



What's happening in the paddock

All regions of EP have received some rainfall during the past 4 weeks, allowing crop growth to continue. However, yield prophet sites reveal that some crops were under significant moisture stress prior to the weekend's rain event.

While the recent winter conditions have been welcome, most regions of Upper and Lower EP were still 50-85mm below their normal April-August rainfall. This major growing season rainfall deficit should be reflected in your yield expectations.

Early crops are filling grain, while some of the later sown ones are still GS30-31.

Some significant frost events occurred late in August, and damage is now evident in paddocks.

Russian Wheat Aphid are very active in many areas of EP and are rapidly breeding/spreading in the warmer conditions.

Hand feeding of livestock has slowed with paddock feed levels adequate for the short term on most farms.

Weed control in crops has been completed on most of EP. Fungicides and insecticides are being applied where required, and pastures manipulated to ensure no grasses set seed.

Try to attend at least one sticky beak day or local field day this season. They are great days to learn from your peers.

Frost

Frosts have damaged cereal, canola and pulse crops on parts of EP over the last 10 days. Symptoms of vegetative frost, stem frost, and flowering frost are evident in some paddocks on Eastern, Central, and Western EP.

Crop damage is widespread, but sometimes is limited in area in individual paddocks. As is common on EP, frost can be more damaging in the low lying areas of the landscape, in areas with lush/dense crop canopies, on the lighter coloured soils (even on the hills) and where high levels of stubble were retained.

The new frost publication answers some of the common questions people have about frost. Click on this link, and open the pdf file.

<https://grdc.com.au/frost-faq>

Recent Temperatures

As a rough rule, it is preferable that cereals flower before the week that average temperatures exceed 23 degrees. This condition has been met for many of the early emerging crops on EP. With forecasts of cool daytime temps for the next week or so, many more crops not suffering from moisture stress or frost damage might start filling grains several row wide.

Late Pasture Manipulation

Staggered emergence of medic and grasses has made management decisions difficult in pastures this season. Many will require an application of glyphosate or paraquat to stop the seed set of grasses. Where appropriate, a late chemical fallow glyphosate application, often followed by paraquat as a double knock, should be applied before any grass seeds complete flowering.

If preserving some ground cover is a priority, sub lethal doses of glyphosate and paraquat can be used as a “spraytop” to manage grass seed set. Spray topping is unreliable unless even grass seed head emergence occurs and application timing is perfect.

Glyphosate 450ai is registered to stop seed set if applied to flowering ryegrass at rates of 360ml/ha plus wetter (higher rates are normally used). Application if the grass seed heads are past flowering stage is less reliable when targeting ryegrass. Remember, if sub lethal doses are used, all the ryegrass seed heads must have fully emerged from the boot and should not be past flowering stage.

For barley grass, brome grass and silvergrass, application of glyphosate from heading to milky dough can be successful in reducing seed set.

Paraquat is also registered to stop the seed production of grasses in pastures. Timing is also critical. Wait until the last ryegrass seed heads have emerged from the boot, and the majority are at or just past flowering with anthers present or glumes open. Rates of 400-800ml/ha are effective if applied at the optimal time. Spraying of barley grass should occur before any sign of seed heads haying off. Some staggered grass populations can require two separate applications of paraquat to ensure complete seed set control.

Russian Wheat Aphid Update

Large areas of EP have required treatment to prevent significant yield loss. Infection has resulted in 40% white heads in some wheat and barley paddocks that were not treated on time. Complacency has resulted in massive crop damage in some areas.

Infestation levels have remained low in some paddocks, but caused significant damage in others.

Predicting how quickly a light infestation will turn into a significant problem is impossible, but we observe that regular rainfall events seem to keep population growth low.

Overseas indications are that infestation right into the grain fill period can cause significant yield damage.

Get out in the paddock, check for symptoms, check for aphid presence on plants with symptoms, and make a decision to control, or not.

As the weather warms up, pirimicarb is now useful option for control – it can leave some beneficial insects intact, but costs more than chlorpyrifos.

Paddocks treated with insecticide at low water rates have been providing poorer control than those treated with 100L water/ha or more.

There are not many farmers who have regretted controlling this aphid on EP so far this season.

Look at this publication – excellent for identification.

https://grdc.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/244377/Russian-Wheat-Aphid-Tactics-for-Future-Control.PDF

Other Warm Season Insects

Traps are picking up some native budworm moths on Upper EP, but so far massive numbers from recent flights have not been detected. However, if your pulses are podding, sweeping every few days is required as some crops already have threshold numbers of native budworm grubs present and require treatment.

Lentils should be regularly checked for etiella moth – they can be found on EP now and need to be controlled as moths, before they lay eggs.

Cowpea aphid are present in vetch and some other pulse crops. Cabbage, turnip and green peach aphid are in some canola crops, and cereal aphids are some cereal crops. Checking regularly is the only way to monitor populations of insects in your crops and work out if they are increasing in number, and causing economic damage.

Upcoming Events

MAC Farm Field Day – 6th September
LEADA Spring Crop Walk – 8th September
Far West Sticky Beak Day – 12th September
Goode/Charra Sticky Beak Day – 13th September
Lock Sticky Beak Day – 18th September
Central Eyre Sticky Beak Day – 19th September
Wirrulla Sticky Beak Day – 20th September
Tuckey Sticky Beak Day – 21st September
Roberts/Verran/Wharminda Sticky Beak Day – 22nd Sept
Minnipa Sticky Beak Day- 25th September
Elliston Sticky Beak Day – 4th October
Mt Cooper Sticky Beak Day – 5th October
Streaky Bay Sticky Beak Day – 6th October

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