

LUCERNE *Leader*



ISSUE 77 | JUNE 2025



LUCERNE AGRONOMY REPORT



by Elyssa Hausler & Scott Hutchings, Delta Agribusiness

Winter is almost upon us which allows us to review the Summer/Autumn period. The area of lucerne seed production was considerably lower than the previous season, with the majority being irrigated stands with some dryland stands around Colebatch and Willalooka. Irrigated lucerne seed yields ended up being above average with some growers setting record average yields. This was a result of hot, dry flowering conditions, strong pollinator activity due to lack of alternative pollen sources and low pest pressure, in particular low seed wasp numbers.

The main factor that resulted in low seed wasp pressure was the lack of dryland area for the wasp to breed up on early in the season which slowed down generational growth. As a result of low seed wasp pressure, some clean out rates were below 10% which was definitely a bonus. However, paddocks that were locked up later in the season still showed increased levels of seed wasp activity, reinforcing the importance of early lock-up to reduce this pest's pressure.

It was also notable that mirid & aphid pressure was low over Summer resulting in limited insecticide use, except for control of later flights of Heliiothis.

In recent months, limited rainfall has placed considerable stress on dryland pasture growth however, that has created a strong demand for hay allowing growers to secure high prices. Nevertheless, the dry conditions and elevated temperatures over Summer contributed to a decline in hay yields with each successive cut, largely due to above average temperatures and salt accumulation in the soil. Generally, stands performed well

during the first two cuts, with a marked decline in growth and quality in subsequent cuts.

Dryland and irrigated lucerne pastures have been subject to heavy grazing over the last few months due to the lack of feed on offer. Salt accumulation has also occurred in these irrigated pastures as growers have relied on them for feed. To help alleviate the effects of this salt accumulation it is encouraged that growers apply gypsum and resist over-watering if possible until there is a significant leaching rainfall event.

To protect the health of lucerne stands, both irrigated and dryland, it will be important over the next few months to assess stands regarding plant numbers and pest management. Rest and recovery will be a priority of stands after the heavy grazing they have received. These rest periods will promote root development and increase carbohydrate reserves which will build back up their resilience against seasonal stress, disease and pest pressure into the future.

Assessing plant density after regrowth will provide a clearer picture of stand damage. This will help maintain long-term productivity and stand longevity by guiding decisions on which paddocks require extended rest or potential renovation and which can be strategically grazed.

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Rabobank

LUCERNE AGRONOMY REPORT CONT.

by Elyssa Hausler & Scott Hutchings, Delta Agribusiness



As stands will be fragile until their carbohydrate reserves have rebuilt, it will also be critical to focus on early detection and control of pests. Redlegged earth mite will need to be controlled early on to conserve plant health and in spring through Timerite® applications to decrease populations of RLEM next year. Although snail activity has been limited due to dry paddock conditions, it is also important to check the crowns of your lucerne plants to monitor for conical and Italian snails and bait accordingly if present. It will also be important to monitor stands for aphid pressure as they recover.

To also support stand recovery during winter, lighter winter cleans are recommended. This softer approach will help preserve plant populations and encourage a faster regrowth response in Spring helping growers fill feed gaps.



BARENBRUG UPDATE

by Aaron Keane, Barenbrug



Seed Production Update

The vast majority of our lucerne has been cleaned and has finished testing. Seed quality and yields have been of a very high standard, with most crops performing above average. Cleanout percentages have been positive with wastage below the long-term average, and a shoutout should be given to the seed processors for the excellent work to provide high quality seed with minimum wastage.

The Barenbrug production team has had a very successful Autumn contracting period, with the vast majority of our lucerne area locked away for this year. There are very limited opportunities remaining to secure a lucerne contract in 2025, and with strong recent enquiries we expect the remaining area to be filled well before Spring. We will have more hectares available to sow lucerne in 2026, as paddocks naturally fall out of certification and complete their stand-life.

If you've missed out on securing a lucerne contract this year, we have various opportunities available to fill the rotation gap with other species. This will then secure the paddock for a lucerne contract for 2026 sowing. Please speak to your agronomist for more information on the phone numbers listed below.

Aaron Keane 0408 851 411
(Mid-North / South-East / Western Vic)
Michael Birks 0456 437 976
(Lower South-East)
Alan Gowers 0427 152 145
(Victoria / NSW)

Domestic Sales Update

The recent unprecedented autumn conditions across Southern Australia has seen a vast variability to demand for lucerne sales. Sales in southern regions with minimal rainfall and drought conditions have been diminished, whereas regions from Dubbo and north, demand has been a lot more consistent. Supply constraints also affected sales particularly in the dorm 6-7 range. We are confident that Spring demand will be in line with the long-term average in all regions, if near to normal rainfall patterns materialise. High water costs will affect irrigators in Northern Victoria / Southern NSW and this may impact new plantings as well. For those regions in South Australia and Western Victoria which have been extremely dry, growers may prefer for fast growing options to get feed back on track as opposed to longer term crops like lucerne.

Overall, we are in a good supply position for lucerne, with key SARDI varieties all unrestricted.

