

Tuesday March 15 2011

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## Summer weed management essential for disease control

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Although summer is over, weed control for most farmers is still happening throughout the cropping regions of Victoria. With the season being so drawn out, it is no wonder weed management is closing in on the beginning of sowing. This year it is even more important to have successful weed control as the humidity and moisture around volunteer plants and weeds is a breeding ground for disease.

In the medium and low rainfall cropping regions, successful summer weed control is particularly important as it increases yield by conserving soil moisture and nutrient levels in the soil profile, therefore increasing profitability. There are many additional benefits such as chemical fallow control reducing the risk of paddock erosion. Furthermore, a mechanical fallow will leave a lot of stubble and dry matter cover which may be more of a hindrance than a help this season. High stubble loads means farmers may miss some weeds that are hidden by stubble when spraying.

Naturally, the earlier the implementation of a summer weed management program the easier and better control of weeds we will have. Weeds are more manageable when they are small and not moisture stressed and the opportunities for additional in-crop benefits in the following season will be increased. Furthermore, more mature weeds can become more expensive to control as they make take multiple sprays.

If using herbicides, be aware of plant growth, previous rainfall events, and weather conditions (relative humidity, temperature, delta T, and wind direction) and ground conditions such as dust. Also it is important to note the plant back period of each chemical. It would also be more cost effective to add an insecticide for locust control to your sprayer as locusts are now banding and will become an issue at sowing time. Be sure that

BCG has been conducting summer weed control trials incorporating different break crops which have shown some brilliant results. For more information on these trials contact the BCG office on 5492 2787.