

LUCERNE *Leader*



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AgriFutures®
Pasture Seeds



**SAVE
THE DATE**

ANNUAL FIELD DAY
WEDNESDAY 6TH MARCH 2024

EGG AND BACON ROLL AND GREAT
COFFEE FROM 7.30AM AT KEITH
FOOTBALL CLUBROOMS

PLUS VISIT THE LUCERNE AUSTRALIA VARIETY SITE TO
VIEW TWO NEW AGRONOMIC TRIALS AND MORE.



Rabobank

RESETTING THE BEARINGS AFTER THE STORM

November 28, 2023

by Vitor Cacula Pistoia, Analyst RaboResearch, Australia & New Zealand



Rabobank

As the year is drawing to a close, the 2023/24 harvest looks set to come in at close to the last five-year average, slightly under 50 million tonnes of grains. Also, it is now predicted the El Nino weather will be having an impact up until early autumn, unfortunately. It is clear that the ebbs and flows of global commodities will lead to different farm inputs costs. So, the question is: how to fit these puzzle-pieces together in the budget decision-making process?

Starting with the cost of production, it is poised to be lower, but not without caveats.

The major challenges are coming from wages and diesel. From October 2022 to October 2023, national private-sector wages grew by four per cent, on the back of an extremely tight labour market, especially in rural areas. And diesel showed a reduction of seven per cent in the last 12 months, however, the forecast is grim. The Q1/2024 projected price for diesel is \$1.95/litre for the terminal gate price, an increase of 8.5 per cent versus the first quarter in 2023, which was \$1.8/litre. Thus, the longer-term forecast, going out to Q4/2024, puts the terminal gate price at \$2.0/litre, following the overseas imbalance of supply and demand for both crude oil and refining capacity. Global shocks are taking a toll.

There is good news regarding farm inputs coming from fertiliser and agrochemicals.

Agrochemicals are in a good position in terms of stocks and supply. This is made clear by checking Chinese prices, which dropped 43 per cent in the last 12 months across the different active ingredient categories. For instance, tebuconazole dropped 31 per cent and 2,4-D prices were reduced by half.

Fertiliser prices have seen a 40 per cent reduction in the majority of the overseas producers. Despite the instabilities of natural gas markets, the overall supply is in better shape than last year. This greater supply also finds support in a weaker fertiliser demand from key markets. For instance, the second corn season in Brazil – which has the largest share of the cereal production in South American's goliath farming sector – is set to have a substantial reduction in area planting. Brazilian farmers are not excited about corn prices – the CBOT dropped 30 per cent year-to-date – and farmers are already facing a lack of good rainfall and soil moisture. Brazil imports roughly 17 per cent of global urea, and 2023 numbers show so far imports are lagging 11 per cent behind the five-year average. To put this into perspective, this represents over 700,000 tonnes less of imports or 25 per cent of the Australian five-year average of annual urea imports. India is another of the major global fertiliser importers with faltering demand after the Indian government slashed the market subsidy. For example, the DAP subsidy in India is now reduced by 31 per cent and pushed importers' margins to the negative side. India is responsible for approximately 29 per cent of global DAP imports. This will



Vitor Cacula Pistoia, Analyst RaboResearch

not only reduce the overall fertiliser demand, thus, potentially alleviating prices but may also translate into a smaller global crop production in 2024. Market feedback sometimes transforms the suffering from one region into a booster for another.

These are important examples of how the fertiliser market is moving following the 2022 shocks and the wind now is blowing in Australia's favour.

The period between November and March is crucial to set fertiliser prices for the season ahead as the lead time can be up to 10 weeks. For instance, if the input must be at a shed in South Australia by early March, the procurement of the cargo should be done at some point between November and December. Hence, by comparing overseas producers' prices from Nov/22-Mar/23 to Nov/23-Mar/24 forecast, there is the potential for urea to be five per cent lower year over year, DAP indicates to 16 per cent reduction potential and MOP 36 per cent less. These figures could be better for farmers if the AUD had not lost as much value as it did. In the last 12 months, the AUD lost 7.4 per cent of value versus the USD and by mid-2024 it might be in the 0.66-0.68 range.

When budgeting for grain and oilseeds revenue the outlook is of price stability from an Australian perspective. Since May 2023, local port prices have risen following El Nino concerns. Which is to say the drought premium is back, boosted by the Chinese barley tariff removal and global canola drawbacks. In the last 12 months, the national average port price for APW1 has fallen 3.6 per cent, from \$434/tonne to \$418, and non-GM canola by 17.1 per cent, from \$809/tonne to \$669. On the barley front, the price is virtually unchanged.

Looking forward towards global markets, we have Australian wheat prices higher than the CBOT or MATIF prices. This is because Russia is pumping a lot of wheat into the international markets on the back of the last two record-breaking seasons, thus, depressing global prices. At the same time, local millers and feedlots have to compete against South East Asian buyers for Australian wheat. This trend is expected to remain in place up to mid-2024. The barley industry is facing a wall of US and Brazilian corn that is reducing overseas feed prices. Local buyers are sustaining the feed market for barley, and for malt there is a substantial discount versus Canada, France or Argentina port prices. Therefore, there is room for an upside, but the weak global GDP perspective is capping a rally in prices. Canola is trading with a discount compared to ICE or MATIF due to geography, which is poised to continue during 2024. The global supply of oilseed is steady and should hold its position. Canada had a smaller canola crop, but it was not a complete failure. And Brazil had a record-high soybean harvest last year and is also on track to deliver another bumper crop for 2023/24. Despite all its challenges,

Ukraine increased the oilseed supply to the detriment of barley and corn. The palm oil industry is still, at least for now, away from negative El Nino's impacts. In terms of price, there are no substantial upside elements nor bearish. It is all about weather and economic activity, thus, demand.

When commodities/inputs ratios - or affordability - are analysed, the situation is in general in a better shape. This is because the price drop in farm input is greater than the drop in farming commodities. By combining everything together, the APW1-Urea affordability moved in 12 months from 2.19 to 1.43, a 34 per cent improvement. This is to say, in October of 2022, it was necessary to produce 2.19 tonnes of APW1 to buy one tonne of urea free on board at the Middle East ports and by October of 2023 "just" 1.43 tonnes.

