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CENTRE PIVOT TRIAL SITE ANNUAL REPORT

By Scott Manser, Trial Committee Member



Lucerne Australia irrigated lucerne seed and plant persistence trial aims to obtain and compare lucerne herbage and seed yield data using the current best practice system of drop tube irrigation. It will determine which lucerne varieties will optimise seed and herbage yield under a drop tube centre pivot irrigation system, therefore increasing the return per mega litre of water. It is proudly supported by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

The trial site is currently moving along quite well in this, the second season of production. With the trial site field day having come and gone by the time this edition of the Lucerne Leader goes to print, those that attended will be well aware of the excellent pod set throughout the different varieties in the trial. Moisture levels have been adequate through the hot periods; however there are some areas in the trial that have suffered due to lack of moisture. This is purely due to soil type differences within the site and this is evident throughout the whole pivot. Favourable weather conditions throughout the summer period has ensured for a good initial pod set and this will hopefully provide great yield data when the trial is harvest in March.

"LA AIMS TO RELEASE THE PRELIMINARY HARVEST RESULTS PRIOR TO THE 2012 SOWING SEASON"

The results from the 2011 harvest had very little credence due to low yield and variability. This makes it very difficult to determine yield variability between the different varieties, however this year should provide some excellent seed yield variability between different varieties.

continued over page...



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CENTRE PIVOT TRIAL SITE ANNUAL REPORT

continued...

There was quite good plant growth post winter cleaning, which enabled herbage yield data to be collected during spring in the run up to seed production. This data has been made available to Lucerne Australia members in the 2011 trial results booklet.

The Trial Site Committee is proud to also announce the release of the results and report from the 2011 harvest, the first year of the trial. All members were sent a hard and electronic copy of the report which showed the results from the seedling stand.

The trial site committee aims to release the preliminary harvest results prior to

the 2012 sowing season so growers have information available to them to make informed decisions about variety selection. The trial committee is very pleased with the way the trial has progressed since last season's poor seed results and we look forward to working with RIRDC, growers, marketers and industry over the life of the trial.

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. We would especially like to thank RIRDC, marketers and industry for their support over the past year and for their ongoing support into the future.



- **Ag Machinery diesel mechanic**
- **Fully equipped service vehicle**
- **Pre-season machinery inspections**
- **Air conditioning repairs**
- **Preventative maintenance**



ROBERT WILL Ph 0407 189 368

INVITATION: Cost of Production workshops – March 2012

In early-November, a workshop on Lucerne Australia's industry-first Cost of Production Program was held in Keith to go over the program and introduce it to those who were unable to attend the launch event. We will host two workshops in Tintinara and Keith on 27 and 28 March 2012. More information about these workshops will be released soon.

New members and those interested in revisiting the template and fine tuning it for their own businesses should attend.

Please RSVP to Nicola Raymond on 0439 538 332 or info@lucerneaustralia.org.au

NEW BREEDING PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCED

By Seed Distributors

A new partnership between the NSW Government and a South Australian seed company has been formed to provide a new generation of highly productive lucerne varieties to farmers across Australia.

The National Lucerne Alliance, announced by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, is between NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Seed Distributors.

"This partnership will deliver new highly productive disease and pest resistant lucerne varieties to farmers," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"THE NATIONAL LUCERNE ALLIANCE IS A NEW AGREEMENT BETWEEN NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES (DPI) AND SEED DISTRIBUTORS"

She said this will enhance DPI's long

established lucerne breeding program and aim to provide acid soil-tolerant varieties of lucerne for low pH soils.

Lucerne is a highly productive, nutritious perennial legume and is an integral part of the State's agriculture, especially in the wheat-sheep zone.

Seed Distributors Managing Director, Rob Damin, said the partnership with the NSW DPI will ensure farmers will benefit from targeted research into lucerne for Australian conditions.

He said Seed Distributors was very pleased to partner with NSW DPI and looked forward to continuing to deliver the best lucerne varieties to the market place.

