Getting Next Season's Seed Right

By Helen Lethlean, Senior Agronomist, FarmCo

The seed you keep for the coming season is the most valuable seed on the farm. It has the potential to determine germination and early vigour in next year's crop.

Sound establishment in those early stages helps set up yield potential right through to the end of the season.

Factors affecting grain quality

Nutrition
Harvest seed from the most fertile part of the paddock.

Frost
Frost can leave grain distorted and shrivelled.

Rain and humidity at harvest
Wet harvest conditions can lead to sprouting and low falling numbers, which can reduce seed quality. A germination and vigour test is the best way to check.

Dry conditions
Drought can leave you with high screenings and shrivelled grain.

Disease
Avoid diseased areas, as disease can often carry over into the following crop.

Storage
Keep seed in clean, cool, dry, insect-free conditions and monitor it regularly.

Other considerations

Varietal purity. Plan seed paddocks into future rotations with purity in mind.

Weed-free seed. Keep seed as clean as possible. Weed seeds sown with the crop can spread weeds, and potentially herbicide resistance, across the rest of your farm.

The bottom line

Seed that has been harvested from the right part of the paddock, stored properly and tested before sowing gives next year's crop the best possible start, and that early advantage carries through to yield at harvest. Worth the effort.

For germination and vigour testing or advice on seed selection, contact Helen or the FarmCo agronomy team.