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## CENTRE PIVOT VARIETY TRIAL PROGRESS REPORT

The trial site had very good initial seedling vigour and growth in most of the varieties. Currently the trial is moving along ok and there appears to be some quite good differences in pod set between varieties. However like many other early “locked up” crops in the district it has suffered from the early cool weather and other seasonal factors, which is reflected in the amount of pod set throughout the different trial plots.

**The trial field day will be held on  
Thursday 3rd March commencing at  
1.30pm at the Keith Bowling club**

A Sentek moisture probe was installed in the pivot on November 16th 2010 and there is a graph below showing the different irrigation applications and rainfall events. The pivot has received a total of 7 irrigations totalling 420mm (4.2 meg/ha) so far for the seed production period. There have been a total of three trace element and two insecticide applications during the season so far.

The Trial Site Committee is proud to also announce the release of the results and report from the 2010 harvest at the flood irrigation trial site. All members were sent a copy of the report which showed a good comparison of the three years of data. For those who would like a hard copy of the report please contact Lucerne Australia.

**continued on page 2...**



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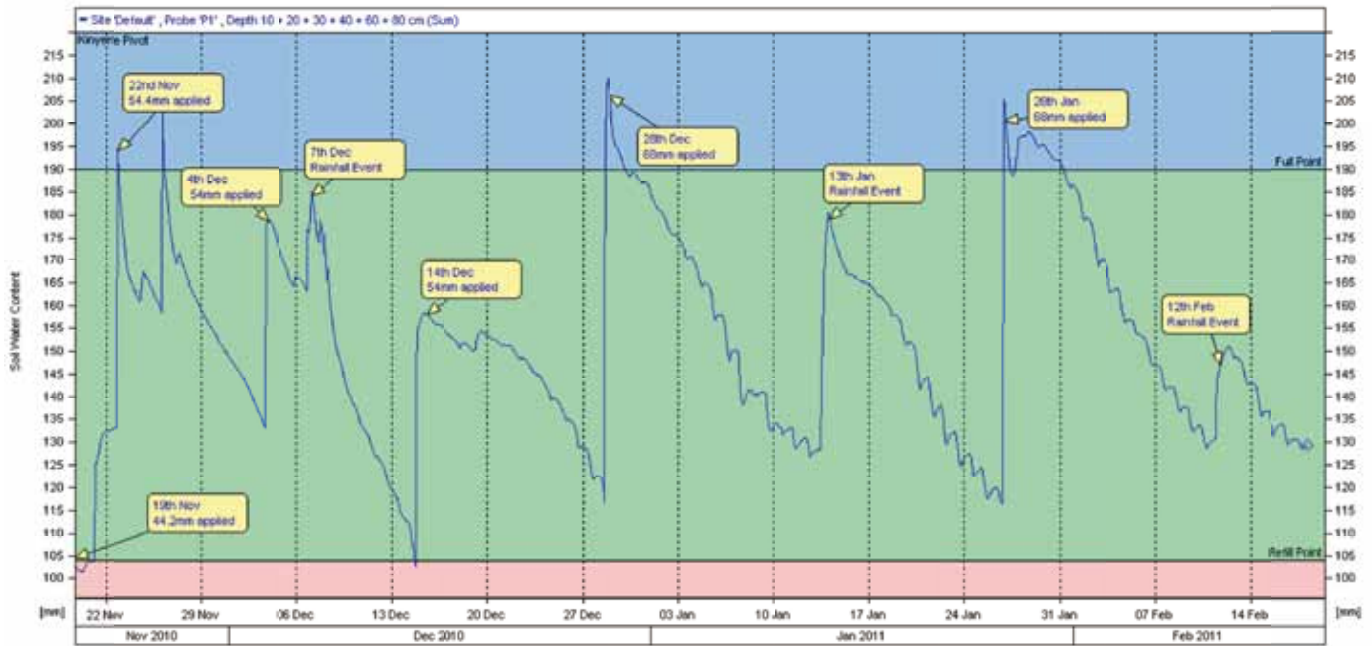
## Centre Pivot Variety Trial Progress Report Continued...

