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New legumes offer improved options

NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) field days have been confirmed at Kikoira and Beckom to highlight the availability of new hard-seeded legumes as alternative, drought-hardy pastures.

The free field days will be held on Thursday October 6 at the Kikoira Hall from 9am until lunch time and at Mike and Velia O'Hare's Beckom property from 2pm.

NSW DPI agronomist, Belinda Hackney, said new varieties of hard-seeded legumes had been bred in Western Australia and trialled by NSW DPI to ensure the pastures would suit local conditions.

"These legumes will suit a range of soil types and growing conditions, offering a number of advantages to producers," Dr Hackney said.

"Bred to germinate in cooler conditions, they can produce good feed good feed in autumn, winter and spring.

"They have an in-built protection mechanism which prevents them from germinating out of season – specifically during false autumn breaks."

French and yellow serradella, biserrula, and clovers - sulla, eastern star, rose, bladder, purple, gland and arrowleaf - are hard-seeded legumes which can be grazed or used for hay.

Dr Hackney said the hard-seeded legumes were drought-hardy with deep root systems and the ability to set a high number of seeds which could regenerate after rain.

"In crop/pasture rotations they offer greater flexibility than traditional subclovers and can easily regenerate after the cropping phase," she said.

Western Australia Department of Agriculture and Food plant breeder, Dr Angelo, and Ballard Seeds' Neil Ballard will be on-hand to discuss significant aspects of these hard-seeded legumes.

Results on the performance of the hard-seeded annual legumes will be delivered and presenters will discuss their fit in local farming systems.

Producers should register their interest in attending a field day by contacting NSW DPI agronomist Bob Thompson, 02 6977 3333 or robert.thompson@industry.nsw.gov.au

Media contact: Bernadette York 6391 3936 or 0427 773 785
Digital photographs available bernadette.york@industry.nsw.gov.au