

Final Technical Report

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Effective baiting options for the control of conical snails in the Albany port zone.

Project code: SCF00004-A
Prepared by: Dr Kathi McDonald
kathi.mcdonald@scfarmers.org.au
Stirlings to Coast Farmers Inc
Dr Christine Kershaw
christine.kershaw@scfarmers.org.au
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Abstract

Small conical snails can cause a significant amount of damage on emerging crops. While much work has been done in South Australia on control of snails, there is still a gap in the knowledge of growers on the timing of baiting and bait choice for small conical snails in WA farming systems. It was the aim of this project to address this knowledge gap.

A survey of current grower baiting practices was carried out to obtain baseline data on the current strategies. The survey found that while most growers with snails had baiting programs, 60% were unsure as to the efficacy of baits on small conical snails.

Glasshouse trials on snail bait preference and timing found that snails were not attracted to baits but randomly came across them, and that bait formulation or active ingredient had no effect on snail mortality. In the field, baiting close to the time of crop germination was the best way to prevent snail damage to emerging crops. There was no difference in the field plots between rainfast and non-rainfast baits in their efficacy to reduce snail numbers. However, at Wellstead in wet conditions experience in April rainfast baits were more effective at reducing snail numbers than non-rainfast bait. It appears that non-rainfast baits will lose integrity in wet conditions and become less effective.

Executive Summary

Albany port zone RCSN have identified snails and slugs as an issue for the past three years at their RCSN meetings. Small conical snails are a growing issue for growers in the Albany and Esperance port zones. To date, control for snails has centred on baiting during the growing season. While much work on control of snails has been conducted in South Australia, there has been little work in Western Australia and on WA soils and conditions. There is still a gap in grower's knowledge about timing and bait choice for small conical snails in WA farming systems, which this project aims to address.

To begin, a survey of the current baiting practices of growers in the Albany and Esperance port zones was distributed to over 200 growers across the region, with 120 responding. The survey highlighted the increasing impact of small conical snails in the Albany and Esperance port zones, particularly in canola and barley crops. The report also shows that most growers with a snail issue, engage in a baiting program at least once a year, usually applying baits post-seeding with a spreader. There is a high level of uncertainty amongst growers as to the efficacy of baiting programs on small conical snail control.

In caged bait trials, all active ingredients were equal in causing mortality to snails. The amount of active ingredient per bait in these trials did not influence mortality in snails. However, the more bait points there were, the more snails were killed by the baits.

All active ingredients were equal in causing mortality to snails. The rainfastness of a bait, 14 days after application, did not impact on the mortality of snails. However, after 14 days it is highly probable that non-rainfast pellets would lose their integrity and decompose in wet conditions making it less likely that snails would come across it.

There was no difference in the iron based formulations for causing mortalities. There did appear to be differences in metaldehyde based products in causing snail mortalities. Within the metaldehyde range, Deadline, Defender, Delicia, Farmalinx, Meta and Metakill caused over 95% mortality.

Field trials were then conducted at three different locations on differing soil types – forest gravels (Kendenup), Kalgan loams (Woogenellup) and south coast sandplain (Wellstead). Field cages were set up at the Kendenup site to determine directly the effect of baits on snail mortality at four different bait times. Plant damage was assessed and live and dead snails counted three weeks post emergence at each of the field sites. Conditions were dry at the Kendenup site and snail numbers were too low in the field plots to determine any effect of bait type or timing. From the remaining trials, less snails were found on plots baited 2 or less weeks prior to seeding, there was no difference between bait treatments, although control plots did have significantly higher snail numbers. Baits applied 4 or more weeks prior to crop germination, need to be reapplied to suppress snail damage to germinating crops.

In the field cages placed at Kendenup with manually added snails, baits applied in late April (immediately pre-seeding) caused the highest mortality.

The project has shown that the following points are most important for growers to obtain control of conical snails in their paddocks;

- In order to minimise plant damage, baits should be applied close to the time of crop emergence.
- The number of bait points is important; the more bait points per square metre, the better the kill. Calibrate spreaders to ensure an even spread of baits across the paddock to increase the likelihood of snails coming across them and feeding.
- There was very little difference in snail mortality between the non-rainfast bait formulation and the rainfast bait. However in the wet conditions experience in April at Wellstead, rainfast baits were more effective at reducing snail numbers than non-rainfast baits.

Further work on the effect of multiple baiting times as opposed to a single time of baiting on snail numbers in paddocks would be of benefit to improve decision making for growers on the best method to obtain effective control of conical snails on their farms. Investigating the effect of baiting strategies on snail contamination at harvest as well as plant damage early in the season would also improve the ability of growers to develop an effective snail control program on their farm.

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Background

Albany port zone RCSN have identified snails and slugs as an issue for the past 2 years at their RCSN meetings. Small conical snails are a growing issue for growers in the Albany and Esperance port zones. To date, control for snails has centred on baiting during the growing season.

While there is no current data on the extent of losses due to snail and slug damage in WA, a Senates Estimates brief in February 2013 estimated that the total cost to the Australian grains industry from snails at that time was \$17.678 million. The annual average loss in the southern region was estimated to be \$11.79 million and \$5.882 million in the western region.

At their last meeting in July 2015, the Albany port zone RCSN lifted the level of importance of this issue and voted it as their second top priority for the port zone.

There have been a few projects looking at snail and slug control, with a lot of this work emanating from South Australia.

An excellent resource was developed and produced in 2003 with collaboration from many different sources, (<http://grdc.com.au/Resources/Bookshop/2010/11/BashEm-BurnEm-BaitEm-Integrated-snail-management-in-crops-and-pastures>). Within this book there are many good messages, however much of this work has not been in WA where the soil types are such that bashing or burning are fraught with environmental risk. While baiting is the most common method of control, reports of high snail and slug numbers are still rising particularly over the last three years.

