



IRRIGATED CROPPING FORUM

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OILSEEDS NEWS

DOUBLE CROPPING PUT TO THE TEST

The profitability and practicality of growing winter and summer grain or feed crops on irrigation in the one year will be put to the test this year, in the first of a three-year project coordinated by the Irrigated Cropping Forum.

Trials at Madowla Park, east of Echuca were sown in May by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, with the aim of lifting yearly gross margins to \$2000 per hectare in a year, by growing winter and summer crops in succession.

The first phase of the project has been established, with the trial site sown to the winter crops barley, canola, faba beans, clover, wheat and oaten hay.

“These crops have characteristics that make them more suitable for double cropping, such as shorter maturity or less height, so as to make the summer phase easier or more timely,” said DPI senior agronomist, Damian Jones.

The winter crops will be followed by maize for silage and grain, soybeans and forage sorghum.

“Originally we aimed to produce 20 tonnes per hectare per year, but then we decided that a rotation of maize followed by oaten hay may produce 27 tonnes per hectare of

product, but may be less profitable than 7 tonnes per hectare of canola and soybeans,” said Mr Jones.

The trials are funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Congupna grain grower Craig Reynolds said that the main reason he double crops is to maximise the water use efficiency by growing winter crops to take advantage of moisture left over from the preceding summer crop.

“It’s a flexible system and can be quite profitable, and allows us to maximise the usefulness of the winter rainfall and variable irrigation allocations,” said Mr Reynolds.

Mr Reynolds grows oaten or clover hay or barley for grain in winter followed by soybeans for human-consumption or maize in the summer.

He aims to sow and harvest on the same day in mid-November, with the aid of controlled traffic equipment to minimise soil compaction.

(For more information, contact Craig Reynolds on 0427 288 211, or Damian Jones on (03) 5450 9525.)