The trial committee and Lucerne Australia would like to thank Cox Rural and Kinyerrie's manager Joe Sandford for their support and co-operation throughout this project.

The trial field day will be held on Thursday 3rd March commencing at 1.30pm at the Keith Bowling club, hope to see you all there!

### Lucerne Australia Summed

Logger: agc05  
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 Comment: LA Trial Site



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## SUMMARY OF LUCERNE AUSTRALIA LUCERNE SEED CONTRACT FORUM

Lucerne Australia hosted a lucerne seed contract forum at the Keith Institute on Friday 4 February with guest speaker Professor Rocque Reynolds from the University of Technology, Sydney.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss developing a standardised lucerne seed production contract and agreed minimum industry standards between growers and marketers.

As author of 'Fair Dinkum: A seed production agreement for the pasture seeds industry', Rocque addressed over 60 members and associates and took questions from the floor regarding the draft seed production agreement and the use of fair and effective contracts.

The draft agreement was developed due to the new growing environment for pasture seeds whereby growers are often poorly placed to protect themselves. Many sign contracts without consultation with lawyers, thereby not understanding what they are required to do.

### **Plant breeder's rights (PBR) and intellectual property (IP)**

Rocque explained the introduction of plant breeders rights (PBR) over the past 20 years, which gives PBR owners control over the use and marketing of seeds.

She outlined cascading royalties where the intellectual property (IP) owner has the right to register, plant, condition, grow, store and sell the seed and collect royalties from whoever manages it.

With breeding, growing and marketing of seed increasingly managed by different parties, clear definition about who owns the certified seed at what stage of the cycle is critical. Ownership must be spelt out in a contract between a grower and marketer.

If a grower is producing a public variety of seed, full ownership is well-defined. However, with certified seed growers and marketers have to deal with IP rights. A grower is limited to selling the product because of the rights of the intellectual property (IP) owner. Growers cannot use certified seed to plant their next crop or sell certified seed as uncertified (VNS) as this is illegal.

### **A schedule..**

The draft agreement includes a schedule, which outlines the details of the agreement such as seed variety, quality requirements, delivery, cleaning, bagging, purchase obligations and price. The schedule is negotiable and prone to annual changes between grower and marketer. With a six-year production phase, Rocque suggested setting a single lucerne seed contract for the whole period, and a new schedule negotiated annually.

*"The base contract will be the overarching agreement and each marketer can determine their own schedule for each grower and negotiate the finer details, including the price."*

- LA member

A contract is not void, even if payment times are not met. However, the draft agreement states that if the buyer hasn't paid, you can write and give notice that they must pay within a certain timeline. However, she recommended always seeking legal advice to reduce risk.

Rocque encouraged negotiating a guaranteed minimum price wherever possible. However, without a spot-market for lucerne seed this is a challenge. An alternative price formula will be considered.

### **Next steps..**

It was agreed a lucerne seed industry standardised contract be considered, with growers and marketers forming an LA sub-committee working group to investigate the concept further.

*"We don't want to put resources onto something we won't achieve, but I agree with the idea. When I first saw the draft document I thought, "wow, 24-pages"; but it's not that bad"*

- Marketer

*"We need to do it otherwise we're turning a blind eye and we'll sit here for 10 years having the same conversation."*

- Marketer

*"There has been too much uncertainty and misunderstanding in contracts. I am first to admit I don't understand half of what I sign. It's time for the industry to be progressive and do this."*

- LA member

A Lucerne Australia sub-committee will be set-up which will include representation from all marketing companies and growers. Initially, four growers will participate in early discussions: Tony Hedges, Darren Sanders, Rodney Lush and Guy Cunningham. Each marketing company will be invited to appoint a representative for their company. Following the forum, a barbeque and drinks enabled further informal discussion between growers, marketers and associates.

**Nicola Raymond, Administrator**





# Calling contract growers

- **Growers required for both Public and PBR lucerne varieties**
- **Purchase/forward contract opportunities available for Siriver, Aurora, Sequel and Trifecta**
- **Approximately 1500ha of new production opportunities in 2011 for our own PBR and Forage Genetic varieties**
- **Good basic seed stocks of Public varieties available for purchase**

Seedmark markets in 70 countries around the globe as well as domestically. We focus on research, development and extension, and boast a diverse, high quality product range backed by credible data.

