

Agronomy Fax Update 1st AUGUST 2008

Rainfall - well! What a turnaround for the northern region! Things were looking good, but now with the recent rains received, there is a considerable amount of moisture in the system. Top up fertilizer has been applied by air, by SP boomsprays and by conventional tractor drawn spreaders (where appropriate), in order to meet new yield targets. Many cereal crops are suffering from leaf diseases and the trickle of fungicides being applied to crops is now more a steady flow. Fungicide availability is a concern, with orders taking some time to come through the system. A Stripe Rust breakout in Victoria has meant that much of the fungicide stocks have been mobilized eastward, so there are not large quantities of fungicides just sitting on the shelf. If you have susceptible varieties on cereal stubble, thick crop canopies with moderate disease levels, the recent rains will provide a very moist humid environment in the crop canopy for diseases to thrive in. Monitor barley crops also for Net form of Net Blotch (NTNB) and Powdery Mildew. As long as temperatures remain mild, Mildew can go from very low levels to major infection levels in a short period of time. Monitor crops 3-4 days after the rains have passed, as raindrops and free moisture remove hyphae from the leaf surface, but re-infection rapidly occurs. Contact your agronomist to formulate a plan.



Above L Net Type Net Blotch in barley



Above R Powdery mildew in Barley

Grain Quality - Protein ? -

Do I aim for yield or protein or both? At this stage, 10.5% protein seems to be the magic number. Slip below this and the next grade could be priced significantly less –

0809 Multi G spreads: +\$18 APH2/H1, +\$13 H2, -\$15 ASW1, -\$20 ANW1, -\$30 ANW2, -\$30 AGP1/HPS1, -\$50 AUW1, -\$75 FED1. *Multi G is flat priced*

The National Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association (NACMA) will put forward recommendations on grain segregation quality parameters to marketers and handlers in the next week or two. Until then, we are unsure of the \$ return of N applied vs Price received per tonne (+/- protein) of the different segregations.

One thing we do know is approx 20 kg N/ha is required to grow 0.5t/ha wheat, 40 kg N/ha for 1.0t/ha wheat assuming medium efficiency. Nitrogen is currently around \$2.20/kg N. Approx 6kg N is required to lift 1t of wheat by 1% protein.

20 kg N (landed on Farm and spread) = \$54/ha*. 0.5t/ha wheat = \$150/ha *

If you have a new yield and gross margin target, assuming available funds, appropriate crop growth stage, low tissue nitrate levels and abundant moisture, the net return is \$96/ha or roughly **180%**.

(*Assumes \$12/t freight and \$7/ha spread, 8% interest for 6 months, wheat farmgate at \$300/t)

Top ups with Flexi N -

CSBP agronomists are confident that flowering canola crops can be sprayed with 30-50L Flexi N with only minimal scorch on the leaf margins. Flowers appear unaffected. Spraying during the rain will further reduce any leaf tipping.

Cereal crops that have flag leaves and heads emerged can also be sprayed with Flexi N, as long as rate is less than 50L/ha, is sprayed in mild conditions with no dew on the leaf (includes light misty rain). Previous observations suggest that spraying toward the end of the afternoon and into the evening will further reduce the likelihood of crop scorch. If pesticides are to be added, SC formulations will have little to no influence of crop scorch. EC formulations can dramatically increase the potential scorch rating. Dilution with water can also reduce crop scorch slightly. Avoid warm dry windy conditions!



Above L - Flexi N with EC Pesticides during the warm windy day



Above R - Flexi N and Pesticides same crop sprayed at night in cool still conditions

Minimising overlapping with the boomsprayer – auto boom shut off a great idea



Above L – double application of Select on canola showing bud deformities



Above R – End to end headlands – double dose of lexone in lupins showing excessive crop toxicity

best of luck for the remainder of the season!