VARROA MITE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: LATEST INFO ON VARROA MITE

courtesy of the National Varroa Mite Management Program, PIRSA



NATIONAL
Varroa Mite Management
PROGRAM

Varroa mite is extending its reach in NSW and has now also been detected in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT, but with limited extent at this time. There are still no known detections of Varroa mite within South Australia.



The SA Varroa heat map and hive inspection form are now available for SA beekeepers to help in examining surveillance efforts and will ultimately aid in providing an indication on the distribution of positive Varroa detections.

At present, only negative surveillance results from June 2022 to date are depicted on the heat map.

All jurisdictions are still implementing actions to slow the spread of Varroa across Australia. This includes border entry controls and encouraging beekeepers to undertake surveillance, while assisting them by providing practical information like treatment plans to help them make sound business decisions for when Varroa does arrive.

The pollination guide is undergoing final review by the National Varroa Mite Management Program (NVMMMP) after considerable feedback from industry and jurisdictions. The resources on Varroa.org.au continue to be expanded for beekeepers and associated industries including pollination factsheets, online courses and training materials.

Our VDOs are continuing to traverse the state to provide information and assistance to beekeepers to enable them to effectively monitor and prepare for managing Varroa mite, upon its arrival. The VDOs have attended the Lucindale and Karoonda field days and will be attending the Riverland, KI and Paskeville field days later in the year.

Once Varroa mite does arrive, hive availability will likely reduce. As such, it may be time to speak more in depth with your beekeepers about establishing pollination agreements. These agreements help to provide assurance and protect both beekeepers and growers. There are many examples/ templates you can utilise and modify for your situation as listed below:

- Australian Beekeeping Guide pg121, <https://agrifutures.com.au/product/australian-beekeeping-guide/>
- Australian Almonds <https://almondboard.org.au/topic/pollination/?v=8bcc25c96aa5#related-resources>
- Crop Pollinators generic agreement.pdf <https://aussiepollination.com.au/pdf/generic-agreement.pdf>

- Berries Australia <https://berries.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Berries-Pollination-Guide-AHBIC-V1.0-November-2024-LR.pdf>



Above: VDO's (L-R) Davide Stella, Josh D'Ambrosio, Aaron Woolston at the SE Field Day, March 2025



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BOOSTING LUCERNE POTENTIAL WITH MORE EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

by Paul Croser, Benparts

Lucerne is a cornerstone crop in Australian forage production, thanks to its high nutritional content and strong yields. But maximising lucerne's potential comes down to a crucial factor: water. More specifically, how, when and where that water is applied.

With growing pressure on water resources, increasing energy costs, and unpredictable weather patterns, many lucerne growers are taking a closer look at how they irrigate. For those still relying on traditional flood irrigation, now may be the time to consider a more efficient alternative - centre pivot or lateral move systems.

The Irrigation Efficiency Equation

Flood irrigation has been the go-to method for generations. It's relatively simple and low-tech, but it can also be inefficient. Uneven application, runoff, waterlogging, and high labour demands can all impact crop performance and long-term sustainability. In contrast, pivot and lateral irrigation systems are engineered to deliver precise, uniform watering tailored to your soil type, slope, and crop stage.

Lucerne is particularly sensitive to water stress and waterlogging. Too much or too little at the wrong time can impact growth, quality, and yield. So being able to apply the right amount of water, in the right place, at the right time - makes all the difference.

More Crop per Drop

On average, converting from flood irrigation to a pivot or lateral system can reduce water use by 20–50%. That means more of your water allocation is going to the plant, not running off or evaporating. With rising water costs and tighter regulations, improving Water Use Efficiency (WUE) is essential.

Beyond water savings, growers also see reduced energy inputs thanks to lower pumping volumes and less time spent moving pipes or managing flow. Over time, these savings add up - making pivot irrigation a smart business decision as well as a smart agronomic one.

Adaptable for Your Conditions

Pivot and lateral irrigation technology is constantly evolving, increasing control, manageability and reliability in the toughest environments. Sprinkler packages can also be custom-designed to match your soil's infiltration rate and water-holding capacity, ensuring every inch of the paddock receives exactly what it needs.

And for those looking to push efficiencies further, FieldNET® remote monitoring and control technology gives growers the power to manage irrigation systems in real time from a laptop, tablet or smartphone. You can track water usage, schedule irrigations, and receive alerts, wherever you are. This kind of data-driven management not only saves time but helps you make more informed decisions about irrigation, fertigation, and crop planning.

The Takeaway for Lucerne Growers

The return on investment from switching to a pivot or lateral system isn't just in yield. It's also in water savings, time saved, lower labour costs, and the ability to better manage your resources in a changing climate. Lucerne is a high-performance crop, and it deserves a high-performance irrigation solution.

Ready to Explore your Options?

At Benparts Irrigation Specialists, we've been helping farmers irrigate smarter for over 30 years. We work with leading technologies from Lindsay and provide fully tailored solutions, including custom sprinkler design and FieldNET integration. Whether you're planning a new installation or thinking about upgrading from flood, we're here to help.

Get in touch with the team at Benparts to find out how pivot or lateral irrigation could benefit your lucerne operation.

