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Please advise your new Chemcert licence details or call to arrange an enrolment for re-accreditation

Check the available dates and venues on our website or call us to organise enrolment in a refresher course in the coming months.



It is uncomfortably dry at the moment and multiple reports highlighting the extensive drought conditions currently taking place in rural Australia have been on regular media time slots.

These conditions are also affecting our local regions too. It is difficult to understand the emotional impact that these circumstances have on individuals, families and communities. It is also worth considering the impact that these same media reports have on any individual who has previously suffered a difficult period, especially not nearly as visible as the current widespread drought and without media attention.

Examples might include crop losses through frost, plague locust or spray drift, widespread and severe late season disease (as happened in our vineyards several years ago), bushfire incidents etc.

Although these losses might be recognised locally by neighbors and community members nearby the affected party, they largely go under the wider populations radar.

Nationwide drought is newsworthy for everyone, it is very evident to Jo Public as he traverses country highways and impacts the price of his everyday food items. People therefore take notice and sympathise with farmers.

If you have been affected previously with a major loss that went by un-noticed remember that the media will jump onto the next "best seller" as soon as it turns up and the continued plight of farmers will fall by the wayside!

I would suggest stay focused on the management tools you can implement to make the best decisions for your circumstance. Most importantly though, don't get distracted in this process by the current media coverage.

Greg Schubert

Quote of the Month

"You can't calm the storm, so stop trying. What you can do is calm yourself. The storm will pass."

– Timber Hawkeye

Broadacre Cropping

We have repeated weekly rainfall forecasts delivering 1-5mm on each front and so local crops have continued to survive very much "hand to mouth". We haven't received that big rain event to really wet things up or push moisture to depth. Unfortunately, some areas are now in a diabolical situation and for some regions this follows a poor season in 2017. Despite minimal rainfall it is surprising how well the crops are hanging in and the response they have to the small falls that actually hit the ground.

Disease

We are seeing leaf disease in cereals. Septoria can be found on Scepter wheat, while barley crops have low levels of Net Form of Net blotch. Oats grown in a close rotation could have septoria and red leather leaf. Crops should be monitored closely as the regular small rain events will promote the continued development of these diseases. Apply an appropriate fungicide as required to preserve and maintain green leaf area. If you have chickpeas growing in your rotation you will still need to apply preventative fungicides in front of rain events to protect them from ascocyta. Maintaining crop health and preserving leaf area will be paramount in a tight finishing season.

Nitrogen

Escalating grain and hay prices are the one positive on the back of the poor seasonal conditions we are experiencing. Maximising production for your rainfall will never be more important than this year!

The dry conditions over the last summer and autumn period has resulted in no mineralization of any nitrogen from the soil. As a result of this we are seeing very good response in crops to nitrogen applications. Having said that, we do recommend a cautious approach to nitrogen application rates. We must manage our crop canopy to preserve some plant available soil moisture at grain fill.

Weeds

Late germinating weeds have emerged in recent weeks.

Prior to routinely applying herbicides to control these late germinations you should check the crops growth stages as some crops are further advanced than they may look. Products like Dicamba, Tigrex, Paragon and Flight can all have a negative effect on the crop if it is at post jointing.

Cont on page 2

Seasonal reminders

- Keep up with the rodent control around the house and sheds. While temperatures remain low these pests will continue to remain indoors.
- Make the best use of limited feed reserves with a Gallagher strip grazing system. Battery and mains energisers in stock.

- Early bird spring offer - buy 1,000L Super Kelp and receive an extra 200L at no charge
- Clean up weeds along fence lines to ensure trouble free maintenance – especially electric fences! Use Uragan for total control!
- EVO shearing gear in stock – call Ashley or Randall for pricing.

- Please return all Chep pallets to either of our yards so that they can be de-hired to Chep.
- Philmac fittings, poly pipe and troughs for all water supply.
- Spread Neutrog products around the garden and on turf – SeaMungus, Rapid Raiser, Sudden Impact and Upsurge for lawns.

from page 1 At the same time the relentless wind has held up many boom sprays. Please be conscious of the agronomic features of some chemicals as well. Products like Talinor, Velocity and Precept (newer Group H products) need to be applied during the day - preferably on a bright sunny day. In addition, some products such as Affinity Force or dicamba should not be applied to a wet canopy. You will no doubt be aware of all these cautions off the top of your head! However, our agronomy service provides an opportunity to discuss these in more detail for your situation – give our agro’s a call. Continue to choose soft chemistry and be mindful that it is getting late in the season and plant backs could be an issue again in 2019.

