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INTRODUCTION MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF LUCERNE AUSTRALIA



By Warrick Thorpe, Chairman



As the newly appointed Chairman, I look forward to representing Lucerne Australia by continuing to grow the industry professionally. Since my inception on the committee, I have been impressed by the commitment of all sectors involved in the supply, production and sale of lucerne seed, which is exported to over thirty countries throughout the world.

Although growing lucerne seed is perhaps small in scale compared to other more traditional agricultural sectors, the skill set and optimism amongst growers and associated businesses has shown great strength and resilience. The past three years are arguably the toughest period in Australia's lucerne seed history, which has highlighted the need to stay connected, informed and supported by an organisation that is focused on supporting its members whenever possible.

Recognising we are one of only a handful of areas on the globe with the ability to grow lucerne seed makes us unique. This brings with it many challenges and opportunities.

Lucerne Australia is the only true representative for the Australian lucerne seed industry, with executive committee members experiencing many of the same things you are facing at any given time. It is with this depth of knowledge, integrity and our ability to search for solutions to whatever is thrown our way, I am confident Lucerne Australia and its members will continue to grow from strength to strength. Our preferred approach is to be proactive rather than reactive whenever possible.

Continued over page



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BANKING



GOOD PEOPLE TO KNOW



INTRODUCTION MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN

CONTINUED



By Warrick Thorpe, Chairman

Since Lucerne Australia's formation in October 2005, the list of achievements is outstanding. Many of these would not have been successful without the teams of people who have strived to get the best results for members.

The strategic plan released in 2010 still forms the backbone and template for our existence, ensuring synergy and reward from acting as one. As we continue to deliver new items to keep our members at the forefront of our industry, it has been made possible through a strong foundation of getting the basics right from the start.

Thank you to all who had the vision, foresight, motivation and can-do attitude in creating Lucerne Australia to represent and lead an industry deserving of its successes.

I, and the rest of the Lucerne Australia team, look forward to catching up with you at our events, and hope you all have a successful and prosperous year ahead.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR THE 2012-2013 YEAR

By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer

Newly Appointed Executives



Josh Rasheed – Associate Member

Josh was appointed as the Contract Cropping Manager and Pasture Advisor at Naracoorte Seeds in November 2011. He enjoys working with clients to help grow contract crops and quality pastures. In his role, lucerne is one of the major crops he is involved with and he believes that working with Lucerne Australia will be helpful in gaining a better knowledge and understanding of the industry. Josh has previously been a Real Estate Agent at the family business in Meningie. He is married to wife Emma, with two daughters Paige and Annie.



Bruce Connor – Grower Member

Bruce was born in Mt Compass and worked on the family dairy farm. In the late 1970's, he purchased a property in the Tintinara area to grow out replacement heifers and in 1998, he and his wife Nola moved from Mt Compass to Tintinara. In 2006, they separated the original family business. Today, Bruce, Nola and their three children run beef cattle and have cropping, dryland and pivot irrigated lucerne for hay and seed. Bruce looks forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead in the lucerne industry.



Warrick Thorpe – Grower Member / Chairman

Our new Chairman is Warrick Thorpe, Grower Member. Warrick grew up at Meadows in the Adelaide Hills where the family-owned business runs a dairy farm. The business has expanded to the Upper South-East and now includes a lucerne property at Coombe. Warrick has entered the lucerne industry with an open mind, enjoying the challenge of growing lucerne for feed, hay and seed and is a valuable contributor to the industry as part of the Lucerne Australia team.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2012-2013 *CONTINUED*



By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer

Incumbent Committee Members



Lisa Charlton – Associate Member / Vice Chairman

Lisa has lived and worked as an agronomist in Tintinara for 11 years, specialising in dryland lucerne seed, broad-acre cropping and pasture renovation. Working in the agricultural industry and being able to work with farmers and their families within their different enterprises has been a highlight which Lisa enjoys immensely. She is a very motivated and enthusiastic executive committee member and works hard to increase communication between those involved in the industry.



Guy Cunningham – Grower Member

Guy farms with his wife Sarah and family near Willalooka. The business comprises a 300-cow stud beef cattle herd, dryland winter cropping and lucerne production, mainly aimed at seed with some hay sold off-farm. He believes lucerne production is uniquely suited to both value-add livestock operations and as a stand-alone enterprise. He is interested to examine ways for lucerne producers to reduce production and marketing risk.



Owen Croser – Grower Member

Owen has farmed at Keith since 1983 with 340 hectares growing wheat, barley, beans, canola and triticale. There are also beef cattle, sheep and a small feedlot. They have flood irrigation and grow lucerne for seed and hay production. Owen is involved as steward and councillor of the Royal Adelaide Show, is past chairman of the Keith Branch of SAFF and is a committee member of GRDC's South-East Research Advisory Committee.



Adam Desmazures – Grower Member

Adam runs the family-owned business with wife Michelle, a young family and his parents. The mixed farming enterprise has a self-replacing Merino flock, beef cattle and 400 hectares of dryland lucerne for hay and seed. Adam has a strong interest in research and technology and in 2010, was successful in gaining a grant to conduct a trace element study on their dryland lucerne. This involved regular sap and tissue testing through the growing season and was a valuable learning experience.