Greg Baker and Michael Nash (SARDI) have been working in this field for some time. As noted by Michael on an RCSN initiated visit to WA in July 2014, small Conical (Pointed) Snails will become a massive problem all along the great southern region. They are already a major pest around Esperance.

Cultural controls that do not involve burning and tillage (due to the friability of the soil) were discussed at all meetings. Rolling was suggested by Michael without much interest. Cabling is being used but Michael noted that this only works for round snails. At present where snails are a problem, growers are dumping canola straw and chaff in rows, allowing snails to congregate then burning but fire risk needs to be carefully managed. Albany port zone RCSN and researchers recognise that there are options available for southern areas (in South Australia) but they are not as effective here, due mainly to their more fragile soil types found typically along the southern coast of WA.

Svetlana Micic is currently managing an Albany RCSN initiated project '[Investigate and extend effective and reasonably priced monitoring and control methods for snails and slugs in the Albany and Esperance Port Zones](#)'. Various treatments have been incorporated into this work, including at South Stirling's - cabling of stubble and burning of windrows; and at Esperance - tillage. Also included in the project is investigation of post-harvest treatments and the impact on plant (crop) densities in the following year. This is all being viewed by a time lapse camera based near Frankland; and near Esperance. Albany DAFWA and Accuspread also spent time conducting 1-day workshops in 2014 to help growers calibrate their spreaders to accurately spread baits, spread fertiliser and lime which went some way to encouraging correct grower practice.

There is still a gap in grower's knowledge about timing and bait choice for small conical snails in WA farming systems, which this project aims to address.

Project objectives

It is expected that the main outcome of this project will be that growers will have easy access to information on the most effective bait options for conical snails in the Albany port zone for their farming system.

Our objective is to work out what are the most important factors affecting bait efficacy on small pointed snails. Is it rainfastness, bait formulation active in the baits or the rate applied per hectare? Currently, this is confused by various formulations of various sized baits with differing rainfastness and reported palatability.

The project reports field data only for the 2017 season. Different results may be achieved under different environmental conditions, especially given that snail activity is highly dependent upon environmental conditions.

Methodology

Grower baiting practices survey

In consultation with the other grower groups in the Albany and Esperance port zones, and CBH and DAFWA, a survey of grower baiting practices was designed and distributed to over 200 growers via the online Survey Monkey program, and 'hard copy' paper versions completed at Spring Field days across the region in September and October 2016. Surveys were distributed to all growers attending Spring Field days across the South Coast, and all members from the grower groups covering the southern Agricultural zone were invited to complete the survey on-line. There was no specific selection of participants apart from that they were all likely to be members of a grower group. Responses from 'hard copy' surveys were manually entered in to Survey Monkey, and all results analysed utilising the Survey Monkey analysis tool. A summary of results was written up and is included as an addendum to this report (Appendix A).

Caged baiting trials

For each of the 3 caged bait trials, cages were placed in a randomised block design in a shadehouse, with 4 replicates.

Small conical snails were collected in the field. Only those of uniform size, greater than 0.5mm, and found on the top of grass stalks to ensure they were actively moving were collected.

Snails and baits (applied at label rates) were placed in to cages containing a substrate of sand and peat, with 50 g of stubble placed on the surface. The substrate was at field capacity and up to 10 mL of water was added daily to ensure substrate was moist enough to initiate snail movement. Temperatures in the enclosures ranged from 10°C to 32°C. For a list of treatments for each of the caged trials, please see Appendix B.

Counts of live and dead snails were conducted 14 days later.

Results were analysed using ANOVA that incorporated the factorial treatment structure and were reviewed by a statistician.

A letter was sent to all commercial registrants of snail bait products requesting permission to include their product and publish results in trial 3. Only those products readily available and with the registrant's permission were included. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix C.

Field trials

Three sites were chosen in paddocks with a known history of snail infestation, at different locations on different soil types – forest gravel, sandplain and Kalgan loam (see location table below). All sites were set up in the same way, and all were sown by the host farmers to canola. Monthly rainfall data from nearby weather stations was collected over the duration of the trial and is presented with the results.

Trials were pegged in one bank, with 3 replicates. Three treatments were applied at each site – nil baiting, rainfast bait and a non-rainfast bait. All baits were applied at label recommended rates. Each of these treatments was applied at the following times;

- Treatments applied post-harvest
- Treatments applied pre-seeding, at time of first weed control (Autumn)
- Treatments applied post-seeding, pre-emergence
- Treatments applied at crop germination

Host farmers applied all herbicides, fertilisers etc as per rest of paddock

Two weeks after the final bait application, plant damage assessments (% of cotyledon and true leaves damaged by snails) and counts of live and dead snails in 4 x 0.1m² quadrats per plot were recorded.

Results were analysed in GENSTAT ANOVA with a split plot design and were reviewed by a statistician.

Field cage trials – snail mortality

Twenty four large snail proof cages (plastic tubs with the ends cut out) were dug in to the ground along the fence line adjacent to the field trial at Kendenup in the late summer. Snails were collected and placed along with bait treatments in the cages at the same time as treatments were applied in the adjacent field trial. There were 3 treatments x 8 replicates for each time of application. All baits were applied at label recommended rates. Snails from half the reps were collected 20 days after and were placed on moistened filter paper. Active live snails were counted 24 hours later. The remaining 4 reps were harvested 24 hours prior to the next time of application, with snails collected and placed on moistened filter paper, and counts of active live snails taken 24 hours later.

Results were analysed in GENSTAT ANOVA with a split plot design and were reviewed by a statistician.

