

RURAL | GRAINS

Concept met with scepticism

GRAIN

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LATE season weed control has arrived for the southern Victorian high rainfall zone (HRZ).

The concept of using harvest as a last ditch effort to control those unwanted guests in the paddock has often been met with some scepticism.

The adoption of this management tactic has been clouded with the spread of anecdotal opinion that bluntly insinuates that it doesn't work.

What it all comes down to is the ability to get weed seeds in the harvester.

This has proven to be challenging due to the tendency

of weeds to lodge or shed their seed before the header has entered the paddock.

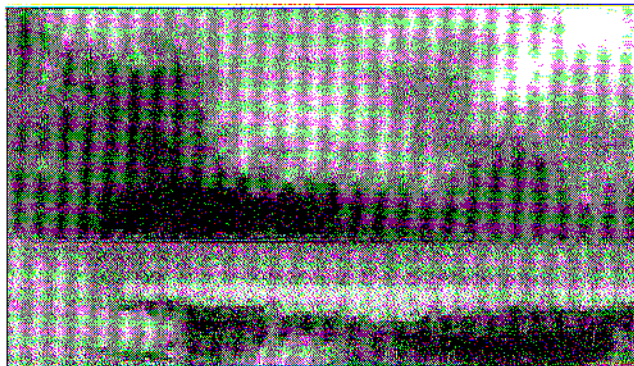
The heavy stubble loads, narrow row spacing, and mixed farming systems in the south of Victoria do not leave much room for new procedures to make an appearance.

Cropping with any prolonged management strategy begins to show cracks, and the cracks this time are weeds.

Traditional agronomy habits usually encompass early season herbicides as the primary defence.

This has inevitably allowed for herbicide resistance to grow and late germinating weeds to finish in the long growing season.

So what are the options?



CONTROL: Windrow burning cereals has proven to be problematic in the high rainfall zone as a consequence of the narrow row spacing and heavy stubble loads.

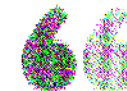
Windrow burning cereals has proven to be problematic in the high rainfall zone as a consequence of the narrow row spacing and heavy stubble loads that are customary to the area.

Burns jump the windrow and the event often con-

cludes in the entire paddock going up in smoke.

On the contrary, if the burn is left too late then the windrow will not obtain enough heat to destroy the weed seeds.

Chaff carts run into similar problems with a burn often



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Aaron Vague, SFS

continuing into the next day which violates most fire district regulations.

Wheat track rotting may work for controlled traffic systems however the number of enterprises that follow

tramlines in the western district is uncommon when compared to drier regions.

The idea of baling residue behind the header is an idea that is gaining momentum. This is due to the fact that the majority of farms have livestock in the system to utilise the end product.

With word spreading of a new harvester integrated weed seed mill being close to commercialisation there is growing anticipation for its use on high yielding paddocks.

The opportunities at harvest are still limited for the high rainfall zone, however when all the tools out of the integrated weed management tool box are used up, the weed management will have to change.