



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



FODDER FOR THE FUTURE

Birchip Cropping Group

Winter forage trial update June 2021

Murray Dairy has partnered with Birchip Cropping Group through the Fodder for the Future project to conduct a number of winter forage demonstration trials at Mitiamo.

These trials are designed to demonstrate a range of crop varieties and management strategies that optimise the yield and quality of forages specifically for use in dairy cow diets.

The trial will look at 6 oat varieties, 2 barley varieties, 4 vetch varieties, 4 mixed species (field pea and vetch, vetch and oats, oats and canola, vetch and canola). It will also look at the effect of 2 different sowing date on final yield and quality.

Not only will the trial look at how yield and quality is impacted by varieties, species and sowing dates, but will also include some additional treatments looking at 2 different sowing rates and 3 different cutting times.

The crops have now all been sown down at the site in Mitiamo, with excellent germination and establishment. Weed and pest control has been excellent and will continue to be monitored. The season has got off to a great start and soil moisture conditions are ideal at the moment. Final yield will ultimately be determined by follow-up rains through winter and spring.

It is well understood that there is often a compromise between achieving maximum dry matter yield and achieving high quality. The results of these demonstrations will provide

valuable information on the impact various strategies have on final yield and quality of the fodder.

This project is a cross-industry collaboration between the dairy, cropping and fodder industries. By working closely with other industries, Murray Dairy hopes to learn from the experts in the cropping industry and share this information with dairy farmers. It also provides us with the opportunity to better understand the needs of cropping farmers so that we can work better together, while at the same time informing crop growers of dairy farmers requirements for certain quality parameters in order to properly feed their cows.

Winter forage trial at Mitiamo



James Taylor and Genevieve Clarke from Birchip Cropping Group gather plant establishment data.

