Gorst Rural Agri Talk

www.gorstrural.com.au

September 2023

At a Glance…

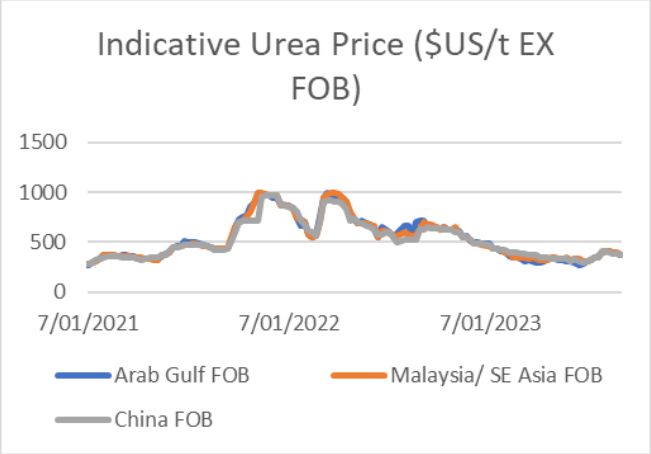
- Cam's Update.
- Spring Pasture Management.
- Top performing pasture varieties over winter.
- Nitrogen treatments and urea alternatives
- Grass Tetany in Cattle.
- Sheep Worm Management.

Another month rolls on, canola and the wattles are flowering, footy finals underway and spring in full bloom. Spring is always a nervous month navigating rainfall, extreme temperature events, and also spring feed and finishing stock. We have some great trial work on nitrogen polymers and enhancers for urea, winter performing pasture varieties and the usual variety trials. Get along to one of our events for a closer look.
We have great information on livestock production and getting the most from your spring pastures. Plus in store we have a range of RMW gear, hardware, new pipelayers and other material that will be handy around the farm.

Call out for calendar photos—our 2024 calendar is at risk…
We have hardly received any photo submissions so far this year. If you have a calendar worthy farm photo please send them through to davina@gorstrural.com.au
All photos that make the monthly feature receive a $100 Gorst Voucher.

Urea
As I look back on last months writings on Urea not much seems to have changed. We are still at the mercy of shipping running past expected dates, breakdowns and allocations ex port that do not allow free and easy access to contracted tonnes. I know this a frustrating and disappointing process for many as we just want to get nutrition out on growing crops as required. Equally frustrating is not being able to give you clear communications on when exact allocations and loads are available. Rest assured we are working hard to get tonnes out on farm. I cannot remember a season where we have had zero options for alternative supply or opportunities. We are hoping to speed up a lot of allocations in the next few days and have urea bookings up to date by mid September barring breakdowns and unforeseen holdups. This should also free up for any new tonnes or Hay Booster applications.

There will be some things to take out of the season when it all settles and we will strive to do things better. If you do have feedback and constructive ideas we are happy to listen. We will conduct a review please send through your comments. (cam@gorstrural.com.au). More forward orders and



GORST RURAL

Lake Bolac
P 5350 2440 F 5350 2301
Derrinallum
P 5597 6668 F 5597 6713
Skipton
P 5340 2262 F 5340 2321
Tatyoon
P 5354 0585 F 5354 0571
Willaura
P 5354 1251 F 5354 1149

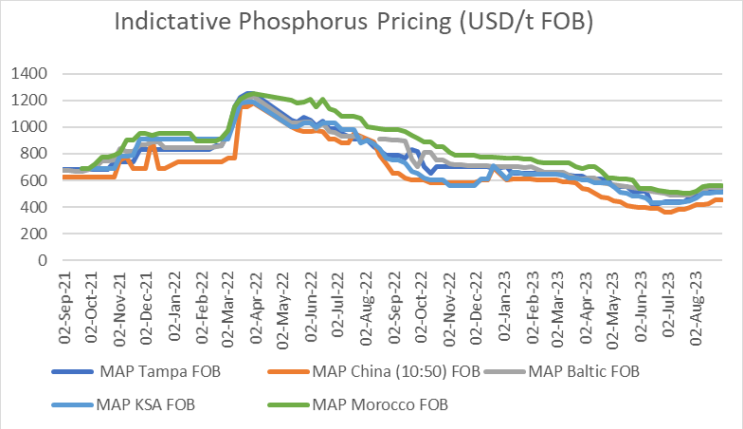
FIELD SERVICES TEAM

Cam Conboy
0418 655 137
Kelly Moore
0429 636 178
Ash Maconachie
0427 063 769
Marcus Smith
0447 035 970
Sonia Marquardt
0436 440 141
Alex Prince
0436 331 535
Grace Abela
0477 063 938
Robbie Neale
0428 681 300

