Serradella's suitability to the Southern Slopes PDS

Project background

HLN secured funding from Meat & Livestock Australia for a Producer Demonstration Site project called 'Serradella's suitability to the Southern Slopes'. The project came about from local farmers interested in trying serradella as an alternative legume species in their pastures. NSW DPIRD and CSIRO recently tested the performance of different serradella varieties in small plot trials across the state, and the two varieties we are testing in paddock scale demonstrations in this project (Avila and Margurita Serradella) were identified as having the most potential in our region.

We currently have 7 producers growing serradella, with the intention of harvesting some of these paddocks to have seed available for other producers in the future.

2026 Results

Regeneration counts were completed in the Autumn and pasture dry matter in the Spring, and the results of the paddocks sown last year (June 2025) are presented below along with some interpretation. Note, that serradella can be sown two ways – as a bare seed (pod/shell removed) or as podded seed. NSW DPIRD staff assessed dry matter (DM) in October 2025, and these numbers give a relative indication of plant performance prior to seed set.

Bare seed

Serradella sown as bare seed is expected to have a low regeneration count the next year (Year 2) due to the hard seeded nature of serradella. Most seed sown would germinate in the first year and, depending on the growing conditions and grazing pressure at flowering, the plants will set seed (pod) which will fall to the ground and begin the process of pod breakdown/softness over the summer and following year. Less than 20% of this seed will germinate the next year (Year 2).

As expected, the numbers below for both Avila and Margurita bare seeded 2025 plantings show low Year 2 regeneration counts, except for paddocks at Morven (nursery site paddock) and Tarcutta. Both paddocks had the highest dry matter in October last year, and it's assumed that this resulted in large numbers of seed produced, and some of the soft seed germinated this year.

Paddocks with low very dry matter in October last year are unlikely to have set enough seed to allow them to persist, however this will be determined with future monitoring.

Avila (Yellow Serradella) Year 1 dry matter and Year 2 regeneration counts for paddocks planted as bare seed in June 2025.

Location	Year 1 dry matter (October 2025) (kg DM/ha) (DPIRD)	Year 2 regeneration counts (June2026) (plants/m2)	Year 2 dry matter (October 2026) (kg DM/ha)
Yerong Creek	11	0.4	Not yet measured
Holbrook	220	5	90

Morven (paddock)	540	5	280
Wantagong	810	6	40
Morven (nursery)	960	122	770
Tarcutta	1850	44	220*

*Sprayed with Igran to control capeweed.

Margurita (French/Pink Serradella) Year 1 dry matter and Year 2 regeneration counts for paddocks planted as bare seed in June 2025.

Location	Year 1 dry matter (October 2025) (kg DM/ha) (DPIRD)	Year 2 regeneration counts (June2026) (plants/m2)	Year 2 dry matter (October 2026) (kg DM/ha)
Morven (paddock)	260	0.2	10
Yerong Creek	13	0.8	Not yet measured
Holbrook	17	2	4
Morven (nursery)	1460	256	1660
Tarcutta	3100	95	210*

*Sprayed with Igran to control capeweed.

Podded seed

Podded seed is expected to have low germination in the year of sowing (Year 1) as the pod needs time to decompose/breakdown, and is expected to have a high germination in Year 2. Germination counts of the two paddocks planted as podded seed last year did not support this. Reasons for the low plant numbers this year may be due to the serradella being out competed by other species – wire weed /ryegrass at Morven and subclover/ryegrass at Holbrook.

Avila (Yellow Serradella) Year 1 dry matter and Year 2 regeneration counts for paddocks planted as podded seed in June 2025.

Location	Year 1 dry matter (October 2025) (kg DM/ha) (DPIRD)	Year 2 regeneration counts (June2026) (plants/m2)	Year 2 dry matter (October 2026) (kg DM/ha)
Morven (paddock)	28	7	400
Holbrook	2	16	130

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More information

https://holbrooklandcare.org.au/serradellas-suitability-to-the-southern-slopes/