Location

NOTE: Where field trials have been conducted please include location details: Latitude and Longitude, or nearest town, using the table below (please add additional rows as required):

	Latitude (decimal degrees)	Longitude (decimal degrees)
Trial Site #1	34.48 S	117.58 E
Nearest Town	Kendenup	
Trial Site #2	34.58 S	117.8 E
Nearest Town	Mt Barker (Woogenellup)	
Trial Site #3	34.46 S	118.6 E
Nearest Town	Wellstead	

If the research results are applicable to a specific GRDC region/s (e.g. North/South/West) or Agro - Ecological Zone/s please indicate which in the table below:

Research	Benefiting GRDC Region (can select up to three regions)	Benefiting GRDC Agro-Ecological Zone (see link: http://www.grdc.com.au/About-Us/GRDC-Agroecological-Zones) for guidance about AE-Zone locations	
Effective baiting options for the control of conical snails in the Albany Port zone.	Western Region Choose an item. Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/> Qld Central <input type="checkbox"/> NSW NE/Qld SE <input type="checkbox"/> NSW Vic Slopes <input type="checkbox"/> Tas Grain <input type="checkbox"/> SA Midnorth-Lower Yorke Eyre <input type="checkbox"/> WA Northern <input type="checkbox"/> WA Eastern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WA Mallee	<input type="checkbox"/> NSW Central <input type="checkbox"/> NSW NW/Qld SW <input type="checkbox"/> Vic High Rainfall <input type="checkbox"/> SA Vic Mallee <input type="checkbox"/> SA Vic Bordertown-Wimmera <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WA Central <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WA Sandplain

Results

Bait practices grower survey

Please refer to the attached report, '*Snail and slug baiting practices grower survey – summary of results*' for complete results for the survey. The main points from the report are listed below.

- Small pointed conical snails are an increasing problem in the Albany and Esperance port zones, with almost half of the survey respondents indicating snail presence on their farms. Almost 60% of those with presence reported a level of infestation that required a baiting program.
- Most growers are only recently becoming aware of the problem, although some have recognised snails as an issue for over five years.
- Canola and barley were the crops reported as most affected by snails (and canola by slugs).
- Snails were found across all soil types on respondent's farms, most commonly occurring on sandplain and duplex soils (these are also the most common soil types across the south coast). Slugs were predominantly recorded on clay and, to a lesser extent, duplex soils.
- Of those respondents that had applied baits in the past five years, most applied baits only once in the year, although 40% did apply baits twice. Most baits were applied in the post-seeding period, but some did also apply pre-seeding. Generally, growers that applied baits twice a year applied them pre- and then post-seeding.
- The level of infestation is the greatest consideration for respondents on whether to apply baits.
- Metaldehyde baits were by far the most commonly applied. These are also the most widely available with the largest range.
- Baits are mostly applied at recommended label rates, and are applied via spreader (baits alone). Some application via spreader (with fertiliser) or plane (aerial) was also reported.
- Respondents were mixed in whether they considered baits an effective control for snails, with almost 60% being unsure. Baits were considered an effective control for slugs by most.
- Apart from baiting, burning (of windrows and whole paddock) and good farm hygiene/biosecurity were considered as control measures.

Delivery to CBH of snail contaminated grain does not appear to have been an issue for most respondents, however almost 15% did record that they had some difficulty in the past five years.

Caged bait trials

In the caged trials, baits caused significantly ($p < 0.001$) more snails to die than the control (nil baits) (Figures 1 and 2). However, there were no significant differences in how well the baits worked. Baits with the active ingredients metaldehyde, methiocarb and iron all caused similar mortalities to small conical snails (Figure 1).

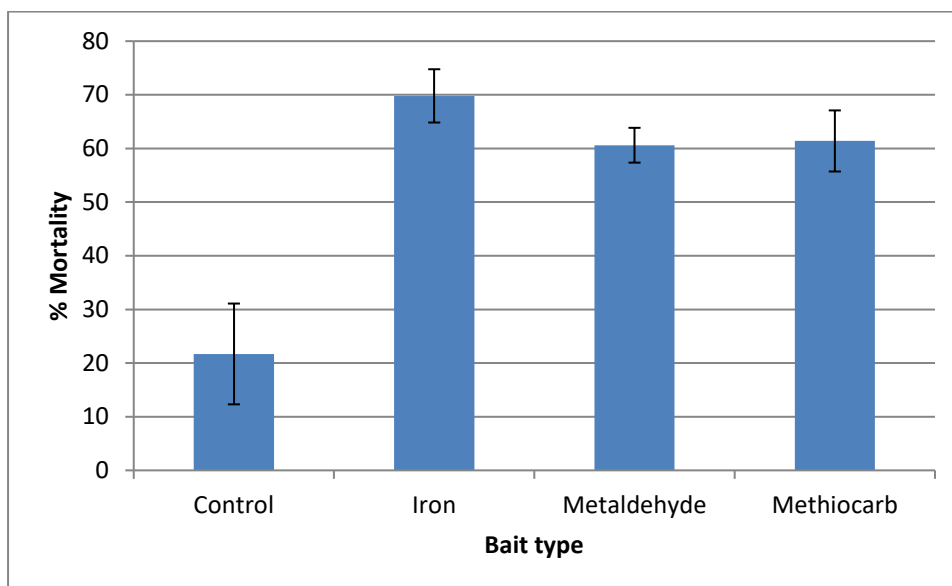


Figure 1: Percentage (%) of dead snails at Day 14 after being exposed to different bait types. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

Metaldehyde baits with a higher percentage of active ingredient did not cause more mortality than baits with less active (Figure 2).

