

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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## FARMING PHOTO OF THE MONTH

During the course of 2025 we are offering a prize for the best seasonal farming photo of the month.

The winning monthly photos will subsequently be used in our annual Farmer Johns calendar.



Post your February 2025 farm shots to our **FJs Facebook** page.

Our Blyth store is a dealer for **Parts Express & Worthington Ag Parts**.

All Parts Express orders will be supplied on a next day delivery basis to our Blyth site.

Many of you will be familiar with the comprehensive range of farm machinery parts available.

Call our Blyth store for specific orders.



## Seasonal reminders

- Order seed supplies for the 2025 winter cropping program, including canola, lentils and cereal seed.
- Grape picking supplies in stock, including Nally Mega bins, snips and buckets. Give any of our stores a call for orders.
- Order Polymaster tanks to have installations completed by autumn.



Vintage is well underway across all winegrowing regions. Talk indicates fruit quality is pretty good but yields are well back in those blocks impacted by the frost events. Water availability

might become a bit tight for some growers during the next few weeks.

It is interesting to observe the various ways our clients deal with the challenge of a very dry season. The first discussion point that most have is the financial impact that a poor season has on their farm business. There are obvious concerns for livestock and the ability of grazing enterprises to continue maintaining those stock over the remaining months of summer and autumn. Feed and water are tight on all farms.

Conversations over the counter don't really cover off the more important issue though. Despite the acknowledgement of the physical day to day challenges a dry spell throws up, individuals tend to hide their personal wellbeing challenges.

Our Farmer Johns team love to see clients succeed in improving and achieving production goals as well as growing the health of their farm businesses. They are also aware that personal circumstances can become overwhelming.

I encourage all of you to look out for each other over the 2025 year. I reckon you should also try to include a bit more depth in your "over the fence" conversations. In addition to the weather, the best yielding variety and the dollars per tonne, in confidence your conversations could include a bit more personal chat?

A huge number of meetings and discussion groups have been made available across all regional areas in Australia aimed at raising the awareness of mental health challenges. These efforts are quite worthless if we as communities don't back up the conversations with our mates, work associates and farming neighbours.

I reckon 2025 might be a very appropriate year to give someone a hand through open and honest discussion?

**Greg Schubert**

## Quote of the Month

"Never get so busy making a living, that you forget to make a life"

- Dolly Parton

## Broadacre

**Planning for the 2025 cropping season is well in hand!** Crop nutrition represents a large part of the cropping program budget. In order to maximise value from the nutrient input **standard 10cm soil tests and Deep N coring** to establish the actual nitrogen available in the soil profile should be undertaken in a timely manner. Test results will assist in crop nutrition planning and ensure appropriate nutrients and rates are applied.

Testing is especially important after a tough season when spending capacity will be compromised for many croppers. It is also likely that nutritional carryover exists across a large number of paddocks as a result of the poor 2024 growing season. Testing will help to identify residual nutrient levels and also determine the requirement for other soil ameliorants such as lime or gypsum.

There is nothing more character building for our agro's than undertaking these tests on the warm days over the height of summer – give them a call before the next hot spell!

**Summer weeds** have been active in those regions lucky enough to score some early summer rainfall.

The exceedingly dry weather and the extended heat have limited opportunities to manage these weeds. Good weed control relies on timely applications of an appropriate herbicide in a tank mix with a suitable adjuvant. Given that all plants will be stressed over recent dry weeks, the difference between a satisfactory spray job and a poor result can simply be the wetter chosen for the situation.

The old Castrol "oils ain't oils" slogan also applies to spray mixing partners!

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- Use Trough Blocks over summer to stop algae blocking tanks, troughs and float valves.
- We have a range of Spika gun safes in stock to ensure compliant on farm storage of firearms and ammunition.
- Full range of Castrol oil in stock - call our stores for competitive pricing on 20ltr and 200ltr drums. Farm deliveries can be arranged.

- Knock out rabbits with a dose of Bunny Bait. Pindone baiting is an effective and safe method of removing these destructive pests.
- Look out for pinkeye infections on the back of dry and dusty conditions.
- Return all Chep pallets, 1000ltr shuttles and 110ltr Enviro's ASAP. We will take empty non-returnable fertiliser and glyph shuttles.

