



Soil Wealth
NURTURING CROPS



**Integrated
Crop Protection**
PROTECTING CROPS

RMCG



**Hort
Innovation**
Strategic levy investment

**VEGETABLE
FUND**



Integrated weed management

How cover cropping can improve its use for vegetable growers

Integrated Weed Management

How cover cropping can
improve IWM for vege growers



Paul Kristiansen, Michael Coleman, Chris Fyfe UNE

Integrated weed management in practice

Key strategies

- Plan, do and review
Identify your weeds
Managing the weed seedbank is the goal
- Diverse, avoid patterns
Use multiple strategies
- Be strict about hygiene
Prevent translocation of weed seeds!
- Diligence and timing
A stitch in time saves 9 ... thousand!



Planting a leek crop into stale seed beds

Integrated weed management

Tools

Use multiple strategies (diversity), and **plan** ahead

- Hygiene - machinery washdown, starting on clean paddocks
- Cultural - Crop rotation to reduce seed bank, break cycles
- Mechanical - Early inter-row weed control (herbicide or cultivation)
 - Hand weeding (chipping)
- Biological - Biofumigant cover crops
- Chemical - Herbicides (pre-plant, selective)
- Other - Plastic mulch, Thermal control



Cover crops as part of crop rotation

- Vary the crops grown, reduce seed bank, break cycles
- Different families have different needs and timings
- Enable different weeding methods to be used
- Benefits for pest & disease management
- Benefits for soil

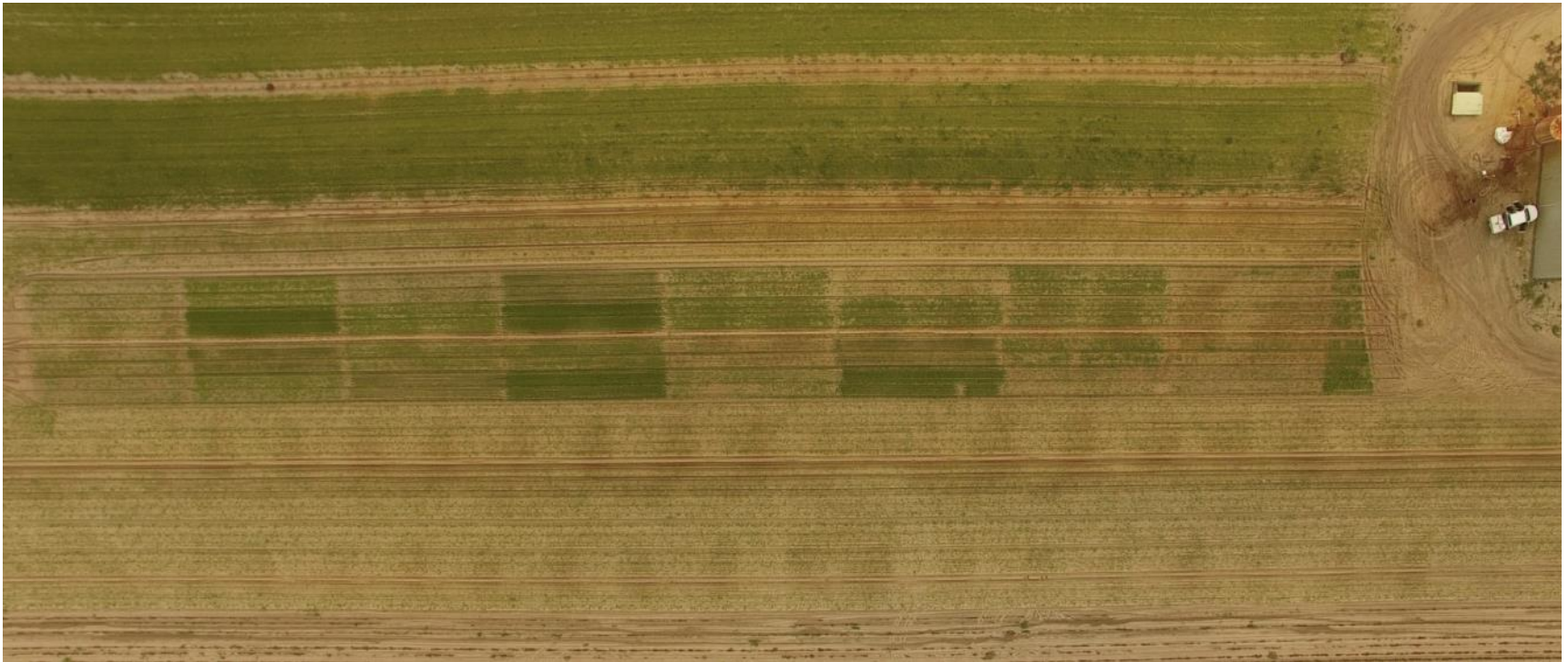


Cover crops

- Physical competition: quick growing, dense cover such as ryegrass & other cereals, some legumes
- Biofumigation: relies on chemicals from the cover crop to suppress weeds (and soil pests), tricky to manage, only targets certain weeds, e.g. brassicas
- Issues: poor establishment, termination, weediness, lost income. BUT, these issues can be addressed through management choices



