

PIONEER

A YATES FAMILY BUSINESS



CORN

2026-2027



All things considered

Thorough approach yields success for the Bellato family



Fourteen
high-performing
corn hybrids

Research is a
never-ending
story

The importance
of even
emergence



PIONEER
BRAND • SEEDS



It's a pleasure to share with you the Pioneer Corn Catalogue for the 2026-27 growing season, which contains details on our latest hybrid line-up as well as technical information on the importance of even emergence and an outline of how Pioneer corn hybrids are developed, trialled and brought to market in Australia. Thanks to David and Julie Bellato (page 4), Nathan Pate (page 22) and the Kahl family (page 32) for allowing us to share the stories behind their successful farming businesses.

The past growing season was challenging for many growers in southern New South Wales and northern Victoria, with a cool, wet start in some regions followed by multiple extreme heat events around flowering. Despite the environmental challenges, Pioneer's industry-leading genetics continued to perform, and there were some excellent yields, including an Australian record-breaking crop of Pioneer® brand P0937 grown by Dean Leslie at Arcadia, Victoria, which produced 23.78 t/ha.

In the north, the trend of early sowing to limit crop damage by fall armyworm (FAW) continued to be successful. When coupled with proactive scouting, timely insecticide control, and the wider range of FAW-control chemistry now available, early establishment resulted in many successful, high-yielding crops in both dryland and irrigated systems.

Last year, Pioneer Seeds celebrated 50 years since the company first began selling seed to Australian farmers. This year marks another significant milestone - the centennial anniversary of the Pioneer brand and its global business. This is a wonderful achievement only made possible by the generations of growers and those who supply and service them, who have supported the Pioneer brand and business over the years.

This season's Pioneer corn line-up includes 14 hybrids from 75 to 123 CRM. We are confident you will find the right product for your paddock in our comprehensive line-up.

On behalf of the Pioneer Seeds team, I extend our best wishes for a successful 2026-27 season. We appreciate your continued support and wish you the very best as you "Plant the 100th season" of Pioneer. If we can assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact your local Pioneer Seeds representative.

With warmest regards,

Ben Vercoe
Pioneer® Seeds Summer Crop Portfolio Manager



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PIONEER LONG LOOK

We strive to produce the best products on the market.

We deal honestly and fairly with customers, employees and business associates.

We vigorously market our products, but without misrepresentation.

We provide helpful management information to assist customers in making optimum profits from our products.



Growing more than corn in *Coleambally*



DAVID AND JULIE BELLATO,
COLEAMBALLY, NSW

Corn has played an important role in the Bellato family’s farming business for more than 30 years. Operating Greenline Farming across 1,000 hectares of irrigated country in the Coleambally Irrigation Area, David and Julie Bellato grow a diverse mix of crops including corn, popcorn, cotton, soybeans and winter cereals. It’s a system built on careful planning, sustainability and a commitment to creating value both on and beyond the farm.

Two hundred and fifty hectares are planted to corn, including popping corn, each season, with water availability playing a major role in determining the balance of crops.

“Our general rotation is mostly determined by water availability, especially for the soybeans” says David. “Since they’re planted in November–December, our earlier water allocation goes to corn and cotton, they get the first hit”.

The Bellatos have been growing Pioneer® corn hybrids for many years and have planted P1837 for the past four seasons, after previously growing other Pioneer hybrids. Targeting yields of 16 to 17 t/ha, their recent 2025-2026 crop returned 16.5 t/ha. Most of their grain is aimed at the human consumption market, although in recent seasons some has moved into stockfeed when pricing has been favourable.



Farm walk

- 250 ha corn annually (mix of grain + popping corn)
- Crop returned 16.5 t/ha in 2025-26 season
- PI837 grown past four seasons
- Strong focus on establishment as critical success factor

“Most people in this area grow Pioneer corn hybrids” David says. “I haven’t grown a competitor product for probably 15 years. I feel that Pioneer has probably got the better genetic lines, and they always seem to be introducing better yielding varieties every couple of years”.

Establishment is treated as one of the most critical parts of the process. Planting typically runs from the last week of September through to early October, with a focus on hitting the right window to avoid late harvest risk.

“We aim for that window, because if we go towards the end of October, then it won’t be harvested until the end of April, early May” David explains. “Around here, the weather can turn at that time of year, and once it gets wet, it stays wet, so sowing timing is really important”.

Crop nutrition and irrigation are managed with the same discipline. Ahead of planting, the Bellatos apply 150 kg/ha of Granulock and 300 kg/ha of urea, with a further 500 kg/ha of urea applied through the season, partly through the

water and partly side-dressed. Their corn is grown on a bankless irrigation system, using around 10 megalitres per hectare of irrigation water in a district that averages about 400 mm of rainfall annually. In the previous season, growing-season rainfall was only about 60 to 80 mm, making irrigation timing even more important. Moisture probes set at 60 cm help guide decisions, but David still believes there is no substitute for looking at the crop yourself.

“I haven’t grown a competitor product for probably 15 years. I feel that Pioneer has probably got the better genetic lines, and they always seem to be introducing better yielding varieties every couple of years”

“It’s important to drive around the crops and pay attention to what they need, without relying solely on the technology” says David. “You don’t want to stress the crop out, if you get in two or three days late with irrigation, you can lose a few tonnes per hectare pretty quickly”.

Weed and pest control are managed through a combination of chemistry and timely management. A pre-emergent herbicide program is often supported by row cultivation, while Zeal and Vantacor

are typically applied at flowering for mite and heliothis protection.

“We’ll use a pre-emergent most of the time. It seems to do a pretty good job when we follow up with inter-row cultivation with a side-dressing of urea six weeks after planting, at the start of November” David says.

Harvest usually begins in early April. David targets a grain moisture of 13.5 per cent so it can be delivered under the 14 per cent threshold. The family has about

3,000 tonnes of on-farm storage, which gives them the ability to hold grain and market it across a longer period.

Corn plays an important strategic role in the wider business. It is used as a disease break in the cotton system, helps protect soil health and gives the family another way to manage risk across seasons and markets. With resistant ryegrass starting to emerge as an issue, rotating crops also allows them to use different chemistry and tackle weed problems from more than one angle.



The Bellatos try to rotate cotton every three to four years, and David says that diversity strengthens the whole farming system. It also supports a busy annual cycle, where summer crop country is planted back to a winter cereal after harvest and prepared again for the following season.

Like many successful family farms, the Bellato operation extends well beyond the farm gate. David and Julie farm with the support of their five children, Jessica, Haylee, Carissa, Oscar and Ashlee, with the next generation already contributing in different ways. Oscar has an engineering business in town and



has also returned to help on the farm along with Ashlee, while the others are building careers and businesses that remain closely tied to regional life, from working with the Royal Flying Doctors Service to owning and operating the local Coleambally hardware store.

Julie has also created a strong community presence through Muddy Duck Tapas & Events, a social enterprise she established in an empty main street café. What began as a renovation project has grown into a creative community hub, local employer and place for people to meet, work and connect.

“Our whole theme is built around paddock-to-plate, showcasing locally grown grains in the area, like corn, popping corn, soybeans, wheat and barley, helping both locals and visitors better understand the end use of the region’s produce” says Julie.

That combination of farming success and community leadership has not gone unnoticed by their peers over the years. Following on from Julie’s early career achievement of Young Australian of the Year in Sustainable Regional Development, David was more recently recognised as Cotton Grower of the Year in 2024, reflecting the same drive and discipline that underpins the family’s corn program. In the paddock and in town, the Bellatos are focused on building something that lasts, a productive farming business, a strong family operation and a thriving local community. In Coleambally, corn is an important part of that story.



Corn research *drives yields*

Years of breeding, research, testing and data analysis come together each season to bring Australian growers proven, high-yielding Pioneer corn hybrid hybrids that perform in their paddocks.

