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AG NOTE

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Introduction

Welcome from everyone at Western AG to our Spring newsletter edition and the last one for the year.

The 2013 season has not been without its challenges such as the delayed break, a very wet August in some areas and the wet and windy conditions making it difficult to spray and spread on time. It is pleasing to see the condition of most of crops and pastures and the recovery that has been able to be achieved through good management.

Every season offers an opportunity to modify and refine management practices and to learn from the result of doing this. A good example of this is the dry sowing of not only canola and

pulses but cereal crops this year. Paddocks that have had a good weed control history combined with an effective pre-emergent program have been very successfully dry sown and these relatively advanced crops look excellent. This experience has been great and will allow us to sow early and dry with more confidence and to extract the highest level of production from paddocks that is possible.

We have everything crossed for you wishing for a good Spring to allow crops and pastures to maximise their potential.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter edition and we look forward to being able to assist where possible as we finish the year and lead into harvest.



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Company Developments

We have the pleasure in welcoming our newest staff member to Western AG with Leigh Walters being appointed as Assistant Manager at our Horsham Branch.

Leigh has an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture (Longerenong College) and has worked in the industry for 10 years in the Sunraysia area. He has extensive knowledge and experience in the Horticulture area, in particular wine and table grapes and seasonal vegetable crops. He will be assisting Mark Hoffmann and the team at Horsham to continually provide the best service possible to our clients.

On a personal note, Leigh follows North Melbourne in the AFL, is a Ford V8 supporter and is hoping to join a local football club as a trainer. Since accepting the role, Leigh has had a whirlwind few months by getting married and relocating to Horsham with his wife Rochelle.

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Late Broadleaf Control in Cereals (by Trudy McCann)

Now is a good time to be having a look at your cereal crops and checking for any missed or late germinating broadleaf weeds, the two main concerns are wild radish and musk weed in the north. It is easy to think that those few plants you might see are not any big issue at this stage of the year.

It's true that any in crop weed competition will have already caused its yield damage and removing them now will not save this. So why spend time and money on them?

Well, if we consider that on average one radish plant will have around 10,000 seeds / plant and those seeds will be viable in the soil to germinate anytime in the next 8-10 years, then adding the \$15/ha worth of herbicide to your fungicide application, or even coming back for an extra pass, is going to be worth it.

Wimmera/Mallee Disease Update (by Tim Hofmaier)

With good rainfall received in the Wimmera/Mallee area over the past four weeks, the potential of both cereal and pulse crops is very promising.

Wheat

Stripe rust infection has been generally low so far this season due to the exceptionally dry summer and the lack of a volunteer crop or "green bridge" to carry the disease over. At the time of writing, the variety where infection has been found is Wallup and any farmers growing this variety need to monitor. It also needs to be kept in mind that this disease has the ability to build up quickly. Over recent weeks, growers have been busy applying preventative sprays for Stripe Rust which is always the best way to manage this disease.

We have experienced higher than normal levels of yellow leaf spot earlier in the season with Derrimut, Correll and Scout all being affected badly. At first glance, crops appear to be infected by stripe rust. Upon closer inspection, the plants can be found turning yellow with extensive lesions on both lower and upper leaves.

Earlier applications of high rates of propiconazole @500ml/ha appear to have worked well and this treatment also offers early protection from stripe rust.

There is a number of herbicide options available depending on the crop growth stage, the most common recommendation will be a phenoxy (2,4-D amine).

The safest timing for high rates of 2,4-D based herbicide is after the end of tillering (GS30) but prior to flag leaf emergence. In most instances, applications are safe to early booting stage. Booting is the stage after flag leaf emergence and before the head is visible. After this point pollen formation and flower development occurs and the plants become sensitive to any stress.

Cereal crops move very quickly through these growth stages, so it is important to check before any 2,4-D application. A good rule of thumb is no phenoxy once awns become visible in a cereal crop.



Yellow Leaf Spot in Wheat

There have already been reports of stem rust found in the Mallee and growers with varieties such as Yitpi which is rated as VS for this disease need to monitor crops closely.

Barley

Spot form of net blotch and scald infections have been widespread in barley, particularly in sensitive varieties such as Gairdner. A range of treatments have been used including better quality fungicides, such as Amistar Xtra and Prosaro, in addition to propiconazole in an attempt to achieve better disease control. With crops starting to flower, we are coming to the end of the fungicide treatment window. It is still very important to continue to monitor crops for any late diseases that may affect the yield and grain quality.