WA Winter cover crops trial



WA Winter cover crops trial

Video

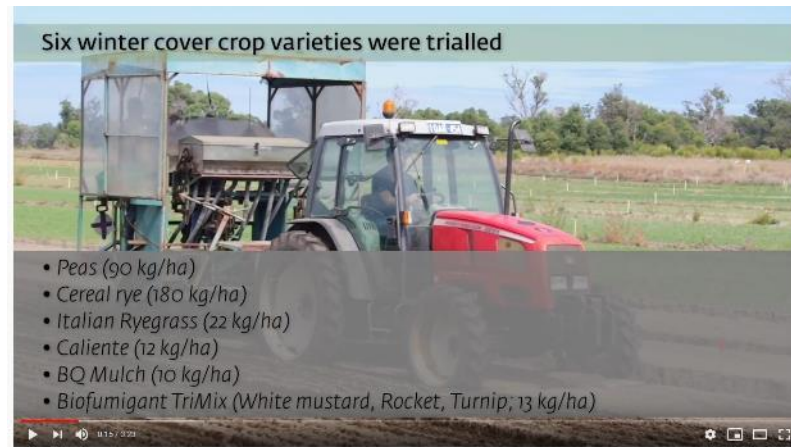


Winter cover cropping for weed management



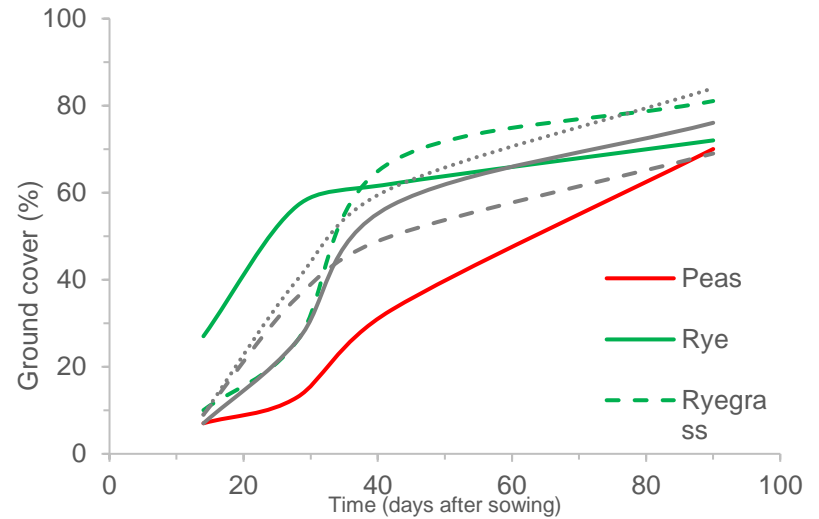
Winter cover cropping for weed management

Video



VG15070 Cover crop trial, Myalup Western Australia, April 2018 - Preliminary Results

WA Winter cover crops trial



Cover Crop	Weeds density (plants/sqm)	Weeds Biomass (grams/sqm)
Peas	13.5	17.7
Ryecorn	7.8	0.4
Ryegrass	10.5	3.1
Caliente	15.5	2.7
BQ Mulch	18.5	2.6
TriMix	14.5	2.5

Lesson 1. Successful weed suppression was a cover crop that established quickly and had quick canopy closure e.g. ryecorn (cereal rye)

Lesson 2. Good seed bank management can be a cover crop that gets up gradually up but with canopy closure that excludes light and smothers weeds before they set seed – like a false seed bed!

Lesson 3. Cover crop biomass is good but good canopy closure is key! Too stalky can let light in and allow weeds to persist!

Lesson 4. Support good establishment - treat you cover crop like any crop rotation.

WA Winter cover crops trial, agronomist Grant's insights

Cereal rye

- Rapid germination and early establishment, high vigour, effective at out-competing weeds in the cool season.
- Weeds still present but usually fairly small and therefore less likely to be setting seed.

Ryegrass

- Less early vigour than cereal rye. Some weeds may get above the crop canopy and set seed.
- Forms a thick canopy later in life.
- *Perhaps better suited to the cooler conditions of south-east Australia (Tas/Vic).*

Biofumigants

- Slower early establishment.
- Will form a good canopy later if sown at a suitably high rate.
- Offer the added biofumigant benefit to crops.

In WA, it may be possible to grow a winter cover crop largely with rain – but some irrigation still likely to be required to ensure vigour is maximised. Cover cropping with more water-hungry varieties may not be suited to vegetable farms where water availability is a major limiting factor.



Tasmania Winter Cover Crop Long Term Trial (10+ years)



Tasmania Winter Cover Crop Long Term Trial (10+ years)

Cover Crop	Weeds Density 48DAS (plants per sqm)	Weeds Density 48DAS (plants per hectare)	Weeds Density 145DAS (plants per sqm)	Weeds Density 145DAS (plants per hectare)
Fallow (weeds)	87.3	872,500	22.3	222,500
Italian Ryegrass	236.5	2,365,000	189.8	1,897,500
Caliente (mustard)	212.0	2,120,000	262.3	2,622,500

Cover Crop	Weeds Biomass N/A (grams per sqm)	Ground Cover 20DAS (%)	34DAS (%)	48DAS (%)	145DAS (%)
Fallow (weeds)	12	2	3	11	5
Italian Ryegrass	24	2	12	21	100
Caliente (mustard)	48	4	19	48	100

Cover Crop	Chickweed (plants per sqm)	Shepherds purse (plants per sqm)	Wild radish (plants per sqm)	Blackberry Nighshade (plants per sqm)
Fallow (weeds)	3.8	2	0.8	9
Italian Ryegrass	166.8	20	0.8	0
Caliente (mustard)	259.0	1	0.3	0

Lesson 1. Chickweed in high numbers, followed by Shepherds Purse, but not really battles worth fighting as they're weak competitors. Wild radish is more of a problem.



