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New legumes offer improved options

A NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) field day has been confirmed at the Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute to highlight the availability of new hard-seeded legumes as alternative, drought-hardy pastures.

The free field day will be held at on Friday October 7 from 9am until lunch time.

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 Loi, 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 the field day by contacting NSW DPI pasture specialist, Nigel Phillips, (02) 6938 1981 or nigel.phillips@industry.nsw.gov.au

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