



CLIMA Media Release

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## **GIVE PEAS A CHANCE**

Australian growers should rotate new, alternative and traditional crops to improve their farming systems, according to Yantai Gan of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

“In Canada, there has been a rise in alternative crop plantings, such as legumes, to maximise profits from rotations, with field peas and lentils particularly increasing.

“In a rotation, I like lentils, but love chickpeas and therefore encourage WA growers to give peas a chance,” Dr Gan said.

At a recent Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) seminar, he discussed agronomic management options to optimise pulse crop benefits in the farming system, such as improved rotations incorporating chickpeas.

“Canada’s chickpea industry was devastated by ascochyta blight in 2002 and breeding programs have not yet developed a robust variety.

“Australia too has suffered badly from ascochyta, with epidemics since 1997 damaging the industry and shattering grower confidence,” Dr Gan said.

Based on potential national chickpea plantings of 400,000 hectares at \$400/ha, ascochyta resistant chickpeas could sustain a \$160 million Australian industry.

In WA, chickpeas are an excellent option for the 70 per cent of growers who use rotational cropping systems.

Dr Gan is visiting CLIMA on behalf of the Canadian government to investigate opportunities for improving pulse-based cropping systems for western Canada, particularly CLIMA’s world leading chickpea research and breeding program.

“Chickpeas are an important part of a profitable rotation, however, like in Australia, ascochyta is currently making the crop too risky for Canadian growers.

“CLIMA’s chickpea breeding programs are producing varieties with useful ascochyta resistance, which are further advanced than Canada’s programs.

“While in Australia, we’re investigating ways to minimise ascochyta in Canada and looking for opportunities for Australia-Canada collaborations,” Dr Gan said.

Dr Gan, CLIMA Director Professor Kadambot Siddique and Bill McLeod of the WA Department of Agriculture are compiling a definitive review of integrated ascochyta management.

**[www.clima.uwa.edu.au](http://www.clima.uwa.edu.au)**

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