The hybrid advancement process begins long before hybrids become commercially available. It begins with Pioneer corn breeders in Australia and around the world, and progresses to the local research team in commercially releasing a limited number of new hybrids.



Pioneer Summer Crop Portfolio Manager Ben Vercoe.

Pioneer's global breeding process

Pioneer has built one of the largest global corn genetics libraries in the world. The company can trace the genetics of each of hybrid back to the beginning of the Pioneer brand almost 100 years ago. Impeccable pedigree records allow breeders to quickly select parent lines with the greatest potential to address agronomic challenges and increase yield and quality.

Australian breeding program

The Australian corn breeding program focuses on developing hybrids that will thrive in Australia's unique growing environment.

Every corn hybrid is produced from two inbreds which become the male and female lines for the seed production process. Corn Breeder James McLean starts the process by using predictive breeding tools to simulate and predict the best performing genetic combinations. Promising inbreds are then sourced from Pioneer breeding stations around the world.

Inbred multiplication

Australia's strict biosecurity laws mean that corn seed imported into the country from anywhere other than New Zealand must be grown in a glasshouse under quarantine conditions. Inbred lines are inspected by an authorised person three times throughout the growing season, and the harvested seed is also inspected.

After release from quarantine, the inbred lines are grown in winter and summer nurseries to multiply seed volume.

Hybrid test crosses and research trials

Once there is sufficient seed, male and female inbreds are crossed to create new hybrids. These "test crosses" are planted in intensively monitored research trials where they are rigorously evaluated for a comprehensive range of agronomic traits including yield, maturity, grain quality and more. Hybrids remain in research trials for up to four years. While several hundred new hybrids enter the testing program each season, typically less than 10 make the grade to be promoted to the Seed Technology Research In Key Environments (STRIKE) trial program.

New Zealand hybrids

Corn growing regions through southern Australia utilise similar comparative relative maturity (CRM) hybrids to those grown by New Zealand grain producers. For the past 50 years Genetic Technologies (also a Yates family-owned business) have been producing and distributing Pioneer products in New Zealand. Each season in New Zealand around 100 hybrids are trialled in 150 grain trials throughout key grain growing districts to identify high-yielding, top-quality grain hybrids.



Pioneer hybrid seed sold in New Zealand is produced there and can be imported directly into Australia without the need for quarantine. This is the main source of short-maturity germplasm for the Australian STRIKE trialling program.

STRIKE trial program

Each season the Australian research team plants and harvests around 30 grain and silage STRIKE trials across the key corn growing regions in Australia to help identify higher yielding corn hybrids. Trials include a mix of commercial and pre-commercial hybrids including experimental hybrids from the Australian corn breeding program and shorter maturity (below 105 CRM) hybrids sourced from New Zealand.

STRIKE trials are planted within commercial corn crops using a precision research planter. Each trial has a total of three replicates and utilises diagonal check hybrids to help correct for environmental variation across the trial site. The research team monitor STRIKE trials throughout the growing season and plots are scored for a wide range of agronomic traits. Grain STRIKE trials are harvested using a research combine and samples are collected for grain quality analysis.

Each season, multi-year hybrid performance information collected from the STRIKE trials is collated and statistically analysed using customised statistical analysis software.

Pioneer Summer Crop Portfolio Manager Ben Vercoe believes that the addition of the STRIKE trial program has been instrumental in driving yield gains of Pioneer corn hybrids in Australia.

“The STRIKE trials have given us the ability to test a range of hybrids in a number of different locations with high accuracy” says Ben. “From these trials we are gathering statistically robust data which allows us to identify and bring to market the highest yielding hybrids with strong trait packages and to understand their strengths and weaknesses so we can position the right product in the right paddock”.

James McLean
Pioneer® Seeds Corn Breeder

According to James

Corn Breeder James McLean has been part of Pioneer Seeds Australian breeding effort for the past seven years. Previously, he worked as a Senior Field Technician with the University of Queensland.

“We start with hundreds of Pioneer inbreds sourced from around the globe and ultimately end up with a handful of high performing new hybrids which have been specifically selected for Australian growing conditions” says James. “It’s an exciting process to be involved in, and I enjoy the fact that every piece of data we collect in the field can be used to help us make the best product advancement decisions”.

“While yield and grain quality are important, we are also looking for hybrids which deliver the full suite of agronomic traits including standability, disease resistance and late season plant health. The aim is always to provide hybrids that will deliver enhanced reliability and profitability to growers”

RIGHT The Pioneer Seeds research team harvesting a STRIKE trial



The Pioneer Seeds research combine harvests a STRIKE trial at Murrumbidgee, NSW.

Product knowledge plots

Hybrids are tested for three years in the STRIKE program. In their final year the handful of grain and silage hybrids that possess promising agronomic, yield and quality characteristics are added to the product knowledge plot (PKP) stage of testing. Here they are planted in strips alongside commercially available hybrids in growers' paddocks.

"The PKP's are a great way for local growers, agronomists and resellers to see the latest Pioneer genetics in their local environment" says Ben.

Commercial release

The final stage of the process is commercial release which typically occurs about eight years after the initial test crosses were made. While the testing process starts with hundreds of new hybrids, each year only a select few make it into the Pioneer bag and into the hands of Australian growers.

Why does Pioneer Seeds invest so much into its local hybrid trialling program? Ben says there are two main reasons:

"Firstly, even though the Australian corn market

is small on a global scale, we use a variety of crop management practices to grow a wide range of hybrid maturities and for a range of end uses. Growers plant corn across an array of latitudes, soil types, and climatic conditions. A hybrid which performs well in an irrigated paddock may not be suitable for growing under dryland conditions on another farm. We need a comprehensive trialling program to test hybrids under diverse growing conditions to be sure of their relative performance".

"Secondly, our corn growing seasons can be extremely variable. We can't predict what the weather conditions might be during the next growing season but by planting trials at many locations over several years, we can be sure our hybrids have been tested under a wide range of conditions".

If you would like to visit one of the STRIKE trials or PKPs in your region, contact your local Pioneer Territory Sales Manager (TSM) or Farm Services Consultant (FSC). See the back cover for contact details.



Pioneer Territory Sales Manager Tim Lovell inspecting a corn crop.

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Corn hybrids

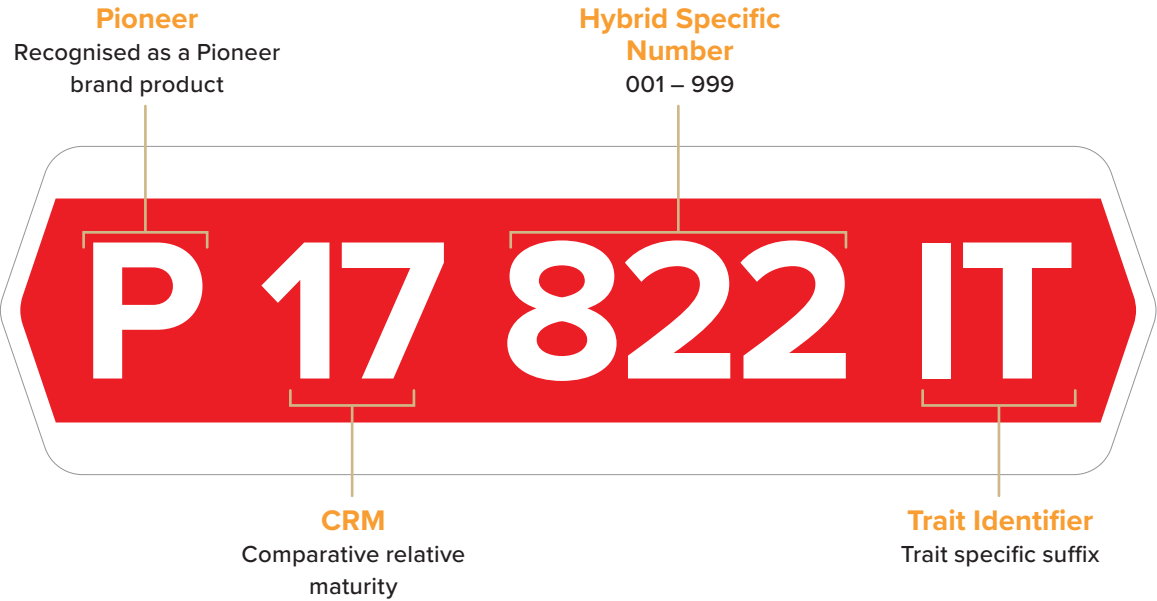
Pioneer has a long heritage as an industry leader – from 100 years of hybrid innovation to a world-class germplasm library, advanced conventional breeding technologies and an extensive global research program. Pioneer® brand corn hybrids are for those growers who refuse to settle for anything less than a great yield of high-quality grain.