Every year we travel to 30 countries marketing our PBR as well as public varieties. Our aim is to show our clients the value of our products in their local systems. Rather than selling on price we demonstrate performance. This builds credibility not only in our varieties, but also in Australian bred and produced Lucerne. These are just some of the reasons why Seedmark is a well rounded choice for growers looking for Lucerne marketing options.

**Please contact Shane Ebert on 0411 181 166 or our Head Office on 1800 112 400.**

**Head Office:**

Level 1 – 145 South Terrace  
ADELAIDE, STH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA, 5000  
Email: [seedsinfo@seedmark.com.au](mailto:seedsinfo@seedmark.com.au)

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## MARKET REPORTS

### Naracoorte Seeds Market Report March 2011

How much Lucerne will there be around and what will it be worth? These are the million dollar questions which will be answered in the coming months. It seems the mild summer conditions and the abundant soil moisture has conspired to stop Lucerne plants from setting the volumes of seed we thought may have been available.

Stocks of Lucerne seed were cleaned out late last year and the beginning of 2011 so everything points to good news for Lucerne seed producers. Pricing should start and remain strong for the coming year. Most Lucerne varieties "should" attract prices north of \$3. Interest for Certified Varieties has been



**“Stocks of Lucerne seed were cleaned out late last year and the beginning of 2011 so everything points to good news for Lucerne seed producers.”**

constant but we have been unwilling to forward contract due to the high risk nature of this form of marketing. Dollar and price fluctuations can be crippling

and there is no guarantee that the line of seed contracted will come up to specification for the markets required. Specifications from one market to the next vary significantly so we marry each line with each market on a needs basis.

We look forward to seeing a few tests roll off of the fax machine and turning your seed into cash.

**Regards, Jamie Tidy**  
*jamie@rbm.com.au*  
**Mobile – 0427621944**

### Tintinara Seeds Market Report March 2011

One of life's laws is that nothing stays the same forever! So it is with Market Reports. The dominant theme for all reports over the past two years has been the depressed markets, and the depressed prices with distinct lack of interest in lucerne seed. That has now changed. For the 12 months from December 2009 to November 2010, Australia exported over 10,000 tonnes of lucerne seed. To put it in perspective, for the previous 12 months, only 3,500 tonnes was exported. The lucerne glut has gone.

This year's market report is dominated by the weather. The wet season in 2010 gave good growth for lucerne. This, combined with the exceptional rains during summer have led to a dramatic increase in the area of lucerne shut up for dryland seed production and a pumping cost reduction for irrigators.

What nature has given with one hand, she has taken away with the other hand. The seed set generally this season has been quite disappointing. With so many other crops losing yield and quality because of excessive rains at harvest, the concern is that this may be the same for lucerne. We certainly hope not.

With the massive flooding in Queensland and Victoria and very heavy rains through much of New South Wales as well, large areas of pasture may need re-sowing – in time. Also, with water catchments full and quotas at 100% many growers have much more confidence to sow lucerne again this year.

Lucerne prices will be solid this season, with potential volatility being created by weather and yield factors. The steady



recovery from the lows of April and May 2010 are likely to continue. Argentina, Saudi Arabia, North Africa and Canada look set to continue their demand for Australian lucerne seed. Demand from the United States may be somewhat less than normal as they begin rolling out their Roundup Ready stock pile. The high Aus\$ will also keep price increases in check to a certain extent.

**“The lucerne glut has gone.”**

We hope that the late seed set this season will have time to mature and be harvested without major dramas. Good luck for the next two months!

**Rob Sanders**



## Seedmark Market Report March 2011

The strong interest we have seen in the export market for Lucerne has continued through the last quarter of 2010. Total Lucerne exports from Australia in the 2010 calendar year were a staggering 10,580mt, a rapid increase from the 4,283mt in 2009, and well above previous years, 7,982mt in 2008 and 6,265mt in 2007. Argentina topped the destination of this seed export with 2800mt, with Saudi Arabia the second largest at 2630mt. These two countries were responsible for 50% of the total, reinforcing their importance to the overall Lucerne seed industry in Australia. Pricing at the farm gate has steadily improved over the course of 2010 from a low of around \$2/kg to the mid \$3/kg range. This upward pricing is now hitting some resistance from buyers, who are deciding to sit and wait until product is required before confirming. There is little carryover in Australia, however reports have recently

been confirmed of large amounts of certified CUF 101 being held in the US. It also appears that the pricing gap between certified and uncertified seed is large and the expectation is that this trend will continue.

