower rainfall areas.



Forage Brassica

Lucerne varieties for 2014

When deciding on a Lucerne variety, it is important to look at the kind of production you are wanting to achieve, e.g. grazing for sheep and cattle, silage or hay production. The next step would be to check the dormancy rating of the variety to see if that matches your desired production requirements. With Lucerne, remember the higher the varietal number, means the more winter active it is, or visa versa, the lower the number is then the more winter dormant it is. Also, even although a variety might have a dormancy rating of 5, this doesn't mean that it doesn't grow at all in winter, it will be just be slower than a variety with a dormancy rating of 7.

As highlighted earlier with Forage Brassicas, it is also very important to make sure that you have the paddock

Summer Crop & Lucerne Options for 2014 continued..... (by Matt Barber)

preparation spot on. With Lucerne you have to get it right the first time as it is very difficult to "top up" Lucerne after the initial sowing. So get it right and you will be rewarded for many years. Weed and insect management is also essential. Poor weed management early in the Lucerne establishment phase can be the difference between a successful crop and a failure. When sowing Lucerne, aim for a sowing rate of 12 to 15kg/ha with MAP or DAP fertiliser @ 100-120kg/ha.

Below are several varieties which have performed well more recently.

L56 Lucerne – Semi winter dormant

This variety is a high yielding variety with excellent forage quality and greater persistence on most soil types. It gives excellent perennial year round production and fits into the scenario of 1 to 2 hay cuts as well as offering excellent grazing most of the year. It is a semi-dormant variety which responds quickly with summer rain.

Silverosa GT Lucerne 7

Silverosa is also another high yielding Lucerne new from Upper Murray Seeds. Its first release was in 2013. Silverosa is ideally suited to both intensive grazing periods and subsequent fodder production. It is extremely persistent with a winter activity of 7; it will grow in most areas and can tolerate levels of salinity. This

variety can handle cold winters, appears to be frost tolerant and can be used for dryland or irrigation systems. It will produce top quality, out of season feed and has a high leaf to stem ratio with excellent palatability and digestibility.



Mature Lucerne Stand

Stamina 5

Stamina 5 is a relatively new semi winter dormant variety by Wrightsons. This variety has proven to be popular because of its' grazing tolerance. As a 5 dormancy, Stamina 5 has little winter growth but has a high leaf to stem ratio which is ideal for quality hay production. This variety is an ideal choice where a stand is required for periods of prolonged continuous grazing. Stocks of this variety will be extremely limited in 2014. An alternative if this stock is sold out would be **Venus**. Also a 5 dormancy, Venus was bred from the old Hunter River variety but has aphid resistance and moderate resistance to *Phytophthora* Root Rot. Venus still rates highly in the semi winter dormant trials at Ballarat, and is an excellent choice when grazing management is less than ideal.

Icon

Classed as a winter active variety, Icon (7) has proven to be a reliable performer in the Western Districts over the last few years. Icon is a broadly adaptable, moderately tall variety with semi-erect leafy stems. Icon is an ideal choice if looking for a little more winter production, but remaining very strong in the summer after producing good quality hay. Icon has good disease and pest resistance. There are good supplies of Icon this season.

Sardi 7

This is certainly a well proven and reliable variety that has been bred in Australia by Sardi and now marketed by Heritage Seeds. Sardi 7 certainly has fantastic dryland persistence as a result of its' good disease package. Certainly comparable to Icon.

There will be some exciting new varieties released next year by Seed Distributors called **GTL60** and **L71**. Keep these in the memory bank for next year when seed will become available.

Sowing Summer Crops and Lucerne is not a simple exercise. Please contact your local Western Ag Agronomist for further information on varieties, seed bed preparation, fertiliser rates and to discuss other critical components.

Native Budworm Control in Legumes (by Tim Hofmaier)

Last season, there were high levels of Native budworms in many pulse crops with some growers having to spray crops twice. Whilst this is not expected to be the case in 2014, it is important to remain vigilant and check crops regularly.

The adult form of the native budworm is a moth which has light brown patterned forewings and mostly pale hind wings with a black patch on the tail.



Native Budworm Moth

White eggs (0.5mm) are laid near the top of the plant mainly, then are darkened with maturity and hatch after seven days. Once pods form on pulse crops growers will need to monitor crops weekly for grubs. If growers are finding one grub per 10 sweeps, spraying would be recommended to avoid early damage and potential yield loss.