greater storage maybe potential avenues but falling pricing and hard to store product is challenging. I am sure that these scenarios are not sustainable and need to be part of wider industry conversation to better understand forecasting, supply and price, which will ultimately see all parties wear some risk.
In terms of pricing there certainly has still been some ups & downs in the last 4 weeks with pricing rising well past mid $800/t – particularly with the market chasing immediate and mostly unavailable spot tonnes.

Phosphorus

Following on from Urea, I know there is plenty of discussion on AP's and where the market is heading. We did see a dip in international pricing approx. 4 weeks ago but this has since risen, at least for the short term. Global supply & demand balances seem stable at the moment although the outcome of Hurricane Idalia on Northern Florida production and the re-entry of China into the export markets are weighing heavily. Industry commentary seems to point to Q4 (Nov-Dec) as optimum timing from pricing and then Feb-Mar delivery point of view. If there is anything we have learnt – it may be a case of taking a position and securing supply more than price. As ever, my crystal ball remains cloudy and I'll be wrong…



Other Inputs

It would seem the global input market is slowly changing with Chinese manufacturers looking for sales and revenue, but at a price. Market falls of the last 3 months have levelled out and pricing seems somewhat stable. Droughts in North America, Canada and Brazil have to weigh heavily on forecasts and one would think consumption of products such as Glyphosate & Paraquat are subdued. We are seeing markets level back to more consistent norms and hopefully supply channels for fungicide, herbicides and even slug bait even out. As always talk to us about your requirements and or insights.

Spring Pasture Management

The spring period can bring a host of challenges to graziers, both good and bad. Unwanted annual weeds may have appeared and are rapidly looking to set seed, or there may be an abundance of surplus feed which is looking to potentially go rank in the paddock.

Surplus Feed: Getting on top of surplus feed is crucial, because if left untouched, the pastures will go rank and lose density and clover content, ultimately growing less dry matter the following autumn. There are five main ways to control your spring surplus. They are as follows:

1. Turn your surplus pasture into supplementary feed, in the form of high quality silage. The key is to lock up your paddocks in October before the surplus is there. It may even be earlier in September the way the weather forecast is planning out. However, if feed is to become short, then these paddocks can always be opened up to grazing once again.
2. Sow a summer crop. This way you will have less grass to deal with, have more quality feed on hand, as well as achieving good ground cover.
3. In cattle and sheep grazing operations, set-stock grazing should be considered to keep spring pastures from getting too long. However, it may be too late if the feed surplus is already present and may not be controlled.
4. In sheep operations, retire certain paddocks to go unchecked from grazing and concentrate on maintaining good grazing control over the rest of the farm. Preferably your easier paddocks to clean up at a later stage will produce a better growth response.
5. Choose later flowering ryegrass options suitable for your area. Sowing these in a renovation plan can help improve spring quality.

September 2023

Spring Pasture Spray Topping: Weed seed management also comes down to timing to make sure the spray actually hits the seed at its most vulnerable stage. When targeting barley grass and brome grass, glyphosate 450 @ 300-500 ml/ha should be applied when seed heads have fully emerged out of the leaf sheath and just prior to the dough stage of the seed. This is because the herbicide needs time to be translocated through the plant to reach its target. Once the plant is beyond flowering, Paraquat (Gramoxone 360) @ 400-600 ml/ha should be used for best control past the dough stage. If you are concerned about pasture damage, a soft rate Gramoxone 360 @ 280 ml/ha may be used. This timing with paraquat can also help to avoid regrowth of the weed and tiller escape. If choosing to use glyphosate at that earlier stage, make sure that your application doesn't coincide with the flowering window of your legume pastures, as the chemical can seriously impede their seed set.