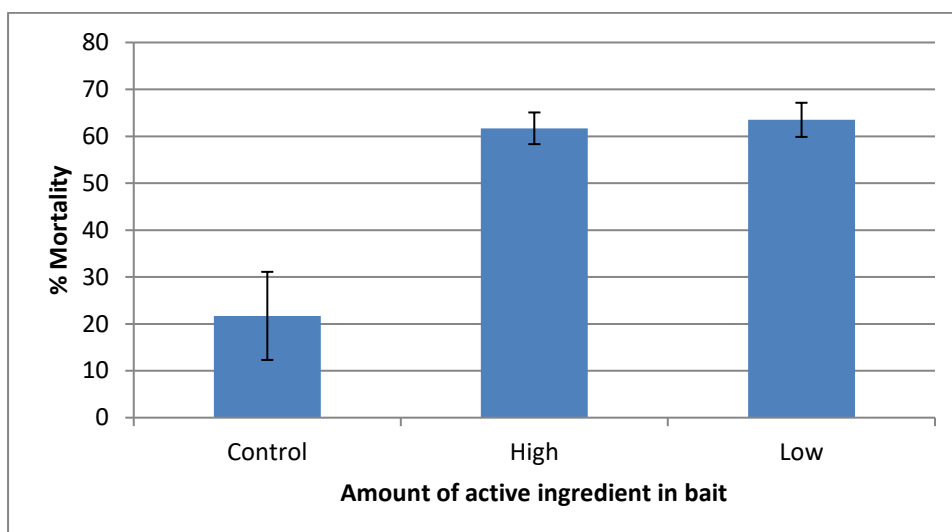


Figure 2: Percentage (%) of dead snails at Day 14 after being exposed to baits with the same active ingredient but varying amounts of active ingredient in each bait. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

However, the number of bait points was a significant ($p < 0.001$) factor in snail mortality. The more bait points there were, the more snails were killed (Figure 3)

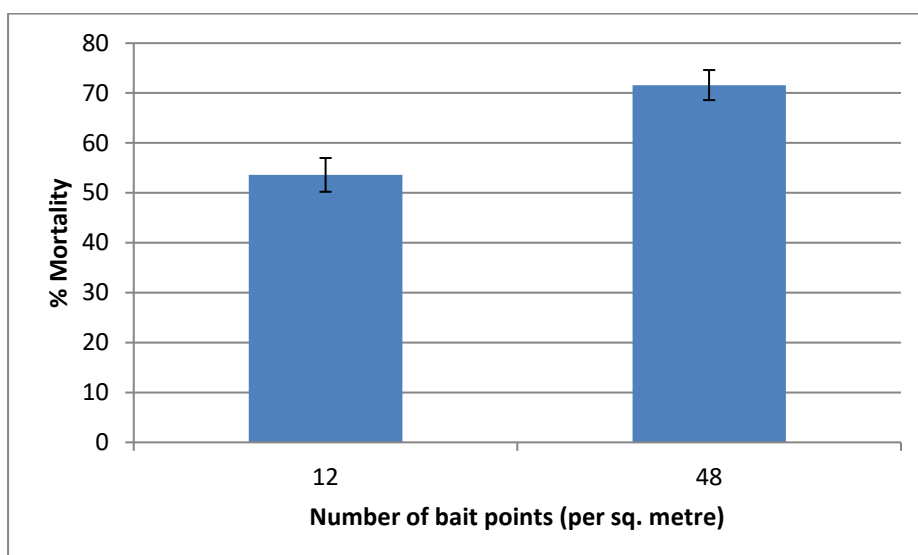


Figure 3: Percentage (%) of dead snails at Day 14 after being exposed to baits with either 12 or 48 bait points per square metre. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

Rainfast and non-rainfast baits caused similar mortalities to small conical snails (Figure 4).

However, by Day 14, there was a difference in the structures of the baits. Non-rainfast baits had begun to degrade and were no longer shaped as a pellet, whereas rainfast baits still held their integrity as a pellet.

Analysis of photographs taken at Days 7 and 14, showed that over 80% of snails had not moved in baited enclosures, whereas 100% of snails had moved in the control. This indicates that by Day 7 snail death had already occurred in baited treatments.

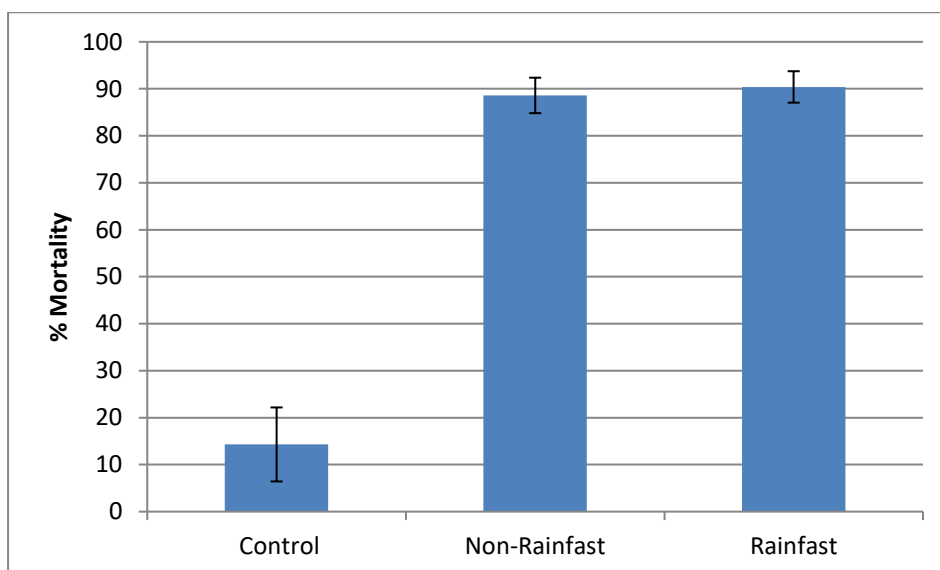


Figure 4: Percentage (%) of mortality in snails at Day 14 after being exposed to rainfast or non-rainfast baits. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

Metaldehyde based baits caused similar mortalities to snails as iron based baits. There was no significant difference ($p=0.178$) between these formulations.

