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HORSHAM LEADING PLANT-BASED PROTEIN INNOVATION

The Andrews Labor Government is putting Victoria on the map as a leader of alternative proteins by fast-tracking research and innovation to target new markets and consumers while supporting more local jobs.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the Grains Innovation Precinct at Horsham SmartFarm to announce \$12 million from the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* to fund a state-of-the-art glasshouse and incubation hub – supporting grain crop industries to diversify into the plant-based protein market.

The new glasshouse will help to advance research and innovation in plant varieties that are climate resilient, have higher protein content and support the growing demand for plant-based foods including those made from lentils, chickpeas, field peas and almonds.

The SmartFarm is already home to two new glasshouses which were recently completed, supported by an additional \$10 million co-investment partnership with the Grains Research & Development Corporation.

The project replaced six 50-year-old glasshouses with world-class facilities to accelerate the delivery of more profitable lentil and field pea varieties for Victorian growers.

Western Victoria is a state leader in producing crops that can be used in plant-based protein products such as lentils, faba bean, field peas and canola. Once complete, the glasshouse complex will help maximise the region's capabilities and opportunities to tap into new markets, support jobs and boost future investment.

The glasshouse will also support innovation at a new Science and Business Incubation Hub — a space where Agriculture Victoria, entrepreneurs and industry can come together to collaborate and explore product opportunities for plant-based proteins.

The hub will include a collaboration space to house commercial start ups and attract and secure postgraduate students, as well as offering facilities such as a test kitchen and analytic equipment to explore opportunities for alternative proteins.

The Labor Government is enhancing the commercialisation of research through its 10-year Agriculture Strategy while ensuring the state's agriculture sector is well placed to be stronger, more innovative and sustainable. For more information visit: agriculture.vic.gov.au/about/agriculture-strategy

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"As demand for plant-based proteins continues to increase we are helping our scientists fast-track research into breeds that can be targeted to new markets and consumers, while boosting more jobs in regional Victoria."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"The Horsham Grains Innovation Centre is world renowned and this investment will secure the Wimmera as a world leader in producing the plant-based proteins that consumers are increasingly demanding while supporting successful businesses and creating jobs."

Quote attributable to Grains Research and Development Corporation Managing Director Nigel Hart

"Through our partnership with the Victorian Government, the recently completed glasshouses will accelerate solutions to some of Victoria's grain growers' most pressing constraints such as drought, frost, disease and pests."

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