W: benpartsirrigation.com.au
E: kirstie@benparts.com.au
M: 0427 619 337 (Paul Croser)



ENHANCING LUCERNE GROWTH UNDER STRESS CONDITIONS WITH CALIBRATE

by Johan Potgieter, MScAgric Agronomy, BScAgric Soil Science and Horticulture, Pr.Sci.Nat, Technical Agronomist at Wilchem

Lucerne is renowned for its nutritional value and exceptional resilience under diverse Australian conditions. However, productivity and sustainability, particularly in regions such as South Australia, often face challenges due to soil stress factors including elevated sodium levels, acidity, and suboptimal soil structure. Addressing these challenges is important for maintaining lucerne productivity.

Several Australian studies have provided valuable insights into mechanisms and strategies to enhance lucerne resilience to salinity stress. Research by Smethurst et al. (2008) indicated lucerne genotypes exhibit distinct mechanisms of salt tolerance, such as sodium exclusion and potassium retention. Rogers (2001) identified significant performance differences among lucerne cultivars under saline irrigation conditions, with CUF 101 and Validor cultivars demonstrating notably superior performance. Noble et al. (1984) showed variability in salt tolerance traits, highlighting the importance of selecting for characteristics like low leaf damage and efficient chloride exclusion. Additionally, Al-Farsi et al. (2020) reviewed adaptive mechanisms including osmolyte accumulation, maintenance of low $\text{Na}^+:\text{K}^+$ ratios, antioxidant enzyme activation, and hormonal regulation.

Calibrate is a liquid nutrient product formulated to assist lucerne crops experiencing soil stresses, potentially improving soil conditions and supporting crop performance under challenging environmental scenarios. Salinity stress in the root zone reduces productivity by limiting nutrient availability, disrupting water uptake, and hindering healthy root development. Calibrate aims to mitigate these conditions by delivering plant-available calcium, intended to displace sodium ions, potentially enhancing soil structure and root zone conditions.

Calibrate also includes humic substances, which may support soil microbial activity, nutrient cycling, and water infiltration. The combination of calcium and humic substances aims to support healthier root systems, potentially enabling plants to better withstand environmental pressures throughout the season.

Recommended application of Calibrate involves multiple treatments at key growth stages. Starting the season with a soil-applied streamer application at approximately 10 L per hectare targets sodium displacement and encourages early root growth. Subsequent foliar spray applications at similar rates may provide essential nutrients directly to plant tissues during periods of potential stress.

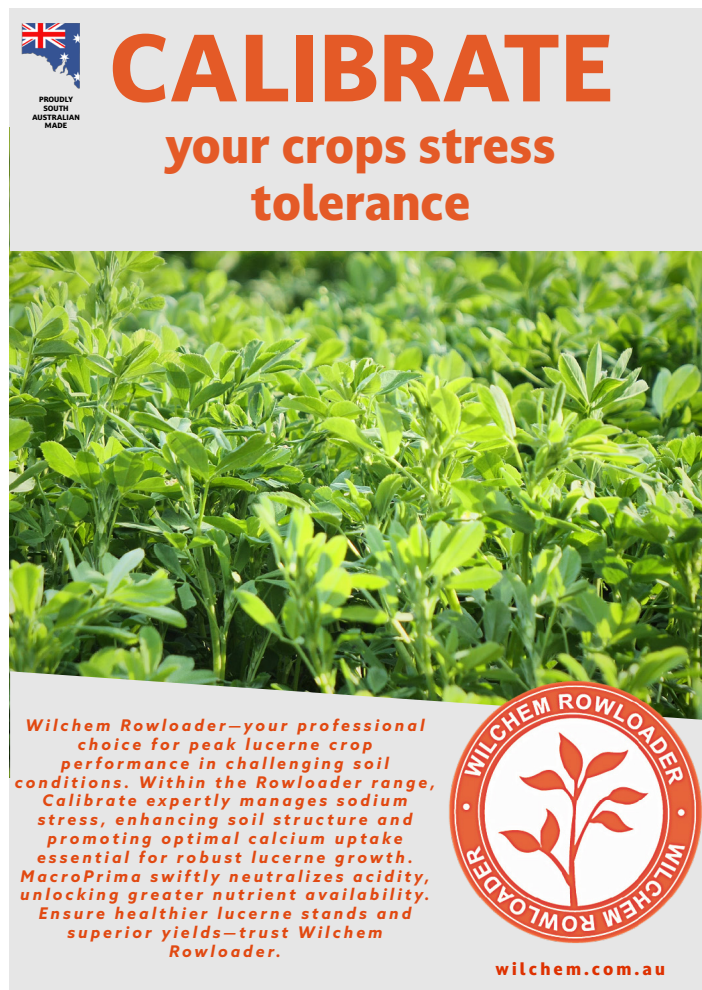
International research supports the general effectiveness of calcium and humic substance-based products in saline conditions. USDA studies highlight the benefits of calcium amendments in improving lucerne growth and sodium displacement (Shannon and Grieve, 1999). Research from the Chinese Academy of Sciences reported improvements in soil structure, root biomass, shoot growth, and nutrient uptake when calcium-rich amendments were combined with humic substances

(Li et al., 2016). Mediterranean trials demonstrated improved lucerne establishment and yield under saline conditions using calcium and organic amendments (Tejada et al., 2006).

