

EPARF Member Technical Newsletter

January 2018 – No 1



Welcome to the first edition for 2018 of the EPARF Technical Newsletter.

EPARF aims to provide members with regular and topical newsletter throughout the season. Please provide any feedback on content to eparf31@gmail.com

What's happening in the paddock

Summer weeds should be controlled in every paddock by now. The benefit of summer weed control to the following crops and pastures is well proven – early control can equate to more plant available moisture and higher soil N levels for following crops and pastures.

Failure to control summer weeds while they are young and before they are 20 days old usually results in reduced profit. If you want to maximise your ability to make profit, control summer weeds.

Controlling summer weeds also reduces harbour for snails, and removes host plants for problem insects like Russian Wheat Aphid.

Snails

Once summer weeds are dead, there are fewer cool, humid places for snails to shelter. Cabling/rolling/slashing etc on hot days should commence when summer weeds have been controlled. We know from experience that 2 passes with a cable are required to get a good consistent snail kill.

Be prepared to bait after the first rain event that gets snails onto the ground for a few days. This could be as early as next month. Baiting before breeding is essential.

Germination Tests

Germination and 1000 seed weight tests allow you to calculate a sowing rate to achieve optimum target crop densities. Without this information, you can only guess your seeding rate. Seed services SA or Plant Science Consulting can conduct the test for you, or you can do your own at home if you are careful and have an accurate set of scientific scales.

It is particularly important to germination test any weather or frost damaged grain, and any older seed from previous seasons.

Grain Cleaning – do it properly

Introducing weeds seeds to your paddocks at sowing is a sure fire way to ensure you battle with weed management forever, and have increasing issues with herbicide resistance.

2008 research by AHRI showed that 73% of cleaned grain samples retained for seed contained weed seeds. The most common weed seeds in the cleaned samples were ryegrass, radish, brome grass and wild oats. Many of these weed seeds were also herbicide resistant.

Seed contamination in samples cleaned by professional cleaners was half that in the samples cleaned by the grower. 27% of samples had no weed seeds – it is possible to achieve weed free cereal seed.

Cleaning via gravity table was the best way to remove weed seeds from grain retained for seed. Rotary screens were the next best method of removing weed seeds from grain samples, and sieves removed the least weed seeds.

Summer Spraying Tips

The first round of summer spraying should have been completed weeks ago. If paddocks need another application for later germinating weeds there are a few tips that can increase your chance of successful control.

1. Spray at 16 km/hr – faster speeds increase dust, and impacts on droplet deposition
2. Use a robust water rate and coarse droplet size
3. Set boom height so double overlap occurs at stubble height
4. Spray in the opposite direction to the first summer spray
5. Don't skimp on chemical rate
6. Summer weeds don't usually die by themselves – kill them early with herbicide and follow up grazing where applicable.

Grain Treatment

All wheat and barley seed should receive fungicide treatment for smuts and bunt at a minimum. Barley seed should also be treated with a fungicide that protects seedlings from additional diseases like early scald and powdery mildew. If your barley variety had loose smut last year, and it is one of the more susceptible varieties like Spartacus CL or Hindmarsh, it should be treated with products like Evergol Prime® or Vibrance®. Systiva® also has some activity of loose smut, but control can be more variable than if you use EverGol Prime® or Vibrance®. Baytan® will not provide adequate control of loose smut in the more susceptible varieties.

Newer generation seed treatments can offer control or suppression of additional diseases if required. They may also have only a minimal effect on coleoptile length and emergence compared with some older active ingredients. EP trials have shown seed treatments claiming rhizoctonia suppression do not reliably result in increased yield, however, products like Systiva® can provide excellent control of foliar diseases like the net blotches.

Even coverage is very important when applying insecticide and fungicide seed treatments. Don't apply treatments to samples containing lots of dust or chaff – apply to cleaned seed only. If you have to apply your own treatments, 2 nozzles placed 1m apart on the auger usually provide better coverage than a single nozzle. Ensure auger flow rate and application pump flow rate are correctly matched to provide the desired rate of product per tonne of grain.

There is a lot of good information regarding grain storage, treatment and hygiene. Look up this link www.storedgrain.com.au

Copy and paste this address into your web browser to download the most recent PIRSA 2018 Cereal Seed Treatment Guide

www.pir.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/237920/final_web_CerealSeed_Treatments_2017-18_booklet.pdf

Time of Sowing – Canola

GRDC research has shown it is very important to choose the correct variety when sowing canola early. Some varieties simply do not yield well if sown in early April.

Check out this link for more details

<https://grdc.com.au/10TipsEarlySownCanola>

Herbicide Resistance Testing

It is not too late to collect samples of weed seeds from paddocks for resistance testing. It takes a little longer to get sufficient seed after harvest, but it is still possible.

Herbicides are still an important part of every weed control strategy. Unless you know what works efficiently on your farm, you will have difficulty implementing a successful long term weed control strategy. If you don't test, you are guessing what herbicides still have activity.

Look up this website for details on collecting samples and where to send them for analysis.

www.plantscienceconsulting.com.au

EP Variety Trial Results

Most of the EP and state-wide variety trial results for the 2017 season are now available at www.nvtonline.com.au

There is plenty of info on varieties on this site, as well as short and long term variety comparison results. Remember, you should not choose to grow a variety on the basis on one season's yield performance. Look at long term yield relative to alternative varieties, disease packages, quality packages, adaptability, ease of management etc to assist in making a variety choice.

REMINDERS

- Kill snails on hot days – don't miss an opportunity (keep in mind fire risk)
- Kill new summer weeds that have recently germinated
- Get a germination test on grain retained from previous seasons, and any weather damaged grain from 2017. Calculate 1000 seed weights and required seeding rate.
- Check stored grain for weevil infestation
- Organise 0-60cm deep soil tests for N and S (and maybe K on the odd soil type), and topsoil tests for P (and N and S if also doing 10-60cm deep soil test). If you don't test, you are guessing what the nutrient status is in a paddock.
- Go to as many workshops and updates as you can in the next 2 months – listening to experts and interacting with other farmers is a major pathway for gaining new knowledge and skills.
- Control all summer growing weeds and volunteer cereals to conserve soil moisture, plant available nitrogen, and to remove hosts for pests like Russian Wheat Aphid
- Finalise your budgets and refine fertiliser plans based on soil test results
- Get your seed cleaned and treated, stubbles managed, and seeding equipment ready early eg by end Feb.

Upcoming Events

Moisture Probe Workshops – 8th and 9th February - Wudinna, Kimba, Cleve, Cummins. How to use data generated from the EP Moisture Probe Network. Contact Naomi Scholz to RSVP 8680 6233

EPARF Pulse Agronomy Workshop – 14th February, Minnipa Ag Centre. Contact Dot Brace 8680 6202

LEADA Expo – 13th March. Contact Megan Low 0427393065

Upper EP Farmer Meetings/Harvest Reports – 19th-23rd March

EPARF Adjuvant Workshops – Various locations TBA July

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