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OILSEEDS NEWS

RIVERINA SOYBEANS BREAK YIELD RECORDS

The soybean harvest in the Riverina is drawing to a close with commercial crops breaking previous yield records this season due to a combination of good management practices and a kind growing season.



ECSTATIC: Riverina soybean yields hit a new high this harvest.

Department of Primary Industries.

Mr Gaynor said that irrigation management by growers was excellent this year, with crops being watered at the most critical stages.

The average yield this year is 4.2 tonnes per hectare, with one commercial crop yielding a record 4.7 tonnes per hectare.

The adoption of the newer, higher yielding varieties, Djakal and Snowy, was the main reason for the good average yields was according Wagga Wagga-based soybean researcher, Luke Gaynor, with New South Wales

He also said that the season was warmer than usual, and generally had lower insect pressure – both factors favouring soybean yields.

Coleambally soybean grower Steve Wilson said that his two crops of Djakal soybeans yielded 4.75 and 4.25 tonnes per hectare. His previous record for a culinary soybean variety was 4.0 tonnes per hectare.

“I’m ecstatic with soybeans this year – just with the fact that you take the risk and grow a crop when many others traded the water”.

And the residual soil moisture and nitrogen from the crops will not be going to waste. Mr Wilson said that he will sow a crop of Gairdner barley into the soybean paddocks within the next ten days.

SOUTHERN FARMING SYSTEMS PULSE AND CANOLA FORUM TOMORROW

The Southern Farming Systems will hold a forum tomorrow, Friday 20 April, with a focus on canola and pulses at its Inverleigh research site at 9:00 am.

The program is called, “time to get serious with break crops”.

For more information or media enquiries, contact Rohan Wardle on (03) 5229 0566.

CUTTING THE RISKS OF GROWING CANOLA

Canola need not be a financially risky crop for growers, according to industry figures which say that some production costs can be cut or delayed until growers have a better picture of the crop’s potential yield.



Oilseed Industry Development Officer, Felicity Pritchard, said the biggest opportunity to reduce financial risk was by holding off some of the nitrogen fertiliser. And new research in Victoria and South Australia will put this to the test this season.

“Fertiliser costs around \$75 a hectare for canola in the Victorian Wimmera - and nitrogen fertiliser is the single biggest cost to canola growers,” she said.

“Research has found that there is usually no penalty for splitting nitrogen fertiliser applications, provided there are reasonable levels of nitrogen in the soil at the start of the season,” she said.

“By applying only starter nitrogen at sowing, growers have the time to reassess the need for additional nitrogen later - before stem elongation - when they have a better idea of how the season is shaping up and a more accurate estimate of potential yield”.

Horsham-based agricultural consultant John Robertson of AGwise Services said that he has recommended to his growers to split nitrogen fertiliser applications for the past three seasons.

Last year, this saved his clients around \$36 a hectare, as they opted to not topdress.

At this year’s Grains Research and Development Corporation Update in Bendigo, advisors heard that many growers felt reluctant to split the nitrogen application for canola.

The Birchip Cropping Group will conduct a trial this year at Longerenong and Birchip to compare the profitability of applying urea by pre-drilling compared with split applications and also no nitrogen fertiliser.

Trials in South Australia will also assess the effect of timing of nitrogen applications on canola as part of the national “Better Canola” project, funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation and the Australian Oilseeds Federation.

Ms Pritchard said that for some growers there will be opportunities for reducing other up-front costs such as sowing rates, phosphorus and sulphur fertiliser rates and seed dressings. But this needs to be assessed on a paddock-by-paddock basis, she said.

Media inquiries: John Robertson 0429 821 438, Felicity Pritchard 0427 600 228.

FREE CANOLA ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP OFFER



Steve Marcroft.

The Canola Association of Australia (CAA) is offering growers and cropping advisors 12-months free membership.

To be eligible, growers and advisors are asked to undertake a short survey as part of the national “Better Oilseeds” Project – previously known as the National Oilseed Agronomy Project.

Coordinator Steve Marcroft said that the primary aim of the project is to support canola growers to become more profitable.

He said the survey will ensure that the project delivers what growers need, and help direct future research into canola.

The project is funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation and the Australian Oilseeds Federation.

The benefits of CAA membership include quarterly newsletters, Factsheets and the annual blackleg (disease) resistance ratings and a copy of the publication, “Best Practice Management for Sustainable Canola Production in SE Australia”, due out

before sowing in 2008. The Association also represents growers' issues on a wider industry level

To take up this offer, email a reply to Steve Marcroft on marcroft@bigpond.net.au. Steve will forward you the login details to complete the survey online. Please also provide your name and mail address if you wish to take up the offer of free CAA membership.

MOISTURE MATTERS

The keys to lower risk canola this year are sowing on time and sowing where there is subsoil moisture, according to Oilseeds Industry Development Officer, Felicity Pritchard.

She said that each week's delay in sowing beyond the optimum sowing date can cut canola yields by roughly five per cent and reduce oil content. And subsoil moisture is like insurance for the crop in low and medium rainfall environments

“In the Victorian Mallee, canola is seen as an opportunity crop, and should be sown by the end of May to take advantage of an early break, subsoil moisture and a promising forecast for the growing season,” she said.

“In most other parts of Victoria, such as the Wimmera, north central and northeast, the optimum time to sow canola is late April to about the 20th of May, but sowing can



ON TIME: Canola needs timely sowing.

be extended until mid June, especially if the delay is due to the paddock being too wet.”

She said that ideally canola should be sown from early May to late June in the Western District, but in very wet years, sowing can take place up until September because of the good chance of cool and wet conditions in spring.

In low rainfall environments, every 10 millimetres of plant-available subsoil moisture is estimated to translate into at least 0.15 tonnes per hectare of canola, she said.

“While the rule of thumb is that yields fall by five per cent per week’s delay in sowing, the penalty can be lower in years with a good seasonal finish, but as high as 18 pc per week in years with a hot, dry finish”.