Incorporating Calibrate into agronomic practices can offer growers a potential solution for enhancing lucerne productivity under variable environmental conditions, supporting overall crop resilience and productivity.

References:

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- Tejada et al. (2006). Agronomy Journal, 98(3), 722-730.



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AUSTRALIAN FODDER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION HAY REPORT: JUNE 2025



National Summary

Driving Prices Up – As farmers inch closer to the lambing and calving season, desperation is setting in to ensure they have enough forage to fill their appetites. Prices have jumped up again as the need for hay, of any quality, is required to support all livestock.

Driving Prices Down – Nothing is driving prices down, but sources have stated there are lucerne stores in southern South Australia which may be released soon.

Southeast South Australia

- Sunshine, frost and showers are making a play across the region.
- Daytime temperatures are stable and sitting in the mid to high teens, however the evenings are ranging from minus 2 to 11 degrees over the coming week.
- Sunday and Monday are the most promising for rainfall across the region with Mount Gambier, Robe, Coonawarra and Naracoorte also expecting some additional falls on Saturday.
- The past four weeks have been reasonably steady, but that has changed this week with Straw increasing by \$40 per tonne and Cereal hay increasing by \$30 per tonne.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
 - Cereal hay: +30 (\$400 to \$490/t). Prices increase this week.
 - Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$455 to \$485/t). Prices remain steady this week.
 - Straw: +40 (\$190 to \$280/t). Prices increase this week.
 - Pasture hay: +20 (\$330 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.

Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced, and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality, with the price range generally indicative of the quality of feed. We recommend testing and viewing fodder before purchase to ensure the quality of feed.

Central South Australia

- With temperatures still above average for the month and rainfall well below average, conditions are getting very desperate for growers and farmers.
- Food security is a growing concern. As fodder becomes more scarce the impact on livestock farmers comes to the fore. Reports state they are concerned about a loss in milk production for all consumers.
- Farmers will be able to secure bales of premium-graded cereal hay at Rapid Relief Team's Farmers Community Connect event at Jamestown on Friday 6 June. Rapid Relief Team director Mick Dunn said the initiative aimed to bring local communities together and give them a morale boost while also offering practical support.
- After a massive jump in Cereal hay pricing last week, things have stabilised.
- No change to pricing this week.
 - Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
 - Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
 - Straw: +/-0 (\$180 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced, and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality, with the price range generally indicative of the quality of feed. We recommend testing and viewing fodder before purchase to ensure the quality of feed.

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LIMING ACIDIC SOILS FOR LUCERNE PRODUCTION

What's the best way to economically apply lime to increase pasture persistence on acidic soils? This project aims to provide some answers.

Soil acidity is a known limiting factor for pasture production. While soils can become more acidic naturally, agricultural systems will also reduce the pH of soils over time. Applying lime is known to be one of the best ways to combat this acidity in a farming system, however the pasture production and persistence response to different lime treatments is less well understood.

A collaboration between the Limestone Coast Landscape Board, Brian Hughes (SA Research and Development Institute), and Adam Hancock (Elders), the *Lime application on lucerne on sandy soils* project will examine how different rates and methods of applying lime can impact the rate of lucerne pasture production by measuring pasture response and pH change.

Lucerne pasture establishment and persistence is known to be challenging in the Western Flat area of the Limestone Coast, with acidic soil being a limiting factor. Starting in June 2025, a trial site is being established to understand how different lime application rates and methods can improve the persistence and establishment of lucerne pasture at Western Flat. This project will run until 2028.

The research team will be hosting farm walks at the trial site and workshops to update the community of the progress and findings of this project.

The results of this trial are likely to be important to anyone growing pasture on acidic soils.

We are currently seeking people who would be interested in being involved with project activities. If you are interested in being a part of this group, or want to learn more about the project, reach out to the Limestone Coast Landscape Board Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator (Matthew.Hay@sa.gov.au).

The *Lime application on lucerne on sandy soils* project is part of the Limestone Coast Climate-smart Landscapes program and is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program and the Landscapes Priority Fund.



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STAYING PREPARED IN CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

courtesy of Safe Ag Systems



Staying Prepared in Challenging Conditions

To say it's been a challenging start to the season downplays the struggle farmers are experiencing Australia-wide.

Due to insufficient rainfall this autumn, South Australia and Western Victoria continue to face challenges brought by drought and low soil moisture.

On the other hand, parts of Queensland and Northern New South Wales are having the opposite problem. Rainfall is still prevalent and causing floods in many areas. Farmers need the fields to dry out before they can start seeding without worry.

With growers at a standstill, what can they do while waiting? Even when the main job stops, there's still a never-ending list of tasks to do on the farm. Let's investigate what you can get the jump on while waiting for conditions to change.

Machinery Maintenance and Records

This one's a no-brainer. Your machinery works long hours during seeding and harvesting, and should be thoroughly inspected before and after.

The best part? It gives you a sense of productivity until conditions change.

Have you assessed your current inventory and prepared a checklist?

- Safety inspections: Are tractors fitted with an approved rollover protection structure?
- Does any preventative maintenance need to be scheduled? Are vehicle tyres worn or damaged?

