

Agronomy news September 2018

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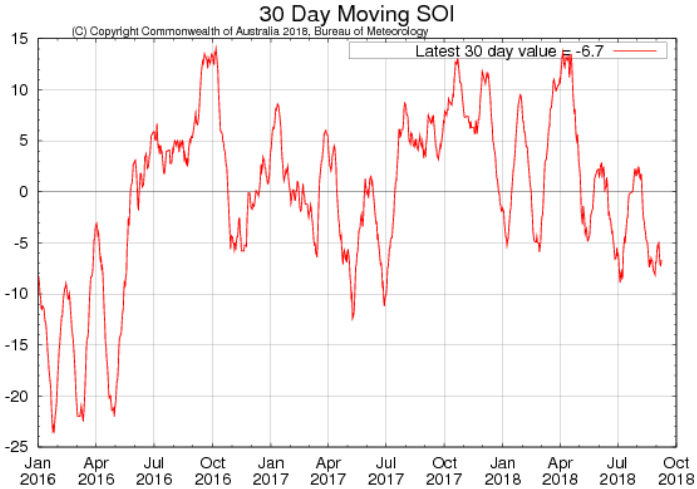
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Current SOI -6.7 Current IOD -0.2

30 day developing SOI -7.6 120 day AAO (SAM) 0.0148



Spartacus CL barley- a looming problem

Whilst we are seeing barley crops suffer due to lack of moisture, we are keeping an eye on the sandhills or our neighbours as a potential seed source.

We saw increasing levels of loose smut in Spartacus CL last year (especially the Wimmera), and it seems that it is continually getting worse- more smutted heads per hectare.

It appears that Spartacus CL is more susceptible than its cousins Hindmarsh and LaTrobe. Over each crop generation the percentage of smutted heads can increase when softer seed pickles are used, and seed coverage is poor even when superior SDHI fungicide pickles are chosen.

Baytan is only 50-70% effective on barley loose smut with this barley family; In reality, solid label rates (ie rhizoctonia rates) of ***Evergol Energy***, ***Rancona Dimension*** or Vibrance to a lesser extent are the only products to use on Spartacus. Thorough coverage is essential; seeds without "colour" are likely to become infected and multiply the disease in spring.



Loose smut of barley is a different strain to that found in wheat

Infected tillers usually produce zero grains

Harder to control than covered smut and bunt

There is a GTA delivery standard for smuts

Spray application and drift management workshops

There are two additional free spray application workshops being held this week, following the Swan Hill and Tooleybuc meetings;

Ultima Hotel **20/9/2018** **9:00am to 12:00pm**

Boort Tennis Club **20/9/2018** **2:00pm to 5:00pm**

Drift management is the main topic, but there will be other subjects that will definitely help improve our spray efficacy.

The presenter is Mary O'Brien, a consultant living and working in mixed winter crop/ summer crop areas. She has previously worked for Bill Gordon, who is the other leading authority in spray technology.

It is imperative we all get along and attend one of these workshops, to keep up with the latest in spray technology and decision making.



Terminating pulse crops

The dry conditions are going to probably mean pulses on clay loam or sandy clay loam soils may produce less than a harvestable yield. Crop and weeds could be so moisture stressed to the extent that glyphosate may not be 100% effective on grass survivors.

It may be better to use **paraquat** at 800mL/ha or more as a contact product not requiring translocation. Paraquat performs best with high water rates and applied in low light conditions.

Tips for making cereal hay

The value of cereal hay is at peaks above the last drought. This is due to the bigger geographical area affected by drought, and the higher value of sheep, lambs and wool.

Cereal crops that are frost affected or have no prospects of grain fill could become profitable hay crops. The last drought period is also a reference point for haystack fires; it only takes one semi-cured bale to cause a fire.

Fact 1: Windrowing cereals without conditioning will mean a long curing time- 4 weeks is not unrealistic

Tip 1: If you are using your draper front to windrow, consider running through windrows with a macerator to condition the stem.

Fact 2; Moisture meters give an overall moisture content- it is stem moisture (especially node moisture) that is the big risk.

Tip 2: Slice open stems with a knife and feel for traces of moisture. Smash nodes on your towball to also check for node moisture.

Tip3: Wait until as many heads have emerged from the boot to reduce curing time.

Tip 4: Watch the wheel compression in headlands- slower curing where the windrows have been driven over

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New lentil for the Mallee- PBA Hallmark XT

A new Clearfield lentil was released at the Hart Field Days on 18/9.

I have previously mentioned CIPAL 1422, which is now called PBA Hallmark XT.

Hallmark will be a direct replacement for Hurricane XT as it has a few advantages;

Higher yield + 5-12%. Grain size is medium red, so marketability is like Nugget. Mid flowering date.

Whilst having Bolt in its parentage, Hallmark has a botrytis resistance rating of R/MR

SHSF are taking orders as of now.



Hallmark XT (L) vs Hurricane XT (R) at Hart 2017

Heliothis grubs in lentils

Just a reminder that the permit for alpha cypermethrin in lentils is expired.

The go to product is FMC Trojan.

Trojan is made up of 100% gamma cyhalothrin, the most insecticidally active isomer of cyhalothrin.

Trojan is the safest SP insecticide, with an S5 safety schedule

Trojan has a microcapsule formulation which gives it a 30 minute rainfast period, yet extended surface residual

Trojan[®]
Insecticide

Fodder conservation products available

Swan Hill Stockfeeds are distributors for **Integrated Packaging** hay and silage products.

If you are intending to make hay, why not call us for a quote on;

Round bale wrap; SilaNet, SilaNet Forte, Great White Netwrap

Big Squares; Great White LSB, Great White XD



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Weather report

The dry conditions continue, despite the climate indicators being within a “normal” range.

The BOM has commented about slightly warmer waters in the central and eastern Pacific, yet neutral atmospheric indicators.

Most of the Mallee experienced a severe and prolonged frost event on 29/8, and some of the northern Mallee had a significant frost event on 20/8; we are seeing some sterile heads emerging in cereals as a result.

With the BOM predicting a drier than normal September to October for southern Australia, we should not be expecting a series of life-saving rains.

Interestingly, the SOI in **spring 2015** was far more negative- August -19.8, September -17.8, and October -20.2

Crop salvage and cost recovery strategies

The cereal hay market is currently trading higher than any of the previous droughts. Typical values are \$400/t, with some asking for much higher as an opportunity.

Where frost has affected a cereal crop, the decision to cut hay may be fairly straightforward. If the main stem head of a wheat crop is frosted, 60% of the yield as grain is gone.

A knee high wheat crop could produce 2.5t/ha of hay, or \$1000/ha less about \$160/ha in costs.

Livestock trading could be another option. This may take the form of purchasing ewes, joining them in the November to January period for resale next year. When there is a strong break the re-stocker market could be very strong.

Finishing lambs is also profitable, but do investigate the starter cost of a good 30kg store lamb.

It is very important to maintain ground cover- so it's best to run lower numbers and not get too ambitious.



This main-stem head could have produced up to 28 grains, or 1.3 t/ha at a crop density of 130p/m². It is totally sterile, as is the primary tiller.