Shane Oster – Associate Member

Shane is a former chairman of Lucerne Australia and has been a valuable contributor to the executive committee for three terms. Shane has a farming background. However, he operates his own consultancy based business in the Keith region with his primary focus on lucerne seed production, but also has an extensive client base for winter cropping production. Shane is married and lives in Keith with his wife Kirralie.

SEEDMARK & HERITAGE SEEDS MARKET REPORT

By Craig Myall,
Heritage Seeds/Seedmark
Phone: 0407 620 580
Email: c.myall@seedmark.com.au

Sales and shipments of the final amounts of lucerne seed currently available are occurring, ensuring a sell-out of stocks in Australia of certified seed of most varieties whether they are proprietary or public. Whilst this is a fantastic platform to launch from in 2013, it will put a lot of pressure on cleaning sheds and distribution for the domestic and early international markets following harvest. This should ensure however that prices are firm for the opening stocks of lucerne at harvest time. And provided the major market of the Middle East remains strong, we should see demand and supply well-aligned.

Exports for the 2012 calendar year (until end of September) sit at 4700mt. Seed demand and subsequent shipments to Saudi Arabia dominate this tonnage with over 50 per cent of the total tonnage equaling 2400mt exported to the country in total with pricing to this region climbing consistently over the selling season.

The US is a distant second with 19 per cent – or 895mt – exported with countries such as Morocco 229mt and Sudan 218mt well down the chain as the third and fourth highest year to date. The concerning factor for Australian lucerne shipments is that only 212mt has been shipped to Argentina in the calendar year thus far with none in the March-September period. Resistance to price, coupled with a heavier focus on purchasing seed with American genetics has been the major limiting factors.

According to the Australian certification agencies, certified seed areas will be similar to last year, whilst in the US seed plantings in California are well underway and surface areas are also expected to remain similar to previous.

Should you wish to discuss your production or marketing opportunities, feel free to contact the relevant staff members listed right:



better seeds, better choices



- **Craig Myall**, International Business Manager, 0407 620 580
- **Warwick Prestwood**, Seedmark International Sales & Marketing Manager, 0459 111 105
- **Colin Grant**, Seedmark International Sales & Marketing, 0403 465 515
- **Steven Dukalskis**, SE Pasture Production Manager, 0434 072 544
- **Jeremy Gittins**, National Production Manager, 0417 338 078

SEED GENETICS INTERNATIONAL MARKET REPORT

By Mark Harvey,
Partner / Director, International Operations
Phone: 08 8271 6000 / 0419 994 234
Email: mharvey@sgiseeds.com

Shipping to SGI regular clients in various regions and countries is starting to wind up and we expect to complete the program by February/March with stocks sold out.

This puts the new SGI crop in a good position. There is growing interest going forward and we believe that even with

a return to normal crops this will not overly affect the demand because of shortages in the US crop this year and reducing areas in major production areas around the world.

We wish all growers the best for the coming harvest.



NARACOORTE SEEDS MARKET REPORT

By Jamie Tidy,
Owner/Manager
Naracoorte Seeds and SA Seed Marketers
Phone: 0427 621 944
Email: jamie@rbm.com.au

There really isn't a lot to say that may not be covered by other marketers in this issue. Token amounts of lucerne are left around the place and almost no certified seed left. Early markets are expected to be dominated by the USA requiring non-dormant varieties prior to their harvest in mid-year. The word is that the US has historically very low levels and will probably require start up stocks. Domestically, sales should be strong early which should keep pricing firm. Middle Eastern markets should again be looking for our Siriver certified types which should keep pricing firm also.

The Aussie dollar has found a trading range of support between about 0.97c US and \$1.07c US. Although this seems historically high we are not seeing the major fluctuations outside of this range which is giving some confidence to overseas clients. As most lucerne (Alfalfa) is traded in US dollars, this stabilization found in the last 12 months has been very important.

Argentina is a very important trading partner and they were largely missing from lucerne trade last season with 871t exported there in the 2011/12 financial year and about zero in this current financial year.



If Argentina ventures back into the market, coupled with a normal Australian harvest with low USA stock levels and normal demand from Saudi we should again see strong demand price wise for our lucerne for the coming season.

I am hearing from growers that dryland harvest is sitting on a knife's edge with Mother Nature failing in her end of her bargain to send down some moisture. I wish all lucerne producers some fortune this season as the recent harvests has certainly tested even the most loyal and dedicated seed growers.

PGG WRIGHTSON SEEDS MARKET REPORT

By Travis Munday,
International Trading Manager - Australia
PGG Wrightson Seeds
Phone: 0408 838 687
Email: tmunday@pggwsa.com.au

It would be fair to say that the life in the lucerne industry does not have too many dull moments. Over the past season we have seen and faced many challenges including a below average harvest in Australia and the United States, further acquisitions, mergers and consolidation of some of the industry players and an evolving change of land use in some of once more prominent seed production areas in California.