A common trend last season showed growers that sprayed early for grubs had the best yielding crops with no damage to the grain. This ensured the best price possible for the grain. Spraying for Budworm with Alpha-Cypermethrin is registered @ 200mls/ha or 300mls/ha with the higher rate giving you longer protection (up to 14 days).

Please note that is not registered for Native Budworm control in Lentils.

Sumi-Alpha Flex is another excellent option for Native Budworm and has a different active to Alpha-Cypermethrin. This product is registered on lentils and other legume crops with rates ranging from 130mls to 330mls/ha depending on size of the grub.

With regards to when is it financially correct to spray, as a rule of thumb, each budworm per m2 at podding in Lupins can cause \$1/ha of damage. In Peas, Chickpeas, Faba Beans and Lentils, each budworm per m2 causes a \$2/ha loss. It doesn't take many to make it a sound strategy to spray.

Disclaimer

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Spray Topping in Legumes (by Tim Hofmaier)

Once again this season, and what appears to be becoming more common, is the amount of annual ryegrass (ARG) and brome grass escapees after spraying with Clethodim and Clethodim and Haloxyfop mixes in legume crops. The best option this year on ryegrass control has been Clethodim (Status, Platinum) + Butroxydim (Factor), with the addition of Factor doing an excellent job of controlling large, tillered plants. With more ryegrass resistance around to Group 'A' chemistry, there is a greater importance on making sure all legume crops are "spray topped" to prevent annual seed set.

Spray topping, prior to harvest with non-selective herbicides such as Paraquat, when the target weeds are at flowering to early grain fill can result in 90% reduction in weed seed set. The timing of the application is the key to providing a successful reduction in weed seeds.

The selectivity of the crop topping process is dependent on the sufficient gap in physiological maturity between crop and weed.

Currently, there are limited registrations for non-selective herbicides for spray topping. However, Paraquat 250 is registered at 400-800ml/ha, Diquat (Reglone) is registered at 1 to 3lt/ha (crop dependant) and some Glyphosate 540 brands (Weedmaster Argo) at rates from 680mls/ha to 1.8lt/ha.

Timing is Critical

Lupins, Lentils, Peas and Faba Beans require 80% colour change before they can be 'topped' with Paraquat 250 with little damage to yield. Generally, the legume seeds should be firm to hard when they are squeezed between thumb and forefinger. The best timing for the ryegrass is ideally when at the milky

dough stage. Paraquat is very effective reducing seed set in the vicinity of 64% to 95%. Glyphosate works more effectively with flowering ryegrass.

Lentils and Peas are the most sensitive to Paraquat, so adequate care must be taken to ensure the correct timing for spray topping. Given the aim of crop spray topping is to achieve effective ryegrass control, growers need to strike a balance between optimal timing for ARG (which is generally earlier than later) and yield loss.

As the stage of the crop and weeds are critical to the timing of any application, please consult with your Western AG Agronomist first to ensure a better result is achieved.

Late ARG Control in Canola (by Trudy McCann)

Canola has traditionally presented itself as the ideal crop for the reduction of annual ryegrass (ARG) numbers, particularly in the high rainfall zone (HRZ) where other break crop opportunities are more limited.

Canola now has many in crop herbicides options, CL, TT and now RT (Roundup plus Triazine tolerance) and great crop competitiveness. Season 2014 has seen Factor become more available, adding a 'spike' for Clethodim to help with in crop ARG control. Clethodim has come under huge pressure in the break crop (canola and pulse) phase and thus ARG resistance to Clethodim has become common in many paddocks. Another much anticipated herbicide control tool in ARG seed set reduction is the pending registration of Weedmaster DST by Nufarm for pre harvest ARG control. Unfortunately, registrations are yet to be approved by the APVMA and we cannot anticipate the 'green light' for this season.

Western AG invited Peter Newman from Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative (AHRI) in Western Australia to present at our 4 Roadshow Meetings held in August. Peter provided a passionate, clear and very informative session on herbicide resistance (focusing on ARG & Wild Radish) to the 160+ growers that attended.

