

Plant genetics' role in challenging year

The cold, wet weather has affected both early and late-sown crops across the varietal spectrum. In 2011, most crops were showing tasselling by early July. By contrast this year, a high percentage had failed to reach this stage by the beginning of August.

Mike Corp, of Procam's Chemega, points out a similar growing season a decade ago would have been labelled a disaster in some parts of the country.

"Plant breeders have made rapid genetic progress over the past 10 years, and their efforts have paid off. Most of the newer varieties are better equipped to withstand stress caused by cold and wet conditions, and this has been a very challenging year.

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