World hay and dairy prices are still one of the main driving factors for lucerne pricing levels in the main markets; whilst lucerne is a volatile commodity, we have recently seen strong pricing as a result of demand outweighing supply.

PGG Wrightson Seeds have experienced a steady sales season to-date and are confident that we will have minimal carryover of proprietary seed by the start of the next harvest. The volume of common seed remaining in the trade appears to be minimal, which indicates that Australia and our key international markets will head into next season with minimal carry over stock.

While it is too early to gauge what our next lucerne harvest will yield, we are forecasting early demand for uncertified seed may come from the United States requiring lucerne stock prior to their harvest period.



It is anticipated the Middle East will be in the market to purchase stock also prior to the United States harvest.

All indications at this stage point to a firm start to the marketing next season. If you are looking for forward marketing options or information please contact one of our local grower representatives or PGG Wrightson Seeds Keith Office on (08) 87 551 777.

Finally, the team at PGG Wrightson Seeds wishes you and your family a safe and Merry Christmas.

IRRIGATORS REMINDED OF WAP TIMEFRAMES



**By Pete Whiting, Communications and Media Officer
Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources**



Government of South Australia
South East Natural Resources
Management Board

Natural Resources South East is reminding irrigators that they have until 30 June 2013 to be able to trade up to 75 per cent of their previously reduced volume of water allocation to another licensee without undergoing a hydro-geological effects assessment.

Tim Bond, Manager Planning and Evaluation from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, said that during the development of the Tatiara Water Allocation Plan consideration was given to providing water users with time to adjust to the new conversion from area based allocations to volumetric allocations.

"In addressing the challenges of longer term groundwater sustainability, reductions have occurred to licensed allocations in most management areas. However, the South East Natural Resources Management Board wanted to give ample opportunity for landholders to be able to adjust to their new allocations," he said.

The Tatiara Water Allocation Plan was prepared by the South East Natural Resources Management Board following community consultation and included changes to water management in the region.

The plan included specific transfer rules in certain management areas to provide greater certainty to water users. Mr Bond said the transfer rules in the Tatiara plan were included to encourage water markets and make the transfer process simpler.

"It needs to be noted however, that this specific transfer criterion is only open to irrigators until 30 June 2013. After this time normal assessment criteria for transfers will need to apply as a means of risk management for the groundwater resource. I would strongly encourage irrigators to make their transfers before the cut-off date."

Should irrigators wish to investigate their options under the transfer rules within the Tatiara Water Allocation Plan they should contact Natural Resources South East on 87351177.

We strongly encourage irrigators to make their transfers before the 30 June 2013 cut-off date.



TINTINARA WAP ADOPTED



**By Pete Whiting, Communications and Media Officer
Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources**



Government of South Australia
South East Natural Resources
Management Board

The Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Paul Caica has adopted the Tintinara-Coonalpyn Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan. The plan – a review and amendment of the 2003 plan – was well received by the community, according to Drew Laslett, Acting Regional Manager for the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR).

“Under the Act, water allocation plans must be regularly reviewed and it has been encouraging that the community has helped shape improvements and changes to this WAP,” he said.

The review was undertaken with the assistance of community members

who have provided guidance and recommendations to the SE NRM Board on options for more sustainable use of water in the region.

The review of the WAP confirmed that the amount of water currently used across the Tintinara-Coonalpyn region is within sustainable limits. However, in two management areas (Tintinara unconfined water management and the Tolmer confined water management area) it was identified that the levels of allocation, if used fully, would be unsustainable.

In addition, the amended water allocation plan facilitates volumetric conversion of the existing area based allocation of licenses within the region in order to better reflect the actual volume of water allocated to irrigate the types of crops grown within the region.

Mr Laslett said the newly adopted WAP provides a pathway to reduce allocations within these management areas over four years to lessen the difference between water allocations and a sustainable level of use.

“This will ensure the water resource can continue to provide water for the community, the environment and the production sector,” he said.

Mr Laslett praised the community for its involvement and commitment to the WAP and said it highlighted a positive outlook for water resources in the region.

DEWNR staff are able to discuss the implementation of the Water Allocation Plan with irrigators and community members and can be contacted on 08 87 351134.



RURAL INDUSTRIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION RESEARCH PAPERS



By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer

Did you know about some of the valuable lucerne seed industry publications that exist through the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC)?

