



Southern irrigated cereal and canola varieties achieving target yields

A three-year \$1.2 million project co-funded by GRDC and NSW Department of Primary Industries is responding to the southern irrigation region's needs. Recent industry research identified significant potential for increased production and profitability of irrigated cereal and canola. It is estimated that if current yields increased to best trial levels, the farm gate value of cereals and canola almost doubles to \$347 million.

These traditionally dryland crops have a sound fit in southern irrigated rotations as an alternative option to rice when water allocations are low, and provide the additional benefits of being a break crop for weed, disease and pest management. Cut backs in water allocations have created urgency for irrigated industries to grow 'more crop per drop'.

The *Southern irrigated cereal and canola varieties achieving target yields* project is aiming to increase irrigated cereal and canola production in the GRDC southern region by:

- a) Improving grower and adviser knowledge of high yielding cereal and canola varieties for irrigated systems so they can select the *best variety* for their location and irrigation system; and
- b) Improving grower and adviser knowledge of specific *agronomy management* that will improve production and profitability of cereals and canola under irrigated systems (and increase water use efficiency).

The project covers six nodes (locations) in the southern GRDC region. The three core research sites are Murrumbidgee (Yanco Agricultural Institute), Murray Valley (Rice Research Australia Pty Ltd, Jerilderie) and North West Victoria (Kerang). The three satellite research locations are Lachlan, South East South Australia and Tasmania. Each node identified priority research questions and the trials in that node will be addressing some of those questions.

The research outcomes of the project will assist with the development of three tools for growers and advisers to be completed in 2017:

1. An 'Irrigated Wheat: Best Practice Guidelines in Southern Irrigated Cropping Systems' manual
2. An 'Irrigated Canola: Best Practice Guidelines in Southern Irrigated Cropping Systems' manual
3. Variety Specific Agronomy Packages (VSAPs) for each node.

'As an irrigator, the value of the 'three tools for growers' will be invaluable in our winter cropping enterprises. Winter cropping was a very poor cousin to summer cropping in our farming system even ten years ago, however now we depend on this vital part of our income stream. It takes advantage of residual moisture left in the profile from our summer crop, and also our winter dominant rainfall.

There are so many questions that this project will provide answers for in terms of water and nutrient efficiency as well as improved varietal choice.

IREC are delighted to be involved in the extension of this project to our irrigators over the next three years and beyond.' **Rob Houghton, Chairman, IREC**

The project is co-funded by GRDC and NSW Department of Primary Industries. It also involves several subcontractors who will manage the satellite research nodes.

IREC has an important role in the project as the extension and communication conduit to irrigated growers and will receive funds to assist with these processes.

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