

For most growers crop rotations have now been set, however the question of 'when to start sowing?' will be on growers minds at the moment. Many Growers have decided to reduce the amount of barley sown compared to previous years and will be sowing more Canola, lentils and beans throughout the Wimmera. This year will give growers an opportunity to put in a much needed 'break crop' or even spell the paddock as gross margins for Feed Barley are not looking good.. Growers who for the past few years have followed the trend of decreasing their stocking rates and increase their cropping hectares may now be looking for another avenue to make a profit. However, it seems the wheel has turned yet again and growers are looking to increase their stocking rates and decrease their cropping areas. With sheep prices at record highs, can growers afford to follow this new season trend and, will these prices be sustainable in the long term?

Locusts are also a problem facing growers this year. It seems that they are moving south from the Mallee and are now entering the Wimmera. Their numbers really have to be seen to understand how thick they are across the Mallee. Locusts can be a major problem for new emerging crops as they like to eat fresh stems which can knock a crop back extremely quickly.

Good rainfall across most of Victoria has been positive for growers and most have the seeder and grouper serviced and ready to go. Some growers have sown down sheep feed crops as well as vetch. Many will feel a lot better about growing Canola this season, as soil moisture levels are much improved. The decision on what type of canola to grow this year is an important one for growers to make. There is now a wider choice of canola varieties available. Growers can choose from a conventional variety for cleaner paddocks, or weed control systems. The herbicide options available are Imadazalinone(Clear field) tolerant, Triazine (TT) tolerant or Roundup Ready (RR) tolerant canola systems. With these options growers can be sure to find the right variety for their paddocks.

Andrew Brown, AGA Field Merchant Horsham (03) 5382 6484