The next season's budget should have similar behaviour for agrochemicals and the overall picture, potentially, points towards good farming margins, if the weather allows.

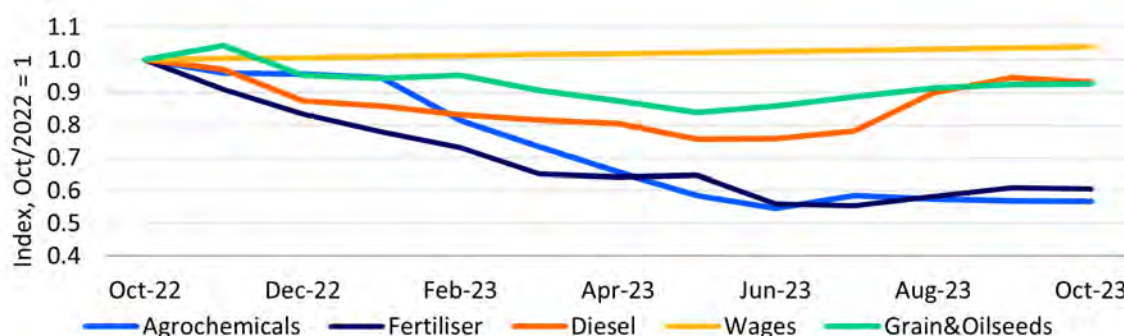


Figure 1: The last 12 months' price movement for baskets of farming outputs and inputs indicates budget relief for the 2024 season.
Source: ABS, Bloomberg, CRU, Rabobank

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WHY IRRIGATE WITH PIVOTS

courtesy of Benparts

Pivot/lateral irrigation systems – right amount of water at the right time, in the right place

Lucerne is one of the most important forage crops grown for hay in the world today, because with the correct application of water, it has the ability to produce high yields of very good quality feed. So, why consider pivot irrigation for your lucerne?

Applying the correct amount of water at the right time is crucial to getting a good yield, but it's also important to apply water uniformly.

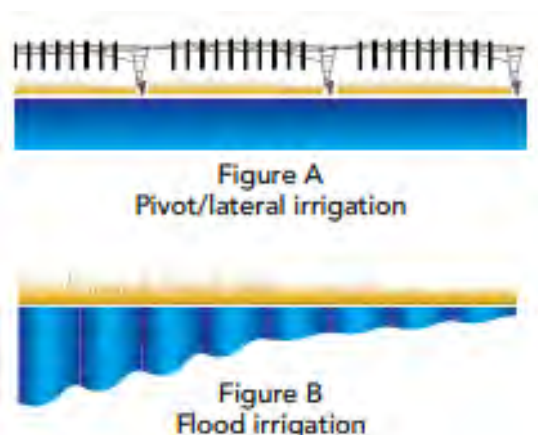
Improvements in pivot sprinkler design have paralleled those made in mechanical move systems. Computer designed sprinkler packages are tailored to match water application to the specific texture, infiltration rate and holding capacity of the soil in each paddock.

A centre pivot system has low labour requirements and is available in fixed or mobile versions. It allows crop production on hilly terrain, with slopes up to 15 percent. Sprinklers can be mounted on top of the spans or on drop-tubes to reduce water loss from drift and evaporation. Centre pivots are available with a choice of drive-motor speeds and provide the flexibility of using frequent, light watering or more soaking irrigation as the crop matures. Adding a corner arm to a centre pivot can also provide up to 22 acres (8.9 ha) of additional irrigated coverage on a square 160 acre (65 ha) paddock.

Pivots/laterals v. flood irrigation

Less waste

The most obvious benefit to irrigating with a pivot or lateral system is that it produces less waste. You get even, precise water application across the paddock (Figure A), rather than having too much water at the upper end, and not enough water at the lower end of the paddock (Figure B). You can also control the timing and amount of water that is applied while eliminating runoff, helping to prevent contamination of the water table and nearby waterways.



Why Choose Benparts and their preferred Lindsay Irrigation systems?

Benparts have been in business for over 30 years and there is not much we don't know about irrigation. Lindsay irrigation systems have been the choice of the world's irrigators for more than 55 years and with the help of regular maintenance from the Benparts team, these irrigation systems pay for themselves many times over during their lifespan assisting farmers to alleviate risk when weather conditions are not ideal for planting and growing seasons. Benparts Irrigation can provide you with computer designed sprinkler packages tailored to match your individual water application needs. We can also assist in the provision and installation of rotating-spray, fixed-spray and medium elevation sprinklers to provide the best coverage and pressure solutions to fit your specific paddock/crop conditions and needs.

Benparts technicians are highly qualified in the installation and maintenance of irrigation systems and specialize in the installation of Control panels and remote monitoring technology to any brand irrigation systems. Adding FieldNet technology to your new or existing system, of any brand, is a game changer for operators. This technology allows you to remotely monitor and control entire irrigation systems – from pivots and laterals to pumps and sensors simply from accessing the easy to use app from your laptop, tablet or smartphone. This next-generation technology provides integrated water, fertilizer and chemigation management.

To find out more about how a Pivot could improve your farming operation, give us a call today, we are happy to come and discuss the options with you.



LUCERNE AUSTRALIA AGM

The 2023 Lucerne Australia AGM was held on Wednesday 18th October 2023 September at Henry & Rose Cafe.

Guest Speakers

Crawford Taylor, from sponsor Rabobank Australia and Danny Le Feuvre from Australian Honey Bee Industry Council who provided great presentations on carbon and varroa mite. The evening was a good opportunity to catch up and network.

Election of Committee

This year - three grower members and one associate member were up for re-election. Nominations were received from Greg Excell, associate member and Rodney Lush, grower member and they were re-elected to their positions. Nominations received prior to the AGM for the Executive Committee were not sufficient to fill the three available grower member vacancies. The Executive

has appointed retiring Grower members Scott Campbell and Adam Zacker to the casual vacancies following the AGM, as per the constitution.

The new Chairman of LA is Scott Hutchings. Incoming Deputy Chair role has been filled by Ben Farmer.



NARACOORTE SEEDS REPORT

by Joshua Rasheed, Director, Naracoorte Seeds



What will 2024 bring for Lucerne Seeds?

