

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Staff Farewells and Employment

We farewell several staff members in the next couple weeks.

Shaun Pick, our Ramco Store Manager has chosen to shift his agri focussed career into a supplier-based role.

Paige Collins also based at Ramco and **Blake Bertelsmeier**, our Blyth based trainee agronomist, have both resigned and are planning to travel on working holidays over the next year or two.

We sincerely thank them for the service that they have provided to our business and of course the dedicated efforts they have made in assisting you succeed in your individual farm businesses.

We are actively seeking suitable replacements for these three vacant positions and would welcome any enquiries or personal recommendations to assist us in this recruitment process.

Our Store Manager – Ramco will require a sound understanding of the ag industry, demonstrate strong people leadership and client relationship building skills as well as some experience in business and stock management and sales, planning & WHS.

Ramco and Blyth Store Sales roles require great people with outstanding communication and relationship capability and some administration relating to sales, stock and point of sale processing.

Enquiries should be directed to Greg Schubert - 0412 739396 or via email to greg@farmerjohns.com.au



Here we are at the beginning 2026. No doubt all of you will be hoping that this year will be a little easier to navigate than the last one!

Many of you have attended one or other FJs hosted function over the course of time when I have spoken about our FJs vision and core values. We want to see your business grow and succeed. If that happens, our staff and business will also grow and be successful. The 2025 year was obviously a challenging year for most of our clients, just as it was for us too. All business owners, from primary production to manufacturing to hospitality to retail need to always keep an eye on costs – especially in a tough environment as we are presented with at the moment.

However, while managing input costs is very important, we still need to make good decisions to ensure that production is still maximised to maintain satisfactory output, even during challenging times.

While the noise of the world goes on around us

and with all the distractions that this brings to our attention, our focus should remain firmly fixed on what we can manage and realistically achieve within our own individual businesses.

Why not determine to tweak just a few small improvements within your enterprise in 2026 as more often than not it is the little things we do that result in the best outcomes for ourselves and those around us - farming included!

Our agronomy team spend a lot of time backgrounding new production techniques and theories and studying new products and trial results. By default, they simply accumulate a wealth of knowledge through observations and hands on experience.

An “outside set of eyes” can also be helpful in providing a wider perspective when making little “tweaks”. Our crew might also be the cheapest resource that you could potentially call to assist in formulating your 2026 farm plan.

Remember, we are with you in this growing business!

Greg Schubert

Quote of the Month

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.”

- Mark Twain

Viticulture

Most vineyard spray programs are heading toward final applications. **Some disease pressure is still evident in protected and historically prone locations** but generally growers have maintained good control over the course of the growing season. Our routine monitoring programs identified some low-level Downy Mildew outbreaks in a number of Eden Valley and Hills vineyards subsequent to the heavier November and early December rain events. Recent warm and dry conditions should have negated any additional risk of these infections continuing.

Bunch closure Botrytis applications have also concluded. **Resistance management is a key focus when selecting products for inclusion in a botrytis spray program** with rotations of actives over consecutive seasons also being considered. Migiwa, Verpico and Intervene were products of choice in recent weeks.

Final protective sprays including late season sulphur applications will be completed in January. Care should be taken to avoid coinciding these sprays with any hot weather events to avoid leaf burn etc. The first couple weeks are forecast to be hot and dry – perfect conditions to negatively impact vineyards at this time of the growing cycle! **Surround can be included in the spray tank** with late fungicide applications. **Surround will provide up to 8°C temperature relief** which in turn reducescont page 2/

Seasonal reminders

- **Vaccinate stock for Pulpy Kidney** prior to turning them onto stubble.
- **Protect ripening fruit crops from bird damage** – bird scarers, gas guns and netting in stock. Check out the laser Bird Control system.
- **Get ready for vintage** – we have supplies of picking bins, buckets, snips, sun protection products etc.

- **Castrol oils will keep your engines in top order over the harvest and horti season.** Call our stores to sort all your lube requirements.
- **Livestock nutrition supplements** will assist animals to utilise dry feed reserves over the summer months. Talk to our team for personal advice.
- **We have a full range of turf care products** available for your lawns.

