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LEGUME LOGIC

Global Vision, Local Focus

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Frost observations

The two heavy frosts in late September received extensive media attention as a result of huge wheat losses, however the effect on pulse crops escaped largely undocumented. The following is a summary of my observations of the effect of frost on legumes.

Lupins

The frosts aborted flowers and very young pods. Older pods were mostly unaffected and I estimate yield losses to be only 10 - 15 per cent. One observation is that the yellow lupin Wodjil was more sensitive to the frost than the narrow leafed varieties.

Peas

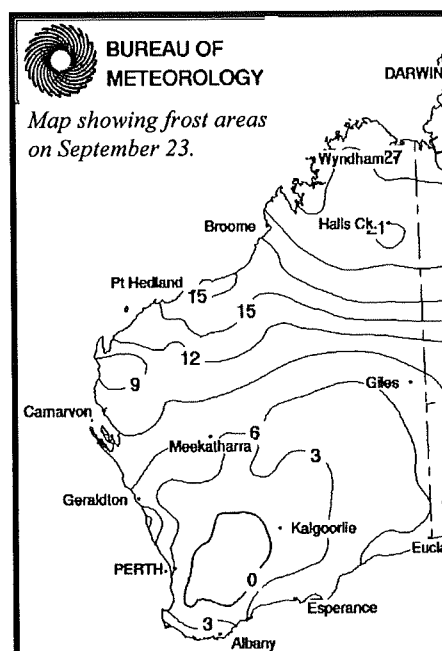
A significant proportion of field pea crops were frost affected. Some have made at least a partial recovery. With rain and mild weather experienced, since the frost, some crops have reflowered and repodded which should ensure these farmers don't face a total write-off. Unfortunately for others, earlier planted crops and lack of soil moisture has resulted in devastating pea losses.

Faba beans

Faba beans were affected in a similar way to lupins. Older pods came out of the frosts unscathed however there were several instances of stem frost which caused plants to bend over. The stem frost mainly affected pods that sat a metre or more off the ground - those pods underneath were untouched.

Chickpeas

The frosts aborted all pods and flowers and while most crops have reflowered to an extent with the mild weather, more rain is needed to achieve below average yields on these crops.



Pulse Points

- Chickpea prices continue to climb Australia wide on the back of severely reduced supply from the east coast. Traders are looking to the west to fill orders and WA growers are reaping the benefit, however these premiums will fall slightly after the first shipments are filled.
- The slow arrival of new season chickpeas from both Australia and Turkey into the Indian Subcontinent have also pushed international prices upward and similarly, this price spike will be sustained until early season orders are filled.
- Field pea markets have firmed recently, in response to significant stock disappearance levels into international food aid programs as well as commercial buying interest.
- Crop damage and harvest delays from recent rainfall in India's production areas pushed asking prices for most pulses higher on local markets.

Peas - a forgotten crop

Ask most wheatbelt farmers, who have suitable soil types, why they don't grow field peas and they will give one or more of three answers. Harvesting problems, blackspot disease and soil erosion following harvest. There are solutions to all



of these perceived problems. Tanveer Khan is the principal plant breeder with Agriculture WA and he had the following comments to make on peas - the forgotten crop.

"Field peas can grow in most soil types with varying soil pH. The crop thrives in the warm north as well as in the cooler

conditions of the south, and yields well in dry as well as wet years. In comparative trials, field peas have, on average, out-yielded all other pulses including narrow-leaf lupin. **Peas are more forgiving than any other grain legume available today.** Markets for field peas have also been very stable over several years.

"The black spot disease has been a major concern for growers, however it is easily managed by delaying sowing 10-14 days after the break of the season. Delayed sowing and plant establishment of about 50 plants/m² for tall Dundale types and 60 plants/m² for semi-dwarf King and Magnet are the keys to a good field pea crop."

Tanveer is pleased to report that the local breeding program has now reached a stage where a steady flow of new varieties will ensure continued support to the pea industry. Two new varieties were released last year: King, a

high yielding dun-type variety was released for the high and northern medium rainfall areas and the semi-leafless Magnet was released for the high rainfall areas.

Another white-seeded line WAPEA 2013 is likely to be released in 1999. During the 2000-2001 season, a number of potential releases are likely. WAPEA 2015, a white-seeded pea may be released for the low rainfall areas. There are three new varieties in contention to replace Dundale at this time. Additionally, WAPEA 2039, a quality white-seeded pea may replace all existing white-seeded varieties. By 2000-2001, the local breeding efforts may have added another 20% over the yielding potential of Dundale, making field peas an even more profitable and attractive crop. Now is the best time to gain experience with the crop so that you will be in a position to capitalise on the new field pea varieties that are likely to be released.

Seed testing 1999

It is good management to test legume seed intended for planting next season for freedom from disease, viable ger-

mination percentage and seed size. Poor seed quality has a marked effect on yield performance, especially if establishment conditions are difficult. Legume seed testing services are now available.

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Correction

There was an error with the inclusion of the Tallerack variety in several spots on the Lupin Variety Recommendation Map from the last issue of Legume Logic. Tallerack is very susceptible to anthracnose and is not recommended in the H1, H2 and M1. Care should be exercised in the M2.

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