

EPARF Member Technical Newsletter

December 2018 – No 7



Harvest is winding up on Upper, Central and Eastern EP after some frustrating weather delays. Some operators still have 1-2 weeks left, but most are finishing up. Despite frost, late emergence, wind damage, and poor in season rainfall, yields and quality have generally been above expectation.

This season shows that crop yields can be quite surprising in below average rainfall seasons if you:

- are well organised and do things on time,
- conserve moisture from summer and previous seasons,
- treat the better parts of the paddock differently to the poorer parts when necessary.

Summer weed spraying is in full swing. Well organised farmers have planned their seed cleaning, and have already finished the first summer spray in the higher priority paddocks.

Minnipa Farm Harvest

Jake and the team have finished harvest on the MAC commercial farm. A more comprehensive summary will be available later, but wheat and barley averaged around 1.5t/ha. Compass and Spartacus had similar yields and Planet was significantly lower yielding. Most barley was F1 due to protein, and most wheat achieved H2.

Seed Treatment

Clean and treat seed early. This allows you time to source any additional seed required, deliver any excess at current high prices, and protect the retained seed from insect attack.

If you observed loose smut in your Spartacus CL barley, use a seed dressing identified in SARDI and WA trials to control it. Products like Evergol Prime® (now called Evergol Energy®), Vibrance®, Jockey Stayer® combined with Raxil® and products with carboxin in them consistently provide high levels of loose smut control in the more susceptible varieties like Spartacus.

Several surveys have shown that seed cleaning with a professional cleaner consistently results in cleaner seed than farmers who clean their own. It can also result in more even application of any seed treatment.

Planning for 2019 Fertiliser

If you regularly take pre sowing soil tests for phosphorous and tissue tests during the growing season, and have accurate yield data for each paddock, you are in a good position to plan your seeding fertiliser requirements for 2019.

Regular use of soil tests, taken from the same place in the paddock, can help you monitor soil P availability over time. These results will help you evaluate the success of your P fertiliser strategy.

In season tissue test results will highlight any trace element issues that might need addressing at seeding eg the need for zinc or copper compound fertilisers.

At a minimum, replace P removed in previous crops and pastures. This strategy has worked on the less calcareous soils, and where historic P input has been high. However, on the more calcareous soils (higher P tie up) and where historic P input has been lower, it may be beneficial to adopt a higher P input regime (“replacement plus”).

Remember, if a paddock averages 2t/ha, some areas probably went over 3t/ha. If you expect the good areas to maintain their yield potential over time, you need to replace the P in the higher yielding zones – this does not happen if you replace P based on the paddock average yield.

Soil Test Suggestions

Plan your 2019 soil test program. Annual topsoil and deep soil tests are a feature of many successful farms on EP. A database of tests allows you to confidently change fertiliser regimes as a response to economic or seasonal demands.

Regular 0-10cm soil testing allows you to evaluate your phosphorous reserves and adjust inputs accordingly. Always get a DGT test, PBI test and maybe a cowell P test as well (soil type dependant). 0-10cm soil tests can also be useful when looking at nitrate and ammonium N, Sulphur and potassium. The N, sulphur and potassium tests results are more useful if combined with a deep soil analysis for these elements as they can move in the soil profile.

Soil testing for trace elements does not always accurately indicate where a response is likely.

2018 Variety Results

Over the next few weeks, more NVT variety trial results will be posted on line. Currently the results from some field pea, wheat and canola trials are loaded. Always read the comments on frost and heat shock – they can help explain some unusual rankings.

www.nvtonline.com.au

Click on SA on the map to see all SA trial sites. Click on the EP and you will see the trial sites for EP appear. If the icon is grey for a location, then the results have not been loaded yet –or the trial has not been harvested yet. If the icon is coloured eg yellow for canola, click on it and the menu will allow you to select the current season trial results.

Remember, decisions on varieties should not be made on single season performance only.

Herbicide Resistance Testing

It is not too late to collect seed from paddocks for herbicide resistance testing. There is usually sufficient seed heads present in the paddock, windrow, chaff heap etc to collate for testing.

Tips for the next 3 weeks

- Make accurate notes of your individual paddock performance and observations – these will help you make good decisions on management in the future
- Refine your fertiliser plan based on yield and protein results from 2018
- Only keep low moisture high quality seed, and get germination tests and seed weights organised asap - especially on pulses, retained canola seed and seed left over from last season
- Carefully manage the introduction of livestock to cereal stubbles to prevent grain poisoning
- Spray all your summer weeds now and be prepared to spray again 10 days after the next rain
- Clean seed and apply seed treatments to protect from insect infestation before Christmas.

WISHING YOU A GREAT CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

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