



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment



# FODDER FOR THE FUTURE

## Irrigated Cropping Council

### Trial site update June 2021

Murray Dairy has partnered with the Irrigated Cropping Council through the Fodder for the Future project to conduct demonstration trials investigating management strategies for cereals and faba-beans as fodder for dairy cows.

The first trial will look at the impact of sowing dates and seeding rates for wheat (Cesario) and oats (Forrester) crops. Sowing dates were early and late April. Sowing rates were 80, 120, 180 and 270 plants per m<sup>2</sup>.

Two different cutting times will also be measured to understand the impact of harvest time on quality and yield for each cut.

All plots have been sown with successful weed and pest free establishment. The crops are all growing well, with some plots quite advanced in their growth stage. This may create a management challenge if harvest time is very early.

The second trial is looking at how faba-beans (PBA Bendoc) might fit into a dairy farm fodder strategy. Faba-beans are a high yielding and high quality crop that could potentially provide excellent feed for dairy cows. Faba-beans are high in moisture and could create a challenge when harvested for silage. This trial will look at two sowing rates and three harvest dates.

The faba-bean plots are now all sown and established, with some early weed challenges. Plots will continue to be monitored for weed and insect pests.

It is well understood that there is often a compromise between achieving maximum dry matter yield and high quality. The results of these trials will provide valuable information on the impact various strategies have on final yield and quality.

This project is a cross-industry collaboration between the dairy, cropping and fodder industries. By working closely with other industries, Murray Dairy hopes to learn from the experts in the cropping industry and share this information with dairy farmers. It also provides us with the opportunity to better understand the needs of cropping farmers so that we can work better together, while at the same time informing crop growers of dairy farmers requirements for high quality fodder.

### Irrigated Cropping Council trial site



*Damian Jones, Trials Manager with the Irrigated Cropping Council, inspects the cereal plots at their Research Centre in Kerang.*