With livestock prices crashing over the past 6+ months this is a question on many Lucerne seed grower's lips. As we come out of a season that saw record prices for public Lucerne seed, and now very little carry-over with next harvest still 3 months away, the question being asked is 'what are Lucerne seed prices going to do in 2024'?

The past 3 months have been very quiet for Lucerne seed enquiries and Lucerne seed exports for September 2023 were the 3rd lowest for the past 15 years, but then again, we don't have a lot of public seed left to offer. I am not sure we can say the same for proprietary Lucerne seed varieties? The main issue however is our four main export destinations, who take around 80-85% of our Lucerne seed, two of them are reported to have large carry-over stock levels and one is continuing to have a serious financial crisis. Saudi Arabia, our largest importer of Lucerne seed, is one of the countries report to have large carry-over stocks and indications are requirements for seed, especially early, could be reduced. This would place pressure to hold the pricing levels we have seen over the past 10 months.

Naturally growers will be hoping seed prices stay strong to help cushion some of the pain felt with livestock prices. One factor on pricing is export demand, but the other main factor won't be felt for some months yet, that is how our harvest. If we have an above average harvest this could place more downward pressure on pricing, however if we have a below average harvest this could well see pricing not only hold at last year's levels but increase further.

We can try to predict the lucerne seed prices for 2024 now, still some 3-4 months away from our 2024 harvest, but predictions could mean nothing if we have a poor Lucerne seed harvest!

If you would like to know more about any of the above or have public pasture seed to sell, please feel free to give me a call to discuss on 0427 790 655 or email josh@naracoorteseeds.com.au

Summer Crop Options

With the amount of rain we have received throughout the South East over the past couple of weeks it is the perfect time to be thinking about planting summer forage crops. Whether you're looking for cheap dryland options with Forage Brassica's or irrigation option for hay Naracoorte Seeds have you covered with good stocks of Brassica's, Turnips, Radish, Millet, Sorghum and Chicory so call today to discuss your options.

Naracoorte Seeds Field Day

Naracoorte Seeds held another very successful Field Day in October with over 75 attendees. They had the opportunity to review trials showcasing Ryegrass, Phalaris, Fescue, Cocksfoot, Vetch and Brassica varieties, while also hearing from Rick Jordan on tips to best utilise fertiliser and Phil White on how to get the most out of your Forage Brassica crop. The day was rounded off beautifully with our guest speakers Malcolm Blight and John Reid on their life and footy careers. Thank you to everyone who attended and for those of you that couldn't make it but would like to receive our Field Day brochure with all the trial data please give me a call.

Joshua Rasheed – Director Naracoorte Seeds
Ph: 0427 790 655

DLF SEEDS UPDATE

by Jess Nottle, Seed Production Agronomist



Seasonal Update

Some dryland lucerne crops experienced a tough start. Many growers chose to lock up their paddocks early due to the forecast dry weather outlook, and unfortunately some of these paddocks encountered some nasty frost damage in their early growth stages which meant these paddocks had to be topped and started again. Thankfully some recent thunderstorms have given these paddocks a freshen up - we'll see how they look in a few weeks' time.

It's pleasing to see irrigated paddocks have been locked up in a timely manner this year. Many seed growers didn't opt to cut hay from their paddocks this season. I think last year's disastrous, wet hay cutting season was still firmly planted in the back of peoples minds!

Summer grasses such as love grass & panic grass are becoming more prevalent in lucerne crops and on seed tests, in-turn limiting the marketability of your seed. If you're seeing summer grasses germinate in your paddock, consult with your agronomist to develop an effective control strategy.

Also, a reminder to all certified seed growers that you should now have returned your certification renewal & phytosanitary inspection applications to your certifying agency.

Global DLF Seeds Update

DLF Seeds acquires Corteva's lucerne breeding program & appointment of Australian based lucerne breeder

DLF has officially acquired the Corteva Agriscience lucerne breeding program (formerly known as Alforex Seeds), and have strategically employed an Australian based lucerne breeder to support adaption of germplasm to Australian growing conditions.

The acquisition includes Corteva's global lucerne germplasm and breeding program, the Alforex Seeds brand name, and trademarks like Hi-Gest alfalfa technology, Hi-Ton performance alfalfa, Hi-Salt salinity tolerant alfalfa, and msSuntra hybrid technology. DLF has also obtained current commercial lucerne varieties from Corteva, as well as select research and development personnel.

Acquiring a renowned lucerne research program presents a rare opportunity for DLF to significantly enhance our global position in lucerne breeding and sales.

Corteva's lucerne portfolio will bring a proven lucerne germplasm base and a native trait pipeline to DLF for both dormant and nondormant markets. These traits include high yield potential, superior forage quality, winterhardiness, and pest and disease resistance.

Our new Australian based Lucerne Breeder, Matt Francis, joined our research team at the beginning of October following the completion of his studies in the US, and is excited to tackle the challenges facing growers in the lucerne industry.

Matt grew up on a small sheep and beef farm in the Central North Island in New Zealand. In 2014 he undertook a Bachelor of AgriScience at Massey University in Palmerston North and started work with the breeding team at PGG Wrightson Seeds in 2015. In 2019 he moved to California to complete a PhD in horticulture and agronomy at UC Davis. His research focused on improving lucerne's yield potential through genomic- and phenomic-based breeding. While at UC Davis, Matt was trained in statistics, molecular breeding, and high-throughput phenotyping. He incorporated genomic selection into the university's lucerne breeding program and established a remote sensing workflow to extract and process spectral data from drone-based imagery.

We look forward to collaborating with our Australian lucerne seed producers as DLF builds its breeding operations in Australia with the long term view of breeding productive varieties for suppliers and customers alike.

Lastly...

DLF Seeds have openings for new lucerne seed production contracts in 2024, plus other seed crops suited to SA & VIC. Get it touch today to ensure you get your preferred planting option.

Wishing you all the best for the season ahead, and a joyous Christmas & prosperous New Year!



Seed Production & Purchasing

Jess Nottle – 0438 302 148

Anthony Quilter – 0427 572 125

BARENBRUG UPDATE

by Daryl Turner, Southern Production Manager



Domestic Lucerne Market

Recent spring demand for lucerne was slightly down on what our expectations were, but sales had actually increased year on year for the same period. Dry conditions across most of the east coast meant that the majority of new plantings were on irrigated country. The depressed red meat market has impacted grower confidence and discouraging some growers from investing in lucerne, however this has been offset by the strong hay market. Carryover stocks of key products are limited and hence some customers are also keen to secure product early for next autumn sowing.

