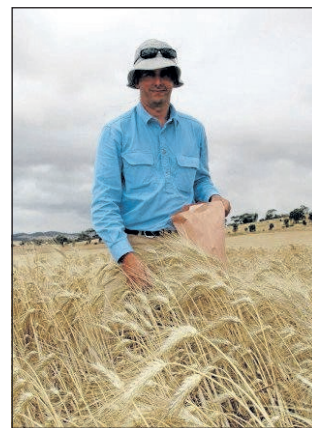


CROPPING



CROP DAY: SARDI's Marg Evans, Shawn Rowe and Rob Wheeler with Southern Australia Durum Growers Association's Neville Sharpe.



FORUM: Breeder Jason Able was a guest speaker at a SADGA forum.

Breeding showing promise for future

THE latest durum variety Aurora was successfully grown in the Horsham, Vic, area for the first time last year.

Durum breeder Jason Able said considering the tough seasonal conditions in the district, it was good to see Aurora still performed well.

"We've also got good grower adoption of Aurora in southern NSW," he said.

"There's even been contact from growers in WA, interested in growing Aurora."

Dr Able said there were three new varieties coming through the breeding program that offered similar yields to Aurora.

"Two of the three lines have improved screenings potential compared to Aurora, so we're making steps forward with screenings, while maintaining yield potential," he said.

The three lines will be entered for evaluation in 2016 National Variety Trials.

"All three entries are going to be commercially scaled up in 2016," Dr Able said.

He said a SAGIT-funded project would look at the gross margins of durum, compared to leading bread wheat varieties.

SA trial results glowing for new durum varieties

BY PAULA THOMPSON

THE durum varieties Aurora and Saintly were the stand-out performers for yield and quality in SA last year.

At the Southern Australia Durum Growers Association's annual pre-seeding forum, held at Blyth on Wednesday last week, SARDI New Variety Agronomy program leader Rob Wheeler outlined the performance of durum in SA National Variety Trials.

"Overall, the season last year favoured early- and mid-maturing varieties," he said.

The average yields of the

latest durum variety Aurora were 2.06 tonnes a hectare on the Yorke Peninsula and 2.29t/ha in the Mid North.

This equated to 114 per cent of the sites' mean yield on the YP across the different durum varieties and it was 110pc in the Mid North.

Saintly also performed well at 115pc of the sites' mean yield on the YP and 114pc in the Mid North.

Mr Wheeler said the long-term results also showed very good performance for Saintly and Aurora.

In the past five years Aurora has yielded 106pc of NVT sites' mean yields on the YP and 104pc in the Mid North.

Likewise, Saintly had been a good performer with a five-year result of 106pc of the sites' mean yield on the YP and 103pc in the Mid North.

Aurora had also been a stand-out for quality, with average screenings of 6.7pc across all sites, while Saintly was a little worse for screenings at 9.6pc. But, both were nowhere near as bad for screenings as the varieties WID802 and Yawa, which were from 11-12pc.

"With Aurora having 6.7pc average screenings, relative to other varieties it's quite a good result," Mr Wheeler said.

"It shows we're heading in

the right direction with new varieties."

Five-year data showed Aurora met the specification for the DR1 grade 73pc of the time for screenings and 97pc for test weight. It met the protein standard for DR1 54pc of the time.

Yawa is one of the worst performing varieties for screenings, only achieving the DR1 specification 23pc of the time, across the five-year data period.

Caparoi remained the stand-out variety for screenings, meeting the DR1 standard in 93pc of samples.

Mr Wheeler said trials had shown Aurora and Saintly

were two of the best varieties for competing against weeds.

"They have a similar competitiveness to Mace wheat, which is promising because durum is often not thought of as being as competitive as bread wheat," he said.

Mr Wheeler said a SAGIT-funded three-year project undertaken by SARDI showed Boxer Gold remained the best choice as a pre-emergent grass weed control herbicide in durum, although some damage may occur in some instances.

But, the likelihood of herbicide damage was less than using other products, such as Sakura.



TOP GROUND: Land formerly sown to legumes, such as lentils, are ideal for growing durum crops.

Encouraging signals for pulses

GROWING durum and pulse crops often go hand-in-hand, with the wheat performing well following legume crops.

So, when the Southern Australia Durum Growers Association held their annual pre-seeding forum at Blyth, a pulse market update was included as part of the day.

Australian Growers Direct trader Tom Lucas said there were issues with Indian pulse crops, which could help support prices.

"India is halfway through their Rabi season (the country has two growing seasons) and that season usually

produces two-thirds of their annual pulse production," he said. "The season has been affected by adverse weather conditions and heavy storms."

Mr Lucas said while these weather conditions would affect production, and lead to an increase in imports, there was a limit to the country's demand.

"Last year even though their production fell 2 million tonnes, imports only rose by 1mt," he said.

Mr Lucas said it would be important to keep an eye on what was happening with Canadian crops.

"Canada has a year-on-year increase in lentil plantings and 1.8m hectares of red lentils are expected to be sown in Canada this year," he said. "Medium to large size lentils, similar to the variety Nugget, are produced in Canada."

In SA last season, 120,000ha of lentils were sown, with 150,000t produced. The area sown to lentils in SA is expected to rise again this coming season.

"Non-traditional areas like the Mallee and the Riverland are looking at planting lentils this year," Mr Lucas said.

— PAULA THOMPSON