Legume Logic

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L O G I C

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Stubble trouble?

How will you handle it? Machines or matches?

Late rains in 1997 boosted cereal biomass production and although this may not have been fully realised in grain quality or yield, farmers will be confronted with some formidable stubbles into which lupins are to be seeded this year.

In 1981, Doug Sawkins, District Leader Agriculture WA Narrogin, highlighted the need to retain surface soil cover by retaining cereal stubbles to minimise brown spot infection in lupin crops. In 1998 this situation still applies.

Fungicides such as Rovral® and Sumiclex® will only give protection to the young plants for seven to ten days. Surface stubble prevents rain splash of brown spot spores from the soil and provides long term protection.

Low risk lupin production involves the retention of surface trash - the more the better.

So will your seeding machine get through the stubble this year? Now is the time to test it and make rational decisions before the mad rush of seeding commences.

Let's assume that you have a stubble too thick for your machine to handle. Here are the options in order of preference.

1. Slash the stubble to make it shorter. Try seeder again.
2. As in 1 and rake with a stubble rake. Burn windrows on a calm, moist night. Ensure the fires are out before morning. Seed with narrow points on a 36cm row spacing with provision for deep banding fertiliser. If seeding wet, incorporate simazine with rolling harrows.
3. Seed with modified (better seed placement) culti-trash or similar disc implement.
4. Skim plough. Do not burn or rake. Try seeder again.
5. Increase seeding rate by 10%. Drop seed on top with seeder and skim plough it in. Apply simazine after seeding and if seeding wet incorporate with harrows.
6. Use a box of redheads, seed with your seeder on a new moon and buy a lottery ticket!

Field Peas

Field peas have been described as the forgotten crop in WA but this situation is about to change.

The State field pea production area forecast to be at some 200,000 hectares by 2005.

There are several potential markets for WA field peas including the Australian stockfeed market, European stockfeed, Asian stockfeed, Asian and Middle East human consumption markets.

Split field peas (dhal) are used extensively in India, Malaysia, Middle East and in western countries as a high protein food supplement.

Asian and Middle East human consumption markets are emerging as important export destinations for WA field peas.

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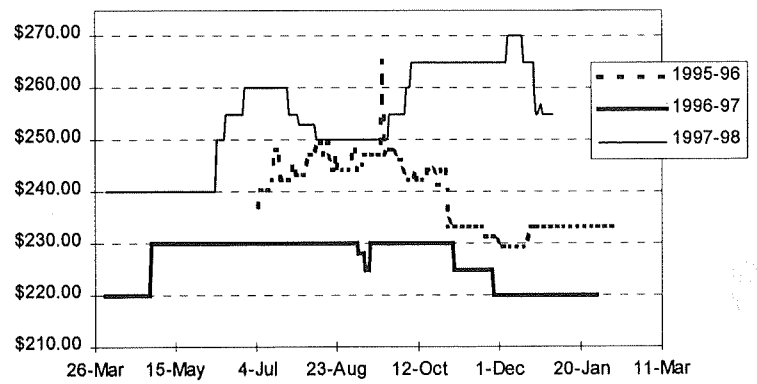
Daily Field Pea Cash Price for the last three seasons



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Field Peas *from page 1*

Field pea markets are affected by a number of external factors.

- Indian and Turkish chickpea production
- Timing of Ramadan
- Canadian production
- Other protein grain markets
- Domestic production and demand
- Western Australian quality
- Niche market availability
- Australian dollar value

Field pea prices in WA are fairly stable due to a strong domestic market underpinning export demand.

The market strengthened during 1997, as Australian and WA production was less than predicted.

Given normal seasonal conditions, field pea prices for 1998/99 should be between $230 and $255 per tonne.

Reminders

Summer weeds should be under control in cropping paddocks.

With the summer rain, there will be potential for aphid buildup.

Have you had your lupin seed tested for CMV levels this year?

Remember if seeding this month the seed should be placed in wet or dry soil. Partial moisture will result in emergence problems.

Lupin conference

The 9th International Lupin Conference will be held in Klink, Germany from June 20 to June 24 1999. For further information please contact the German Lupin Association:

Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Lupine-GFL
Im Rheinfeld 1-13, D-76437
Rastatt, GERMANY
Fax: + 49 7222 7707 77

Weed control in chickpea crops

Victorian farmers are successfully controlling weeds in chickpeas using sheep. Acids exudate from the chickpeas making them unpalatable to graze.

The practice is not new, having been used by some farmers for 10 years.

Farmers in the Mingenew/Irwin LCDC have highlighted weed control in chickpeas as a serious problem and to test whether the Victorian success was repeatable in WA, Cameron Weeks (Mingenew/Irwin LCDC Co-ordinator) and Elders agronomist Richard Quinlan set up two trials and a demonstration site. Trials were carried out on 1 ha fenced chickpea plots which were then grazed. Harvest strips were taken in the plots to assess grazing effect on yield. Some of the results are described below:

Rob & Gordon Campbell Yandanooka, Mingenew		
Treatment	**t/ha**	**% Admixture**
Control	0.86	11.8
Grazed	0.90	4.9

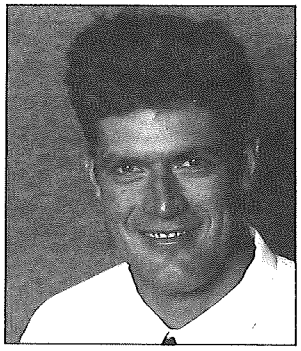
The plots were crash grazed for a period of 11 days (15-26 August) at a stocking density of 10 DSE/ha. When the sheep were introduced into the paddock, the chickpeas were 20-25 cm tall. Flower buds were just becoming visible at the time the sheep were removed.

Results

There was no reduction in yield from grazing the chickpeas. Admixture (predominantly radish) was reduced markedly.

It was not reduced to the point where dockages were not incurred however with light grading this could be achieved.

A similar trial conducted at Gary Chivers' property, Yandanooka, showed no reduction in yield from grazing. Field peas were eliminated from the grazed treatment but radish levels in the sample were not reduced. The grazed radish plants recovered enough to set seed after sheep were removed.



Richard Quinlan

Recommendations

Although the radish plants recovered to some degree after grazing and set some seed, the trials revealed that grazing of chickpeas is a workable practice for control of both broadleaf weeds and grasses. Further refinement of this method is needed for effective weed control as explained below.

- Grazing chickpeas earlier and for a longer period is thought to enhance weed control above that achieved in these trials. Grazing after grass selectives have taken effect to until the crop begins to flower is expected to be the most effective timing of the practice.
- The earliest time of grazing is determined by the bitter taste of the crop. Once the plants taste bitter, sheep can graze the paddock.
- If grazing chickpeas for longer, lower stocking densities than in the trial will need to be used (1-2 DSE/ha).
- Keep a close eye on the grazed paddocks to identify problems arising.
- Use older sheep in preference to young sheep or weaners for their more selective grazing habits.
- Spray out fencelines and areas not in crop to ensure the sheep move into the paddock to feed, enhancing weed control.