



**AgriTalk**

**January 2026**



## **Cam's Update**

The new year brings a sense of optimism as the harvest continues to yield promising results. The late spring rains and a mild finish have exceeded most crop expectations, although a late frost has affected some wheat crops. Balancing a diverse crop and variety rotation to mitigate frost risk from the 1st of October to beyond the 20th of November, while managing weeds, diseases, and commercial considerations, remains challenging. Hopefully, you've seen good results and found time to rest and recharge. The livestock outlook is positive, with forage crops and lucerne performing well and opportunities to finish stock on stubbles, with stock prices holding steady.

The Gorst team has been hard at work on our extensive trial program, which is now almost wrapped up. The preliminary results are looking fantastic, with new canola, wheat, and barley varieties showing great potential. Additionally, the outcomes from our fertiliser enhancement and biological trials, along with various herbicide options,

have been interesting. Keep an eye out for our trial results as you plan for the season. Our goal is to help you get the most out of your inputs and deliver tangible results.

We've also been experimenting with some stubble treatments, including a new foliar spray, "Res Plus" from Adama, which showed positive results last year. Our forage trials are ongoing, and we're noticing some notable differences between brassica varieties.

We have a few Gorst team updates to share. After four years with us, Robbie 'Scratcher' Neale is returning to his family roots in SE SA, concluding his role in Livestock Production and Retail Support at Gorst Rural. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Robbie for his dedication and expertise in developing our livestock production platform.

Taking over his responsibilities, our junior livestock production specialist, Sarah Kelly, will now handle all your livestock inquiries. Sarah has been pivotal in collaborating with Robbie on drench, nutrition, and feedlot startup programs. Sarah is highly skilled and covers all locations across the region. She is fully prepared to assist with all your livestock production needs. With her extensive expertise and dedication, Sarah is here to help you plan for a successful 2026. You can reach her directly at 0407 922 593.

In the fertiliser department, Rick Barbary is concluding his tenure with Gorst Rural after five years, as his other venture, Grass Growers, progresses into its next phase. Rick has been an invaluable resource and a tremendous support to our southern fertiliser clients. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Rick for his dedication and expertise.

We will continue our fertiliser business with Drew overseeing the depot at Lismore (0428 518 801).

For any fertiliser-related market intelligence and pricing, please contact Cam (0418 655 137).

For ordering, logistics, and invoicing, Nada can assist you (0497 850 489).

If you need advice on crop nutrition and agronomy, Simon is available (0429 337 610).

Additionally, the friendly staff at the Derri store can be contacted at (03 5597 6668).

We aim to make this transition as seamless as possible. Grass Growers will continue to handle any spreading on behalf of Gorst, and we can organise products as needed. Rick will still be available on his mobile during the transition period. If you need more information or want to be included in our fertiliser market updates, contact Cam at 0418 655 137.

We are actively seeking to fill several key positions to continue enhancing our team and adding value to our services. Specifically, we are looking for a Business Development Manager/Retail Team Leader, a Fertiliser Category Manager, and a Senior Livestock Production Specialist. If you know anyone who would be a great fit, please let us know.

To ensure we find the best possible candidates to help grow our business, we have partnered with Leadology and Agribusiness Recruitment. For more information, please visit our recruitment page on our website <https://gorstrural.com.au/about/join-our-team/> and share these opportunities within your network. Your referrals and support are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support as we navigate these changes together.