Pioneer’s elite genetics are tested in our industry-leading Australian Seed Technology Research In Key Environments (STRIKE) corn trialling program, which encompasses all the key corn grain growing regions. This local trialling allows us to identify superior performers and confidently position each hybrid in the environments where it will deliver the best results.

Whether you’re growing corn in Kununurra, Tasmania or anywhere in between, we are confident you will find the right product for your paddock amongst this season’s outstanding Pioneer hybrid line-up.

What’s in a name?

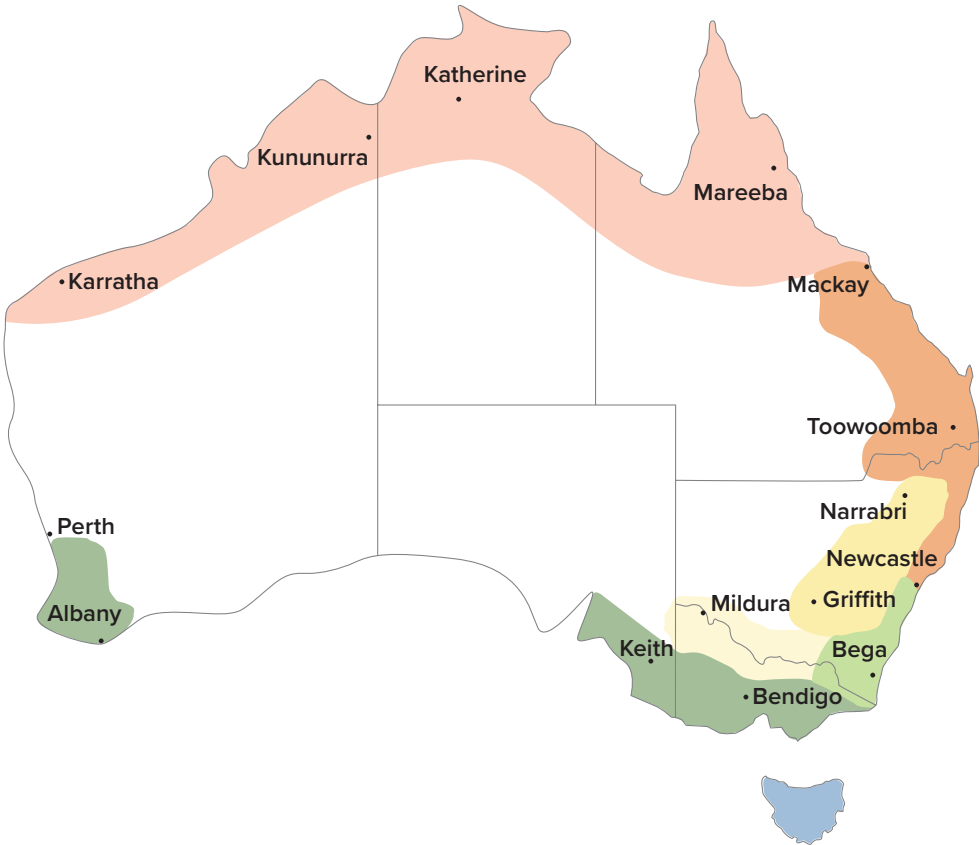
Pioneer’s naming system is designed to help growers instantly recognise the comparative relative maturity (CRM) and added traits of a corn hybrid.



CRM: Comparative relative maturity. For products over 100 CRM, only the last two digits are used (P17822 IT = 117 CRM).
Trait identifier: BMR = Brown mid-rib, IT = Imidazolinone tolerant, W = White

Choosing the right Pioneer hybrid for your farm

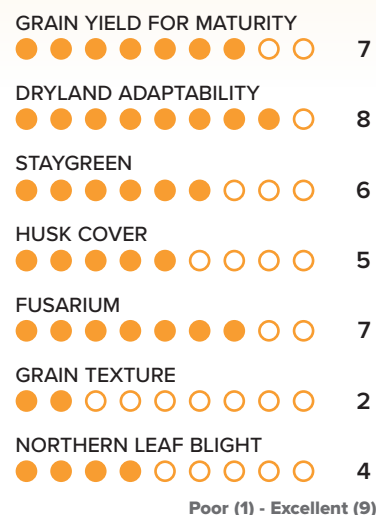
The corn-growing region map is a simple tool to help growers quickly select hybrids best suited to their growing regions. For further advice on the best Pioneer hybrid for your paddock, talk to your local Pioneer representative, agronomist or reseller.



- Region 1** Northern Australia including, North QLD, Northern Territory and Northern WA
- Region 2** Central QLD, Wide Bay & Burnett, Darling Downs, Western Downs, Border Rivers, South-East QLD and North Coast NSW
- Region 3** Northern NSW, Liverpool Plains, Central West NSW and Riverina
- Region 4** Northern VIC and Southern NSW
- Region 5** Hunter Valley, Sydney Basin, Central and South Coast NSW
- Region 6** Gippsland, Western Districts of VIC, South-East South Australia and Southern WA
- Region 7** Tasmania



PIONEER
BRAND · SEEDS
P8500
CRM 85

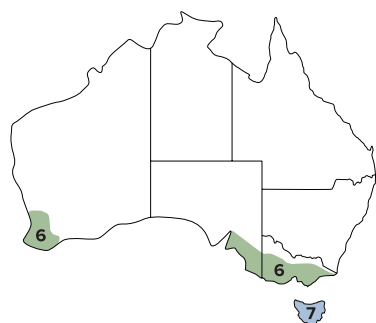


Yield leader with looks to match.

Great yield potential with a good all-round agronomic package.

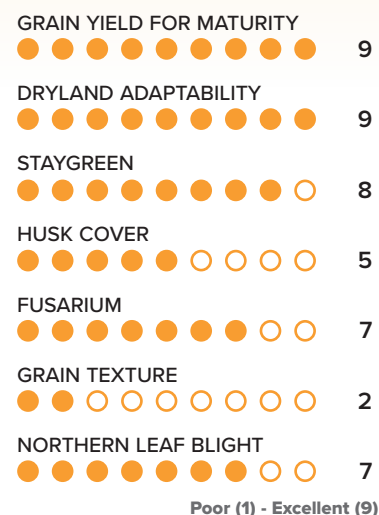
- Tall, robust hybrid and an industry leader for its maturity.
- Solid drought tolerance provides reliability in double-cropping programs.
- Moderate husk cover and strong Fusarium resistance protects grain as it fills and matures.

Very popular hybrid across Gippsland, Western Districts and Tasmania, with perfect maturity and consistent performance.



☐ Recommended for me

PIONEER
BRAND · SEEDS
P92575
CRM 92

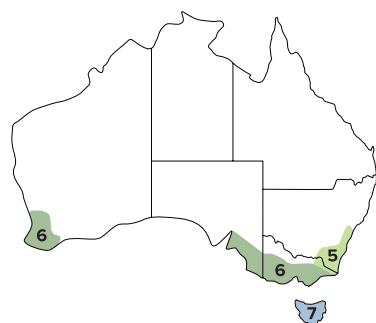


Solid, balanced hybrid with top-of-the-line foliar health.

