

SCF Focus

STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS

AUTUMN 2022 NEWSLETTER

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STIRLINGS TO COAST





JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Sandy Forbes, SCF Chairman

Hello to all Stirlings to Coast Members, Sponsors and Staff.

Welcome to a new farming season ahead and I trust you had a bit of a break over summer. I've taken on the role as Chairman from Jon Beasley who is enjoying retirement in Tasmania! Thanks to Jon for his great contribution as board member and Chairman and all the best to him and Felicity.

Last year certainly threw up some very different challenges from 2020, with too much rain creating headaches for cropping. Despite this, there are some very good yield results from parts of the region and

especially surprising from late sown crops. Record prices for canola were a huge boost to the bottom line. It is also prudent to consider that some had crop failures, especially with canola, and had a difficult year. This year we negotiate our way through very high input costs, equipment and input availability and the ongoing labour shortages but with the knowledge that we have soil moisture to work with.

Livestock continued to be highly profitable with continuing high prices and some records broken at sales around the country. There has never been a better time to invest in pastures, infrastructure, better management and genetics with both sheep and cattle. As livestock is my passion I'll certainly be working closely with the great people and knowledge base in the SCF area to capitalise on this for our members.

Once again, the staff at Stirlings to Coast, under the guidance of CEO Nathan Dovey, have excelled themselves in working with farmers and agribusinesses delivering timely and relevant info to all our members. We are lucky to have such great people working within SCF and I very much look forward to working with them.

We also welcome Amy Sims to our Board and as Chair of the Finance Committee, having replaced Rebecca Willis while she is on maternity leave. Thank you very much to Rebecca for her efforts in streamlining our financial reporting and we wish her the very best with the new addition to her family.

All the best for the start of 2022.

Sandy Forbes, Chairman

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GOLD



Rabobank





CEO REPORT

Nathan Dovey, SCF CEO

Hi everyone, and welcome to the first newsletter of 2022. Last year's harvest was a record breaker for WA, with over 24 million tonnes of grain produced in WA. Locally, the waterlogging certainly cut yields back, but I am hearing many growers were pleasantly surprised with their yield from late sown crops. This was especially true for wheat and barley, with canola yields generally poor from late seeded crops.

Input costs for the coming season are high, but at least projected grain prices are also predicted to be good. We will hear more about this topic from Rabobank at the upcoming 'Trials Review Day' on the 17th of March. The location is Sounness Park in Mt Barker. Your support would be much appreciated at this event, and it should be a great way to start the 2022 year.

SCF staff are busy collecting data and writing final reports on our projects. We will be bringing this information to you via the 'Trials Review Day' and of course, the 'Trials Review Booklet'. The booklet should be out in late April, so keep an eye out for that.

I want to make a quick call out for new trial site hosts in 2022. We are looking for hosts in the following areas:

- Experienced Faba bean or lupin grower to host a small plot trial and complete a farm-equipment scale demonstration (same paddock).
- High Rainfall Zone (HRZ) Yield constraints project, looking for canola and barley growers for farm-scale trials in both crops. Last year, our canola trials were ruined by waterlogging, which means we need to repeat those and complete some barley demonstrations in 2022.

If you think you could help with either of these projects, please get in touch with me or any of the SCF staff. If you have not hosted a trial in a while, don't worry, our staff can clearly explain your responsibilities and what you need to do during the season. We like to illustrate all components to ensure members are comfortable before agreeing to host a trial or demonstration. In most cases now, we can utilize your harvest yield monitor to collect the yield results, which stops SCF from needing to interrupt your harvest logistics. Thanks again to all members that hosted a trial in 2021 or previous years. All members benefit from the sacrifices in time and effort you have made.



SAVE THE DATES



Spring Field Day East (Green Range/South Stirlings)

22 September

Spring Field Day West (Tenterden/Kendenup)

29 September

TRIALS REVIEW DAY

17 MARCH @ 11AM, SOUNNESS PARK
MT BARKER

The event will wrap up the SCF 2021 trial results and include forward-looking presentations from Meredith Guthrie (DPIRD) on weather and climate outlooks for this season. Rabobank will have two analysts discussing the 12-month outlook for grains, oilseeds and farm inputs. Dennis Voznesenski and Wesley Lefroy will discuss what impact the conflict between Russia and Ukraine already had on markets and what it means for the future, including the impact on prices and trade flows. In the final session, we will hear from local agronomists James Bee (Elders), Wayne Birch (Farmanco) and Kirsty Smith (Nutrien) discussing some of the critical lessons learned from the wet and waterlogged 2021 season.

Please note: To attend this event you must be fully vaccinated and have proof of such when attending. Masks will be required to be worn at all appropriate times throughout the event also.

10:30am	Registration and coffee
11:00am	Welcome – Sandy Forbes, SCF Chair
11:10am	Rabobank- Season outlook for grain & oilseed prices plus rising farm input costs.
11:50am	'On-the-go' soil pH - Philip Honey
12:10pm	Hyper Yielding Crops Results- Key findings from the 2021 Frankland small plot trials & implications for local growers.
12:40pm	Weather/Climate Outlook for 2022- Meredith Guthrie (DPIRD)
1:10pm	Lunch
2:10pm	"Turbo Talks" – A quick Snapshot of results from six current SCF projects for the GRDC & MLA.
3:40pm	Afternoon Tea
4:10pm	Local Agronomy Panel- Reflections & lessons learned from a wet 2021 season
5pm	Social Drinks

TO RSVP HEAD TO [BIT.LY/SCFTRD22](https://bit.ly/SCFTRD22)

CURRENT PROJECTS



PROJECT TITLE	GROWER HOST	INVESTMENT PARTNER	FINISH DATE
Ripper Gauge	Clint Williss	GRDC	Mar-23
High Rainfall Zone - Yield Constraints	Mal Thomson & Andrew Slade	GRDC	Mar-23
Non-Wetting Soils	Michael Webster	Southern Dirt/GRDC	Mar-22
Subsoil Drainage	Preston family & Kieran Allison	GRDC	May-24
Alternative Forage Crops	Metcalfe, Pyle, Smith	MLA	Apr-23
On-The-Go pH testing	Martin & Tammy Wiehl	NLP	Nov-22
Soils Extension	Mackie, Tomlinson, Wood	NLP	Nov-22
Hyper Yielding Crops	Beasley, Preston, Hood & others	FAR Australia/GRDC	Jun-22
Soil Pathogens	Hunt family	GGA/GRDC	Jun-23
Subsoil Manuring	First Australian Farmland Peter Van Zeyl	NLP	Jun-23
Pasture Optimisation	TBA	NLP	Jun-23
Water Use Efficiency	Multiple	AgriFutures	May-22
Future Drought Fund	Multiple	DAWE	Jun-22
Summer Cropping Options	Walker, Curwen	GRDC	Mar-23
Stubble Height	Slade Family	GRDC	Feb-25
Harvest Losses	Various	GRDC	Nov-22
Sheep Confinement Feeding	Griffiths, Walker, Webster	MLA	Mar-24
Wheat Falling Number	Various	GRDC	Jun-22



meet the new board member **Amy Sims**

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Koorda, a small town in the Wheatbelt although we were townies, my parents were shearing contractors and later worked at CBH.

I went to boarding school at Iona Presentation College for my final years of high school, making many lifelong friends from all over WA

What has your career looked like so far?

Whilst away at boarding school my family moved to Albany, as my parents transferred with CBH. The next three years were spent completing a Bachelor of Commerce at Curtin University and CBH office administrator in Jerramungup over harvest/uni break each year.

Fresh out of uni I moved to Albany in 2003 after accepting a job with RSM through their CA Program (Chartered Accountant). The start of my career as an accountant.