### **Fertiliser**

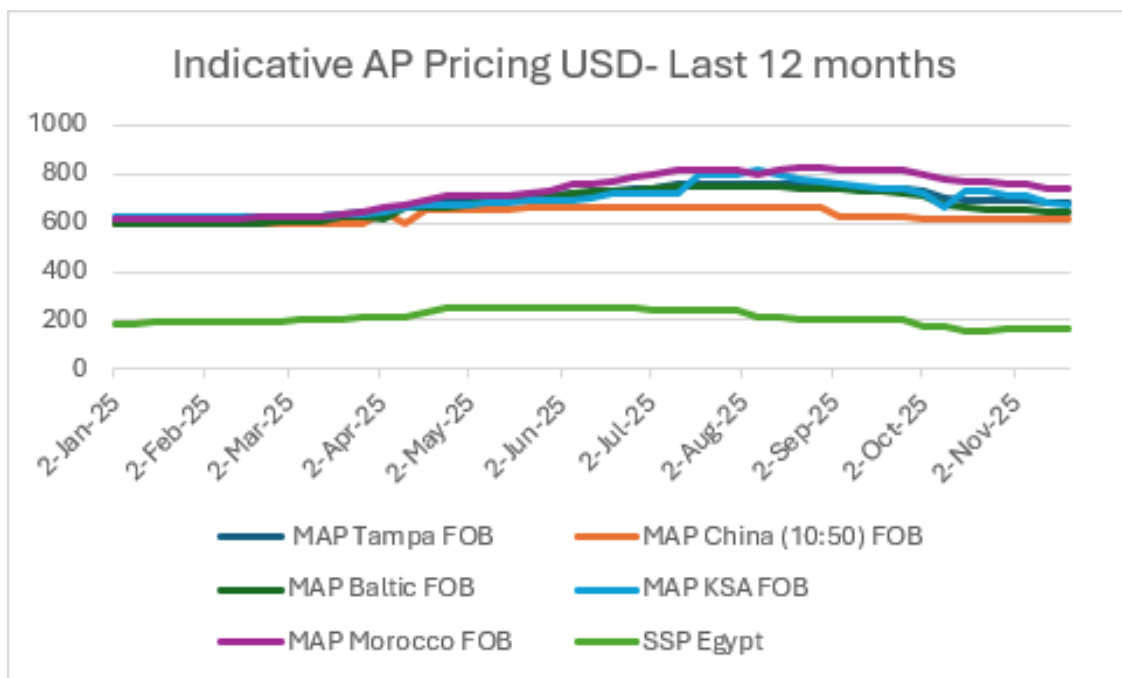
As harvest wraps up, the next logical step is to consider plans for 2026, soil testing, root disease testing (plenty of crown rot around this year), weed-seed testing and seed germination testing. We can organise a suite of testing required- whether it be paddock testing, Precision Ag grid testing or other requirements. Thoughts also swing to the biggest input in our gross margins- sowing fertiliser. Aside from market intel- there are a couple of changes this year from the status quo.

1. MAP is of variable quality. With the absence of Chinese product, there is a mixed bag of fert quality, colour, dust, oiling and granule composition that we have already seen at port. As suppliers seek alternative sources, we have found various compositions. Please check product & analysis before committing- and a reminder we do have our unique screening service on all fert that goes through our Lake Bolac depot.
2. DAP and Compound (Zinc) will have substantial premiums over MAP; a consideration needs to be taken over what you require. Many of you may have run down zinc levels slightly with drier years- but check your crop plans as adding it with fertiliser is still the best option. We do offer a zinc coated granule that will offer a cost-effective solution at 1% zinc.
3. We will be offering some Samsung MAP direct out of the Riordans depot at Lismore. This will be a straight MAP product- and doesn't offer the customised additions or mixes that Drew can offer at the Gorst Lismore depot.
4. We will offer the full range of sowing blends, zinc, copper & moly- plus Impact, Uniform, and other fert enhancers (eg Nutricharge P, Ferticoat) fully customised to your farm, crop, variety and paddock.
5. There are some SSP discounts for picking up in January and February- let us know if any interest.