Plant where Northern Leaf Blight, standability and drought tolerance are seasonal concerns.

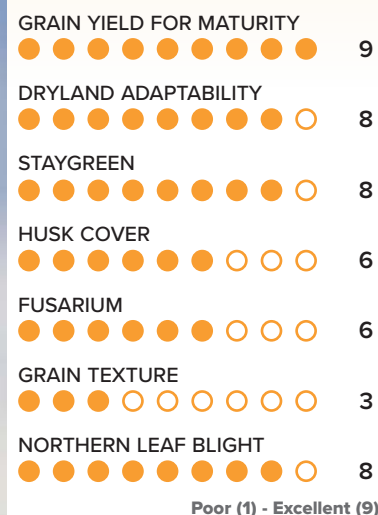
- Moderately tall with strong agronomics, superior root and stalk strength.
- Combines excellent drought tolerance, staygreen, to protect grain yield and keep the crop standing.
- Exceptional grain yield potential in a short season, well adapted to southern growing regions or a late sown double crop option.

First choice in southern Victoria, where plant health and yield are a priority.



☐ Recommended for me

PIONEER
BRAND · SEEDS
P9978
CRM 99

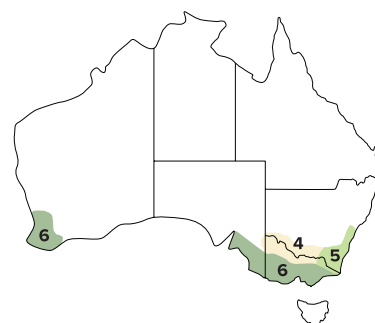


Very productive. Very stable. Very defensive.

P9978 sets the new standard for sub-100 CRM performance in grain yield.

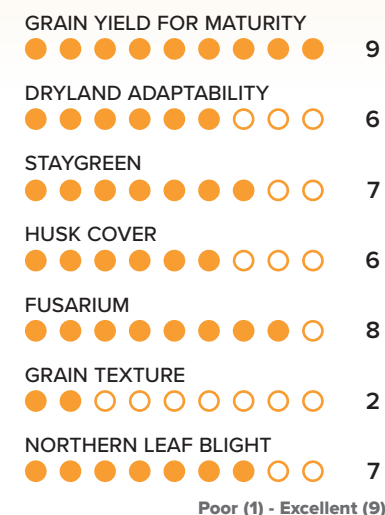
- A moderately tall plant with low ear placement, strong root strength, superior drought tolerance, stay green and Northern Leaf Blight resistance.
- Delivers exceptional grain yield in this maturity.
- Perfect double crop option, adapted to a wide sowing window and great agronomics and plant health.

All growers will reap the rewards of excellent defensive traits, standability, and yield reliability across seasons.



☐ Recommended for me

PIONEER
BRAND · SEEDS
P0937
CRM 109

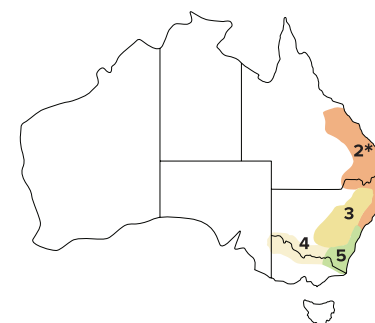


Next generation hybrid in a great maturity.

A modern plant type with erect leaves, low ear placement, notable foliar health and great standability.

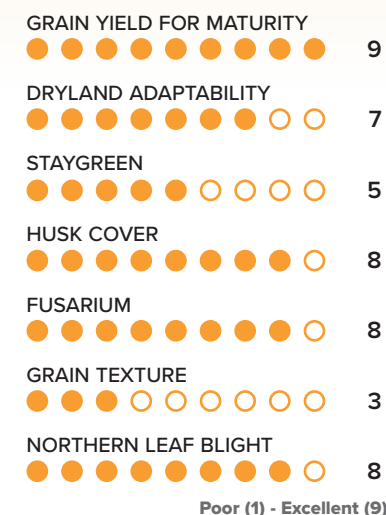
- Holds the Australian grain yield record of over 23t/ha.
- Widely adapted, stable yet high grain yielding hybrid.
- Excellent early vigour and emergence when sown early in cooler conditions

P0937 is a reliable performer in a wide range of environments, sow with confidence and reap the rewards.



☐ Recommended for me

NEW
PIONEER
BRAND · SEEDS
P13063 IT
CRM 113

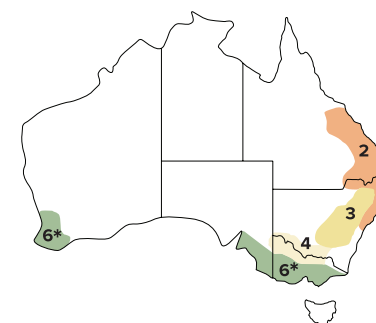


Newest genetics packed with yield, agronomics and herbicide tolerance.

Moderately tall hybrid with excellent standability.

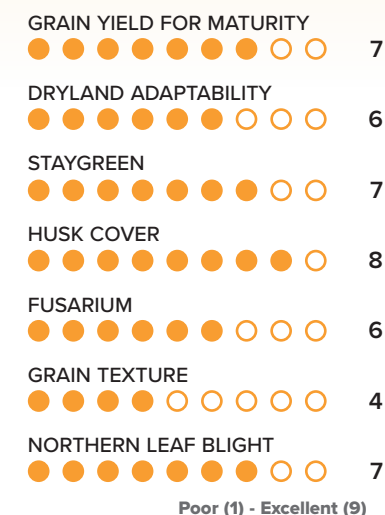
- Well-suited to most environments with excellent yield for maturity and well-rounded agronomics.
- Moderate staygreen helps get to harvest quickly in southern environments with a shorter season.
- Imidazolinone herbicide tolerance for in-crop management of summer grasses.

P13063 IT is a great mid-maturing option for growers chasing reliability and flexibility.



☐ Recommended for me

PIONEER
BRAND · SEEDS
P1477W
CRM 114

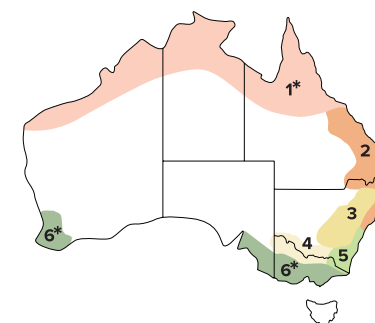


Market leader for white grain.

High performing hybrid, well suited to irrigation and delivers a quality grain.

- Superior grain quality, Australian standard for white grain.
- Compact hybrid with great root and stalk strength.
- Reliable Northern Leaf Blight resistance.

P1477W services the white grain market and is a great choice under irrigation.



☐ Recommended for me

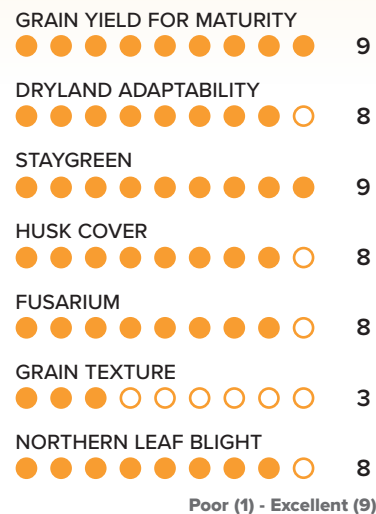


NEW



P15744 IT

CRM 115

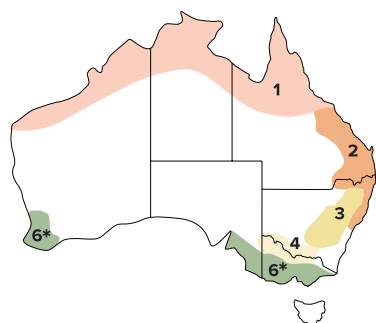


Compact hybrid with top-end yield potential.