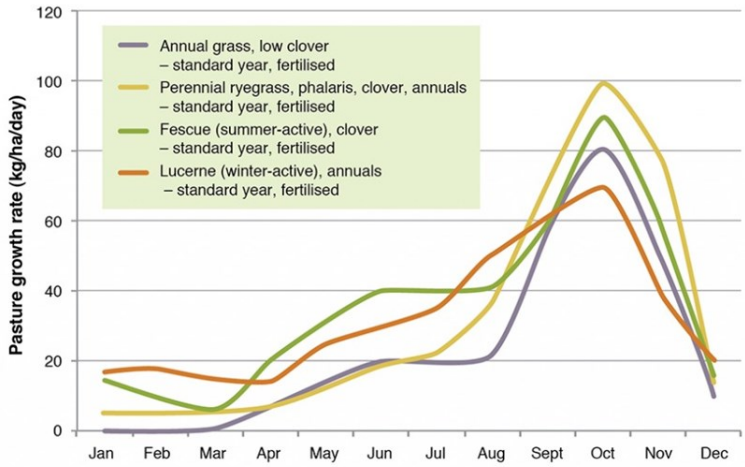
When targeting silver grass in your pastures, glyphosate should be applied at the early head stage and paraquat at a later stage, just prior to haying off.

Following your sprays (grazing withhold depending), a heavy grazing is recommended to reduce the emergence of late tillers. The stock will preferentially graze the regrowth as it will be green and far more palatable than the affected pasture. If there is more regrowth in the paddock than what can be managed by stock, then the paddock should be considered for a follow up spray.

For more information on managing your pasture through the spring period please contact your Gorst Rural Agronomist.

Top performing pasture varieties over winter

Often winter can be seen as a time of significant feed gaps on farm, therefore being able to manage winter pasture production is important. The interaction of temperature, effective rainfall and radiation directly influences pasture growth. In winter while temperatures are low, and periods of radiation decrease pasture growth is severely limited. Below is a graph showing the pasture growth rates (Kg/ha/day) at Hamilton for various pasture species. The graph shows a clear gap in pasture feed over the winter months.



With these challenging growing conditions over winter in mind, picking the correct varieties of pasture for optimal winter growth is important. Between our Tatyoon and Derrinallum pasture trial sites we have been able to gain some valuable insights on which pasture varieties are looking to be top performers over winter.

The long term pasture trial site at Tatyoon has shown:

- **Legion** (DLF, diploiod perennial ryegrass) to be producing the most dry matter per hectare in the perennial ryegrasses,
- while in the short term ryegrasses **Forge** (Barenbrug, tetraploid hybrid ryegrass) and **Shogun**(Barenbrug, tetraploid hybrid ryegrass) have been standouts.

The Derrinallum site which was sown this autumn has also shown:

- **Legion** (DLF, diploiod perrenial ryegrass) as a top performing perennial ryegrass over the winter, making it a standout across both trial locations.

September 2023

- In the short term ryegrasses **Manta** (DLF, diploid italian ryegrass) was yielding the highest across all cutting dates,
- and in the annual ryegrasses **Torpedo** (Upper Murray Seeds, annual ryegrass) was also the highest yielding across all cutting dates.

We look forward to seeing how these varieties perform in trials over the spring we look forward to seeing you at our trial day to see these varieties in action.

Nitrogen treatments and urea alternatives

Urea has been the topic of discussion over the last few months, with supply shortages making it hard to access product and general media attention on nitrogen use. While all this has been happening, we have been working hard trialling different nitrogen treatments, urea coatings and biological nitrogen products across three different trial sites in wheat, spring canola and winter canola. Our aim is to assess which urea treatments and enhancements will work in our cropping systems.

Preliminary visual results at our spring canola nitrogen trial are promising. It is clear that any application of nitrogen is beneficial, and you will see a response when compared to a nil treatment.

We are also seeing that these alternative nitrogen products are holding up against urea. Image 3 below shows the same units of N applied, one in the form of granular urea and the other Easy N, a liquid nitrogen. At this stage it is hard to see a difference between the plots.

