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L O G I C

Editor: Peter Nelson

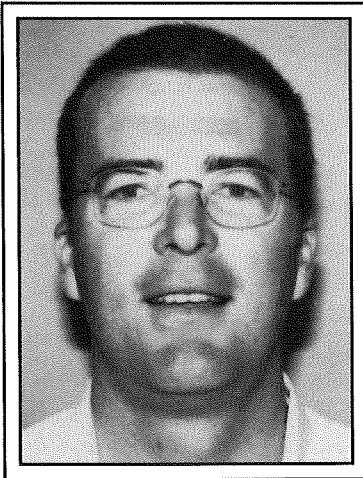
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Mice damage

In 1997 approximately 28 thousand hectares of crop were treated with Zinc Phosphide for mice control. Simon Foley, an agronomist with Elders, Geraldton carried out a survey of 42% of the treated area to assess crop damage and determine if agronomic practices predisposed crops to mice infestation.



Simon Foley

- 71% of the area was sown to lupins and 29% to canola
- nearly all the crops were sown on unburnt wheat stubble
- majority of crops were direct drilled and over half of farmers surveyed used narrow point seeding equipment
- two thirds of crops were sown prior to May 7
- 1.8 t/ha av. lupin yield; 1.6

t/ha av. canola yield

- 30% of farmers estimated no yield loss; 30% had losses between 200-400 kg/ha

Simon said heavy stubble, minimum soil disturbance and ample feed with a warm dry winter resulted in high populations of mice which damaged early crops as they commenced fruiting.

The low yield losses were explained by compensatory growth due to late unseasonable rains.

Simon pointed out that it is imperative for farmers to monitor crops early this year for the presence of mice. He is concerned that mice damage may become a more frequent problem as a result of farmers using minimum tillage seeding methods.

CMV alert

It had to happen sometime - CMV was present in nearly half the samples sent in for testing this year.

The more the message gets out that CMV levels were higher in lupins last year, more samples will be tested. Did you test your lupin seed from the 1996 crop? What was the level of CMV infection in your seed planted in 1997?

Experimental work conducted by Agriculture WA in 1992 found if aphids were present, seed with CMV infection levels as low as 0.5% could result in yield losses up to 15 per cent.

With 0.5% or more of CMV in seed, the risks must be weighed up.

Dr Roger Jones, virologist with Agriculture WA says the following factors should be considered:

- obtain tested clean seed (for high risk zones)
- CMV risk increases with summer/early autumn rain favouring early aphid build-up
- promote rapid canopy cover using 100kg+/ha seeding rates, narrow row spacings and early sowing (shades out smaller infected plants)
- retain cereal stubble - ground cover deters aphids from landing

Roger advises growers in high risk areas that a lot of late summer/early autumn rains may mean they should not sow infected seed.

However with a dry start to the season they may get away with it if they follow the recommended management package.

Last year highlights the need to test seed every year for the presence of CMV and viable germination percentage.

Anthracnose prevention

All lupin seed intended for planting in WA in 1998 should be treated with a fungicide effective against anthracnose. This was the forceful message delivered by Dr Mark Sweetingham, Plant Pathologist Agriculture WA at the recent Update meetings held in Perth.

Seed treatments are only a part of the production package for minimising the risks of anthracnose disease.

You should:

- use clean seed and resistant varieties
- plan seed areas for 1999 crop
- avoid last year's lupin stubble
- control adjacent blue lupins

- monitor machinery coming on-farm

This year brown spot may account for more economic loss to the lupin crop than anthracnose.

If brown spot has been a prob-

lem on your farm one of the mixtures listed below should be used.

There is no evidence to suggest that any of the recommended seed dressings for the control of anthracnose reduces the germination percentage or the growth of treated seeds.

Situation	Chemical rates (g) per 100g seed	Approx. cost \$/ha @ 100kg seed/ha
Anthracnose only	• Thiram 100g	1.50
	• Carbendazim 50g	4.50
Anthracnose and brown spot	• Rovral® 100mL + Thiram 100g	4.50
	• Sumisclex® 100mL + Thiram 100g	4.50
	• Rovral® 100mL + Carbendazim 50g	7.50
Anthracnose - need for seed inoculation	• Carbendazim 50g + innoculant	6.50

Wodjil lupins

Due to demand far exceeding supply Wodjil lupins will be bulked up for another year before general release in 1999. This bulk up will take place on very acid soils in the central and eastern wheatbelt.

Chickpeas

WA chickpeas are largely produced for human consumption markets in the Indian sub-continent, Middle East and Mediterranean.

Desi chickpeas are the main variety grown in WA with around 20,000 tonnes delivered to CBH in 1997/98.

Kabuli chickpeas are produced in much less volume with only 1,000 tonnes produced annually. The two varieties have slightly different end uses.

Desi is eaten whole, split (Chana dhal) or ground into flour while Kabuli is made into a paste called hommous or sold for whole seed con-

sumption.

While both share a similar market place, they can be affected in different ways by the same factors.

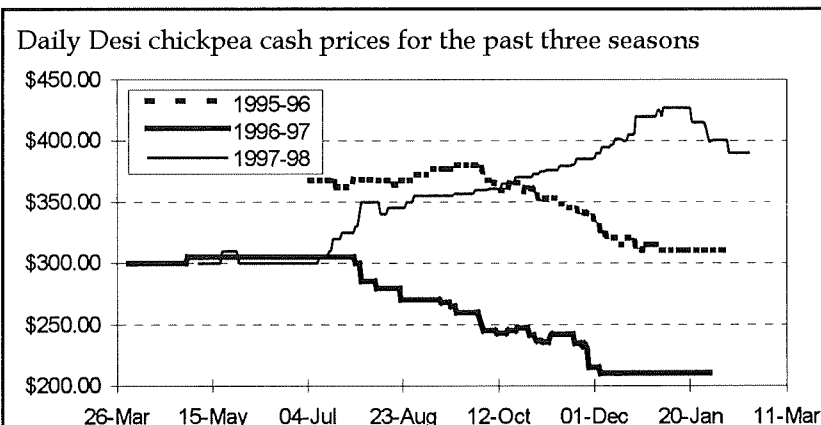
These include:

- Indian domestic production (shortfalls present opportunities for Australia)
- Turkish production of Kabuli
- Australian production
- Timing of Ramadan, the Muslim religious festival lasting four weeks beginning in 1998 on December 20
- West Australian quality
- Australian dollar value

During 1997/98, chickpea prices in WA increased from \$240/tonne at the beginning of January 1997, to in excess of \$420/tonne in January, 1998.

The dramatic increase in prices was due to low levels of Australian chickpea production, harvest delays and quality problems in India. Prices in 1998/99 are, as a consequence, difficult to predict.

However the forecast shortfall in winter Indian pulse production and the low level of the Australian dollar should augur well for a buoyant market.



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