

Australia's GRDC invests \$3 million in soybean breeding by germplasm evaluation

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The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) will invest \$3 million in a new five-year soybean breeding program that will be led by the University of Adelaide and aims to deliver new elite soybean varieties to Australian growers.

Since 2012, GRDC has invested over \$5 million in soybean breeding that has developed new varieties and advanced breeding material.

Worth \$6 million in total, the new breeding program will accelerate the delivery of new varieties to growers by "speed breeding" using new technology to improve germplasm evaluation and other key breeding processes.

GRDC genetic technologies, biosecurity and regulation general manager Juan Juttner says GRDC and the University of Adelaide had joined forces in a quest to deliver higher yielding soybean varieties suitable for a broader range of growing environments.

"The important new, national soybean breeding program will build on previous investments GRDC has made in this area that have delivered significant gains for Australia's soybean growers," Dr Juttner says.

GRDC oilseeds and genetic technologies manager Allison Pearson says the investment would evaluate breeding material with the goal of improving yield potential and ensuring that new varieties meet the quality parameters of domestic and international end users.

Australian soybean production is around 40,000 tonnes per year. Its expansion has been limited due to inconsistent and unreliable production, exacerbated by environmental factors, crop price and variety choice.

Within 10 years, Soy Australia wants to increase annual production to 150,000 tonnes per year â?? equating to \$75 million â?? by improving production in existing areas and expanding soybean into new regions.

The national soybean breeding program will focus on improved varieties for the existing soybean growing regions in Queensland and New South Wales and work towards expansion for new regions such as Central Queensland and South Australia.