His key point – *Stop relying on herbicides to beat resistance.*

Implementing cultural control practices is a vital tool in beating weed resistance.

Below is an abbreviated excerpt straight from the AHRI website:

'The best option to maximise the weed seed bank is to harvest high and spread all of the weed seeds evenly over the paddock. This will give you something to spray next year. If you feel this is a bad idea, start narrow windrow burning. The first step is to spend some time familiarising yourself with a beer can as the internationally accepted harvest height when trying to capture weed seeds is the same height of an Australian beer can. The next step is to work out how to modify your harvester to make narrow windrows.

Harvest weed seed control is the main non-herbicide tool and narrow windrow burning is a great introduction to removing weed seeds at harvest. Local farmers are already windrow burning so local experience is available to help with questions and ease reservations about this practice.

The basic guidelines for burning narrow windrows are;

1. Start with a small area and start with canola. Canola windrows are less bulky and burn hot with little risk of the fire escaping to burn the entire paddock.
2. Harvest low (10-20cm), drink can height. The crop needs to be harvested low to pick up as many weed seeds as possible to be moved into the windrow.
3. Make a narrow windrow chute (600mm). Narrow windrows are ideal as

they burn hotter for longer killing the weed seeds.

4. Windrows burn more effectively with a cross wind (burn longer and hotter). An up and back harvest pattern is easier to manage for the best burning conditions.

5. Grazing the paddock after harvest and before the burning of windrows can cause problems. Livestock can reduce the biomass of the windrow as well as spreading them out and making many small fire breaks. Ideally paddocks should not be grazed.

6. Wind direction and temperatures do need to be ideal. Successfully burning requires early preparation. Be organised.

Narrow windrow burning has been widely adopted in WA for a few years with a number of SA growers now implementing it. Many years of research has demonstrated the ability to capture at least 60 to 70% of wild radish and annual ryegrass seeds at harvest. These can then be concentrated into a narrow windrow. When these windrows are burnt in the right conditions in the following autumn, 99 to 100% of the seeds are destroyed.

For more information:

<http://www.ahri.uwa.edu.au/news/AHRI-insight/Windrow-burning-a-good-place-to-start>

<http://www.weedsmart.org.au/> - search narrow windrow burning

<http://youtu.be/fLEuwyB8wo> - Header Setup & Tips for Narrow Windrowing

<http://youtu.be/Cb6bhuJQLbw> - Windrow Chute Design

Fence Line Spraying Alternatives (by James Jess)

One of the key issues surrounding fence line spraying is the occurrence of herbicide resistant populations of ARG. According to the glyphosate sustainable working group, 53 of 189 documented sites with glyphosate resistant annual ryegrass are fence line situations.

A major component of fence line spraying is the lack of competition and mechanical intervention. Taking the reliance off glyphosate is paramount and growers need to be aware of the dangers associated with spraying glyphosate year in year out for weed control in crop borders. These areas should be treated not unlike the rest of the farm with herbicide resistance a key focus. Therefore, growers need to work with their agronomist in order to make better informed decisions about the best strategies to achieve lasting control.

Timeliness of fence line spraying is the key to good results. Avoiding situations like the photo below is a must if growers wish to limit weeds moving into paddocks. There needs to be a shift to earlier applications when the fence lines are populated by a small number of actively growing weeds with plenty of visible ground.



Poor Fence Line Control

Residual and long acting herbicides should be used to improve the longevity of control. They are ideally partnered with a knockdown herbicide for best results. Options include the following.

Uragan (800g/kg Bromacil)

This product is best applied in a mix with a knockdown herbicide on young winter weeds ideally within 10 weeks of germination. The ideal mix for a typical fence line is 3kg/ha Uragan + 2lt/ha Spray Seed + non-ionic wetter @ 0.1%. A product like Uragan can give you up to 10 months control at 3kg/ha.



Good Fence Line Control with Uragan

Alliance

(Amitrole 250g/L+ Paraquat 125g/L)

Alliance offers a viable alternative to glyphosate, offering a dual action, killing green tissue on contact before starving the weed to death. Therefore, weed control is usually better resulting in fewer transplants and less survivors. Residual chemistry can be combined with this product to achieve long term control. The primary benefit of Alliance is the additional resistance management gained from not using any glyphosate in the fence line mix.

