CLIMA GROWS INTO PHASE THREE AT UWA

Innovation in legume science and technology remains the focus of the Centre for Legumes In Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) as it moves into its third phase as a research centre within the University of Western Australia (UWA).

CLIMA has been headquartered at UWA’s Crawley campus since commencing in 1992 as a Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) and transforming in 2000, after its CRC phase ended, into a research alliance between the WA Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA), UWA, CSIRO and Murdoch University.

The current memorandum of understanding between CLIMA and the four partners concludes June 30.

This week the CLIMA Board endorsed a plan to continue CLIMA as a research centre at UWA from July 1, with continued collaboration with DAFWA, CSIRO and Murdoch University.

Announcing the new phase, CLIMA Board Chairman and UWA Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Dean, Professor Alistar Robertson said industry input to CLIMA’s operations would be facilitated by the Advisory Board to the UWA Institute of Agriculture.

CLIMA Director from 2001 to 2006, Professor Kadambot Siddique, is Director of the Institute.

“I’m very pleased to advise all our partners in the farming community and industry that CLIMA will continue its R&D program, but with a fresh and sharpened focus,” Professor Robertson said.

“Productive, profitable legumes in rotations are a key to sustainable agriculture.

“CLIMA therefore will remain a central research centre, using its advanced local and international links to maintain the flow of new germplasm into our farming systems.”

Professor Neil Turner, who in August last year succeeded Professor Siddique as CLIMA Director, will continue in that role, as originally planned, until retiring at the end of June 2007, when UWA will appoint a new Director.
According to Professor Turner, who spent 30 years with CSIRO and has been involved with CLIMA since its inception, CLIMA will retain its focus on beneficial outcomes for WA growers and maintaining strong links to other Australian and overseas legume research groups.

The international links include several important projects with the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Syria and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India.

“This international collaboration has resulted in access to elite germplasm and faster selection and development of profitable grain and pasture legume varieties.

“In the past 14 years CLIMA has released more than 45 grain and pasture legume varieties, many of which are playing prominent roles in the farming system.

“CLIMA has also produced research outcomes with very significant benefits for WA farming systems, having trained more than 100 post-graduates in legume science, many of whom have made significant impacts on the industry,” Professor Turner said.

www.clima.uwa.edu.au

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Image: SothisTurner.JPG
Caption: CLIMA Director, Professor Neil Turner, DAFWA researchers Dr Angelo Loi and Bradley Nutt and GRDC Western Panel Chairman, Neil Young of Kojonup at the release this week of AGWEST Sothis, the world's first commercial variety of eastern star clover.