Lucerne Australia has worked in partnership with RIRDC on research and

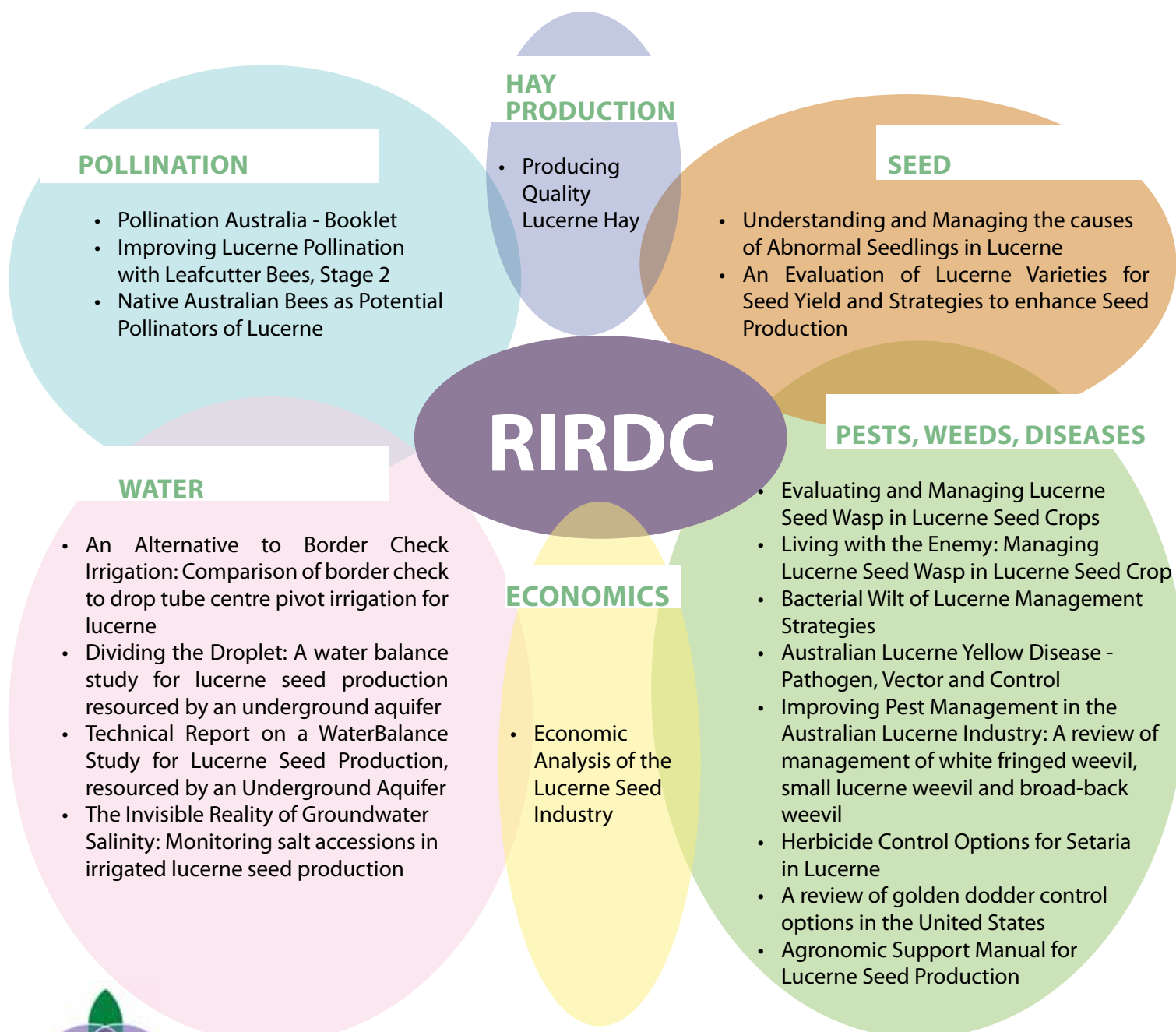
development since 2005.

Hard-copies of these reports are available on request and free of charge to members through Lucerne Australia. Printable PDF download links are also available on the Lucerne Australia website.



Australian Government

**Rural Industries Research and
Development Corporation**



CLEANING SHED REPORT: INDENT ROLLERS



By Brett Wegener, Kongal Seeds

Indent cylinders separate product on the difference in length of the seed. The indents are sometimes known as length separators.

The indent cylinder separator has a horizontal rotating cylinder, made of thin sheet steel, approx 2.4 mts long and 450mm diameter, as per photo one.



Photo 1: Two Indent Cylinders

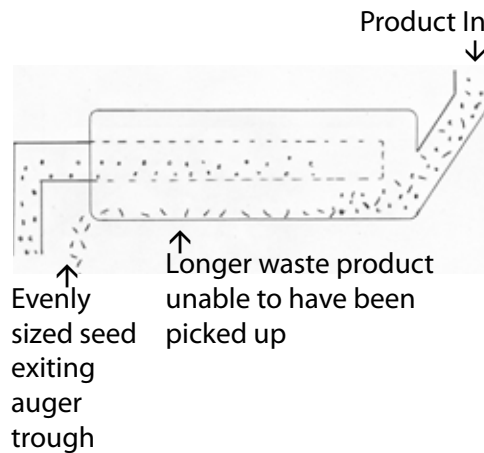
There are several different types using various sizes but these are the most common. The inside surface of the cylinders have small, closely spaced, round indentations pressed into them.



Side cut away view

When the product is fed into one end of the cylinder the short seeds, in this case lucerne, are lifted by the combined effect of fitting in to the indentations and centrifugal force. Near the top of the rotation the seeds inside the indentations are dropped out into a full length trough with an auger conveying them out.