When all bait types were grouped together, metaldehyde and iron based baits caused similar mortalities in snails and were not significantly different ($p=0.164$).

Bait formulations containing iron caused similar mortalities in snails so were not significantly ($p=0.679$) different.

However, different bait types containing metaldehyde were found to be significantly ($p=0.038$) different in the number of snails killed (Figure 5) when compared to the control.

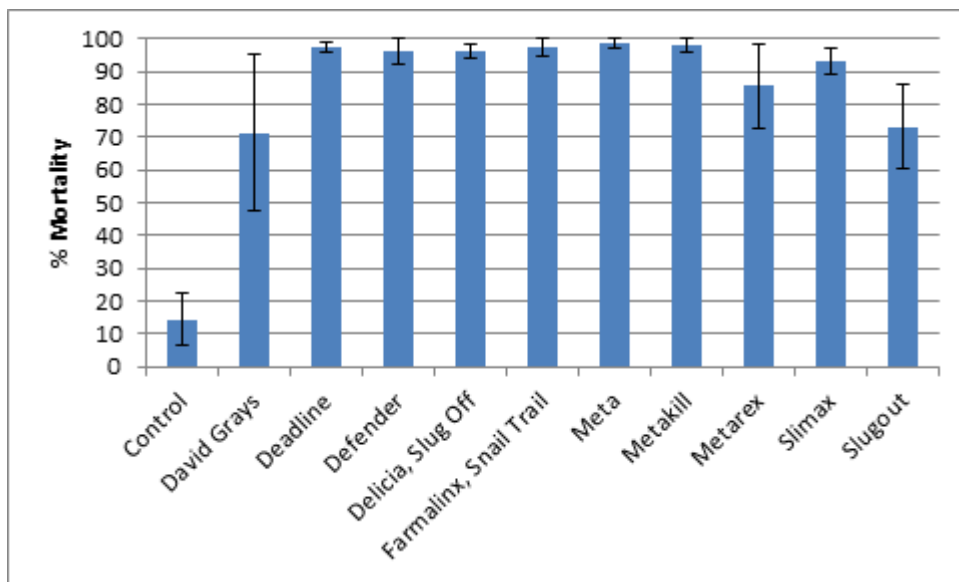


Figure 5: Percentage (%) of mortality in snails at Day 14 after being exposed to different metaldehyde based baits. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

The amount of active ingredient in the baits does not explain the differences above as baits with the lowest amount of active ingredient, eg Meta contains 15 g/kg, caused 98% mortality to snails in this trial.

Field trials

Monthly rainfall data was collected from nearby weather stations for each trial site and is presented below. Wellstead recorded consistently higher rainfall over the duration of the trial than either Woogenellup or Kendenup.

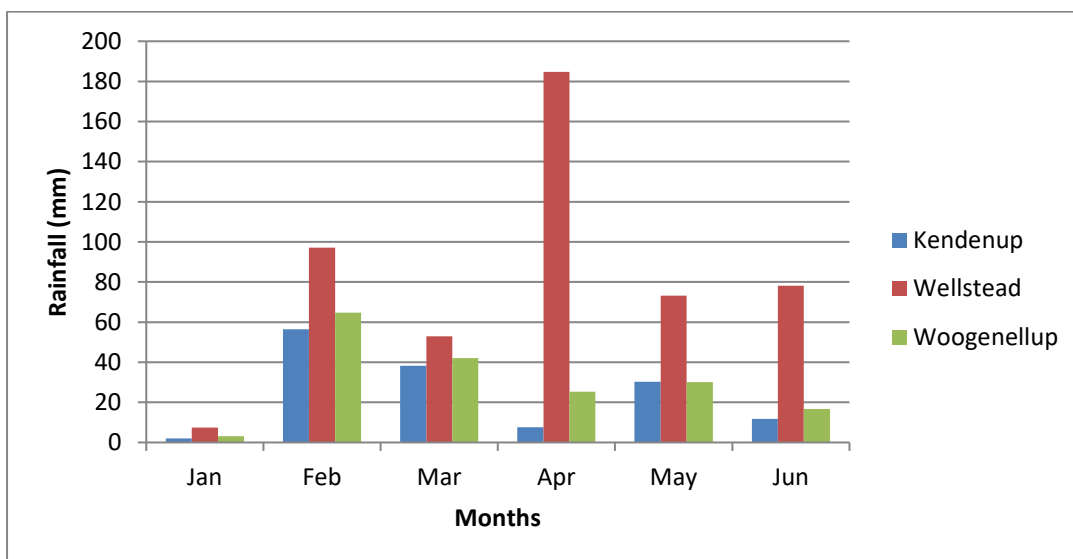


Figure 6: Monthly rainfall totals for weather stations located near each of the three trial sites.

It was not possible to monitor the number of live snails at each site, as snails moved between plots. A single snail count was conducted at the end of the trial at each site. Different numbers of live snails were present over the three sites, Woogenellup had on average 149 snails; Wellstead 159 snails and Kendenup 56 snails per square metre.

Statistical analysis of each site separately did not show a significant difference in the number of snails between treatments or amount of damage between plots.

The Kendenup trial site had low snail numbers and very low levels of crop damage were assessed as a result.

The Wellstead site did show a significant interaction in the treatments. The interaction reflects that post-emergence there were significantly ($P = 0.017$) lower snail numbers as a result of bait treatments (Table 1).