In 2008, Craig and I semi eloped to Hamilton Island with our immediate family. It was also the year I completed my CA and moved to Lincolns Accountants. With too much time on my hands (pre children obviously) I volunteered to join the board for Albany Community Hospice and later the Small Business Centre filling the treasurer role.

2012 the journey of parenthood began welcoming the first of our two sons. Priorities changed, working a bit less and volunteer positions moved over to the daycare centre and now the school P&C.

Recently I moved to Smith Thornton where the grass is a lot greener.

What lead you to accounting?

Accounting was my favourite subject at High School. I was good with numbers and liked the fact that you were either right or wrong. Accounting was a field you were almost guaranteed a job at the end of uni. It was a no brainer.

What are some of your biggest passions and why?

My biggest passion is making things happen. I love to think outside the box when brainstorming ideas, be creative and then most of all seeing ideas come to life.

I am motivated by other people's enthusiasm and prefer to actively be involved rather than just be a spectator.

What do you hope to bring to the SCF board?

I am excited to be a part of the SCF board and share my experience with not for profit organisations. I have heard bits and pieces about the organisation over the years although I look forward to hearing more first hand and how this will benefit my clients also.



meet the member

Lucy Anderton

Region: In the Frankland River and Fitzgerald

Farm name: Minyara & Coopertup

Size of farm: 450 hectares with forest gravels & loam at Minyara and 2800 hectares with a mixture of sand over clay duplexes and loam over clay duplexes at Coopertup.

Year joined SCF: 2020

What sort of enterprises do you run? (eg. Crop/livestock, species/breed, flock size)

Our farming mix has traditionally been 40% crop and 60% sheep with a focus on wool and prime lamb production. We breed our replacement ewes at Fitzgerald for our flock at Frankland where we focus more on prime lamb production.

Since purchasing Minyara in Frankland River in 2016 we have grown canola, oats, barley and wheat. In 2021 we mated 1000 Merino ewes to Poll Dorsets and planted barley and Massive oats for hay. We also downsized our operation at Fitzgerald and leased part of the farm to our neighbour, but we have retained another 1100 Merino ewes mated to Merino rams, utilising the stubbles and annual pastures with a focus on producing quality wool. Our dry stock graze 7000 acres of oil mallee trees allowing us to sell the wethers in winter.

What are some of your biggest passions and why?

Shearing and seeing the wool harvest is a great time of the year on the farm especially seeing the sheep in good condition off shears and the wool is looking white and bright. Seeing our prime lambs growing at different stages over the spring until they are ready to sell is one of the pleasures of farming. It has taken me a long time to appreciate putting them on a truck when they are ready to go but the current prices help to make it seem more acceptable.

Perhaps our greatest passion we share are our dogs, they are a vital part of the team and both of us are passionate about getting the best out of them, they also provide great company and generally don't argue in the sheep yards.

What are some of the most significant constraints to achieve higher productivity on your farm? – NOT including rainfall!!

We have recognised the importance of improving the quality of our pastures to improve our productivity so our focus in the next few years is to renovate and improve our pastures.

Is there anything that you do on-farm that is slightly different to the so called 'norm' that is interesting?

In the last four years, we have been trialling a new farm management product called myFARMSMART which I have developed as part of my other life. My other passion or "hobby" besides farming has been working as an agriculture economist. I worked for DPIRD for several years, but in 2016 when we purchased Minyara I started a project with a grower group in the Eastern Wheatbelt to develop a decision support tool for farmers to evaluate farm performance and risk. myFARMSMART is a decision support tool for farmers which we have now used since 2018 on our farm. One of the great things about it is that it facilitates our decisions in a format we both understand. When we are in planning mode and sit down together to run through the figures it is quick to use and easy to understand, it means both of us can stay focused and the decisions are much clearer.

What technologies are you using on-farm? If so what is it (eg. Yield mapping, VR applications, security cameras, tank sensors etc.) and how has it shaped your farm?

Besides myFARMSMART for our decision making the other technologies we have implemented include lick feeders which we started using in 2018. Moving to a new rainfall environment in 2016 has meant learning a new farming system and after 2017 at Frankland which had a relatively late break and pastures were

slow to grow, we decided feeding sheep on the ground in wet conditions needed to change. Since introducing lick feeders to our system at both farms it has taken the stress out of feeding sheep, reduced grain wastage and reduced labour hours. By providing a consistent supply of feed the additional output in wool, growth rates and meat production have compensated for the relatively small additional cost in grain.

The lick feeders are also used to reduce numbers on our pastures early winter which then helps with pasture growth. We plan on introducing good quality hay into our feeding system in 2022 to improve the efficiencies of grain feeding, provide a good quality dry matter and help pastures grow.

Are you currently trialling anything yourself? – This could include experimenting with soil wetters, crop varieties, fertiliser rates, soil amelioration, pastures, technologies.

In 2021 we grew Massive Oats for the first time, to make hay. Next year we plan to grow some for hay and some to graze before harvesting.

Is there anything that you would like to test or trial in the next 2 years?

In the next couple of years, we are aiming to improve lamb growth rates and stocking rates by improving quality of pastures. Attending the livestock field day at Genstock in the middle of the year and seeing the quality of the improved pasture has inspired us to investigate how we can improve our pastures.

What do you think the next big thing in agriculture will be in 5 to 10 years?

A combination of precision agriculture and robotic technology will create significant changes in on-farm technology for cropping in the next 5 to 10 years. Yet despite all the potential changes in the cropping enterprise and potentially the livestock with individual animal management, the sheep industry appears reliant on shearers for the next 5 to 10 years. The impact of Government policies around carbon farming will also create change, which at this stage appears unclear, but our markets will create a demand pull on us to become more carbon neutral and more environmentally conscious – this is where I can see precision technology will be used.

Do you attend any agriculture field days other than SCF?

Michael attends the RAIN field days and I have presented at several over the years including GRDC updates in Jerramungup, Lake King and Merredin in 2019. I have also presented at several field days for Merredin and Districts Farm Improvement Group (MADFIG) and the Far Eastern Agriculture Research Group (FEAR). We attend the Frankland Rural field days when we can.

We usually attend Newdegate field day and last year I demonstrated myFARMSMART. I am planning on attending Woolorama 2022 to demonstrate myFARMSMART to farmers.



Lucy Anderton with her partner Michael Dougherty.



Perhaps our greatest passion we share are our dogs, they are a vital part of the team and both of us are passionate about getting the best out of them, they also provide great company and generally don't argue in the sheep yards.





Soil amelioration – Timing of ripping

Dan Fay, Project Officer, SCF

Stirlings to Coast Farmers has just completed the first year of a trial assessing the effectiveness of deep ripping post-seeding as an amelioration technique in the Albany Port Zone. This trial is part of GRDC’s investment in soil amelioration strategies to improve the soil quality of WA.

A farm-scale trial was implemented to measure the effectiveness of the post-seeding ripping treatments (1 week after, three weeks after, six weeks after) against the standard pre-seeding ripping treatment and untreated control (UTC). Although all four ripping treatments effectively reduced soil compaction, the post-seeding ripping treatments had a significant negative impact on plant growth.

PLANT ESTABLISHMENT AND BIOMASS

All three post-seeding ripping treatments caused a burial effect that reduced plant numbers and plant biomass when measured 11 days after the 6-week ripping treatment was applied. The reduction in both plants per m² and dry matter per m² is seen across all three post-seeding treatments, whilst the pre-seeding ripping treatment performed better than the UTC (figure 1). This highlights the physical damage that the deep ripping post-seeding causes. Interestingly the one-week post-seeding rip reduced plant numbers but had greater biomass. This shows the ability of the crop to recover after ripping if the plants do not die.