- **Get yourself a new pair of Rossi work boots for 2026.** Rossi boots are still made in Adelaide!
- **Rats and mice are active around farm yards and houses.** Use Storm, Talon or Bromakil grain or blocks. Keep pets safe by securing baits inside rat and mouse bait stations.
- **Please return all Chep pallets.** 1000ltr shuttles and 110ltr Enviro's.

“with you in the **GROWING** business”

from page 1/... heat stress and the associated impacts that extreme temperatures have on the plant. Surround is an inert calcined kaolin-based product that is safe to use in vineyards up until harvest. Local trials have proven that Surround improves fruit quality including fruit colour and yield. Anecdotally, bird activity is also reduced in vineyards that have had Surround applied to the canopy.

Our agro's have been finding below threshold numbers of LBAM across a number of vineyards. Most populations are at the 4th instar growth stage. These populations will need to be monitored in more susceptible varieties such as Grenache and Riesling to ensure their entry into bunches is prevented at fill and ripening. If left unchecked, the damage they can cause within bunches during this critical period may provide additional disease

entry points which once established are very difficult to treat. Products used for any late season LBAM control will obviously need to fit within the approaching harvest withholding and MRL limits – always check in with your winery processor prior to the application of any fungicide or insecticide product close to harvest.

Salinity has been an increasing issue for many primary production businesses for a number of years now. There has been a significant lift in the number of vineyards showing salinity symptoms in our wine production regions this past 12 months. Growers have had little alternative other than using poor quality irrigation water as a consequence of very limited runoff into water storages and reduced ground recharge during three consecutive dry spring seasons. Scorched leaf perimeters and a distinct discolouration along the leaf edges typify the visible evidence of salinity in vines.

Band-Aid measures in badly affected blocks at this stage of the season will provide the vineyard the best opportunity to adequately carry the current crop through to harvest. This could include monthly foliar applications of a low-rate of Cal-Nitrate and Super Kelp tank mix that will assist in mitigating the negative effects of salinity. Aqua-Cal can also be included in irrigation applications. It is a highly available calcium source designed to displace salt and enable a plant to survive salty soils or salty irrigation water. Applied through the irrigation to the soil, Aqua-Cal will release salt and improve drainage.

Orchard Citrus and Horticulture

Citrus crops have reached the 35+mm diameter in most orange orchards. Some earlier varieties such as M7's have cracked the 40+mm range. As a result, "golf ball" GA sprays have been completed during the last few weeks. Washi's and Navels have been particularly targeted in these early applications. Valencia's and M7s will generally take care of themselves during this current sizing period but are still worth keeping an eye on as part of the routine monitoring program.

There may be a requirement for additional foliar sprays later in January following the Gibberellic Acid applications. These later spray requirements will be dependent on the prevailing weather conditions over the next few weeks and any subsequent disease or insect pressure as a consequence of those conditions.

Continue monitoring for insect activity in citrus blocks. There is still some Katydid activity lingering on in local blocks but generally growers have managed early populations adequately.

Our agro's are finding LBAM at early instar growth stages with further evidence of their webbing on foliage. It is also a telltale sign of active larvae. Expected heat events in the first week or so of January will certainly impact their activity. It would be prudent to continue monitoring known populations of LBAM to ensure their numbers do continue to fall away.

Other pests that are typically active at this time of year, including Red Scale and Mealy Bugs, haven't reared their voracious heads during the

season - yet. No doubt they will make an appearance later in January. Low numbers of Brown Scale have been sighted in young citrus blocks. Check in with either Mete or Georgie at the FJs Ramco store if you need an extra set of eyes in your orchard during this critical time. Occasional brown scale was also spotted in young citrus.

Surround has been discussed as an option to protect vines from sunburn in our previous "viti" segment. It is also a valuable tool to assist citrus trees deal with extreme weather events, especially thin-skinned varieties such as Cara and mandarin. Surround will reduce temperatures within the tree canopy as well as providing sun protection on the developing fruit. Stone fruit orchards should be given a post-harvest nutrient boost once fruit crops have been removed. Ideally a leaf analysis should be taken within three weeks of harvest. These test results can be used in conjunction with recent soil test results to determine a suitable nutrient supplementation program going forward.