Table 1: Average snail numbers at Wellstead for all plots counted 14 days after final bait application

Time of bait application	Control	Non-rainfast bait	Rainfast bait
Post-harvest	25.0	42.5	51.7
Pre-seeding	12.5	24.2	51.7
Pre-emergent	44.2	33.3	6.7
Post-emergent	87.5	8.3	10.0

Caged field trial – snail mortality

The timing of assessments of mortality of small pointed snails at 20 days was not significantly different to that of mortality assessed at 20+ days ($P > 0.05$). This means that within 20 days snails that were going to consume the baits did so. Consequently, there was only one time of assessment of mortality of snails exposed to baits at the last baiting time.

Baits applied in April caused more mortality than baits applied at any other time (Figure 8). In this case, there was also a difference between the two baits, the rainfast bait caused significantly ($P = 0.015$) more mortality in snails than the non-rainfast bait.

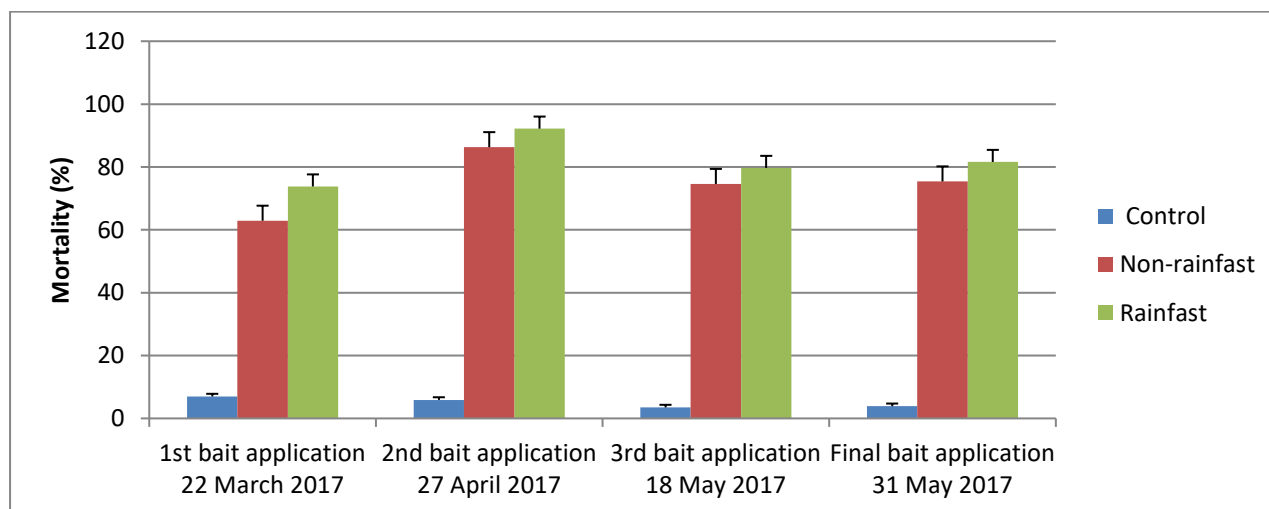


Figure 8: Percentage mortality in small pointed snails exposed to baits after 4 different times of baiting. Error bars represent standard errors.

Discussion of Results

The grower survey on baiting practices highlighted the increasing spread and impact of snails and slugs to growers in the southern agricultural regions of WA. While the findings also indicated that the majority of growers with a snail problem did engage in a baiting program, 60% of these were unsure as to the effectiveness of baits to control small conical snails. This project investigated the effectiveness of a range of baits and baiting strategies in the glasshouse and in the field across three different soil types.

The caged trials in the glasshouse showed that there was no difference in snail mortality from different bait formulations or amount of active ingredient. The main influence on snail mortality was the number of bait points per square metre – the more bait points the higher the snail kill. Snails did not appear to be attracted to particular baits, but only randomly came across them. Snails fed on all baits they came across. These results highlight the importance of having properly calibrated spreaders and achieving an even spread of baits across the paddock to increase the chances of snails coming across the baits and feeding upon them.

The field trials compared a non-rainfast bait with a rainfast bait, applied at four different times – post harvest, pre-seeding, pre-emergence, and post-emergence, across three different soil types – forest gravel, south coast sandplain and Kalgan loam. Despite having a paddock history of high snail numbers and crop loss due to snail damage (as indicated by the host farmer, and the main reason this site was selected) the Kendenup site had over all low snail numbers. It is possible that because of the generally dry conditions experienced at the site during the trial (Figure 6) snails were not actively moving and feeding and so were not visible. This fact highlights the importance of projects continuing over multiple seasons to ensure results take in to account seasonal variation in real world situations.

The remaining sites showed significantly increased snail numbers on control plots compared to baited treatments. All baiting treatments were effective in reducing snail numbers. There were no differences observed between the two bait types in the field, however there was a difference between bait timing, with less snail numbers found in plots baited after seeding.

Results from Wellstead did show a significant interaction between time of applications and bait treatments. There was no difference in snail numbers at the end of the trial between the two bait treatments for the two earliest times of application. This could possibly be due to the act of seeding burying any remaining baits on the plots and making them unavailable to snails that moved in to the area post-seeding. Snail numbers were lower for the rainfast baits compared to the non-rainfast baits for the pre-emergent time of application. This occurred in April when the site experienced high rainfall (figure 6) and non-rainfast baits applied at this time may have been compromised.

Results from the forest gravel field site at Kendenup were not included due to low snail numbers. Snails had been observed, though not counted, actively moving in greater numbers at this site earlier in the season (March). While receiving some good early rains in summer and early March, the site had not received significant further rain and was very dry over the trial period. It may be that snails that were previously actively moving at the site had returned to a dormant state due to the dry conditions and simply were not feeding, on either baits or plants. Despite a similar rainfall pattern (Figure 6) the site at Woogenellup did have high snail numbers. This site had significant quantities of stubble and trash retention, and the soil under this was noticed to be damp, possibly providing the snails with moist refuges to continue their life cycle despite the lack of rain. Mating and egg laying was observed at the time of final assessment (mid-May) at Woogenellup.