If weeds are discovered after this timing it is possible to delay and use 2,4-D later, when the crop seed dough is fully formed and firm to touch. Higher rates of 2,4-D are required at this timing and only partial weed seed set control can be achieved.

If timing does not allow for 2,4-D to be practically applied, there are some other options for high priority weeds. Logran is registered for control of wild radish in wheat and barley and can even be applied at head emergence. However, crops should not be sprayed at flowering. The other more effective option is Eclipse which can be used at similar timings. Remember that Plant Backs will be an issue when using these herbicides on alkaline soils.

Faba Beans

The season has been conducive for growing beans and crops look very good, however, this has also favoured high infection levels of diseases such as chocolate spot, cercospora leaf spot and ascochyta. Growers have had to spray as often as every 3 to 4 weeks in high disease pressure situations in an effort to maintain seed quality and colour.

In addition to disease, crops need to be swept for insects from now on. Green Peach Aphid is being detected and Budworm is significant virtually all seasons. Alpha Cypermethrin at 200 to 300ml/ha provides around 2 to 3 weeks protection for Budworm. In the case of aphids, advice needs to be sought regarding spray thresholds and the appropriate treatments. Quite often, insecticides can be easily applied with the last fungicide.



Native Budworm

Late Weed Control in Pulses (by Matt Witney)

With harvest approaching, now is a good time to give some thought to the control of any late germination of ryegrass or “survivor” plants from in-crop treatments before they set seed. This can be done in pulses using Glyphosate, Paraquat or Diquat based herbicides. It is important that this technique is not relied upon to control high densities of ryegrass, and rather it is used in conjunction with integrated weed management (IWM) techniques such as hay, green manuring and windrow burning.

Glyphosate and Paraquat products are mostly used and not all formulations are registered so it is important to check product labels. In most cases, the rate of herbicide used will not actually kill ryegrass but rather prevent it from setting viable seed.

GRDC funded trials in the 1990’s found that paraquat is more effective than glyphosate when ryegrass is at milk stage (control range of 64 to 97%) versus glyphosate (control range of 14 to 74%). However, if early control is needed and ryegrass is still flowering, glyphosate was found to be a better option overall.

Glyphosate

Herbicide rate required varies depending on the active loading. For example, Weedmaster DST, which is Nufarm’s Roundup DST replacement, can be used @365ml/ha at the flower stage of most grasses to control seed set. A higher rate range, 780ml/ha – 2.1L/ha, is required to control more advanced weeds, to desiccate and/or accelerate the ripening of crops such as chickpeas, faba beans, field peas and lentils.

Spray timing is critical and is usually a balance between spraying early enough to achieve weed control and not too early to have crop affect. The best time for ryegrass is when the last seed heads at the bottom of the plant have emerged and the majority of the heads are at, or just past, flowering.

In regards to the crop, chickpeas and lentils should be sprayed when they are physiological mature or < 15% green pods. Faba beans should be sprayed when pods turn black and the average seed moisture is below 30%. Field peas should be sprayed when pods turn yellow and the average seed moisture is < 30%.

The WHP for Weedmaster DST is; Do not harvest for 7 days following application.

Paraquat

Gramoxone is registered for spray topping @400ml/ha, and desiccating @800ml/ha for chickpeas, faba beans, lentils, lupins and vetch. Due to its contact mode of action, this product can be used later than glyphosate, however spray coverage is critical. The spray equipment should be set up to produce a medium droplet and a higher water volume (100L/ha) is ideal. The addition of non-ionic surfactant at 100ml/100L can be beneficial also.

The WHP for Gramoxone is; Do not harvest for 14 days following application.

Keep in the back of your mind that one pulse crop that can be hard to spray top or desiccate is chickpeas due to the late maturing nature of the crop.

Remember, to fully understand the best time to spray crops for any late weed control, speak to your agronomist.

Summer Crop Management (by Michaela Alexander)

Brassicas (rape):

Whether grown primarily for summer feed or to clean up a paddock in preparation for sowing down to pasture or crop the following year, brassica’s require careful management to ensure the best results.

Insect pressure can be high over Spring and Summer with red legged earth mite (RLEM) and diamond back moth (DBM) being the most common. DBM are prolific breeders and multiple generations are possible in one season. There is wide spread resistance to synthetic pyrethroid and organophosphate insecticides. It is for this reason that it is sometimes a more economical option to graze the crop rather than spray. Organic based insecticides, such as Dipel, are effective but must be used when larva are very small.