ROTATING INDENT CYLINDER



The speed of rotation can be varied, the slower the speed, results in the lucerne falling out of the indentations too soon, before reaching the top, If the rotation is too fast, the seed will not fall out at all, but will simply continue to rotate around inside the cylinder, being held there by centrifugal force. Any product or seed which is longer than the lucerne – such as wheat, barley, plant stalks, ryegrass – will not be able to fit inside the indentations and therefore have nothing to ‘grip’ them and lift them around to the top to fall into

the auger trough. These products will simply sit at the bottom of the cylinder and slowly slide out horizontally till falling out the open end.

The sizes - if indentations in each cylinder vary - depend on the commodity being processed. Most processors would generally hold up to 10 different sizes. Seeds requiring the use of small sized indentation would be Haifa Clover. Medium sized indentations are used for lucerne or sub clover and larger sizes used for wheat, barley, oats etc.

For increased capacity, several indents cylinders may be used together in series, with the inward product being split between them. In the same way the longer waste product can be separated out from short product, the reverse can also be utilized. By using an indentation size too small for the good seed to be picked up and deposited into the auger trough, any shorter product will still be lifted up and be separated. Examples of this would be the separation of fat-hen from lucerne, wheat from oats, canola from ryegrass. The seed is then ready to continue on to the next machine in the cleaning process.

“MEDIUM SIZED INDENTATIONS ARE USED FOR LUCERNE OR SUB CLOVER AND LARGER SIZES USED FOR WHEAT, BARLEY, OATS ETC”

LUCERNE AUSTRALIA FIELD TOUR REPORT

By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer



A two-day field tour to the Adelaide region was held on 20 and 21 September. This two-day event offered the group of 25 members visits to a number of major agricultural businesses.

David and Karen Altmann showcased their intensive dairy feedlot at Murray Bridge which was formed in 2005 following SA Water's decision to purchase their irrigation land. The group witnessed high productivity in this business with 500 cows on 22 hectares and was a great example of innovation in the dairy sector. They have similar challenges to all primary producers such as identifying reliable and skilled labour. David highlighted the importance of careful consideration before making changes to variable input costs, as productivity and net profits are directly affected.

A visit to the Jurlique herb and flower farm, which supplies the ingredients for their global skin care products, was a major highlight. Biodynamic certified, the farm of 64 hectares has over 2500 plants and flowers which are carefully managed with sustainable practices. Jurlique currently boasts \$140 million sales annually, and is poised to grow to \$250 million sales by 2015 all generated from their own farm growing 97 per cent of product used. In their vertically integrated process from grower to end sales, soil and plant health is the number one priority. They make their own compost, have bee hives, a worm farm and rely on irrigation. Chemical free and labour intensive weed control needs to be constantly managed.

A visit to the Samwell sprout business

at Mount Barker was hosted by Kent Samwell and his family. They are one of only three major Brussels sprout businesses in Australia, producing 1.5 million sprouts annually. They have the ability to grow more, but they are constrained by labour. They employ 30 staff and Kent admitted that they have never had a bad year in the sprouting business. Their products are sold domestically and exported to countries such as the Netherlands. Threats to the business include pests, diseases, high labour costs and re-zoning of the area, which is close to Mount Barker.

At the Field Tour Dinner in Adelaide, on Thursday, 20 September, three speakers presented on a variety of subjects. Charlie Goode outlined his work and the services offered by the Rural Counselling Services SA. He was followed by Graydon Chong, Rabobank Senior Analyst Grains and Oilseeds, who addressed guests with a lively and informative update of the global grains industry and other agribusiness trends. Some members commented that they could have listened to Graydon discuss agricultural economics all night! The final speaker for the evening was David Hudson, SGA Solutions, who highlighted the latest news in the technology innovation pipeline for Australia's pasture, fodder and livestock producers.

The second day provided a full half-day visit to the Waite Campus at the University of Adelaide. Members received a full tour of the research facilities and gained insights into new technology in agriculture including use of DNA assays to quantify organisms in

crop and pastures, the lucerne breeding program, and other programs relating to the lucerne seed and cropping industries. Speakers included Dr Alan McKay, Leader, Diagnostics, Ross Ballard, Scientist, Leader of Pasture Microbiology and Sue Hoppo, Scientist, Oat Breeding Program.

Seed Services Australia also hosted the group, with a visit to their seed testing laboratory to inspect lucerne samples with high levels of abnormal seedlings and to discuss contributing factors. The group also inspected the trial site areas with a range of crops on display.

"THIS TWO-DAY EVENT OFFERED THE GROUP OF 25 MEMBERS VISITS TO A NUMBER OF MAJOR AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES."

A visit to Lenswood Cold Stores (LCS) was an eye opener for members, with large tonnages of apples being processed daily in the facility and the first of its type in Australia. It is one of the most successful fruit cooperatives in Australia and approximately 70 per cent of SA apples are packed and marketed by LCS. The group was shown some of the most innovative fruit storage facilities in the world.

