

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Take Petiole samples at flowering.
2. Monitor for pests in citrus.
3. Order canola seed for 2024.
4. Plan for season 2024.
5. Be bushfire ready.



Unfortunately, the dry weeks of September carried forward for the entire month of October! Broadacre crops have turned with harvest operations well underway in most areas. Crops have obviously struggled over the last few weeks with very little or no rainfall!

The summer horticulture season has kicked off in all regions. The warmer weather has certainly prompted strong early season growth particularly in the vineyards across our market area.

You may have noticed some frost damaged vines in odd spots, more so in the Clare region which copped a doozy a few weeks ago.

After several very good seasons with strong returns in all farming segments, the current low sale prices and demand for farm produce, livestock and wine grapes particularly has turned the financial tables for a lot of farm businesses.

Maintaining a strong communication with your financial institution and suppliers will ensure that you

also have the support required to manage your business through this tight situation. Alternatively, Rural Financial Counselling Services are available via the Rural Business Support network here in SA. The RBS financial counsellors are regionally based and experienced in supporting primary producers to recover from financial stress and threats.

They are available for confidential conversations and can assist farm businesses to negotiate this new and difficult territory.

We have some interruptions at the moment in our Nuri store as we finalise the connection from our new administration office to the main store. We apologise for the inconvenience this may cause with noise and building dust.

We also anticipate a bit of disruption at the Murray Bridge store over the next few months as well. This work will provide better customer service and store facilities as our business continues to grow at Murray Bridge

Greg Schubert

Quote of the Month

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by changing their attitudes.”

- William James

Viticulture

Soil moisture levels are much lower than average after the reduced cumulative rainfall over the winter and spring seasons. Recharge has been minimal across all viticulture regions particularly in subsoil comparisons. Irrigation should be managed over the course of flowering to prevent the vines suffering from water stress. There is obviously a likelihood that the summer will be warmer and drier than most in previous seasons meaning that water budgets should also be reviewed to ensure the availability of supply deeper into the growing season.

We can assist with all moisture monitoring tools, speak with one of our agro's to follow this up if you see an opportunity to improve water use efficiency on your property.

Petiole sampling conducted during flowering to assess plant available nutrients provides a very accurate assessment of the nutritional status of the vineyard. Any individual deficiencies can be taken care of over the balance of the season or during dormancy in subsequent years. Understanding the vines actual requirements rather than “guessing” their nutritional status also allows better and more financially efficient nutrient plans to be sorted and improve vine productivity and fruit quality. In many situations, tests may also show surplus nutrients which in turn may actually assist in reduced spending on inputs.

Talk to our agronomists with all your vine nutrition queries. They can also take petiole samples if required as well as onward representative samples you have collected from blocks ofcont page 2/



Welcome Brad Johnston,
to our Ramco team.

Brad is busy batching liquids in our nutrition blending plant. Please make yourself known to Brad.

Seasonal reminders

- We have a volume of grain bags in stock - give us a call if you wish to expand your farm grain storage over harvest.
- Dry feed supplements will assist livestock to utilise the dry feed still present in the paddock and will assist in maintain ewe condition prior to joining.

- Vine guards will protect new seasons plantings from hare and rabbit damage.
- Use Castrol oil for all machinery maintenance during harvest and over the summer horti season. Call our stores for quotes and on farm deliveries.
- We have feeders on hand for all containment and lot feeding.

- Be bush fire ready – check all farm fire protection equipment is in good working order. We have a range of pumps and fire-fighting units on hand and stock fire hoses, nozzles and fittings.
- Please return all Chep pallets to avoid additional hire fees and 110ltr Enviro drums and 1000ltr shuttles. Call to arrange collection off farm.

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From page 1 / interest. They can then analyse the results to determine the best path forward for your vineyard.

Fungal diseases will no doubt rear their head over the course of the season. We always find Powdery Mildew somewhere and generally showing up around Christmas time. After last season's high disease pressure, it is important to consider the disease load in most vineyards and ensure a tight preventative program is maintained early. As the season progresses the fungicide options become more limited which in turn puts additional pressure on our curative actives.

Botrytis preventatives should be applied at late flowering and pre-bunch closure when flowering scars and any early insect damage provides an entry point for latent botrytis spores to enter berries.

Frost events at the end of last month have caused a large amount of damage across most viticulture regions, with some quite significant damage in localised areas. Stollers BioForge and Foli-zyme both contain nutrients and co-factors that will assist vine recovery while promoting strong tissue and root growth to overcome such stressful events. These products will also provide a proven level of increased resilience to heat events.

