Pek

COMMON VETCH
: Vicia sativa

PBR

Quick Seed Facts

Sowing rate
- 35–60kg/ha

Maturity
- Mid (105+ days)

Suitability
- Hay
- Silage
- Grazing
- Multi-species covercrops
- Green manure

Seed treatment
- None/XLR8® optional

SARDI plant breeders have created a breakthrough with Pek vetch with its unique tolerance to acid soils, which until now, has been a limitation for the use of the species. Pek is a highly rust resistant, common vetch with improved performance on acid soils, delivering high yields of high-quality forage in a wide range of environments.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

- **Improved tolerance to acid soils (pH 5.5–7 in water), compared with current varieties**
  Allows vetch to be successfully grown in a wider range of soils
- **High yielding (9% more than Timok in acid soils)**
  Greater profits from higher hay or silage yields and more grazing days
  More nitrogen fixed
- **Highly rust resistant**
  Allows for maximum yield, forage quality and animal health
- **Mid-maturity (105+ days)**
  Able to maximise yields in spring seasons with both early and late finishes, and suited to both low (350-450mm) and higher rainfall areas

STRENGTHS

- Acid tolerance
- High yields
- Rust resistant
- Improved disease tolerance
- Nitrogen fixation
- Improves protein and energy levels in forage and fodder when sown with companion species

LIMITATIONS

- Poor tolerance to waterlogged, saline and sodic soils
- Poor recovery from overgrazing

WHERE IT GROWS

Rainfall: Pek vetch thrives in regions with annual rainfall over 350mm to 600mm. It is a preferred variety for areas with more than 450mm of rainfall.

Soils: Pek vetch is different to other vetch varieties as it will grow well in acid soils (pH in water greater than 5.5). Vetches prefer well-drained and fertile soils and perform poorly in waterlogged, saline or sodic soils.

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WHERE IT GROWS CONTINUED...

Temperature: Vetch is adapted to Mediterranean and temperate zones of Australia (10-35°C). As for all common vetch varieties, Pek is tolerant of mild frosts but could occasionally be impacted by severe frost in southern regions.

ESTABLISHMENT

Performance optimisation or limitations for your soil type can be discussed with your local agronomist.

Sowing time: Sow in autumn when soil temperatures are at least 10°C (15-20°C is optimal).

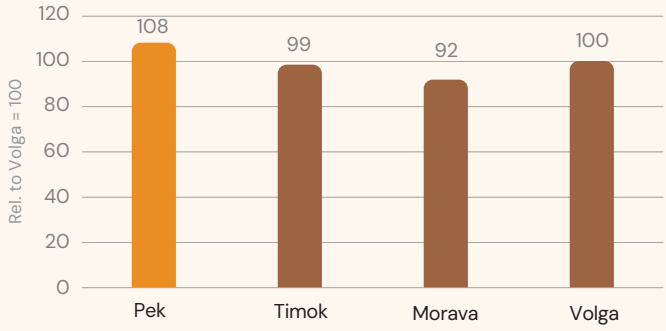
Sowing depth: Covered with 5-15mm of firm soil to achieve good seed-to-soil contact.

Inoculation: The correct viable rhizobia strain/group (group E) is required to infect the root system for optimum nitrogen fixation by the plant.

Fertiliser: Establishing vetch with fertiliser (phosphate, sulphur and potassium) is normally recommended, with seed and fertiliser separated in the soil to avoid seed damage. Inoculated Pek plants will fix nitrogen for themselves so fertiliser is not essential, however nitrogen fertiliser is normally beneficial to the non-legume species (e.g. oats) in multi-species crops, but this will have no negative effect on vetch.

DATA

Mean dry matter yield in acid soils 2017-2020, relative to Volga



SARDI Technical Information Dossier SA 37107

COMPANION SPECIES

- Forage cereals
- Pasture grasses
- Clover & pasture legumes
- Forage herbs & brassica
- Tropical pasture grasses

MANAGEMENT

In-crop fertiliser: Most soils lack enough nutrients to maximise yield from vetch, so fertiliser applications will improve results. Use a soil test to confirm potassium, phosphorus, and sulphur levels and then decide which nutrients and rates are needed for optimum production.

Whilst Pek vetch has improved yield in acid soils, application of lime can still improve forage and nitrogen yields. When nitrogen fertiliser is used to improve yield from non-legume companion species this will not reduce growth from vetch. Performance optimisation or limitations for your soil type can be discussed with your local agronomist.

Grazing/cutting: Vetch is highly palatable and can provide excellent winter and spring feed for grazing as well as hay/silage, but management is important to maximise production and persistence. If the crop is to be grazed, begin when plants are 15–20cm long and well anchored. Avoid grazing too early, as young plants can be pulled out by livestock and establishment may be compromised. Remove animals from the paddock before vetch plants are grazed below 5cm because leaving some stem and leaves will improve regrowth. Stock can be returned to the paddock when plants have recovered to 15–20cm. Most feed is available from late winter through spring. Feed quality is highest before flowering, with crude protein averaging 24%.

For hay or silage making, cut at early to 50% flowering. Earlier cutting gives higher protein and digestibility whereas later cutting increases yield but reduces feed quality. Typical hay yields in pure vetch crops are between 3–8t DM/ha, depending on rainfall, fertility, and variety. If growing for nitrogen fixation or green manure, allow plants to reach early pod development before soil incorporation.

Herbicide susceptibility: Herbicides for post emergence and pre-emergence for broadleaf and grass control are available. Consult your local agronomist for herbicide options. Always check label before herbicide use. Sowing into weed-free paddocks will reduce the need for herbicides.

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ANIMAL PRODUCTION

Feeding value: Pek vetch is a reliable source of high levels of crude protein and metabolisable energy. It is ideal for farmers focused on the performance of grazing animals, and those wanting to improve the quality and yield of hay/silage.

Palatability: Very palatable.

Livestock disorders/toxicity: Non-toxic disorders resulting from feeding common vetch are similar to other legumes or forages with high feed value. These nutritional disorders may include bloat, acidosis, and photosensitivity. As with these types of feed, it is best fed to animals as a mixed diet with lower-quality feeds (e.g. oats/vetch). Although Pek forage is unlikely to have much rust, rust-infected vetch crops that are used for fodder may induce abortions in pregnant livestock.

Pek vetch has lower toxin levels in grain than woolly pod vetch, but grain should make up less than 20% the diet for pigs. Grain can be fed to ruminant animals (e.g. sheep, cattle) if required.

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