Insects

It wouldn’t be a normal cropping season without some insect pest pressure too. Monitor for pest activity especially in crops that missed the Gaucho seed dressing.

Pasture

It continues to be a tricky season for pastures. Below average rainfall has been enough to green things up over the hills and northern ranges, but not enough to allow much growth. As a consequence, feed stocks are still very tight. Hopefully, some encouraging falls of rain will continue together with longer daylight hours and rising temperatures we should hopefully start to see the first glimmers of spring growth towards the end of the month. We have discussed ProGibb as a product that can be used to assist in filling the winter feed gap in the past. Given the current poor seasonal conditions, it may be necessary to encourage growth a little quicker than nature intended.

Most graziers will be in a tight grazing program at the moment and therefore an ideal opportunity exists to promote feed growth with an application of ProGibb. ProGibb contains a naturally occurring plant growth hormone. Plants produce it to stimulate growth during the growing season.

A strategic application of ProGibb before the spring season really gets going can encourage pastures to wake up and start producing 2-3 weeks earlier than usual, stretching the season out a little longer. This could be vital for graziers attempting to get some earlier weight into livestock in the coming months. ProGibb should be applied in conjunction with a fertiliser application to sustain the increased production that will occur.

Give one of our pasture agro’s a call for more detailed advice on the best use of ProGibb, particularly this season, and how it will result in a feed surge on your property.

RLEM are still very active and will continue to cause damage as the spring temperatures rise. Their activity at this time of year is often overlooked however when feed reserves are at a premium their impact might be more obvious.

Le-mat can still be used for the remainder of 2018.

Weeds have been difficult to control up to this point in time. Conditions and opportunities for herbicide applications due to frost and moisture stress as well as persistent windy weather have been limited.

Get onto outstanding paddocks as soon as practical. Bear in mind target crops as broadacre and horti crops are on the move. Check with our agro’s for options.

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YEAR of the GROWER

Viticulture/Horticulture

Soil moisture levels are generally much lower at this time of the year than we would ideally like to see. Adequate rootzone moisture will ensure that vines are not stressed at budburst. In an ideal environment buds will emerge evenly followed by good strong early shoot growth. Recent moisture probe readings are typically showing moisture received via **rainfall has only penetrated soil profiles to ~40cm deep** at this stage.

It is quite obvious that for this ideal budburst to take place in season 2018 the current soil

moisture will need to be topped up with irrigation. Many growers might already be running a tight line with available water reserves given the dry finish to last season. If water is used now it will be prudent to work through an irrigation budget exercise to ensure enough water is available over the entire growing season including which water sources should be used first if options are available.

Any top up winter irrigation should take place prior to budburst. It would be advantageous to piggy back rain events with these irrigations as well. Include **Aquacal** for enhanced leaching of salts during the top-up irrigations (natural leaching is non-existent so far this winter and it is quite likely that poorer quality water may be used in the coming season).

It is likely that moisture management will be an ongoing topic of discussion over the coming viti season and therefore it might be worth a discussion on options available for more precise **monitoring of water** availability and use. Call either Adam or Shaun to talk in more detail.

In addition to irrigation, moisture can be conserved in the vineyard by removing any under-row weeds and making an earlier move on management of the midrow crops. Mulching under rows has continued to indicate multiple benefits for moisture retention as well as improved fruit quality.

Jeffries mulch products are the best option for mulching and readily available.

Vine health

Plan your fungicide and fertiliser regimes early. Our agro's are **planning fungicide strategies now**, taking into account previous pressures and of course activity group rotations. There are a number of new products available this season that should be considered for inclusion in the spray program. Miravis Prime as an example has been registered for use in wine grapes and Serenade Opti is available in the 2018/19 season for late season botrytis control. Serenade Prime is exempt from MRL's.

If budburst takes place earlier than normal (and it looks likely that this may eventuate) vignerons need to be ready to apply **mite control** sprays at woolly bud stage. Some vines may be close to this growth stage now. Call the FJ viti guys for further advice, remembering that mite activity is on the rise across a large chunk of the Barossa.

In season stress might be a common occurrence as the season progresses. **Bio-Forge can be included in a program** as a tactic to reduce stress. Our local trials have shown increased leaf retention, sugar movement and favorable end Baume as well as improvements in wine quality in less than ideal conditions. An application cost of \$25/ha is a small investment for the benefits achieved from just one application. Bio-Forge is a Stoller product backed with the support of their local Australian base here in SA.

