



HISTORIC FIRST: Eyre Peninsula farmers Tom Blinhead, Strabky Bay, Dean Waters, Wudinna; Gus Glover, Lock; Mike Wike, Darke Peak; and Graham Waters, Wudinna, at Port Lincoln for the loading of EP Grain's first export shipment of wheat, which is destined for Iraq.

Wheat export coup for EP

By PAULA THOMPSON

EP GRAIN has loaded its first export shipment of grain – 50,000 tonnes of wheat for Iraq.

The wheat – due to be shipped from Port Lincoln yesterday (Wednesday) on the MV Hellenic Skyon – will be used in flour milling.

EP Grain is a joint venture between grower cooperative FREE, Eyre and grain trader Emerald.

Chairman Mike Chaseling said that the sale was strategically important for EP Grain, which buys wheat, barley and canola from Eyre Peninsula growers.

"The Middle East is a key market for us," he said. "We're pleased to be able to break into

Key points

- EP Grain's first overseas shipment
- 50,000t headed for Iraq
- Aim to be EP's number-one marketer

the Iraq market, which is particularly discerning from a quality point of view."

"South Australian grain is quite a hard grain, which is favoured by Middle East buyers," he said.

"We're also targeting South East Asian markets for higher-protein wheat. Because the EP is predominantly a feed barley area, we're looking at the traditional markets like Saudi Arabia."

Mr Chaseling said the company had big plans.

"The joint venture only started 12 months ago and last season we received more than 15 per cent of the total crop on EP," he said.

"We think for our first year this is a pretty good result, that puts us on track to meet our objective to be the number-one player on EP."

He hoped the company would receive at least 20 per cent of EP's overall crops this coming season.

"To be the number-one player, we'll need to receive in the order of 30 to 50pc of the crop," he said.

EP Grain general manager Tim Burrow said EP Grain had worked hard in conjunction with joint-venture partner Emerald –

which manages export sales – to make sure that grower customers gained access to important and quality-conscious markets.

"Iraq is a wheat market that is adamant about quality," Mr Burrow said.

"This shipment shows the strength of the EP Grain structure – allowing farmers from the Eyre Peninsula to take greater control of their marketing destiny by getting closer to our markets and focusing on quality.

"We will continue to focus on markets that will deliver dividends for our growers, where quality is paramount and valued.

"We believe this strategy will continue to assist us to maximise our growers' returns."