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Lesson 2. Above ground patterns = Below ground seed bank

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Lesson 3. Ryegrass was slow to establish but smothered most weeds that germinated, particularly chickweed.



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Lesson 4. Stalky Caliente allowed light penetration and more weeds to persist and go to seed.



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Lesson 5. Caliente – the most weeds, but the least of the one that really mattered.



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Lesson 6. Herbicide fallow for major weed incurrence.

Lesson 7. Potential herbicide resistance of wild radish.



NSW Summer cover crops trial



NSW Summer cover crops trial

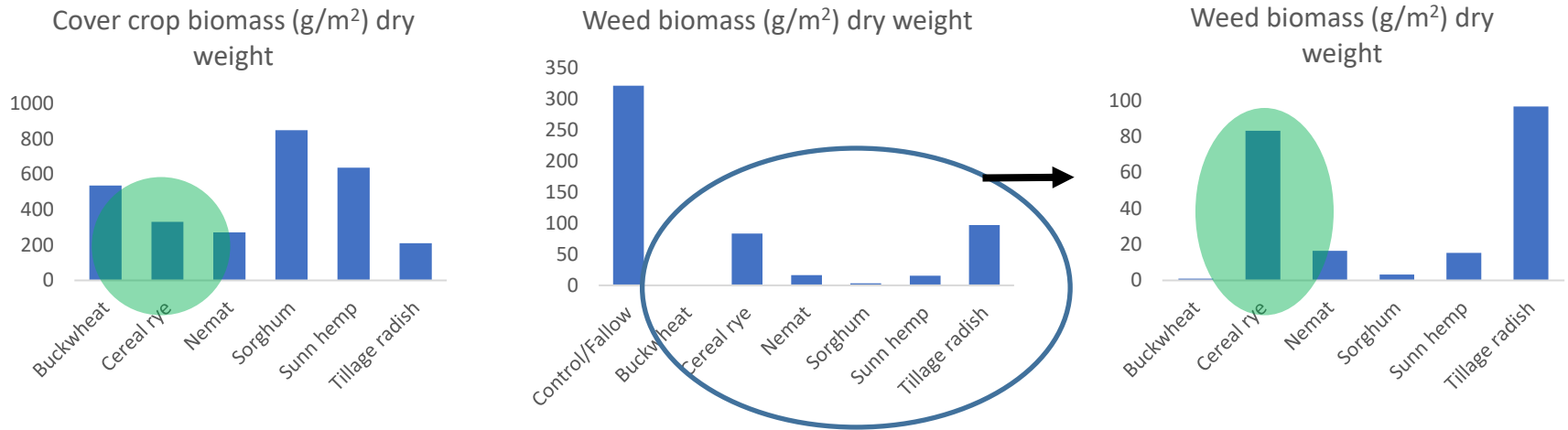
Video



Video



NSW Summer cover crops trial

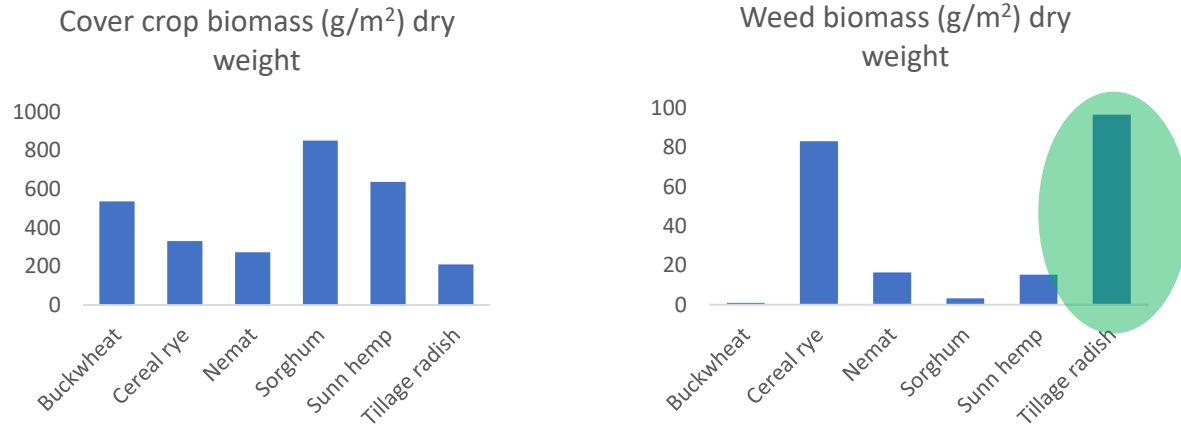


Lesson 1. Plant cover crops to suit the season e.g. ryecorn (cereal rye) was a winter cover crop. It performed okay in terms of biomass out of season, but didn't perform as well as the summer cover crops for weed biomass.

Buckwheat is also a cooler season crop, but it grew and reached 100% canopy cover before all other crops, and performed extremely well at outcompeting weeds. It just shot much earlier (@ 4 wks) in this warm season than it would in a cool season.



