
FOREWORD

On behalf of the Agronomy Society of New Zealand I would like to welcome you to this symposium. As you can see from your programme we have been able to assemble a list of capable speakers who I am sure will present to you an interesting and informed summary of various aspects of pea production and marketing.

With us today is Mr G.P. Gent who is Director of the Processors and Growers Research Organisation in England. I extend a special welcome to him and look forward to his address, particularly his comments about the effects of increased pea production in Europe and how this experience might relate to the New Zealand growing and marketing scene.

Peas in New Zealand are a relatively minor cash crop compared with cereals, but are grown over a wide area extending from Southland to Hawkes Bay. Since the early 1970s the area grown each season has been about 33,000 ha, with about one third garden peas for processing and the balance field peas of several types. Total annual production is of the order of 65,000 t with average yields of all cultivars only 3 t/ha. These figures indicate that there is potential not only for higher total production but also higher yields.

Peas fit into intensive cereal rotations well as they provide a break crop for the major diseases affecting particularly wheat and barley. Perhaps too many producers see peas in this role of being supplementary to cereals and not always as a high return crop in their own right. With greater emphasis today on productivity and net return/ha, the value of management inputs assumes much greater importance. Peas have their special requirements and are very sensitive to factors such as weed competition, moisture levels, rotation lengths, diseases etc. The average yield of 3 t/ha is not high as the better crops producing double this indicate. There is opportunity for higher yields and profitability which no doubt the speakers today will discuss.

Research into pea production is at a low level with most effort going into breeding and cultivar evaluation. Other management considerations are largely ignored probably because of the small size of the industry. If advances in pea production are to be achieved, investment in future research is necessary and would very likely give a good return on money invested. The problem in times of economic downturn in the farming sector is, who is going to provide the money?

The marketing of the crop is vitally important, particularly as production increases will have to be exported. I am pleased to see that this topic will be discussed.

We are indebted to Bill Jermyn who has had the responsibility for arranging this symposium and on behalf of the organisers our thanks go to him for his efforts.

Once again I would like to welcome you here today. If you only gain one new idea I believe your attendance will have been worthwhile.

W.H. Risk
President
September 1985