## Market Intel

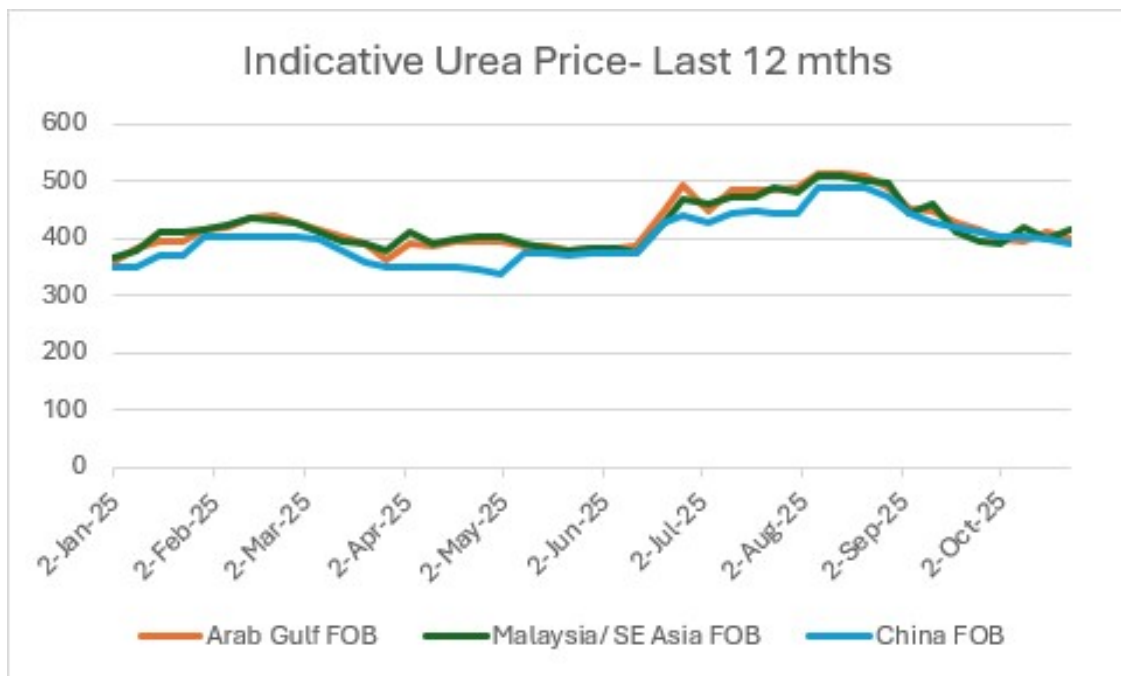
### Phosphates

The global market is fairly sluggish – with oversupply from August onwards, despite China halting exports for 12 months. A lack of demand from both the US and Brazil has seen pricing creep down. Crop affordability (grain prices vs fert pricing) is 10% weaker than a year ago- and hence a reluctance from grain growers to jump in. There is some fertiliser from China (pre Shutdown), but mainly will be from Saudi Arabia and Morocco, and of mixed qualities and granule size- and expected supply into Australia will be OK. There is speculation however, that if the US, Brazil, India and Australia all step in with buying product in the next 4-6 weeks, that this will cause an uptick in pricing. A strong AUD (Close to 67c US) is helping purchasing, and it is expected MAP will be below the \$ 1200/t mark. As previously mentioned – DAP And Zinc compounds are running at a premium- and we suggest having a chat over the best options for you. Watch this space- but fert decisions maybe imminent.



### Nitrogen

Urea continues its volatile journey, with Indian tenders, tariffs and export quotas all playing their part. Urea affordability is 17% weaker than this time last year. However it is expected demand will pick up in Q1, and that pricing may increase from there. Urea to Australia is expected from Malaysia and Vietnam in the next coming weeks, as well as normal Middle East sources. There could be opportunities for early Urea over the next few weeks.



