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OILSEEDS NEWS

IRRIGATED CANOLA TRIALS BREAK 5 T/HA BARRIER



RECORD YIELDS: Damian Jones in the VICC/DPI irrigated canola trial at Kerang just before windrowing.

Photo: Felicity Pritchard

The five tonnes per hectare canola yield barrier has been broken this year in irrigated variety trials at Kerang thanks to good management and temperatures promoting a long flowering period.

The trials, managed by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and the Victorian Irrigated Cropping Council produced an impressive average yield of 4 tonnes per hectare (t/ha), with one hybrid variety yielding an average above 5 t/ha. The five-year average yield from the trial is 3 t/ha.

Senior DPI agronomist Damian Jones put the excellent yields down to good irrigation and weed management, and less days with very high temperatures during flowering which allowed for a longer duration of flowering to increase yield

potential.

“In September, we didn’t have the temperature extremes, and that’s what knocks us around,” Mr Jones said.

He said that most of the varieties in the canola trial began flowering on the 24 August, a week earlier than usual. This was likely to be due to the warmer than average conditions earlier in the season.

Flowering also finished about four days later than usual, mostly by 26 September, and the dates for the end of flowering was scattered over a 12 day period for the different varieties.

Normally hot days in spring bring an abrupt end to the flowering period in irrigated canola in northern Victoria and parts the Riverina, and the different varieties in the trial finish flowering over two to three days.

Oilseeds Industry Development Officer, Felicity Pritchard said that the temperatures during flowering were actually slightly warmer than average, but the hottest September day in Kerang this year was only 26 degrees.

“Research in glasshouse trials has shown that sudden high temperatures during flowering can cut yields by as much as half of temperature-sensitive varieties,” she said.

“The yields are less affected if the maximum temperatures increase slowly over a number of days, and some varieties are more tolerant of heat stress than others,” she said.

She said that the long-term irrigated variety trial at Kerang was extremely important as there are no similar trials in southern Australia.

“We can’t just assume that varieties suitable to high rainfall areas are ideal for irrigation too, as the high rainfall areas generally experience milder temperatures during flowering and pod-filling,” she said.

Mr Jones also said that the triazine tolerant (TT) varieties were lower yielding than other varieties.

“In general, we don’t recommend TT varieties unless you have a weed problem that requires them.”

For details of the 2007 trial results and the long-term results for the trial, contact Damian Jones on (03) 5450 9525 or Felicity Pritchard on (03) 5382 4396.
