

Grower Request Trials

In response to feedback from growers, this year we have included an additional “grower request” trial at the Conmurra site.

This trial focuses on **Weed control in Broad Beans** – an issue that is fairly unique to the South-East region.

The trial looks at various chemicals, both straight products and in mixes at varying rates. The efficacy on weed control and the effect on the broad beans are the key factors in determining the effectiveness of the mixes.

Another grower request was looking at **Dessication/Harvesting Methods of Beans**, this work is also being carried out this season but in Faba's for logistical reasons.

Next season, we plan on extending this Grower request trial program and hope to look at a key issue around the Frances area as well, so if you have any ideas or burning issues that you think are relevant to your area, let me know.

A visit to the broad bean weed control site will be included at Conmurra on the 31st October as part of the main MacKillop Field Days, and I would encourage all broad bean growers to attend.

I look forward to seeing you there,

Felicity Turner



2012 MFMG Field Days

Frances

30th October

Conmurra

31st October

Trials available for viewing and discussion on these days include

NVT Oats
SARDI Barley
SARDI Wheat
NVT Canola
GRDC WUE Wheat Agronomy
Elders Knockdown
Seedmark
NVT Lupins (off-site)



NVT Early Wheat
NVT Wheat
SARDI Barley
GRDC WUE Wheat Agronomy
NVT Trit
Wheat Fungicide
TT Canola
Elders Jumpstart
Bean Variety
Elders Knockdown
Growers request Bean Herbicide



Further information on these days will be available soon

Grain and Graze 2—Filling the Feed Gap

Grain and Graze 2 would like to thank Mick Faulkner of Agrilink Agricultural Consultants Pty Ltd and Bill Long of Ag Consulting Co for information used in this publication.

Are you a farmer with a mix of stock and crop for whom current seasonal conditions ratchet up the stress levels with each passing day? Has the late start, cold weather and recent frosts stalled the growth of your sown or self-sown pasture to the point where you're concerned about your sheep losing condition? What is it costing you right now in supplementary feed and sleepless nights?

Chances are you've got some under utilised resources at your fingertips which can help take the pressure down, reduce the costs and maybe even score you a good night's sleep!

If you've got some early sown crops, it is very likely they can be used to fill the feed gap until pastures really kick in later in July. Farmers have often perceived grazing crops for feed as a minefield requiring lots of technical know-how. As part of its objective to lift farm productivity, the Grain and Graze 2 program is Right Here, Right Now to show you that capitalizing on the resources you have is easier than you think.

Does it matter which varieties of cereal I graze?

Sure, there are differences in how different varieties respond to and recover from grazing pressure but the good news for you is that those differences don't need to be taken into account yet. Most of the varieties you are growing will recover very well. Some time in July farmers will be getting messages from Grain and Graze 2 on how variety differences can influence when you should take stock out of various paddocks but for the next few weeks that's likely to be irrelevant.

The important message for you Right Here, Right Now is that you don't have to suffer this feed shortage any longer. Do something NOW by grabbing the opportunity to graze your appropriate crops!

How do I know if the crop is advanced enough to graze?

The most important rule of thumb here is that you don't want the sheep to be able to pull the whole plant out of the ground. Use the old pinch and twist test:

Pinch the top leaves between the thumb and forefinger, pull the leaves upwards while twisting your wrist. If the leaves break off and the plant does not pull out of the ground, the crop can be grazed.

You can test that by hand to get an idea or just put some stock in and see how much damage they do.

Dry matter per ha doesn't matter now

There are lots of complicated formulae around to help you calculate how many kilograms per hectare of dry matter is in the paddock to be grazed and whether that is enough to sustain the various classes of livestock you might want to graze on it and for how long. The reality is for Right Here, Right Now, it doesn't matter. As long as you can't pull the plants out of the ground you can graze the paddock. It will enable you to get a few days or several weeks of grazing respite for pastures to get away.

When do I take the sheep off the crop?

Assuming a normal spring, there is little risk of a major effect on grain yield from early grazing of cereal crops right up to mid tillering (Growth Stage 22-25). If you graze longer than that, recovery for grain production can be affected. At GS30 the risk of not getting enough grain starts to become a reality. However, this year, very few farmers in SA will be at GS30 prior to the end of July. That leaves ample time to walk the sheep over your cropping paddocks, let pasture feed get away and get the sheep off the crops without significant grain yield impact.

An easy way to monitor the growth stage of the crop your sheep are grazing is to establish a stock exclusion area in a paddock with weldmesh or portable sheep yards. Grazing delays the transition from tillering to stem elongation by a few days so when the main stem on these ungrazed plants begins to elongate as GS30 approaches, the rest of the grazed paddock will not be far behind.



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This is a Grain & Graze 2 project, funded by GRDC & the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative

Grain and Graze 2—Filling the Feed Gap *cont*

Bill Long, Ag Consulting Co agronomist says: “When stock have been grazing a paddock down pretty hard, just shift them into another paddock. There’s no real advantage in calculating feed value at this point. You can tell if they are doing well by keeping an eye on their condition and the amount of supplementary feed you need to provide in a year like this.

Unless you are getting close to GS30 you are not even worrying about the grain, you are just trying to maximise the feed you have right now. Farmers can graze one paddock then another and then shift stock to the paddock first grazed if it is still early enough. Often you can just leave the gate open and sheep will shift themselves to the next ungrazed paddock at the right time on their own.”