International Lucerne Market

International markets remain subdued due to a combination of extensive rainfall conditions seen in Saudi Arabia creating a carry position and continued economic instability in the Argentina market. Other major markets are becoming more in alignment with historical purchasing patterns, so we have seen some easing in demand from these regions compared to the past 2 years. As a result, the strong early demand that we have experienced over the past years has not eventuated currently. These markets are fluid and the Saudi market, in particular, can change quickly but for now there is a hold position and likely to continue until completion of harvest.

Seed Production Update

During November Barenbrug hosted a lucerne grower information session at the Keith Football Club to provide an international and domestic market update to our growers. It was an informative and timely update as our international team have recently returned from visiting overseas customers and were able to share the latest trends and forecasts from these important markets and the potential impact on the 2024 seed harvest. In addition to this we also had two special guest speakers from SARDI's lucerne breeding program, Alan Humphries & James Begg. Alan & James provided great insights into the selection criteria for key traits (especially seed yield) with breeding new varieties they have in their program, as well as providing expert knowledge in general discussions throughout the morning. We recently hosted some interstate guests for a tour of the lucerne seed growing region. Our Barenbrug Seed Production Agronomists facilitated a short tour of the district, which included farm visits and a cleaning shed tour. It is very pleasing to experience local lucerne growers sharing information and some keys to their success, as it makes for a stronger industry.

November thunderstorms are back on the agenda again. As always, the rain will have come at the perfect time for some and at the worst time for others. It will certainly help some dry-land crops around the state, as well as late Spring-sown lucerne crops, but may hinder those who were mid-way through cutting hay or mid-harvest of some other species such as cereals, canola and clovers. Fingers crossed for a return to warm sunny days during summer!

LUCERNE AGRONOMY REPORT

by Scott Hutchings, Senior Agronomist, Cox Rural



While recent thunderstorms delivered some heavy rains through the SE of South Australia, the main dryland lucerne growing area between Willalooka & Coonalpyn only received modest totals ranging from 5mm to 25mm, this has not been enough to increase local dryland lucerne seed areas. Well below average rainfall from July has meant that many dryland crops have run out of moisture or suffered from late frost events in October and early November causing low lying areas to burn off and abort flower. Currently dryland areas are about half or last year with many paddocks still on a knives edge. Those that have reasonable growth and have pushed to flower are setting reasonably well. Generally paddocks that were winter cleaned early and preserved moisture and those that have higher moisture holding capacity at depth look like they will run all the way to seed.

With no significant rain delays during hay making the irrigated area in the Upper South East have been locked up considerably earlier than last year, a good 2-3 weeks earlier. Pest pressure so far has been low with occasional Native budworm flights, some early crop mirids and wingless grasshoppers. Aphid pressure has been low to date. With a generally earlier shut up of irrigation,

producers who shut up late will need to be conscious of the risk posed by seed wasp to later crops.

Transform is now fully registered & available in lucerne for Mirids and aphids in hay, grazing and seed crops & Mainman still has an emergency permit for aphids in seed crops only until the end of January. Both these products are best used early in the season at budding in seed crops to keep pest numbers low. If you have had historic issues with resistant aphids these products will give new options for aphid control. Unlike last year, Transform will be available for use earlier in the season.

Generally, irrigated areas remain stable to slightly higher than last year but without a significant rainfall event in the immediate future dryland area will be significantly lower. Dryland harvest is expected to be much earlier than last year especially for those early paddocks that dodged the frost events, some of these paddocks have already set a significant percentage of seed. Early market indicators are suggesting a softening of pricing due to a number of international factors, domestic livestock pricing and drier weather conditions.

DAIRY FARMERS CHALLENGED, BUT PROFITABLE



by Isabel Dando, Industry Analyst, Dairy Australia

The Dairy Farm Monitor project (DFMP) and the Queensland Dairy Accounting Scheme (QDAS) record financial and production data of participating dairy farms across the country. In its current form, the program is a collaboration between Dairy Australia, local state agriculture departments and universities across all major dairying regions. Both the DFMP and QDAS allow for analysis of dairy farm productivity and profitability to support government and industry policy and service delivery, as well as facilitating comparison and benchmarking for improved farm business performance.

Now in its 17th year, the 2022/23 DFMP results showed that, for Australian dairy farmers, the season was characterised by balancing high farmgate milk prices against significant seasonal challenges and increased costs on-farm. Dairy Australia's December Situation & Outlook report outlines how almost every dairying region experienced the impact of flooding at some point in the season, leading to an increased reliance and cost of purchased fodder for many farmers. As a result, there were significant increases in total feed, herd and shed costs as well as overhead costs. Despite this, profits were recorded at an all-time high in some regions, strengthening progress towards Dairy Australia's target of at least half of all farming businesses achieving \$1.50/kg MS EBIT (earnings before interest and tax) over a five-year average. Average profitability, both return on total assets (ROTA) and EBIT were particularly high in Tasmania, South Australia, and Victoria.

In terms of average ROTA (%), farmers in Tasmania recorded the greatest ROTA of 10%. This was followed by farmers in Victoria,

with an average ROTA of 7%, SA at 6.8%, NSW at 6.1%, and Western Australia (WA) at 5.7%. While recording the lowest ROTA of 5% comparatively, farmers in Queensland also had a profitable season.

The cost of producing milk can differ significantly across the country, influenced by the type of farming systems. Farms which rely more heavily on supplementary feed and/or irrigation water often have higher total farm costs, compared to others. Historical data has shown Queensland and New South Wales have higher costs of production on average, compared to southern states. In 2022/23, Tasmania recorded the highest average EBIT and return on total assets, as well as the lowest cost of production. While farmers in this state experienced the same input cost pressures as those on the mainland, weather conditions were more favourable in comparison. Dairy farmers in the northern regions of Australia faced significant climate challenges, and as such, the average total cost of production in Queensland and New South Wales were 44 per cent and 39 per cent above Tasmania, respectively.

