



VICC Irrigation Newsletter

For Mixed Farmers and Croppers in the Irrigation Areas of Northern Victoria and Southern New South Wales.

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Contributions are welcome.
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Editorial

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of the VICC newsletter. Could we possibly be put through another dry winter? At the time of publishing only a few areas have had enough rain to get crops well established. With most areas, being on the knife edge in terms of rainfall for crop and pasture survival, we all hope that substantial rain fall soon.

With only a small amount of pre irrigation, it was a challenge finding sites for VICC'S tensiometer trials. Hopefully the four sites selected will produce some data that will help us further understand just what is happening in the root zone of irrigated crops. At the end of this season, these tensiometers will be forwarded to other member's farms for further evaluation

As always, VICC endeavours to bring the latest research results to you. This year we present the GRDC Irrigation Update at Moama on Aug 7th (see the program attached), so we hope to see you there. Finally, we need your help to keep our organisation strong. This is especially the case in tough times, like present, so your membership is vital. If you can see your way clear to making a

contribution, we can help you keep up to making the best use of a valuable resource in irrigation water. Hope it rains on your farm, soon!

Rob Fisher

Double Cropping Project Update

Dale Boyd and Damian Jones DPI Vic

The summer crops (fodder sorghum, maize and soybeans) have been and gone and we have planted the third winter phase of the project. The project was initially due to end on June 30, but with the trying conditions over the last couple of years, GRDC have allowed the project to continue until the end of 2008, allowing us to grow another winter crop.

In the initial stages of setting up the project, double cropping was like “trying to squeeze 13 months into a year”. While there have been improvements to variety maturity, there are still other factors that can make or break double cropping success. Timely harvest is essential to having a successful next phase. Where there were delays to the optimum sowing date from either later maturing winter crops or hold-ups to sowing by contractor availability or waiting for weed growth to allow the use of knockdown herbicides, yields of the later sown crops were lower compared with the crop sown on time. As an example, maize suffered a 13% decline and the very late sown soys failed to produce an economic yield at all.

So what did we learn from the 2007-08 summer cropping season?

1. To be successful with double cropping, a thorough knowledge of your weed levels and herbicide resistance is critical. Even though we have known about our Group A resistance and have put in place several strategies to overcome it, ryegrass still is a problem.
2. Soil moisture monitoring equipment is essential in order to make accurate irrigation scheduling decisions. Water at \$500-1000/Ml meant that we had to make sure we didn't waste water with unnecessary irrigation, but also make sure we didn't restrict productivity of the crop.
3. Leading on from the cost of water, is to accurately know what your costs and potential income will be from the crop you are considering growing. A quick gross margin analysis will soon let you know what you can afford to pay for water.
4. Canola stubble appeared to reduce the vigour of the maize, possibly an allelopathic result. Symptoms were patchy emergence and poor initial seedling vigour.
5. Herbicide use must be carefully planned. An option for Group A ryegrass resistance is to use a Triazine Tolerant canola. However this can make controlling canola volunteers a bit more difficult where atrazine is used for early weed control in the summer crop. Likewise using Group B herbicides in your winter phase will severely limit your options for a summer crop (certainly sorghum, maize and soys used in this project have long plant-back periods).
6. As discussed earlier, if you miss the optimum sowing window, you are increasing the risk of poorer yields and potentially having late maturity than may affect the next phase.
7. The problems of late maturity can be salvaged by cutting the crop for fodder. This allows either a poor yielding grain crop salvaged as fodder (as we did with the late soys) or makes preparation for the next phase quicker by not having to deal with stubble.

The winter cropping phase has been sown to barley, oaten hay, canola and faba beans. If you would like to know more about what's happening, contact Dale Boyd at the Echuca DPI Office on 54821922.

“Breaking down the barriers”

LATEST INFORMATION FOR
MIXED ENTERPRISE CROPPERS IN IRRIGATION AREAS

Speakers presenting in concurrent sessions on Agronomy, alternatives, current issues
Experts, farmer experience and displays

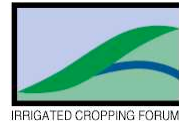
Rich River Golf Club, Moama

Thursday 7th August 2008
8.30 am – 4.00 pm

organised by farmers through:
Victorian Irrigated Cropping Council
Irrigated Cropping Forum
Department of Primary Industry (NSW & Victoria)



VICC



Supported by:

Growers through the GRDC
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Topics and presenters offer something for everyone:

TOPICAL ISSUES FROM LEADING RESEARCHERS, CONSULTANTS AND FARMERS

What is in the pipeline with GM crops and pastures? *Dr Carl Ramage, Victorian AgriBiosciences Centre*

Reducing the cost of Crop Nutrition

Dr John Angus, CSIRO

- Phosphorus – What other real options are there?
- Nitrogen- Is there another way?

Six years of VICC Trials, What works in irrigated cropping? *Damian Jones DPI Vic*

Lifting Irrigated Cropping Profitability and Water Use Efficiency **Farmer case studies**

- Water as and Enterprise *Helen and Craig Reynolds – Congupna, Goulburn Valley*
- Gaining efficiencies *Harry & Jenny Kooloos, Mayrung, Murray Valley*

New cereals for yield on irrigation *Andrew Milgate, NSW, DPI*

- New quality results from 2007 harvest
- Varieties to target 10t/ha on irrigation

Forage Brassicas- Do they have a place in mixed farmin*Dave Eksteen NSW DPI*

The fast watering project *Sam North NSW DPI*

Managing rust in irrigated cropping syste *Dr Col Wellings & Geoff Raymond*

- How are the new strains different to the old in the paddock?
- What are the best fungicide options and when should they be applied?

Irrigated Canola - Breaking through the 5t/ha mark – Felicity Pritchard DPI Vic

Detach along here

Cost: \$35 pre-paid entry; \$50 pre-paid entry and 2008 membership (for Newsletter and other benefits);
\$45 entry at the door; \$60 entry at the door & 2008 membership.
Includes notes, lunch and morning and afternoon teas.

To register fill-in the form and post, fax or email the information.

Registration form:

Name:

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Cheque enclosed: \$ (Payable to VICC);

Post to GRDC Update, PO Box 238, KERANG, 3579

Or Direct Debit: \$ (VICC a/c no. 633 000 1128 40301, quote your surname as a reference)

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More information: Phone – Rob Fisher 0428 545 263 or email vicc@dragnet.com.au