- Has equipment been tested? Are there no steering defects? All chains & slings used for lifting have been checked?
- Has equipment been cleaned? Are battery terminals and terminal leads clean & secure?

Record all servicing and maintenance done on your machinery. It helps prevent the need for extensive repairs, assists with warranty claims and maintains accountability of workers utilising the machinery, as well as preserves resale value.

Maintenance records aren't just nice-to-have; they're a legal requirement as well.

You need to keep these maintenance records for the life of the machinery or equipment, and ensure these are provided to someone who buys that item from you.

Other machinery records to keep are registration, risk assessments, maintenance and any testing or inspections completed for that piece of plant or equipment.

WHS Record Keeping

While it may not be the most entertaining job, it plays a crucial role in your business. Whether you keep a paper trail or use a digital safety management system, ensuring your WHS records are all up to date and accessible is important. This process is also great for identifying any gaps in your business.

Ensure you keep records of the following:

- Company Policies
- Safe Work Procedures
- Worker and Contractor Inductions
- Training records

- Incident and hazard reporting
- Hazardous Chemicals
- Asbestos (if applicable)
- Machinery and equipment records
- Risk assessments
- A Risk Register

The above list seems like a lot of work. But the harsh reality is that if you don't keep this kind of information, in the event of a serious incident, you may leave yourself in a tricky spot with a regulator. Work out what records are compulsory for your operation and develop a system or use a safety management software to keep these updated regularly. Don't forget to inform and train your workers on any updates and changes.

Some records have specific timeframes for retention, while others have some grey areas.

The rule of thumb for agriculture and workplace health and safety record retention is 5 years unless there's a specific requirement. In the event of a serious injury, illness, or death occurring on your property, it's important to keep thorough records ready for the inspector's arrival.

Training and Development

Take this opportunity to review all training, licenses, certificates, and tickets for both yourself and your team. This ensures everyone is up to date and compliant with necessary qualifications.

Workers who have been with you for a while need training too. New equipment, processes and even chemicals need some kind of upskilling to ensure safe use and operation.

Even experienced workers can benefit from learning new skills. Training your team helps your business run more smoothly and can reduce the risk of serious accidents.

Write down the different roles and tasks on your property, and think about what licences, training and/or competency a worker needs to do the job safely. Then you've got a guide as to what workers need.

For example, spraying will mean a worker needs safe use and handling of chemicals training, and competency in operating spray equipment.

Be sure to keep copies of any licences, certificates or tickets your workers have that are needed for the work they do. Additionally, keep any training a worker does while working for you.

While now might not be the ideal time to start or complete a certificate or course, you can always schedule it for later or set a reminder to revisit it.

Prioritising Mental Health

It's a tough time right now for farmers. The demand for lucerne and fodder continues to rise, putting pressure on growers to meet the supply.

Now that you've covered your machinery, business and workers, let's not forget about yourself. Whether you're running your

business solo or with a team, you're an integral part of the operations and should prioritise your well-being too.

- Notice the signs: Acknowledge how you're feeling emotionally and physically. Don't run yourself into the ground by pushing through it.
- Be proactive, not reactive: Surround yourself with a supportive network and community. Don't hesitate to speak up and access professional help early.
- Don't let emotions drive you: The reality is that we can't dictate the weather. Try not to pour your emotions into something beyond your control. It'll only lead to burnout and fatigue. Ensure you stay informed but not overwhelmed by forecasts.

While the skies may be holding out on rain, or dumping too much of it, utilise the time to go through processes and look after yourself. From checking over machinery, organising records, reviewing training or prioritising your well-being, you're preparing yourself and your business for the future. And you'll later thank yourself for it.

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.



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RLEM HATCH TOOL

Helps to predict if mites are hatched, unhatched, or soon-to-hatch using current climate data.

courtesy of GRDC, Cesar Australia, CSIRO, The University of Melbourne & Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development.

The redlegged earth mite (RLEM) is a common and widespread pest of pastures and most broadacre crops. Adult mites are approximately 1 mm in length with a velvety black body and 8 orange-red coloured legs. Redlegged earth mites are commonly controlled using insecticides, however, non-chemical options are becoming increasingly important due to evidence of resistance and concerns about long-term sustainability.

This webtool aims to improve RLEM control outcomes through more precise monitoring and well-timed control applications. If pest control strategies are used too early, they may have no impact while the mites remain unhatched. If pest control is undertaken too late, economic damage to the crop may occur. Thus, it is important to carefully time RLEM monitoring and control efforts.

This web tool was developed by James Maino through a GRDC investment (CES2010-001RXT) with contributions from Cesar Australia, the University of Melbourne, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and CSIRO. The tool is based on past research by McDonald et al. (2015) on rainfall and temperature requirements for hatching of over-summering eggs of the redlegged earth mite. See McDonald et al. (2015) for details on the underlying algorithm. Climate data is provided through the Queensland government's SILO database which makes gridded Australian climate data available from 1889 to yesterday.

To account for the acceleration of RLEM hatching through irrigation, users can enter the amount and date of irrigation, which will be treated like additional rainfall on the specified date.

References

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Access the RLEM hatching tool:
<https://cesaraustralia.shinyapps.io/RLEM-hatch/>

Detailed hatch information for KEITH SA 5267 As at 5th June 2025.

