COMMITTEE WORK: Durum Growers Association of SA committee members Leith Cooper, Mark Hill, Bruce Crawford, Neville Sharpe, Michael Jaeschke, Monica Trengove, Fil Ciancio, John Rohde and John Green at their annual forum last week.

New durum lines flex yield muscle early on

By **PAULA THOMPSON**

NEW durum varieties are showing increased yield potential over traditional crops but growers need to be mindful of quality issues, according to SARDI new variety agronomy group's Kenton Porker.

Speaking at the Durum Growers Association of SA annual pre-seeding forum at Blyth last week, Mr Porker said new varieties such as Tjilkuri, WID802 and WID803 were 5 per cent to 15pc higher-yielding than Tamaroi or Kalka.

"Tjilkuri and WID802 are performing relatively better in central South Australia than the South East," he said.

"The yield differences aren't as big when sowing late, but the new varieties show their true potential when sown early."

The variety Caparoi remained a stand-out in terms of quality, particularly for lack of screenings, while WID803 had screening issues.

"Particularly with late sowing, we're seeing a lot more screenings problems and quality downgrading," he said.

Late sowing was showing up quality issues like low test weights and screenings.

Mr Porker said it was particularly important to avoid low test weights, with the current standard of 74 kilograms a hectolitre moving to 76kg/hl for the 2014 harvest.

A seeding rate trial showed an optimum rate of 220 seeds a square metre across all environments.

KeyPoints

- WID803 showing issues with screenings
- Little difference in seeding rates
- Yield, quality a balancing act

"This means the new varieties can be managed in the same way as older varieties with seeding rates," Mr Porker said.

Grain weight needs to be considered when working out the seeding rate, with WID803 having a 1000 grain weight of 33.8 grams, so 83kg/ha equated to 220 seeds a square metre.

"The new varieties have higher yield potential but the protein is lower so N management is important," he said.

"New varieties require more N to reach the target protein of 13pc but N is most effective when applied late."

The optimum treatment to achieve 13pc protein across all the durums was 40kg of N at growth stage 31 and 80kg of N at growth stage 47.

"Early N application does predispose the new varieties to downgrading from screenings," he said.

"Caparoi is by far the superior – quality durum and is easier to manage, but it is lower in yield."

When sowing late, it was recommended to sow varieties that were more likely to achieve Durum 1 such as Caparoi or Tamaroi and early maturing varieties such as Saintly.

University of Adelaide durum breeder Jason Able said the Australian Durum Wheat Improvement Program was the longest-running in the country. The GRDC is providing $6 million in funding for the program in the next five years.

"Our number one priority is yield and yield stability," Mr Able said.

"We're also increasing our priority on strategies to reduce crown rot susceptibility and increasing the emphasis on using molecular markets to fast-track some of the new lines."

The program involved six to eight sites in New South Wales and nine trial sites across SA, from the Mid North to the South East.

"A focus is on increasing the production area, particularly in the South East around Bordertown and Kaniva and in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula," he said. "There's room for growth in areas such as Maitland and Minlaton."

There were two new lines coming through the breeding program, UAD0951096 and UAD1053255, which were showing equal to or better yield than Tjilkuri, increased 1000 grain weight, and reduced screenings.

NSW Ag Tamworth Research Centre durum quality chemist Mike Sissons said there was growing competition in the export market from countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkey.

"Our main competitor is still Canada, so we should be mindful of benchmarking our quality against theirs," he said.

US trip from canola variety challenge

MID North farmer Ray Lamond has won a trip to the United States and Canada in early August through his involvement in the Clearfield Canola Challenge.

He will join three other farmers from New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria on the tour. Mr Lamond took out the Clearfield Canola Challenge for South Australia.

As part of his trip to North America, Mr Lamond will visit canola growers and processing facilities.

Triazine canola is the usual type grown by Mr Lamond but he planted a crop of Pioneer hybrid 45Y82 as part of the challenge, which compares the two herbicide-tolerant canola types.

The 45Y82 was sown into the same paddock as Tawriffic TT canola with both crops treated with their individual herbicide options through the season.

The variety 45Y82 had the herbicide Intervix and a grass selective applied as a post-emergent option and Mr Lamond said it seemed to control the weeds really well.

"I sowed it in the worst of the ryegrass paddocks and it did a great job," he said.

A weigh bin was used to compare part of the trial with 45Y82 yielding 2.2 tonnes a hectare compared to Tawriffic TT at 1.8t/ha.

Mr Lamond said the difference between the two was even more pronounced in the overall result, with 45Y82 producing an average yield of 2t/ha and Tawriffic TT 1.5t/ha.

"Neighbours who had Pioneer were talking about 400 kilograms a hectare up on the triazines," he said.

Mr Lamond said he normally sowed TT canola at 4 kilograms a hectare and the Tawriffic TT canola was planted at 4.2kg/ha.

In comparison, the hybrid 45Y82 (CL) canola was planted at a vastly reduced rate of 2.2kg/ha on the advice of his agronomist.

"I was a bit worried about cutting the seeding rate in half but the seed accuracy was spot on," Mr Lamond said.

"Plenty of plants established."

He said the early vigour of 45Y82 (CL) also impressed him.

"This gets up and goes – it was so much better than the other one," he said.

The Clearfield Canola Challenge will be held in 2012 with growers from around the country invited to pit Clearfield and Triazine canola types in a side-by-side competition.

Get smart about pests with web tool

A NEW tool promises to give farmers and farm advisers the upper hand in identifying and managing insect pests in south-eastern Australia.

PestIQ is a web-based service that aims to provide all the resources they need to combat the problem.

It was designed and developed by *cesar*, an independent science and innovation company that has been working in the agricultural sector since 2006.

Dr Paul Umina, *cesar,* is encouraging agronomists, advisers and farmers to explore the tool which he said removed the time and effort required to search for pest information.

"It also aids the correct identification of insects, and gives users the confidence in their management decisions," Dr Umina said.

"Central to pestIQ is an internet service which allows users to quickly access an array of information on pest and beneficial insects found in broad-acre pasture, cereal, oilseed and pulse crops.

"Using our custom-built functionality, this information is strategically linked to information on insect monitoring, insecticides and pest management advice."

Dr Umina said pestIQ had been developed in response to an identified need to streamline and simplify the process involved in sourcing information on insect pests in crops.

PestIQ brings together an array of referenced materials into one easy-to-use interface. This includes four interactive and comprehensive sections on insects, monitoring, insecticides and integrated pest management.

cesar's manager of sustainable agriculture Philip Jobling said the insect search engine allows users to quickly and accurately identify insects and to find information about their basic biology, lifecycle, damage symptoms and economic thresholds.

"Also included are step-by-step instructions on how to use these techniques in the field, the equipment required and images."

PestIQ has been designed to complement the highly successful PestFacts South-Eastern newsletter service, which has been produced by *cesar* for the past six years.

Supported by the GRDC, PestFacts South-Eastern is a free service designed to keep graingrowers and advisers informed about invertebrate pest-related issues and solutions. Dr Umina said *cesar* would continue to provide PestFacts for Victoria and New South Wales in 2012.

• **Details: www.pestIQ.com.au**