

News from the breeding program at the University of Adelaide

The 2014 season is shaping up to be very good. The majority of our trial sites were dry sown in early-mid May and with the unseasonal warm conditions we had in May, most of our sites are well advanced already for this time of year. Mallala, Redhill (see below) and Jamestown are significantly superior in terms of development when compared to the bread wheat crop surrounding our trial plots.



Our new seeder was used for the first time this year (with the new tractor), and while we had a few teething problems and a blocked seeding tube at Alywn's site (Kaniva), the rest of the sites went in reasonably well. For next year, a few improvements will be made to the seeder and tractor that will streamline the sowing operations further.



This year also heralds the release of a new variety – currently known as UAD0951096. While many of you have heard about this variety and some of you are growing it this year for multiplication and sales for the 2015 season, this

variety will only be officially released (with the name) at the Hart Field Day in September. UAD0951096 will also be discussed at the upcoming crop walks in the Mid-North, South East, Southern NSW and Horsham.

In general terms, UAD0951096 promises to deliver over the more recent varieties including Hyperno, Saintly, Tjilkuri, Yawa and WID802; whether in yield potential and/or quality attributes. The overall disease package of this variety is also superior to any durum variety currently commercially available in Australia. However, as with any variety, durum or not, there are always caveats. So while UAD0951096 will not solve all the problems a durum grower faces it will be a step-change variety for the industry over the coming years.

From a research perspective I think we have a few burning issues that need to be addressed as an industry which should set us up well beyond 2017. At a genetic level it would be great to attract research money for screenings and protein achievement. These are without a doubt my number 1 and 2 issues with many of the breeding lines coming through the program at the moment. On a positive note related to this, the breeding program has been taking action even without the necessary funds. It is

hoped that with the introduction of new genetics, from what is now a significant germplasm bank of overseas durum lines that have been imported through quarantine into the program, we may see some dividends in a few years with respect to improvements in TGW and protein with the crosses that have been made.

Having recently come back from an Italian business trip (mid-May to early-June), I also hope to see that within a couple of years we have the southern industry in a position where we are producing a constant export surplus above the needs of our industry partner, San Remo. While a continuity of supply to San Remo is first and foremost for our industry, we also have the capacity in the southern region to be the frontrunner of supplying durum nationally year-on-year. One of the take-home messages from the Italian trip is that their leading pasta companies (including Divella and Barilla – who are very big players in the world market) want Australian durum – and they like what they have seen from the southern region with the tests that they have completed on our new varieties (WID802 and UAD0951096). So for the industry to grow and prosper we require not only the core durum growers to maintain or increase their acreage but we also need to entice new growers into durum. I will present more on the trip and its outcomes at the forums early next year.

In the meantime, best wishes for the rest of the season and I hope to see all of you at the upcoming crop walks and field days. Spread the news on the new variety to your neighbours and particularly those they aren't yet in the durum space so we can grow our industry further.

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