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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Maize Silage Quality Drives Specialist Breeding Programme**

The need for growers to obtain a consistent and reliable high quality from their maize silage crops has been a key driver for HSR Seeds Maize Research and Development programme, according to HSR Seeds Marketing Manager Kevin Collingridge. Maize silage is widely acknowledged as a superior feed in terms of supplying bulk energy, particularly in the dairy and beef feedlot industries. "There have been issues though with the ability to grow and manage the crops from planting right through to the final chopping and filling of the silage bunkers" he said." Basically what has happened on a number of farms is that growers are not quite getting the agronomy right to grow a high producing crop, but also have not had the experience needed in managing the process from chopping through to the final rolling and covering of the silage in the pits or bunkers. "We are a long way better off now though, as there are a number of very good silage contractors and consultants who have brought forward better management techniques, which they are sharing with the growers. Apart from that improvement, there has still been a rather large gap in having silage specialist hybrids to choose from. A lot of maize grown previously for silage has simply been hard feed corn varieties that can perform well agronomically in a district, but have a harder, flintier grain which can be less digestible. The problem with these harder grain types is that there is a direct relationship between the amount of starch available in the corn kernels and the energy value of the final feed. The softer and starchier the kernel quality, then basically the better utilization of that feed by the animal.

HSR Seeds have been breeding silage specialist corns using high Dent type kernel characteristics attempting to provide improved final feed values in the silage sample. Olympiad is one of these varieties and it is winning over many growers who can see for themselves the improved feeding value from the Olympiad silage. Apart from its kernel construct, Olympiad offers a number of other advantages such as a high cob to stover ratio, very high yield potential, excellent disease resistance, and good drought tolerance. It is being grown widely across all maize growing areas of Australia, and has performed particularly well on the Darling Downs. Mr. Collingridge emphasized the need to manage the agronomy well, as no matter how good a variety is, the final yield will come down the growing environment and the basic skills of the farmer. Olympiad is also excellent on the early plant he stated. Our "Jumpstart" varieties such as Olympiad and Hannibal are guaranteed by us to be able to be sown at 10degrees C.