## Ag Chem

Crop inputs are fairly steady, with most products in good supply and pricing close to long term lows. There is plenty of Glyphosate available- in most strengths and formulations, as is good supplies of Dropzone, LV Ester 680, Starane and Triclopyr. Paraquat supply is OK, however price has crept up in recent months. The AVPMA final review date for paraquat has been pushed out another 6 months- so label & use rates stay as status quo for now. Most pre-emergent products seem in good supply, and at similar pricing to last year- we don't see any issues. It will be interesting to see how the pre-season rainfall plays out- and what influence that has on pre-emergent programs- particularly products such as Rustler, Tenet, Boxer Gold, Sakura and Mateno that all perform better with soil moisture. Our trial results (with both disc & tyne systems) show some very interesting information- and the benefit of Overwatch, trifluralin and Avadex in the dry. These products do need rotations and support to continue their efficacy, especially when challenged by late rains, late weed germinations and a cool finish.

Ask our friendly staff for the in-depth information and local info on what is best for you.

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## Flushing Ewes



As we head towards joining, a cost-effective way to increase lambing percentages and rebuild flock numbers is flushing ewes. Flushing involves a short-term increase in energy and protein intake just prior and into early joining with the aim of increasing ovulation rate, tightening lambing and improving early embryo survival. Strongest responses are seen in ewes with moderate body condition scores.

Ewes should be flushed one oestrus cycle (2-3 weeks) prior to joining and continued after rams have gone in for 1-3 weeks. For ewes in low condition score, it can be beneficial to begin flushing the ewes earlier (6 weeks prior to joining). Ewes are usually fed up to 500g per day, depending on supplement type and pasture or stubble feed base.

Lupins or beans are the preferred feed source as they are rich in energy, rich in protein and low in starch. Green actively growing pasture of high quality such as clover or lucerne can be also used to flush ewes. Cereal grains can be another option (best mixed with pulses or pasture); however, it is important to be aware of the risk of acidosis and provide a buffer. Due to the sudden change in feed, it is beneficial to gradually introduce grains to ewes over the first week of supplementing. Avoid flushing ewes on high-risk forages such as oestrogenic pastures, weedy paddocks or those that may cause metabolic stresses (immature or flowering brassicas, rapid rumen passage).

While flushing is a great tool, it is important to note that it cannot compensate for very poor body condition ( $CS < 2$ ), heat stress during joining, override genetics, diseases like campylobacter or low ram fertility. Ewe lambs should be 75-80% of their standard reference weight and at least 7-9 months old at joining to achieve successful conception rates.

Rams will not have the same response to flushing as ewes; however, they will benefit from good body condition and adequate protein and energy for libido and semen quality.

If you would like any further information, please contact Sarah Kelly 0407 922 593 in Livestock Production.

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## **Grazing Stubbles & Dry Pasture**



Grazing stubbles provides a major feed source for sheep during summer and autumn that can also reduce stubble load and assist in its breakdown. Adult sheep are preferred for grazing cereal stubbles as young sheep are unlikely to achieve weight gains of more than 80g/hd/day. Depending on the amount of grain on the ground, the nutritional value will fall away sharply once the actual grain has been cleared up. Regularly assess the amount of residual grain and ground cover.

The nutritional value of cereal straw is generally very poor because of its low digestibility, low energy and low nitrogen content, particularly in wet areas where rain may have reduced the digestibility further by leaching out the digestible components of the straw. Acidosis may be a risk when stock are introduced to cereal stubbles with higher amounts of grain leftover from harvest.

If canola stubbles contain green leaf (regrowth) and stem material, they may provide enough quality feed that is beneficial to young stock and ewes to be flushed for

joining. They are highly palatable therefore can be grazed out quickly, growth rates will then start declining. Legume stubbles are a better feed source for young stock and ewes before and during mating.

Once digestibility falls below 55% it will provide a maintenance at best and possibly weight loss if not substituted. Dry pasture will have very high fibre content and very low protein. It is therefore more 'fill' than nutritional feed. The nitrogen to carbon ratio is required for rumen microbial activity to lead to better feed utilization. Dry pastures and cereal stubbles are low in nitrogen and have inadequate mineral and vitamin availability so consider supplementing.

What supplements might my stock need?