Other nutrients that are also important in assisting the vines recovery and for the production of new growth, include calcium and zinc. Calcium is important for plant cell structure and integrity which ultimately reduces the susceptibility of plants to pathogenic organisms. Zinc plays a vital role in shoot elongation and the development of leaves, pollen and berries.

PIRSA Vineyard Rebate for Ethephon Trial-Chemical Crop Thinning

A study to assess the effectiveness of Ethephon to reduce crop load in red wine grapes is underway. Last season was the first year of the trial which demonstrated that the application of Ethephone reduced crop load by up to 90%. This will reduce the input costs

associated with supporting a crop. A rebate of \$40 per hectare sprayed to cover the cost of Ethephon, is available to growers. Please discuss this with your agronomist prior to application as there are some side effects that should be considered as well.

Citrus and Orchard

Citrus flowering is almost over in orchards. Fruitlet sizes are now ranging between pea and nut size which in turn escalates the importance of timely foliar nutrition applications over this important growth stage.

Insect pressures from Katydid, Thrips and LBAM as well as Earwigs and snails vary with some damage evident from their activity. Control should be managed to both reduce these pest populations but also be mindful to preserve beneficial insects and bees whilst flowering is still taking place.

Stone Fruit trees are getting toward the important end of the season, with fruit quality and sizing management top of mind. Nutrition applications can have a major influence on trees over the next few weeks with potassium supplementation a key base of fruit quality management.

We can mix specific nutrition blends to your orchard requirements at our Ramco store.

Talk to one of our agro's specific to your situation.

Carpophilus Beetles can cause significant damage to developing stone fruit and will spread Brown Rot spores as they move about in orchards. It is therefore important to manage their populations. Clean up fallen fruit to break their lifecycle and treat populations if critical thresholds are exceeded. Contact one of the FJs team to sort trap refills to monitor their seasonal activity.

We have stocks of **Burning Sulphur** on hand for the approaching dried fruit program as well as **fruit cutting knives in stock**.

Weeds are persisting in orchards and if allowed to grow on will use valuable soil moisture intended for the fruit crop. Talk to one of our team about the best control option for your situation and weed profile.

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Broadacre

The 2023 winter cropping season has certainly been challenging! Earlier sown crops have significantly better yield prospects over those sown further into the season. In addition, all crops sown into clean paddocks as a result of robust summer weed programs show significantly better yields than those left for stock feed.

Desiccation herbicide applications are in the final stages as harvest rapidly approaches. Given the volume of Roundup Ready Canola in our region, it is worth noting that Reglone (Diquat) should be used as the desiccant in these varieties and must be applied no earlier than at 70% pod colour change. Comparative timing for glyphosate application to conventional varieties will see applications as early as senescence onwards (>20% colour change). Our main concern in all farming systems is the management of ryegrass.

Planning turns to weed seed management at harvest, as this is the last chance to impact weed seed set for next year. Everything must be done to slow glyphosate resistance in ryegrass.

Insecticide applications have been ongoing in legume crops, particularly targeting Heliethis populations. A number of outbreaks have also occurred in canola with Diamond Back moth an issue in some areas. These infestations have mainly been found in later sown paddocks or areas that have been re-sown as a result of early season slug damage.

Fertiliser; prices now have a firm outlook due to the conflict in the Middle East as well as the low Aussie \$. Earlier forecasts were for a soft to stable outlook but these recent global headwinds now place us into a highly variable outlook. No-one is able to predict what may happen with local pricing. We are happy to have a conversation about what we are able to offer at the moment, including longer delivery windows to suit a post-harvest collection window.

Planning for next year's cropping program needs to start now and take into account our dry spring and the associated plant back constraints from chemical applied during 2023.

Given our reliance on the Clearfield trait in many crops, in crop Intervix or Intercept in 2023 will likely require a Clearfield tolerant crop to be grown in 2024.

The following excerpt from Nufarm's Intercept - "**Rainfall requirements for Intercept: DO NOT use Nufarm Intercept® in areas where rainfall from spraying to sowing of cereals the following year is expected to be below 150 mm (for 300 - 375 mL/ha use), 200 mm (for up to 500 mL/ha use) and 250 mm (for 600 - 750 mL/ha use)**".

This means that anyone who has used the high rate of Intercept this season and is intending to plant a non-Clearfield cereal on the paddock in season 2024 will need to find a Clearfield tolerant wheat, barley, oats or canola variety.