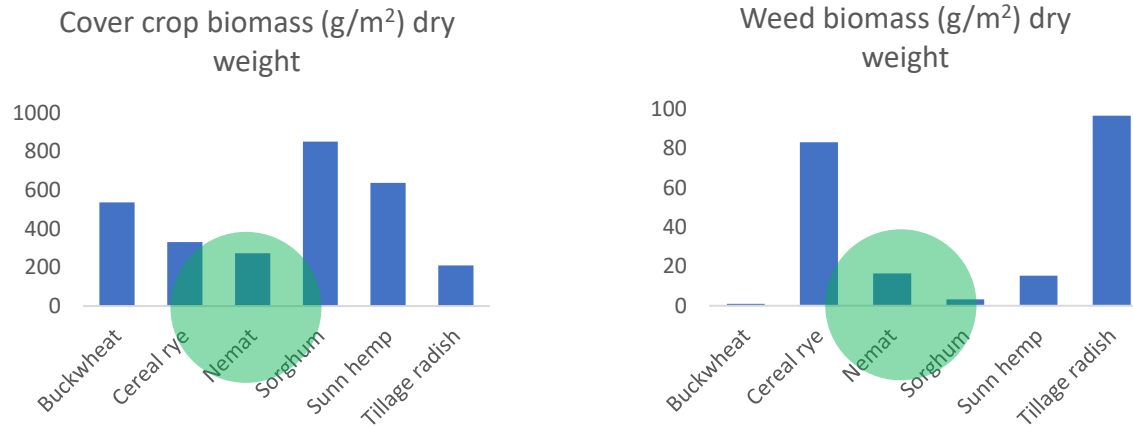
NSW Summer cover crops trial



Lesson 2. The importance of the sowing rate e.g. tillage radish (@ 6 kg/ha) was very slow to reach full canopy closure. Weeds that survived were able to grow quite big, so despite a low weed density, it recorded the highest weed biomass. A higher sowing rate would have meant much quicker canopy closure and light exclusion for weeds. The sowing rate was therefore increased in the second season.



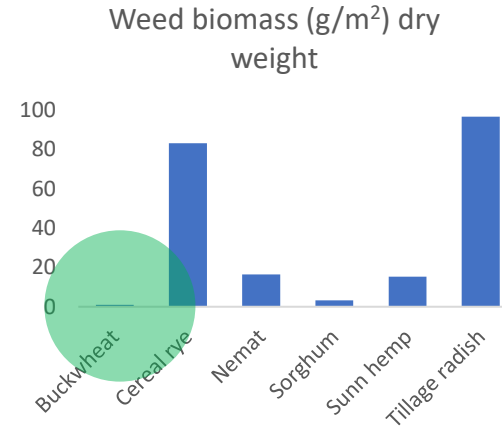
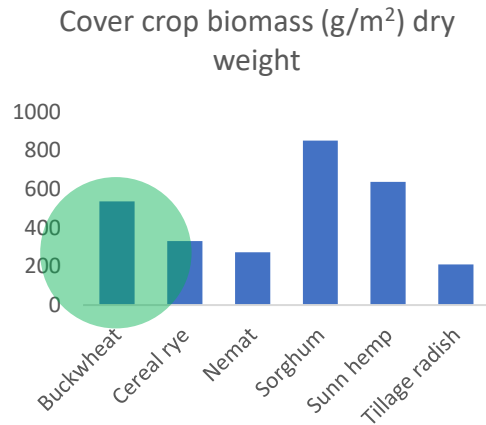
NSW Summer cover crops trial



Lesson 3. A low cover crop biomass can still be effective at weed suppression e.g. nemat. Although a small plant, it's leaf morphology meant it shaded out weeds. Think also of the other benefits e.g. nematode suppression, quick to breakdown and minimum till required to prepare for next cash crop (e.g. vs sorghum)



NSW Summer cover crops trial

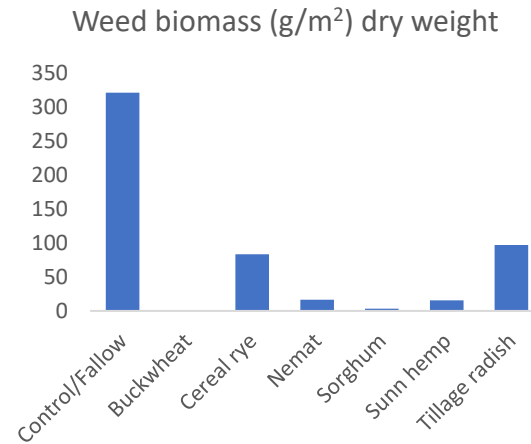


Lesson 4. Terminate cover crops before they themselves set seed and their seeds become part of the 'weed' seed bank e.g. the buckwheat shot and starting seeding at 4 weeks. This could actually work well for a short rotation, and it was very effective at outcompeting weeds. It's soft leaf and stalk also mean it's another cover crop to quickly break down.

Timing is so important here though. The buckwheat was terminated late after seeding. This meant high numbers of buckwheat seeds in the soil seed bank, and so buckwheat in the following lettuce crop. This could also mean a longer term problem.