Red Legged Earth Mite



Brassica crop Leaf Colour Variety
(Photo courtesy Agfact P2.1.13, 1st ed, 2002)

Grazing Management is very important. Animals will need some adjustment to grazing rape and it is advisable to initially rotational graze a stand with a pasture paddock. It is also important to reduce the risk of nitrate poisoning by waiting until leaves on the rape have changed colour before grazing (see photo).

Millet & Sorghum:

Millet which is free of prussic acid can be grazed once at 25-30cm in height. This is roughly 6 weeks after sowing. Sorghum should be rotationally grazed and a safe grazing height can vary with different varieties due to prussic acid present in fresh young growth.

An excellent high production option to the traditional sorghum varieties is Pioneer’s Sudan by Sudan cross, called Triple S. Unlike traditional sorghum, there is no prussic acid risk allowing stands to be grazed at an earlier stage. Triple S can be sown at low seeding rates making the seed cost not much more than rape.

Urea applied after each grazing of millet or sorghum will provide quicker regrowth of the crop and better quality feed. It is also recommended that a sulphur lick block, in addition to some form of roughage, be provided to stock grazing particularly on sorghum.

It is important to note that, sorghum has a soil temperature requirement for successful establishment of 15°C and above. This may not be achieved until late October in the Western District. To maximise the productivity of all stands of summer forage, short grazing intervals of high stocking rates followed by a recovery period are preferred.

Winter Type Canola (by Brad McLean)

Winter type canola is widely grown in the Northern Hemisphere and has huge potential in the high rainfall cropping zones in Australia also. Unlike the spring type varieties that are currently grown, winter canola requires a period of cold conditions before initiating flowering and seed production. This allows for a wide planting window, starting from around mid-October sowing moisture dependent through until Autumn.

Why Grow a Winter Type?

Trial work by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries has shown winter types to consistently out yield the best spring canola types in high rainfall areas. Yields being produced in trials has been in excess of 4t/ha. However, due to the late maturity of these varieties reasonable spring conditions are required.

Being able to plant winter type canola early allows the crop to be established before the onset of slug pressure and may offer some advantages with blackleg management. It also allows crops to be grazed over summer and autumn.

These varieties do grow tall and grazing is likely to reduce plant height which could be an advantage. Additional nitrogen post grazing may be required to regain biomass and retain yield potential.

Seeding rates, target plant populations, starter fertiliser requirements and weed and insect control programs are similar to spring canola. Weed pressure could be higher in early planted canola and it will be important to use Trifluralin at sowing to control ryegrass and hogweed. One additional risk with spring planting could be diamond back cabbage moth (DBM).

Varieties for 2014:

The leading variety available for 2014 is Hyola 971CL, a Clearfield hybrid from Pacific Seeds. Hyola 971CL has performed favourably compared to the variety Taurus, the first winter type commercially released in Australia a number of years ago, and has the advantage of being able to control a range of broadleaf weeds.

If you wish to consider planting winter type canola this year, Hyola 971CL seed is expected to be available from early November.



Late Glyphosate Usage (by James Jess)

Hay & Silage

Weedmaster DST (same glyphosate formulation as Roundup DST) has a dual salt formulation that has been found to perform very well under summer conditions and provide for quick 'brown out' times. A registration which is relevant for this time of year is the pre hay/silage cut application timing option.

The application of DST prior to cutting for hay or silage is an excellent way to control weeds and prevent re-growth. It also gives growers the ability to achieve quicker sowing turnaround times when following up with summer fodder crops.

This application needs to take place 3-10 days prior to cutting with data showing that once hay/silage is left any longer than 10 days quality starts to decline. Hay or silage quality is actually optimised if cutting is commenced within 3-5 days of spraying. Application of Weedmaster DST can also result in reduced curing time in high biomass crops. For more information and guidance please contact your agronomist.

Canola Update

Over the top (OTT) applications of glyphosate pre harvest in canola have been found to be effective in controlling weeds and making the direct heading of crops more efficient.

Nufarm have been pioneering this work in Australia and a re-submission has had to be made to the APVMA for registration of Weedmaster DST. Unfortunately, this will not be ready for this year's harvest.

