



IRRIGATED CROPPING FORUM

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OILSEEDS NEWS

SOYBEAN HARVEST UNDERWAY

The soybean harvest began on Thursday for Jim and Caroline Maskus at their property at Whitton near Leeton in the Riverina.

Mr Maskus expected his crop of Djakal soybeans to yield about 3.5 tonnes per hectare, and is looking forward to harvesting other soybean crops in the region, particularly seed crops of the highly-anticipated new variety, Snowy, which Japanese buyers are looking forward to trying on a bigger scale.

Mr Maskus, who is president of the Riverina Soybean Growers' Association, said he expects around 180 tonnes of Snowy seed to be harvested off three paddocks in the Riverina and northern Victoria, which will be sold through licensed merchants for the Association.

And while Riverina soybean growers are keen to try Snowy for its high yields and disease resistance, Japanese buyers are also keen to try the variety on a bigger scale for making high-quality tofu.

According to its breeder, CSIRO's Dr Andrew James said Snowy is a white, large soybean that looks good to prospective buyers and also makes excellent tofu due to its high protein content.

Dr James said that historically the Riverina has produced the best quality soybeans for tofu making, due to its relatively long finish to the season which helps produce plumper grain with better protein levels.



“Sweet harvest: Jim Maskus (right) is looking forward to harvesting seed crops of Snowy soybeans in the Riverina district, pictured with NSW DPI soybean agronomist, Luke Gaynor”.

THINK TWICE ABOUT CANOLA FUNGICIDES

Canola researchers have raised concerns about a blanket approach of fungicides for canola, and have warned that in some cases they are an extra unnecessary expense, and may be putting the entire industry at risk by creating ‘super-bugs’.

At a recent meeting of canola industry leaders at Wagga Wagga, Canola Association of Australia president Trent Potter aired his concerns that the widespread use of fungicides may not always be warranted, and that the fungus that causes the disease, blackleg may, in time, develop resistance to the most commonly used chemicals as a result.

Horsham-based canola pathologist, Dr Steve Marcroft said at a recent national meeting on canola fungal diseases that many growers used fungicides as a type of “insurance” against blackleg.

He also said that it was preferable to choose a variety with resistance to the disease rather than relying on fungicides for a susceptible canola variety.

“Variety choice is critically important. There’s generally no use using a fungicide on resistant varieties, but if the blackleg resistance rating (of a variety) is less than six (out of ten), you’re more likely to see results,” he said.

Dr Marcroft said that in low rainfall areas, like the Mallee, growers could get away with sowing canola varieties with a minimum blackleg resistance rating of four, but he advised that six is the minimum rating in higher rainfall areas. He also cautioned that blackleg resistance rating for varieties could deteriorate from one year to the next.

CSIRO scientist Dr John Kirkegaard told the meeting that it’s “the norm” for yields of canola to respond to fungicides in New South Wales, but the effect is far less marked in the more resistant canola varieties.

Research in New South Wales has shown that while the fungicide ‘Impact’ lives up to its name in reducing diseases levels and increasing yields where disease is a problem in canola, the fungicide ‘Jockey’ is far more cost-effective, while ‘Maxim’ didn’t hit the mark.

Across all the experimental sites he studied, Maxim had little effect, whereas Jockey worked in nearly 30 per cent of cases, and improved yield by an average 0.10 tonnes per hectare. Impact seemed more impressive and made a difference in nearly 50 per cent of cases, with an average 0.17 tonnes per hectare improvement in yield.

However, it wasn’t all good news for Impact. Dr Kirkegaard said that even though the yield of canola treated with Jockey rarely out-yielded Impact-treated canola, the lower-priced Jockey came up with the goods financially for growers.

“For a 100 hectare paddock of canola, you would spend \$600 on Jockey and make an average of \$3,100 (a \$2,500 return). If you were to use Impact, you would spend \$2,000 to make \$4,000 (a \$2,000 return).”