The domestic market has now moved to a focus on Autumn sowings and

**“The domestic market has now moved to a focus on Autumn sowings and interest to date has been solid with the semi dormant varieties again dominating this early interest in the marketplace.”**



interest to date has been solid with the semi dormant varieties again dominating this early interest in the marketplace.

Seedmark has earmarked approximately 1500Ha of new production opportunities for growers in 2011 of its own PBR and Forage Genetic varieties. We also have good basic seed stocks of Public varieties available for purchase. Please contact Shane Ebert on 0411 181166 or our office on (08) 8234 9333 to discuss your 2011 production interest, basic seed requirements or with any public seed you may have for sale.

## PGG Wrightson Seeds Market Report March 2011

Lucerne harvest is upon us again and with the past weather conditions over the last couple of months giving us the varied seed set it has made predictions on yield and total tonnage very difficult. Most of our export markets are watching our crop reports very closely. They have seen December reports indicating and expecting a large crop, with the last couple of month's reports starting to send a clear message that we do not know what exactly we will end up with.

Overall all, the Lucerne Markets both Export and Domestic are looking positive, live cattle and sheep prices are rising around the world and in all

**“Overall all, the Lucerne Markets both Export and Domestic are looking positive”**

major countries there is strengthening milk prices. This is the major factor to the strong finish of last years sales of the 2010 crop where both the live cattle and milk price have risen in Argentina by around 75 percent in the last 12 months and their November demand was very strong.

2011 season certified seed is now set to start off with prices very comparative to

what we have seen early this year, and a far greater improvement than we seen during the start and mid 2010. Current export enquiry for our new crop PBR material has been very good and we have secured some strong forward sales contracts on new proprietary material to be released for sowing this year.

PGG Wrightson is running a series of BBQ information sessions throughout the Lucerne area in March; keep an eye out in the papers.

**Travis Munday, PGG Wrightson**  
**Telephone (08) 87 551 777**  
**Facsimile (08) 87 551 815**



## VIVUS TRIAL



Since Lucerne Australia hosted the IPM forum in September last year, Lucerne Australia has been in contact with several of the speakers to further our IPM ambitions. Ag Biotech Australia presented at the symposium and showed interest in running some trials this year with its product "Vivus Max".

Vivus is an insecticide which infects and kills heliothus grubs with the NPV virus. This virus is already commonly found in our fields and effectively kills

heliothus but generally is not in high frequency until later in the season. Anthony Hawes, the director of Ag Biotech was confident that it would have an excellent fit in the lucerne production system and would work in well with our ambitions of a better IPM system. Fitting it into our system should be relatively easy as it is already registered on lucerne and it is commonly used in many other crops. Vivus has no impact on predators as the virus only affects a few species of Lepidoptera (Moths and Butterflies).

The trial is being conducted at "Scottswell" this summer. Full pest and predator counts are being collected through the season to fully evaluate its impact. Once the results are collected they will be shared with the IPM working group and LA members. Early results are looking very positive.

**Shane Oster**

## RURAL PROPERTY ADDRESS CHANGES

New Rural Addresses came into effect in 2011 so that all properties without a PO Box or Locked bag will have an allocated number according to the distance along the road in which they live.

Many questions can be answered at:

[http://www.landservices.sa.gov.au/1online\\_services/56Rural\\_Property\\_Addresssing/20FAQ.asp](http://www.landservices.sa.gov.au/1online_services/56Rural_Property_Addresssing/20FAQ.asp)

If you have a new address please forward it to LA and other businesses to ensure any further printed mail deliveries reach you as intended. Please note that any town street numbers and PO Box number addresses stay the same as before, RMB and RSD are the ones changing.



