EPARF Member Technical Newsletter MAY 2017

What's happening in the paddock?

Not as much as most would like. Crops have been sown and are emerging well in several areas including some of the areas Wirrulla and West, and around Kimba and Cowell. The remainder of EP is very dry with limited topsoil moisture. Crops sown into the remainder of EP are generally struggling to emerge due to lack of moisture.

More crop has been sown dry on EP this season than in recent memory. Dry sowing provides challenges for herbicide safety, weed control, and on some soil types, sowing depth.

Mice

Baiting of paddocks has occurred in most regions of EP. Highest numbers are generally in un-grazed stubbles, with some paddocks requiring repeat baiting. If you have more than the threshold of 2-3 active warrens in a 100 m x 1 m strip, damage is likely.

Have some bait on hand – it has been hard to obtain in many regions due to shortage of active ingredient.

Check all paddocks not baited the day after sowing for signs of activity/damage.

Pre-emergent Herbicides

Many of these herbicides require moisture post application to "activate" them and make them available for uptake by weed seeds. In most cases there has not been sufficient rainfall in May to activate products like Sakura®, diuron, metribuzin and simazine. Depending on soil type, some of the herbicides may require 10-15 mm of post sowing rainfall to become available for uptake by weeds.

Knockdown Herbicides

The weeds that have come up prior to sowing are starting to show signs of moisture stress. If you continue sowing into low soil moisture, use robust herbicides and water rates, use the correct adjuvant package, and slow down to minimise dust and maximise herbicide contact with the weeds.

Soil Temperatures

Soil temperatures have dropped from above 20 degrees two weeks ago to around 16-17 degrees in many parts of EP. This will result in slower germination and emergence once it does rain. Slow emerging crops are more susceptible to insect attack so monitor carefully.

Insects

Russian wheat aphid, earth mites including Bryobia and lucerne flea have been found in isolated EP paddocks over the past 2 weeks. Lucerne flea are more likely on heavier soils in areas that received the better April rainfall events. Minor damage from cutworm has also been observed in emerging crops on sandy soils.

A product of the GRDC funded EPARF project: Maintaining profitability in retained stubble systems (EPF00001).

Target initial monitoring for Russian Wheat aphid in areas of paddocks where plants are thin, on sandy rises or adjacent bare ground.

Canola Sowing Window

It is past the optimum time of sowing for canola on Eyre Peninsula. The following table summarises three seasons of time of sowing yield responses conducted by Andrew Ware and his team at the Minnipa Agricultural Centre. The chance of obtaining average yields for canola that emerges in late May/early June is reducing for most regions of EP.

TOS	Dates	Ave Yield (t/ha)
TOS1	15 - 25 April	1.83
TOS2	26 April - 8 May	1.58
TOS3	9 – 18 May	1.26
TOS4	19 – 29 May	0.95

Average yields of Minnipa Time of Sowing (TOS) experiments conducted in 2013, 2014 & 2015.

Pea Blackspot Risk

The SARDI/DAFWA blackspot risk manager still has most of EP in a higher blackspot risk category. Another rain will be required to reduce the blackspot risk. However, delaying pea sowing in most areas for much longer will increase the risk of heat stress during reproduction. Take into account the distance of planned pea crops from last year's pea stubble, blackspot history when peas were last grown on the paddocks, incidence of peas in your area, intended fungicide program etc as well as the predicted blackspot risk when working out an appropriate sowing date for peas. Most areas would prefer to have their peas sown by the end of this week if blackspot was not a risk factor.

Reminders

- Russian wheat aphid can now be found from Kimba right through Eastern and Lower EP. They are very likely to also be in your area. Monitor early emerging crops carefully if they have not been treated with an appropriate insecticide seed dressing.
- Reconsider paddock plans –especially where high risk crops were planned.
- Reconsider target yields as the sowing widow stretches on. Revised target yield will impact on Nitrogen decisions.
- Consider increasing seeding rate for later sown cereal crops.
- Mice are still affecting sown crops and pastures. Baiting immediately after sowing is best. If crops will be slow to emerge, damage from mice can be more severe. If in doubt, bait.
- **EPARF member day – 'Legume Management' – 28 June 1pm start, conclude with BBQ tea**