

Media release

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Scientists collaborate to improve wheat for pasta

Australian, Italian and German researchers are meeting at the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics (ACPF) in Adelaide to discuss ways to improve durum wheat. Durum wheat is a hard wheat used to make pasta.

“Durum wheat is a less reliable crop for Australian and Italian farmers than bread wheat,” said Professor Peter Langridge, from ACPF. “But there’s plenty of scope for improving durum with new breeding technologies, because it hasn’t been studied as thoroughly as bread wheat.”

Scientists from the durum working group are meeting in Adelaide on 2nd-3rd January to draft a white paper detailing opportunities to enhance their collaboration. The durum group is part of the G20’s International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement.

At the Adelaide durum workshop, scientists from ACPF and the ARC Centre of Excellence in Plant Cell Walls will meet with researchers from Germany and Italy. In addition to scientific talks, the researchers will meet with representatives of the Government of South Australia and the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC). Both the SA government and the GRDC have shown strong support for the durum industry.

Australian durum is used in domestic pasta manufacture and for export. San Remo, in Adelaide, is the largest domestic user of durum wheat. Australia’s main export market for durum is Italy.

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ACPF scientists are improving cereal crops’ tolerance to environmental stresses such as drought, heat, salinity and nitrogen use efficiency. These stresses are a major cause of yield and quality loss throughout the world and cause significant problems for cereal growers. For more information on ACPF visit www.acpfg.com.au