The DFMP results from the 2022/23 season paint a positive story for dairy farming across the country. While showing that there were significant challenges faced, high milk prices contributed to record profitability in some areas, supporting against the increases in farm costs over the same period.

Both the DFMP reports, and the latest Situation & Outlook report can be accessed via the Dairy Australia website: <https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au>

Dairy Farm Monitor Project

Table 1: Key metrics from 2022/23 Dairy Farm Monitor Project by state

	Victoria	Tasmania (p)	South Australia (p)	New South Wales	Queensland (p)	Western Australia (p)
Average return on total assets (%)	7.0	10	7.4	6	5.0	5.6
Average EBIT* (\$/kg MS) (p)	2.87	3.67	3.08	2.78	2.53	2.65
Average EBIT* (total \$/farm)	\$616,995	\$1,602,352	\$1,180,470	\$691,162	\$400,396	\$817,627
Milk income (\$/kg MS)	\$9.77	\$9.95	\$9.84	\$11.43	\$11.78	\$9.30
Cost of production (incl. inventory changes) (\$/kg MS)	\$8.03	\$7.02	\$7.94	\$9.73	\$10.11	\$8.53

*Based off gross farm income.

(p) = provisional data

Source: Dairy Farm Monitor Project, 2022/23



Upper Murray Seeds
Sow much better

UPPER MURRAY SEEDS UPDATE

David Cowle – UMS Production Manager - Ph: 0437 076 920

On the back of strong demand for Upper Murray Seeds Silver Lucerne varieties, we are looking to expand our grower base. For those of you looking for information on growing with us, please contact David Cowle (UMS Production Manager) on 0437 076 920. We would also like to take this opportunity to wish all growers and members a safe and Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2024.

Australian seed bred for Australian conditions.



Since 1993, Upper Murray Seeds has been focused on producing premium pasture seed for the Australian farmer.



With a proud family history, we have grown over 3 generations, to create a vertically integrated seed business.



Our range includes Australian bred grasses, fescues, lucerne, clovers, forage barley, oats, & brassicas.



Through extensive research, we aim to yield the best products that perform from germination, to harvest and usage.

For more information & advice, call Keith Lange, Southern Victoria and South Australia Area Manager on 0428 406 464.



Upper Murray Seeds®
Sow much better

www.uppermurrayseeds.com.au

MANAGING PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE

courtesy of Safe Ag Systems

When assessing workplace risks you'd typically look for physical hazards. But it's not only the physical elements you should be looking out for.

Our industry is well-known for its numerous hazards, such as the operation of heavy machinery and the potential danger of getting injured by falling hay, which can pose a serious threat.

But one invisible element not recognised is 'psychosocial hazards'. And it appears in every industry.

'Psychosocial hazards' are anything that could cause psychological harm and risk to your mental health. Yet, experiencing psychosocial hazards over a long duration of time can start affecting your physical health as well.

An independent report in 2018 recommended 34 changes after reviewing the current Australian Work Health and Safety legislation. The report recommended more guidelines to identify and manage psychological risks.

Safework Australia published the Model Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work in 2022 and amendments to the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 came into force in April 2023.

These changes:

'...provide better guidance to workers and employers on how to manage the risk of psychological injuries and illnesses in the workplace.'

Each State and Territory have their own due diligence to legislate these changes. Many states and territories have already enacted legislation with South Australia being one of the last. Regulations are expected to come into effect in December 2023.

What are workplace psychosocial hazards?

Psychosocial hazards aren't always easy to identify. But it's important to consider if your workplace is taking a mental toll on your employees.

You may understand the physical demands of the job, but how about the mental demands?

Examples of workplace psychosocial hazards are:

- Excessive workloads and job demands
- Violence and aggression
- Low Job control
- Harassment and sexual assault
- Traumatic events
- Remote, isolated or poor work environment
- Inadequate reward and recognition

They may not have a physical effect on you, but mentally they'd have a significant impact on your mental health. And as a result, may affect your physical health as well.

Safe Work Australia reports 7,984 Australians are compensated each year for work-related mental health conditions.

Psychological injuries usually have longer recovery times, higher costs and mean more time away from work than physical injuries.

How does it affect Lucerne Farmers?

Farmers live and breathe their work. Many don't get a chance to 'switch off' from the stress of the industry.

Don't worry, these changes don't add any extra requirements for business owners or team leaders.

Australian workplaces have always had to manage psychosocial hazards. Yet, these regulations will provide clear guidelines on how to reduce or remove psychosocial hazards.

Consider the psychosocial hazards mentioned above. Several of those are relative to farming.

Job demands can increase in peak periods such as harvest. You may have highly repetitive and dull work during picking season. You could've seen a traumatic event like your mate in an accident. Could've been the first responder to the scene and had their life in your hands. Sounds extreme, but it's some people's reality.

The impacts of hazards like these don't go away. The stress and anxiety lingers until it takes a mental and then physical toll. This is when incidents around machinery or equipment are more likely to occur.

As a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) you must eliminate or minimise psychosocial hazards in the workplace as reasonably practicable.



As a Worker, you're responsible for your own duty of care and that of others around you. If you're struggling or something doesn't feel right, speak up. Your boss won't know something's wrong until it's brought to air. It's then your PCBU's responsibility to eliminate or manage the issue.

By introducing new guidelines to identify and control psychosocial hazards, employers will be better equipped to manage them.

How can you prevent psychosocial hazards on farm?

While not all psychosocial hazards can be prevented, they can be controlled.

The key to controlling psychosocial hazards is consultation. Start by communicating with workers about how they feel on-site. Are the hours too long with too little breaks? Do you have a poor workplace culture? Are they uncertain about the job tasks or expectations? Are workers violent or aggressive to one another? Assessing the psychosocial hazards currently in your workplace will make it easier to control them.

Here are our top tips for controlling psychosocial hazards:

- Consult with workers on psychosocial hazards
- Have regular breaks with a decent duration
- Ask workers if they're ok?

- Have clear processes for communicating with remote or isolated workers
- Communicate job expectations and responsibilities
- Prevent worker violence, bullying or behaviours by pulling them up on it
- Develop a regular sleep routine - nothing is worse when you're experiencing mind fog!
- Create a healthy work-life balance - your personal life needs to be bigger than your work one or it'll consume you. Take up a hobby or something you enjoy to get your mind off work.

