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## OILSEEDS NEWS

### 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.



**ON TIME:** Canola needs timely sowing.

“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 20<sup>th</sup> of May, but sowing can 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”.

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