



Media release

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development
and Fisheries
The Honourable Mark Furner

Superstar scientists supporting state's sorghum industry

World-class research from Queensland's leading scientists is supporting significant growth in the state's sorghum industry and boosting exports to markets around the world.

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner said his department had been leading the way in developing new varieties of sorghum for over 60 years.

"Over the last three years we have licensed more than 120 improved genetic lines to private breeders, who then use these lines to deliver pest-resistant, high-yielding hybrids to Queensland farmers," Mr Furner said.

"We are investing in innovation so that our farmers can take on the world.

"Department of Agriculture and Fisheries scientists work with the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI) and Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) to grow sorghum varieties that are more resistant to pests and diseases, while also providing higher yields.

"Queensland growers now produce some of the highest yielding rain-fed sorghum crops anywhere in the world."

The gross value of sorghum production is estimated to reach \$552m in 2018/19, well above the five-year average, thanks to large increases in crop plantings and stronger world prices.

Mr Furner said the scientists' work was also working closely with industry.

"Because of the work done on midge resistance by my department and QAAFI, producers have substantially reduced use of insecticides and have greater flexibility in planting dates," Mr Furner said.

"Our partnership model with private breeders is respected around the world as an effective way to link leading crop research to better farmer outcomes."

Mr Furner said the Queensland sorghum industry was well placed to take advantage of the surging global demand for the crop.

"In Australia, sorghum is primarily used for stock feed but the cereal is a staple food for millions of people around the world in countries like India and Ethiopia," he said.

"There's also room to grow in Asia, where sorghum is used to make the Chinese liquor baijiu, the most widely consumed alcoholic spirit in the world.

"That is why the Queensland Government is continuing to co-invest with GRDC and QAAFI in DAF's sorghum breeding program, so that our farmers can continue to be the best and help feed the world."

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Images:

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