

RELEASE

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Spotlight on EPR benefits as harvest ramps up

End Point Royalties are in the spotlight with a new campaign from Australian Crop Breeders to inform and talk with grain growers about the importance of innovative breeding to support this billion-dollar sector and protect food security.

Chair Tress Walmsley says while EPRs are something all growers know of, there is a lot of misunderstanding about how they work and why they are essential.

“We know many farmers understand and appreciate how the EPR system works and that it is critical to funding ongoing, targeted grain breeding here in Australia.

“But we find there is still a lot of misinformation around, particularly in relation to how it is structured and where the money is invested.”

Australian Crop Breeders represents public and private organisations that generate new varieties of wheat, barley, canola, pulse, oat and other grains for Australian farmers.

Its members are responsible for collecting End Point Royalties paid on grain varieties subject to Plant Breeder’s Rights. The EPR funds crop breeding activities nationally.

Ms Walmsley says legacy experience of how crop breeding used to be funded is part of the confusion.

“In the past, much of Australia’s crop breeding was funded by government programs including input via the GRDC levy.

“The vast majority of the commercial cereal crop varieties farmers have access to these days are funded via the collection of EPRs.

“The exceptions are some hybrid canola varieties that are structured slightly differently with a combination of upfront seed price and EPR in play and smaller crops such as pulses which continue to receive GRDC funding.”

She says that the EPR system relies on growers doing the right thing when declaring their grain harvest.

“The EPR for each variety is a set amount per tonne of grain harvested, paid by the grower when the crop is sold or used as feed. Seed retained for sowing next season is not included in the calculations.

“By linking the amount of EPR payable to the yield at harvest, it means both the grower and the breeder benefit, which encourages better breeding outcomes that target high performance results in the paddock.”

“Breeding a new crop variety is not a quick process, it can take 8-12 years and there are key steps we must meet along the way, such as hundreds of glasshouse and paddock trials to select the strongest performing lines, through to quality evaluation, seed bulk up and commercialisation.

“The EPRs paid on this year’s crop will fund breeding research over the next decade. Likewise, the current harvest is a result of breeding activities that started years ago.



Breeders target different attributes such as high yields, disease resistance and grain quality parameters when looking at which varieties will best support farming activities in different growing conditions.

Without a funding system like the EPR, Australia runs the risk experienced in other countries where a lack of research funding has the potential to impact the long-term competitiveness of the Australian grains industry.

“In areas like the US, crop breeding programs in public institutions are under pressure from a lack of investment and innovation. The number of skilled breeders is falling to dangerously low levels due to factors such as insufficient funding and experienced staff nearing retirement without enough succession planning.

“Our structure here with the Royalty system is different and really does help us avoid many of these problems.

“But it only works while people understand its importance and do the right thing.

“Every time an Australian farmer pays the EPR, they are contributing to the success of our sector.

“It’s the best way we can deliver premium genetics to maintain our world-leading reputation for high quality crops.

“It is about investing in the future of a strong Australian grain, pulse and oilseed industry, for the long term.

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About Australian Crop Breeders

Australian Crop Breeders (ACB) is the peak body representing public and private organisations that generate new varieties for Australian field crop farmers.

ACB works with other industry bodies to support and promote the Australian field crop industry and maximise its international competitiveness. It provides leadership to breeding research and development strategy, the National Variety Trial system and End Point Royalty collection for Plant Breeder’s Rights varieties.

Members are actively involved in breeding bread wheat, barley, canola, sorghum, oats, durum, lentils and lupins.

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