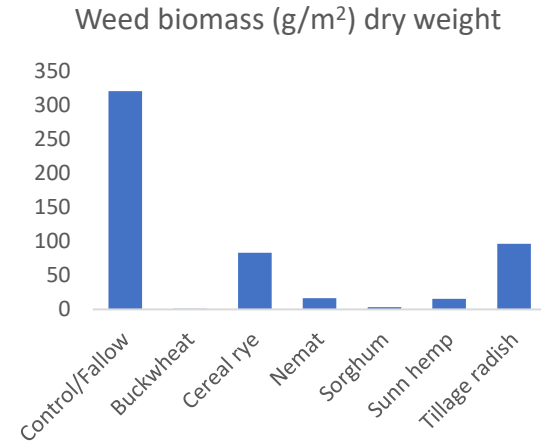
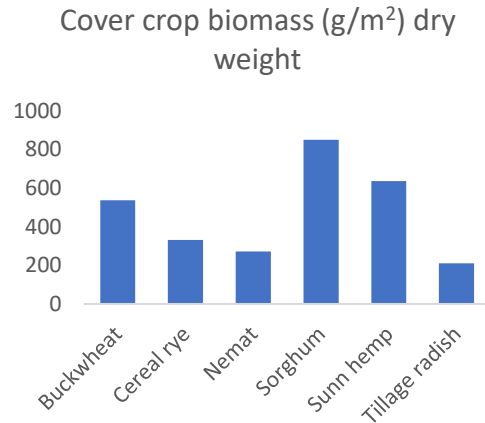
NSW Summer cover crops trial



Lesson 5. All cover crops performed better than a bare unmanaged fallow!



NSW Summer cover crops trial



Lesson 6. Know your problems weeds. Apple of peru was vigorous, and grew like a successful cover crop in the bare fallow.

The out of season cereal rye and low sowing rate of the tillage radish meant they struggled to compete. The right cover crop selection, e.g. sorghum, worked well to outcompete it.



NSW Summer cover crops trial, grower Mario's insights

Sorghum: Mario's favourite.

- Relatively cheap to grow and can use standard seeding equipment.
- Produces very high biomass – suppresses weeds through vigour and canopy.
- Post-termination break-down will take longer due to high biomass & woody stems.

Nemat

- Establishes very quickly and competes well with weeds.
- Breaks down quickly when incorporated.
- May carry disease over in a brassica rotation.

Tillage radish

- Sow at a high enough rate to ensure effective competitiveness and quick canopy cover.
- Relatively slow to establish but forms a good canopy.
- Breaks down quickly when incorporated.

Cereal rye

- Did not perform as well in warm summer climate of Sydney Basin: did not form good canopy.
- Likely more suited to cool season.

Buckwheat

- Rapid growing and produced high biomass.
- Went to seed far too quickly – becomes a weed problem itself.
- Likely more suited to cool season.



Qld Summer cover crops trial



Qld Summer cover crops trial



Lesson 1. The most weeds occurred under the stalky cover crop that allowed light penetration to the soil surface. If sown at a higher rate, and/or terminated before seed set this is okay for long term seed bank reduction.

Lesson 2. The very slow to establish black jack radish had the most weeds early on, BUT, the least weeds (= 0!) by the end. Including during the pigweed and fat hen incursion during drought conditions. This is equivalent to a false seed bed. Weed seeds germinated but died due to lack of light under the thick, broad leaved radish. A very effective strategy for long-term weed seed bank depletion.



Lesson 3. The importance of a well supported and well timed crop. In the second cover crop rotation, Gatton was in drought. Quality water was limited, and temperatures extreme. The cover crops ended up being a field of pigweed, amaranth and fat hen.

Other key lessons shared by our trial growers

- Winter cover crops can help with winter weeds, and vice versa for summer. A cover crop rotation targeted at reducing the weed seed bank of your worst weed problem is a strategic option.
- Choose a variety suited to crop rotation e.g. brassica biofumigant (e.g. nemat) not suited to a brassica cash crop rotation due to disease carryover risk.
- Support establishment (H₂O, fertilise) as you would for any crop rotation. Cover crops require water and fertiliser to maximise their performance and benefits in weed suppression – you need to be happy and able to dedicate resources to them, and can't just 'sow and forget'.
- The benefits in using grass cover crops: avoid disease carryover in brassicas; selective herbicide options for broadleaf weeds.
- A non selective can be used to terminate the cover crop - this also kills the weeds (like a stale seed bed!)
- Terminate cover crops before weeds set seed!
- Understand your weeds, download at:

www.une.edu.au/iwmvegetables



Farm-level Economics Report

- Potatoes grown in a three-year rotation, followed by fallow period, ryegrass (5kg/ha) for soil health reasons and sown higher than the standard rate in order to more effectively smother weeds (cut three times for silage), then Caliente; *Brassica juncea* and Nemat; *Eruca sativa* seed mix is sown.
- The biofumigant cover crop is well supported to ensure a vigorous crop, providing weeds with minimal opportunities to compete.
- At flowering, the biofumigant cover crop is terminated (high-speed mulcher) and quickly incorporated (high-speed disc plough). This is intended to generate a biofumigant effect in the soil that helps to kill weed seed.
- The grower observed that the overall impact of the biofumigant cover crop is to reduce weeds in the potato crop by 85 per cent compared to a fallow.
- The grower observed that the previous herbicide regime 'knocks back' the potato crop so that 3-4 weeks of crop growth was lost = 3 t/ha loss in pack-out yield. This yield loss is avoided when using the biofumigant cover crop and less herbicides, thus increasing yield and revenue.
- \$ After introducing the biofumigant cover crop, whole farm operating profit increased \$1,917 per hectare of potatoes grown!