Year	Estimated hatch
2024	10 June
2023	08 May
2022	15 May
2021	04 June
2020	04 May
2019	18 May
2018	14 May
2017	04 May
2016	02 June
2015	28 April
2014	09 May
2013	22 May
2012	03 May
2011	12 May
2010	19 May
2009	04 May
2008	07 May
2007	30 May
2006	25 April
2005	03 June
2004	11 May
2003	23 May
2002	20 May
2001	26 May
2000	23 May
1999	01 June

Australian Grassland Association Inc.

Seeds of Change

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www.australiangrassland.org

For more information, contact Rowan Smith at 0417 380 131

ACCOMMODATION: We have reserved rooms for you at the Adelaide Hills Convention Centre. We STRONGLY URGE you to book accommodation before 5th May 2025. Reserved rooms will be progressively released to the public after the 5th May, and none will be held on reserve after the 23rd June. Accommodation is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Hahndorf Stays (08) 8388 7921

Mention the Australian Grassland Association Event 8-10th July when booking.

Australian Grassland Association Inc - Seeds of Change

Draft Program (This program is subject to change)

Day 1 Tuesday 8th July – Adelaide Hills Convention Centre (Registration 8.15–9.00 am)

Session 1. Welcome and setting the scene

- Opening Address – AGA President *Rowan Smith*.
- Importance of pasture seed in South Australia – *TBC*.
- Current challenges in seed production – *TBC*

Session 2 – Pasture Seed Production

- Swathing subterranean clover does not suck: a promising alternative to vacuum harvesting – *Ruby Wiese*.
- Brush hour: Efficacy of an integrated brush head in subterranean clover seed harvesting – *Wesley Moss*.
- Harvest and use of medic pods on-farm – *David Peck*.
- An initial investigation into the seed production and hard seed breakdown pattern of Trophy white clover – *Neil Munday*.
- Student Competition Finalists

Session 3 – Breeding, cultivar development & evaluation

- Benefits and risks associated with using genetic modification and gene editing to deliver traits of value in forages for Australian pastoral agriculture – *John Caradus*.

- The potential for wider use of serradella in the pastures of southern Australia – *Laura Goward*.
- Adaptation of novel germplasm and cultivars of serradella (*Ornithopus* spp.) to cold-climates in south-eastern Australia: flowering date and flowering date stability – *Rebecca Haling*.
- Market failure in the Australian pasture seed industry after 30 years of Plant Breeders Rights – A review – *Richard Hayes*.

Agrifutures pasture research update

Session 4. Seed physiology, ecology and conservation

- Hard seed softening of diverse annual pasture legume cultivars in three contrasting environments of southern Australia – *Phillip Nichols*.
- Improving seed germination performance of arrowleaf clover (*Trifolium vesiculosum* Savi.) – *Rowan Smith*.
- Changes in seed yield and quality during maturation of subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterraneum* L.) – *Ruby Wiese*.

Symposium Dinner - Adelaide Hills Convention Centre, Guest Speaker – *TBC*

Day 2 – Wednesday 9th July – Field Tour (including dinner) – details TBC

Day 3 – Thursday 10th July – Adelaide Hills Convention Centre

Session 5 Pasture agronomy, nutrition & management

- Changes in pasture and soil properties with liming and superphosphate application over 12 years on a range of soils in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales – *Richard Hayes*.
- Root morphology and phosphorus requirements of tropical grasses and legumes – *Jonathan McLachlan*.
- Rapid assessment of nutritional value and performance of pasture species in the field using chlorophyll fluorescence – *Tary Clarke*.
- Management of mollusc herbivory in mixed species pastures: small conical snail challenges to production now and into the future – *Michael Nash*.
- To Seed or to Plant? Native Pasture Restoration in the Kimberley Rangelands, Western Australia – *Peter Galos/Clinton Revell*.
- A brief overview of rhizobial strain assessment for sainfoin (*Onobrychis vicifolia*) in Australia – *Richard Hayes*.

REGISTER NOW at <https://www.trybooking.com/CZVQN>

Session 6 Current and future challenges

- Formulating pasture mixes with low CH4 emission potentials – Grass/herb-annual legume mixes – *Guangdi Li*.
- Evaluating the methane production and nutritional quality of pasture forages under current and future climate conditions – *Isabelle Kite*.
- Modelled potential distribution of C4 pasture species in current and future climates for Australia, with focus on southern Australia – *Marja Simpson*.
- Establishment of perennial legumes in agrivoltaics system in Pacific Northwest – *K Carver*.
- Elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and seasonal rainfall change the mineral composition of temperate pasture grasses – *Beth Penrose*.

Symposium close 15.30

AFIA National Fodder Conference

22 - 24 July 2025

Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort, Gold Coast

www.afia.org.au/events



AFIA
Australian Fodder Industry Association

AFIA Member
Pass

\$750

Non-Member
Pass

\$950

GenAg
Pass

\$500

POST HARVEST REFLECTIONS: BUILDING SAFER FARMS ONE STEP AT A TIME

courtesy of Josh Ingham, Ingham & Co

As the dust settles on another lucerne season, many growers are shifting focus—from paddock to paperwork, from harvest to housekeeping. And at Ingham & Co, we've been out on farms with Lucerne Australia members, seeing first-hand what's working—and where things are falling through the cracks.