- Grain/Pellets- once the grain leftover from harvest has been cleaned up, stock will require supplementary feed to maintain condition.
- Dry Feed Block with Urea – provides supplementation of trace elements, major minerals and protein for utilization of dry and poor-quality feed.
- Flockboost Feedlot Crumble/Flockboost Buffer Assist- includes a buffer to alleviate the risk of acidosis.
- Flockboost Toxin Binder- if toxic weeds or grasses are present.
- Vitamin A and E- if prolonged feeding on cereal stubbles stock may become deficient.

If you would like any further information, please contact Sarah Kelly 0407 922 593 in Livestock Production.

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## **Establishment, Performance & Grazing Management**



### **Lucerne paddock:**

Lucerne is a highly nutritious and productive perennial legume, but it requires deliberate management to maximise persistence and feed value. Optimal performance is achieved under a rotational grazing system. Although lucerne contributes limited feed in its establishment year, it rapidly becomes a high-quality grazing option once stems mature. After each grazing event, plants should be spelled long enough for crowns and root carbohydrate reserves to fully replenish.

As a legume, lucerne fixes substantial nitrogen and contains high protein levels. In intensive grazing systems, excess protein may become problematic and should be balanced with additional fibre.

For best utilisation, lucerne should be allowed to reach 30–40 cm in height and show early stem purpling before grazing. Delaying until 5–10% flowering risks leaf drop and reduced feed quality. Stock should graze the stand down efficiently but be removed before new crown shoots are damaged, as these shoots form the basis of the next grazing rotation.

### **Forage brassica paddock:**

Forage brassicas provide high-quality, low fibre feed but require careful grazing management to optimise utilisation and animal health. Brassica crops are generally ready to graze at 20–30 cm in height, when lower leaves and stems begin to darken to a deep green or purple.

Stock should be introduced gradually, beginning with 2–3 hours of access per day and increasing over time. A grass runoff area or supplementary fibre source (such as hay) should always be available, contributing at least 25% of the diet to maintain rumen function.

As a guide, cows typically consume 4–5 kg/ha DM of forage rape per day, and brassicas should make up no more than 30% of their total diet. Lambs generally consume 1–2 kg/ha DM per head per day, and at typical utilisation levels (around 80%) will also require additional fibre.

Provide unrestricted access to clean water and consider mineral licks to support growth rates. Stock should be monitored closely for issues such as nitrate toxicity, plant stress responses, and photosensitisation. Remove animals immediately if symptoms or risk factors arise.

If you would like any further information, contact your local Gorst Rural agronomist.

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## **Stubble Retention Vs Burning**



With yields exceeding expectations in many areas across the district and some high stubble loads, deciding what to do with stubbles can be a topical issue. Once fire restrictions come to an end across the district, many growers will consider burning stubbles to reduce the stubble load going into sowing.

While burning stubbles has always been a popular method, there is growing pressure to move away from this technique unless necessary.

Unfortunately, there is no routine method to managing heavy stubbles in our area, and as yields continue to increase and disease and resistance pressure is rising, burning may be the only reasonable option for many farming operations.

Burning is an effective and inexpensive way to remove stubble. Burning assists in reducing disease carryover as well as reducing pest and weed populations. Burning does come with some negatives such as nutrient loss from stubbles as well as an increased risk of erosion.

Ideally burning would occur late in the season, just prior to sowing to minimise the time soil is exposed and reduce erosion. To get good control of disease and weeds, stubbles need to burn 'very hot.' Annual ryegrass and wild radish seeds can be killed at 400 °C while Broome grass requires at least 40 seconds at 450°C to kill all its seeds.

There are also other options to burning if stubble loads are too high to sow through. Mulching is a great option, as it helps shorten stubble, retain soil moisture, and accelerate decomposition. Straw can be baled after harvest, with the added financial bonus of selling straw.

Where it permits retaining stubbles can come with many benefits. The main benefits being moisture conservation and less erosion. Stubble provides ground cover which protects soil from wind and water erosion. Retaining crop stubble can improve soil moisture content by reducing evaporation and increasing rainfall infiltration rates.