INTEGRATED WEED
MANAGEMENT

Hort
Innovation
Through Technology

VEGETABLE
FUND





Integrated Weed Management

Case study in **Sydney Basin**
was undertaken April 2020
– August 2020.

✓ Herbicides (preplant)

✓ Cover Crops

Ryecorn vs Ryegrass vs Buckwheat

Buckwheat + Ryegrass

Ryecorn + Ryegrass

✓ Handweeding (x 15)

✓ Mowing





27 May 2020

Buckwheat 30 DAP



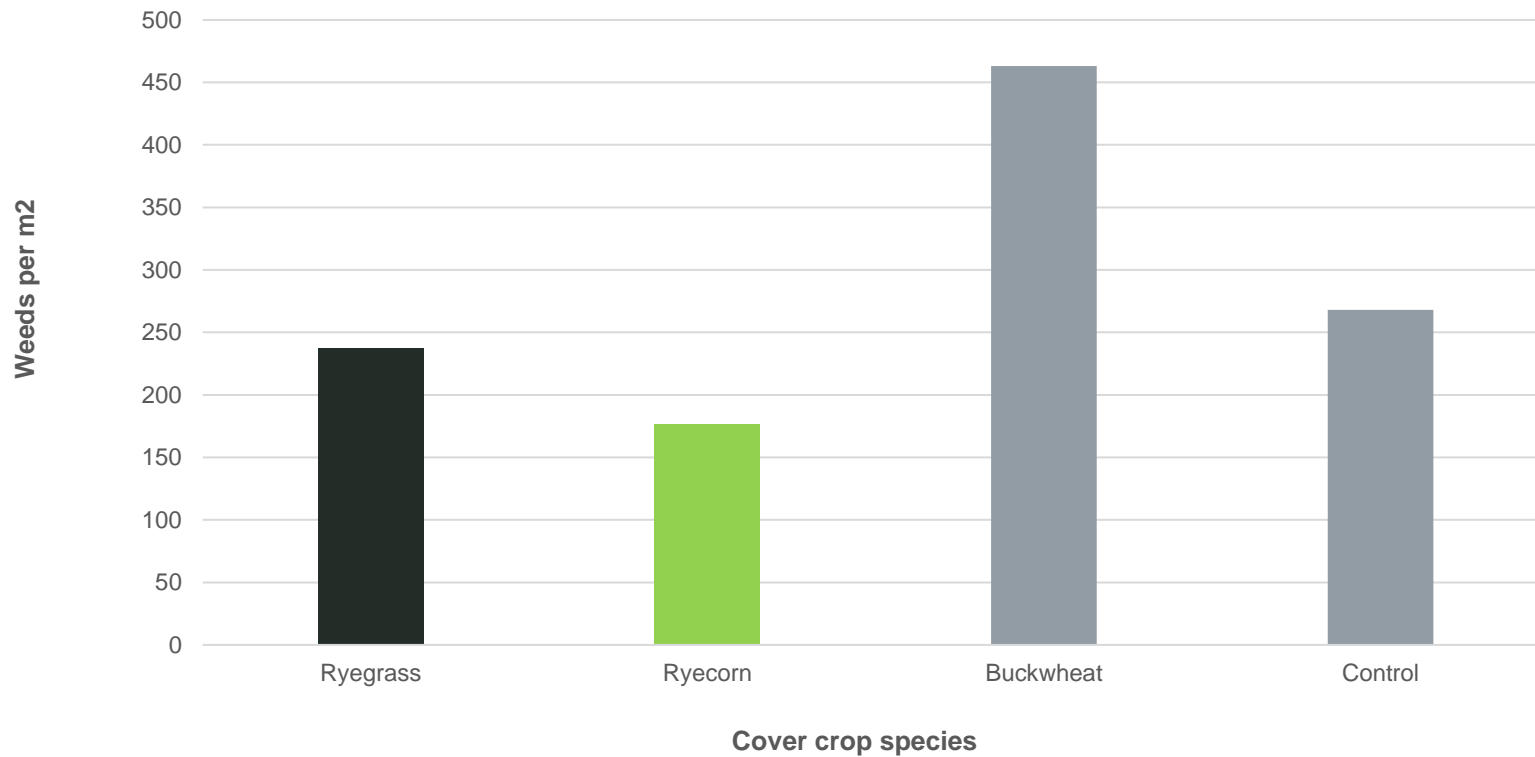
Ryegrass 30 DAP





Sydney Basin **inter-row** Cover Crops

Cover Crop initial Weed Suppression





Cover Crop Objectives

Ryecorn 66 DAP



Ryegrass 66 DAP





Ryegrass the standout

23 Sept 2020

Ryegrass

- Loved Sydney autumn & winter weather
- Prostrate *and* outcompetes most weeds
- Handles mowing, extreme weather & foot traffic



Ryecorn

- Fewer tillers, erect growth to 1.5 metres tall
- Did NOT survive mowing + constant foot traffic
- Hosted more aphids



COVER CROPS FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS

Cover Crop Quick Reference table for picking a cover crop.