Tomahawk wheat is a Clearfield equivalent to Scepter recently release from AGT.

Trials show a yield improvement over Scepter. We have a significant volume available with the pending Clearfield residues in mind. **Given that almost all Clearfield wheat seed is sold out, call us sooner rather than later on this one!** Reflex was a widely used pre-emergent herbicide in 2023. Reflex treated paddocks will require a 9-month plant back and 250mm of rainfall prior to sowing cereals, canola and some legumes in 2024. Extreme caution is required on soils with low organic carbon typical in sandy type soils.

Overwatch can be used in many crops and has shown real benefits across our region in our battle with ryegrass. It has a 250mm rainfall and 9-month plant back for Chickpeas, Lentils, Oats Vetch, Sub Clover and Clovers.

Canola seed orders should be sorted as soon as possible, particularly if you require a specific trait like Podguard or multiple traits like Roundup and Clearfield tolerance. We expect good supplies of traditional Clearfield, TT and Roundup Ready varieties.

Pasture

The disappointing fall in all livestock prices during recent months has certainly taken the enthusiasm out of associated production activities for some. Despite this, there are many lambs and young cattle that still need to be finished prior to marketing. Many clients in all areas have chosen to maintain a **focus on improved pastures** which in turn has led to increased marking percentages and higher weight gains.

Hoggets destined for the breeding flock will also show a benefit with higher body weights and growth rates, resulting in improved conception, stronger lambs and more surviving twins on the ground.

Graziers that have the added opportunity of **irrigation on pastures over summer** can also discuss summer feed options with our agro's. We have a range of pasture varieties on hand suited to irrigation and higher rainfall zones.

Managing perennial pastures over summer subsequent to a poor spring will be imperative in preserving the pastures persistence. Grazing should be managed to reduce dry cover without baring the paddock. Some cover will also discourage weeds.

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Animal Health & General Merchandise

Our recent sheep information morning covered summer focussed production matters with representatives from **Performance Feeds, Elanco, AWI and MLA** attending. Topics included dry feed management, fly treatments, summer drenching, livestock market updates and new wool campaigns and innovations.

Michael Winzar from Performance Feeds emphasised the importance of **having plenty of quality water available above all else over summer**. Secondary to water was maintaining the correct balance of supplements to increase feed and dry matter utilisation. When animals drink less, they will eat less and lose condition which is vital over summer when joining ewes.

Trough blocks should be used to control algae in troughs. One 200g block is sufficient for 7000ltrs over 30 days. Summer weeds such as Potato Weed and Caltrop can cause Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid poisoning from too much copper. Poisoning can cause photosensitisation, and result in permanent liver damage. Take care when feeding additional copper supplements to stock in these situations.

Beachport Minerals Green Cap can also be added to water troughs to keep up the intake of essential vitamins. It contains electrolytes via fulvic acid and amino acids via kelp/seagrass extract. Green Cap aids in dry feed conversion and stress relief to livestock over the hot summer season as a result of these electrolytes and their naturally occurring calming effect. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein.

A hot, dry and dusty summer is predicted. **Pink Eye could become a potential problem** for cattle and sheep producers. Pink Eye is a common and painful bacterial eye infection

that can cause blindness with a subsequent decrease in general production as a consequence. Early signs of the infection include inflammation of the eye and clear tears, a blue haze on the eye itself which becomes cloudy and white over 3 or 4 days, blindness and blood vessels growing on the cornea making the eye appear pink as the eye heals. Most cases will recover over a 2 - 3 week period. Treatment should include removing any irritants of the eye, ie; grass seeds, and apply Terramycin aerosol or powder twice, 48 hours apart. Prevention should include avoiding to yard sheep in dusty conditions and control flies in and around yards as well as possible. Flies congregate and feed on infected areas and easily spread the bacteria from animal to animal. Eye patches can be applied to affected animals; patches are more practical for cattle than sheep. Patches also offer protection from any further irritation from dust, flies and sunlight in the early stages of infection. Cattle can be vaccinated to protect against infection however vaccinations need to occur prior to infections.

Bunny Bait will provide effective control of rabbit populations. As the natural food source dries up into the summer time rabbits are more inclined to take other feed sources including grain bait. For best results rabbits should be "primed" with untreated oats initially. Once they are feeding on the oats the bait treated oats can be fed. This method also allows an accurate determination of the volume of baited oats to be fed. Repeat the dose in 4 days.

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