Excellent drought tolerance drives high performance in dryland and irrigated systems.

- Impressive grain yield for maturity across environments.
- High Northern Leaf Blight resistance with superior root and stalk strength.
- Strong husk cover protects the developing cob, and great stay green protects yield in drought stress situations
- Imidazolinone herbicide tolerance provides options for in-crop grass weed control.

P15744 IT is an excellent mid-maturity option for grain producers.



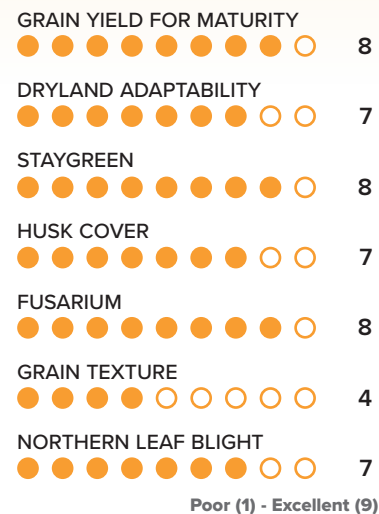
☐ Recommended for me

NEW



P1729

CRM 117

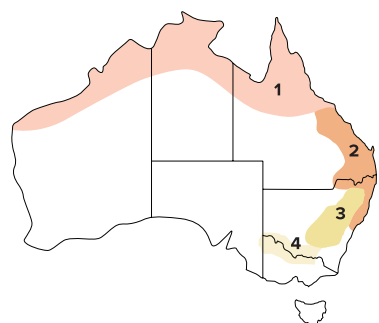


Tall all-rounder that won't disappoint.

Well-balanced, full-season hybrid that delivers consistent, reliable yields with excellent agronomics.

- Excellent drought tolerance and standability – foliar health drives top grain yields for its maturity.
- Top-end performance in grain markets from northern Victoria to northern QLD, NT & the Ord.
- Processing market grain quality gives the most grain marketing opportunities

Plant alongside **P1837** for processing markets.



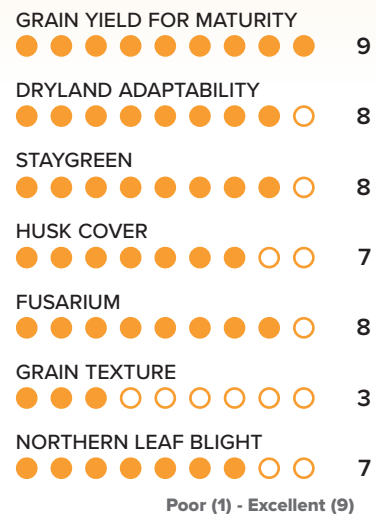
☐ Recommended for me

NEW



P17822 IT

CRM 117

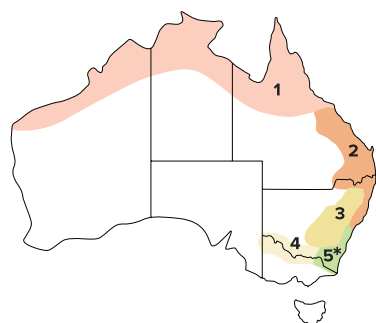


High-yielding, full-maturity heavyweight.

Exceptional performance, breaking grain yield barriers.

- Tall plant with excellent root and stalk strength, impressive stay green and solid resistance to Northern Leaf Blight, all combining to protect and enhance yield potential.
- Market leading grain yield option where the season length supports the maturity.
- Imidazolinone herbicide tolerance adds in-crop flexibility to paddock selection and rotations.

Outstanding new option to plant alongside **P15744 IT**, **P1729** or **P1837** depending on marketing and maturity requirements.

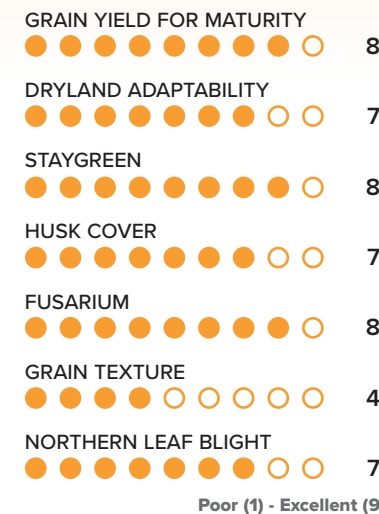


☐ Recommended for me



P1837

CRM 118



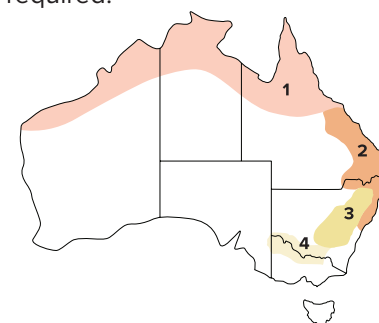
Defensive, reliable, full-season competitor.

Superior standability and solid resistance to Northern Leaf Blight and Rust.

- Excellent drought tolerance and stay green, which protect yield and grain quality in all environments.
- More compact hybrid compared to **P1729**, while being slightly later in maturity.
- **P1837** is well adapted to a range of populations, suitable for dryland and irrigated situations.

A widely adapted, stable, full-season hybrid. Plant early in high yield potential paddocks in warm production areas.

Processing companion for **P1729** or switch to **P17822 IT** for feed grain requirements and where Imidazolinone herbicide is required.

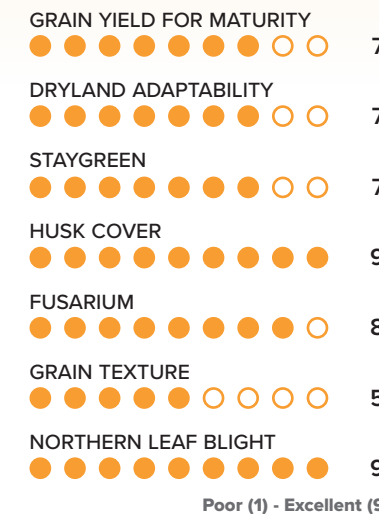


☐ Recommended for me



P2307

CRM 123

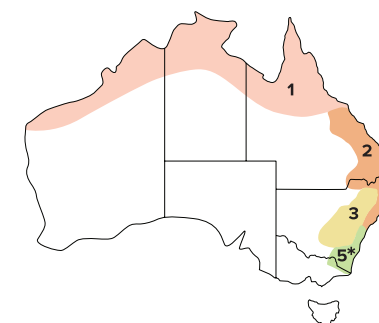


Coastal grain specialist.

Be prepared to be impressed by the resilience of this hybrid.

- Robust tropical genetics provides exceptional late-season plant health.
- Very tall plant with impressive Northern Leaf Blight tolerance to protect yield in high-pressure situations.
- Very hard-textured grain.

P2307 is an excellent option for growers in coastal and northern regions with high Northern Leaf Blight pressure who require reliable production.



☐ Recommended for me

Also available:



P7524

CRM 75



P1315 IT

CRM 113



P1756

CRM 117



PIONEER
HUNDRED YEARS

**MANY CROPS.
100 YEARS.
ONE
LONG
LOOK.**

PIONEER LONG LOOK

- We strive to produce the best products on the market.
- We deal honestly and fairly with customers, employees and business associates.
- We vigorously market our products, but without misrepresentation.
- We provide helpful management information to assist customers in making optimum profits from our products.



Last year, Pioneer Seeds celebrated 50 years since they first began selling seed to Australian farmers in 1975. This year marks another significant milestone, with the centennial anniversary of the Pioneer brand and its global business.



