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Media Release

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The Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) is looking to 2009 with renewed vigor after the appointment of Dr Nicole Jensen as the new Executive Officer last week.

Dr Jensen has a strong background in plant breeding and information management in the seed industry in Australia and the US.

Dr Jensen has a PhD in quantitative genetics and plant breeding, and was a Wheat Breeding Research Officer at the Leslie Research Centre from 1997 to 2000. In that role she was one of the original breeders of the wheat cultivar EGA Stampede, which was released in May as a high-yielding feed wheat variety.

Dr Jensen later worked with Pioneer Hi-Bred International in the United States.

GRFL chairman Damien Scanlan said Dr Jensen's appointment is a huge win, not only for the GRFL, but for Australian agriculture.

"Nicole is an outstanding candidate and we are very excited to have someone with her experience and knowledge join the GRFL," he said.

"It's wonderful to see people like Nicole coming back to work in the Australian grains industry. GRFL is passionate about attracting people of Nicole's caliber to the industry so we are delighted to have her on board."

"The GRFL has several major issues to tackle in the coming year and we look forward to Nicole's contribution to these debates."

Dr Jensen said she's also looking forward to working with members of the GRFL.

"This role offers me a unique opportunity to work with grain growers, research providers, funding organisations and agribusiness to ensure research is done that will help grain growers maintain profitable and sustainable businesses," she said.

The GRFL Board met for an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Toowoomba on November 26, marking the Foundation's first 12 months in operation.

Mr Scanlan delivered his annual Chairman's Report at the meeting and focused on the key achievements of the Foundation in its first year.

“Over the past 12 months we have entered into Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with AgForce Grains and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) which reinforce the Foundation’s key objective of representing the grain industry’s views on research, development and extension,” he said.

“We have had a real focus on increasing the awareness and influence of grain growers through our four Research Advisory Committees (RACs).”

Mr Scanlan said the GRFL would need to build on the achievements of the past 12 months by addressing key issues such as carbon trading and RD&E investment in 2009.

“We’ll be focusing on these issues as well as some other crucial problems such as the need to attract more students to the field of agricultural science and retain them in our RD&E programs,” he said.

“We also need to closely monitor the restructuring of crop breeding programs. Recent restructuring has resulted in governments withdrawing from crop breeding programs and the private sector significantly expanding its role in this field.”

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Caption

Dr Nicole Jensen is looking forward to tackling some key issues in the grains industry as the new GRFL Executive Officer.

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