Seed Distributors is an independent Australian forage seed company that has been providing seed to farmers since 1997.

Mr Damin said the company was committed to developing the leading

range of forage species and the NSW DPI agreement was the latest in a series of partnerships the company has with local and international breeding institutions.

Ms Hodgkinson said the alliance would boost the work which is already being carried out at the Tamworth Agricultural Institute, led by Dr Shoba Venkatanagappa.

"NSW DPI has a proven history in providing high performing lucerne varieties – including Aurora, Genesis, Venus and Pegasus.

"This new partnership will combine the breeding, evaluation and pathology expertise of NSW DPI's lucerne breeding program team with the seed production and marketing expertise of Seed Distributors," Ms Hodgkinson said.

The first seeds from the new partnership are expected to be commercially available in 2014.



L-R: Seed Distributors Managing Director, Rob Damin, NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, NSW DPI lucerne breeder, Dr Shoba Venkatanagappa and Seed Distributors National Sales Manager, Adam Davies.

HEADER SETUP DAY

By Shane Oster, Lucerne Australia Chairman

On Friday the 17th of December about 40 members attended the "Header Setup" day hosted by Lucerne Australia. This was held largely in response to feedback received at this years symposium. Attendees were very interested in the presentation done by Robert Will and James De Barro, but felt that being able to conduct the talk in the field to allow more two way conversation and physically show the machinery would enhance the learning experience.

Taking this feedback on board LA arranged for the use of a New Holland CR 960 rotary header (thanks to Lachie and Trevor James), and a JD 9500 convention header (thanks to Guy and

Sarah Cunningham). LA once again invited Robert Will of Will Inspect along to present to growers. In addition to this LA was also able to call upon the services of Harold Wise of Wise Farm Equipment. In September last year Wise Farm Equipment come on board as Silver sponsors of LA. This field day was one of the many ways we can work with our sponsors for the benefit of industry.

A casual two way format was used to demonstration and discuss the use of the LSD kit released by Alpha Group Consulting. This format was then carried over to discussion about the header setup. Harold & Roberts expertise shone through in was largely a question and answer session for the best part of an

hour. This and experience from within the group highlighted many ways that operators can improve the harvesting and avoid costly damage to seed lines. The headers were then run in a dryland seed crop and attendees were able to view first-hand how well the machines were handling the crop and conditions and view the result of seemingly small changes.

As a result of suggestions made on the day Guy changed his harvest speed from 5 to 7 km/hr. This reduced his abnormal seed count from 5% to 0% and produced a much cleaner seed sample. Harold Wise (who has forgotten more about headers than most people know) demonstrated the use of cover plates in

"HAROLD WISE DEMONSTRATED THE USE OF COVER PLATES IN A ROTARY HEADER"



Groups attending header day



Groups attending header day

WISE

Farm Equipment

a rotary header. These plates allow the material to stay in the header for longer allowing more opportunity for pods to thrash against another pod instead of against metal. This is particularly useful in thin crops where “filling” a header to capacity is a common issue. This was largely a new concept for a lot of people who attended the day but seemed to be a simple solution to a common problem. This solution cleans up a sample, produces less un-thrashed pods in the sample and reduces the abnormal count. This was only one of many suggestions made on the day. For more detailed information I’m sure that Robert Will or Harold Wise would be happy to field questions and Lucerne Australia thanks them again for their participation.



Robert Will & Harold Wise



Growers assessing results of header set up



Headers in action

IRRIGATION AUSTRALIA 2012 CONFERENCE, ADELAIDE

Irrigation Australia welcomes you to register for its annual conference, which this year will be held in Adelaide from 24 June to 28 June 2012. It is the largest industry event ever to be held in Australia!

This conference coincides with the 7th Asian Regional Conference. Running alongside this is also the biggest water and irrigation trade show in the Southern Hemisphere, featuring the latest in products and services.

The conference will address topics outlined in the below program themes.

