

USA trip for young agronomist

James Cheetham, an agronomist based in Quirindi will be travelling through the USA from this week combining work with travel. The aim of the trip is to explore modern farming practices currently carried out at different locations in the US. Time will be spent with various agricultural consultants and representatives including Pioneer Seed district agronomists based in Dallas, Texas.

James will also spend time with Phil Needham, a private ag consultant based in Kentucky and Willard Ag Services, Maryland, which is a similar agribusiness to Pursehouse Rural.

The winter season in the US is currently coming to an end with some impressive wheat and barley yields being harvested. The summer cropping season is well underway with most of the corn sown and out of the ground, making it an



Techspray clients
Unfortunately due to price rises in fuel and equipment, Techspray will be increasing their prices by 25 cents per Hectare as of Monday 9th June

ideal time to see a range of cropping rotations. This trip will be very valuable to broadening James' knowledge and experience in sustainable farming systems and also identifying some newly adapted crop management techniques. We look forward to hearing about James' trip upon his return.

Agonomist's attend pasture field day

A pasture field day was held near Walcha on Monday 26th May looking at the response after grazing to Easy N and gibberellic acid application on high performance Hybrid Perennial Ryegrass and long term perennial mixes. The long term pasture consisted of Tall Fescue, Hybrid Ryegrass, Phalaris, Chicory, Plantain plus Clovers, which was 12 months old. The replicated trials were different rates of Easy N + gibberellic acid, gibberellic acid alone and Easy N alone, attempting to increase regrowth after grazing when cooler temperatures normally slows pasture growth until spring. Late autumn applications of gibberellic acid have shown that Phalaris and Prairie grass in a pasture will respond to a half rate of gibberellic acid while Fescue and Ryegrasses require the full

recommended rate to get a response. During winter, full rates are needed for an effective response. On basalt soils with good soil moisture and fertility, growth rates on these pastures are quoted at 13kg/mm rainfall for hybrid perennial pastures and 8kg/mm rainfall on the long term perennial mix. Pasture probe measurements at the field day, (day 20 after application), saw an increase growth in the order of 300 to 400kg DM of the Easy N + gibberellic acid over that of the control (nil treatment) on the long term perennial mix. General discussion on pasture management highlighted the performance of the perennial ryegrass and hybrid ryegrasses, the need for good grazing management and the role of spring N application to encourage new tiller re

cruitment which is the basis for the following seasons production. Andrew Harborne from Incitec Pivot indicated the importance of a small N boost to stimulate pasture growth while organic N release was slowed due to cool soil temperatures. One of the graziers attending, Simon Murray from Aberfoyle, indicated that he would like to see if it was possible to gain similar responses and growth rates on the lower fertility and lower moisture holding soils and what were the limitation to the system. Additional treatment will not always remedy a poor performing pasture if the fundamentals of grazing management, soil moisture and fertility, weeds, pests or disease are not addressed. For further information contact your local Pursehouse Rural agronomist.

Importance of Pulses in a cropping rotation

Pulses play an integral part in cropping enterprises as a crop rotation. This is mainly due to their ability to prevent disease, control problem weeds, enhance soil fertility and provide financial benefits. Along with these benefits pulses also attain the ability to self-fix nitrogen from nitrogen gases (N₂) in the atmosphere. SO when considering the rising cost of fertiliser this can be highly beneficial to your rotation.

Disease Control

Crown Rot has the potential to dramatically reduce yields in winter cereal enterprises. Being a stubble-borne pathogen, Crown Rot can be common in cropping enterprises that adopt stubble retention in reduced and zero-till systems. Crown Rot levels can become particularly detrimental on crop yields when wheat on wheat practices are adopted. The implementation of a winter pulse into a cropping rotation will help break down the stubble pathogen by reducing Crown Rot inoculum levels and starving the fungus of a suitable host.

Weed Control

Pulse crops provide good weed control alternatives that can improve grain production in the whole farm rotation. Rotating with Pulses provides opportunities to utilize a wider range of weed management practices that are not normally available in a cereal dominate system. Rotating chemicals can also help prevent resistance problems that may occur from consistent use of the one herbicide group.

Soil Fertility

Pulse crops have the ability to contribute a significant amount of nitrogen to the soil, however this is dependent on both the effective nodulation of the crop and relatively low soil nitrogen levels at planting. They help maintain or improve available soil nitrogen by fixing much of their own nitrogen needs rather than extracting it from the soil. Chickpeas for example have the ability to fix up to 46kg of N/ha of available nitrogen and Faba Beans up to 94 kg of N/ha, with the Faba Beans fixing more due to their higher demand for N. This not only helps maintain or enhance soil fertility but also decreases the amount of nitrogen fertiliser needed for the following crop. Cereal yields following pulses are often significantly increased while production costs are reduced with lower fertiliser nitrogen inputs on cereals and oilseeds being required.

Pulses have the ability to add many beneficial attributes to a cropping rotation, and can fit well into modern farming systems, particularly where minimal or no tillage farming is practiced and where a cereal stubble retention system is in place.

For further information contact your local Pursehouse Rural agronomist.

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New Herbicide Technology available

Chemical companies are endeavouring to find new ways and new chemistry's to combat the ever increasing pressure of herbicide resistance. One example of such new technology is Syngenta's new pre-emergent herbicide called Boxer Gold. This new product has registration on annual ryegrass and toadrush in both wheat and barley while also having some activity on other grasses and broadleaf weeds.

It can be used in a full disturbance (conventional) or minimal tillage system. The product must be mechanically incorporated via the sowing operation. Unlike other pre-emergent herbicides Boxer Gold has only short residual activity, giving you a greater flexibility when it comes to plant-backs.

Boxer Gold has a single use rate of 2.5lt/ha when controlling annual ryegrass and has full compatibility with Roundup Powermax, Le-mat, Fastac Duo, and Glean to name a few.

It is important to consider history of use when deciding what herbicide to use for weed control. Herbicide resistance is an ever increasing problem. It is important to consult your Pursehouse Rural agronomist when considering weed control not only to learn what new products and chemistry is available, but to also understand the best management strategies moving forward.