



**Weekly Times (Vic)
Wednesday 30/12/2009**

Page: 49
Section: General News
Region: VIC, AU
Circulation: 71000
Type: Rural
Size: 300.00 sq.cms.



slice
slicemedia.com

press clip



Cooking oil: hot weather has fried Charlie Fairbairn-Calvert's oilseed crops this year.

Picture: MARK GRIFFIN

Move over canola, try manola

By PETER HEMPHILL

UNSEASONAL weather has taken a bit of the gloss off Charlie Fairbairn-Calvert's canola crops at Skipton.

First, it was a heatwave in early November, followed by a deluge of rain a week later.

Next, it was strong winds blowing windrowed canola around paddocks, shattering seed pods and spilling oilseed on to the ground.

Charlie said his canola crops

were yielding about 1.6 tonnes/ha.

"We were hoping for about two tonnes/ha but the wind has done a bit of damage," he said.

Charlie said it had been a "long, hard season".

"We had only received 200mm of rain up until the end of June," he said. "There was only a little rain at sowing.

"But the crops had just enough water to carry them through the season.

"We had a good, short spring

but then the hot week in November fried the crops.

"If we didn't have that hot weather, we would have had good crops."

Charlie uses neighbours Andy and James Gardiner to sow and harvest his crops.

They planted 130ha of canola, 70ha of monola, 250ha of bolac wheat and 250ha of gairdner barley.

He also runs about 5000 sheep, mostly Merinos and first-cross ewes.

Charlie said it was the first time he had grown monola.

The crop yielded about 1.8 tonnes/ha — about 25 per cent less than expected, but slightly more than his canola crops.

But with establishment costs and oil content payments about the same as canola, monola has provided a better option, courtesy of a \$45/tonne premium paid by Riverland Oilseeds.

The premium was enough to prompt Charlie to consider sowing monola again next season.