

Bringing the whole grain back

14 June 2022 (Canberra) - Despite another record-breaking year for grain exports, Australians still aren't eating their recommended share of one of the nation's key commodities. That's why Whole Grain Week is encouraging Australians to eat more whole grains for better metabolic and planet health.

Most Australian adults only eat 1.5 serves (21g) of whole grains per day – which is not enough to support peak health according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Data shows that eating three serves (48g) per day is linked to a 20-30% reduction in risk of total mortality, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke and bowel cancer.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr. Matthew Cossey, said, "Despite the safe and abundant supply of fresh produce available to consumers, inadequate consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables continues to be one of the biggest risk factors of metabolic disease in Australia.

"Innovations in science and technology have strengthened our knowledge about the nutritional value in whole grain foods like wheat, rice, oats, barely, sorghum and rye grown here in Australia. Rather than chasing the latest expensive fad, these are the superfoods Australians should be eating more of if they are serious about good health.

"We now know that whole grains provide key nutrients like folate, thiamine, niacin, magnesium, zinc and protein which are essential for growth and development, but they're also an important prebiotic fibre which fosters beneficial gut microbiome.

"Plant science is also playing an important role in the nutrition potential of whole grains. GM crops currently being evaluated in field trials have improved essential nutrient uptake and bioavailability of minerals and vitamins such as iron and beta carotene which could be significant for people who don't eat enough red meat and those looking for more plant-based foods in their diet.

"Eating more whole grain foods is also a great way to eat more sustainably. They are some of the least resource intensive foods to produce, with advances in biotechnology developing climate resilient crops with greater yields and improved carbon sequestration to help mitigate climate change.

"We know that Australians are becoming more aware of the impact of their food choices on their health and the environment. To help with this, it's key that we get people back to the basics of eating enough whole grain foods produced by the world's best farmers, right here in our backyard," Mr Cossey concluded.

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About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the national peak industry organisation representing the plant science sector in Australia. CropLife's members are the world-leading innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and crop biotechnology products. The plant science industry, worth more than \$20 billion a year to Australian agricultural production, provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies key to the nation's agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability. CropLife is part of the plant science industry's 91 country international federation.