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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Sunflowers a Sound Option This Spring, But Stored Subsoil Moisture Critical**

With a larger than average area expected to be sown to summer crops this year, sunflowers may be a sound option for farmers to help spread their risks, according to HSR Seeds Quirindi based Sunflower Business Manager Graeme Tooth

“Most likely there will be a huge area sown to grain sorghum this season “said Graeme.” Any grower that is fortunate enough to have good subsoil moisture should consider sunflowers as a viable option on the next decent planting rains. “

Being a tap rooted plant sunflowers can draw deep down on stored moisture, and if they can be planted into 1 metre of sub soil moisture, they have an excellent chance of achieving a significant economic yield. Combined with good rain around budding time, pre flowering, a good start will virtually guarantee a decent crop.

“Growers have the choice between both polyunsaturated or monounsaturated sunflowers which means even further spreading of risk by choosing varieties that can capitalize on either the poly or mono prices,” said Graeme.

Sunflower prices are very attractive at the moment, and apart from spreading farmer’s risks, they also are very competitive on a dollar return Gross Margin per Hectare basis compared to grain sorghum. Mono contracts are particularly lucrative, and most monos are being sought for the early plant. Sunflowers can be planted much earlier than sorghum, and are usually the first summer crops sown, able to be planted at 810 degrees soil temperature.

Another real benefit, according to Graeme, is that the sunflower crop no longer draws on any soil moisture once it reaches physiological maturity –the crop simply dies off and dries down naturally. In a time when managing soil moisture is becoming even more important, this is a key benefit for sustainable paddock moisture management.

Many sorghum crops are sprayed out at physiological maturity, because of the extra soil moisture they continue to draw upon, until they have been killed either by herbicide, or ploughed out. “Our newest monounsaturated sunflower Sunoleic 6, has been bred to provide a very quick dry down once they reach physiological maturity”, said Graeme. “This means they are through to harvest up to four weeks quicker in some cases than other varieties, which means an even greater opportunity for farmers to conserve their valuable soil moisture.

Sunoleic 06 also has an ability to “flex” its maturity, according to planting date and performs best on lower sowing rates – about 20,000 to 30,000 plants per hectare established” HSR Seeds are now marketing both Sunoleic 06 and` Advantage sunflowers as part of their continuing expansion into the Australian summer crop seed industry.

For more information on growing spring planted sunflowers, growers can contact (NSW) [Graeme Tooth](#) on 0427 690 014  
or



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