Addressing psychosocial hazards is a crucial step in creating a safe work environment. Agriculture can be as mentally taxing as it is physically. We all know that.

By creating a safe workplace you not only protect your employees, but also contribute to a happier workforce.

Safe Ag Systems provides a Psychosocial Safety Policy template to ensure all your psychosocial hazards are managed.

This article has been written specifically for our members by Safe Ag Systems. As a member of Lucerne Australia, you can receive a 10% discount off your annual subscription. Terms and Conditions apply so please head to their website Safe Ag Systems or contact their team on 08 8490 0939.

SYNERGY SEEDS UPDATE

by Craig Myall, Managing Director

Australian exports totalled 2,239mt of Lucerne seed during the July to September 2023 quarter, a healthy figure however the lowest amount in Q3 of a calendar year since 2018. Major markets such as Saudi Arabia (increased wheat plantings), Argentina (government trade restrictions) and South Africa (coating/local production), have seen reductions in demand levels from years previous. This doesn't mean there is lot of stock here in Australia, as a low supply position at the start of the year was met with a below average harvest in 2023.

Year to date 4,312mt has departed our shores in the first nine months of 2023, 867mt less than same period 2022, and 3,225mt less than the first three quarters of 2021. Major destinations for this seed year to date include Saudi Arabia - 1,776mt, USA - 1,201mt, South Africa - 453mt, China - 187mt and Argentina - 162mt.

Normally Australia exports between 1,500-2,500mt in the final quarter of a calendar year, which we forecast will likely be on the lower side in the upcoming period. This should mean around 5,500-6,000mt will be the full year figure for 2023, around 1,000mt less than 2022. If you couple this with domestic sales,



there shouldn't be a lot of seed remaining in grower's hands come the 2024 harvest, and hopefully not a lot in seed companies sheds. The big unknown at this point is what the international demand will be in 2024!

We are still forecasting the 2024 certified harvest will come from an area similar to the last couple of years given not a lot of new sowings were undertaken 2023. Dryland crops which were looking very dry have had some moisture of late, but we are still some time from seeing that develop into significant seed production.

If you are planning a new Lucerne seed site in 2024, Synergy Seeds have attractive seed contracts for its growing Proprietary Lucerne range. Please feel free to contact Ian, Wayne, Nathan or myself on the numbers listed below to discuss our options.

As this will be the final Lucerne Leader of 2023, my staff and I would like to wish all those involved in the Lucerne industry a very merry xmas and a happy new year. Stay safe and well, and all the best for 2024!

CONTACTS

Craig Myall	Managing Director
Nathan Smith	Sales & Supply Manager
Wayne Heading	Production & Procurement
Adam Davies	National Forage Sales & Marketing Manager

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VARROA MITE

– SA INFORMATION & RESOURCES

courtesy of PIRSA Apiary Unit

Varroa mite (*Varroa jacobsoni* and *V. destructor*) is the most serious pest affecting honey bees worldwide. It remains a key threat to Australia's honey and honey bee pollination plant industries.

Transition to management

The National Management Group (NMG) confirmed at its meeting on 19 September 2023 that eradication of varroa mite is no longer feasible, based on technical grounds. This follows advice from the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP). National planning for the transition to management is underway, in consultation with:

- the honey bee industry
- pollination dependent industries
- all jurisdictions, including SA.

Watch the latest industry updates for managing varroa mite:

- [AHBIC webinar October 2023](#)
- [PIRSA webinar November 2023](#)

SA advisory committee

A South Australian Advisory Committee has been established to manage varroa mite, in support of the bee industry. It includes representatives from:

- [Beekeepers Society of South Australia](#)
- [South Australian Apiarists Association](#)
- [Australian Honey Bee Industry Council](#)
- large commercial beekeepers
- pollination dependant industries.

Response and support in SA

South Australia remains free of varroa mite, and PIRSA is working with industry groups to promote awareness of the current risks. PIRSA will continue to update the response plan against the evolving situation. This includes assessing the entry restrictions of bees, apiary products and equipment into SA.

Beekeeper responsibilities

It is critical to maintain [bee biosecurity measures](#), including record keeping and registration.

- [New and ongoing beekeepers must register their hive details to protect the industry from possible outbreaks of varroa mite.](#)
- [Beekeepers should continue sampling a representative number of hives and send suspicious samples to PIRSA for analysis.](#)
- [As a beekeeper or almond pollinator, you need to monitor and control the health of your hives.](#)

Bee movement restrictions

[Movement restrictions](#) are in place to protect apiary and horticulture industries from the threat of varroa mites, which were first detected in NSW in 2022.

The following items cannot be brought into South Australia without written permission of the Chief Inspector of Stock:

- bees, including queen bees
- hives, including nucleus hives
- associated apiary products
- beekeeping property.

Identification and impact

Varroa mites are tiny reddish-brown external parasites of honey bees. Individual mites can be easily seen on brood, but they are difficult to identify on adult bees.



Varroa mites partially hidden under honey bee abdominal segments – photo: Dr M. Goodwin

If left untreated, varroa mites will kill any beehive or colony they infect.

Varroa mites are agile, they move into hives quickly and transfer through contact between bees. Adult bees can carry this pest between hives and even between apiaries when drifting, swarming and absconding.

Mites can also spread via the beekeeper and equipment shared between hives and apiaries.

Learn more in the [notifiable honey bee pests and diseases factsheet](#).