Things to watch out for when retaining stubbles include seeder blockages. If stubble load is too high, it may cause difficulties when sowing. Pest populations can increase; mouse, snail and slug population can become an issue if left unchecked. Stubble-borne disease can also be an issue, especially if you have tight cropping rotations.

If you would like any further information, contact your local Gorst Rural agronomist.

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## **Res + A Practical Tool for Managing Heavy Stubble**

Big wheat and barley stubbles are great for soil health, but they can also slow machinery, block openers, and make sowing harder than it needs to be. Burning and mulching still have a place, but many growers are now looking for smarter ways to manage residue without losing ground cover.

That's where Res+ fits.

Res+ is an enzyme-based solution applied post-harvest to speed up cereal stubble breakdown. It is not a bacteria or a fungus. Instead, it stimulates microbial activity already in the soil, so residue is broken down faster and more evenly.

Early trial work and grower observations show Res+ has potential to:

- Accelerate breakdown of large wheat and barley stubbles
- Reduce heavy residue loads and improve trash flow at sowing
- Create cleaner, more workable seedbeds the following season
- Lower septoria spore counts on wheat stubble making it a useful disease-management bonus

To get the best out of Res+, timing and moisture matter. Apply at least six weeks before sowing, ideally after rainfall or ahead of a forecast event to help activate microbial processes. It's particularly useful where heavy cereal residue has previously caused blockages, hair-pinning, or uneven establishment. Res+ is also compatible with summer knockdown brews, making it easy to fit into existing programs.

Res+ isn't designed to replace every stubble strategy; it's simply another tool in the box. Used in the right paddocks, it helps retain residue, support soil biology and make sowing smoother without reaching for the match.

We're keen to watch it in local conditions this season. If you'd like to trial Res+ or talk through fit and timing, get in touch. We're happy to walk through options.

If you would like any further information, contact your local Gorst Rural agronomist.

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## **Soil Testing for the 2026 Season**



With harvest almost finished, now is the time to consider what paddocks on the farm need to be soil tested. Soil testing is an invaluable tool to diagnose constraints to crop and pasture production and allow your agronomist to make accurate and informed recommendations on soil ameliorants and fertiliser.

We recommend soil testing paddocks every 3 years or when you are planning to sow a sensitive crop such as canola, beans or pasture.

Gorst Rural offers a range of soil testing services, from a standard 0-10cm test to a deep core soil sample 0-100cm using our hydraulic probe. We can offer a range of testing parameters to ensure you get all the information necessary for your paddock.

Once the soil tests are completed, samples are sent to an accredited laboratory. We will then supply you with a detailed report and recommendations for your soil.

We also have a commercial arrangement in place with Precision Ag to conduct grid and strategic soil testing.

As crops come off paddocks and harvest wraps up, there can be a delay in getting soil test results back, so if you have any long-term pasture paddocks or pasture paddocks that will go into crop next season, we recommend getting them tested now.

We can also help with an array of other testing services such as hay and feed tests, seed germination and vigor tests and silage tests.

Speak to your local Gorst Rural agronomist to organise your soil, seed or feed tests for the 2026 season and be ready for farm planning now.

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## Giving Back to Our CFA



Community is a big part of who we are, so this Christmas we were excited to host a BBQ for our Mortlake CFA branch as a small thank you for everything they do.

Our CFA volunteers give so much of their time to keep our community safe, and it was great to be able to bring everyone together for a laid-back afternoon of good food and good company. It was a chance to slow down, catch up, and show our appreciation during a busy time of year.

We're proud to support our local CFA's and the incredible work they do — now and always.

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## Specials

**Polymaster BUte  
Toolbox - 140lt**

**Redline Sprayer  
55lt 12v**



\$300.00incl (limited stock)



\$295.00incl (limited stock)

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## Field Services Team

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**Rick Barbary**  
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**Eddie Holt**  
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