



Options on a failed winter crop

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BACKGROUND

It became obvious as we moved into the thick of the 2021 winter that we were in for another challenging year with the wet. There were many paddocks in the area that either didn't get put in, had seed burst events (or multiples of) or germinated and eventually died out through being just too wet for too long.

The questions around what to do next were coming thick and fast, with very little data in this area. GRDC recognised this lack of data and provided funding to assess these options. We jumped at the opportunity to work with Stirlings to Coast to help assess this on a small plot scale, with the help of the Nutrien trials program.

Aim: Assessing the best crop type to sow after a failed winter crop to capitalise on moisture and get best return.

The crop types and treatment list;

TOS	Description
	Fallow
A	Vixen Wheat
A	Mundah Barley
A	Emu Canola
A	BPS Rye corn
A	Shirohie Millet
A	BPS Linseed
A	Aussie Stripe Sunflower
A	SG10 Lucerne
A	Safflower
B	Highworth Lab Lab
B	Ebony Cowpea
B	Liberty Sorghum (White)
B	G33 Sorghum (Red)
C	Fedora Industrial Hemp

Sowing dates: A: 14th October | B: 11th November | C: 24th November



Image 1: Barley Head emergence: 5 Weeks after sowing.



Image 2: Safflower, starting to flower.

OBSERVATIONS

At the time of writing the trial is ongoing; full results will follow.

CEREALS

As expected, the short season cereals sown into moisture and increasing soil temperatures flew out of the ground and had their first head emerging around 5-6 weeks after sowing. All cereals in the trial were not impacted by insect pests and as such required little to no intervention to establish. Disease pressure was low and didn't show up on the cereals until around maturity. Summer weed control was easy with a standard broadleaf brew. Cereals reached harvest maturity 11-12 weeks after sowing on average.

The millet died out during the extended dry spell with no grazing to remove foliage. The grain sorghums also struggled through the dry.

CANOLA

Insect pressure is the biggest concern when establishing canola in warmer temperatures and when other canola in the area was flowering. Diamond Back Moth, White Cabbage Butterfly and Vegetable Beetle all required controlling in order to get the canola established. Without multiple sprays and a bait, it is expected that we would have had no yield from the canola. Using the Trueflex variety EMU allowed us to get good weed control at the site. Canola reached maturity around 16 weeks after sowing.

NOVEL GRAINS: OBSERVATIONS

Sunflower: Summer weed control has been an issue. No insect pressure.

Safflower: Weed control has been an issue due to lack of information. No insect pressure.

Linseed: Weed control has been an issue. No insect pressure.

Cowpea/Lab Lab: Nodulation of both was poor, even with double rates of inoculant. Growth has been minimal. Weed control has also been an issue.

Hemp: Impressive growth in short amount of time as a dryland crop. Good knockdown opportunity due to the later sowing, controlled summer weeds.

The trial is ongoing and further results will be available.

For more information, please contact Kieran Zilm or Kirsty Smith at Nutrien Albany.