Withholding Periods for crop chemicals

One cautionary note for farmers intending to sell stock after grazing crops is to know the withholding periods for the chemicals they have used. Some of the pre-emergent chemicals have restricted grazing periods when stock destined for slaughter feed on the treated crops. This may override the need to consider the crop stage as the only indicator of when to take stock out.

Weeds – choose clean paddocks

The likely or apparent weed burden in a cropping paddock can affect its suitability as a grazing option. If you have a ‘dirty’ paddock and you reduce the crop canopy with grazing then there will be less competition from the crop to hold back the weeds.

This year farmers tended to sow most early crops dry or on marginal moisture into paddocks with a low weed burden or where they were confident in the effectiveness of their herbicide of choice. So it is a relatively easy decision to put stock on those paddocks because you would expect they would be clean or have weeds that are easy to control.

It will be the late sown paddocks where you may have been waiting for another germination that you may have only sown in the last week. These late sown paddocks are probably not the ones to graze if you are worried about weeds unless they are easy to control. Pick the clean paddocks that were planted early as the best grazing option.

Canola – a grazing opportunity that can also assist with weed control

Don’t ignore the fact that your canola crop may be good feed too. Grazing a weedy cereal crop can give the weeds a boost but it works the opposite way with weeds in the canola. As canola plants grow and spread they tend to shade the weeds below. As the sheep graze the canola they actually open up the canopy and allow for better exposure of target weeds to herbicide control when sprayed after grazing.

So with lots of early canola in this year, there’s a great opportunity for filling the feed gap and making weed control more effective at the same time!

Classes of stock

The main thing to keep in mind here is the advisability of moving stock that may be vulnerable to extra stress. So it’s not a great idea to keep shifting older ewes in late pregnancy or ewes with lambs on the ground from paddock to paddock. If it’s easy to just open a fence and let them through to the adjoining paddock when they spot the better feed on their own, that’s fine.

More help?

If you need more information to help you take advantage of Grain and Graze 2 opportunities when you are making decisions along the way please contact your advisor. Be aware though, that Grain and Graze 2 will be publishing important updates and messages throughout the year. Be sure to sign up for posts from our blog site: www.grainandgraze2.com

So in a year like this where stubbles didn’t provide the normal level of nutrition, the break was late, your feed reserves are down, you’re sick of hand feeding and buying back your feed barley for more than you sold it for at harvest there may just be a golden opportunity staring you in the face right outside your office window! Go graze those crops now! Grain and Graze2, Right Here, Right Now, for You!



Written for Grain and Graze 2 by Mike Roberts Communications, Research and Consulting.

A request from Nick Edwards and SEPLA

I have now completed 2 years as SEPLA Chairman. Although no-one has yet stepped up to take the mantle as incoming Chair it is still time for me to step down as new roles and responsibilities have recently come my way.

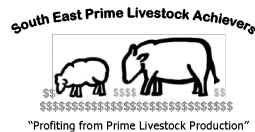
This is the chance for someone new to step up!! It is an important time for SEPLA as the time is now right for the group to have greater impact within the MacKillop Farm Management Group as other avenues for livestock related research, development and extension slowly dry up in the South East.

To make this happen we need new blood into the committee, renewed enthusiasm for the livestock cause and a new Chairman!!!

The SEPLA committee recently reaffirmed the need for a chair of SEPLA so that there is a key point of contact for livestock issues and so someone is driving the direction of the group.

If you know (or you are) someone who has that drive and enthusiasm for one (or all) of our livestock industries please encourage them to nominate for the SEPLA committee and/or to contact myself or one of the other SEPLA committee to discuss the opportunities. As with all roles it is one that can be truly rewarding as you help drive innovation with the local livestock community.

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SEPLA Committee contact info

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Upcoming Event for all with an interest in Pasture management

9th October 2012

Post Drainage Field Day

SEPLA Pasture walks

SEPLA AGM

(information overleaf)

SEPLA AGM and Pasture Walk and Post Drainage Field Days

9th October 2012

This field day will provide an opportunity to view and discuss a range of pasture options, based on the outcomes from SARDI SE Pasture Research Group research projects and South East Prime Livestock Achievers/MacKillop Farm Management Group on-farm demonstration trials.

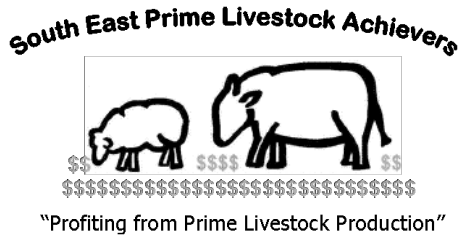
The day, held in conjunction with the South East Prime Livestock Achievers (SEPLAs) /MacKillop Farm Management Group and Grasslands Society of Southern Australia, and will take in both the post-drainage pasture research sites and some of SE-PLA's on-farm pasture demonstrations. This event will focus on managing perennials in the landscape.

Guest speakers will discuss managing pastures, decision making around renovating pastures, the impacts of implementing EverGraze principals and details on a range of pasture varieties.

This event will start at 9am at the Avenue Range Oval, concluding at the same location for refreshments and a BBQ around 5pm.

Food and refreshments will be provided.

For more information contact Penny Roberts Craig on 08 8762 9162, or 0427 573 038.



The SEPLA AGM will also be held on this day

please consider becoming a committee member



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