

Alternative Crops Demonstration

Ten different crops were sown at the Birchip site on the 11th of May. None of the crops were harvested. If you would like further information about any of the crops described below contact Sue Knights at University of Melbourne, Longerenong campus.

CROP DESCRIPTION

Fenugreek is an annual legume that originated in Mediterranean regions and the Near East and is used for imitation maple syrup and flavouring. condiments, and for synthesis of hormones. The greatest potential for commercial development of fenugreek in Australia may be as a green manure.

Coriander is an annual that can be used as a fresh green herb, but is generally harvested as seed, which is used in either curry powder, or pickling spices. South Australia is the major area of production in Australia. Coriander is suited to a climate of wet cool winters and dry summers with a minimum annual rainfall of 400mm. Yields are generally 1 to 1.5t/ha in a dryland situation. Recent prices have ranged from \$1200 to \$1400/t with expected gross margins of \$500 to \$600/t.

Linseed - The use of acrylic paint and vinyl flooring has caused a large decline in linseed production in Victoria. Linseed grows best in areas where rainfall is from 450 to 750mm per year and is usually bought by local seed and grain trading companies who have found niche markets for the seed.

Canary Seed (Moroccan) is a relative of the pasture species of Phalaris. Its main use is as a component of seed mixtures for caged birds. Currently around 500ha of seed is grown in the Wimmera.

Canary Seed (Glabrous) - as above

Safflower (Sironaria) is an annual oilseed crop. It requires a dry climate during late spring-early summer to improve seed set and seed quality and deep, well drained soils which are neutral to alkaline with high moisture holding capacity. The oil is considered superior to other vegetable oils. It is highly polyunsaturated and has a good shelf life.

Crambe ATC No 94535 is an annual oilseed closely related to mustards. Crambe produces an inedible oil that is used to manufacture lubricants, heat transfer fluids, surfactants and coatings, cosmetics, polyesters, plastics and nylon. Currently there is no demand here in Australia but there is a developing market in the USA.

Crambe ATC No 94528 - as above

Sinapis alba contributes a 'hot' flavour to various foods. Sinapis alba has been looked at as potential protein crop with the seed normally 30 to 40% oil and 30 to 32% protein.

Brassica carinata ATC No 9411 is relatively slow growing crop with a large and predominantly dark seed, although there are yellow-seeded forms. It is widely grown in Ethiopia and to a limited degree in India. While of poor agronomic type it has yielded well in Victoria. Poor quality of both oil and meal remains a major problem.