Baits applied in April in the field cages caused more snail mortality than at any other time. It may be that this coincided with a time that snails were most active and there were little alternative feed sources to 'distract' snails from the baits.

To minimise crop damage, baits need to be applied close to the time of germination, when snails are actively moving and feeding. Previous studies have found that cultural activities such as windrow or paddock burning can also be effective at controlling snail numbers but are only appropriate on heavier soil types that are not liable to be subject to wind erosion.

Further research investigating the implications of multiple versus single baiting options in a season, and the resulting impact on snail populations at the end of the season (at harvest) as well as

prevention of damage to emerging crops at the beginning of the season, would better enable growers to make decisions on the most appropriate baiting strategies for their farm.

Conclusion

Small pointed conical snails are becoming an increasing issue in the Albany and Esperance port zones. Snails were reported across all soil types with canola and barley the crops most commonly impacted by snail activity.

Growers commonly bait once a year, post-seeding. For those that bait twice a year, baits are generally applied pre- and then post-seeding. Metaldehyde baits are the most commonly used bait type, generally applied via a spreader, baits alone, or sometimes mixed with fertiliser. A small amount of aerial application was reported.

Despite many of the grower respondents to the survey engaging in a baiting program, almost 60% were unsure as to its effectiveness in controlling small pointed conical snails.

Caged trials showed that there is no difference in the efficacy of a rainfast versus non-rainfast bait. However, the trials did suggest that non-rainfast baits lose their integrity after 14 days in wet conditions.

All active ingredients cause mortality to snails. However, there is more product choice in the metaldehyde range. In this range of products, Meta is one of the least expensive products on the market (\$4/ha) and is non-rainfast; Metakill is rainfast, is more expensive (\$8/ha) and contains 35 gai/kg more than Meta.

However, the caged trials show that the amount of active ingredient per bait does not affect mortality in snails.

In the field trials, less snails were found in plots with baits applied 2 or less weeks prior to crop germination. Baits applied 4 or more weeks prior to crop germination, need to be reapplied to suppress snail damage to germinating crops.

Results from Wellstead showed a significant interaction between the bait types and time of applications. It appears that at times of high rainfall/intense rainfall events, non-rainfast baits may be compromised and not as effective at controlling snail numbers.

Results from the field cages at Kendenup showed that baiting late in April when snails are actively moving and feeding will lead to a better kill.

From the results of the caged and field trials, it can be concluded that for protection at crop emergence, growers should be baiting close to the time of crop emergence. Depending on environmental conditions, cheaper non-rainfast baits can be just as effective as rainfast baits. However, the non-rainfast baits do lose efficacy in wet conditions and if longer term crop protection is needed, the rainfast baits are likely to be more effective. Multiple applications of non-rainfast baits may be another option.

Implications

The field trials show that rainfast baits are slightly more effective in achieving snail kill in the paddock than non-rainfast baits, particularly in wet conditions. In glasshouse caged trials Meta was one of best performing baits in terms of snail mortality. In field conditions, however, it's performance was reduced compared to that of Metarex (rainfast). This is likely due to loss of integrity (dissolving baits) of Meta in wet conditions, compared to Metarex lasting longer and able to be fed upon by snails for a longer time, achieving better crop protection.

The cost of baits generally increases with rain resistance qualities of the bait type (rainfastness). More than one bait application may be needed to control snails. The grower survey showed that while most growers baited a single time, 40% applied baits twice in a season. Multiple applications of a cheaper bait may still provide the same protection as a single application of a more expensive rainfast bait however application costs (labour, fuel etc) will be increased.

Table 1: Cost of applying rainfast baits at a single time versus non-rainfast baits twice in a season. Physical costs of application (labour/fuel etc) would of course be higher with multiple bait applications in a season, but may still work out just as cost effective.

Products	Active Ingredient (g/kg)	Cost \$/kg	Rate Spread at kg/ha	Cost \$/ha	Total cost of baits \$/ha
Metarex® (rainfast)	Metaldehyde 50g/kg	\$6/kg	5kg/ha	\$30.00/ha	\$30.00
Meta® (non-rainfast)	Metaldehyde 15g/kg	\$1.30/kg	7.5kg/ha	\$9.75/ha	\$19.50
Meta®	Metaldehyde 15g/kg	\$1.30/kg	7.5kg/ha	\$9.75ha	

The effectiveness of multiple baiting in a season as opposed to a single application on both crop protection and snail population numbers throughout the year is something that requires further investigation.

Recommendations

To minimise crop damage, baits need to be applied close to the time of germination. If baits are applied early in the season, then follow-up baiting is recommended to ensure crop protection at the time of emergence.

Growers are recommended to use rainfast baits to achieve a longer period of control if only baiting a single time, as cheaper non-rainfast baits appear to lose integrity quicker in the field when conditions are wet and become less effective at controlling snails and preventing crop damage.

Baiting more than once if snails are actively moving may decrease incidence of egg laying and reduce snail populations, but earlier baiting (post-harvest or pre-seeding by a few weeks) will need to be followed up by baiting around the time of seeding to prevent damage to emerging crops. Further work to follow up on snail populations later in the season, and at the time of harvest, would be beneficial to determine the impact of multiple baitings versus single baiting on snail population numbers.

Appendix A.

Snail and slug baiting practices grower survey – summary of results

See separately attached report.

Appendix B.