Arsenal Express

(150g/L Imazapyr + 150g/L Glyphosate)

Arsenal Express, from BASF, offers the combination of a Group M knockdown herbicide combined with a Group B residual herbicide. Issues surrounding this mix arise from the use of Glyphosate as the knockdown combined with a Group B residual. Herbicide resistant populations of ARG are still at risk of surviving an application due to the level of resistance experienced for both the chemical Groups M and B.

Therefore, a fence line mix of this nature should only be used if you are confident you are chasing susceptible weeds. It definitely still is a better option than just using a straight glyphosate!

Double Knock

Using a double knock on fence lines is an excellent strategy to make sure effective control of glyphosate resistant weeds is achieved. Two applications of Spray Seed 14 days apart will give you excellent results with the opportunity to add residual chemistry in the second pass. Obviously this is not an ideal strategy for a fence line situation but, if you start to highlight the problem fence lines, it may be the best strategy. It is imperative that Growers need to be doing whatever they can to avoid fence line weeds moving into their production zones.

Hay cutting

Mechanical control of herbicide resistant weeds is proven. Hay cutting is one of the unique ways to ensure that weeds seeds don't make it back into the seed bank. Growers need to consider the benefits of cutting the first round of all cereal crops and exporting the weed seeds off the paddock in a bale. This ensures any annual ryegrass moving in from the fence line is quickly eradicated.

Resistance Testing

It will help to get your fence lines tested for glyphosate resistance. This will be the first step to understanding the dangers of continual use of glyphosate on ryegrass based fence lines.

Speak to your Western AG Agronomist for details on how and when to do resistance testing.

Early Silo Hygiene (by Aaron Starick)

The next two months provide an ideal time for undertaking tasks in preparation from harvest. One of these tasks should be the preparation of silos for grain receipt and storage. It is never too early to clean out storages and coat internally with either a Permaguard or Dryacide type product.

As this product usually takes two weeks to control any insects present and won't breakdown quickly, it is important to treat as early as possible.

Gloves, hat, overalls and a basic dust mask is all that is required to protect the user.

Adopt the following simple procedure:

1. Open the lid of the silo
2. Stand inside the bottom hatch
3. Use the "wonder gun" to coat the entire inside for 10 seconds.
4. Close the bottom hatch immediately after blasting
5. Shut the top lid when you see the dust starting to come out.



The "Wonder Gun"

Grazing Lucerne over the Spring (by Troy Kollegger)

Lucerne is a deep rooted perennial legume pasture plant that provides valuable feed for livestock and is well adapted to a range of soil types and variable climatic conditions. It is often described as “The King” of all fodder crops enabling Graziers to finish young cattle and particularly lambs to meet specific markets. It is mostly productive in Spring, Summer and Autumn providing a highly digestible and high protein feed. When grazing Lucerne over the Spring, it is essential to remember associated risks. Two of the most common issues are Bloat in cattle and Red Gut in weaned lambs.

BLOAT

Grazing on Lucerne presents certain animal health issues particularly with Bloat in cattle one of the most common problems seen over the Spring period. It is a seasonal condition rarely reported in sheep, but it is the largest health issue for cattle grazing on stands of pure Lucerne.

Bloat is a seasonal problem in both beef and dairy cattle. The condition is generally triggered by the rapid consumption of lush legume pastures such as Lucerne and/or clover in the spring time. It is caused by an increase in the gas pressure within the rumen as these feeds are fermented. Normally this gas is released back through the oesophagus to relieve the pressure on the rumen. A stable foam is produced trapping the gas and increases the rumen pressure causing the heart and lungs to fail often resulting in death.

Common signs / symptoms of Bloat:

- Cattle appear distressed – bulging eyes and tend to vocalise – often kick at their sides
- No longer grazing
- Cattle begin to breath rapidly, mouth may be open with tongue protruding
- Stock strain to urinate and defecate
- Mobility is compromised – unable to stand eventually lying down
- Distended or swollen left abdomen

Common management practices and preventative measures adopted prior and during the grazing periods:

- Don't allow hungry stock sudden unrestricted access to Lucerne
- Provide free access to palatable hay or straw while grazing lush Lucerne
- Increasing the fibre intake of cattle can reduce bloating
- Feed hay immediately prior to the introduction to Lucerne pastures
- Bloat capsules and blocks are commonly utilised
- Be aware frosts can change forage composition and increase bloat risk
- Shift stock later in the day when dew or frost is off the Lucerne

RED GUT

Red Gut is a disease of weaned lambs grazing lucerne characterised by sudden death. Some cases may show severe abdominal distension of the small and

large intestine and in many cases the bowels are displaced. Trials have indicated that early and late weaned stock, lambs vaccinated for Clostridial diseases and lambs supplemented with lucerne hay were susceptible to red gut.