## LUCERNE AUSTRALIA "THINK SPOT" - RICK HINGE



**Rick Hinge**  
Bordertown Men's Project Worker

When I was at school we used to have reading lessons. I remember getting out the reader, the teacher would say "let's open your book and we will start reading at the first page". Not everyone found it easy; some couldn't find the book let alone the page. Eventually when everyone knew where to start we would read the story one at a time.

One thing is for sure the events of 2010 have gotten everyone on the same page. It has not been easy reading for many.

**What is it we need to do to look after ourselves to keep ourselves well?**

Could it be sleep, rest, visit a mate, talk to someone, water the stock, do something with your partner, enjoy the kids, or visit the doctor, bank manager, accountant or candlestick maker? For each of us it will be a different need to attend to.

As we pay attention to our needs we will discover that which is most important to us, and this is how we will get through.

**What do you reckon?**



## AUSTRALIAN BEE SERVICES POLLINATION PROJECT

Strange white dome tents have been popping up in lucerne paddocks across the Tatiara region. These dome tents or 'exclusion tents' have been erected in selected lucerne paddocks to determine what effect bees, or more specifically bee densities, are having on seed yields.

Australian Bee Services with the help of CSIRO scientist Saul Cunningham are continuing the trial program started in 2009.

The trials are aimed at quantifying the relationship between bee densities and seed set in irrigated lucerne paddocks. Sixteen paddocks throughout the Tintinara/Keith region have been selected that have either high stocking rates of managed hives, medium levels or no managed bees whatsoever.

Bee density assessments are being conducted during flowering. The exclusion tents, which have been erected in each focus paddock act as

an experimental control by excluding honey bees but allowing other smaller pollinating insects to pollinate the lucerne within the tent. The tents act as an experimental control allowing us to account for differences in environmental and management practises at each site.

There are equal numbers of flood and pivot irrigated paddocks in the study and a spread of soil types, management practices and verities.

At harvest, samples will be taken from both within and outside the bee exclusion tent. The yield data will be compiled with pod and seed counts

to develop a response curve to the different bee densities.

This small study aims to answer the simple yet much debated question 'do bee's influence lucerne seed yield?'. The results from this initial study will be compiled and made available through Lucerne Australia at the conclusion of the project.

**Danny Le Feuvre**



**Australian  
Bee Services**



## AVOID ABNORMALS THIS SEASON

Several grower updates over the past few months have highlighted the importance of seed quality. No longer is there any reason to have seed discounted due to high abnormal seedling counts. Prior to the 2010 harvest Alpha Group Consulting launched its lucerne seed damage or "LSD" kit. This kit allows growers to test their seed samples during harvest to monitor for harvester damage. As discovered in the RIRDC funded project "Understanding and Managing the Cause of Abnormal Seedlings in Lucerne", headers were irrefutably the primary cause of seed damage. The research conclusively showed that there is a direct link between seed damage caused at harvest and abnormal seedlings.

Anecdotal accounts over the years

have shown that years such as this where seeds have been exposed to several wetting events are often the worst for high abnormal counts. When yields and prices are low don't risk further profit penalties by having to sell 'off spec' seed.

**"headers were irrefutably the primary cause of seed damage"**

The "LSD Kit" is simple to use, portable and lightweight. The process of seed assessment is easy to do and only takes approximately 15 minutes per test. The kit is designed to last indefinitely with only the Ferric Chloride solution needing replacement when completely used. Each kit is capable of 330 seed

assessments and refills of the Ferric Chloride mixture used are readily available from Alpha Group Consulting. The "LSD Kits" retail at \$180 + GST or around 55c/test.

Can you afford not to have one?