Weed control has been mentioned earlier in this article. Subsequent to initial knockdown sprays, many growers are aware that long term weed control can be achieved with residual applications of pre-emergent herbicides. Most of these products need to be incorporated with rainfall. With a less than ideal rainfall outlook, these residual products should/could be applied earlier than has been the general practice in the past.

If suitable rainfall is forecast some effort should be made to utilise the opportunities to get these products on the ground.

Call Shaun or Adam to cover off any of these issues for your individual situation.

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Livestock

Record prices for lambs continue in saleyards around the country! This is great news for producers who have been able to hold stock and finish them under the current trying conditions.

With these prices on offer it becomes quite clear that every lamb is important in your production system. It is therefore very obvious that every effort should be made to ensure that lamb survival is maximised.

In recent Landlink newsletters (check our website for back copies) we have talked about vaccination programs across the flock including administration of booster shots, internal parasite control and nutrition.

All these management tools can be scrutinised within each of your own systems and improved to also add more value to the "outputs". It really shouldn't be a case of taking short cuts on input costs when records are being set at the moment in saleyards!

When the spring feed flush begins some time over the next few weeks **nutrition should be a point of focus**. We need to ensure grass tetany and ryegrass toxicity don't become an issue for rapidly growing lambs. At worst case, a Glanvac 3 shot for pulpy kidney is only 12 cents per head plus yours and Rovers time!

Ideally a **worm test should be carried** out on sheep heading into a feedlot or confinement block as well as a jab of both ADE and B12 (two needles, one of each) to give them the best start and help negate the impact of the initial lockup phase. On the assumption that any hay fed out now will quite likely be the second, third or even fourth option it would be prudent to sort a **feed test on hay and grain** to determine the energy and protein parameters for the job at hand. Give our stores a call to arrange these samples and tests.

Lice Control

As we head into the spring shearing period some consideration should be given to the lice control program employed in your wool production program.

Products applied down the backline have obviously made life much easier for wool producers and especially at shearing time.

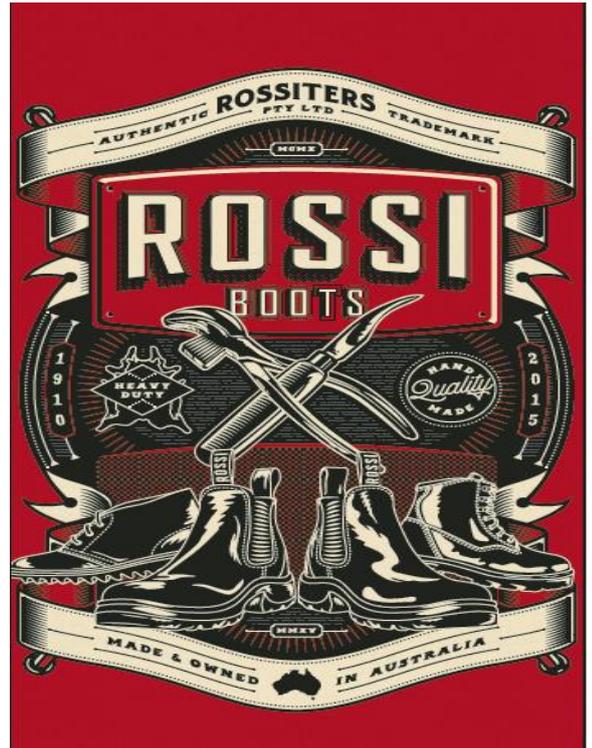
A few cautions though. Ensure the chosen product is applied according to correct bodyweights. Take care in even distribution down the back to ensure complete coverage and check wool harvesting, meat withholding periods and export slaughter interval prior to application.

Talk to the Farmer Johns sales staff for product recommendations and to arrange applicator use.

Cattle Tranz is a trough block containing a balanced array of essential minerals, glucose and fructose. Calcium, sodium, potassium and magnesium are electrolytes needed for normal metabolism of an animal. It has been suggested through trials that stress in animals is the imbalance of these electrolytes. Stress such as prolonged and continuous heat stress in animals in live export boats, animals being transported domestically over long and short distances, livestock walking long distances during musters, working horses, weaners in the yard during weaning or even sick animals, all suffer from stress. Studies done in Australia have shown that supplementing cattle with electrolytes reduces glycogen loss and improved dressing percentages in cattle prior to slaughter. Electrolytes supplied in drinking water can also markedly increase daily water intake.

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