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Broadacre

Global fertiliser prices have come off from the highs of mid-2025, with the current market finding a floor with limited buying activity around the world at the moment. Since our advice to hold off on fertiliser purchases last month, we believe the market is now at a point where consideration should focus on securing supply before market volatility on the back of large contracts in the US and Brazil begin to push prices north. Large volumes of phosphate fertiliser are on the water enroute to Australia, setting our market up for the months ahead.

MAP will provide the best value for money in our local market with DAP at a significant price premium because of the higher ammonia requirement and the associated cost to manufacture.

Single super could be an issue in 2026. Impacts fertiliser plant in Tasmania is now the only source of Australian made SSP since Incitec Pivot committed to shutting its facility in Geelong. The underlying issue is that almost all imported SSP into Australia had come from China in the past. However, China's export bans have restricted supply which has in turn forced importers to source suitable quality product from Egypt for our domestic market.

The first job for most in planning for the 2026 season will be seed cleaning.

It is most important to choose the correct seed treatment product for the variety of seed to be sown and the disease profile you are looking to control or suppress. Neo barley is very susceptible to Loose Smut. If you have Neo in your sowing plans it will need to be treated with a better product such as Ever Gol Energy. Ever Gol has outstanding activity on Loose Smut and is also the market leader in the suppression of Rhizoctonia. Victrato is a new seed treatment from Syngenta registered the suppression of Crown Rot and Root Lesion Nematode in wheat and barley (including Durum). **Victrato is very effective and improves grain quality and yield gains up to 20%.** Victrato should be used on seed sown in high-risk situations especially when issues are confirmed with a Predicta B test.

In addition to seed preparation discussion, **we have a watch-out for canola seed availability for the 2026 season.** A positive pricing outlook for canola on the back of strong yields this past season, under seriously compromised conditions, has resulted in an increased forecast planting in 2026. Once again, our regional concern will be herbicide residuals and plant back tolerances on the back of limited spring rainfall. Flag your requirements early with any of the FJs team to ensure supply of your preferred variety, especially across the Clearfield portfolio.

Summer weed spraying has been a priority over the last few weeks. Recent dryer conditions have weeds stressing and pushing through their growth stages very quickly. In order to maximise any herbicide applied in these conditions please consider the following key points.

Water quality: is the water hard ie. bore or tap water contains calcium and magnesium which can bind glyphosate molecules? Hard water requires the addition of ammonium sulphate.

Nozzle selection: It is critical to understand the product being applied and what droplet size is required to maximise its performance on the weeds targeted. The product label contains this information. The additional benefit of applying Very Coarse droplets is the improved droplet life and the increased amount of any systemic herbicide reaching and entering the target weeds.

Product quality: It is also important to understand the difference in the quality or formulations of various products in our market – same actives but can be very different formulations in the drum. Glyphosate is a classic example in that all products work when conditions are favourable. However, when stressed weeds or complex tank mixes are in play, the product quality can make a significant difference to the end result. Our agro's have lost count of the jobs they have seen where Dropzone significantly outperforms other forms of Amine in summer spraying.

Pasture

Irrigated pastures hit their straps over the warmer summer months – both in terms of growth and livestock utilisation. This in turn decides the financial benefit to the enterprise. Our agro's can work together with you to achieve the best possible returns for the summer pasture investment by considering grazing, cutting, irrigation and nutrition supplements, paddock by paddock. Weeds and insect activity can seriously limit production and should taken care of in a timely manner. Our summers can be harsh which means adjustments may need to be constant for irrigation frequency, volume of water applied and over a variable time schedule and of course, evaporation rates.

Soil moisture monitoring could be a consideration to include into the summer pasture management plan. FJs have a long history and cumulative experience in installing and monitoring a wide range of soil moisture hardware. Give any of the FJs agro's a call to follow this up if it is of interest to you and your business.

Pasture options for the 2026 season should be explored early. What are your pasture goals for 2026 – and beyond? Have you a grazing or hay focus?

