



Media release

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development
and Fisheries

The Honourable Mark Furner

Queensland researchers launch new mungbean 'gem'

Queensland Government plant breeders have outshone themselves again, developing a new disease-resistant variety of mungbean with high yield potential.

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner said 'Opal-AU' is the latest gem from Queensland's globally-recognised mungbean breeding program and will be available for growers to buy in late 2020.

"The Queensland Government continues to support farmers by developing and commercialising superior mungbean varieties with high grain yield, resistance to bacterial disease and the highest grain quality demanded by export markets," Mr Furner said.

"Opal-AU is the sixth variety released since the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) National Mungbean Improvement Program began in the early 2000's.

"Since 2003, the Department's research and development has underpinned a quadrupling of Australian mungbean production, and its mungbean varieties have 99 per cent market share.

"The Queensland Government is currently investing \$3.3 million dollars in a five-year mungbean breeding program and is also supporting growers with \$1 million to research on-farm storage of tropical pulses."

DAF Principal Research Scientist for pulse crops Col Douglas said the new variety represents the most significant breakthrough in protection against halo blight in large seeded mungbeans.

"Opal-AU has the best protection from this bacterial disease and will significantly lift the productivity and reliability of mungbean in southern production areas where the disease is more prevalent," Mr Douglas said.

"Grain yield was 28 per cent higher than the next best variety in seven years of trials from Southern Queensland to Northern New South Wales.

"The new variety has good early vigour with agronomy and maturity equivalent to the other large-seeded varieties Crystal and Jade-AU."

Mungbeans are one of Queensland's tropical pulse success stories, worth \$100 million each year at the farm gate.

The preferred summer rotation crop in Queensland, 100,000 hectares of mungbeans are planted each year, with prices of \$1,000 per tonne and a crop duration of 100 days providing quick cash flow to growers.

Based at the Hermitage Research Facility at Warwick, Department's mungbean breeding program is a joint investment with the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

GRDC Chair John Woods said the development of Opal-AU was an example of yet another successful collaboration between DAF and the GRDC that would benefit grain growers.

"It is imperative that, as an industry, we continue to invest in new varieties that offer our growers the genetic tools they need to combat costly diseases, lift production and drive increased profitability," Mr Woods said.

"The GRDC is committed to working with research partners, such as DAF, to continue to deliver improvements in crop varieties that have a significant positive impact on growers' bottom lines.

"This new variety shows promise as a higher yielding mungbean option with improved resistance to halo blight and I am sure that will appeal to growers."

Seed of Opal-AU will be available through commercial partner the Australian Mungbean Association (AMA) in late 2020.

Media contact: Ron Goodman **0427 781 920**

Download video of the new Opal-AU mungbean variety at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/myfd98951a2jo9b/MungBeans%20OpalAU%20DAF.mp4?dl=0>