Right now, across the growers that we're working with, we're noticing a few consistent themes:

- Confusion around compliance. Most farmers are doing their best, but many aren't sure what's legally required under the new WHS legislation—or whether their current systems would hold up under scrutiny.
- Gaps in documentation. Training and induction records, contractor checks, incident reporting processes, and maintenance records on machinery and vehicles are often incomplete, inconsistent—or just not documented at all.
- Unclear responsibilities. On many farms, there's no single person owning 'safety', which means important tasks and follow-ups can be easily overlooked.
- Good intentions—but limited time. Most growers want to improve their systems, but are flat out and unsure where to begin.

What's been encouraging is the proactive mindset we're seeing from the growers we're working with. Many have reached out not because something's gone wrong—but because they want to

get ahead of the risks, protect their team and feel confident that they're doing the right thing.

It's also clear that safety isn't just a legal requirement—it's a cornerstone of strong business culture. A proactive safety culture helps build trust, reduce risk and create a more resilient, future-ready farm.

For any Lucerne Australia members who haven't yet taken up our free on-farm safety review, there's still time. The offer (valued at over \$990) includes:

- A full compliance and risk assessment
- A tailored Safety Report outlining key risks, gaps and practical next steps
- Clear guidance to help improve your safety systems—without the overwhelm

You don't need to book your review immediately—but to qualify, you'll need to register your interest by 30 June 2025:

<https://forms.gle/zaQbEyNLcpd1Mg9U7>

We've been grateful for the opportunity to support Lucerne Australia members so far, and we're here to help others take that next step—whether you're just starting out or refining what you already have in place.

Ingham & Co is an independent farm safety consultancy—not the regulator—so our goal is simple: to make compliance easier, clearer and more manageable for hardworking producers.