The incidence of the disease was reduced when lambs were supplemented with good quality hay and when lambs were suckled.

Other preventative measures include:

- Prior to stock initially grazing on lucerne, ensure lambs are in forward condition.
- On-off grazing of lambs: graze on poorer pasture plus hay then rotate on lucerne and repeat the grazing cycle. Must ensure lambs are adequately nourished prior to returning onto the lucerne paddock.
- Offer hay and straw to slow the passage of feed from the rumen and to increase the volume of the rumen. This decreases room for intestines to twist.

Please note that conditions can vary significantly from season to season and it is important to seek professional advice from a qualified nutritionist to obtain a detailed plan to maximise stock performance, prevent stock loss and therefore increase profitability.

Getting to know you.....



Tim Hofmaier

Tim has worked as an agronomist for Western Ag since January 2010.

He completed a Diploma of Applied Science at Longerenong College and, after completing his studies, he moved to Naracoorte in S.A. to work for a CRT business as a field agronomist. It was here that Tim first gained valuable knowledge with both horticultural and pasture production systems. At this time, Tim also worked closely with potato and onion growers throughout the South East of SA.

After 15 months, Tim decided to move back to Horsham to further his career in broadacre cropping. He worked for three and half years with a private consultant where he focused primarily on No Till Farming and plant nutrition.

After a further three years working for a corporate input supply company, he joined Western AG where his focus has continued to be on developing both existing and new clients in the Wimmera and Mallee areas.

He is married to Jess and has two children, Lewis and Ivy.

Outside work, Tim has been a member of the Horsham Golf Club for over 15 years, he has represented Horsham on many occasions playing “Eight Ball”, enjoys fishing and loves cleaning his aquarium.

He also is a very passionate Collingwood supporter in the AFL.
(but we won't hold that against him!!!!)

Health Matters (by Guest Editor, Dennis Hoiberg)

MAXIMISING PERSONAL PERFORMANCE

The modern business is faced with many challenges and dangers. These risks include financial, climate change, and broad business risk. While all these risk strategies are critical to your success they aren't the real source of risk.

THE GREATEST RISK TO YOUR OWN BUSINESS IS ACTUALLY YOU.

If you lose the passion, energy and drive for your business, regardless of all these other strategies, you will still fail.

You need to look after yourself in order to look after your business. The good news is that you can become your business' greatest strength. But it requires a change in mindset and behavior.

Thomas Fuller once said, "you only value health until sickness comes". My observations of working throughout Australia and other places is that sickness has arrived and we need, as individuals, families, businesses and communities to take urgent action to prevent and manage. This sickness goes beyond emotional and physical, it is more prevailing than that – and consequently a holistic approach is needed. And it's needed urgently.

A quick scan of broad statistics in Australia today tells us:

- * Each year 1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental illness (most common are anxiety, depression, bipolar, substance abuse)
- * 20% of all Australians will experience depression at some time in our lives
- * 13% of Australians will experience anxiety disorders at some time in our lives
- * In 2011, 1727 males and 546 females died by suicide. That equals 2273 deaths – that's nearly 6 a day (official ABS figures)
- * The PBS indicates 31.1 million prescriptions for mental health related medications were issued in 2009-10
- * \$377m is the annual direct healthcare cost attributable to physical inactivity per year
- * \$56m is the annual healthcare cost directly attributable to depressive disorders
- * Possibly 180 Australians a day may be attempting suicide
- * The cost to Australian businesses due to "stress-related" time off is around \$30B in lost productivity and workplace participation
- * Women account for 58.6% of mental health claims

These figures are not presented to alarm people, rather it is what it is. Part of the benefit of presenting these figures is that if we can't measure it we can't manage it.

So how can we start to manage and proactively prevent this silent illness?