The final visit for the two-day tour was to J & AJ Johnston Winery, one of the oldest known family businesses in SA, with origins dating back to 1839. Based at Oakbank, members heard the family history and enjoyed wine tastings and food platters in a relaxed environment.

LUCERNE AUSTRALIA FIELD TOUR REPORT *PHOTOS*



By Nicola Raymond, Executive Officer



"Darren Sanders tests the Brussels Spout planter at the Samwell's"



"Charlie Hilton considers moving from lucerne seed production to Brussels Sprouts"



"Anthony Jaeschke seems keen to do some shifts on the Brussels Spout harvester"



"Rodney Lush listens to Dr Pamela Zwer, Principal Plant Breeder at Waite"



"Abnormals testing with Seed Services Australia at Waite"

"MEMBERS RECEIVED A FULL TOUR OF THE WAITE RESEARCH FACILITIES AND GAINED INSIGHTS INTO NEW TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE INCLUDING USE OF DNA ASSAYS TO QUANTIFY ORGANISMS IN CROP AND PASTURES."



"Among the trial plots at Waite"



"Steve Graetz offers his technical advice on quality apples at Lenswood"



"Owen Croser leads the way at Lenswood Cold Stores"

"THE SAMWELL'S ARE ONE OF ONLY THREE MAJOR BRUSSELS SPROUT BUSINESSES IN AUSTRALIA, PRODUCING 1.5 MILLION SPROUTS ANNUALLY. THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO GROW MORE, BUT THEY ARE CONSTRAINED BY LABOUR."

HAY DEMONSTRATION DAY



By Guy Cunningham, Executive Committee Member

Over 55 grower members and contractors were present at Gumbowie, Willalooka on Tuesday, 16 October for a Hay Demonstration Day, in preparation for the hay season.

The focus of the day was on mowing and raking with three local dealerships - Wise Farm Equipment, Farmers Centre and O'Connors - who, along with local growers, brought machinery to the event. This provided an opportunity to see some of the newest machines available working in the field. Weather conditions were not ideal for curing to say the least, with some weather damage already apparent, but this provided plenty of interest in raking and tedding options.

Over a barbecue lunch, there were a number of speakers focusing on the theme of hay production, management and transportation. The keynote speaker was Mary-Anne Lattimore, District Agronomist for NSW Department of Primary Industries in Yanco. Mary-Anne is author of "Producing Quality Lucerne Hay", a comprehensive guide for lucerne hay producers, produced by Rural

Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). The booklet and a factsheet were provided to all members who attended. Mary-Anne went through some of the key messages in the booklet including drying rates, losses, cutting time, moisture stress, plant growth stages, conditioning, raking and storage and handling.

Daniel Menzel from WFI addressed the group about insurance and prevention of hayshed fires, John Bullen from Rabobank focused on farm finance for machinery and equipment and Ian Schulz from Elders also covered some of the preservatives on the market to assist with hay production.

Finally, Troy Clasohm from Transport SA Safety Compliance was a surprisingly popular speaker as he covered the rules and regulations for the transportation of hay and agricultural machinery on SA roads.

Paul Fisher from Farmers Centre did a raking demonstration with both an MF Rotary Rake and Howard V-Rake. Danny Berryman from O'Connors

demonstrated with a Lely Rotary Rake. Mowers were also demonstrated, including a Wise Farm H7450 Mower-Conditioner and a Linkage Disc Mower from O'Connors. We are also grateful to members Steve Graetz, Glen Simpson and Owen Croser for providing additional tractors on the day, as well as local farmer Robert Chalk.

The key messages from the event included the importance of timing of hay production, early mowing (bud to early flowering) to improve quality (protein and energy) though yields may be lower, earlier raking (<40% moisture) will reduce leaf loss and retain quality, wider windrows will speed initial drying, especially in spring, which preserves quality. Finally, removing hay from the field to covered storage (or cover in the field) will reduce weather damage.

Our aim is to continue to convene days where new technology and machines can be demonstrated actually working in the field. If you have any ideas that you would like to see form such a field day please contact one of the LA executive.



Hay Demonstrations in the paddock

"THE FOCUS OF THE DAY WAS ON MOWING AND RAKING"



Hay Demonstration Day gets underway

HAY DEMONSTRATION DAY PHOTOS

By Guy Cunningham, Executive Committee Member



Mary-Anne Lattimore addresses the group

"KEYNOTE SPEAKER WAS MARY-ANNE LATTIMORE, DISTRICT AGRONOMIST FOR NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, AND THE AUTHOR OF "PRODUCING QUALITY LUCERNE HAY", A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE."



Listening to speaker Mary-Anne Lattimore



John Bullen from Rabobank speaks to the group



In-field demonstrations

"JOHN BULLEN FROM RABOBANK FOCUSED ON FARM FINANCE FOR MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT"



"THE SPEAKER FROM TRANSPORT SA (ABOVE) WAS A POPULAR SPEAKER"



In-field demonstrations

HERITAGE SEEDS UPDATE

By Jeremy Gittins

As you would be aware, Heritage Seeds purchased Seedmark in March this year. Since then, a lot of work has been undertaken to integrate the two businesses. The acquisition represents an excellent strategic fit for Heritage Seeds as the product range from the two companies are extremely complimentary, with very little overlap. In addition, the acquisition places Heritage Seeds in a very solid position to continue and grow seed supply and demand for both the domestic and international markets.

