

# Hunter Local Land Services

# Pasture news



## Summer Crop Seed Availability Update

Following on from what only can be described as a tough 2017/18 season, the seed industry as a whole is expecting seed production shortages across a range of summer forage crops for the 2018 /19 season.

Millet in particular is extremely limited with expected flow on effects to impact upon forage sorghums where dryland varieties are in short supply generally whereas irrigated variety stocks are plentiful.

Brassicacae, herbs and most clovers are plentiful at this stage, but it is expected that stocks will experience limitations as the season extends.

Lucerne's are generally satisfactory with pressure on only a small number of varieties.

Tropical grasses and legumes are variable.

It is suggested that if you are planning on some form of summer forage that you speak with your preferred rural merchandise supplier and secure your requirements early.

## Summer Forage Agronomy

If planning to sow summer forage this spring, a couple of things to note:

- Sowing Temperatures at 9am for at least five days consecutively:

**Millet - >14°C**

**Sorghum & Cow peas - 18-20°C**

Temperatures lower than this can slow and/or reduce germination by up to 50% and also expose seed to soil borne disease and pest risk.

- Weed control - ensure paddocks are clean prior to sowing to reduce competition and ensure palatability and quality. Check with your preferred agronomist where weed identification and correct chemical programs are required.

- Nutrient management - especially for Sorghums, ensure sulphur status is adequate to assist with managing Prussic Acid incidence. A minimum of 12mg/kg KCl sulphur is preferred. If unsure, conduct a soil test prior to sowing. All summer forages should be sown with a starter fertiliser to ensure strong and vigour as seedlings. Aside from legume crops which should have adequate PKS at sowing, all other varieties should be sown with an NPS based starter, e.g, 15-11-0-12 at 125-150kg/ha or an equivalent. And do not be afraid to topdress with NPKS post grazing or cutting to extend the season of the crop as well as DM/ha performance.
- Grazing Management - with particular reference to Sorghums, there are specific grazing heights that assist with reducing Prussic acid exposure. If unsure, clarify with your preferred agronomist or seed company representative.
- Fodder Conservation - try and target at least 1-2 cuts for hay or silage production where possible. This may require additional ground to be sown.





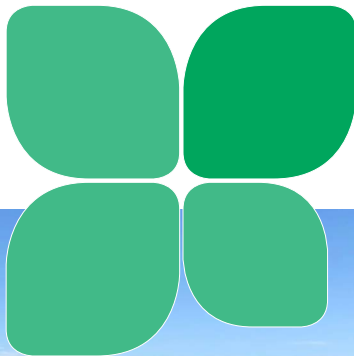


## Singleton Demonstration Site Update

The second open day was held on Tuesday 31 July in some pretty windy conditions, where more than 110 landholders had the opportunity to review all the varieties and blends on site and discuss what nutrient, weed and grazing management strategies had been implemented since the first open day in mid-May and the impacts of these – both the negatives and the positives – and what the plans are between now and October.

We are expecting to hold the third open day in early October with a focus on:

- Hay and Silage production this spring-summer
- A review of the year – what worked, exceeded expectations or disappointed
- Summer Crop site plans
- Planning for autumn 2019



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