"with you in the **GROWING** business"

cont. page 1/ Whilst talking about weeds, a key consideration to a successful cropping program in 2025 will be ensuring that herbicide residues are thoroughly considered when crop rotations are planned. Low rainfall totals over the entire 2024 growing season, coupled with minimal (or non-existent) summer rainfall has seen our agronomy team grappling with this challenge.

Based on the range and volume of products used in our region over the last 12 months, the main concerns that are clearly going to be issues for a large number of growers are as follows;

**Lontrel** – avoid sowing legume crops where Lontrel was applied in 2024.

**Intercept/Spinnaker** (Imidazolinone herbicides) – avoid growing any non-Clearfield varieties on treated paddocks.

**Velocity/Precept/Galaxy** – 9-month plant back and 250mm rainfall required before sowing should commence

**Overwatch** – 9 months and 250mm rainfall requirement prior to Chickpeas, Lentils, Vetch, Oats and clovers. 350mm for lupins and medics

**Reflex** – 9 months and 250mm rainfall requirement prior to any Wheat, Barley, Oats and Canola crops.

In addition, we have seen increased and heavier stands of problem weeds, especially in some parts of the Mallee where crop competition was particularly poor. The temptation for some mixed farmers is to leave some weed stands as 'valuable' sheep feed. A standout observation for our agro's over the last 12 months has been the distinct difference between crop yields on paddocks treated for summer weeds and those that weren't. Feathertop Rhodes Grass is not controlled by glyphosate and is starting to creep around the Mallee while Skeleton Weed continues to cause problems. **Fertiliser ordering activity has increased after** planting fertiliser prices found a level with enough product on its way to the East coast of Australia to give a little stability.

The soft Australian dollar is having the greatest influence on prices at the moment, with the current domestic DAP and MAP price trading below the

cost of replacement if a new cargo was to be loaded today. There looks to be little benefit in waiting to order fertiliser unless some of the key price drivers change. On that basis, we have filled a reasonable volume of orders to ensure timely on farm supply in readiness for the season.

Compound fertiliser (ie Granulock Z, Gain Z, Zincstar & Granulock SS) are in very short supply.

Please contact our team as soon as possible if these products make up a portion of your requirement and to finalise your fertiliser orders.

## Pasture

Pastures will have taken a decent hiding by the time we get anywhere near our typical autumn break. The difference between this dry season and previous years though is **how well farmers have managed their properties to maintain good levels of ground cover and to minimise erosion.** The advent of containment feeding has certainly gone a long way to ensure soils are preserved and any residual pasture seed bank remains viable.

**Pasture soil sampling** is best timed prior to the normal nutrient application program. A large amount of broadcasting will take place prior to the autumn break. Please contact any of our team to arrange to have tests completed.

Natural seedbanks are likely to be more depleted after a couple dry spring seasons. The focus for all livestock producers heading toward the season break should be planning to re-establish pasture availability for livestock as soon as possible in autumn.

Check in with our agronomy team to discuss the best pasture options for your grazing situation and to sort your **pasture seed orders** and topdressing requirements to ensure availability and supply is ready on farm. Please contact any of the FJ team to discuss this further.



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## Viticulture

**Vintage has started in earnest across all regions**, well ahead of average.

Some late low-rate sulphur applications may still take place on late picked varieties. Observations during monitoring jobs indicate a very busy mid-February coming up if the current dry conditions continue.

Although our regions suffered early season crop losses from frost, early indications are that yields and quality appear to be average.

There are also a number of **late powdery infections** in poorly planned and minimally sprayed blocks across the wine regions, both in the Barossa and Clare Valleys as well as the Riverland. These late season outbreaks typically occur around Christmas time and into the New Year. Unfortunately, growers are lulled into a false sense of security especially in a dry season. However, cool damp nights and warm dry days are very favourable to this insidious disease. Resources spent on protective chemistry is way more economical than chasing late disease outbreaks.

On the back of these late season disease challenges, our agro's have had a number of discussions with growers about 2025 spray programs. It is appropriate to undertake these reviews now while the issues are present in the vineyard. Hotspots and problem blocks can be identified and diarised for particular attention at the beginning of the new season.

Low market pricing and oversupply continue to hamper grower's ability to manage some vineyard inputs to the level preferred. This situation will also impact **post-harvest nutrition applications** and subsequent soil treatments.