Image 1- Nil treatment on left. 80 units of N applied as Urea on right.

Image 2- Nil treatment on right. 120 units on N applied as Easy N through streaming nozzles of left.

Image 3- 120 units N applied as urea left. 120 units N applied as Easy N right.

Image 4- 120 units N applied through eNpower.

Image 5 – Product A (biological N fixing product) on left and Nil on right.

We are also seeing some good results out of the polymer coated urea. Image 4 above shows a plot that has had 120 units of N through eNpower applied. eNpower contains nitrification inhibiters that work by inhibiting nitrifying bacteria in the soil, slowing down the conversion of ammonium N to nitrate, reducing the loss on N through nitrification.

Biological products have also been included in this trial, image 5 below shows a new biological product that fixes atmospheric nitrogen into the soil. Results so far are looking promising.

While these are just preliminary results we are excited to see how the trial progresses, seeing what the yield advantage is of these products. There will be plenty more results to come.

September 2023

The Ararat Veterinary Clinic is servicing the Lake Bolac region at Gorst Rural on the first Tuesday of every month.
Please call the Ararat Veterinary Clinic on 5352 1021 to book your appointment now.
Any farm visits booked on these Tuesdays will incur travel fees from Lake Bolac only, we look forward to meeting you.

ARARAT VETERINARY CLINIC

Grass Tetany in Cattle

Grass Tetany can be caused by a magnesium deficiency or an absorption problem and often leads to deaths in cattle during peak lactation. Although normally common for Autumn and Winter calving periods, Grass Tetany can also be seen during spring calving, especially when the weather is wet and stormy.

Causes

- A cow in peak lactation loses a huge amount of magnesium through milk production and although magnesium is stored in the bones and muscles, they have an issue with being able to access and utilise that magnesium and therefore need a constant supply every day.
- Often from late Autumn to Spring, pasture paddocks often have lower magnesium and calcium levels, and are higher in potassium (potassium often inhibits magnesium absorption). Grazing cereal pastures is also a high risk due to very low levels of magnesium.
- When grazing these sorts of pastures after calving, this is when problems occur. Fat Cows have low levels of magnesium in the blood compared to normal cows and that is often why Grass Tetany is more associated with old, fat cows.

Signs/Symptoms

⇒ Dead Cows – often one of the first signs
⇒ Muscle twitching
⇒ Walking stiffly
⇒ Hypersensitive to touch
⇒ Urinate frequently

Treatment

Early treatment is critical to recovery and the best chance of survival, immediate restoring of magnesium is essential. This can be achieved through:

- A 4 in 1 pouch – this consists of magnesium and calcium and is injected under the skin,
- After initial treatment from the 4 in 1, causmag or a loose lick high in magnesium (e.g TPM Hi Mag Assist Loose Lick) should be given after the initial episode to prevent it happening again.
- Other options that can be given to prevent a relapse include; magnesium oxide powder sprinkled over feed or pasture, magnesium lick blocks.

Prevention

To help prevent Grass Tetany, an adequate supply of magnesium is key. This needs to be available during those high-risk periods. Examples of this are 60 grams/per day/per head of causmag tipped over hay or 80grams/per day/per head of TPM Minerals - Hi Mag Assist.
Another option to reduce the risk of Grass Tetany is to move calving until spring time. This helps to avoid the bad weather which can have a big impact. Although this does not eliminate Grass Tetany as the risk can still be high in spring time, however it helps reduce the time that you need to put prevention matters in play.

Other options to help prevent Grass Tetany include:

- Matching high risk cattle to low-risk pastures
- Have cattle in good condition, not too fat or not too skinny
- Feed Hay
- Eliminate stressful situations

For more information on Grass Tetany or advice on best practise for your livestock system please talk to our professional team at your local Gorst Rural store.

September 2023

Sheep Worm Management

With somewhat of a 'normal' spring and summer approaching it's timely to consider worm parasite management of your sheep. Following such a wet spring/summer last year we experienced carry-over pasture worm burdens in many areas – therefore multiple drenching required, particularly in young stock. Knowledge of your resistance status to drench active groups has never been more important to enable informed decisions around drenches to use and grazing management.