Your answers to these simple questions might provide some clarity in defining the pasture you need to look at this year.

Whether it's straight seed lines or one of the more traditional blends or even a multi species blend? Continuous plant breeding has seen a huge range of options available now. Whether its serradella, winter forage cereal, clover, ryegrass, medic and a new fescue or a grazing canola, brassica or chicory. **In order to get the best value from your pasture buck, catch up with one of the FJs agro's.**

Finally, a quick reminder to get onto the autumn to topdressing orders as well!



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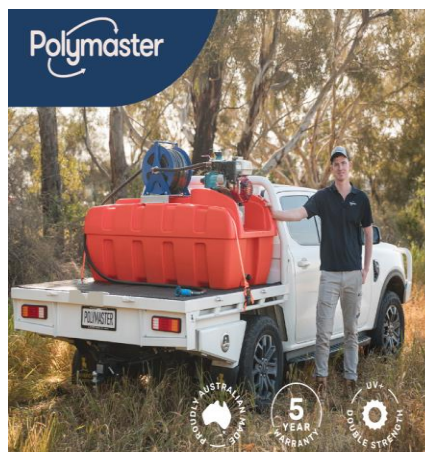
Animal Production & General Merch

Fire safety around the farm has been highlighted over recent weeks. Unfortunately, and based on past summer seasons there will be a number of serious fire incidents across our region during the summer months.

Make sure your fire prevention and bushfire plans are current and any farm fire equipment is well maintained and in good working order.

Onga pumps with either a 5.5hp or 6.5hp Honda motor have proven to be a reliable combination over a very long period of time. We also have fully assembled "tray ready" fire units in stock.

In addition to the major tank and pump units we carry a full range of fire equipment including hoses, nozzles,



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reels and clamps etc. Give any of the FJs stores a call for assistance if you need to upgrade or improve your fire firefighting gear.

On farm water systems are paramount to any grazing enterprise. Adequate storage and reliable water delivery and trough setups allow peace of mind over the tough summer months. We stock and sell Vinidex poly pipe and a full range of Philmac fittings. If you buy any poly pipe from FJs you can also arrange free use of the FJs poly pipe layer making the installation process a whole lot simpler!

Give the FJs store teams a call to quote your next farm water supply project.

Pinkeye has become a reasonably regular conversation across the FJs counters. Dust, grass seeds and **flies** can all contribute to occurrence of pinkeye in sheep and cattle. Any eyes that show signs of weeping eyes or the telltale "cloudy" discolouration that is evident in the early stages of infection should be investigated thoroughly. Grass seeds can become lodged beneath the eye lid of stock as they are grazing dry feed. Obviously, these should be removed prior to any treatment and to prevent further damage to the eye or deeper penetration into the surrounding tissue. A simple application of Terramycin Pinkeye Powder or Aerosol will generally clean up low level infections. However, if infections are more advanced repeat treatments may be necessary or in severe cases a Pinkeye patch may be fixed over the infected eye to offer better protection as well as excluding nuisance fly activity whilst the healing takes place.

Cattle can be vaccinated to protect against Moraxella Bovis with Piliguard from Coopers. A simple 2ml subcutaneous dose administered 3-6 weeks before the pinkeye season begins might be a more robust control option. Stock as young as 2 weeks can be included in such a program.

Have a chat to any of the FJs store teams about the best pink eye solution for your livestock.

Rabbit populations have been on the rise over the latter weeks of spring. As natural feed reserves are quite depleted it may be opportune to treat remnant populations to a belated Christmas lunch of Bunnybait! In order to achieve the best result, rabbits should be fed untreated oats for a

week or so leading to Bunnybait being offered. This will also provide an opportunity to determine the volume of treated grain to offer without wasting or overfeeding the population that is being targeted.

Once a stable level of plain oats are being consumed on a regular basis, Bunnybait can be offered. Three feeds of Bunnybait should be offered at 3 – 5 day intervals.

Dogs and cats may show symptoms of poisoning if they consume poisoned carcasses over several days. They should be excluded from treated areas and any deceased rabbits should be removed and burnt or deep buried as per the product label.



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