

Hi-tech breeding gives global edge

A new high-tech Australian approach to wheat breeding is set to significantly boost Australia's \$8 billion-a-year wheat industry.

The world-leading molecular technology will rapidly improve Australian wheat grain — and with it the industry's productivity and global competitiveness.

Rapid adoption of the process will add substantial impetus to the industry's efforts to move wheat from a bulk commodity status into more profitable, specialist value-added streams.

"This technology is way ahead of anything else being used or developed around the world at present. Its application will give Australia's wheat industry a major global advantage for years to come," said Professor Bill Rathmell, co-director of Triticarte Pty Ltd which is now launching the revolutionary genome profiling service on the Australian market.

Triticarte is a joint-venture spin-off from the one-third federal government-funded Value Added Wheat Cooperative Research Centre (VAWCRC), which developed the

technology over the past 10 years, and Diversity Arrays Technology Pty Limited. Bill is also managing director of VAWCRC.

Triticarte's technology enables wheat breeders to accurately identify genetic traits. This in turn allows them to select plants containing genes that promote advantageous characteristics, including higher yield and improved sprout tolerance, which is critical in Australian conditions.

This more versatile grain will also deliver qualities needed for the improvement of products such as noodles, biscuits, pasta or bread.

The \$76 million research program was jointly funded by VAWCRC and the GRDC.

The project is also receiving substantial industry support. Active long term partners include Arnotts Biscuits and Allied Mills. The former has contributed nearly \$3 million to the VAWCRC and is already using improved wheats from the research programs in its biscuit products.

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