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Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) Chairman Damien Scanlan believes a decision by Enterprise Grains Australia (EGA) to sell its wheat breeding program will create almost a monopoly in wheat breeding programs throughout eastern Australia.

EGA announced this morning that the South Australian based company, Australia Grain Technology (AGT), will take control of its wheat breeding programs which include the QDPIF breeding programs.

Mr Scanlan is disappointed that a partnership with growers wasn't considered and said the Western Australian Government recently restructured its wheat breeding program without the need to introduce non grower private equity

Mr Scanlan said Queensland growers have a right to be concerned that their interests won't be properly represented in future breeding programs.

"This will essentially be a South Australian breeding effort and we are concerned about how Queensland growers might have some input into breeding priorities for the north," he said.

"The decision brings almost a monopoly in wheat breeding and that will mean very little competition in the way end point royalties are collected."

"At the end of the day, this has been a pretty clumsy effort by GRDC to rationalise the wheat breeding programs of the EGA."

Mr Scanlan said this decision has severed the partnership between grain growers and the Queensland Government through the former Queensland Wheat Breeding Institute in Toowoomba, which is now known as the Leslie Centre.

Queensland grain growers have invested millions of dollars in the centre since the late 1950s - helping to establish it as a world class wheat breeding facility.

Mr Scanlan said the Queensland Government now needs to demonstrate a commitment to continuing some kind of research partnership with growers.

"The Livestock Wheat Breeding Program, which focuses on producing varieties that are appropriate for livestock and industrial purposes such as Ethanol, is still operating within the DPI's Leslie Centre and I believe there is a real opportunity for growers to take some ownership of this program," he said.

"We feel there is a role there for the Grains Research Foundation Ltd and we will be requesting of the Government that they demonstrate their commitment to a partnership with growers through the Livestock Wheat Breeding Program."

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