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OILSEEDS NEWS

CANOLA DISEASE WARNING

Farmers who plan to sow canola into failed canola paddocks are putting this year's crop at great risk of the potentially devastating disease, blackleg, according to a leading industry figure.

In his last report after four years as president of the Canola Association of Australia, Trent Potter warned growers not to sow canola on last year's canola paddock, or even nearby.



DISEASE ALERT:
Canola growers have been warned to not sow canola on last year's canola paddocks to cut the risk of the disease, blackleg.

He said that some growers are considering growing canola on failed canola paddocks from last year.



DISEASE HARBOUR: Canola crown and stem stubble harbour ripening blackleg spores.

remains.”

“There is still a very real chance of blackleg developing in these paddocks,” said Mr Potter.

“Where crops were cut for hay or silage, there is at least 10 centimetres of the base of the plant remaining.

Also on crops that were grazed out, the crown still

He said that summer rain has started the blackleg spore ripening process. Both the crown and stem of canola plants can harbour spores.

“Further rain may allow spores to be mature at about sowing time to infect canola seedlings.”

Recent research has also found that burning canola stubble is not effective in controlling blackleg as it does not destroy all stubble, which can still release blackleg spores.

The keys to managing blackleg are using resistant varieties, sowing canola at least 500 metres from the previous year’s crop and sometimes the use of fungicides.

LAST CHANCE FOR CANOLA FOR MIA IRRIGATORS



END IS NEAR: Irrigators with remaining water have until the end of March to pre-water canola paddocks this year.

PHOTO COURTESY NSW DPI.

With the impending closure of irrigation systems in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, those irrigators with water remaining will need to irrigate before the end of March to pre-water any crop area, according to a leading irrigation consultant.

The Executive Officer for the Irrigation Research and Extension Committee, Bryan

Clark, said that croppers with water still available could pre-irrigate in late March, allowing them to sow crops like canola in mid to late April into a good moisture bank, or on a small rain event.

“Irrigators need to make a choice. If you still have water you either irrigate or not – at this time there are no water deliveries available past the end of March in many areas. Otherwise, you may be able to store water on farm, in which case you could water later but again probably don't want to be wasting water evaporating in storages for too long,” he said.

“In both cases it may be that canola is a better cropping option than wheat in that you can sow into a reasonably full profile in April. Canola offers many benefits to producers in terms of rotational disease management, soil health improvements and broadening the enterprise diversity on irrigation farms.

Mr Clark said that some irrigators currently have water available, including bore irrigators with a capacity to water up crops on time and those farmers with water in

storages. He also said that paddocks which are growing a summer crop could provide some residual soil moisture to a winter crop.

Oilseed and pulse specialist, Don McCaffery, with the NSW Department of Primary Industries said that canola has a lower irrigation requirement in spring, at least one megalitre per hectare lower than a spring wheat or faba beans.

“This is where canola has the advantage over these crops,” Mr McCaffery said.

He said that dual-purpose wheat was a good option for growers with livestock, but for those irrigators who are purely grain growers, canola should be factored into the spring irrigation scenario, given irrigators who are also growing rice will be aiming to save as much water for that crop.

IRRIGATED CANOLA VARIETY TRIAL RESULTS



INFORMED: Growers have now access to information on long-term performance of irrigated canola varieties.

Irrigators now have access to better information to help them choose the best canola variety for their situation.

Long-term results from canola variety trials on irrigation in the Kerang region, conducted by the

Victorian Department of Primary Industries, are now available for the first time.

Oilseeds Industry Development Officer, Felicity Pritchard, said that irrigated canola growers have had less information on variety choices available to them than their

dryland counterparts, as canola varieties on irrigation are not trialled as part of the National Variety Testing (NVT).

“Biometrician Chris Lisle from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries has worked together with the Victorian DPI to analyse the data. Previously, we could only look at the variety trial one year at a time. We now have information on which varieties under irrigation stack up the best over a four-year period.”

Victorian DPI irrigation agronomist, Damian Jones, suggested that growers use varieties that have proven to be high-yielding in the longer term, and test new varieties on a smaller scale.

For further information, contact Felicity Pritchard on (03) 5382 4396.