Barbers Pole has been detected on a few properties in Western Victoria – appearing to survive winter months – worrying signs. They have a shorter life cycle than common roundworms therefore grazing management needs to be a shorter rotational period. The eggs themselves once deposited on the ground through the dung – eggs will die in temperatures less than 10 degrees. However, if conditions are right the larvae hatched are cold tolerant and will survive. The ideal temperature for hatching is in summer (wet conditions especially) with temperatures above 27 degrees. They are the only blood sucking worm, are prolific egg layers (numbers multiply extremely quickly under right conditions) and have a devastating impact on sheep survival and productivity.

Small Brown Stomach worm and Black Scour worm are the two types of roundworms we commonly see. Recent worm egg counts have shown that there are significant worm burdens still present on pastures.

Considerations:

1. Long Acting v Short Acting drenches – short acting reduces selection for resistance, long acting gives longer protection period but exposure to parasite is prolonged. Understand length of persistence on particular worm species.
2. Grazing Management – rotational / clean paddocks / know contaminated paddocks.
3. Use of primers and tail cutters when using longer acting drenches.
4. Use of combination drenches highly recommended – understand how these actives work before making decisions on which drench to use.
5. Worm Egg Counts – test don't guess!
6. Larval Culture – determine species of worms present.
7. Effective drenches – know status / drench checks / resistance testing / drench rotation.
8. Quarantine drench every time new sheep are introduced to your property.

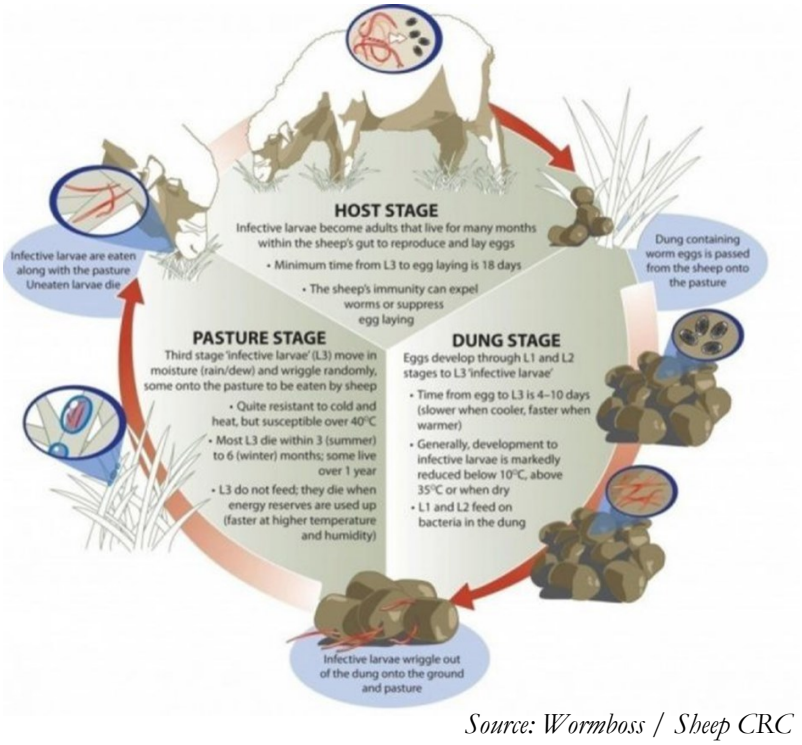
<u>Sheep Roundworms – Life Cycle</u>

L1 & L2 Dung Stage – approx. 4-10 days to L3
… feed on bacteria in the dung

L3 Pasture Stage – carried in water films (dew, rain)
… mostly concentrated at base of the pasture
… rarely move more than 10cm up the plant
… survive on energy reserves, most L3 die within 3 months in summer & 6 months in winter

L4 Host Stage – minimum 18 days to develop into adults (Pre-Patent Period)
… females then lay eggs, passed out in dung.

For more information on worm control and resistance testing in your flock please contact our professional team at Gorst Rural.



Source: Wormboss / Sheep CRC