

# GRDC reviews variety trials

Commercial scale variety trials vital to the future of the grains industry will be improved following an extensive consultative review of the National Variety Trials (NVT) by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

The NVT program is managed by the Australian Crop Accreditation System Limited (ACAS) under a service agreement with GRDC and involves more than 580 trials sown at over 250 locations each year. Crops tested include wheat, barley, triticale, oats, canola, lupins, lentils, field peas, faba beans and chickpeas.

Dr Juan Juttner, GRDC project manager pre-breeding says the review – planned at the establishment of the NVT in 2005 – incorporated more than 360 group and individual submissions.

“Consultation with NVT stakeholders from across the industry has been highly beneficial to the future of the trials,” Juan said. “Every group or individual who provided a submission or was involved in the review received a summary of the review’s outcomes. The summary is also available for download from the GRDC website.

“Many comments indicated a need for a formalised mechanism for stakeholder involvement in NVT operations,” Juan said. “An advisory committee system across Australia will now be established to provide input into the trials to ensure the NVT system continues to improve its delivery of key data to stakeholders.

“The review helped identify ways to



**GRDC northern panelist and wheat breeder John Sheppard inspects NVT trials in Central Queensland. The nation-wide trials have recently undergone a major review by GRDC.**

strengthen and expand the role NVT plays in providing reliable information about the performance of new varieties to growers, consultants and breeders.”

Separate committees will be established for wheat, barley and coarse grains, canola, and pulses.

“GRDC will appoint three representatives from among growers or grower groups; one representative each from the west, north and south growing regions on each of these four committees,” Juan says.

“Advisory committees are the main innovation to the NVT program following the review and the solution addresses many of the issues raised during the industry consultation.”

Trial standards are also to be improved, with GRDC accepting the need to audit every NVT trial site at least once every year, starting in 2009.

Service providers to the NVT program can also expect to see GRDC reinforce staged payments and penalties built into the next funding period. In recognition of growth in the service provider sector, the GRDC expects to hold open, multi-stage tenders.

Additional changes are also in the pipeline, including making trial results available in hardcopy.

**See a summary of the NVT Review Report from the GRDC website:**  
[www.grdc.com.au/director/events/onfarmtrials/nvtreview](http://www.grdc.com.au/director/events/onfarmtrials/nvtreview)

## Crop competition off to the top of the class

Grain Growers Association (GGA) has launched a crops competition targeting agriculture students in Australian and New Zealand universities.

The Australian University Crops Competition (AUCC) initiated by GGA with founding sponsor Syngenta Crop Protection, has been developed to increase the knowledge and skill level of graduates and to help bolster young people into a career in the cropping industry.

Competition participants will be assessed in the areas of seed identification and analysis, pulse identification and analysis, grain grading, crop assessment including disease and weed identification, a business case and further processing (with relevance to the end user).

GGA Chairman John Eastburn says with the average age of Australian farmers increasing, the AUCC is one way GGA is encouraging young people to cement a rewarding career in agriculture.

### Attractive career path

“GGA is committed to programs such as the AUCC which not only raise the profile of agriculture as a career choice but provide participants with both knowledge and resources to better prepare graduates entering into a career in the grains industry,” John said.

The AUCC has three main objectives:

- Increase the pool of intelligent and enthusiastic young grain industry representatives;
- Increase the connectivity between universities, degrees and the rural industry; and,
- Enhance Australia’s international reputation and connectivity to the global grains market.

The competition will be held over 2½ days in Temora, NSW commencing Friday September 25 and concluding on the Sunday. The competition provides a relaxed competitive environment where GGA can assist students to develop their confidence and communications skills, as well as acquire and apply knowledge of the practical aspects cropping and business decision making.

The top five place getters will win a fully hosted four day international industry study tour.

The competition is open to all Australian and New Zealand universities and GGA is now seeking expressions of interests from both universities and individual students.

**For more information on the AUCC visit**

[www.unicropscomp.com.au](http://www.unicropscomp.com.au)

**Competition Development:**

**Grain Growers Association Ph: 02 9886 2200 or 1800 620 519**

**Competition Management:**

**Event Directors Pty Ltd Ph: 02 4333 6039**