FIND OUT MORE: https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/animal_species/bees/varroa_mite

LUCERNE EXPORT STATISTICS FROM AUSTRALIA

- January 2013 to September 2023

courtesy of Teague Australia

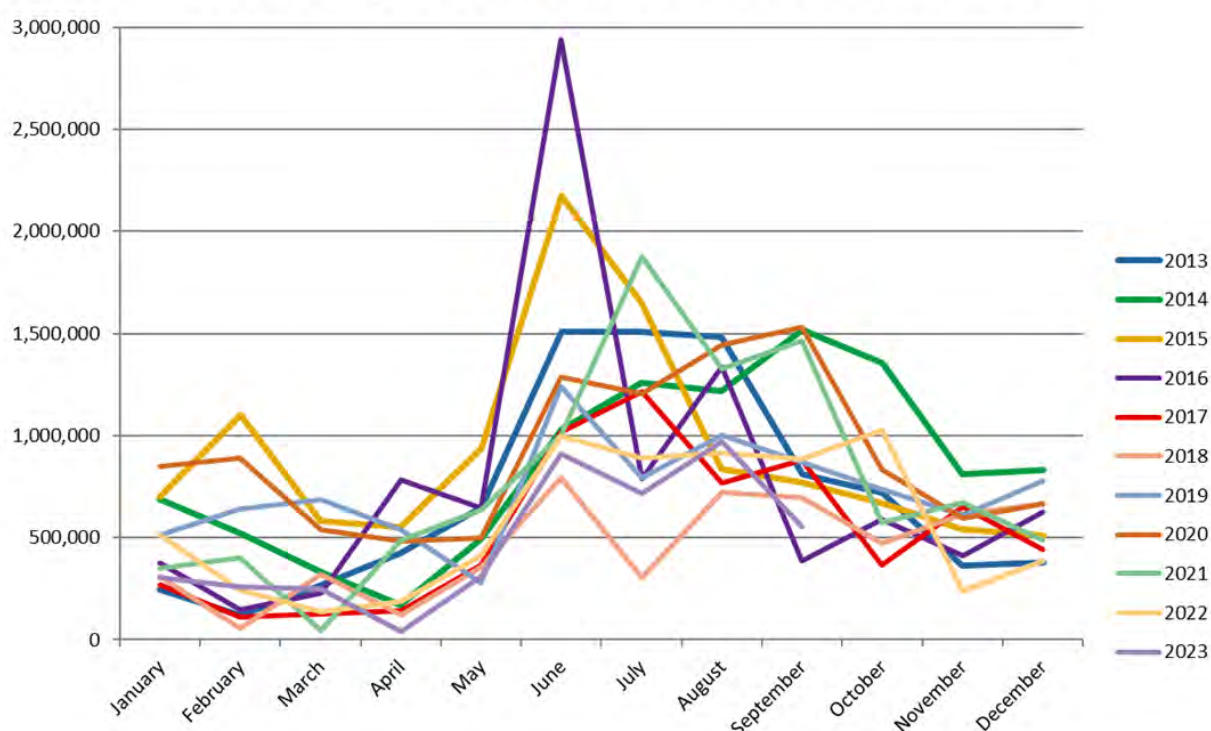


Quantities below are in kg.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Year to date Difference 2020 & 2021
Jan	245,741	687,172	698,895	374,150	266,596	307,530	512,692	850,518	352,056	515,246	302,931	-212,315
Feb	118,025	518,553	1,099,252	148,919	108,988	57,008	639,425	887,613	400,125	243,786	258,832	-197,269
Mar	269,091	334,033	582,929	227,050	127,000	321,205	684,044	539,525	44,500	137,329	249,850	-84,748
Apr	424,057	171,816	549,340	784,031	143,025	123,100	536,501	482,194	439,500	186,064	40,819	-229,993
May	647,509	495,472	940,000	644,704	363,023	355,575	281,335	495,875	633,571	409,715	310,224	-329,484
Jun	1,509,605	1,029,000	2,176,805	2,942,685	1,018,477	794,995	1,239,461	1,286,579	1,000,145	996,989	910,183	-416,278
Jul	1,510,278	1,260,782	1,649,080	786,450	1,214,352	303,288	792,380	1,205,927	1,875,361	891,632	715,121	-592,789
Aug	1,482,357	1,217,121	834,178	1,339,684	767,256	721,730	1,002,472	1,443,626	1,329,201	914,012	970,022	-536,779
Sep	811,667	1,516,965	770,857	388,207	882,195	698,665	871,762	1,533,097	1,463,717	885,058	553,840	-867,997
Oct	719,882	1,356,922	667,503	588,199	364,673	472,480	738,090	832,925	573,749	1,026,920		
Nov	363,877	810,704	543,246	409,700	649,318	615,285	609,028	595,095	670,850	237,888		
Dec	379,122	829,293	511,127	623,560	443,729	664,134	775,684	667,771	488,544	385,212		
Total	8,481,211	10,227,833	11,023,212	9,257,339	6,348,911	5,434,995	8,682,874	10,661,226	9,271,319	6,829,851	4,311,834	

This summary was produced using data supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Lucerne Exports Statistics from Australia 2013-2023



We thank Teague Australia, an associate member of Lucerne Australia, for supplying these figures.

LIMESTONE COAST SEEDS UPDATE



by Greg Excell, Limestone Coast Seeds

Our seed receivals have commenced for the 2023/24 season, and we are pleased to be receiving good tonnages at these early stages. We have been kept busy with our export commitments, with containers regularly leaving our site and heading to various international locations. With the increase in demand at our site, we have employed three new staff this week and hope to recruit more casual staff in the lead up to the lucerne harvest.

I'm happy to report that approximately 90% of last year's lucerne harvest has already been exported from our site, with the last lots of uncertified lucerne seed moving, and the grower price continuing to hold around the \$7 mark.

We are eagerly awaiting the imminent arrival of our Verbruggen palletising machine from the Netherlands which is due for arrival into Adelaide within weeks and will hopefully be installed early in the new year. This is going to significantly reduce the manual handling aspect of our facility and increase the efficiency of our processes, which in turn will assist the marketing companies that we deal with.

Many regional areas are in the midst of a housing shortage and our community is no exception. We are taking proactive measures to secure housing for our staff members and have recently purchased several allotments of residential land to develop in close vicinity to our site. This will benefit both our local employees, as well as our seasonal staff who we employ during our peak times, and will hopefully also help us to attract new staff to the area.

Limestone Coast Seeds is proud to be a family owned business, and we understand how important it is to promote and support our local communities. We appreciate the overwhelming support that we have received since our establishment, and try to reciprocate by employing locals wherever possible, providing outstanding service to our clients, and donating generous sponsorship to local clubs and groups.

As we enter the festive season, I would like to wish all our clients a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year.