Lucerne production will remain an integral part of Heritage Seeds business both domestically and internationally. Varieties such as the SARDI range, the Alfamaster's, Genesis, Pegasis and Venus will all continue to meet the needs of the market place. This coupled with the ongoing strong relationship we have with Forage Genetics, will continue to

provide many opportunities for our growers in the near and distant future for Lucerne production.

Research and Development in the field of Lucerne will also continue to play a major part of the new Heritage Seeds with our work focussed on leading the market in all facets of the package including disease resistance, herbage count, graze-ability and importantly seed yield.

In June 2012, Heritage Seeds moved into a new head office and warehouse facility in Dandenong South, Melbourne. This is a state of the art purpose built site, which has the capacity to store over 6,000 tonnes of seed. The site is capable of handling B-Double trucks and in the near future, a seed coating plant will be installed, along with improved capacities to blend and palletise seed. Major functions operated

out of Dandenong South include Finance, Supply Chain, Customer Service, National Sales and Marketing and Production. Heritage Seeds will continue to run the International business and Procurement out of the Adelaide office on South Terrace.

In October, Steven Dukalskis was appointed as Pasture Production Manager and is responsible for managing lucerne seed production (and other key seed crops) in the south east region of South Australia. He can be contacted on 0434 072 544. Naracoorte Seeds will continue to manage Heritage Seeds SARDI lucerne production. Josh Rasheed from Naracoorte Seeds can be contacted on 0427 790 655.

*Jeremy Gittins
National Production
Manager (0417 338 078)*



Heritage Seeds new head office and warehouse in Melbourne

LUCERNE AGRONOMY REPORT

By Scott Hutchings, Cox Rural, Keith



The lucerne hay season is now well underway with dryland baling mostly finished and irrigated crops in various stages throughout the district. Dryland hay yields generally did not realise full potential due to below average spring rainfall. Weather conditions for hay making have been challenging with generally lengthy drying times being coupled with short opportunities for baling putting pressure on contractors and producers alike to get hay off the paddocks. However, this has been offset by no weather damaged hay and what appears to be good demand for lucerne hay early in the season which can only increase if dry conditions continue.

Once again the winter cleaning season highlighted the level of paraquat resistant barley grass in the district with most paddocks requiring a secondary application of grass selective and also showed the importance of winter

cleaning early to preserve moisture and allow enough time for the follow-up applications of grass herbicide if required. Milkthistle, prickly lettuce and ryegrass also were noted escapees and are becoming an increasing problem.

Paddocks shut up for dryland seed are generally struggling to make growth unless they were shut up earlier or are on soft finishing sandy soil types with good sub-soil moisture. An unseasonal late frost on the 10th November has also affected some of the early dryland crops and some hay paddocks, particularly in low lying areas. While the dryland season is still very early and there is still a good six weeks left where a rain could still result in a good dryland harvest, many producers are opting to graze off marginal paddocks until a rain is received. While this is not positive it may help contribute to a lower seed wasp level in the district.

With the first dryland crops beginning to flower, now is the time for producers to implement their seed wasp management strategies and stop non-seed crops from flowering by grazing and topping and by controlling feral lucerne on irrigation banks, lane ways and around sheds.

Irrigation is currently in lock-up stage with many producers choosing to lock-up some production areas earlier than normal as a risk management strategy for seed wasp. At this early stage, indicators look good for strong demand for lucerne seed so hopefully producers can look forward to a much deserved solid harvest.

“AN UNSEASONAL LATE FROST ON THE 10TH NOVEMBER HAS ALSO AFFECTED SOME OF THE EARLY DRYLAND CROPS AND SOME HAY PADDOCKS”



Lucerne frost damage



Lucerne frost damage

CENTRE PIVOT VARIETY TRIAL REPORT



By Adam Desmazures, Executive Committee Member

The aims of the Drop-Tube Irrigated Lucerne Seed, Herbage Yield and Persistence Trial are:

- To identify varieties of lucerne that are capable of optimising production, both seed and herbage within a given irrigation schedule with the aim of increasing net returns per mega litre of water pumped.
- To optimise seed production for the Australian lucerne seed industry in order to achieve higher net returns per hectare.
- To measure and compare the seed and herbage yielding performance of new and existing commercial lucerne varieties.
- To measure and compare the seed and herbage yielding performance of experimental varieties of lucerne against current commercial varieties in order to identify and fast track superior genetics to the commercial market.

- To conduct the proposed trial within a drop-tube centre pivot irrigation system with current best district practices using the knowledge of specialised agronomists, growers and research organisations.
- Annual plant persistence evaluation of different winter activity lucerne groups.
- To measure and compare the seed and herbage yielding performance of new and existing lucerne varieties between the proposed drop-tube centre pivot irrigation trial and the current border check irrigation trial.