YIELDS

All three post-seeding ripping treatments negatively impacted barley yields. Whilst the pre-seeding ripping treatments performed better than the untreated control. The yield penalty resulting from the three weeks after and six weeks after seeding treatments was 1.5t/ha compared to pre-seeding deep ripping, whilst the one-week post-seeding treatment yielded similar to the untreated control. Interestingly the final yields mirror the GS25 dry matter measurements, which suggest that it is the initial mechanical damage caused by the post-seeding ripping that limits yields rather than plant symptoms or stressors that arose from the in-season ripping.

CONCLUSION

Deep ripping post-seeding was effective in reducing soil strength and alleviating compaction. Still, the resulting in-season yield penalty was too costly to warrant the adoption of post-seeding ripping. Given the multi-year lifespan of ripping, the long-term economic benefits of post seeding ripping could still be realised over the efficacy period of the ripping.

IMPORTANT NOTE

In this trial, the deep ripping was completed with inclusion plates still on the machine. Inclusion plates would have increased the level of soil disturbance, and therefore this trial would need repeating without the inclusion plates to assess the impacts in that scenario.

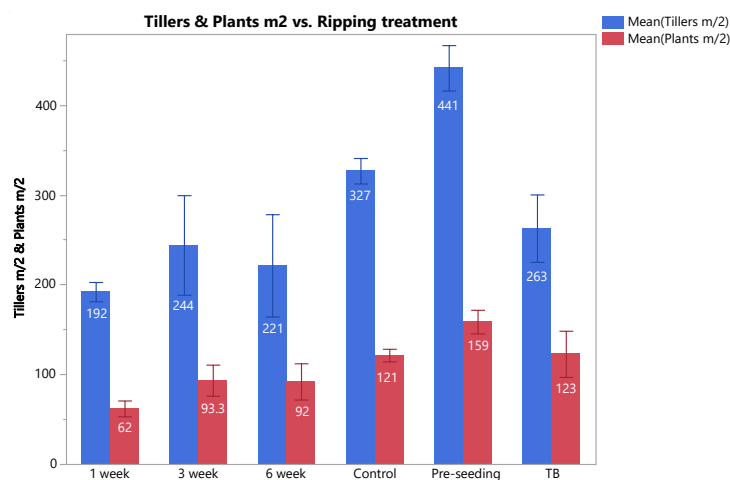


Figure 1: Graph shows the average plants and tillers per m², in response to each ripping treatment at GS24.

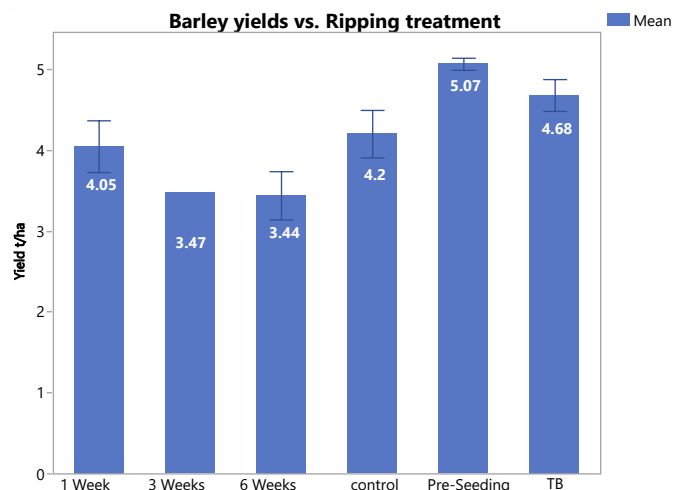


Figure 2: Average yields t/ha recorded via yield monitor for each ripping treatment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to the Willis family for hosting the trial site and the GRDC for investing in the project.



MLA Producer Demonstration: Pyle Sites

Samantha Cullen, Membership Officer, SCF

Trial Host: David Pyle

KEY MESSAGES:

- Pallaton Raphno had a higher nutritional value (NV) than the canola stubble control. This included a higher crude protein, digestibility and metabolisable energy.
- Excellent weight gain was achieved by lambs on the Raphno with 141g/head/day more than the canola stubble.
- Lamb live weight gain was 7.66kg/ha/day for the Raphno, which was more than double the canola stubble, at 3.57 kg/ha/day.

LOCATION- South Stirlings

SOIL TYPE- Sand

CONTROL- Canola stubble with a clover dominant pasture underneath, 30ha, 670 lambs, 22.3 lambs/ha

VARIABLE- Pallaton Raphno, 59ha, 1580 lambs, 26.8 lambs/ha

BACKGROUND

In 2020 Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) began a project with Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) looking at alternative forage crops for southern WA. The project is currently finalising data from the second of the three years. The aim of the project is to measure the benefit that alternate summer forages, such as Pallaton Raphno, Sorghum and Millet, can contribute to livestock weight gain and carrying capacity. The alternate forage crops were compared to traditional feed sources such as dry pastures and crop stubbles. The Great Southern region's decile 10 rainfall has delayed seeding for two of the forage crop demonstration sites (Smith and Metcalfe). Below are the summarised results obtained from Pyle's demonstration site.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Figure 1 and 2: Left, photo of Pyle's 30ha Canola stubble control on Nov 25, 2021. Right, the same crop Dec 17, 2021, when the control mob were removed.



Figure 3 and 4: Left, photo of Pyle's 59ha Pallaton Raphno crop on Nov 25, 2021. Right, the same crop Dec 17, 2021, when the control mob were added to this paddock.



Table 1: Summary of the rainfall since August 20, 2021, from Pyle's digital rain gauge located in the Raphno paddock.

Period	Date (2021)	Rainfall (mm)
1 month prior to seeding	August 20 to September 20	74.8
Seeding to stock entering	September 21 to November 25	116.8
Stock in to stock removed	November 26 to December 17	3.6
Total rainfall	August 20 - December 17	195.2

Table 2: Key nutritional value analysis of forages (full analysis published in the SCF trials review booklet)

NV Analysis	Canola Stubble	Pallaton Raphno
Dry Matter (DM)	26.8 %	16.1 %
Moisture	73.2 %	83.9 %
Crude Protein	11.4 % of DM	16.6 % of DM
Digestibility (DMD)	54.8 % of DM	82.0 % of DM
Est. Metabolisable Energy	7.8 MJ/kg DM	12.5 MJ/kg DM

Table 3: The Average lamb weights recorded on December 3 2021 (Weigh In) and January 4 2022 (Weigh Out), and average liveweight gain across the 30 days.

Forage	Weigh In (Avg kg)	Weigh Out Avg kg)	Weight gain (Avg Kg)	Avg weight gain g/ hd/day	Weight gain g/ ha/day
Canola Stubble	38.2	41.4	3.2	145	3.57
Raphno	40.1	46.4	6.3	286	7.66

The demonstration compares two paddocks; a regrowth Canola stubble containing a clover-based pasture and a Pallaton Raphno stand.

The Raphno was sown on September 20 2021. Biomass cuts, soil samples and plant samples for nutritive value (NV) analysis were taken November 25, the same day lambs were weighed and introduced. Lambs recorded average weights of 38.2kg and 40.1kg for the canola stubble and the Raphno, respectively. The two paddocks had vastly different available biomass, with 2.54t/ha for the control paddock and 4.05t/ha for the Raphno. NV analysis revealed the Raphno was a much higher feed quality, possessing higher digestibility, metabolisable energy and crude protein than the canola stubble pasture mix (Table 2). David Pyle noted that the Raphno paddock was under stocked carrying 26.8 lambs per hectare and ideally the stocking rate would have been above 30 lambs per hectare.

At the conclusion of grazing, the canola stubble had been exhausted and the 670 sheep from the control mob were then added to the 1580 Raphno mob on December 17. Figure 4 shows that there was still plenty of biomass left in the Raphno paddock at this time.

