

Welcome to Vicki, Our New Leongatha Agronomist!

We are very excited to announce the commencement of our new agronomist, Vicki Nink. Vicki will be based at our Leongatha depot, starting after Easter. Vicki has great local experience after living and working in the South Gippsland area for the past 6 years. Vicki has worked in the agricultural industry throughout Victoria for over 10 years and has developed great knowledge of soil and animal health, plant nutrition, and pasture production. Vicki will be working closely with Katherine, our graduate agronomist, visiting customers, soil testing, and creating autumn farm plans. If you would like to get in touch with either Vicki or Katherine give them a call, or drop into the Leongatha office on Geary St, Leongatha.

Vicki: 0400 879 818

Katherine: 0447 873 888

RYEGRASS STAGGERS AND ENDOPHYTE

Ryegrass staggers is a nervous system disease caused by the fungal endophytes found at the base and seed head of some varieties of ryegrass. The endophyte produces an alkaloid substance which is toxic to stock when consumed, causing staggers, digestion problems, and reduced production. Symptoms usually occur within 7-14 days of being exposed to toxic pastures. Endophytes are bred into new species of ryegrass as they create better pest and drought resistance in the early seedling stage; however approximately 80% of older species have naturally occurring 'wild type' endophytes.

The risk of ryegrass staggers increases when pasture is heavily grazed to the base of the plant. This is often after the autumn break following a dry summer when there is a flush of short, green pick. If a plant is stressed, particularly by lack of water, the endophyte produces a higher level of alkaloids. To reduce risk of staggers, look to top pastures with seed heads, avoid over grazing and provide an alternative feed source such as low endophyte hay during high risk times. Research is being conducted to isolate the compounds which protect the seed from pest attacks but do not cause staggers.

INVESTING IN GIPPSLAND

As part of our ongoing investment in better facilities for the Gippsland farming community, a new blender was installed over the last weekend at Koo Wee Rup.

The Leongatha blender will soon have a complete upgrade and we are currently upgrading our Tinamba blending facilities.

In Leongatha our new spreader trucks will be rolled out in the next few weeks, ready for the autumn rush.

They are equipped with the latest technology to provide you with accurate and reliable spreading and we are adding an additional bin truck to the fleet.



Koo Wee Rup
150 Sybella Avenue
Koo Wee Rup
Ph: 03 5997 2203

Leongatha
96-102 Horn St
Leongatha
Ph: 03 5667 3100

Tinamba
620 Heyfield Upper-Maffra Rd
Tinamba West
Ph: 0427 220 127

Building a Winter Feed Wedge

Building a winter feed wedge can be crucial in any pasture-based grazing system in order to allow for feed to be available during times of slow pasture growth. By improving the management of pasture through good rotational grazing, winter supplementary feed costs can be reduced and pasture utilisation increased. Ideally, grazing should occur at the 2-3 leaf stage or at canopy closure, then grazed to a 4-6cm residual. A feed wedge can be created to ensure there is sufficient feed ahead in the rotation. Whilst initially building a feed wedge, less pasture will be available and supplementary feeding (hay, silage, grain) may be required to meet cow requirements. Nitrogen could also be applied at this stage to increase pasture yield or a winter crop can be utilised to supply a high quality feed source. Importantly, both of these methods will allow for a longer rotation to be established, with rotations being extended by the end of July. Day length, sun light and soil temperature impact leaf emergence rate therefore the round will begin to shorten coming into early spring as extra feed is produced.

Come visit us at the Field Days!

Find out about our tailored agronomy services and meet the team

Farm World

Lardner Park
April 12th to 15th

East Gippsland Field Days

Bairnsdale Aerodrome
April 27th and 28th

Pest Profile: Root Aphid (*Aploneura lentisci*)

Identification: As the name suggest, root aphids can be found underground on roots of pasture plants, commonly on those of rye grass and fescues. The adult insects can grow to approximately 2.5mm in length and are often creamy – yellowish in colour. Root aphids feed on the sap of the plant root, producing a white, waxy, mould looking substance (pictured right).

Damage caused: The aphids can cause a loss of vigour, with the plants looking stunted, wilted and yellow as a result of the root damage. Whilst infested with aphids, the ryegrass is placed under high stress particularly during grazing leaving it more vulnerable to disease resulting in a gradual thinning of pasture.

Control: Root aphids can be significantly controlled by ryegrass endophyte AR37. This is a novel endophyte providing pest resistance to root aphids, as well as other common ryegrass pests such as pasture mealy bug and black beetle. AR37 endophyte in ryegrass offers some protection, but in high infestations, damage can still occur. Seek advice from your seed representative to decide if AR37 endophyte is right for your stock.



Our Team of Agronomists



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