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[HEADLINE] On the search for the best wheat

A bumper wheat harvest is forecast just in time for growers to enter the state's annual wheat competition.

Run by AgShows NSW (the peak body for 192 shows), the long-standing Suncorp Bank Championship Dryland Field Wheat Competition is judged across four regions ahead of the state final.

The top five crops in each region (northern, central, southern and western) are identified and then judged to determine the state winner which is announced in the new year.

"AgShows NSW Wheat Competitions are an indicator of top wheat crop yields and quality and an opportunity for other growers to look over the fence to see what varieties are performing well in the current growing season," AgShows NSW president Tim Capp said.

"Our judges look to the 2021 winners for excellent performing varieties to meet quality milling wheat supply demands," Mr Capp said.

"Although there will be challenges in judging this year due to ongoing regional restrictions, it is important to keep the competition running. Many growers are eagerly anticipating it."

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"We will be doing our best to continue to host the competition for growers, especially in a year when so many on-farm field days and events were cancelled because of the regional lockdowns."

Strengthening grain prices and recent rain is auguring well for the upcoming harvest, while mice plagues and sustained cold growing temperatures in certain areas of the state have impacted crops.

While the wheat competition is typically a yield-based competition, if a grower has made the best of the local season, spraying and feeding the crop to grow an optimal plant base it should perform well in this year's competition.

"You can generally pick a contender immediately. They are the wheat crops free from weeds and disease, typically a good even crop with flag leaf vigour and is generally in good condition. While we can only estimate yield and vigour, it is typically these top-judged crops that will produce the excellent quality milling grain that will be in high demand this season as the US, Canadian and EU crops are already considerably smaller than expected."

The cut off dates for competitions in each region as are follows

- Northern: 20 October
- Western: 3 November
- Central: 10 November
- Southern: 17 November

To enter, wheat growers need to compete through their local competition. A map of local competitions and the coordinator's details can be found <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?hl=en&ll=-32.1961689638088%2C148.175278&z=6&mid=1aluVffv-PKhVca-24MdMhsQOS8o>

This year's competition is sponsored by Suncorp Bank, The Land, Lowes Petroleum and Stoller Australia.

Past State Dryland Wheat Winners

Yarrabah Pastoral Company - 2020 (Central Region)

Scott & Julia McLeod - 2019 (Southern Region)

Illinois Farms Pty Ltd - 2018 (Central Region)

Past Durum State Winners

Glenn & Rachel Fernance - 2020 (Northern Region)

Richard and Michael Bowler - 2019 (Central Region)

Tamalie Farms - 2018 (Central Region))

[END]

NORTHERN

Baradine, Barraba, Bellata, Bingara, Boggabri, Bourke, Burren Junction, Coonamble, Crooble, Croppa Creek, Delungra, Garah, Gilgandra, Gulargambone, Gurley, Inverell, Manilla, Moree, Mungindi, Narrabri, Narromine, North Star, Nyngan, Tottenham, Walgett, Warialda, Warren, Wee Waa

CENTRAL

Alectown, Binnaway, Canowindra, Carcoar, Coolah, Coonabarabran, Cowra, Cudal, Cumnock, Dubbo, Dunedoo, Eugowra, Forbes, Grenfell, Gulgong, Gunnedah, Manildra, Mendooran, Merriwa, Molong, Parkes, Premer, Quandialla, Quirindi, Spring Ridge, Tambar Springs, Tamworth, Wellington, Werris Creek, Wirrinya, Woodstock, Yeoval

SOUTHERN

Albury, Arah Park, Boorowa, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Culcairn, Harden, Henty, Holbrook, Howlong, Illabo, Junee, Puccawan, Temora, The Rock, Wagga Wagga, Walbundrie, Wallendbeen, Young

WESTERN

Ardlethan, Bogan Gate, Barellan, Barmedman, Beckom, Berrigan, Bribbaree, Burcher, Condobolin, Caragabal, Corowa, Deniliquin, Finley, Ganmain, Griffith, Hillston, Lake Cargelligo, Leeton, Lockhart, Merriwagga, Narrandera, Oaklands, Peak Hill, Rand, Rankin Springs, Trundle, Tullamore, Tocumwal, Top Woodlands, West Wyalong, Weethalle, Ungarie, Urana