

## NO EARLY SPRAYS DESPITE HIGH-DISEASE SEASON

17<sup>th</sup> October 2011

**D**ESPITE being a bad year for cereal diseases in Victoria's Wimmera Mallee, some of the district's cereal growers left their spray rigs in the shed until early spring.

By the end of September, some growers had sprayed their winter wheat and barley crops two to three times, while others had no foliar disease in their crops after applying a fungicide with their planting fertiliser.

Those growers having a spray-free winter had ordered the fungicide Intake® Hiloal Gold to be mixed with their winter-cereal planting fertiliser.

Agronomist with Harberger Farm Supplies at Donald, Craig Landwehr said the technique had been used in the district for several years, but had really taken off in the past three years, as farmers saw the results.

Tailored to the fertiliser application per hectare, Harbergers professionally apply the precise amount of Intake Hiloal Gold to each customer's planting-fertiliser order.

He said growers viewed this as 'crop insurance', enabling them to sleep a bit easier.

"Even though they still do regular crop checks, very few had to use a fungicide spray between planting and flagleaf stage.

"It's definitely prevented early rust in wheat and slowed down barley scald.

Growers who have used this method have saved at least two fungicide sprays this winter."

Wayne Jones – who runs a dryland mixed cropping and sheep enterprise, *Strathcona*, on self-mulching clay country south of Donald – has been using the technique for four years in wheat crops. This year he treated all winter cereal plantings this way, including across 214 hectares of wheat.

"The first year I used it I was impressed. I fertilised three paddocks of wheat with MAP – two with MAP that had been mixed with Intake Hiloal Gold, and the middle paddock with just a batch of basic MAP. I had to use foliar sprays for rust on that middle paddock.

"This year I have used the full rate of Intake Hiloal Gold across everything - even the barley - and have had no rust or scald to speak of.

"When you see results like that, there's no question at all about continuing to use this technique.

"The beauty of it is that you put the planting fertiliser on, with the applied fungicide, and the early rust-prevention work's done. That allows me to focus on other things on the farm, including sheep work.

"We're lucky that our suppliers Harbergers have the capability to mix the exact amount of fungicide evenly onto our fertiliser. This year we applied 70kg/ha of MAP, and Harbergers added the correct amount of the fungicide to make sure we applied the right amount per hectare."

Mr Jones' winter cropping season began with very good soil moisture from summer rainfall, but by the end of September his winter crops were just 'hanging in there'. After a couple of hot windy days, he said his lucerne looked as though it had been sprayed out.

Crop Care technical sales manager for the Wimmera Mallee region, Jason Wheaton said that Intake Hiloal Gold (with the active ingredient flutriafol) applied to fertiliser and placed near the seed could protect the crop up to and beyond flag leaf development – an important stage for grain development.

"Flutriafol is readily taken up by the plant roots, and translocated throughout the stems and leaves of emerging seedlings.

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**Crop Care Australasia Pty Ltd**

ABN: 53 061 362 347

Portal North – Unit 15/16 Metroplex Avenue Murarrie QLD 4172

PO Box 84 Morningside QLD 4170

Phone: 07 3909 2000 Fax: 07 3909 2010 [www.cropcare.com.au](http://www.cropcare.com.au)



“Crops in the Wimmera Mallee treated with the product have shown exceptionally low incidence of disease – even with this year’s wet start to the season, and the expectation of a high incidence of disease.”



WIMMERA Mallee dryland crop grower Wayne Jones (left) pictured in early September in a clean crop of Correll wheat that had not been sprayed since planting. Intake Hiloal Gold applied to the crop with the planting fertiliser effectively prevented disease development in the young and growing crop. Mr Jones is pictured with Craig Landwehr, agronomist with Harberger, Donald, where the fungicide was applied to the fertiliser before delivery.



HEALTHY wheat crop pictured in early September in a high-disease season – unsprayed, but treated at planting with the fungicide Intake Hiloal Gold applied to the fertiliser.

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