

## Farmer's keen as mustard on biofuels scheme

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Grains | Lara Ladyman

Until now if you saw a crop of yellow you could say with confidence it was canola, but this year 600ha of mustard has been sown in WA with the aim of driving a biofuels industry.

Pingelly farmers John and Michelle Hassell are among a handful of WA farmers who have started growing mustard, which is earmarked for biodiesel production.

The Hassells are also directors of a company BioWorks Pingelly, a franchise of Bioworks Australia, which wants to set up biodiesel processing plants in regional areas so farmers will be able to toll process their canola or mustard crops.



John Hassell, of Pingelly, in a field of mustard, destined for biofuel.

In the immediate term, Mr Hassell said BioWorks Pingelly would be producing biodiesel and selling it to fuel companies, but the real goal was for farmers to toll process their own crops.

"The whole point is for a regionally- based business where the fuel is grown and used in the region and that provides employment," he said.

Pingelly is set to be home to the first of Bioworks' franchised biodiesel processing plants installed in WA, due to arrive in the town in the next month.

It will be able to process three million litres a year of canola, cooking oils, mustard or tallow.

The biofuels processing plant will make use of the mothballed CBH bins at Pingelly. They were to be bulldozed until the storage and handler changed its policy after the Mt Sheridan grower relations disaster when their bins were flattened.

Mr Hassell said there were also good opportunities for the by-products, including selling canola meal to local feedlots and using the glycerol for fertiliser and a wetting agent.

He said growing mustard was just like growing canola, although the seed did not shed so it did not need swathing, which saved \$20 a hectare off the bat.

While there were no triazine-tolerant (TT) varieties at the moment, he believed genetic modification and dedicated breeding programs for mustard to suit WA conditions would lead to big yield advances and better varieties.

He hoped his 50ha of mustard will yield 1.6 tonnes per hectare .

His best canola crop has only made 1.2 tonnes per hectare in the past. "The mustard is looking quite exciting for yield opportunity," he said.

Mr Hassell said the mustard was treated the same as a crop of non- TT canola. He added that it had benefits for lower rainfall areas because in a dry finish mustard would do a lot better than canola.

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