Pick your season, your main purpose (1), and expected growth (2) and soil conditions (3). The suggested sowing practices are provided in 4, with 5 providing an indication of establishment. More information on how to use the Quick Reference table is on the back. For other cover crop resources visit www.soilwealth.com.au



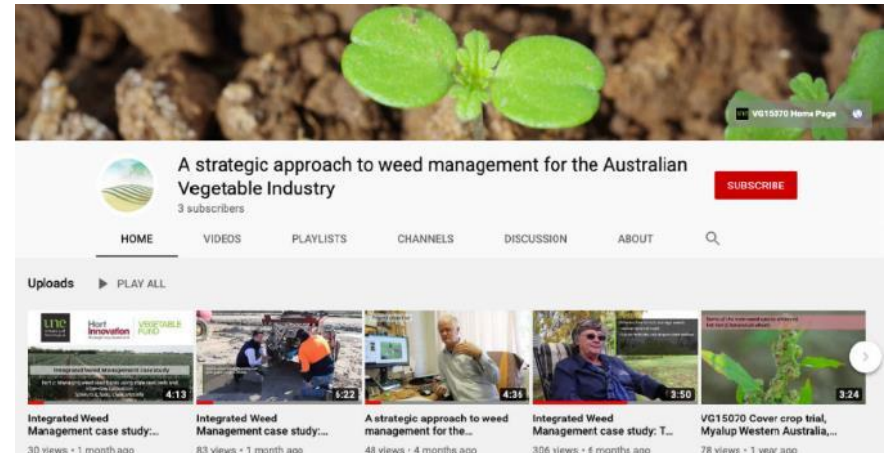
SPECIES	1. WHAT BENEFITS?					2. GROWTH TOLERANCES				3. SOIL CONDITIONS		4. SOWING				5. ESTABLISHMENT	
	PROTECT SOIL & ADD BIOMASS (t/ha)	SUPPRESS WEEDS	ADD NITROGEN	RECOVER NUTRIENTS	BIOFUMIGANT	HEAT	DROUGHT	WATER-LOGGING	FROST	pH (water)	LOWEST GERMINATION TEMP (°C)	RATE (kg/ha)	SEED SIZE	DEPTH (cm)	RHIZOBIUM INOCULANT	TIME	ROOTING DEPTH
CERIALS & GRASSES																	
COOL SEASON																	
Cereal rye (<i>Secale cereale</i>)	3-10	****	*	*****	*	**	***	***	***	4.9-7.9	3	60-120	M	1-3	NA	quick	deep
Oat (<i>Avena sativa</i>)	2-10	**	*	****	*	**	***	***	***	4.5-7.5	8	80-110	M	3-6	NA	quick	deep
Black/Sala oat (<i>A. strigosa</i>)	4-10	**	*	****	*	**	***	***	***	4.5-7.5	8	50-70	S-M	3-6	NA	quick	deep
Annual ryegrass (<i>Lolium multiflorum/rigidum</i>)	2-9	****	*	****	*	*	**	***	***	5.5-7.5	13	15-20	S	1-2	NA	slow	medium
Barley (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>)	2-10	***	*	****	*	*	**	**	***	6.0-7.9	8	50-100	M	3-5	NA	quick	deep
Wheat (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>)	3-8	**	*	****	*	*	**	*	***	5.5-7.9	5	60-120	M	2-4	NA	medium	deep
WARM SEASON																	
Sorghum (<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>)	4-14	****	*	*****	***	****	***	**	*	>4.8	16	15-30	M	3-5	NA	medium	deep
Sorghum x Sudan grass (<i>S. bicolor</i> x <i>S. sudanense</i>)	4-10	****	*	*****	***	****	****	**	*	>4.8	18	20-30	M	2-4	NA	medium	deep
Sudan grass (<i>Sorghum sudanense</i>)	4-10	****	*	*****	*	****	****	**	*	>4.8	18	15-30	M	1-2	NA	medium	deep
Millet - French or Proso (<i>Panicum milioceum</i>)	2-8	***	*	****	*	****	***	*	*	4.5-9.0	14	8-15	S	1-2	NA	medium	medium
Millet - Japanese (<i>Echinochloa esculenta</i>)	2-6	***	*	****	*	****	**	**	*	4.6-7.4	15	10-30	S	1-3	NA	medium	medium
Teff (<i>Eragrostis tef</i>)	3-8	**	*	***	*	**	****	****	*	>4.8	18	6-12	VS	0.3-1	NA	medium	shallow
LEGUMES																	
COOL SEASON																	
Faba bean (<i>Vicia faba</i>)	6-8	**	****	**	*	**	**	***	***	6.0-7.2	4	100-200	L	5-8	F	slow	shallow
Vetch, Woollypod "hairy" (<i>V. villosa</i>)	4-7	**	****	**	*	*	**	**	****	5.0-7.5	9	25-40	M	2-4	E	slow	medium
Vetch, common (<i>V. sativa</i>)	2-5	**	***	**	*	*	**	**	****	5.0-7.5	6	50-60	M	1	E	medium	medium
Field pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>)	3-8	**	****	**	*	**	**	**	***	6.0-7.0	6	80-120	M	3-7	E or F	medium	shallow
Clover, white (<i>Trifolium repens</i>) - perennial	2-6	**	****	**	*	***	**	****	**	6.0-7.0	5	4-12	S	1	B	medium	shallow
Clover, berseem (<i>T. alexandrinum</i>)	3-7	***	****	**	*	***	**	**	*	7.0-7.5	6	10-20	S	1	B	medium	shallow
Clover, balansa (<i>T. michelianum</i>)	3-6	**	****	**	*	*	**	***	***	5.0-7.0	6	4-8	S	1	C	medium	medium
Clover, crimson (<i>T. incarnatum</i>)	3-6	**	***	**	*	*	*	**	***	5.5-7.0	6	10-20	S	1	C	medium	deep
Clover, red (<i>T. pratense</i>)	2-5	**	***	**	*	**	**	**	**	5.5-7.0	5	5-10	S	1	B	medium	deep
Lentil (<i>Lens culinaris</i>)	2-5	*	***	**	*	***	***	**	***	6.0-7.5	5	50-60	M	5-10	F	slow	shallow