- Integrated water management at basin and district level
- Horticulture (including fruit, vegetables and urban or landscape irrigation)
- Agriculture (including grains, pasture and fibre production)
- Drainage and flood management
- Water for the environment
- Regional cooperation
- Water trade

Cross cutting themes include:

- Civil engineering advances to support water management
- Climate change
- Economics informing water management
- Modelling to better manage resource distribution
- Reuse of treated waste water and other 'new' water sources
- Roles of social & cultural issues in developing water policy
- Water pricing

Early bird registrations with reduced fees close on Friday 27 April.

For more information go to: <http://online.saneevent.com.au/ial2012/>

To contact them directly call 02 9553 4820 or email ial2012@saneevent.com.au

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PGG WRIGHTSON SEEDS MARKET REPORT



By Travis Munday, Phone: 0408 838 687

We are getting back into the swing of harvest season again; time seems to go so fast! No doubt we have another interesting year ahead.

With a very small carryover of seed from last season and on the back of high prices, there is some enthusiasm around with regards to the upcoming harvest which is good to see.

So, where to for the Australian lucerne seed market? In such a volatile time, I would say we are all looking for some long-term sustainability in the market. If we can move as much seed as possible again and continue into next season with low carryover, I am sure this could be achieved.

Many main markets for Australian lucerne did not purchase seed due to the extreme prices last season, meaning only a small volume of lucerne was exported compared to average. Seed stock levels are very low internationally, which is putting some strength in the market. However, the world economy is still struggling not to mention Europe.

An average harvest this season will have the "false" perception of a bumper harvest after last year's results in the eye of the international customers.

Certified Dormancy 9 product will be in strong demand, as the Middle East wind up their season. Other common dormancies together with uncertified common lucerne may be slow moving as customers resist current prices.

In short, no doubt we will see strong demand for Australian lucerne; the challenge is making it work for all! This season we will have marketing options open across a range of commodities, we also have available a range of production contracts for the coming sowing season, so feel free to come in and have a talk to PGG Wrightson.

SEEDMARK MARKET REPORT

By Craig Myall, General Manager, Seed Technology & Marketing Pty Ltd



Enquiry is starting to occur from most major markets including the EU, Saudi Arabia and Northern Africa whilst Argentina is currently quiet given their buying season is now over. For the most part, companies have been reluctant to provide pricing indications until we get closer to new crop and as the overall surface area is well back on past year's, caution is being used by most marketers.

While stocks in Australia and the USA are currently low, Italy has sold a lot of seed into the Argentine market cheaply which has hindered some sales of Australian product. Information has it that Italy is starting to run low on lucerne seed stocks for sale, a direct result of the high hay prices in Europe being attractive for growers to produce hay. All in all it appears that the price of seed will remain firm for the foreseeable future, particularly product destined for the Middle East region.

Looking at the numbers, exports for the 2011 calendar year of 4423mt, were well down on 2010 (10580mt) but comparable to 2009 (4283mt). The major destinations of this seed were Saudi Arabia 1480mt, Argentina 1250mt, USA 665mt, Morocco 177mt, and South Africa 137mt, notably these five countries made up 84% of all exports of Lucerne.

Domestically there is very little seed carried over in reseller world which places most marketing companies in a very good position for sales harvest permitting.

At Seedmark we wish all seed producers well for the current and upcoming harvest. Seedmark will also be on the lookout for new production areas in 2012 for both its own PBR and FGI varieties, please contact Shane Ebert on 0411 181166 with any interest you may have.



LUCERNE SEED INDUSTRY WELCOMES A CHINESE DELEGATION

**By Nicola Raymond
Executive Officer**

In November, Lucerne Australia hosted an 'Australia–China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement (ACACA) Chinese delegation to Australia. They were visiting to study Australia's hi-tech management of forage and pasture seed. The delegation was accompanied by Brian Mills from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and they visited the region on Wednesday, 16 November.

