

## Breakthrough broadacre herbicide coming soon

A new herbicide from FMC is under review by the APVMA and has been attracting attention at field days throughout Australia in recent months.

Overwatch SC herbicide is anticipated for commercial release in 2021 and is expected to be a new pre-emergent option to control annual ryegrass and a wide range of other weeds. Tests show that the ability of the chemistry to work in wheat, barley and canola may also provide flexibility with crop choice, replants and rotations.

FMC herbicide portfolio manager **Hugh Palmer** said feedback has been very positive from farmers and agronomists who have seen Overwatch SC in trials.

“When registered, this product is expected to be available for use in several crops and, as a Group Q (proposed) molecule, it will be very different from what is currently available in the broadacre herbicide market,” he said.

“The mode of action means it will control annual ryegrass and herbicide-resistant biotypes. This will provide a new option in many parts of Australia where some current herbicides are losing their effectiveness.

“By utilising Overwatch SC herbicide in the rotation, trial results are confirming that this molecule effectively controls resistant weed types and will potentially extend the life of other herbicide options.

“One of the unique features of the herbicide can be seen in the way the ryegrass reacts to the chemical. It turns a striking shade of magenta, which is noticeable through the rows, before turning white and eventually



**Hugh Palmer inspects a wheat trial at Temora where Overwatch SC herbicide demonstrated excellent control of ryegrass.**

disappearing. Overwatch SC has demonstrated long-lasting residual control, so we have seen its effectiveness on later germinating weeds.”

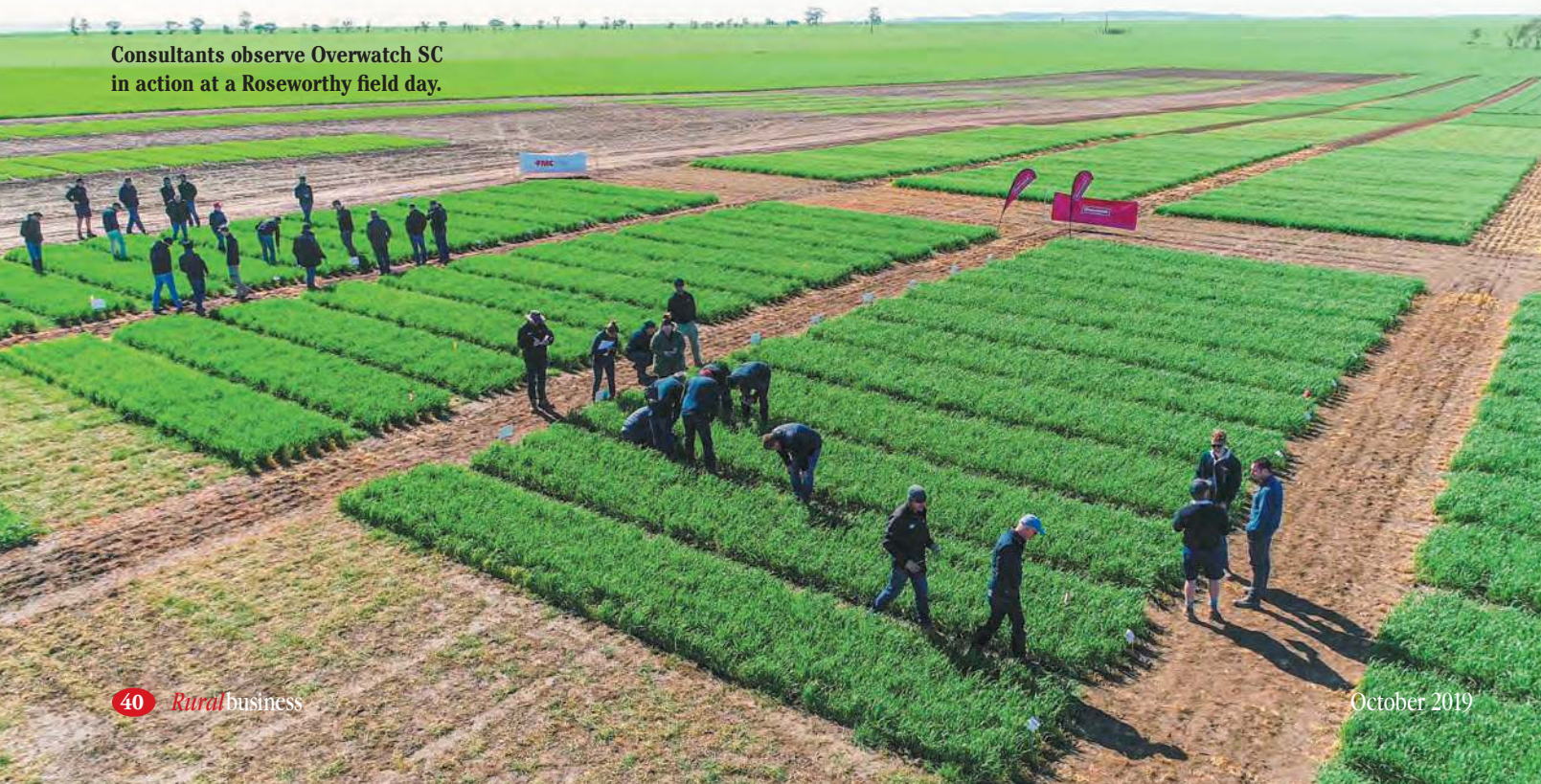
The new herbicide will be applied as an IBS (incorporated by sowing) treatment and has demonstrated excellent performance across a wide range of locations and conditions this season and in trials over several years.

Mr Palmer said Overwatch SC is proving to be a robust herbicide which has controlled weeds in both wet and dry conditions and in trials with high stubble loads.

“Parts of Victoria, for instance, have had large amounts of rainfall while other areas such as NSW have struggled,” he said. “In all cases, trials with Overwatch SC herbicide have shown excellent efficacy.”

The 2019 field and demonstration trials compare the performance of Overwatch SC to a wide range of current herbicide options as well as untreated plots.

**Consultants observe Overwatch SC in action at a Roseworthy field day.**





“There are some sites with very high ryegrass pressure,” Mr Palmer said. “The untreated sections resemble a golf course with the grasses coming through. We are happy to report Overwatch SC has been very effective.”

He explained that while ryegrass is the major weed being targeted with this chemistry, agronomists have also been excited by the range of region-specific weeds that Overwatch SC appears to control.

“Weeds such as wild oats, charlock and wireweed are expected to be on the label pending approval, and we continue to see good control of other species,” he said. “Work will continue to identify and evaluate other weeds to be added to the label going forward.”

Mr Palmer said the growers and agronomists should be aware that there could be instances of crop discolouration when Overwatch SC herbicide is used.

“Concentrated doses of herbicide have been shown to cause a lightening of the leaf area in the time after emergence,” he said. “The crops in our trials have continued to grow through this and within a few weeks they returned to normal and have shown no lasting effect on growth or yield.”



**Overwatch SC briefly turns ryegrass a striking magenta colour.**

Overwatch SC herbicide is currently pending approval by the APVMA. Registration is anticipated in 2020 with the full launch and good volumes of product in 2021.

“There are numerous trial sites throughout Australia this season, with additional sites planned in 2020,” Mr Palmer said. “I would encourage agronomists and growers to have a look at the performance of this unique herbicide and see how suited it will be for current farming practices.”

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