**James De Barro**  
Alpha Group Consulting  
[james@thealphagroup.com.au](mailto:james@thealphagroup.com.au)



## "LSD KITS" NOW AVAILABLE



- Lucerne seed damage kits released
- Prevent high abnormal seedling counts in your seed tests
- Quick, simple and easy to use – test performed in 15 mins
- Kits compact, robust and fit comfortably in the header
- 55c/test – will perform over 300 tests before refills needed
- Refills readily available from Alpha Group Consulting
- \$180 + GST / kit



For further details or to place orders, please contact:

**James De Barro**  
**Mobile: 0417 946 053**  
**Email: [james@thealphagroup.com.au](mailto:james@thealphagroup.com.au)**

[www.thealphagroup.com.au](http://www.thealphagroup.com.au)

## Financial Grower Membership of Lucerne Australia

Allens Warrawee Park	Graetz S & H, "Amaroo"	Munrose Nominees
Altus, DK & CM	Hedges, ANM & VJ	Nalang Pastoral Co
Ashby AD & DC, "South Taunta"	Herriot Dry Cleaners	Narkoona Partners
Ashby J & H & Sons	Hilton, CJ & KA, "Carousel"	Newfair Invesments
Beckersfeild Pastoral Company	Hyfield Pty Ltd	Newton Pastoral Pty Ltd
Beeamma Pty Ltd & Harvey, MJ	Jaeschke Partners	Obst MB & SC
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BJ & CB McMurray	Johnson KH & JH	Parraweena Partners
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Chain Pump Pastoral Co	Lehmann, GE & HJ	Sanders RJ, ED & SN
Charlies Well Trust	Llewellyn DJ & JD	Scottswell Partners
Connor Pastoral Company Pty Ltd	Loller B& L	Seppelt, NR
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The 2010/2011 season continued as I wrote this report to be one of the wettest summers on record which has had a major impact on this year's Lucerne season. With all the rain we have seen and a resulting abundance of feed and as a result massive area of dry land Lucerne has been locked up. For all the rain the outlook for the seed harvest does not look particularly promising with poor bee activity and pod set particularly on the earlier shut up crops be it irrigation or dry land.

The poor pollination of the Lucerne has generally been attributed to cool wet conditions and an abundance of alternative bee forage sources. As this article was being written a number of dry land paddocks have been harvested with yields varying from 50 -300kg but my general expectation is that the dry land harvest per hectare will be below average, large areas shut up may buffer this shortfall.

The better yielding crops at this stage seem to be those that were on slightly "harder" country or locked up relatively late. Irrigated crops have also struggled to set seed for similar reasons. With a reduced area under irrigation this year and a generally below average seed set may influence availability of certified lines.

Pest activity throughout the year has been low particularly budworm, aphids numbers built up in early January and Green Mirids have been relatively abundant all year. Writing this article on the 18th of February it is raining consistently outside with some areas having already had in excess of 30mm for the week and another 20-40mm forecast I had already found sprouted seed in some crops due to rainfall and dense canopies, this will further impact on cleaned yields of those crops close to harvest.



**Cox Rural Keith Pty Ltd**  
Ph 08 8755 1188  
Fax 08 8755 1133

The positives from the season are that Lucerne forage will carry well into autumn. Lucerne seed carryover stocks are low and a below average harvest may just see a more rapid recovery in demand than expected.

**Regards,**  
**Scott Hutchings**  
Mobile: 0428551188

## Financial Associate Members/ Bronze Sponsors:

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Alpha Group Consulting	Landmark Keith	South East Seed Exports
Asure Quality	Naracoorte Seeds	Tatiara Harvesting
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Cox Rural Keith	PGG Wrightson Seeds	Teague Australia
Crop Monitoring Services	Rabobank Australia	Tintinara Seeds
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## New Members:

Teague Australia

## Sponsors:

Thank you to all listed below for renewing their support with LA for 2009/10:

**Rabobank**  
Gold sponsor of LA



**Seed Services**  
Silver sponsor of LA



**LawrieCo**  
Silver sponsor of LA



**Murray Nankivell**  
Providing financial advice



PO Box 505,  
KEITH SA 5267

Phone: 0439 538 332  
Fax: 08 8756 4203

email: [info@lucerneaustralia.org.au](mailto:info@lucerneaustralia.org.au)  
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**LUCERNE**  
AUSTRALIA

PO Box 505,  
KEITH SA 5267

Phone: 0439 538 332

Fax: 08 8756 4203

email: [info@lucerneaustralia.org.au](mailto:info@lucerneaustralia.org.au)

[www.lucerneaustralia.org.au](http://www.lucerneaustralia.org.au)

ABN: 38 226 068 425