In addition to this submission, maximum residue limits (MRL's) for glyphosate which are set by the APVMA currently stand at only 2ppm. OTT applications pre-harvest in canola will exceed this level. The canola industry is pushing for residue limits to be increased to 10-15ppm to allow OTT applications to be made. This obviously requires a lot of co-operation with export partners and takes time, although indications are that they will be in place for next year's harvest.

Seed Set Control in Cereals

At this time of the year, it's not easy driving past those areas on the farm where things just haven't quite gone to plan in regards to weed control. Ryegrass, brome grass & wild oats are often the main culprits and, with each year that goes by, seed banks of these aggressive weeds can increase putting constant pressures on productivity. Growers need to constantly look at alternative ways they can reduce the levels of weed seed set.

Sacrificing areas to hay which are overrun with grass weeds is an excellent strategy to drive down the numbers in the seed bank.

The picture below illustrates an area of a paddock which was last year sprayed with glyphosate and cut for hay as a result of brome grass infestation. The paddock has been planted to canola this year and the level of carry over brome grass seed is very evident in the untreated area.



Area cut for hay (right) and the Untreated area (top left)

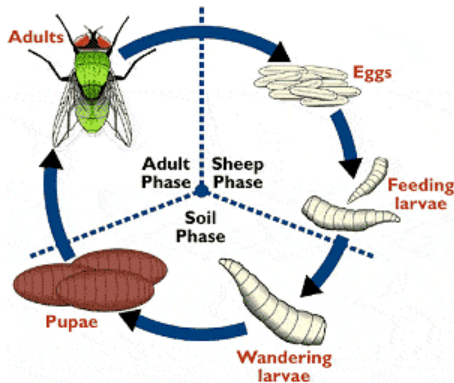
Now is the time to be identifying high weed infestation areas in cereal crops. If the area is just simply cut for hay, weed regrowth is possible and the benefit can be lost. Glyphosate pre-cutting has a great fit here.

Fly Season is Approaching (by Aaron Starick)

With some warmer weather finally arriving, combined with moisture in the air and on the ground the sheep blowfly season is now upon us.

The Maggot to Fly Transition

Flies transition from maggots in the ground, which is soil temp dependent, and generally takes around one week. Interestingly these maggots may have been in the soil for up to twelve months.



Flies require protein to be able to mate and lay eggs and these eggs are laid in clusters on susceptible sheep. After 12 hours, the next generation of maggots have hatched which require protein and moisture to survive.

Once maggots have hatched they take up to 24 hours to serrate the skin and this is when they get their first supply of food. The maggots then generally feed on the sheep for 3-5 days before they drop off and burrow into the soil to pupate. By now the sheep has a struck area and this makes the site attractive for more flies to lay eggs. This secondary flystrike causes rapid expansion of the strike wound and this is when you will start to see the effects on the animal.

Treatment Options

There are many different products on the market to control flystrike. Novartis produces the well-known Clik product, which can be used as an off shears treatment and offers a very long 18-24 week period of protection against fly strike. Clik can also be used on sheep with up to 3 months wool before shearing. The meat withholding period (WHP) is 28 days, wool is 3 months and the export slaughter period (ESI) is 120 days. Therefore if season long protection against blowfly strike is required then this product is often preferred.

ClikZin is a perfect product if shorter term protection, up to 11 weeks, is required. ClikZin has a 7 day meat and 1 month wool WHP with the ESI 21 days. ClikZin has a good fit for animals that are intended for slaughter soon and also following lamb marking.

Blowfly treatment and lice control is also available in a combined form, ClikPlus. This product still has the season long protection of 18-24 weeks for fly strike, with the added benefit of up to 10 weeks lice protection. This can be applied up to 7 days off shears or on lambs with up to 3 months wool. WHP's for domestic export are 21 days, wool is 6 months and the ESI is 70 days.



Vetrazin is an option that comes in a liquid form for shower/dipping with protection of up to 14 weeks. It has a 7 day meat WHP, wool is 2 months, and the ESI is 21 days. It is also available as a spray on formulation which offers 11 weeks fly protection.

Extinosad is another product from Elanco. This comes in a jetting/dipping fluid formulation or aerosol pack. It can be used on sheep with long wool or 2-6 weeks after shearing and has a protection period of between 4-6 weeks. Extinosad provides rapid knockdown against flies and maggots. This product has a nil WHP. The aerosol formulation is a great option to have on hand when checking sheep.