Take a holistic approach – start seeing our lives as one, and all aspects as inter-related. Extensive research indicates there seven areas of your life that you need to really focus on to take this holistic approach.

The seven areas are:

1. Finding your "x" factor
2. Career wellness
3. Emotional resilience
4. Financial wellbeing
5. Physical wellbeing
6. Community connectivity
7. Finding your "y" factor

The "x" factor is understanding your talents, and putting place strategies to build on and play to these strengths. So many times we focus on our weaknesses. We have to accept we have these weaknesses and that possibly we always will. Find and invest in your talents so that you can play to your strengths. Positively focusing on your career, emotional, financial, and physical and community wellness will also assist in building this holistic approach.

Your "y" factor is exactly that – why do you do what you do? What do you believe and what are your underlying values? Critically, are your behaviours in alignment with your values? If not, there will always be that underlining "crawling" feeling that something is just not right in our lives.

So where can we start in taking a holistic strategy. Here are five tips.

1/ Positive self-talk and listening to your inner voice

Our self-talk reflects how we feel and think about our self. When challenged, what is yourself-talk? What do you hear yourself saying when you are facing a tough situation? If you have a negative self-talk, does it influence your actions and how other people interact with you? Work at changing your self-talk so it is positive. Try and describe the situation in another way. Simply reframing your self-talk won't make the problem or challenge go away, but a change in self-talk may move you away from the flight-fight-freeze responses and into problem-solving behaviour.

2/ Focus on the things you can control

Sometimes it can be difficult to know the difference between things that can and can't be controlled. Become adept at knowing what you can control, as opposed to wasting energy on the things you can't. Be realistic and ask yourself, 'what can be done about this, or at least part of this?' It might be overwhelming but consider if there are parts that can be addressed to get some positive return.

3/ Planning

It is important to plan and have mechanisms in place to apply in difficult times. Begin by understanding what 'pushes your buttons' and might threaten your wellness. Knowing what reaction you have when your 'buttons are pushed' enables you to make a plan to counter any adverse reactions and adopt a different strategy or reaction. Find out what works for you, create a plan and build on it continually. Time management is also important to help create a stable and certain environment so you can better handle any surprises. Having a plan, even a simple to-do list, will remind you of the steps you are taking and the progress being made.

4/ Look after yourself

By looking after yourself you increase your capacity to handle the challenges around you.

- A. Physical health: Exercise, a balanced diet and rest are crucial. Make it a priority to see a doctor and dentist. This may be difficult in some rural areas, but schedule them at least twice a year, every year.
- B. Mental health: De-stress and maintain quality of sleep. Think about whether you get a good night's sleep, are able to wind down and de-stress. If not, consider why.
- C. Connectivity and social networks: Stay connected with your friends, family and your community through local groups, clubs and online social networks.
- D. Spirituality: We each have a spiritual dimension. Try to connect with it by spending time in nature, meditating, appreciating music or art, or prayer.

Feeling good doesn't just happen. Living a balanced life requires taking the time to renew yourself and improve your personal wellbeing. Remember: every day provides a new opportunity to recharge and look after yourself. Give yourself a break. Taking time away from the farm can be a source of stress and potential conflict among family members. Even during busy times, consider taking a break of up to four days to recharge and increase your effectiveness when back at work. During 'down time' you should take a break for at least four days.

5/ Connecting with community

It is essential to stay involved with family, work and the community for many positive reasons, including being able to contribute, being valued and to maintain perspective. The more people you interact with, the greater the likelihood that you will meet people who have experienced, survived and grown through similar experiences. Look for ways to connect with the community through work, volunteering, sporting clubs or charity clubs, and get your friends involved in the activities as well. There is scope for positive engagement through the virtual community. Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, is a valuable tool to stay connected and engaged both locally and further afield.

Make the choice to be positive.

Positive people attract positive people and all the benefits that come with that. Surround yourself with positive people and reap the benefits.

** Dennis Hoiberg is the Founder / Director of the niche consultancy Lessons Learnt Consulting Pty Ltd. This company conducts monthly webinars on topics related around resilience and wellness. Lessons Learnt Consulting offers coaching and mentoring support as well as training programs for teams and organisations on resilience and change. These training programs are conducted throughout Australia.*