

AT the time of writing, most areas of the national grainbelt have their winter cropping programs well underway and planting has been into pretty favourable moisture conditions. But as with all seasons, there are always some exceptions – this year it's the turn of traditionally 'reliable' regions of South Australia, stretching into the Victorian Mallee, that have not had their autumn break. But all this could change with the next front coming through.



Western Australian growers got out of jail last year with the delivery of an above average winter crop on well below average rainfall. This year their previous good behaviour looks to have been rewarded with the best start to the season in many years. The break came early and was widespread across the WA grainbelt. Growers have grabbed the opportunity with both hands and look to have planted a record 1.5 million hectares to canola. And at \$800 a tonne on offer and good subsoil moisture, who could blame them?

As marketers have pointed out, at early May prices, one tonne of \$800 canola in the bin equates to about 3 tonnes of barley or 2.5 tonnes of wheat. Not hard to do the sums in favour of canola.

The increased area planted to canola in WA – and other states – has probably come at the expense of the pulses and to a lesser extent, wheat and barley.

Let's hope this early season fervour is justified by some widespread and timely rain as we head deeper into the year.

Revamped Australian Grain website

As mentioned in our previous issue of *Australian Grain*, you're all invited to free (for a while at least) and open access to the revamped online version of our much-loved hard copy magazine. See www.ausgrain.com.au

Australian Grain will continue to turn up in your (real) mailbox every two months full of well-researched and thorough articles while the new online version gives you an easily navigated 'flipbook' of not just the current issue but back issues as well. As time allows, we are expanding this back issues archive.

We have also created an interactive section (*Over The Back Fence*) where time-sensitive, topical and general interest news pieces have a much more effective broadcasting home than what is possible within the bi-monthly printed magazine cycle.

Subscription to the printed magazine is only \$60 per year (in real terms, about a bag of canola) and this includes 6 bi-monthly issues plus the Grain Yearbook. The 2021 Grain Yearbook was released in April. Subscribers to the print version also have unlimited access to the online magazine.

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In this issue...

Research prompts increase to recommended mouse bait rates

New research has enabled evidence-based increases to zinc phosphide (ZnP) mouse baits that will help grain growers battling above-average mouse numbers in eastern Australia.



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Impact of dry seeding on pre-em herbicide efficacy

Understanding the interaction of pre-emergent herbicides and the level of soil moisture at seeding goes a long way when it comes to deciding which herbicides to apply in dry seeding conditions.



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The wrong job!

It is essential I preface this article by reminding my readers that I am a hands-on tractor guy. In other words, I revel in being immersed in grease up to my arm pits, I come alive when up in the seat of a potent, robust tractor, plus I welcome when a neighbour seeks my advice re. the three point linkage on his ageing Massey Ferguson.



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Quantifying in-paddock variation of soil organic carbon and pH

Across Australia's vast and varied farmlands – and particularly in north-east Victoria and southern NSW – soil pH and soil organic carbon are two soil properties that influence soil health and productivity in a significant way.



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Weaving technology with farm practice comes naturally

Rome was not built in a day, and neither was Andrew Sevil's on-farm monitoring system. Luckily for the Queenslander, he is a natural when it comes to integrating technology into everyday farming life.



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