The trial site is a designated area inside a centre pivot circle that is situated on property at Kinyerrie, Keith. The trial site was initially sown in 2010 and the first seed harvest completed in 2011. The second herbage cut of the trial was conducted on 15, November 2012.

These results will be collated soon and will form part of the trial booklet which will be distributed at the trial site field day prior to the 2013 harvest. This is likely to be in late-February. On 15, November 2012, the whole pivot, including the trial site, was mown on the same day. Once the hay is removed the trial site will then be set-up for this years' seed crop.

The trial committee and Kinyerrie have done all they can do to make this years' trial a success. Now all we need is "mother nature" to do her bit!

In time there will be some extremely valuable data available as a result of this trial. This data will promote more informed decision making about which particular lucerne variety is best suited for individual grower's needs and applications.



Centre Pivot Trial Image, taken in October 2012



Centre Pivot Trial image, taken in October 2012

FERTILISER TRIAL UPDATE



By Lisa Charlton-Fatchen, Vice-Chairman

I am pleased to confirm all milestones, actions and procedures linked with the Lucerne Australia fertiliser trial have been completed to date and have gone to plan on time and in a timely manner. Both the irrigation and dryland paddocks have been cut for hay, received their spring fertiliser applications and are in the process of being locked up for lucerne seed. Measurements such as NDVI readings, sap tests and biomass cuts are included within the trial.

Both the irrigation and dryland paddocks have been cut for hay, received their spring fertiliser applications and are in the process of being locked up for lucerne seed.

We are extremely excited with the progress of the trial, and the variety of products included. Our first field day is proposed for late-February, so please keep this in mind.

Products included in our lucerne fertiliser trial are:

- Plain Super
- Super Potash 2:1
- Scrub Mix 5:5:150
- Sulphate of Potash (SOP)
- Muriate of Potash (MOP)
- MAP S/MOP 2:1
- MAP S/SOP 2:1
- Lucerne K36 B 0.95% Zn 0.19%
- Lucerne K38 B 0.77% Zn 0.15%
- Lucerne K31 B 1.25% Zn 0.25%
- BioGraze
- BioGraze 2:1
- BioGraze 5:1
- SS/SOP/Humate granules
- NutriCal + Scrubmix (liquid)

- NutriCal + BioCoat (liquid)
- Foli-Zyme + Super potash 2 &1 (liquid)
- Bio-Forge + Super potash 2 &1 (liquid)
- Lucerne Mix 1 A (liquid)
- Lucerne Mix A++ (liquid)
- Chicken Manure
- Compost
- Pig Manure
- Booster Zinc Moly + Supa Trace Advance + Super Potash 2:1
- Balance 3ZBM + Foliar Boost + Super Potash 2:1
- Booster Zinc Moly + Maxi Mang + Super Potash 2:1
- Balance 3ZBM + Maxi Fruit + Super Potash 2:1

The trial design is in a randomised layout, triple replicated in both the irrigated and dryland trial plots, with some products repeated at different rates.



Photos from the 2012 Spring Application

DIURON BANNED IN LUCERNE.....OR NOT?

By Shane Oster, Executive Committee Member

As growers would be aware, Diuron has been under review by the APVMA. Lucerne Australia lodged a detailed submission outlining reasons why its use in lucerne should be maintained and some suggested label amendments 12 months ago.

The basis for the ban on Diuron was largely due to the environmental impact on waterways, specifically small creeks and tributaries, particularly at high rates. As you are well aware, the predominant topography in lucerne growing regions does not have creeks and tributaries and usage rates are low compared to many other crops.

In September this year, the APVMA handed down its review outlining the uses which have and haven't been supported. Use in lucerne is not one of the uses therefore has not been supported.

After a period of mild panic, LA contacted the APVMA to enquire why the use hadn't been supported. The APVMA certainly received our submission and valued its content greatly, sighting it as a critical source of information. The problem was based on the current label rate in lucerne. As it stands currently Diuron is registered at 3.5 L/ha where current usage rates are more like 1.5-2 L/ha (or 830g – 1.1 kg/ha).

It was not the responsibility of the review to amend labels, it was merely accepting or rejecting current usages. In response, Lucerne Australia has been in contact with Nufarm to work towards submitting a label amendment to more accurately reflect current usage patterns. This has been submitted to the APVMA, was viewed very favourably, and is expected to be approved.

The new label will be for usage on a limited number of small weeds at the 1.5L rate which is below the level which causes any environmental harm. Lucerne Australia and Nufarm are still waiting for an official response from the APVMA but are hopeful of a positive outcome.



GROWING LUCERNE IN OBSCURE PLACES?

Grower member Lachie Seears from Boonderoo Pastoral Company sent us this image last week. It certainly speaks for itself!



“LUCERNE
AUSTRALIA
WISHES ALL
MEMBERS
A HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
AND HOPE
THAT THE NEW
YEAR BRINGS
PROSPERITY IN
THE LUCERNE
SEED INDUSTRY”.

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