Please discuss the nutrient input options available for your situation with our viti agro's. They can assist in determining an appropriate program that might still suit your management budget models without compromising long term productivity goals and vineyard health.

Farmer Johns offer a **wide range of winemaking inputs with stock held in store**. As vintage cranks up more seriously enquiries for wine making products including Tartaric Acid, PMS, Citric and Caustic Soda have also increased. Please contact our stores for quotes on all winemaking products including yeasts and cleaning products.

## Citrus and Orchard

Most conventional Valencia's are now harvested with global demand for fruit and fruit juice remaining at a strong level, buoying the local citrus industries positive outlook.

The new seasons crop continues to develop with M7's reaching 60-62mm size and Navels in the 50-55mm range. Mandarins are around the 30-45mm range. **Nutrition applications have been managed effectively to ensure this steady growth pattern.**

Foliar sprays are still taking place in line with orchard plans. Depending on the current weather pattern, it is likely that one or two skin focussed foliar applications will also be completed in most orchards.

Red Scale and Mealybug populations are on the rise. Movento and Trivora are the insecticides of choice, applied once threshold populations are surpassed. It is likely that an additional application will be made later in February to negate any additional damage. Any infestations of chewing insects can also be taken care of should that be necessary.

Our routine monitoring runs have also identified a number of local infestations of adult Fullers Rose Weevil last week. Eggs are laid in calyx and fruit. Exirel is registered for use on Fullers Rose Weevil and also controls Light Brown Apple Moth and a number of other minor pests. Any evidence of Fullers Rose Weevil will impact KCT accredited growers. KCT growers will also be required to undertake physical orchard management including weed control, skirting trees and band and foliar applied pest control.

Leaf nutrition sampling in stone fruit blocks should be undertaken approximately three weeks after completion of picking. Samples in citrus orchards should only be taken when the majority of the new autumn flush is at two thirds the mature leaf size.

Please contact any of our FJ agro's for further assistance on all orchard matters.

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For further information talk to your agronomist or visit [ag.fmc.com/au/en](http://ag.fmc.com/au/en)

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### What if agriculture's greatest innovation isn't in equipment, technology, or genetics - but in our voice?

Today, misinformation spreads faster than a summer bushfire! Only 1 in 5 people trust modern farming practices, yet nearly 9 in 10 trust farmers themselves. There's a story here that needs to be told, but many farmers hesitate to share it, not out of a lack of pride, but because they care deeply about getting it right.

That's why Dennis Bulani wrote:

#### What a Farmer Wants You to Know About Food.

This isn't just a memoir; it's a call to action, a catalyst for transparent and balanced conversations about food and farming.

Together, we can elevate the voice of farming and connect people to the truth behind their food.

Check out the link attached to the book title if you are interested in joining the effort to build trust and pride in modern agriculture.

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## Animal Production & General Merchandise

**Livestock nutrition and water supply** continues to be a focus for all graziers as the warm and dry spell continues. Feed tests should be available for all feed bought in to the property to ensure it meets your stocks nutritional requirements. We can assist with testing across all fodder types including grain samples – call us to arrange tests.

**Summer fencing projects** are on the go across the district. We have a comprehensive range of fencing in stock including creosote and CCA treated timber posts, fabricated fencing, plain and barbed wire and star posts staples and a full compliment of accessories.

Call any of our stores to sort all your fencing projects and to arrange on farm deliveries

**Serious bushfires across the border** serve as a timely reminder to all landholders to remain vigilant over the summer time. It would also be prudent to regularly check the fire fighting plant to make sure that if it is required in an urgent situation, it is ready to go! We also stock a range of fire-fighting units including the Polymaster skid mounted and compact slip on packages. Give any of the FJs team a call for quotes and deliveries.

The latest round of **On-Farm Dry Times Grants** opened on the 30<sup>th</sup> January and will close on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March. The grants are designed to support the roll-out of sustainable agricultural practices for the longer-term viability of our regions farms.

The full list of activities the grant covers can be found in the [Application Guidelines](#) but include installing new or repairing water infrastructure such as pipes, pumps, irrigation, troughs and dams. Contributions toward improving, upgrading and constructing new livestock containment areas are included. Accessing decision making tools will also be supported – ie; feed and soil testing, soil moisture monitoring and weather stations, tank and trough monitors and telemetry sensor equipment is also covered.



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