



**Friday 7 May 2010**

### **New Zealand bread wheats better than ever**

Plant & Food Research's milling wheats have performed strongly in the Foundation for Arable Research's latest autumn wheat trial results.

Out this week, FAR's cultivar evaluation show Saracen, a wheat variety that has only been on the market for 2 seasons, achieved a 9.8tonne per hectare average.

Plant & Food's other breeds Excede, Wakanui and Conquest also received glowing reviews.

The wheat breeding programme at Plant & Food Research has been funded for the past eight years by Luisetti Seeds and Canterbury Seed.

Director Vincent Luisetti said the milling wheats bred at Plant & Food had to go through a rigorous screening process because farmers needed consistency and reliability.

"Cultivars like Saracen and Conquest will be around for many seasons because they are bred for New Zealand conditions. Imported cultivars have been bred for certain climatic conditions. They may perform well for a year or two until something unique to New Zealand, like a new strain of rust, hits the crop and down they go.

"New Zealand has a particular problem with rust so we are breeding to overcome that.

"For many years New Zealand cultivars have not provided the reliability and quality that flour mills need, hence the widespread use of Australian wheat, but over the past few seasons we have provided cultivars that can replace Australian wheat, meaning New Zealand flour mills can now use a 100% New Zealand wheat grist.

"When we release our New Zealand-bred cultivars, we have 8 years of trial data so we know they are going to be successful and tend to last in the marketplace long term. Having the FAR results confirm our results is great."

What FAR's results didn't show were the additional strengths of the Plant & Food-bred milling wheats, such as their ability to cope with fewer inputs, Luisetti said.

Trials that used a lot of inputs could mask just how effective these NZ cultivars were.



“They are bred for straw strength and disease resistance. That means they often don’t need the 3 - 4 fungicide treatments common in field trials. Less insecticide and less plant growth regulators are also required.

“Many other cultivars won’t perform very well without a high level of inputs.”

Since its commercial release two years ago, Saracen and its fellow cultivar Conquest had performed consistently and predictably.

Farmers were now finding them easy to grow and millers pay a premium for the wheat as it was very well suited to their dough requirements.

“For farmers wanting crops that are reliable, easy to grow and be paid a premium, NZ-bred Plant & Food milling wheats are the way to go.”

Ends

**For more comment please contact**

**Vincent Luisetti  
Luisetti Seeds  
(03) 313 7176**