Once weighed, lambs were found to have averaged 145g/hd/day on canola and 286g/hd/day on Raphno. This resulted in an extra 141g/hd/day produced on the Raphno, nearly double the

average daily gain (ADG) of lambs on canola. Once the stocking rate had been accounted for, the extra lamb weight gain for Raphno over canola was found to be over 4kg/ha/day. Lambs continued to graze the Raphno at a stocking rate of 38 lambs / ha for three weeks. That grazing pressure removed all leaf area from the Raphno. Seven weeks on David reports "The Raphno is looking good, roughly a foot tall, with blanket coverage. Unfortunately we have had a very dry summer, with only one 10mm rainfall event." SCF plan to collect more data at the next grazing opportunity planned for March.

For a more in-depth analysis and results from our other MLA PDS sites look out for our Trials Review Booklet, coming soon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our PDS hosts Pyles (Raphno vs Canola stubble), Smiths (Millet vs Barley stubble) and Metcalfes (Sorghum vs ryegrass).

This project is supported through funding from Meat and Livestock Australia.



Figure 5: David collecting final weights on Dec 17.



Figure 6: Lambs weighed from the Raphno paddock.



Hyper Yielding Crops Projects - Focus Farm

Dan Fay, Project Officer, SCF

Hosts: Ashton Hood, Jon Beasley & Mark Preston

KEY MESSAGES:

- The two Rockstar seeding rate trials resulted in differing levels of yield response, resulting from the different environmental conditions they were seeded into.
- There was no yield response from seeding rate in the Frankland River Kinsei trial.
- The Mobrurp and Kojaneerup South trials were impacted by severe waterlogging which limited yield potential across all trial plots.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the FAR Australia hyper yield cropping program three wheat sowing rate trials were established to determine optimal rates to maximise grain yields in the Albany Port Zone (APZ). The FAR Australia project focuses on the upscaling of research conducted at the hyper yielding research centres at Frankland (Gunwarrie) and Esperance.

The aim of the three trials was to assess the impact of differing seeding rates on Rockstar and Kinsei wheat yields. This was a broadscale trial set within an existing paddock, where the wheat plots would be integrated into the existing agronomic system. The trials aimed to determine if higher seeding rates would improve yields without making any changes to the agronomic package planned for the rest of paddock. Seeding rate recommendations are often based on broad parameters that are not tailored to specific environmental and agronomic conditions. This trial aimed to provide farmers with clarity as to how differing seeding rates perform in the APZ.

Each of the three trials were subject to waterlogging to differing degrees throughout the season, however the Kojaneerup South site was more severely affected than the other sites. It is likely that yields across all sites were affected by waterlogging. As a consequence of each site undergoing prolonged periods of waterlogging (>20 days above field capacity), we were presented with a unique opportunity to assess how seeding rates are affected by or mitigate waterlogging on a paddock scale. Given the nature of the constraint, there is limited paddock scale research around the relationship between seeding rate/plant population and waterlogging.

METHOD

The three trials were located at Kojaneerup South, Mobrurp and Frankland River. These three locations capture differing soil types that are commonly found within the APZ. The Mobrurp site is located on forest gravel, the Frankland site is typified by loamy sand, and Kojaneerup South is located on a low lying sandy duplex.

This trial was a fully replicated field scale trial which aimed to determine the optimum seeding rate for Kinsei (noodle) and Rockstar (AH) to maximise yields in the HRZ of WA. The three trials were agronomically managed in line with the surrounding crop, which was seeded at 90kg/ha for the Frankland River Kinsei and 110kg/ha for the Mobrurp and Kojaneerup Rockstar sites. The seeding rates within each trial ranged from a low to high rate. This allowed us to assess how higher seeding rates perform under existing agronomic management strategies.

It should be noted that a frost event affected the Mobrurp trial site, with portions of the second replication being adversely impacted. Given the plots were 300m in length the second replication was able to be adjusted to form a more indicative data pool.

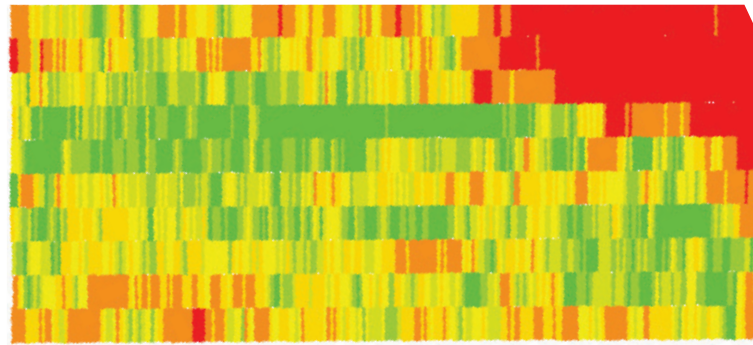


Figure 1: Moberup Rockstar trial yield map, the red zones indicate a significant area affected by a frost event late in the season, in which yields were significantly penalised.

GROWING SEASON RESULTS:

The results differed at each trial site, and we found that there was no uniform yield response to seeding rate across all three of the sites. This was not unexpected, given each site was managed individually and was subject to differing environmental conditions.

The Frankland River (Kinsei) trial resulted in no significant difference in yield or grain quality resulting from the changes in seeding rate (figure 2). The 90kg/ha plot which was seeded at the same rate as the surrounding paddock yielded approximately 0.5t/ha better than the heavier seeding rates. Plant establishment counts taken before tillering followed a linear trend (figure 3), which suggests that there has been failure among the higher seeding rates to convert early season biomass to grain yield.

Within each Kinsei plot there were areas that had been significantly affected by waterlogging with lower lying points in each run suffering periods of stress, however this did not result in any noticeable yield penalty in these zones of the plots at the end of the season. This could suggest that the Kinsei variety of wheat is able to recover from periods of waterlogging stress without a major yield penalty.

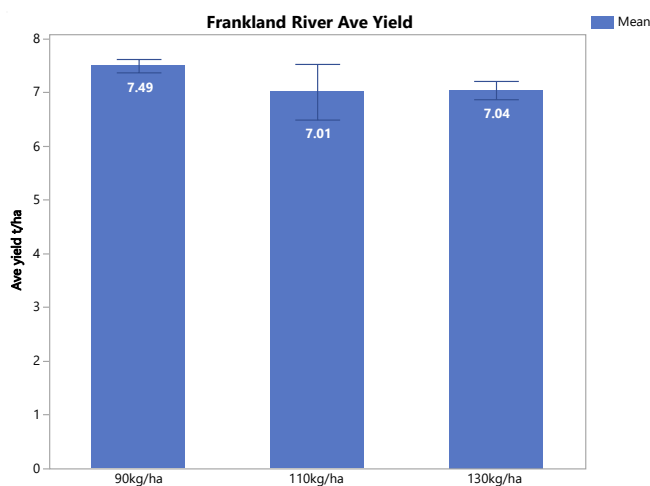


Figure 2: Frankland River harvest yields (t/ha) by seeding rate, yields were taken from calibrated yield monitor

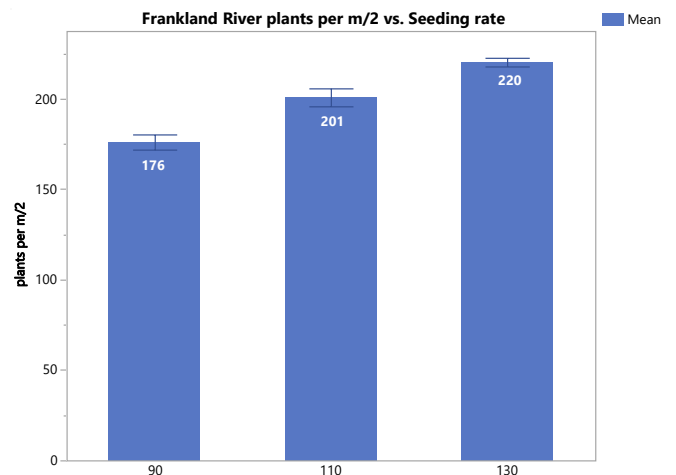


Figure 3: Frankland River plants per m/2 by seeding rate at GS20



MOBRUP RESULTS:

The Rockstar trial site at Moberup saw the greatest response of yield from seeding rate. With a clear pattern emerging whereby as the seeding rate increased, so did the yield response, excluding the 160kg/ha plots (figure 4). The yield results largely follow the trend observed in the plant counts conducted throughout the season (figure 5). It was observed that among the two highest seeding rates (140 & 160kg/ha), there was a lot of dead plant material and failed tillers at the time of flowering, which speaks to the failure of the 160kg/ha plot to convert plant establishment to grain yield.

