

Part 4

Leaching With Rainfall and Monitoring

PREVIOUS articles in this series have looked at types of salt, measuring salinity and movement of salt into and out of the crop root zone. In this article, ANTHONY FOX and JEANETTE CHAPMAN covers strategies for leaching with rainfall and ways of monitoring salt movement within soil.



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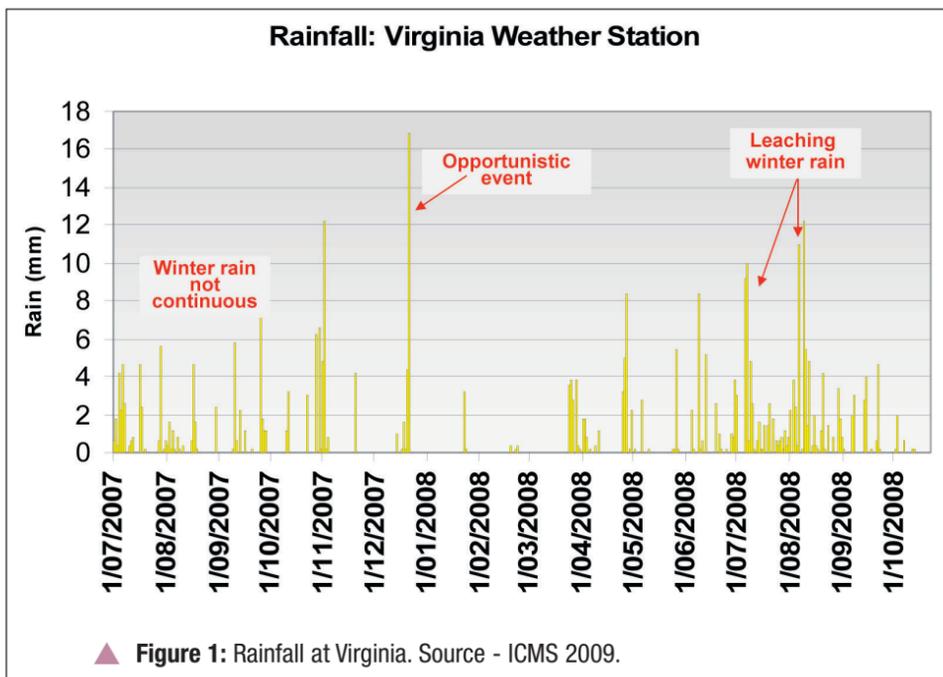
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RAINFALL is liquid gold as far as salinity management is concerned. It may occur as a single, larger event or series of smaller events over several days.

Making the most of an opportunity when it presents itself is essential.

Dominant rainfall occurs over a series of weeks or months – during winter in southern parts of Australia, and summer along the upper eastern coast and tropical areas.

But rainfall is not always predictable, as can be seen in **Figure 1**.



HORTEX
The Alliance for Sustainable Horticulture

The HortEx Alliance builds partnerships between private enterprise, government and grower associations for skills development in production, business management and marketing.

Leaching salt

SOIL must be at its full point to sustain leaching.

During winter of 2007, long, dry periods separated rainfall events.

Priming the soil by applying irrigation was necessary to ensure that subsequent rainfall events promoted leaching.

By contrast, continuous winter rainfall during winter 2008 was more effective in leaching salt.

The benefit of leaching under dominant rainfall will last until regular irrigation begins due to higher water salinity, or as higher crop demand for water reduces drainage volumes.

Annual vegetable cropping cycles can be grown entirely under rain-fed conditions and can fully benefit from the reduction in root zone salinity.

Perennial crops potentially have a rain-fed season followed and an irrigated season.

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POLYMER INNOVATIONS
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Pollies broach carbon tax issue

By ASHLEY WALMSLEY

CARBON, not carrots, became a theme throughout the AUSVEG National Convention in Brisbane this week.

Various views from both sides of politics were shared at different times, providing delegates with plenty to mull over as to how the proposed Carbon Tax could affect them.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Joe Ludwig was the guest speaker at the AUSVEG *National Awards of Excellence* where he took the opportunity to not only praise the horticulture industry for its \$3.1 billion contribution to the economy, but also to sell the “action on climate change” message.

Mr Ludwig said the proposed carbon price mechanism to be introduced from July 1, 2012 would assist households, support jobs in the most affected industries and encourage the transition to the clean energy future.

“More than 50pc of the carbon price revenue will be used to assist households,” he said. Millions of householders will, as a consequence, be better off under the carbon price and that assistance will be permanent. He was careful to point out that agricultural emissions would be excluded, but said there would be opportunities for the sector to participate in abatement activities right across the board “in order to reduce the effects of climate change and promote both productivity and outcomes in efficiency within the industry”.

“The government will provide significant support to landholders to ensure they are aware of the details of this package,” he said.

Nationals Senator Ron Boswell, who also attended the awards dinner, provided

an opposing view of the scheme, announcing an honorary bravery award to Mr Ludwig for “selling a carbon tax to vegetable growers”.

Federal Opposition leader Tony Abbott met growers and wholesalers during the convention, and labelled the scheme simply as a bad tax.

“The carbon tax will increase your power bills by 25 per cent and that’s just for starters,” Mr Abbott said. “This is a bad tax. It’s a bad tax based on a lie and the only way to stop this bad tax is to support people like me, like John Cobb and Campbell Newman.”

“We are here to protect the people of Australia from a bad tax that will damage their cost of living and destroy our jobs and we hear a lot of talk from the government about compensation.”

Nationals Senator Barnaby Joyce also made the most of his invitation as keynote speaker at the Convention by attacking the carbon pricing scheme.

“Carbon sequestration to improve the productivity of land is a good idea on multiple fronts because it allows us to produce more and to feed more,” he said.

“But carbon sequestration policies that inspire a forest, where once there was prime agricultural land producing food, are of little use to humanity unless we envisage evolving into a higher form of termite.”

With tongue in cheek, he made light of the notion that Canberra decision-makers could change the temperature of the world, while warning growers that despite agricultural emissions being excluded, negative effects would be felt.

“You’re going to be part of it. Every time you see that little red light on the clock radio, reminding you it’s time to get out of bed. That little red light reminds you that Big Red Julia has been taxing you through the night,” he said.