Other products available for flystrike and wound dressing include KFM, Deadmag and Flystrike Powder. These products are mainly knockdown products for wound dressing.

Drench Reminder

Along with the above mentioned fly treatment products, Western AG is currently running Spring offers and promotions on drench for both cattle and sheep (see page 7).

Please call Aaron at Derrinallum, Troy at Bannockburn or Mark at Horsham for any further details.

Firebreak Reminder (by Philip Hawker)

Chemical firebreaks have been mostly done now, however, it is important to keep in mind that due to that extra application of glyphosate in this area this is where you are first likely to see glyphosate resistance on your property.

A few tips on managing firebreaks on farm are; crop as close to the paddock edge as possible so there is crop competing with the ryegrass in this area. Keep the sprayed area as narrow as possible, often 2 nozzles width is adequate, with one spraying under the fence itself. If practical, cut the outside area for hay to remove weed set.

The only practical option to glyphosate is Paraquat based products. Paraquat or Sprayseed followed by the same again 2 weeks later is very effective. Another good option is Alliance which is a mix of Amitrole and Paraquat.

The other area where glyphosate resistance is occurring is on roadsides. Ryegrass from a roadside in the Willaura area tested last year has shown 100% survival to Roundup Attack at 2.5L/ha, 70% survival to Roundup Attack at 5L/ha and 20% survival to Roundup Attack at 10L/ha.

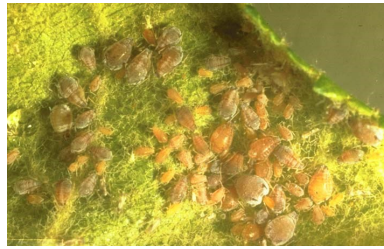
Roadsides are the responsibility of local shires and this problem needs to be brought to their attention, there is a real risk of this problem creeping into any adjoining paddocks.



Agronomy Alert—Aphids (by Phil Hawker)

There have been high levels of cereal aphids detected in crops in the Mallee, Wimmera and SW Victoria this Spring. The majority of crops in the Wimmera and Mallee have either been treated or passed the critical growth stage to get value from treating.

Aphids cause damage in cereal crops by direct feeding at this time of the year and this can result in crop yellowing, stunting and yield loss. Losses are greatest in years when there is a dry finish. The threshold for cereal aphids is 15-20 on 50% of tillers up until about the water dough stage of the crop. The effect on crops is less after grain has filled.



Aphids

There are crops in the SW that are supporting aphids population in excess of the above threshold. Where fungicide and/or herbicides is yet to be applied the addition of an insecticide is straight forward. The decision to apply a dedicated treatment is often harder

and the two factors that need to be kept in mind are;

- is the aphid population building or declining, and
- the site of infestation on the plant and the ability to penetrate the crop canopy with an insecticide.

Beneficial insects such as ladybirds, hover flies and parasitic wasps are significant in controlling aphids and chemicals such as Lorsban, Astound and Dimethoate are broad spectrum and will kill these also. Specific advice needs to be sought regarding aphid control and the appropriate treatments.

New Grain Treatment Products (by Kerry Miles - guest author)

K-Obiol Combi

This is a relatively new product available to farmers by Bayer and is a synthetic pyrethroid (SP) which contains a Deltamethrin and a PBO as a synergist, it gives great protection, proven to be at least 9 months in most situations when mixed with Reldan or Fenitrothion. It can be used on malt barley and all cereal grains.



Stewardship and Access:

Access has been made easy this year with a collaboration between Grain Storage Solutions (GSS) and Western Ag.

Simply register your interest in K-Obiol with your agronomist and they will organise for you to become accredited to use K-Obiol for this harvest by GSS.

No Audits and no ongoing accreditation costs, just a once off fee.



Conserve On-Farm

There is also a new product available this year from DOW and it is a 2 part mix with 3 actives in total. The first, Spinosad is a naturalyte and has been found to be a great protectant against the lesser grain borer only. The second part of the mix is Chlorpyrifos Methyl and S Methoprene IGR, or the old Reldan Plus mix that many have used before. With all three actives in the same mix, Conserve On-Farm will be very effective against all the grain insects found in storages.

It is important to note that it cannot be applied to Malt Barley, Rice or Maize. It can only be applied to your own grain on your own farm, so small commercial bulk handlers will not be allowed to purchase it. You will need your NGR card to purchase Conserve On-Farm. Please contact your agronomist if you think this option is for you.

