



# MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

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## MEDIA STATEMENT

Attention: News Editor/Chief of Staff

16/02/05

### **Western Australia releases nation's first home-grown grasspea**

Agriculture Minister Kim Chance today unveiled a new legume crop for WA growers with the release of Ceora - the first grasspea cultivar to be bred in Australia.

The new Ceora grasspea is intended to fulfil a multi-purpose role as a low-cost, low-input grain legume, forage, hay or green manure crop.

When used as a legume rotation, Ceora will act as a break crop for root and stubble borne diseases of cereals, provide the opportunity for grass weed control, fix nitrogen and produce modest yields of relatively high protein grain.

Ceora was bred by the Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) in partnership with the WA Department of Agriculture.

"Ceora is an exciting and robust new legume crop which provides WA growers with an opportunity to diversify their farming system," Mr Chance said.

"It is a hardy annual legume with a growth habit and yields similar to or slightly less than field peas.

"Ceora is also well adapted for low to medium rainfall areas, with superior tolerance to waterlogging and infertile soils compared to most other crop species. It is also relatively drought tolerant and disease resistant."

The superior disease tolerance of grasspea compared to field pea or vetch means that grasspea may be sown from mid-April onward as a grain, forage, hay or green manure crop.

Ceora's drought tolerance will enable later sowings where a delay is required for weed control or to fit with the sowing of other crops.

Grasspea, also known as chickling-pea, indian-pea or khesari, has a long history of cultivation for human food and forage in central southern Europe, North Africa, Ethiopia, West Asia, the Indian sub continent and China.

While there is no world trade in grasspea grain, the immediate end uses for grain are likely to be in on-farm supplementary feeding.

"Ceora contains very low levels of the toxin ODAP, well below what is considered a safe threshold for human consumption and grazing livestock.

"Generally, grain is of excellent quality for animal feed. However, horses are the most sensitive animals and as a precaution should not be grazed on grasspea dominant pastures."

Mr Chance said CLIMA would not impose any royalty on seed of the new grasspea and had agreed to allow farmer to farmer trading after the first year.

CLIMA's position will enable growers to readily obtain seed and trial the variety on-farm.

The Department of Agriculture has developed a Farmnote on the agronomic characteristics of Ceora and best management practices to ensure growers have access to information about the new product.

The Farmnote is based on research funded by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, the Grains Research and Development Corporation, CLIMA and the Department of Agriculture.

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