The Moberup results suggest that a higher seeding at a rate of 140kg/ha would result in a yield that is statistically greater than rates of 80 and 100kg/ha. The 140kg/ha rate also appears to be the upper limit for seeding Rockstar in Kojaneerup and Moberup.

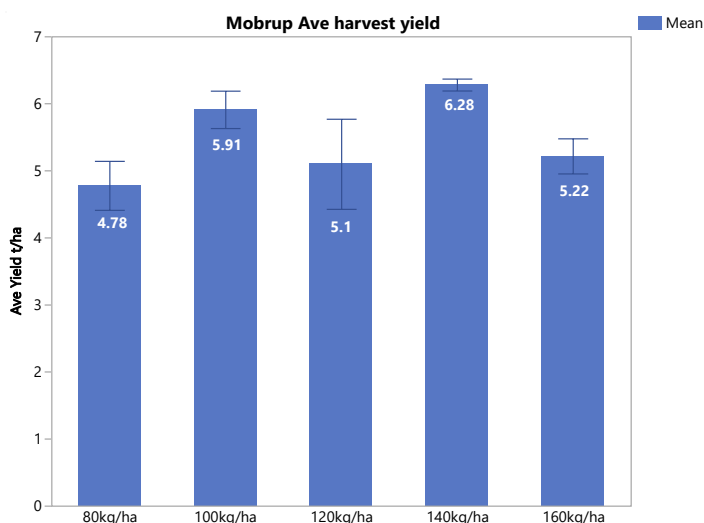


Figure 4: Moberup harvest yields (t/ha) by seeding rate (kg/ha), yields were taken from calibrated yield monitor, and include the frost effected zones.

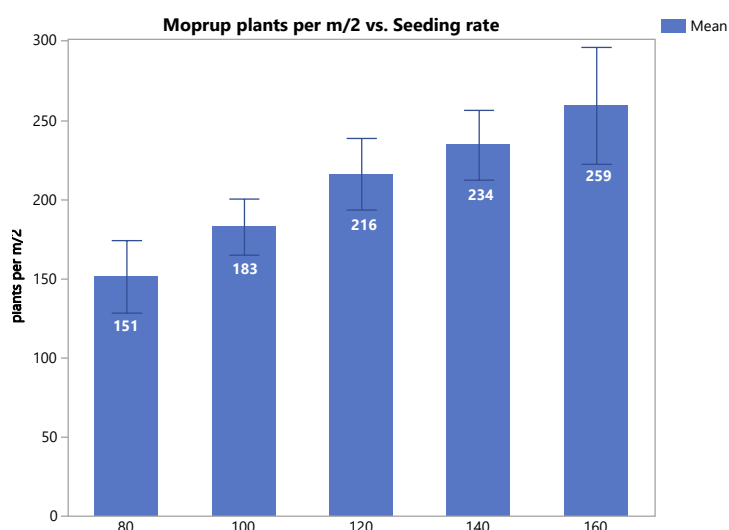


Figure 5: Moberup plants per m/2 by seeding rate (kg/ha) at GS20

KOJANEERUP SOUTH RESULTS:

The preliminary results showed no significant relationship between seeding rate and yield found at Kojaneerup South. However, at the time of print the data is still being analysed. The plots at Kojaneerup south were heavily impacted by waterlogging, which likely limited yield potential irrespective of the seeding rate. Early in the growing season a linear relationship between plant numbers and seeding rate was observed pre-tillering similar to the other two sites, albeit with a greater standard deviation (figure 6). This greater variance was due to large areas within the plots being subject to significant waterlogging from the time of sowing. The plant count and yield results for Kojaneerup South were overall lower than that of Moberup and Frankland River.

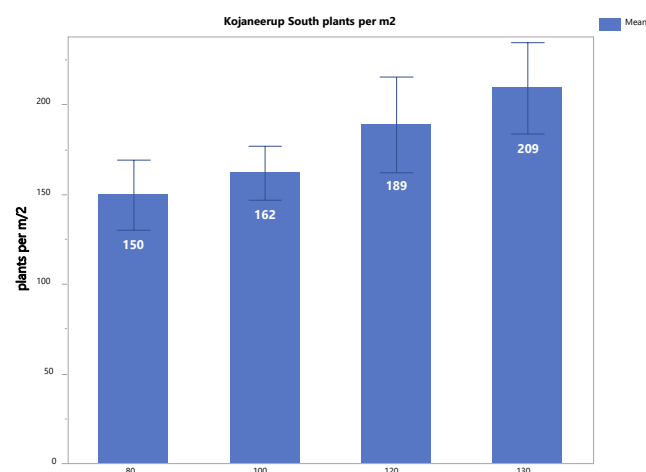


Figure 6: Kojaneerup South plants per m/2 by seeding rate (kg/ha) at GS20



DISCUSSION

The results from these trials show that the relationship between yield and seeding rate is variable and is dependent on a range of factors. Environmental conditions and agronomic management play a significant role in the final yield outcomes, irrespective of the seeding rates. Whilst the Moberup trial showed there was an advantage to be gained from sowing heavier, the same relationship was not replicated at Kojaneerup South. Whilst the Kinsei trial suggested the optimal seeding rate could be 90kg/ha, it would be interesting to further explore how lowering the seeding rate would impact yield, given the lowest rate trialed resulted in the greatest yield.

The extensive waterlogging allowed us to study the relationship between waterlogging and sowing rate. We hypothesized that the heavier seeding rates would result in a greater yield response in the waterlogged conditions, given plant available water would not be a limiting factor irrespective of the increased demand resulting from the higher seeding rates. However, the results from these trials show increased seeding rates failed to significantly outperform the typical rates (90 kg/ha for Kinsei, 110kg/ha Rockstar).

The trial sites were exposed to extended periods of waterlogging that would limit the yield potential of the crops irrespective of the seeding rate. At times throughout the growing period the plot trials looked nitrogen deficient. Nutrient deficiencies were likely induced by a combination of waterlogging impacting root hydraulic conductivity and increased nitrogen losses through leaching and runoff. On top of this, excessive waterlogging reduces photosynthetic rates and carbon fixation through stomatal closure. These factors likely combined to reduce yields across all the plots at all the trial sites. Environmental constraint became the foremost yield determining factor irrespective of the seeding rate. It would be informative to conduct these rate trials under a typical year where waterlogging was not a major environmental constraint. This would provide greater clarity as to what the optimal seeding rate for the HRZ is. It should be noted, the nutrient package for each treatment was tailored to the control seeding rate (90kg/ha Frankland River, 110kg/ha Moberup, and 110kg/ha Kojaneerup South), and this invariably would have impacted the plant available nutrients, with lower seeding rates potentially benefiting from ample available nutrients, whilst the higher seeding rates would be impacted by less than adequate nutrition to support the number of plants that emerged.

CONCLUSION

This trial demonstrates that the relationship between seeding rate and yield is one that is multi-faceted and although there is a potential for yield gains from upping seeding rates in Rockstar wheat, this would be reliant on other agronomic and environmental factors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to Mark Preston, Ashton Hood and Jon Beasley for hosting these trials in 2021.