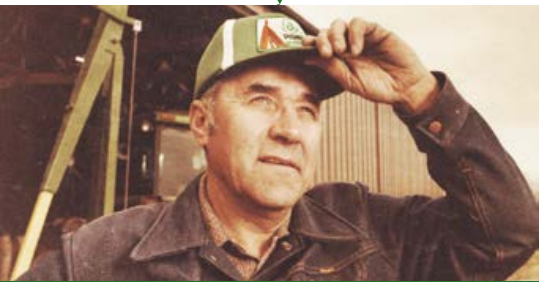
1926 - 1945

THE HYBRID REVOLUTION

Founded by Henry Wallace in 1926, Pioneer began as a bold experiment in corn breeding which quickly grew into a driving force for agricultural progress. Wallace’s vision and scientific curiosity laid the foundation for a company that would revolutionise crop genetics, empower farmers, and set enduring standards for quality and agronomic support.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF CROP SCIENCE

As the space race took off, so too did farm yields — soaring to new heights thanks to innovations like on-farm mechanisation and nitrogen fertiliser. Pioneer pushed progress even further, building research centres focused on improving yields and stress tolerance in hybrid corn and creating its first agronomy team. The company went on to expand its product offerings to include grain and forage sorghum, canola, silage inoculants and beyond.



1946 - 1985



1975

PIONEER LAUNCHES ITS AUSTRALIAN VENTURE

In 1975, the Pioneer Hi-Bred Seed Company was established in Australia. This allowed the company to make their knowledge and experience with hybrid seeds available to local farmers. Since 2016, the Yates family has been producing and distributing Pioneer brand products in Australia and continuing Pioneer’s legacy of supporting local growers with innovative products and dependable in-field advice.

THE RISE IN TECHNOLOGY

While the first 60 years saw yield growth through traditional breeding methods, the last four decades have delivered advancements in the science of genomics. Pioneer scientists now use DNA fingerprinting to help unlock the potential of seeds, while new technologies like AI and automation are being used to increase the rate of genetic gain.



1986 - today

Pioneer’s 100-year milestone reflects more than longevity — it represents a legacy built on science, integrity and partnership. Sincere thanks to the generations of farmers and those others who support them, who have helped shape the company’s growth and development through the years. Thank you for trusting Pioneer products in your fields.



Chasing the next benchmark in *high-performance corn*

Corn has become a defining crop in Nathan Pate's farming system, not just for its productivity, but for the mindset it demands. Across a fully irrigated 1,400-hectare operation at Tocumwal in southern New South Wales, corn sits within a broader rotation of wheat and canola.

Nathan has managed the farm for more than three decades following its establishment by his father in 1968. Today's business reflects a steady evolution shaped by changing water economics, new agronomic practices and a strong team culture.

"We used to have rice as our main summer crop" Nathan explains. "But as water costs increased, the move to corn made a lot of sense. With spray irrigation now in place, it's allowed us to keep pushing ahead with it. It's been a really good shift for the business".

| LEFT Nathan Pate.



Central to the operation is a close-knit team, with farm manager Dan Phelan and agronomist James Murray from I K Caldwell AGnVET playing key roles in decision making and day-to-day management.

“It’s really valuable to see how things perform on your own farm. We get good information out of it, and it gives other growers a chance to come and have a look as well”

Dan has been part of the business for more than a decade and is heavily involved in driving performance across the corn program, from analysing

international data to refining paddock-level decisions. “I keep a fairly close eye on the crop throughout the season” says Dan. “We’re always looking at things like cob size, lodging and pest pressure, and comparing

how different hybrids are performing. It’s about constantly learning and making improvements where we can”. That culture of collaboration extends

beyond the farm gate, with the team working closely with local growers and advisors to stay at the forefront of production. “We get very competitive with our neighbours” says Nathan. “There’s a big group of farmers around here, mostly working with the same agronomist, and we all push each other. Everyone wants to be doing better, and that helps lift the standard across the board”. Nathan and Dan primarily grow Pioneer® brand P0937 and P1837, selected for their high yield potential and proven performance on their farm.

“We’ve got a great history with those varieties, and they yield really well” says Nathan. Corn is grown on around 100 hectares each year, with final area largely determined by water availability. Within



that footprint, the focus is firmly on maximising yield potential. “We’re targeting around 18 to 19 tonnes per hectare” Dan explains. “That’s been our average over the past four seasons, but it’s always going to fluctuate depending on water. When conditions allow, we’ll push hard to exceed that”. That ambition was realised in 2024, when the Pate operation achieved an independently verified Australian irrigated corn grain yield of 23.27 t/ha using P0937, underlining what is possible when system, timing and growing conditions align.

Rather than changing their approach dramatically after that result, the focus has remained on refining the fundamentals. “No matter what you do, you have to be striving to do better” says Nathan. “That’s no different to any job. The record was great, but the goal now is to keep improving and see where we can take it next”. Trial work has also played a role in sharpening decisions, with the business hosting on-farm hybrid evaluations in partnership with local agronomy networks.

“It’s really valuable to see how products perform on your own farm” Nathan says. “We get good information out of it, and it gives other growers a chance to come and have a look as well”. Like many high-performing systems, success begins well before the planter enters the paddock. “Good ground preparation is the most important step” Dan explains. “If you get your strip tilling right, the planting becomes much easier. You’re setting yourself up from the start”. Strip tilling is completed around a month ahead of planting and the process also bands 300 kg of MAP and 300 kg of urea at a depth of between 8 and 9 inches, with a shank. A knock-down spray for barnyard grass and other weeds is applied in August/September. From there, the team focuses on ensuring the moisture profile is full before sowing begins in the second to third week of October. “We like to water up before planting. Around 50 to 60 millimetres of lateral irrigation helps fill that profile” says Dan. Nathan adds that trying to correct moisture after planting can be counterproductive. “If it’s cold, putting on too much water can slow the crop up” he explains. “So we focus on getting that profile right before we plant, rather than trying to fix it afterwards”. Crops are planted at approximately 95,000 seeds per hectare, and there is a strong emphasis on doing the job properly to ensure uniform emergence. In addition to 200 kg of urea applied between strip tilling and planting, 40-50 L/ha of a pop-up blend of liquid MAP and nitrogen is applied at seeding to enhance early vigour. A further two applications of 100 kg/ha each of urea are also applied in crop throughout the growing season. While the farm’s total nitrogen input of 320 – 370 kg/ha appears high, learnings from recent seasons show it is necessary to support plant biomass, drive grain fill and deliver consistent high yields. Like most irrigated systems, water remains the single biggest driver of both crop performance and decision making. “We budget for around seven to eight megalitres per hectare through the

RIGHT Pioneer Seeds Territory Sales Manager Kellen Lemesurier with Nathan Pate and Dan Phelan.



Farm walk

- 100 ha corn annually (area driven by water availability)
- Pioneer® P0937 and P1837 core hybrids
- Targeting 18–19 t/ha, with 23.27 t/ha benchmark achieved
- Strong focus on strip till and pre-plant moisture as key drivers of establishment

growing season" says Dan. "Water availability and price are the biggest factors in determining how much corn we'll plant each year".

Unpredictable seasonal rainfall typically contributes only a small proportion of that requirement, reinforcing the need for careful irrigation scheduling and close crop monitoring.

When it comes to pest management, heliothis are typically the biggest challenge.

"We'll use a pre-emergent spray of Lorsban, followed by aerial applications when we need to, and we keep a close eye on what's happening in the paddock" says Dan.

Harvest generally begins in March through to early April, with grain taken off at around 14 per cent moisture and stored on farm.

At the centre of the operation is a strong competitive instinct, not only between neighbouring growers, but within the business itself. After the Australian irrigated corn yield record was recently broken again by a grower just 80 km away from the Pate farm, the team are keen for the opportunity to reclaim the title.

"Of course, we want to chase that yield record back" Dan says. "But more importantly, we're always trying to beat our own numbers and keep improving what we do".

That mindset is supported by a clear sense of structure and trust across the team.

"The way the farm is set up and the people we've got means it almost runs itself" says Nathan. "Having employees you can trust and a good team is what I'm most proud of. The yields and records are just a bonus".

