



## CLIMA Media Release

**13.10.04**

### **FULL OF BEANS**

WA faba bean growers are set to benefit from a new phase of the National Faba Bean Improvement Program, which will develop new varieties for the western and southern agricultural regions of Australia.

Better varieties could lead to a rapid expansion of the industry, with land suitable for faba bean production in WA estimated at 150,000 hectares.

Scaddan grower Mark Wandel said new varieties generated by the Program and its WA lead agency, Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA), would be a huge improvement for WA's faba bean industry.

His family has grown them since the mid 1980s and has 900 hectares in this year.

Disease, primarily ascochyta blight and chocolate spot, was the main limiting factor to faba bean production on their property.

"Faba bean production has huge potential in WA, especially in southern areas where they can be grown well. Trials in the area have yielded up to three and a half tonnes and our's look like they could go two tonnes if we get a soft finish," Mr Wandel said.

His family's 'dream bean' would have high disease resistance and pods that set in cooler weather.

Kerry Regan of the Department of Agriculture and CLIMA will supervise the Grains Research and Development Corporation project.

According to Ms Regan, faba beans are potentially an important industry for WA.

WA faba bean production has involved three varieties, Fiord, Ascot and Fiesta.

"While they have allowed a profitable industry to be established, their limited resistance to the major diseases, chocolate spot and ascochyta, has restricted expansion of the industry," she said.

Fiesta, however, had shown good field resistance to chocolate spot and attractive seed coat colour in a number of trials and farmers' crops in WA.

“The breeding program will provide a much needed confidence boost for growers, with resistance to chocolate spot and ascochyta a priority for any new varieties.

“Greater yield stability and higher seed quality, to better satisfy Middle East markets, will also be targeted so WA growers can better compete in a global export market.

“There are exciting developments in the variety pipeline, which, when combined with better management packages, promise substantial advantages to WA faba bean growers,” Ms Regan said.

**[www.clima.uwa.edu.au](http://www.clima.uwa.edu.au)**

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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Kerry Regan, Tel 08 6488 1983 or 08 9368 3515, Mark Wandel, Tel 08 9075 3043

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FabaWandel.jpg – Scaddan graingrower Mark Wandel pictured on October 5 surveying a crop of Fiesta faba beans, sown on 750mm row spacings.