

Sunflowers

Pure Oil NZ and FAR have been trialing production of high oleic sunflower oil. The product (The Good Oil, High Oleic Sunflower Oil) is now being commercially grown and marketed in New Zealand.

Production and Returns

- Current average yields for commercial crops of 2.5 t/ha.
- Pure Oil NZ offer fixed price, open-quantity contracts.
- Reasonably low growing costs. Grow in a rotation – need 5 years between crops.
- Contacts for \$1600 to \$1800 per ha in Canterbury, 2021.

Production Risk

- Protect from pests (birds, slugs, cutworm) at seedling emergence.
- Requires pre-emerge herbicide.
- Sclerotinia is the main crop disease, hybrid varieties have high tolerance.
- Bird damage pre harvest.

Processing and Market

- Conventional header fronts can be used to harvest but specialist equipment reduces harvest losses.
- Crop needs to be dried immediately on harvest.
- Pure Oil NZ provide agronomy support, grain storage and handling, and processing out of their Rolleston site.

Labour

- Mechanised planting, crop management and harvest.
- Precision drill is optimum.

Climate and Soil Suitability

- Reasonably water tolerant. Could benefit from irrigation.

Environment

- Relatively low input and nutrient demands.
- Strong roots encourage rainwater infiltration and help break up soil compaction.

References

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