



## Media Release

### **Alliance breeds new wheat and new opportunities for Australia**

**Australia, Monday, July 23, 2001**

An alliance between AWB Limited and Syngenta Seeds will see new wheat varieties developed for Australian growers. Both companies believe the move will strengthen Australia's position in the global wheat market and further boost export earnings. A Memorandum of Understanding has been established, outlining their collaboration.

AWB Limited is the grower-owned and controlled marketer of Australian grain. Syngenta Seeds is a division of Syngenta - a leading provider of agricultural products in Australia and around the world, and a developer of new cereals technologies.

AWB Limited Chief Executive Andrew Lindberg said the alliance would add significantly to the diversity and value of Australia's plant breeding and cropping industries.

"AWB Limited's extensive knowledge of grain markets and grain quality, coupled with Syngenta Seeds' proven expertise in plant science, will deliver the best wheat varieties for production zones in Australia, with quality attributes targeted at the key markets for Australian wheat," Mr Lindberg said.

"This is also a great opportunity for the shareholders of AWB – who are predominantly Australia's wheat growers – to have some ownership of the rapidly growing plant science industry."

He said the alliance was a precursor to a joint venture agreement that would see the two companies own a subsidiary dedicated to the selection and breeding of wheat varieties for commercialisation in Australia, primarily through AWB Seeds.

Syngenta Seeds Oceania Managing Director Peter Gerner said the alliance would enhance the positioning of Australian grain as a top choice by overseas buyers and processors.

"We'll be looking for the best technology that Australia and the world has to offer, and be employing Australian scientists to carry out this research," Mr Gerner said.

"The end result will be a win for agricultural science and a win for all Australians whose livelihoods depend on our wheat industry."

Dr Lindsay O'Brien has been engaged by the companies to assist with the establishment of the alliance program. Dr O'Brien is one of Australia's leading wheat breeders and was until recently the Director of the Sydney University Plant Breeding Institute at Narrabri in NSW.

Through the alliance, the two companies will support pre-commercial research in areas such as breeding technologies and trait development to accelerate the introduction of innovative and advanced varieties that will enhance the profitability and competitiveness of Australian farmers in domestic and world cereals markets.

#### **Company information:**

**AWB Limited** is an Australian grower-owned grain marketing company with interests in grain pools, grain trading, seed commercialisation, storage and handling, grain transport, finance, risk management, grain research and development and food technology. The company through its subsidiary AWB (International) Limited is responsible for the export of Australia's wheat crop through the Single Desk selling system.

**Syngenta** is a world leading agribusiness. The company ranks first in crop protection, and third in the high-value commercial seeds market. Pro forma sales in 2000 were approximately US \$6.9 billion. Syngenta employs more than 20,000 people in over 50 countries. The company is committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative Research and Technology. Formed in November 2000 by the merger of Novartis Agribusiness and Zeneca Agrochemicals, Syngenta is listed on the Swiss stock exchange, and in London, New York and Stockholm. Further information is available at [www.syngenta.com](http://www.syngenta.com).

#### **Media Inquiries:**

Paul Ryan, AWB Limited Public Affairs on (03) 9209 2098 or 0408 347 282

Cheryl Gray, Syngenta Public Affairs on (02) 9688 0537 or 0404 041 175