

# DISPATCH FROM ... WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This issue, our dispatch comes from PotatoLink regional rep Rachel Lancaster in Western Australia.

## EVENTS

In August the PotatoLink team held an event in Jindong WA for local growers. The event commenced with presentations in the Kaloorup Fire Shed, where nearly 30 participants heard from a range of speakers including Rachel Lancaster (EATS and PotatoLink's local rep in WA), Andrew Taylor (DPIRD), who gave a summary of potato diseases, and an update on biosecurity from Shakira Johnson, (AUSVEG).

Following the presentations, local potato growers Tom Payne and Keith Taylor discussed their experiences with cover cropping during a field walk on each of their properties. Keith has been utilising cover crops as part of his potato growing system for many years.

During the field walk, attendees looked at a mixed sward of pasture species that had regrown from previous years (photo top right) and a regrowth paddock of forage sorghum (photo bottom right).

At Tom Payne's property, a mixed cover cropping sward was growing that included tillage radish, oats, turnips and vetch. Tom has been incorporating cover cropping with his potato growing for the past three years and is starting to see the benefits, including better water infiltration into the soil, less water runoff and reduced erosion during heavy rainfall.

Both Keith and Tom noted that planning and preparation is key to cover cropping within the potato cropping system. It is important to plan at least 12 months ahead where



cover crops are to be planted, taking into consideration future potato crops.

Keith also noted that cover cropping combined with reduced tillage/controlled traffic practices has been beneficial on his property. He has observed many positive results from improving soil conditions through cover cropping including increasing organic matter in the soil, which is a practice that growers can influence.

## EXTRA RESOURCES



PotatoLink Webinar: Cover crops for fresh market and processing potatoes in Australia (<https://bitly.ws/WZBG>)

## CONTACT

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