



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



FODDER FOR THE FUTURE

Southern Growers Inc.

Vetch trial update June 2021

Murray Dairy has partnered with Southern Growers Inc. through the Fodder for the Future project to conduct a number of vetch demonstration trials at their research site on the northern edge of Finley NSW.

This trial is designed to demonstrate a range of vetch varieties and management strategies that can optimise the yield and quality of vetch, specifically for use in dairy cow diets.

The trial is looking at four vetch varieties (Rasina, Timok, Morava and RM4) under both irrigation and dryland conditions. In order to see how yield and quality can be manipulated, two different sowing rates (30 and 60 plants per m²) were applied.

As well as these establishment strategies, two different cutting times will be compared to see how this will impact the compromise between quality and quantity. The recommended cutting time for vetch is at the flat-pod stage.

The vetch crops have now all been sown down at the site in Finley, 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 with rapid germination on the irrigated plots and a slightly delayed germination on the dryland plots. Dryland plots are all up now following good rainfall in the autumn. Final yields on the dryland site 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 high quality. The results of these demonstrations will provide valuable information on the impact various strategies have on final yield and quality of vetch.

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 high quality vetch to feed their cows.

Vetch trial at Finley NSW



Russell Ford from Southern Growers inspecting the vetch plots at Finley NSW.

