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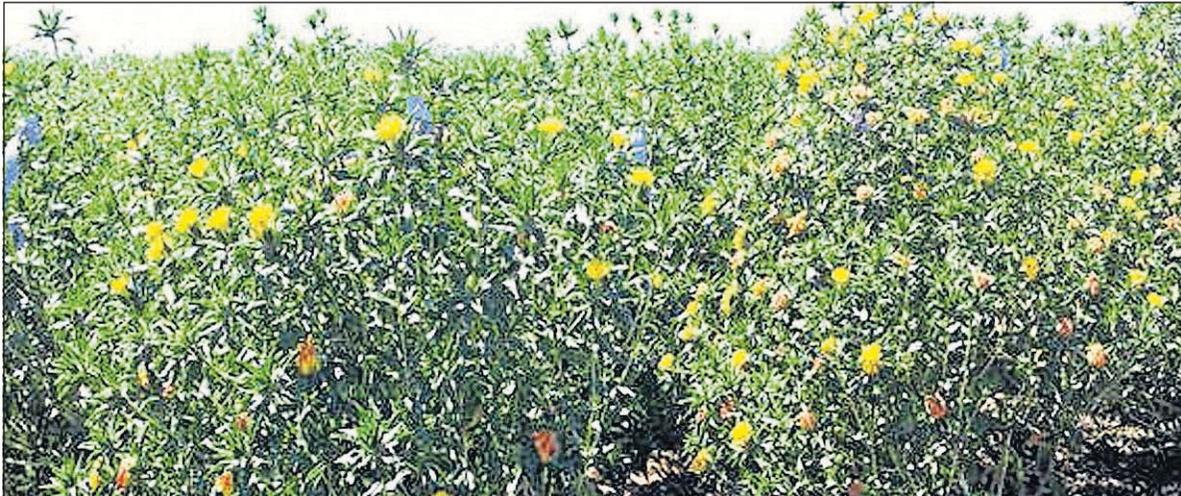
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**ALTERNATIVE CROP:** Super-high levels of oleic acid is being produced from Safflower seeds, creating a new high-value alternative crop for Australian farmers.

## Super safflower ready to blossom

THE CSIRO has entered into an agreement that positions Australian farmers to become leading producers of key bio-based raw materials needed for global industries to transition to a more renewable, sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

The agreement involves the licensing of a novel source of super-high purity oleic acid from safflower seeds to start-up firm GO Resources, and presents new high-value alternative crops.

Oleic acid is a mono-unsaturated fatty acid found in moderate amounts in most plant oils.

The stability of the acid makes it especially suitable for high-temperature industrial applications, such as lubricants and transformer fluids.

It can also be processed to build a range of complex polymers for use in bioplastics and surface coatings and even has uses in the pharmaceutical, cosmeceutical and home-care industries.

"We have produced a novel safflower-seed oil with super-high levels of oleic acid, in the vicinity of 92 per cent to 95pc," CSIRO Bioproducts program research director Allan Green said.

"The very high level of oleic acid purity that we have achieved opens up several high-value applications for the new oil as indus-

trial raw materials and substitutes for petrochemicals.

"Importantly, the future production of these oils and chemicals from crop plants will help us to remove excessive CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere rather than continuing to extract more crude oil from the ground."

The high levels of oleic acid purity opens up options as industrial raw materials and substitutes for petrochemicals

— ALLAN GREEN

Super-high oleic acid safflower is a key outcome of the Crop Biofactories Initiative – a long-term research partnership between the GRDC and the CSIRO launched in 2004.

"A major goal of the program was to develop crop options that address emerging markets, offering new alternatives for Australian growers," GRDC's Ron Osmond said.

"To that end, it is exciting to see the project reach this landmark stage, and to have attracted a commercial partner in GO

Resources to take this technology through the next phases of development and commercialisation."

The safflower crops can be grown in a number of farming regions, from southern Australia right through to central Qld.

But it is likely that growers in close proximity to oilseed-crushing facilities will be the first to take advantage of these new crops.

GO Resources is seeking expressions of interest from additional investors to support taking the technology to market, where the high-value oils offer an ecofriendly alternative in the industrial chemicals, lubricants and plastics sectors.

GO Resources director Trevor Gawne is excited by the prospects. "This is a real breakthrough for Australia," he said.

"Super-high oleic acid safflower marks a starting point for developing our sustainable industries of the future.

"We are delighted to be working with CSIRO and looking forward to taking the next steps in applying the technology to a new generation of bio-based products."

GO Resources expected Australian commercial production to start in 2018 and sought to expand Australian and international opportunities.