

Soil Wetting Agents



The benefits of soil wetters seem best expressed when combined with effective water harvesting furrows

Key points:

- Modern soil wetters applied over the press wheel furrow surface or within the seed zone can help improve wetting uniformity and water retention within the seed zone to boost early crop emergence in water repellent sands.
- Research in South Australia suggests that water-harvesting furrows remaining functional well into the season directly contribute to the effectiveness of soil wetters.
- While plant establishment gains at 5 weeks after sowing is a good indicator of soil wetter effectiveness and of significant grain yield impact, benefits can also develop later and contribute to some yield gains under favourable press wheel furrow conditions.
- Soil wetters should be applied selectively in paddock zones that are water repellent, at a typical cost varying between \$10-25/ treated ha.
- The use of soil wetters may help boost the benefits of edge row sowing or deeper moisture lifting.
- Evaluation of soil wetters conducted with farm-scale seeders suggests crop responses are most significant in low decile growing season rainfalls and under prominent press wheel furrow shapes.

Further information:

GRDC factsheet:

<https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/factsheets/2022/soil-wetter-national>