Thank you to FAR Australia & the GRDC for collaborating and investing in this project.





Non-wetting management options for growers in the Albany Port Zone

Nathan Dovey, CEO, SCF

Trial Host: Michael Webster

KEY MESSAGES:

- There were no significant differences between wheat yields in 2021 from the wetting agent treatments applied in 2020.
- There were no residual yield benefits in 2021 from any wetting agent treatments applied in 2020.
- Growing season rainfall between April 1 and October 30 at the West Kendenup DPIRD weather station was 698.4mm (Decile 10). This effectively removed any non-wetting soil constraint for the 2021 season.

BACKGROUND:

Non-wetting expression can be very problematic for growers with forest gravels, due to their reliance on late summer and early season rains to alleviate the soil's non-wetting properties for plant germination. Non-wetting soils result in patchy and delayed crops, staggered weed germination, increased water erosion, and difficulty spraying crops with different growth stages. Growers are looking at cheaper alleviation rather than expensive mechanical soil amelioration to improve crop establishment in non-wetting soils.

Recent non-wetting mitigation options that have been explored include wetters, on-row seeding, near-row seeding and stubble retention. There are a range of wetting agents on the market. Wetters can be placed on the seed, below the seed, in the seed contact zone or on the furrow surface. Previous research by Glenn McDonald (DPIRD) found that wetting agents will help crop germination and water infiltration at the end of the season, assisting grain filling. He also noted a long-term cumulative benefit of using soil wetters in paddocks. Anecdotally, growers have also observed an incremental benefit from applying soil wetters year after year.

This trial aims to determine the best rate and placement of soil wetters for growers to mitigate non-wetting effects and achieve the best possible crop emergence without mechanical disturbance of non-wetting forest gravel soils.

METHOD:

In 2020, the following treatments were applied to a canola crop in the Webster/Beech's Tenterden paddock.

- 1 *Untreated Control*
- 2 *2 Lt/ha SE14 behind press wheel*
- 3 *4 Lt/ha SE14 behind press wheel*
- 4 *2 Lt/tonne SE14 on seed*
- 5 *4 Lt/tonne SE14 on seed*
- 6 *2 Lt/ha SE14 behind tyne & 2 Lt/ha behind press wheel*
- 7 *1 Lt/ha SE14 behind tyne & 1 Lt/ha behind press wheel*
- 8 *2 Lt/ha SE14 behind tyne*
- 9 *4 Lt/ha SE14 behind tyne*
- 10 *2 Lt/ha BASF Divine behind press wheel*
- 11 *2 Lt/tonne on Seed & 1Lt/ha behind press wheel*

A complete summary of the 2020 results can be found in the projects section of the SCF website (www.scfarmers.org.au/nonwetting). In 2021, we did not add further treatments to the wheat crop sown on 22 May. The aim in 2021 was to measure any yield benefits to the second crop due to the wetting agents applied in 2020.



RESULTS (2021):

- There were no significant differences between wheat yields in 2021 from the wetting agent treatments applied in 2020.
- There were no residual yield benefits in 2021 from any wetting agent treatments applied in 2020.
- There were no cumulative yield benefits obtained in 2020 & 2021 from any wetting agent treatments, compared to the untreated control.
- There was 698.4mm (Decile 10) rainfall between April 1-October 30 at the nearest (West Kendenup) DPIRD weather station. This effectively removed the non-wetting soil constraint in 2021.

SUMMARY:

The exceptionally wet 2021 season mitigated the non-wetting nature of the forest gravel soil at Tenterden. Statistical analysis accounting for spatial effects was conducted by Andrew VanBurgel (DPIRD), but we were unable to measure significant residual grain yield benefits in 2021 from the treatments applied in 2020. This does not mean there are no residual benefits from using wetting agents; it just means we were unable to provide supporting evidence to this hypothesis from the research completed in this project.

The two most crucial project results were obtained in 2020 when canola was planted. They were:

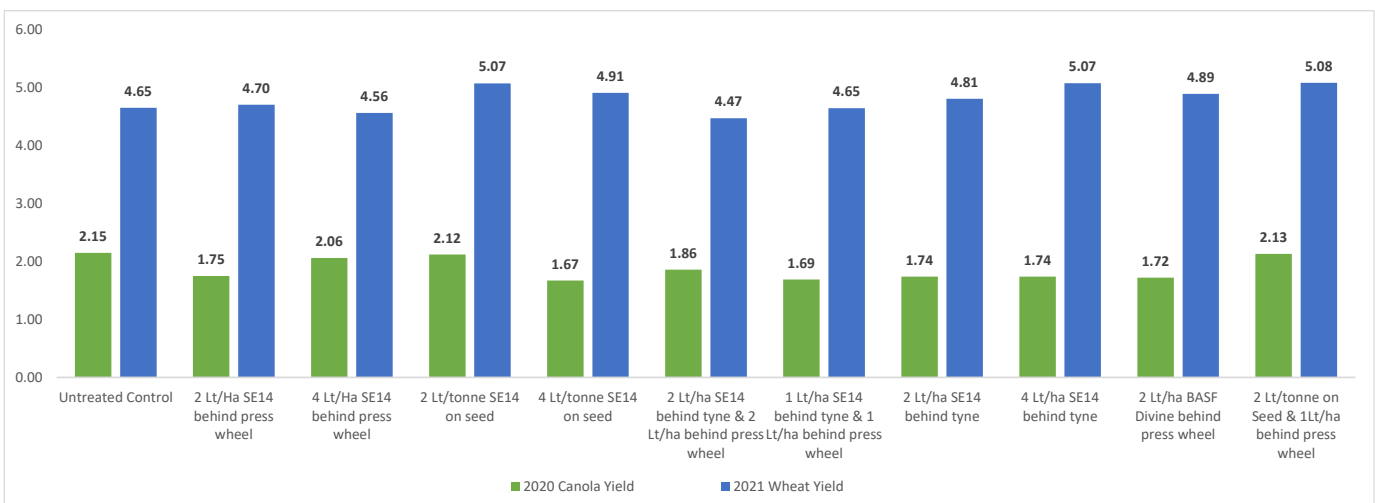
- Seeding on or near last year's furrow significantly increased early biomass growth compared to sowing off-row.
- Placement of soil wetters in the seed contact zone behind the seed boot was more effective than applying wetter on the seed furrow behind the press wheel, for germination and early biomass.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

SCF would like to thank the GRDC for investing in this project and Southern Dirt for inviting our group to partner with them. Thank you also to Michael Webster for hosting the trial in 2020-21.

FURTHER READING:

Please find a related article published in the GRDC Ground Cover Magazine (January-February 2022)
 Guidance systems a plus for on and edge-row sowing | Groundcover (grdc.com.au)



Graph 1: Summary of the 2020 and 2021 grain yields recorded at Webster/Beech paddock scale demonstration in Tenterden, WA. There were no significant yield differences measured in either season (not shown).



Wheat Falling Numbers in 2021

Nathan Dovey, CEO, SCF

Did you have trouble with wheat falling numbers last year? Did you notice any patterns such as variety, time of sowing or paddock location? If so, Stirlings to Coast Farmers want to hear from you!

Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) were recently awarded a GRDC project to collect data from wheat growers across the southern wheat belt titled "Understanding trends in falling numbers in the medium to high rainfall zones of WA". We will be working with the following grower groups to survey at least 60 farmers and 120 paddocks.

- Facey Group
- Fitzgerald Biosphere Group (FBG)
- South East Premium Wheat Growers Association (SEPWA)
- Southern Dirt

The data will be collected via a survey created by the Mingenew Irwin Group (MIG), who are completing a similar project in the northern wheat belt. The data collected will assist growers in the medium to high rainfall zones of WA to better understand how environmental, agronomic and varietal aspects impact falling number test results at harvest and will also inform future research.

