

AGRONOMY REPORT

STEWART-MATTHEWS

5th DECEMBER, 2016

NOV

DEC

JAN

ESTABLISHED
LUCERNE
SORGHUM 4-6 LEAF
ANNUAL RYE
FINISHED



YARRAWALLA
NORTHERN VICTORIA



PIPE & RISER
IRRIGATION



WARM DAYS & COOL
NIGHTS
SOIL TEMP 15°C



SORGHUM X SUDAN

Q. How is the sorghum looking on the Stewart-Matthews farm?

A. Kelvin sowed sorghum in three stages. The establishment across all bays has been good. The first crop went in in mid November and that's now at 4-6 leaf stage.

Q. So when will it be ready for grazing?

A. That depends on the weather but at this stage it looks like the first grazing will be in the first week of January when it reaches a height of around 50cm. Cows will be introduced to the sorghum provided that it's not stressed in terms of things like heat, water logging, temperature or nutrient deficiencies.

Q. And what management is necessary in the meantime?

A. We decided to spray sorghum for native budworm which we noticed amongst some remnant lucerne in the paddock and on seedling sorghum. At seedling stage the sorghum is particularly susceptible to pests and we don't want to be losing plants. We also decided to irrigate in mid-December. Even though the surface is dry there's adequate moisture available at root depth, and below. We cross-checked this with ETo since the last irrigation.

Q. You mentioned that there's lucerne in the paddocks, why's that?

A. The sorghum was sown into an old thinning lucerne stand. There wasn't enough lucerne to warrant irrigating but it was worth keeping to utilise amongst the sorghum. Adds a bit of extra protein. What's more, it's expensive and difficult to completely spray out lucerne. And plant back periods would delay sowing. I find it more economical to oversow a summer crop, follow it up with an autumn crop and see the lucerne decline naturally due to competition. We did spray with a desiccant prior to sowing to control some weeds.

Q. How do you manage both crops given their different characteristics?

A. You manage grazing for sorghum and any lucerne is a bonus. That will mean a slightly shorter rotation.