There were five Chinese delegates. They represented the Grassland Technology Extension Station, the Grassland Research Institute (GRI) at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, the Ministry of Agriculture and an agronomist from Animal Husbandry Technology Popularization Service Station.

The purpose of their visit was to gain an understanding of Australia's agricultural forage management systems and techniques, including cultivation, protection and use of forage species; pasture improvement and management; and development and use of technology in grazing systems and forage production.



At Brecon Proprietors



Brett Wegener celebrates Movember in style!



Talking processing at Kongal Seeds

Chairman Shane Oster and Nicola Raymond met the delegation at Keith and provided a snapshot of the Australian lucerne seed industry. This was followed by two visits to Brecon Proprietors, by kind permission of Scott and Sophie Campbell, and Kongal Seeds, by kind permission of Brett Wegener and family.

Scott Campbell showcased his lucerne hay operation and outlined new technology being introduced on farm. The delegates were impressed by the whole operation including the size of the machinery, size of paddocks and volume of production.

At Kongal Seeds, Brett Wegener showed them through the cleaning shed. He outlined the processing, drying and packing all types of seed and grain for export markets, with lucerne being their main commodity. Following these visits, the delegates returned to Keith and enjoyed lunch at Henry and Rose.



Thanking Scott at Brecon Proprietors



In the paddock at Brecon Proprietors



Introductions at Kongal Seeds

GOLDEN DODDER IDENTIFIED LOCALLY

By Peter Gibbs, Gibbs Agricultural Consulting

I thought it was important to show some photos of Golden Dodder, taken in this region in December. This noxious weed was found growing on common weeds in different locations within this region.

This reinforces the message that most broadleaf plants can host Golden Dodder and even when lucerne has been taken out that the plant can still survive and prosper.

Please also note that most of these photos were taken before the two heavy rainfalls we had in December and haven't been irrigated. In fact, most of these photos have come from a fenced off area not an irrigated patch.

"DODDER WAS FOUND GROWING ON
COMMON WEEDS"

Golden Dodder is a leafless, parasitic weed which removes nutrients, reduces yield and even kills its host plant. Dodder contamination poses a huge threat to lucerne, pastures and seed crops as in Australia, as lucerne seed contaminated with this weed is banned from export, potentially posing a huge threat to our industry. Please be alert to Golden Dodder on your property.



Dodder on capeweed



Dodder on mintweed



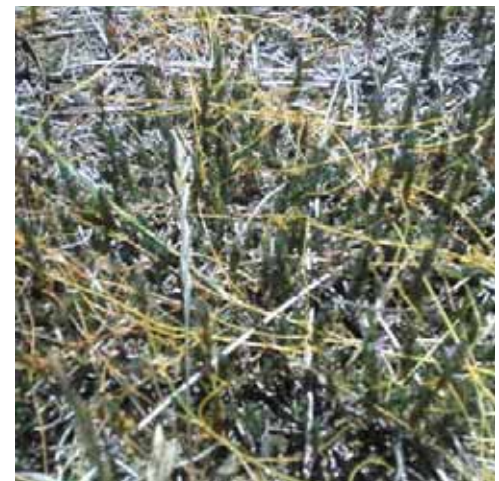
Dodder on marshmallow



Dodder on wireweed



Dodder on wireweed



Dodder on mintweed

'IN-FIELD LUCERNE SEED FERTILISER TRIAL' PROGRESS REPORT

By Warrick Thorpe, Executive Committee Member

Lucerne Australia's independent fertiliser trial specific to seed production has begun well with the collection of data to build a solid foundation in the trials outcomes over the next three to five years on the properties of Scott Campbell, Brecon Properties Pty Ltd.

experience in setting up trial sites and collating data.

Neil Wittwer, Project Manager from Peracto, is responsible for the day-to-day tasks in running the trial. He has taken both soil and sap tests across all

companies involved in supplying product for the full duration of the trial. A final list of the products used will be available in the next Lucerne Leader in June 2012.

