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Legume Soil Health Project

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Field Days Showcase Trial Progression

The two major 2015 Conservation Farmers field days were an opportunity to talk with a large number of growers and advisers about the findings to date with the Legume Soil Health Project.

Jimbour Plains Grower Group Field Day

The legume project results to date were presented at the Jimbour Plains Growers group field day on 26th August to a huge crowd of over 150 growers, consultants and industry representatives.

The winter plantings at Jimbour struggled early due to low rainfall. They were able to finish well following September rain of about 40mm. The biomass produced by both the field peas and faba beans was good despite the limited early season rainfall. They rapidly matured following the spring rain. The biomass production at termination for each of the legumes was Faba bean 4.3t/ha, fieldpea 4.1 t/ha and chickpea 3.0 t/ha.

Tulloona Conservation Farming Group Field Day

A smaller but very engaged group of about 90 looked over the trial site at the Tulloona Conservation Farming Group's field day on 2nd September. This trial produced huge biomass at termination following an excellent winter growing season. Especially impressive was the biomass production of 6.25t/ha across the Faba bean plots which were over 1.5m tall. The field peas produced a biomass of 4.9t/ha while the chickpeas produced 2.5t/ha.

Current trial site status

Lab Lab green manure plots were planted at both trial sites in late September to investigate if an effective cover crop can be established and terminated prior to a summer grain planting. Canopy closure has been difficult to achieve due to limited rainfall, despite reasonable soil moisture at planting.

Assay crops of barley planted over previous trial areas were sampled in late October to investigate the impact of the legumes on subsequent grain yields. The results from all the assay crops will be reported early in the new year.

The intention of the project is to see if any of the legume species are able to enhance soil fertility through improvements in soil nutrient status, biology, organic matter or carbon, and as a result, reduce reliance on nitrogen fertilisers.

The final report will be prepared in the first half of 2016 and a summary will be distributed to members.