Treatment lists for the caged bait trials

Determining optimum rate and density of the 3 major bait types for small conical snail control

Treatment number	Active ingredient	Amount of active ingredient (g.a.i./kg)	Designation of amount of active ingredient for statistical analysis	Rate (kg of product/ha)	Number of bait points per square metre
1	Methiocarb	20		5.5	12
2	Methiocarb	20		5.5	48
3	Methiocarb	20		22	12
4	Methiocarb	20		22	48
5	Metaldehyde	15	Low	5	12
6	Metaldehyde	15	Low	5	48
7	Metaldehyde	15	Low	10	12
8	Metaldehyde	15	Low	10	48
9	Metaldehyde	30	High	2.5	12
10	Metaldehyde	30	High	2.5	48
11	Metaldehyde	30	High	5	12
12	Metaldehyde	30	High	5	48
13	Metaldehyde	50	High	1.5	12
14	Metaldehyde	50	High	1.5	48
15	Metaldehyde	50	High	3	12
16	Metaldehyde	50	High	3	48
17	Iron	60		5	12
18	Iron	60		5	48
19	Iron	60		16	12
20	Iron	60		16	48
21	Control	nil	Control	Nil	nil

Determining if rainfastness affects small conical snail control

Treatment number	Active ingredient	Rainfast Y or N	g.a.i./kg	Rate*(kg product/ha)
1	Metaldehyde	Y	50	3
2	Metaldehyde	Y	50	3
3	Metaldehyde	N	45	3.33
4	Metaldehyde	N	40	3.75
5	Metaldehyde	Y	30	5
6	Metaldehyde	Y	30	5
7	Metaldehyde	N	20	7.5
8	Metaldehyde	Y	18	8.333
9	Metaldehyde	N	15	10

10	Metaldehyde	N	15	10
11	Metaldehyde	N	15	10
12	Metaldehyde	N	15	10
13	Iron	Y	60	10
14	Iron	N	60	10
15	Control	Other	nil	nil

Determining the palatability of bait formulations on small conical snail control

Treatment number	Active ingredient	Tradename	gai/kg	Rate (kg/ha)
1	Metaldehyde	Metakill	50	3
2	Metaldehyde	Metarex	50	3
3	Metaldehyde	Deadline	40	3.75
4	Metaldehyde	Delicia, Slug Off	30	5
5	Metaldehyde	Slimax	30	5
6	Metaldehyde	David Grays	20	7.5
7	Metaldehyde	Slugout	18	8.333
8	Metaldehyde	Farmalinx, Snail Trail	15	10
9	Metaldehyde	Defender	15	10
10	Metaldehyde	Meta	15	10
11	Iron	Eradicate	60	10
12	Iron	Multiguard	60	10
13	Control	Nil	nil	nil

Appendix C.

Request for permission to include product and publish results – letter to bait companies

«AddressBlock»

6th September 2016

To whom it may concern,

Stirlings to Coast Farmers (Inc) are currently conducting snail baiting trials to determine the efficacy of a range of bait types and formulations. Please find attached a research protocol for an initial study, drawn up by experienced DAFWA researcher, Svetlana Micic, that may include one or more of your products.

We are seeking your consent for the results of these trials, in regard to your product/s, to be published. Please note that if we have not heard back from you in (14) days, no comment will be considered as consent.

Please contact myself or Svetlana Micic at the Albany DAFWA office (0427 772 051 or svetlana.micic@agric.wa.gov.au) for further information or to clarify any points about the research.

Kind regards,

Kathi McDonald

SCF Project Officer

m: 0408 418 531

e: kathi.mcdonald@scfarmers.org.au

Research Protocol: Determining the best bait for causing mortality in small pointed snail control (*Prietocella barbara*)

Research details

Research aim:

To find the most efficacious commercially available bait to control small pointed snails

Research background:

Trials have shown that *Prietocella barbara* does not actively search out baits. When given a choice of 4 different bait types, this snail species was found to randomly move around the enclosure and to not be attracted to a particular bait.

Trial design:

Proposed to run an enclosure trial with 4 replicates, with actively moving *Prietocella barbara* exposed to a single bait at the label rate. After 14 days the number of live and dead snails will be assessed.

There will be a single control, where snails are added with no baits.

Enclosures will be 0.11m² in area, with a moistened sand substrate with 50g of dried barley leaves added and spread randomly over the surface of the enclosure, mimicking farmed paddock. Snails at a density of at most 200 per square metre will be added to the enclosure.

Glossary and Acronyms

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
RCSN	Regional Cropping Solutions Network
SARDI	South Australian Research and Development Institute
WA	Western Australia

References

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pest-animals/snail-and-slug-control>

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/mycrop/diagnosing-snails-crops>

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/news/media-releases/dafwa-research-targets-slugs-and-snails>

'Bash 'Em Burn 'Em Bai t'Em – Integrated snail management in crops and pastures' produced by GRDC, SARDI and SAGIT. www.grdc.com.au/GRDC-Snails-BashBurnBait

'Snail Identification and control – the back-pocket guide' produced by GRDC.

Social Media Posting

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Is there any reason why this report cannot be communicated on social media?

a. *No*

If no, please provide the following:

1. Who is the target audience for this content? (e.g., growers, adviser, researchers, policy makers, etc.)

a. *Growers and advisers*

2. At what time of year is this content most relevant to the target audience?

a. *After harvest and before seeding*

3. On which of GRDC's social media accounts would you like this content posted? Please provide text (2-3 sentences for Facebook and LinkedIn and 140 characters for Twitter), images, graphs, or charts that support the content. Where applicable, please include any relevant Twitter handles (usernames) for project staff.

a. *Facebook and/or Twitter*

Apply snail baits close to the time of crop germination to prevent damage from snails on emerging crops. Make sure spreaders are calibrated to achieve an even spread of baits across the paddock.