The prime intent of this trial is to assess

"THE PRIME INTENT OF THIS TRIAL IS TO ASSESS WHAT FERTILISER PRODUCTS (AND RATES) WILL DERIVE THE GREATEST SEED YIELD FROM LUCERNE"

Peracto have marked out the 90 irrigation plots at 15m x 6m and 90 dry land plots at 30m x 6m.

180 plots with the results showing good uniformity adding to the credibility that the trial sites are in a sound location.

what fertiliser products (and rates) will derive the greatest seed yield from lucerne. A number of assessments will be made throughout the initial three year trial, with growers having the opportunity to view and ask questions on any developments as the trial progresses with anticipated annual field days.

Thank you to Scott Campbell and Felicity Turner for assisting in locating the final trial sites selected through EM38 mapping, an essential tool in identifying soil types in unison with Peracto's Richard Porter, who has

Types of fertiliser to be applied throughout the trial include granular, liquid and alternative products. The first applications starting in Autumn this year. Lucerne Australia would like to thank the commitment of the fertiliser

DO YOU KNOW THE LAW FOR CARTING HAY ON ROADS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA?

By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer

In South Australia, when carrying wool or lucerne hay bales up to 2.75 metres in width, you are required to carry an exemption document titled "Exemption for the transport of baled wool and/or baled hay to exceed a width of 2.5 metres" in the cab of your vehicle. This is free of charge.

www.transport.sa.gov.au/pdfs/.../overwidth_baled_wool_01.pdf

All loads of hay exceeding 2.75 metres in width need a permit. This can be renewed annually. A factsheet titled 'Oversize and overmass vehicle permit fees' provides information on permit fees.

application. Standard applications make up over

95% of current permit applications and are assessed and processed within the Vehicle Permits Team. These applications will not incur additional charges.

In addition, travel is not permitted between the hours of sunset and sunrise or in periods of low visibility. Travel is not permitted in the Adelaide Area (Metropolitan), between the hours of 7.00am-9.00am and 4.00pm-6.00pm Monday to Friday inclusive.

For example, from 1 July 2009, standard fees will be payable for: 1) vehicle listing application at a cost of \$42.50; and 2) permit applications at a cost of \$63.00. If your application requires further assessment, additional charges will be incurred based on the cost of that work. Your fee will pay for the cost of assessment and processing a standard

For more information about any of these regulations, contact the Department for Transport,

Energy and Infrastructure (Vehicle Permit) by calling 1300 882 249 or emailing: vehicle.permits@saugov.sa.gov.au
Go online to: www.dtei.sa.gov.au

This notice can be downloaded from the transport website. Go to:

DID YOU KNOW?

2012 IS THE AUSTRALIAN YEAR OF THE FARMER!

By Warrick Thorpe, Executive Committee Member

Last year, for Australian lucerne growers and businesses, the season turned out to be a shocker and it was a similar story in 2012. So far, this year is not looking too bad but I'm not getting too far ahead of myself as the seed is not at the cleaners yet, I don't know the price and I haven't received the money in the bank.

The bank has supported us well, knowing that they had no choice but to lend money to carry us over. We didn't want to borrow more, but we now have a stronger working relationship. Some are saying it's increasingly difficult to obtain a loan, whereas my problem is that my bank is now my biggest paid employee and I still do all of the work! They do recognise that sometimes.

However, some do not recognise farmers. I get frustrated that farmers are not acknowledged as we are – business people. We are also vets, agronomists, scientists, engineers, pasture specialists, stockmen, contractors, entomologists, financiers, accountants, economists, machinery operators, meteorologist, carers of the land, mentors, inventors, problem solvers, business managers, volunteers, a good mate, friend and family member! And that's probably not the whole list.

If you were to add up all of the skills of a farmer individually and work out the equivalent average wage, I don't know any

other people who are more efficient. Not to mention the partners and/or extended family who accomplish all of the above along their side with their own set of special skills.

