

EPARF Member Technical Newsletter

October 2017 – No 5



What's happening in the paddock

Harvest has started on Upper EP with some early pulse and canola crops. Cereal harvest is very close on parts of Upper, Eastern and Western EP. All the later sown/emerging crops are still flowering or just starting to fill grain and are running at least a month late.

Hay has been cut and is in the process of being baled. There is good local demand for vetch hay.

Late grass control in pastures is almost completed with only a few heavily grazed paddocks left to treat with paraquat.

Pulses and canola in southern districts are still being treated for insects (aphids, heliothis, etiella), but the number of cereal crops requiring treatment for Russian Wheat Aphid in the past couple of weeks has declined.

Disease levels are generally low. On EP a small amount of leaf rust can be found in some wheat and barley crops, spot and net form of net blotch has only been a localised problem in barley, and pulse diseases have been relatively easy to manage.

The focus for most is now on finishing hay production, planning for next year and preparation for harvest.

Pulse Crop Topping Time

Crop topping is different to desiccation and the optimum timing of both operations rarely coincide. Crop topping is aimed at minimising the seed set of surviving weeds without adversely affecting the yield or quality of the pulse crop. Desiccation removes moisture from plants and areas of paddocks that are still green – this technique helps you manage harvest timing.

Crop topping is more suited to the early maturing pulses like peas, vetch, and lupins. Paraquat is the favoured product in pulses on EP. The addition of Sharpen® can improve the brown out and reduce seed set in some of green broadleaf weeds like thistles and radish.

Some early pulses are currently being crop topped/desiccated on Upper and Central EP. Paraquat with a good water rate is the favoured product. If excessive numbers of green broadleaf weeds are present, Sharpen plus 1% Hasten oil can be added to the paraquat at a cost of approx \$17/ha plus oil for the top rate. Both paraquat and Sharpen have a 7 day withholding period to harvest.

Refer to the following link for more information on timing of crop topping and desiccation in pulses:

www.pulseaus.com.au/growing-pulses/publications/desiccation-and-croptopping

Livestock Feed Plans

Paddock feed supplies are pretty slim in some regions of EP and will not last long. Hay supplies are being purchased now and oats and lupins booked up in anticipation of a shortage of paddock feed.

Don't leave it until the last minute to source any feed requirements you might need between now and next winter.

Rotation Plans

Prepare your rotation plan for next season well in advance of harvest. Use your observations, experience, weed management plans, and profit expectations to work out appropriate paddock uses for 2018. Use these plans to work out seed requirements for 2018. Remember to keep some additional seed for each crop type as plans usually change as a result of harvest observations.

Trends for next year include increased area allocated to hay or feed crops to replenish supplementary feed supplies used up this season. Lentil area also appears to be increasing again – mainly at the expense of other legumes – make sure you select the paddocks for lentils carefully.

A big consideration for many on EP this season will be plantback periods for crops following the application of herbicides like Sentry[®]/Midas[®], Ally[®], Balance[®], Lontrel[®], Velocity[®], and even simazine/atrazine in some areas.

Harvest Plan

Clean trucks, augers and bins thoroughly – there is no excuse for contaminating grain at harvest time.

Identify the paddocks you will harvest for seed – clean, healthy paddocks that will be harvested early in the harvest program to ensure optimal seed quality. Store your seed properly.

Identify paddocks that must be harvested early to minimise potential losses or downgrading.

Identify the paddocks that require weed seed management and harvest them as low as you can to collect as many weed seeds as possible.

Loose Smut in barley

There are still some crops of barley containing loose smut. Varieties like Hindmarsh and Spartacus CL are particularly susceptible. Loose smut can also be found in many Scope crops on EP. SARDI research has shown that seed treatments like Baytan T[®] are not effective in controlling loose smut in infected seed of Hindmarsh and Spartacus. Products like EverGol Prime[®] and Vibrance[®] are excellent at controlling loose smut, but do not control powdery mildew or scald or stored grain insect pests. You will need to add other products to ensure the insects and other diseases are controlled.

Harvest weed seed collection and destruction

There are plenty of dirty crops this year. Make sure you use an appropriate strategy to prevent these weed seeds from entering the seed bank. Harvesting low and depositing in a narrow windrow for burning is still a reliable method of managing weed seed banks. Chaff carts and now chaff lining are also popular. There is so much experience with and information available on weed seed collection at harvest that there is no excuse for you not to be using one or more of the tools available. The data is

very clear – preventing weed seeds from entering the seedbank at harvest helps manage weed populations. Look up weedsmart.org.au if you need further information.

Remember the golden rule – cut low at harvest to ensure weed seeds enter the header. Once they are in the header, you have options to control them.

Vetch and Medic pastures

Photosensitisation in sheep grazing medics or vetch infested with aphids has become a significant issue in SA in recent weeks with many reports of it occurring on a number of properties across EP. Photosensitisation occurs when an animal's skin becomes abnormally sensitive to sunlight due to consumption of sensitising agents (e.g. aphids), predisposing the animal to facial eczema (sunburn). This can be as a result of several different diseases such as liver damage, the consumption of specific toxic plants or in this case grazing aphid infested pastures.

Sensitisation occurs mainly on areas of white skin, but in all cases may occur on bare areas of the animal (particularly on the face in sheep). Symptoms include animals becoming restless, seeking shade or shaking their heads and rubbing their ears and eyes before their face, jaw or eyes may appear swollen with droopy ears. Later signs may range from mild to severe sunburn (scabs may form on the ears, nose and/or face), loss of appetite, jaundice and in extreme cases, death.

Remove sheep from aphid infested pastures to a well-shaded paddock or shed if they are showing any signs of this condition and provide them with plenty of water and a good source of energy to give them the best chance of recovery. Valuable affected animals may benefit from antibiotic, anti-inflammatory and antihistamine injections (consult your local vet for more information). Ensure that aphids have been controlled before grazing affected pastures again and monitor livestock condition regularly. The condition is not infectious, however consult your livestock agent in regards to salability of affected animals.

For more information, please follow the link to an informative webinar about photosensitisation:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/1710574397103056641>

Weeds

Recent rainfall has prompted the germination of potato weed, fleabane, stinkwort, melons, summer grasses, etc in some paddocks. Early control will be warranted. Early control is cheaper and more effective than waiting until the weeds are big.

Check out the new link for the updated late season weed control fact sheet “Stewardship for pre-harvest application of herbicides in winter crops”:

https://grdc.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0029/248582/Preharvest-Herbicide-Use-Factsheet-2017.pdf

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