



In the PADDOCK

Lastest Insect Pest Update with Dr Paul Umina



North Central News has enlisted Dr Paul Umina (right) to keep local growers informed of insect pest issues and solutions as they emerge in the region during the winter growing season of 2011.

Paul (BSc (hons), PhD) of CESAR and The University of Melbourne, is an invertebrate

biologist with expertise in ecotoxicology, insecticide resistance and IPM.

He is also a coordinator of the PestFacts south-eastern newsletter. Paul has over 15 years of research and consulting experience in these fields and has published broadly in Australian and International Journals.

-by Dr Paul Umina Earth mites

Agronomist, James Christie (JSA Independent), has observed significant numbers of blue oat mites in one canola crop, along with low numbers of redlegged earth mites in several pastures around the Donald area.

Damage is minimal and James says spraying is not warranted at this stage.

Many other reports PestFacts have received in the last month suggest similar situations elsewhere.

Redlegged earth mites and blue oat mites are both significant pests of pastures and many broadacre crops in southern Australia.

In a typical season, both pests are found in high numbers across a wide area of Victoria and New South Wales.

This season however, overall mite numbers have generally been lower than normal.

It is likely that significant spring and summer rainfall and flooding experienced in many areas has had an adverse effect on the production and survival of over-summering dia-

pause eggs of these mites.

Little pasture cockchafers

Grower, Rick Lang, has reported damage to a young canola crop (1-2 leaf stage) near Charlton.

Bare patches were present within the paddock and plants were found with leaves chewed off and only stems remaining.

No insects were found when visually searching, so pitfall traps were set up and left in the paddock for

several days.

Examination of the contents of these traps has detected several little pasture cockchafer (Australaphodius frenchi) beetles.

Little pasture cockchafers are elongated black coloured beetles, approximately 3-4 mm in length.

They have striations down their back and can be confused with various dung beetles.

They belong to the Scarabaeidae family and are found in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.



A Man and His Dog

DARREN Petrie is pictured with his dog Ned.

The five year old kelpie was purchased from a farmer at Laanecoorie.

Darren, like many bosses, is mostly happy with his employee's work: "He's handy in the yards and the paddock but if there's another working dog around he'll hang back.

"Ned's a bit lazy that way.

"He works better on his own," Darren said.

In the lead up to shearing in a few weeks time Darren is busy keeping the feed up to his merinos, catching a few strays and fencing.

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Local Business Begins Exciting New Era

LOCAL agricultural and machinery business, Dunlop & Isbel, is entering a new and exciting era by consolidating with Warrnambool, Ballarat and Hamilton Agricultural to become Agrimac.

New ownership, fresh management and trusted expert service are set to provide a boost to the region's economy.

The branch has already employed five locals and is looking to add more staff to the team as the business grows.

Agrimac owner and Managing Director, Hugh McEachern, says the 22 year-old business will be joining a much larger company providing local job opportunities.

"With locals involved in the business including Dan and Aileen Douglas and Rod Male we aim to ensure the reputation of Dunlop & Isbel remains with the rebranding and consolidation of Agrimac.

"Our company's recent decision to combine all our branches and take on the St. Arnaud business was due to our strong presence across western Victoria and the opportunity to grow into a new prime market area.

"We believe the St. Arnaud community is positive about the advancement and our fresh approach to the business.

"The business of Agrimac will be able to provide more support and resources to St. Arnaud and district customers with a total of four branches extending throughout western Victoria.

"As a regional company, we intend to connect with the community as much as possible such as involving ourselves in community activities."

Agrimac St Arnaud branch will endeavour to carry all the machinery, parts and service skills needed by customers to get on with the job.

This is possible because of Agrimac's economies of scale and their ability to share parts, staff and equipment between branches during the fluctuating seasonal demands.

Due to the dealership's central location Agrimac will ensure customers from St. Arnaud, Donald, Charlton, Boort, Wedderburn and surrounding areas will have access to a large suite of quality products including Case IH, Goldacres, Horwood Bagshaw and Gason.

Dan and Aileen Douglas are excited with the challenges that lie ahead with the new business venture.

Dan has been involved in the agricultural service industry for all of his working career and Aileen is a CPA accountant and has been working in the St. Arnaud area since 1997.

Dan said: "Aileen and I have been interested in running a local business for many years and when the opportunity arose to join Agrimac and manage the St. Arnaud branch we knew it would be a good

opportunity for us and a great opportunity for St. Arnaud and the surrounding region.

"We are very pleased with the staff who have joined the group and with all of us sharing the same passion for agriculture stemming from our direct farming backgrounds, we are confident Agrimac will deliver the quality service and support expected by our customers."



Above: The Agrimac team in front of a new CASE IH Magnum tractor. Left to right: Dan and Aileen Douglas (Managers), Robert Fithall (Diesel Mechanic), Jason Barratt (Spare Parts Interpreter) and Chris Wingfield (Head Diesel Mechanic).