

New agronomy initiative

LEADING seed provider Pacific Seeds has announced a new initiative which promises to deliver new technological solutions and help farmers navigate the emerging technological revolution in agriculture.

Foundation Farm is an innovation hub for ag-tech that will provide a trial site for emerging technological and data-based solutions to increasingly complex farming challenges.

Pacific Seeds Summer Grains Agronomist Trevor Philp said that this program will not only assess new technologies but will also act as a foundation for innovative research that will significantly benefit the whole community.

"We are excited about the potential benefits this project will deliver to the current farming community, but also to many future farmers as well," said Trevor. "With new technologies and start-up businesses emerging every day, deciding on the best solutions for your farm can be a confusing and challenging decision.

"Growers and agronomists need somewhere these technologies can be tested, and their value proven.

"While this hub will be used to test and demonstrate the value of new technologies and management techniques prior to implementation on farms, Pacific Seeds also identified a real demand for every day practical solutions and the need for a centre to educate young farmers and agronomists.

"As new data-driven systems for sustainable and efficient farming emerge, the need to bring together innovative likeminded businesses, researchers and farmers has never been more apparent."

The Foundation Farm site is situated on the outskirts of the Southern Queensland town of Allora and consists of approximately 32 hectares of black clay loam soil and provides capability for both irrigated and dryland farming systems.

Pacific Seeds have established Foundation Farm on five core pillars, comprising of new technology, crop protection, crop agronomy, sustainable farming systems, and training.



Trevor Philp, Pacific Seeds grain agronomist.

Good practice in grain protection

WITH the promise of a big harvest in many regions this year, and the trend to more on-farm storage, Bayer considers it timely to remind growers of good stored grain protection practices. This reminder is especially relevant for those growers with unsealed silos and who rely on grain protectants for weevil control.

According to Daryle Swarz – Market Manager (Pest) at Bayer – in the past four or five years the major suppliers of grain protectants are now recommending a combination of protectants be used and that these be rotated on an annual basis to help manage the build-up of resistance to the chemistry.

"Bayer recommends that its grain protectant, K-Obiol, is used in combination with an organophosphate (OP) insecticide – either fenitrothion or chlorpyrifos-methyl," says Daryle. "K-Obiol is a Group 3A pesticide and the OPs are Group 1B."

"There are six or seven insect pests – generically known as weevils – commonly found in stored grain in Australia. We know that some weevils are resistant, or are developing resistance, to one or more of the insecticide groups. It's very difficult to predict which type of insect pest is going to occur so by using a combination of chemistries you will ensure protection from all the potential insect pests of stored grain.

"It is important to select grain protectant products from different insecticide groups so that weevils which may be resistant to one protectant will be controlled by the protectant from another group," Daryle says.

"That's why on an annual basis we also recommend using K-Obiol and its OP mixing partner in rotation with Group 5 and 7A pesticides. This reduces the risk of resistance developing and prolongs the effective life of all the grain protectants from various manufacturers. Bulk handlers use a similar strategy."

New this season to help chemical rotation

To assist growers rotate their grain protectants, Bayer has released a one litre pack of K-Obiol. "The one litre pack size treats 50 tonnes of grain," says Daryle "which is a convenient size for growers storing grain for seed or feed on-farm. We are also changing some of the requirements of our product stewardship program.

"In addition, farmers buying K-Obiol no longer have to do the online training before purchasing the product. In previous years, some growers would go to buy K-Obiol but not be able to if they hadn't done the online training. Instead, they would buy the same product they used the season before which adds to resistance pressure.

"Growers who haven't previously done the online K-Obiol training (which we still encourage), can now watch a nine minute video in the store, then read and sign an end-user declaration."