Lupin (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.)	2-8	*	***	**	*	**	***	**	**	4.5-7.0	5	70-100	M	3-5	G or S	slow	medium
Medic (<i>Medicago</i> spp.)	1-4	*	**	**	*	****	***	**	***	6.0-7.5	10	10-20	S	1	AL or AM	slow	shallow
Serradella (<i>Ornithopus</i> spp.)	3-8	*	****	**	*	***	**	**	**	4.5-7.0	5	2-5	S		S or G	slow	medium
Biserrula (<i>Biserrula pelecinus</i>)	3-8	***	****	***	*	**	****	*	***	4.0-7.5	5	10-20	M	3-5	WSM1497	medium	deep
WARM SEASON																	
Lablab (<i>Lablab purpureus</i>)	4-12	***	****	***	*	****	****	*	*	5.0-7.5	18	20-40	L	4-6	J	medium	deep
Soybean (<i>Glycine max</i>)	2-8	*	****	**	*	**	***	**	*	5.5-7.5	15	40-60	M	2-5	H	medium	medium
Cowpea (<i>Vigna unguiculata</i>)	2-6	***	***	**	*	****	****	*	*	4.5-6.5	18	35-90	M	3-6	I	medium	deep
Mung bean (<i>V. radiata</i>)	1-6	**	***	**	*	****	****	**	*	5.5-7.5	18	20-30	M	2-4	I	medium	medium
Sunn hemp (<i>Crotalaria juncea</i>)	4-8	****	****	**	*	****	****	*	*	6.0-7.5	14	10-20	M	5-3	I	medium	medium
Lucerne (<i>Medicago sativa</i>) - perennial	4-10	**	****	**	*	****	****	***	***	6.5-8.0	4	15-25	S	1	AL	slow	deep
Sulla (<i>Hedysarum coronarium</i>) - perennial	3-10	*	****	**	*	**	***	**	**	6.5-8.5	15	6-12	S	1-2	WSM1592	slow	deep
BROADLEAF (NON-LEGUME)																	
COOL SEASON																	
Fodder mustard (<i>Brassica napus</i>)	8-16	***	*	****	***	***	**	***	***	6.0-7.5	6	6-12	S	1-2	NA	medium	medium
Indian mustard (<i>Brassica juncea</i>)	4-15	****	*	****	****	***	**	**	***	6.0-7.5	5	6-14	S	1-2	NA	medium	medium
Oilseed radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i> var. <i>oleiformis</i>)	5-12	***	*	****	****	***	**	**	***	6.0-7.5	7	9-15	M	1-2	NA	medium	deep
Turnip (<i>Brassica rapa</i>)	2-6	***	*	***	***	***	**	**	**	6.0-7.5	5	5-8	S	1-2	NA	medium	deep
White mustard (<i>Sinapis alba</i>)	4-12	**	*	****	***	***	**	**	**	6.0-7.5	4	10-20	S	1-2	NA	medium	medium
Rocket (<i>Eruca sativa</i>)	2-8	****	*	****	***	***	***	**	***	6.0-7.5	6	8-16	S	1-2	NA	medium	medium
Chicory (<i>Cichorium intybus</i>) - perennial	3-6	**	*	***	**	***	***	**	***	5.5-7.0	12	4-7	S	1-3	NA	medium	deep
Linseed (<i>Linoleidae</i> & <i>Hugoniolidae</i>)	2-5	*	**	**	*	**	***	**	***	6.0-7.5	9	30-50	S	1-3	NA	slow	medium
Phacelia (<i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i>)	3-6	***	*	***	**	**	***	**	***	6.5-8.5	10	8-10	S	1	NA	slow	medium
WARM SEASON																	
Buckwheat (<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i>)	2-6	***	*	****	*	***	*	*	**	5.0-7.0	10	30-70	M	1-2	NA	quick	shallow
Tillage Radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i>)	6-12	****	*	****	***	****	**	**	***	6.0-7.5	7	3-10	M	1-3	NA	medium	deep
Ethiopian mustard (<i>Brassica carinata</i>)	6-14	***	*	****	****	****	***	**	**	5.5-7.5	7	5-15	S	1-2	NA	medium	medium
Safflower (<i>Carthamus tinctorius</i>)	3-8	*	*	****	**	****	***	**	**	6.0-8.0	5	15-25	M	2-3	NA	slow	deep
Sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i>)	3-8	*	*	**	*	****	***	*	**	5.5-8.0	10	5-10	L	2-5	NA	medium	medium
Marigold (<i>Tagetes</i> spp.)	1-3	***	*	**	*	****	**	**	**	6.0-7.5	18	1-2	M	2	NA	medium	shallow

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Updates and Resources

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Thanks

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