EXCLUSIVE LUCERNE AUSTRALIA MEMBER OFFER

FREE ON-FARM SAFETY REVIEW

KNOW YOUR RISKS - PROTECT YOUR FARM





**FREE
LIMITED
TIME OFFER
VALUED AT
\$990+**

**TAKE THE FIRST STEP TODAY TOWARDS
A SAFER, MORE COMPLIANT OPERATION**



LUCERNE EXPORT STATISTICS FROM AUSTRALIA

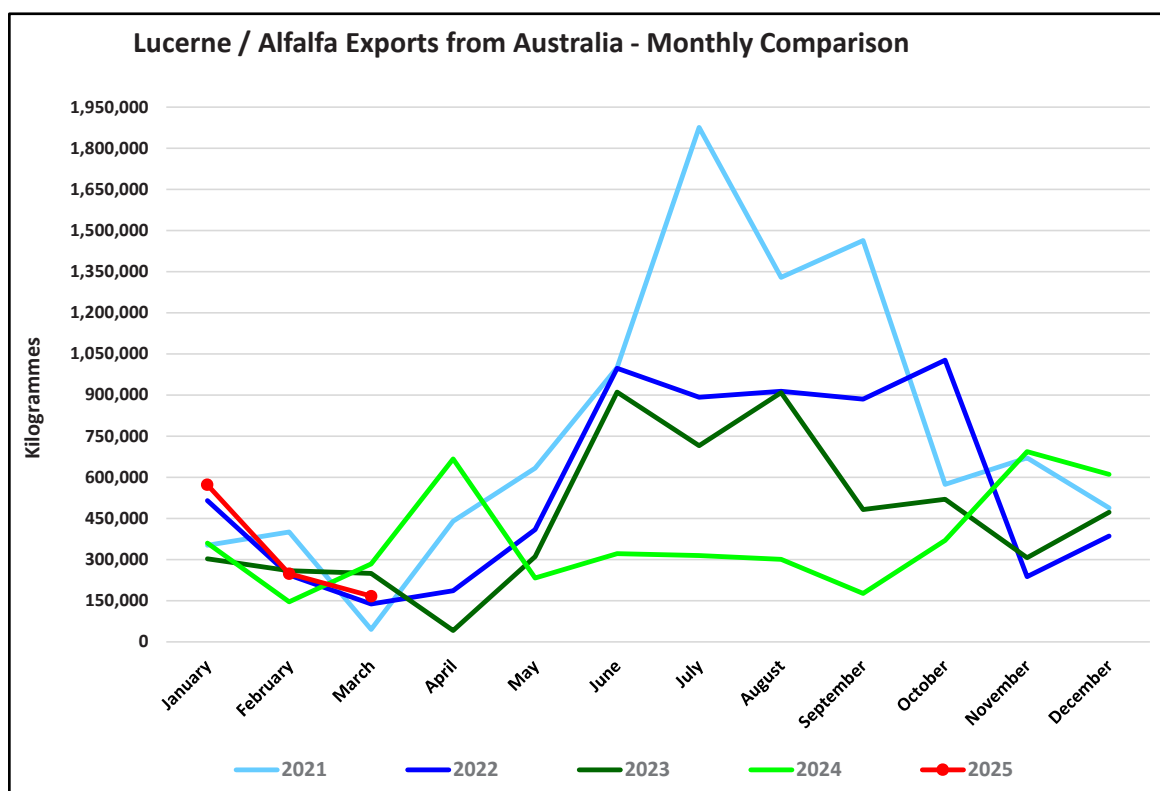
- January 2015 to March 2025

courtesy of Teague Australia

Quantities below are in kg.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Year to date Difference 2024 & 2025
Jan	698,895	374,150	266,596	307,530	512,692	850,518	352,056	515,246	302,936	359,725	572,434	+212,709
Feb	1,099,252	148,919	108,988	57,008	639,425	887,613	400,125	243,786	258,837	145,333	247,955	+315,331
Mar	582,929	227,050	127,000	321,205	684,044	539,525	44,500	137,329	249,852	284,060	165,820	+197,091
Apr	549,340	784,031	143,025	123,100	536,501	482,194	439,500	186,064	40,819	667,244		
May	940,000	644,704	363,023	355,575	281,335	495,875	633,571	409,715	310,224	232,465		
Jun	2,176,805	2,942,685	1,018,477	794,995	1,239,461	1,286,579	1,000,145	996,989	910,183	321,018		
Jul	1,649,080	786,450	1,214,352	303,288	792,380	1,205,927	1,875,361	891,632	715,121	314,968		
Aug	834,178	1,339,684	767,256	721,730	1,002,472	1,443,626	1,329,201	914,012	908,522	300,844		
Sep	770,857	388,207	882,195	698,665	871,762	1,533,097	1,463,717	885,058	482,480	176,056		
Oct	667,503	588,199	364,673	472,480	738,090	832,925	573,749	1,026,920	520,252	369,989		
Nov	543,246	409,700	649,318	615,285	609,028	595,095	670,850	237,888	307,116	693,213		
Dec	511,127	623,560	443,729	664,134	775,684	667,771	488,544	385,212	474,742	610,214		
Total	11,023,212	9,257,339	6,348,911	5,434,995	8,682,874	10,661,226	9,271,319	6,829,851	5,481,084	4,475,129	986,209	

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



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

| FOR THE DIARY

June 2025	20th	AFIA Hay Meetup Barossa Valley, SA
July 2025	22nd - 24th	AFIA National Fodder Conference Gold Coast
July 2025	30th	Save the Date - further information to come Lucerne Australia Growers Information Breakfast
August 2025	25th - 28th	ASF Seed Business Convention Christchurch NZ
November 2025	16th - 19th	International Herbage Seed Group Conference Launceston, Tasmania



LUCERNE AUSTRALIA *Members*

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

LUCERNE AUSTRALIA

Sponsors

Gold



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Associate/Bronze

AJ Cotton & MA McDonald	Ingham & Co	Stoller Australia
AFIA (Aust. Fodder Industry Assoc)	JJ O'Connor & Sons Pty Ltd	Synergy Seeds Pty Ltd
AlfaGen Seeds	Kongal Seeds	Tatiara Seeds
Alpha Group Consulting	Limestone Coast Seeds	Teague Australia
Barenbrug Australia Pty Ltd	Murray Nankivell	Upper Murray Seeds
Brandt	Naracoorte Seeds	Vermeeren Bros Manufacturing
Delta Agribusiness, Keith	Neutrog Australia	Western AG
D & M Rural	RAGT	Wilchem
Elders Keith	Safe Ag Systems	Wise Farm Equipment
Farmers Centre	Seasol International	

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.



Ben Farmer, 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.



Rodney Lush, Deputy Chairman
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.



**Danielle Lannin England,
Executive Officer**
Contact: 0439 538 332

Danielle is based at Keilira, where she is involved in a broadacre grains and Merino wool farming business with her husband Jonathan and his family. She has over 20 years' experience in agricultural extension and working with grower groups across Australia and brings to the lucerne industry strong governance, membership, strategic planning, project management and administrative skills.



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.



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.



Will Secker, Grower Member
Contact: 0427 578 255

Will and his wife Sarah own and manage farms in the Keith area producing lucerne seed, lucerne hay, prime lambs and wool, winter crops and a small herd of Angus cattle. Since returning to the family farm in 2003, Will and Sarah have had a strong focus on irrigated lucerne seed production. Will is passionate about all facets of lucerne seed production and marketing.



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.



Ryan Vandeleur, Grower Member
Contact: 0400 577 767

Ryan farms in the Upper South East, 10 km east of Tintinara on the Dukes Highway. Vandeleur Rural Holdings is a family farming business with properties located in the Mid North and South East. Their properties are mixed farming businesses comprising of 'Rices Creek' poll merino sheep stud, Black Angus cattle, cropping, dry land and irrigated lucerne seed along with hay production.

Ryan brings to the committee insight into lucerne production, particularly lucerne seed and hay production. He is a passionate lucerne grower who works alongside our other like-minded people to continue to develop his knowledge around the lucerne industry.



Aaron Keane, Associate Member
Contact: 0408 851 411

Aaron has been in the seed industry since 2008, starting with Seed Services Australia. During his time at Seed Services, he had a number of roles in both the laboratory and certification programs. In July 2023 he joined Barenbrug Australia as a Seed Production Agronomist, covering the Upper South-East across to the Eyre Peninsula.