Farmers are talented, intelligent, accomplishees, optimistic, supportive, resilient, successful, considerate, a pillar of strength, all round good people, a celebrity in their own back yard, a wealth of knowledge and the back bone of our country!

We realise we are human, not machines, and that we do care and we all have feelings. Lucerne Australia acknowledges our farmer members and the camaraderie with those who face similar issues. We see it a vital element of our event planning to ensure there is social time included for members to have some drinks and food and discuss issues, challenges and ideas. This opportunity to mix with associated members and neighbours is an integral link to business success. For all our farmer and associate members, we say a big thank you for your support and wish you success this season.

The value of a farmer is priceless and being part of a positive group is undervalued. 2012 is officially the Year of the Farmer. So enjoy being a part of it and remember to celebrate. Go to www.yearofthefarmer.com.au for more information about events and activities.

Lucerne Australia donates to the Keith and District Hospital

Following our 'Seed Quality' symposium at the Keith Institute in September 2011, Lucerne Australia has donated \$500.00 to the Keith and District Hospital. We are delighted to support the hospital with this donation, following an address by our special guest speaker Julian Burton, South Australian of the Year 2010. A passionate and powerful speaker, Julian delivered an excellent presentation that focused on enhancing personal and organisational performance in the areas of communication, lifestyle balance, health and life management skills.

AGRONOMY REPORT

**By Lisa Charlton,
Lucerne Australia Vice-Chairman**

Hallelujah! Environmental conditions and seed prices are not up the creek. This season in particular, pollination on irrigation has been remarkable and crop performance is unquestionably more promising in comparison to last season.

Harvesting of the dryland in the upper south east has begun and so far, yields are a promising 200-350kg, with lighter soil types seeing better yielding crops over harder or heavier country. Dryland yields appear to be average, if not a little above average, this season.

Insect pests have been steady. Heliothis has been a consistent issue as we see most years. Mirids have been quieter and aphids – under a good best management practice – have had a less significant impact.

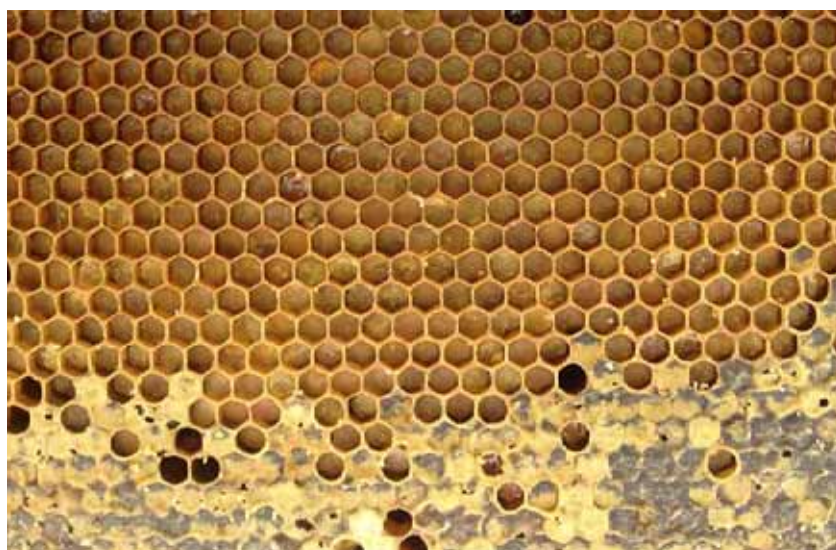
Bee activity has been excellent this season. Lucerne crops have seen much higher bee activity compared to last year with apiarists happy with honey yields. They have noticed a greater level of stored lucerne pollen within the hives in comparison to recent years.

The photos demonstrate the type of pollen yielded in 2010 versus 2012 from the same site. On the left (top) is pollen produced from 'English Daisy' in 2010 with the orange pollen stored in the extracted frame having no lucerne pollen present. The photo in the middle left is this seasons' pollen produced at the same site but from lucerne. The dull yellow pollen stored in the frame shows notably larger quantities.