Chemical Rotations are Critical:

For the last 13 years, we have been without a rotation partner for the S Methoprene IGR, as a result there is now widespread resistance across the East Coast of Australia, and the S Methoprene IGR is failing to work effectively. BRM (Bioresmethrin, also a SP), was the last alternative we had for rotation, but was banned in 2001 due to residues being found in meat of stock fed with treated grain. However, to prevent history repeating with further residue problems, K-Obiol Combi (also a SP) has been granted access to users only through a stewardship program.

It will be very important for longevity of both Deltamethrin and Spinosad that you rotate or alternate product usage.



Options for the 2023/14 season:

K-Obiol Combi + Fenitrothion

This is the best option for storing Malt Barley or if you are not fussed by WHP's as it is the cheapest option. A 3 month WHP at the 9 month rate costs around \$2.30 / tonne.

K-Obiol Combi + Reldan

This is the best option for wheat and feed barley storage for farmers who want a limited WHP. A 24 hour WHP that costs around \$2.75 / tonne.

Conserve On-Farm

A good option for growers wanting to store wheat or feed barley. Nil WHP, however, grain should not be moved within 24 hours and costs \$3.00 /tonne.

Reldan / Fenitrothion + Methoprene IGR

The Western District is one of the few areas left in Australia where resistance has not taken over completely. However, with what we've seen, it is only a matter of time. Our advice is to start to rotate now so that you don't get caught out with resistance issues in the future.

Pre & Post Delivery checklists for Silo Purchases

Pre Purchase Checklist (Silos < 140t)

1. Sealed to Australian standard
2. Ladder access
 - Access to the top of the silo is critical for checking grain quality and for insect control.
3. Ground level fumigation
 - Make sure the manufacturer's system either forces air through the tablets or blankets with fan forced induction or alternatively air passes through from the base of the silo, through the tablets or blankets and into the head space. Avoid pipes that come down from the headspace into a 'T' or some sort of cavity with only one point of entry should be avoided and also pulley systems as they rarely work.
4. Thermosiphon
 - Normally part of a ground level system of fumigation

Thermosiphon works by moving gas into the top and bottom of your silo by using convection currents normally found in silos. The system amplifies these currents by having a black pipe on the northern side of the silo which moves air from the bottom to the top when the pipe becomes hotter than the grain mass, and reversing at night when the pipe becomes cooler than the grain mass. The pipe that comes down the wall needs to be black and this system is normally only recommended for over 100t silos.

5. Sight level glass
6. Aeration
 - Only required if you are going to install an aeration controller.

Post delivery Checklist & Requests

1. Pressure test the silo
During transportation, some of the seals may have been damaged due to flex and vibration, get the manufacturer to prove to you that your silo/s are sealed before they leave.
2. Thermosiphon
When installed correctly this system works incredibly well. Remember, the pipe that comes down the wall needs to be on the northern side to capture as much sunlight as possible.
3. Placement
Put any silos near your main working area as there is usually a better hardstand area, for loading and unloading, and it is far easier to keep it clean!

Western AG Promotions & Activities

Spring into Spring Competition

Western AG is holding an Animal Health Competition that runs between August and November.

For the opportunity to win A BBQ valued at \$1000, all you need to do is purchase \$750 or more of any Animal Health (AH) products. This can be management products such as drench, vaccines, wool packs, lick blocks or any item that is used to keep your animals in prime condition.

The draw will held on December 2.

Ring your local Western AG Branch to check out the full details.



Western AG Client Day

It is always difficult to hold client functions that suit every person and every location, but the Western AG Client Golf Day has been a "marquee" event on the calendar since the company started operations.

This year the annual tournament was held at "royal" Lismore last Friday where a 60 strong field competed for over \$3000 in prizes.

The winners of the Ambrose event were Eleanor Lee (Nufarm), Darren & Liz Brett and Ross Marquand.

Thanks must go to our Sponsors and the catering crew that supported the event.

Sponsors (in alphabetical order):

Agrichem	Nuseed
Bayer	Pacific Seeds
CropCare	Pioneer
Dow	Stephen Pasture Seeds
Farmoz	Sumitomo
Impact Fert	Syngenta
Incitec	Upper Murray Seeds
Koch Fert	Victorian Chemicals
Nufarm	



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