

Embargo until 10am Thursday 30 April 2015

Media Release

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Timaru farmers claims barley world record for New Zealand

The Exclusive Grain Group has confirmed Timaru farmers Warren and Joy Darling are now the Guinness World Records® (GWR) holders for the highest barley yield. The world record attempt took place on Friday 23 January 2015 and was ratified by GWR on Wednesday 15 April 2015 with a yield of 13.8 metric tonnes per hectare with the Blackman Agriculture bred variety 776.

With the barley world record unbroken for 25 years, the three month verification wait from GWR was long and stressful. "There was absolutely no doubt that we had achieved the 13.8 metric tonnes of yield and we had followed the GWR protocol independently assessed by SGS here in New Zealand," said Warren Darling. "It was like being back in school knowing you had done really well on a test but until you receive the final mark, it is an anxious time," he commented.

The Darlings started unknowingly towards their quest five years ago when they changed their farming practise to nurture soils through minimum cultivation and ensuring they had the right equipment from Power Farming. "We studied and worked closely with Ballance Agri-Nutrients to ensure we had built our base fertility and to mitigate nutrient losses from our system," said Darling. At that time the Poplar Grove farmers did not realise a world record barley yield was even possible.

The world record became reality when the Darlings tried John Blackman's autumn sown variety 776 in 2013 achieving 11.5 metric tonnes per hectare. Working with Canterbury Seed led to a slight agronomy change and a focus on timing of inputs - they then realised the previous record of 12.2 metric per hectare was possible.

"We used Bayer products for the majority of our agrochemical inputs for seed treatment, weed management and disease control and we got it right. With regard to seed, it's ironic that John Blackman is a world renowned wheat breeder and we achieved the record with the last barley from his stable," said Darling. Throughout the season Agronomy Solutions played an integral part with variable rate soil mapping as well as ensuring all the agronomy complied with the requirements of the record.

All three generations of the Darling family came together on the day of the record attempt - it was a real family affair and a momentous day for the Poplar Grove team. "The satisfaction from achieving world record status is incredible," said Darling. "It is outstanding that the South Canterbury region of New Zealand is recognised on the global stage for growing world record breaking crops."

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For more information

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About the Exclusive Grain Group

The Exclusive Grain Group is a program administered by Canterbury Seed in conjunction with UK wheat breeder John Blackman (Blackman Agriculture Ltd) to develop wheat and some barley cultivars specifically bred, selected and trialled for New Zealand growing conditions

Growers who belong to this group enjoy amongst other benefits, exclusive access to the Blackman breeding program and varieties along with the potential to realise financial gain from new higher yielding cereal cultivars.

www.exclusivegraingroup.co.nz

Participating Companies

Participating companies in the Guinness World Record attempt include the Exclusive Grain Group (Blackman Agriculture UK and Canterbury Seed), Agronomy Solutions, Ballance Agri-Nutrients, Bayer CropScience, CLAAS Harvest Centre Canterbury, Power Farming Timaru and Rabobank.