LUCERNE AUSTRALIA *Members*

Allen's Warrawee Park	Dinyarrak Farms	Kelvale Emu Flat	Nalang Pastoral Co
Altus, TJ & JL 'Moonmera'	Farmer, BL & RE	Kenwyn Proprietors	Newton Pastoral Pty Ltd
Bergan Park	Florando Partners	Kester, RJ & J	Nupey Pty Ltd
Berry, S & J Family Trust	Forster, SA & KA	Kinyerrie Partnership	Sanders, DE & FM
Brecon Proprietors	Fry, AL & JE & Son	Kuchel, DJ & CE	Sanders, GE & LM
Brown, DC & DG	Glendoon Pastoral Co	Lake Ellen Pastoral	Sanders, SN & DA
Cacia Downs Farming Co	Graetz, S & H	Leach, PJ & Co	Scottswell Partners
Colara Farms	Harvey, M & K Family Trust	Loller, B & L	Simpson Farming
Connor Pastoral Co Pty Ltd	Hawkins, MM	Makin Nominees	Twynem Partners
Corlinga Partners	Hunt, DB & JS	Maluka Partners	Vandeleur Rural Holdings
Crawford, CJ Pty Ltd	Hutchings, SC & CA	Maroona Proprietors	Vowles, BJ & SM
Creston Partners	Hyfield Pastoral Pty Ltd	Martin, JP & SGP	Wallis, PA & ML
Crouch, RJ & Co	Jarra Farm Trust	McMurray, BJ & CB	Wilsdon, RE & TK
Darwent Agriculture Pty Ltd	Jesse, Cameron	McMurray, JA & KA	
	Keller Partners	McWimay Pty Ltd	

LUCERNE AUSTRALIA

Gold



Rabobank

Silver



Associate/Bronze

AJ Cotton & MA McDonald	Gibbs Agricultural Consulting	SA Apiarists Association
Alpha Group Consulting	Imperial Valley Milling Company	S & W Seed Co
AFIA (Aust. Fodder Industry Assoc)	JJ O'Connor & Sons Pty Ltd	Stoller Australia
Barenbrug Australia Pty Ltd	Kalyx Australia Pty Ltd	Synergy Seeds Pty Ltd
Brandt	Kongal Seeds	Tatiara Seeds
Cox Rural Keith	Limestone Coast Seeds	Teague Australia
D & M Rural	Naracoorte Seeds	Upper Murray Seeds
DTS Seed Assurance	Nutrien	Vermeeren Bros Manufacturing
Elders Keith	DLF Seeds	Western AG
Farmers Centre	RAGT	Wilchem
Forage Genetics International	Safe Ag Systems	Wise Farm Equipment
Frank Fatchen Pty Ltd		

LUCERNE AUSTRALIA *Executive Committee*

Got a question for Lucerne Australia?

Contact the Executive Officer or any of our Executive Committee Members who will be happy to help.



Scott Hutchings, Chairman
Contact: 0428 551 188

Scott is a senior agronomist with Cox Rural Keith and has worked in the upper south east for 21 years covering pulses, oilseeds and cereals and lucerne for seed, hay and pasture. Scott holds a bachelor of Agricultural Science from Roseworthy Agricultural College. Scott and his wife Cath also run a small prime lamb production and opportunity dryland seed production enterprise.



Ben Farmer, Deputy Chairman
Contact: 0438 501 269

Ben started with Alpha Group Consulting at Keith in 2013 before purchasing a lucerne property with his wife Rachel in December 2016. After a period of time with Nutrien Ag Solutions they began Wilkei Seeds trading a large portion of feed grains and supplying a wide range of pasture seeds both to seed exporters and businesses throughout Australia. Ben believes his direct experience within most facets of the lucerne seed supply chain brings a valuable and unique perspective to the LA Executive Committee.



Katrina Copping, Executive Officer
Contact: 0439 538 332

Katrina was raised on a mixed farming enterprise at Mundulla and as an active partner in a family farm at Avenue Range has a good understanding of rural issues. She has spent most of her career working in research and extension and is strongly passionate about agriculture.



Aaron Freeman, Grower Member
Contact: 0428 875 600

Aaron manages 'Colara' at Tintinara owned by the Munro Family producing dryland lucerne hay and seed, cereal hay and cropping along with a self-replacing merino flock and prime lambs. Aaron and his wife Penny also own and operate a contract harvesting business Colara Contracting along with a prime lamb enterprise on a recently purchased property.



Adam Zacker, Grower Member
Contact: 0417 853 799

Adam owns and operates the family farm at Tintinara with his wife Hannah. They run a mix of cropping, sheep (both self-replacing Merinos and prime lamb production), a herd of Angus cows and both dryland and irrigated lucerne seed and hay. Adam is passionate about the lucerne industry and its challenges.



Rodney Lush, Grower Member
Contact: 0419 862 510

Rodney farms with his wife Sally at Coombe, producing lucerne seed, lamb and wool since 1991. The farm production system is based around centre pivot and flood irrigated lucerne and rain fed perennial pastures. He also provides farm business advice and support to clients in the Mallee, South East and Western Victoria as a consultant with Proadvice.



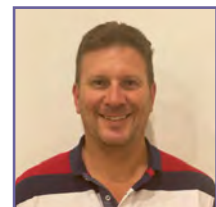
Scott Campbell, Grower Member
Contact: 0417 887 562

Scott and his wife Sophie Campbell own a mixed farming business at Keith, producing Lucerne seed, hay grain and prime lamb production. As a business with a high reliance on lucerne Scott believes it is important to keep abreast of industry issues both domestic and international. His family have been involved in the lucerne seed industry for more than 40 years.



Harrison Berry, Grower Member
Contact: 0447 998 421

Harrison manages a family farming operation at Brimbago, south east of Keith with cropping and sheep enterprises and as well as producing flood irrigated and dryland Lucerne seed. Before returning to manage the Brimbago property 5 years ago, Harrison worked in the Mining industry and also the Civil/Construction industry. This variety has provided a range of different insights and learnings, but he has a strong passion for the agricultural industry and is keen to contribute in building the lucerne seed industry further.



Greg Excell, Associate Member
Contact: 0408 838 684

Greg has more than twenty eight years experience in the seed industry. He has performed various roles including seed cleaning, grain drying and engineering, and has now purchased his own seed processing site called Limestone Coast Seeds. Greg works collaboratively with both growers and marketers to ensure that only Lucerne seed of the highest quality is exported. From working in the seed business for many years it is obvious to Greg the many benefits that Lucerne Australia can offer the industry.