LEFT Nathan Pate with Pioneer Territory Sales Manager Kellen Lemesurier.

RIGHT Farm Manager Dan Phelan with Pioneer Territory Sales Manager Kellen Lemesurier.



It pays to get corn *emerging evenly*

The platform for a successful corn crop is built in the first few weeks after planting.

While fertiliser programs, weed control, hybrid selection, plant population and singulation all matter, nothing sets the yield ceiling more clearly than even, timely emergence. Once the crop emerges, there is no opportunity to recover lost plants or uniformity, resulting in lost yield potential.

In corn, establishment sets up the crop's architecture for the rest of the season. How evenly seedlings emerge determines how well plants compete for light, nutrients and moisture, and ultimately how efficiently the crop converts resources into grain yield.



The cost of late emergence

Corn is particularly sensitive to uneven emergence. Studies and on-farm experience consistently show that plants emerging even one to two leaf stages behind their neighbours act as weeds rather than contributors, competing for resources but contributing little to final yield.

In practical terms:

- Plants emerging three or more days later rarely compensate and can reduce overall paddock yield.
- Severely delayed plants often produce small cobs or no cob at all, but still compete for nutrients and light.

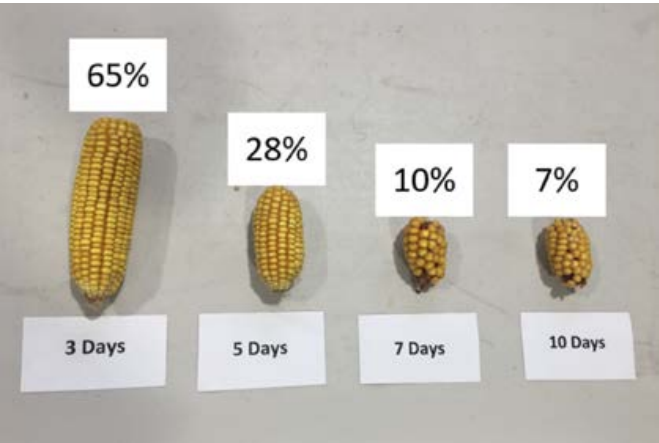


Figure 1: Ear size for plants that have delayed emergence relative to plants that emerged on Day 1 (Pioneer Research Station, Waikato, New Zealand)



Figure 2: Ear size for plants that have delayed emergence (3, 5, 7 or 10 days) relative to the normal emerging plants that were adjacent (Adj) to them or two plants away (Away). The adjacent ears were slightly bigger, but they did not make up for the yield loss from the delayed plants.

The yield impact comes from uneven plant size. Early plants dominate, shading weaker neighbours and reducing the crop’s ability to intercept sunlight evenly across the paddock. Late plants struggle to compete for water and nutrients. A plant that is late to emerge can never catch up later in the season, even with favourable conditions. Uniform emergence helps ensure a more uniform cob size, better grain fill, more even dry down and improved standability later in the season.



Figure 3: Photo showing the impact of uneven emergence on ear size and placement.

What goes wrong at planting?

While seed quality is critical, many establishment issues can be traced back to seedbed conditions and planter set-up. Common causes of uneven emergence include variable soil moisture, uneven planting depth across the paddock, poor seed-to-soil contact, inadequate residue management, incorrect downforce for soil conditions and a high ground speed without sufficient row-unit control.

Good establishment starts well before the planter enters the paddock. A well-prepared seedbed should be firm underneath, friable on top, and even across the full working width.

Key planter setup principles include:

Appropriate planting depth

Aim to place seed into the soil moisture zone. The standard planting depth recommendation for corn is 5–7 cm. In drier situations, particularly with dryland crops and if no rain is forecast within a few days, it may be better to plant slightly deeper since soil moisture variability is greatest closest to the surface. If soil moisture is adequate and uniform at the

target depth, planting deeper than 7 cm is unlikely to improve establishment and can delay emergence, especially under cool conditions, increasing emergence variability. Deeper planting is generally most useful when moisture is more reliable at depth or when surface conditions are prone to drying.



Figure 4: Rootless corn syndrome caused by shallow planting followed by dry soil conditions.

Some people may prefer planting at depths of less than 5 cm to speed up emergence, but this is not recommended, as nodal roots typically initiate around 2 cm below the soil surface.

Shallower planting means these roots are positioned at or near the soil surface, increasing the chance of rootless corn syndrome (Figure 4) later in the season when hot, dry weather inhibits nodal root development.

Accurate downforce

Row units need enough pressure to maintain depth, but not so much that sidewall compaction restricts root growth. Because field conditions can change across a paddock, the ability to automatically adjust downforce can help maintain consistent depth and emergence.

Seed-to-soil contact

Closing wheels must firmly close the slot without compacting the seed zone. Poor closure creates air gaps and uneven moisture availability, delaying or staggering germination.

Ground speed discipline

Modern planters are capable of higher speeds, but only when conditions allow. Excessive speed reduces depth control, seed placement accuracy and uniform emergence.

Attention to residue

Uneven residue distribution can lead to variable soil temperature and moisture, particularly in early spring. Clearing residue from the row can help improve soil warming which supports faster and more uniform emergence.



Technology helps, but it does not replace attention to detail. The most consistent corn establishment results come from operators who regularly check planting depth and spacing and adjust settings as conditions change.

If you are planting corn yourself, it always pays to treat establishment as a yield-critical operation, not just getting seed in the ground. Small adjustments made early can protect yield potential later.



KAHL FAMILY,
WEE WAA, NSW

Corn drives performance in *cotton rotation*

A long standing commitment to irrigated farming has seen the Kahl family shape not only their own business, but the broader cotton landscape of northern New South Wales. Based at Wee Waa, their operation traces back more than 60 years, when Sam Kahl's grandfather, Paul, relocated from Merced, California in 1961 with a business partner and a vision to establish irrigated cotton in Australia.

Today, that same spirit continues through the third generation, with Sam, his brother Daniel and their father James overseeing Merced Farming, a large-scale, family-run enterprise built on innovation, resilience and continuous improvement.

"Grandpa was a prisoner of war in Germany for two years during World War II, and after returning home, he decided to move his family to Australia and establish an industry. We're still farming those same paddocks that my grandfather first set up over 60 years ago" says Sam. "They were the first to recognise the

opportunity for irrigation here. At the time, it was all livestock country, but they saw the similarities to California in the weeds and soil, and they knew cotton could work".

That early decision laid the foundation for what is now one of the most established family farming operations in the Namoi Valley. The business has expanded significantly over time and now includes 3,500 hectares of irrigation, producing around 20,000 bales of cotton annually, alongside a diversified cropping program and a herd of 300 Angus beef breeders. Sam lives and works on the farm, alongside his wife, Narrabri primary school teacher Georgie, and their young sons, Freddie and Walter.

ABOVE Sam, James and Daniel Kahl.





While cotton remains the cornerstone of the enterprise, corn has become an increasingly important part of the rotation. Each year, around 600 hectares are allocated to corn or sorghum, depending largely on seasonal water availability and market conditions.

“Most of our cropping decisions are made based on water” says Sam. “When we’ve got the water, corn becomes very competitive on a return per hectare basis, and it fits really well into our system”.

Beyond its financial contribution, corn plays a critical role in supporting the long-term productivity of the farm, particularly in managing key challenges within the cotton system.

“The main reason we grow corn is for disease management in our cotton rotation” Sam explains. “Verticillium wilt can have a big impact on cotton yields, and corn does a really good job of reducing that inoculum in the soil”.

The benefits extend beyond disease suppression. Corn’s contribution to soil health is equally significant.

“It’s a great soil conditioner” he says. “When you harvest it, you’re putting about 22 tonnes of organic matter back into the soil from stover and roots. The cotton fields following corn always have better vigour. They’re up and away much quicker and just perform better overall”.

