



## **SARDI oat breeding personnel move on after acquisition of the program by InterGrain**

**SARDI farewelled long-time Oat Breeder Dr. Pamela Zwer, Oat Breeding Manager Peter McCormack, Senior Technical Officer Mark Hill, and Oat Technical Officer Peter Wheeler in early March and April following the transition of the program to InterGrain, a private plant breeding company. Sue Hoppo, Research Scientist, Michelle Williams, Senior Research Officer, and Kerry Lee McMurray, Technical Officer, remain in SARDI/ Primary Industries South Australia with different roles.**

Dr. Pamela Zwer joined SARDI (South Australian Research and Development Institute) in 1995, after receiving her PhD at the University of California, Davis. She worked at the University of Sydney and Oregon State University before being recruited as principal oat breeder for SARDI. Pamela was forward-thinking and established linkages with oat millers such as long-term program collaborator Uncle Toby's, re-focusing the program on milling quality. The focus on beta-glucan and the cardiovascular benefits of oat products was world leading, with SARDI-bred varieties now in virtually all Australian oat food products. Over Pamela's career at SARDI she released eight hay, nine milling, and two feed oat varieties. She was also involved with the development of six oat varieties at the University of California while completing her PhD and five wheat varieties while at Oregon State University and Michigan State University.

Peter McCormack started his career at the Department of Agriculture in 1983 as Manager of Minnipa Ag Centre, then as Manager Foundation Seed before moving over to the Oat Program in 2003. Peter has been instrumental in managing the commercialisation of varieties, the logistics of the program, and industry relationships nationally and internationally.

Peter Wheeler worked as a field officer in the program for 16 years. His dedication and commitment have been invaluable and his work in the field greatly contributed to the success of the program.

Sue Hoppo received her BAgSc with Honours from the University of Adelaide in 1986 and joined the oat breeding program in 1989. She was the interim leader between the first oat breeder Andrew Barr leaving the program in 1994 and Pamela joining in 1995, and has been involved in the release of 20 oat varieties in her 32 years with the program.

Mark Hill worked as the leader of the South Australian field program in his nine years with the program. Michelle Williams was instrumental in developing NIR calibrations for screening both grain and hay quality traits, as well as testing 1000's of oat lines screened over her 18 years in the program. Kerry Lee McMurray managed glasshouse activities and the successful oat crossing component, as well as the physical quality screening of breeding lines over 10 years.

SARDI has led the national oat breeding program in conjunction with Grains RDC and Agrifutures for the past 20 years. During this time, the National Oat Breeding Program bred varieties for the export hay industry and milling oats, releasing 17 oat varieties since 2001. The



program's eight hay varieties make up more than 80% of export hay produced in Australia, with the nine milling oat varieties making up more than 90% of milling oats produced in Australia. This is a formidable achievement by any program's standards.

We congratulate the oat team on their outstanding contribution to Australian agriculture and food industries and wish them all the best with their new endeavours.