



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER ANNOUNCES NEW LUCERNE BREEDING PARTNERSHIP

A new partnership between the NSW Government and a South Australian seed company has been formed to provide a new generation of highly productive lucerne varieties to farmers across Australia, Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, has announced.

The Minister launched the partnership while attending AgQuip at Gunnedah yesterday, one of Australia's largest primary industries events.

"This partnership will deliver new highly productive disease and pest resistant lucerne varieties to farmers," Katrina Hodgkinson said.

"It will also provide acid soil-tolerant varieties of lucerne for low pH soils."

The National Lucerne Alliance between NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Seed Distributors will enhance DPI's long established lucerne breeding program.

Lucerne is a highly productive, nutritious perennial legume and is an integral part of the State's agriculture, especially in the wheat-sheep zone.

An independent Australian forage seed company, Seed Distributors has been providing seed to farmers since 1997.

The company produces and supplies lucerne, medics, sub-clovers and other forage grasses and legumes and has the largest seed treatment facility in Australia.

"This alliance will boost the work which is already being carried out at the Tamworth Agricultural Institute, led by Dr Shoba Venkatanagappa.

"NSW DPI has a proven history in providing high performing lucerne varieties – including Aurora, Genesis, Venus and Pegasus.

"This new partnership will combine the breeding, evaluation and pathology expertise of NSW DPI's lucerne breeding program team with the seed production and marketing expertise of Seed Distributors," Ms Hodgkinson said.

The first seeds from the new partnership are expected to be commercially available in 2014.