The result is a system where each crop

supports the next, delivering both agronomic and economic advantages.

In addition to improving soil and crop performance, corn also allows the Kahls to take a more integrated approach to weed management. Rotating out of cotton provides the opportunity to use different herbicide modes of action, helping to reduce the risk of resistance in key weeds such as fleabane, peach vine and bindweed.

Corn is also proving to be a valuable crop in its own right, with the Kahls targeting high yields and quality grain for premium

markets. Most of their production is destined for human consumption through domestic milling markets, with grain that doesn’t meet specification readily moving into stockfeed.

“We’re usually targeting around 15 tonnes per hectare (t/ha), and we’re working towards 16 t/ha as we keep refining the system” says Sam. “Having the flexibility to access both the human consumption and feed markets gives us a lot of confidence at sale time”.

For the last few years, Pioneer® brand P1837 and P1729 have been the hybrids



of choice for the Kahls, selected for their yield potential and market suitability.

“P1837 has been a reliable performer for us, and P1729 has shown very strong yield potential as well” Sam says. “They’re both gritting varieties, which gives us options depending on market demand”.

Like much of their farming system, corn production is underpinned by careful planning and attention to detail. Crops are typically planted in the first week of September using precision planting technology, with a focus on achieving even establishment through irrigation management.

“Ideally, we want every plant coming up on the same day so they’re not competing with each other” Sam explains. “We’re constantly refining how we manage soil moisture at planting to get that consistency”.

Fertiliser strategies are also tailored to match their heavy black soils and flood irrigation system, with a significant proportion applied upfront to ensure nutrients are available when the crop needs them.

“As an insurance policy against weather unpredictability, we put our nitrogen and phosphorus up front” says Sam. “In the past, we’ve put an SOP on in-crop, roughly at the four-leaf stage. Next season, we’ll consider splitting that up and putting some nitrogen on during that pass as well”.

factor, so everything starts with that”. The Kahls utilise a pre-emergent spray of 1.5 L/ha of Dual Gold and 2.5 kg/ha of atrazine, also applied post-emergence, for weed control in crop, in addition to a spray of Starane prior to cultivation to control regrowth cotton.

A defining feature of the Kahl operation is their progressive approach to pest management, with a strong focus on biological control and reducing reliance on chemical inputs.

“We’re heavily invested in integrated pest management across both cotton and corn” Sam says. “Over the last six years, we’ve only needed a handful of insecticide applications in cotton, and we’re continuing to look for ways to reduce that further”.

In corn, this approach includes targeted use of crop protection products alongside the introduction of beneficial insects to help manage pest pressure.

“We’ve trialled things like releasing trichogramma wasps to attack the grubs, and we’re really encouraged by the results” he says. “I’m happy if I can walk into a paddock full of spiders and beneficial insects. That’s when you know the system is working”.

This balance between productivity and sustainability is central to the Kahls’ philosophy, as they look to future-proof the business for the next generation.

“We’re always trying to be more efficient

“P1837 has been a reliable performer for us, and P1729 has shown very strong yield potential as well. They’re both gritting varieties, which gives us options depending on market demand”

Water management remains a key factor, with seasonal allocations influencing both crop selection and yield potential.

“We plan around having about 8.5 megalitres per hectare available for a corn crop” says Sam. “If we don’t have the water, then that becomes the limiting

with what we’ve got, whether that’s water, fertiliser or labour” says Sam. “If we can do that while improving the health of our soils and our environment, then that’s a win for everyone”.

For Sam, corn represents more than just another crop in the rotation.



Farm walk

- 600 ha corn/sorghum annually (rotation driven by water + markets)
- Pioneer® P1837 and P1729 core hybrids
- Targeting 15 t/ha, working towards 16 t/ha
- Corn used as key disease break in cotton



“Growing corn is good for your mental health” he says. “It gets up and grows so quickly, you drive past and think you’re doing a pretty good job. But more importantly, it’s playing a huge role in making the rest of our system better”.

TOP RIGHT Sam and James Kahl with Pioneer Territory Sales Manager Sam Gall.



Hybrid options for your region

Use the tables below to choose your region then identify hybrid options which match your maturity requirements.

Notes

The hybrid options by region tables are intended as a guideline only and are mainly based on hybrid CRM. In some cases, other hybrids may also be suitable for your growing environment. For farm specific advice talk to your local Pioneer Territory Sales Manager or Farm Services Consultant.

Region 1

Northern Australia including, North QLD, Northern Territory and Northern WA

1

	Hybrids	Maturity category		Hybrids	Maturity category
	P1477W*	Mid		P1837	Full
NEW	P15744 IT	Mid		P2307	Full
	P1729	Full			
NEW	P1756	Full			
	P17822 IT	Full			

Region 2

Central QLD, Wide Bay & Burnett, Darling Downs, Western Downs, Border Rivers, South-East QLD and North Coast NSW

2

	Hybrids	Maturity category		Hybrids	Maturity category
	P0937*	Mid		P1729	Full
NEW	P13063 IT	Mid		P1756	Full
	P1315IT	Mid	NEW	P17822 IT	Full
	P1477W	Mid		P1837	Full
NEW	P15744 IT	Mid		P2307	Full

Region 5

Hunter Valley, Sydney Basin, Central and South Coast NSW

5

	Hybrids	Maturity category
	P92575	Quick
	P9978	Quick
	P0937	Mid
	P1477W*	Mid
NEW	P17822 IT*	Full
	P2307*	Full

Region 6

Gippsland, Western Districts of VIC, South-East South Australia, Southern WA

6

	Hybrids	Maturity category		Hybrids	Maturity category
	P7524	Ultra quick		P1315 IT*	Mid
	P8500	Ultra quick		P1477W*	Mid
	P92575	Quick	NEW	P15744 IT*	Mid
	P9978	Quick			
NEW	P13063 IT*	Mid			

Region 3

Northern NSW, Liverpool Plains, Central West NSW, Riverina

3

	Hybrids	Maturity category		Hybrids	Maturity category
	P0937	Mid		P1729	Full
NEW	P13063 IT	Mid		P1756	Full
	P1315IT	Mid	NEW	P17822 IT	Full
	P1477W	Mid		P1837	Full
NEW	P15744 IT	Mid		P2307	Full

Region 4

Northern VIC and Southern NSW

4

	Hybrids	Maturity category		Hybrids	Maturity category
	P9978	Quick		P1729	Full
	P0937	Mid		P1756	Full
NEW	P13063 IT	Mid	NEW	P17822 IT	Full
	P1315IT	Mid		P1837	Full
	P1477W	Mid			
NEW	P15744 IT	Mid			

Region 7

Tasmania

7

	Hybrids	Maturity category
	P7524	Ultra quick
	P8500	Ultra quick
	P92575*	Quick

*Hybrids with an asterisk are suitable in this region in some situations. Contact your local Pioneer representative for paddock specific advice.

Notes:

Trait characteristic notes.

assessment data from overseas and/or Australian trials. In conditions where NLB risk is high, growers should consider planting hybrids with higher NLB resistance ratings.

7. Husk cover:

This rating is a measure of the husk cover at black layer. A rating of 7 or above indicates the husk covers the entire cob, protecting the grain as it dries down.

8. Staygreen:

A measure of the plant's greenness at black layer. A lower score indicates a quicker dry down in the leaves and stem. A higher rating indicates an increased level of green leaves and stem.

9. Grain texture:

5 = Hard. 1 = Soft.

10.Plant height:

9 = Tall, 1 = Short

11. Processing:

Outlines a hybrid's suitability for Yellow Food Corn and milling end uses.

Publication abbreviations

ha = hectare
cm = centimetres
m = metres
km = kilometres
t/ha = tonnes per hectare
kg = kilogram
kg/ha = kilograms per hectare
kg/ha/year = kilograms per hectare per year



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Want more information?
Scan to find your local Territory Sales Manager
or Farm Services Consultant

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