



# THE PASTURE GUIDE

No 10 in a series on Professional Pasture Production by Irwin Hunter & Co

## Blue Ace and Icon Lucerne's New generation lucerne's bred for Australian conditions

Blue Ace and Icon Lucerne's are establishing a good reputation for high quality production both in dryland and irrigation areas in Western Australia. After two years both varieties have been sown over a wide range of soils types and locations throughout the state and the feed back on their establishment vigour and results to date has been excellent.

With lucerne being a very important component of dryland grazing systems in Western Australia the breeding of new varieties for our conditions is vital to progress the development of pastures for increased production.

In October 2008 Irwin Hunter and Ray Candy visited the replicated trial shown below and were very impressed with the management and layout of this trial and the performance of Blue Ace and Icon under the tough climatic conditions being experienced.



Blue Ace lucerne in a three year old replicated trial at Keith in South Australia

In some earlier lucerne trials conducted by Seed Genetics the performance of 28 lucerne varieties including Blue Ace and Icon Lucerne's plus some elite lines were compared in an irrigated replicated field trial.

Management of the replicated trails was in line with standard commercial crop practice where cut material for hay is field dried to approximately 12% moisture before weighing.

Mean hay yield of the Blue Ace and Icon were 16% higher than that of the commercial standards and the fodder yield was 10% higher.

In summary these trials showed that the Blue Ace and Icon Lucerne's were clearly more productive and more pest and disease resistant than the commercial standards. For disease and insect tolerances refer to the table above. For each variety.

### Blue Ace Lucerne

Blue Ace lucerne was developed by selecting plants from within disease resistant survivors in old lucerne stands. Plants were selected on plant characteristics of superior fodder yield, improved pest and disease resistance.

Blue Ace attributes:

- High Winter activity (rating 9)
- Well suited for use in cropping rotations
- High nitrogen fixation for following crops
- Australian bred for Australian conditions
- Improved disease & insect resistance
- Higher productivity

Blue Ace plants are moderately tall with leafy stems. With a winter activity rating of 9, plants have strong winter and spring growth with vigorous recovery from cutting or grazing.

Blue Ace is suited to dryland or irrigated lucerne growing areas and performs well in sites where disease susceptible varieties will not persist.

Being highly winter active, Blue Ace can be sown through the early winter to early spring period and is suitable for under sowing cereals or as a rotation crop.

### Icon Lucerne

Icon lucerne was developed by selection from old established lucerne stands where high plant populations have survived over time. Plant selection was based on superior

forage yields, improved disease and pest tolerance.

Icon plants are moderately tall with leafy stems and a high leaf to stem ratio. With a winter activity rating of 6-7, plants have good winter, spring and summer growth, (where moisture is available), with vigorous recovery from cutting or grazing.

Icon is suited to dryland or irrigated lucerne growing areas and performs well in sites

Icon attributes:

- Good level of Winter activity (rating 6-7)
- Well suited for use in cropping rotations
- High nitrogen fixation for following crops
- Improved disease & insect resistance
- Higher productivity
- Australian bred for Australian conditions

where disease susceptible varieties will not persist.

Being winter active, Icon can be sown through the early winter to early spring period and is suitable for under sowing cereals or as a rotation crop.

#### ESTABLISHMENT TIPS

- Choose a paddock 12 months prior to sowing lucerne which is free draining and do a soil test. Apply lime if pH is below 5.0 (CaCl2)
- Plan for weed and pest control in year prior to sowing e.g. crop paddock prior to sowing lucerne.
- Area sown should be sprayed for insects e.g. bare earth like canola
- Lucerne seed should be inoculated with group AL at the time of sowing
- After sowing light roll to preserve moisture if possible.

Recommended sowing rates: **Dryland:** 4 to 10 kgs/ha; **Irrigation:** 10 to 20 kgs/ha.

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	Spotted aphid	Blue aphid	Pea aphid	Phytophthora	Anthracnose
Blue Ace	HR	HR	R	R	LR

HR = Highly resistant; R = resistant; MR = moderate resistant; S = susceptible

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New Generation Lucernes

## BLUE ACE & ICON LUCERNE

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