The surveys will collect the following data:

- Time of sowing
- Variety sown
- Rainfall events and timing
- Temperature and humidity
- Frost events
- Flowering date
- Maturity dates
- Grain quality at receival site
- Long term history of falling numbers on the property

The data will be collated and analysed with advice from DPIRD and SAGI West (Statistics for the Australian Grains Industry) to identify falling number trends associated with any of the above aspects. The information will be extended to SCF members and made available to DPIRD to guide future research.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are especially looking for wheat growers located near a weather station, be that a DPIRD or BOM station or on-farm weather station installed by SCF in recent years. Sammy Cullen or Dan Fay will be calling members to go through the survey on the phone, where most answers will be off the top of your head. In the case of growers who experienced falling number issues in 2021, we will ask for some CBH loadnet data from affected loads which will need to be looked up at a later date. For the weather data, staff will be able to access a weather station close to your wheat paddocks in question, even if we have to ask for permission from a neighbour. If you would like to register your interest in the project, please send a text to Dan Fay (M) 0498 278 177 or Sammy Cullen (M) 0417 605 784, and they will be in touch shortly.

SCF hopes to collect survey data from up to 15 wheat growers, so please consider helping us to complete this project. As mentioned earlier, the data will be analysed by SAGI West, and SCF researchers will present the findings to our members later.

For more information on what the wheat falling numbers test is, please head to the link below.

<https://bit.ly/wheatgrainquality>





Increasing the effectiveness of claying soils in the Albany Port Zone

Nathan Dovey, CEO, SCF

Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF), in collaboration with Southern Dirt, were recently awarded a project from the GRDC looking at improving the efficiency of claying soils in our region. The overall outcome is that:

By 2024, growers spreading, or intending to spread, clay will have increased ability to assess on-farm clay sources and have methods to better monitor clay application rates.

Many of our members have experienced the transformational productivity benefits of spreading clay on sandy soils, including improved water and nutrient holding capacity, reduced non-wetting expression and increasing soil organic carbon. For over 15 years, local growers have been refining their methods of applying and incorporating clay in their paddocks to improve their soil fertility permanently. Depending on the methods employed and the amount of clay spread, the costs can be \$500-\$1500/ha.

SCF researchers believe that improvements can be implemented by growers and contractors that would significantly improve the clay spreading efficiency. For example, a 20% improvement in clay spreading efficiency could save \$300/ha for growers applying high volumes.

The main area of focus for this project will be improving knowledge of the clay quality growers are spreading and calculating and measuring claying rates to optimise the amount distributed per hectare. We know that clay pits are selected strategically for the most efficient spreading of the clay in the paddock. We also understand that once the topsoil and overburden have been removed, growers feel obligated to use the clay in that clay pit because of the dollars invested in uncovering the product. In some cases, spreading the wrong clay can be detrimental to paddock fertility and be challenging to reverse, although this is rare on our south coast sand plain soils.

The two primary components to this project are the hands-on workshops and the grower demonstration sites. The workshops feature DPIRD soil scientist David Hall, who has been an industry-leading researcher for clay-spreading in the Esperance region for over two decades. They will cover the following aspects:

- Can the limitation be reduced by incorporating clay-rich subsoil?
- What type of clay is available on my farm and is this suitable?

- How much clay-rich subsoil is required?
- What changes to management are required after clay is added?

Growers and contractors will learn about the local clay types and the hierarchy of clay quality which can be determined by soil testing or visual assessment. We believe that improving the machinery operator's ability to assess the clay visually will improve their allocations per hectare. Given the expense of claying, there is no point in spreading more clay than required. The workshop will help growers understand the basic theory of the clay percentage they should be aiming to achieve in their "new" soil and how many tonnes of clay it will take to complete the aim.

The project's second component is the grower demonstration sites measuring the benefits obtained from clay spreading. SCF will host one demonstration site on our sandplain soils, and Southern Dirt will host a site at Muradup on a forest gravel soil. The demonstrations will be installed before seeding this year so we can gather production, soil and clay quality data over the next two growing seasons.

Finally, SCF will investigate a simple and easy to follow method for measuring the amount of clay spread on a grower's paddock. Once we have refined our technique, we will publish the process and distribute it to local members and growers while making it available to interested parties through our website.

If you would like to register your interest in the project by hosting a paddock demonstration or attending one of the workshops, please contact Nathan on 0429 468 030. A simple text indicating your interest would be welcomed.





Options on a failed winter crop

Kirsty Smith, Nutrien Albany

BACKGROUND

It became obvious as we moved into the thick of the 2021 winter that we were in for another challenging year with the wet. There were many paddocks in the area that either didn't get put in, had seed burst events (or multiples of) or germinated and eventually died out through being just too wet for too long.

The questions around what to do next were coming thick and fast, with very little data in this area. GRDC recognised this lack of data and provided funding to assess these options. We jumped at the opportunity to work with Stirlings to Coast to help assess this on a small plot scale, with the help of the Nutrien trials program.

Aim: Assessing the best crop type to sow after a failed winter crop to capitalise on moisture and get best return.

The crop types and treatment list;

TOS	Description
	Fallow
A	Vixen Wheat
A	Mundah Barley
A	Emu Canola
A	BPS Ryecorn
A	Shirohie Millet
A	BPS Linseed
A	Aussie Stripe Sunflower
A	SG10 Lucerne
A	Safflower
B	Highworth Lab Lab
B	Ebony Cowpea
B	Liberty Sorghum (White)
B	G33 Sorghum (Red)
C	Fedora Industrial Hemp

Sowing dates: A: 14th October | B: 11th November | C: 24th November



Image 1: Barley Head emergence: 5 Weeks after sowing.



Image 2: Safflower, starting to flower.

OBSERVATIONS

At the time of writing the trial is ongoing; full results will follow.

CEREALS

As expected, the short season cereals sown into moisture and increasing soil temperatures flew out of the ground and had their first head emerging around 5-6 weeks after sowing. All cereals in the trial were not impacted by insect pests and as such required little to no intervention to establish. Disease pressure was low and didn't show up on the cereals until around maturity. Summer weed control was easy with a standard broadleaf brew. Cereals reached harvest maturity 11-12 weeks after sowing on average.

The millet died out during the extended dry spell with no grazing to remove foliage. The grain sorghums also struggled through the dry.

CANOLA

Insect pressure is the biggest concern when establishing canola in warmer temperatures and when other canola in the area was flowering. Diamond Back Moth, White Cabbage Butterfly and Vegetable Beetle all required controlling in order to get the canola established. Without multiple sprays and a bait, it is expected that we would have had no yield from the canola. Using the Trueflex variety EMU allowed us to get good weed control at the site. Canola reached maturity around 16 weeks after sowing.

NOVEL GRAINS: OBSERVATIONS

Sunflower: Summer weed control has been an issue. No insect pressure.

Safflower: Weed control has been an issue due to lack of information. No insect pressure.

Linseed: Weed control has been an issue. No insect pressure.

Cowpea/Lab Lab: Nodulation of both was poor, even with double rates of inoculant. Growth has been minimal. Weed control has also been an issue.

Hemp: Impressive growth in short amount of time as a dryland crop. Good knockdown opportunity due to the later sowing, controlled summer weeds.

The trial is ongoing and further results will be available.

For more information, please contact Kieran Zilm or Kirsty Smith at Nutrien Albany.



Australia’s agricultural sector is set for another profitable year ahead, with the gross value of agricultural production on track for a fourth consecutive year of growth in 2021/22, Rabobank says in a newly-released industry report.

