Awards honour state-of-the-art seed technology

A new product that enables growers to accurately identify seeds right down to their individual batch number has been recognised at the 2010/2011 DuPont Australia and New Zealand Innovation Awards.

A prestigious awards ceremony has celebrated inspiring advances in agricultural technology.

The biennial 2010/2011 DuPont Australia and New Zealand Innovation Awards, held in Melbourne, recognised the commercialisation of outstanding science and technology across a number of industries, including the agricultural sector.

Sponsored by Simplot, the Agriculture and Food Production award aimed to honour innovation in the development and implementation of sustainable agricultural production techniques and practices in Australia and/or New Zealand.

Winning the award was a pioneering product from AgTechnix called IntelliSeed™, which has been designed to enable seed, grain and other bulk commodities to be identified accurately and cost effectively right down to an individual batch number.

The technology works by applying IntelliSeed™ coating compounds in the same manner as other seed coating materials. Discrete batch identifiers are then applied as a topical application in the last phase of treatment in the form of DataDots, which enable a seed batch to be indentified within seconds using a field tool kit.

IntelliSeed™ also contains invisible covert identifiers that are required to be read via a reader and–providing growers can locate the coating on the seed–they can be read in the field.

Terry O'Brien, Managing Director of Simplot Australia, Agriculture and Food Production category sponsor, with Neil Mulcahy, Managing Director of AgTechnix. Photograph ©Cynthia Sciberras

Managing Director of AgTechnix Neil Mulcahy said: "The benefit for the farmer is that if they buy a branded product and have concerns over the origin of the seed then they can identify the seed in the field or prior to sowing."

Mr Mulcahy said that for growers wanting to use the technology, AgTechnix could licence their current coating service provider or use existing coating technology that they might have access to.

AgTechnix also provides a comprehensive range of technology that allows for component materials to be supplied to seed coaters, seed owners and in some cases growers.

Mr Mulcahy explained that the cost of the process in most situations would only be a few cents (per kg seed) more than current material costs and that rates of application would vary based on seed size and type of treatment.

He said there was also a license fee to access the technology by species and an annual cost to hire the reader.

Finalists in the DuPont Innovation Awards' Agriculture and Food Production category also included Boomaroo Nurseries with an innovative Seedling Chemical Delivery System.

The fully automated technology is described as boasting increased efficiency, minimised chemical waste and pollution and its speed and accuracy is said to enable the company to deliver seedlings treated to growers' needs on demand.

The third finalist in the category was Industrial Research Ltd with a world first SuperEx portable supercritical fluid processing plant.

As well as Agriculture and Food Production, the award categories consisted of Building Innovation, Performance Materials, Design for a Sustainable Future, Medical and Healthcare and CSIRO Young Innovator.

DuPont Australia and New Zealand Managing Director Graeme Longe said: "It is a pleasure for DuPont (Australia) Ltd to once again recognise the home-grown innovation that is helping to provide solutions to some of the big challenges facing our growing population."

"This year's award winners include companies whose work is helping to make air travel safer; generating greater crop yields; providing protection, comfort and dignity to the ill and disabled; producing cleaner and less carbon-intensive sources of energy and revolutionising the face of modern architecture and construction."