For seed producers, this means those stinging little buggers have been doing their job! This is associated with the ideal weather conditions for creating increased bee activity along with optimum lucerne growing conditions.

Desiccation or windrowing of irrigated crops is starting imminently and yields are predicted to be above average (not taking last year's extremely poor yielding year into account).

We wish you a successful harvest.



STANDARDISED INDUSTRY CONTRACT MAKES PROGRESS

By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer

Lucerne Australia held a contracts forum in February 2011 at the Keith Institute. The outcome was a desire by industry to develop a standardised contract for the lucerne seed industry, with growers and marketers working together to market it. A working group was formed by Lucerne Australia with the objective of achieving this outcome. A draft contract had been developed by Associate Professor Rocque Reynolds titled: "Fair Dinkum: A Seed Production Agreement for the Pasture Seeds Industry" and supported by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

Since that forum, the sub-committee has met twice (in April and May 2012) to review the contract and accompanying schedule. Suggested changes were made by both growers and marketers. Since that period, further changes have been made in an attempt to satisfy both growers and marketers in a fair manner.

On 2 February 2012, the Lucerne Seed Industry Standardised Contract and Schedule was distributed to the contracts sub-committee as part of a consultation period in February 2012. We have just completed this process.

Following feedback, we are confident that agreement can be reached and that this contract will be available for all members in the near future.



- **Approximately 2500ha of new production opportunities in 2012 for our own PBR and Forage Genetics varieties**
- **Purchase/forward contract opportunities available for Siriver, Aurora and Sequel**
- **Good basic seed stocks of Public varieties now 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 creditable data.

Extensive overseas travel is conducted each year marketing our PBR and Australian Public varieties.

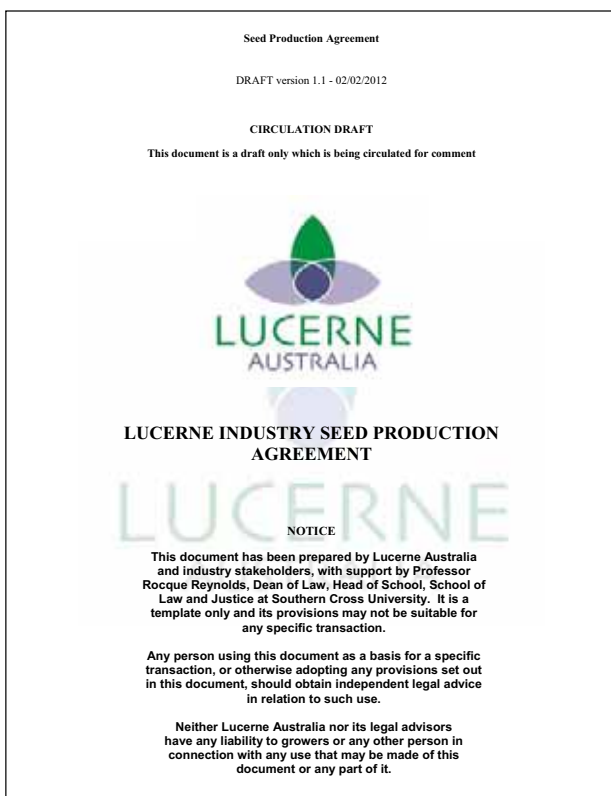
Our aim is to show our clients the value of our products in their local systems, rather than selling on price, we demonstrate performance. This builds credibility not only in our varieties, but also in Australian bred and produced Lucerne.

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



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Clovercrest Consulting	Langseeds Rural	South East Seed Exports
Cox Rural Keith	Lawrie & Co	Tatiara Seeds
Crop Monitoring Services	Naracoorte Ag Services	Vermeeren Bros Manufacturing
Elders Keith	Naracoorte Seeds	Viterra Limited
Farmers Centre	National Australia Bank	WFI
Forage Genetics International	PGG Wrightson Seeds	Wickham Flower
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