In its flagship annual Australian Agribusiness Outlook for 2022, titled ‘Making Hay While the Sun Shines’, the specialist global agribusiness bank says a stellar 2021 – with high to record-high agricultural commodity prices and production volumes reaching record levels in some Australian commodities – represented a continued recovery from the crippling 2017-2019 drought and had positioned Australian agriculture for a strong year ahead.

“Australia’s second year of great pricing and mostly exceptional production conditions in 2021 means the Australian agriculture industry is well placed to take on the challenges of 2022. More importantly, it means the industry can prepare for the time when the sun is not shining so brightly in its favour,” the report said.

RaboResearch senior commodities analyst Cheryl Kalisch Gordon said while there will be some pressure on farming margins in 2022 compared with 2021 – with some heat forecast to come out of a range of commodity prices, a mixed production outlook and supply chain challenges – another favourable year was expected for Australian agriculture.

Local macro-economic settings also remain supportive for Australian agriculture, the report said. “In particular, we expect the Australian dollar to only gain a little over the year and remain near its five-year average,” it said.

Dr Kalisch Gordon said 2021 had been a “once in a blue moon” year for Australia’s agricultural sector, with very strong prices resulting from “hardship globally”, and with the high pricing coinciding with “favourable to very favourable Australian production conditions again”.

To find out more about other Rabobank research, contact the Rabobank Esperance team on (08) 9076 4200 or subscribe to RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness Australia & New Zealand on your podcast app.



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Now you can transact lime from Bremer Bay, Manypeaks, Optima Boranup and Optima Lancelin on your Elders account. Speak to your local Elders team for more information on your liming needs.

Elders Albany	9842 7900
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PASTURE MIXES

Looking for a forage solution suited to our southern climate? Elders Albany's offering of custom pasture mixes have been developed by local Elders agronomists and tailored to local conditions.

EPG Seeds Graza 85 Forage Oats

Suitable to a wide range of soil types, Graza 85 benefits from excellent early vigour and fast recovery post grazing, cutting for hay or silage.

A low growing point provides high feed performance during cooler months right through from autumn to early summer.

Suited to rotational grazing, graze lightly and often to promote

high tillering and increased dry matter production. Always ensure that plants are not grazed below first node to avoid prolonging the regrowth period.

Graza 85 is a long maturity variety. It is quicker than most varieties to first grazing.

Other specialist pasture mixes created by the Elders Albany team to suit a range of environments and production systems include the popular Superstar mix – suitable for hay or silage – a proven annual ryegrass mix with 20 per cent legume component, and the Mile High mix, designed for dairy and high production beef pasture systems with long season Italian ryegrass mix and 20 per cent legume.

Call Elders Albany to discuss your pasture requirements 9842 7900.



Investigating Manganese Application Strategies in Wheat



Background

Extensive liming applications throughout the Great Southern have undoubtedly led to more productive soils and higher yield potentials. In more alkaline soil conditions however, plant bioavailable manganese (in the form of Mn²⁺ ions) is converted to manganese oxide, which is unable to be taken up by plant roots.

To investigate this issue, Summit Fertilizers have recently completed a manganese (Mn) trial at Gunwarrie, located east of Frankland River and west of Cranbrook. This trial was on a forest gravel soil type, which has recently been limed, with a near neutral soil pH and marginal historical Mn levels in tissue test results.

The trial is one of a series of Mn trials set up by Summit in 2021 and compared different Mn rates and sources (within MAP based granules (compound) vs blended with MAP vs foliar spray). The trial was sown with Kinsei wheat on 25/05/2021.

Contact your local Summit Area Manager

Mark Ladny, Albany (West)
0498 223 421.

Andrew Wallace, Albany (East)
0427 083 820.

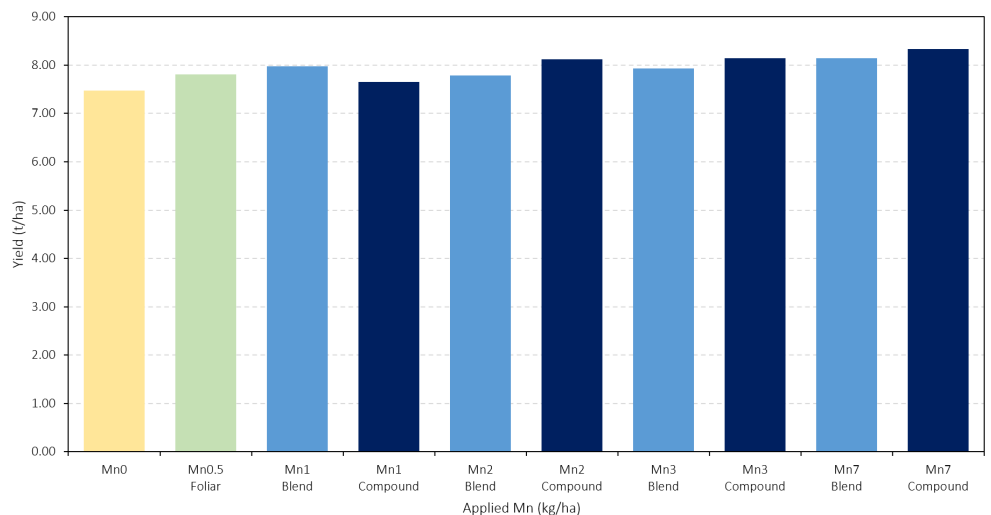


Figure 1: Harvest yields for the 2021 Manganese trial near Frankland.

Results

For 2021, the growing season rainfall at Frankland was 593mm, which was well above the long-term average and contributed to very high average yields, which came in at a staggering 7.9 t/ha.

Yields at the trial ranged from 8.3 t/ha when 7 kg Mn/ha was applied as a compound to 7.5t/ha when no Mn was applied. Despite this, there was no statistically significant increase in yields with increasing Mn rates. The Mn source also had no significant impact on yields.

For further information on this trial speak to Mark Ladny.

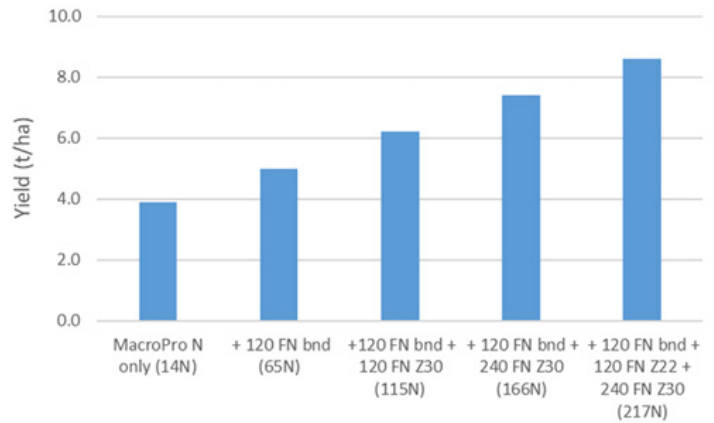


CSBP Flexi-N rates and timings trial on Planet barley at South Stirlings in 2021

KEY MESSAGES

- This trial is continuing the work looking at Nitrogen (N) demand and strategies on the South Coast HRZ .
- It was a very wet year with 573mm for the 'growing season' (Apr-Oct) after 103 mm earlier in the year (Jan - Mar). The crop established well but had to contend with waterlogged conditions from May through to July.
- There were plots that were very responsive to N where most was applied post-seeding and yields increased from 4.7 (65N) to 8.5 t/ha (with 217N).
- With the early wet conditions, N applied at seeding was less effective than post-seeding applications.

Contact Keith Gundill on 0427 389713 for more details



SCF BEHIND THE SCENES

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Stirlings to Coast Farmers could not thrive without the amazing work of our various board and committee members. From SCF members to expert advisors, each one plays a key part in the development and growth of the SCF community.

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