

New superfood growing in GV

By Geoff Adams

Movie stars are calling it the new superfood, and it's growing right here in the Goulburn Valley.

Gwyneth Paltrow likes it, and so does Victoria Beckham.

Although Western celebrities have only recently "discovered" teff, the grain has been a staple diet for Ethiopians for thousands of years.

Shepparton agricultural consultant Les Mitchell has been aware of teff's dietary properties for many years and about 25 years ago grew a crop in the Numurkah district, but couldn't sell the seeds for a decent commercial return.

About three years ago he tried again, with a crop at Pine Lodge and generated enough seed for a bigger venture on Craig Reynolds' Marionvale property.

"We had a fantastic crop," Mr Mitchell said, and it generated enough seed to mill to extract the flour.

He is developing a packaging and marketing plan in partnership with Ethiopian people who are familiar with the food.

Teff is attractive for some consumers because it is high in dietary fibre, protein and calcium, and is also gluten-free. It also contains vitamin K which is missing from some other grains.

Melbourne Ethiopian community leader Hailuel Gebre-Selassie, said the flour was used by Ethiopian people to make Injera, a type of flat bread.

Although it was already available in some supermarkets at about \$24/kg, the quality of some imported product was poor, he said.

Mr Gebre-Selassie, who has become a partner in the business with Mr Mitchell, said he expected Australian teff, grown by experienced croppers and properly milled, could achieve a far higher quality.



Nutritious . . . Teff flour is used to make Injera, which is like a flat bread.



Tiny . . . Teff seeds.

Mr Mitchell hopes the flour will be attractive to an estimated 20 000 Ethiopian people in Australia and could also find its own place among the emerging foods that health-conscious consumers are trying.

A commercial 500 g pack is about to be released for sale through health food shops and specialty food outlets.

Farmer Craig Reynolds grew the irrigated summer crop on 16 ha in between his other crop rotations and said it was not particularly difficult to grow.

The crop was sown in November last year and the fine seeds were harvested with a normal utter bar in March.

The crop also generated about 5 tonne/ha of straw which has been baled and offered for sale as stock feed.

■ The new company has a facebook page: [facebook.com/teffaustraliacompany](https://www.facebook.com/teffaustraliacompany)



Marketable . . . Hailuel Gebre-Selassie with Les Mitchell, and a packet of teff flour.



Successful crop . . . Hailuel Gebre-Selassie with farmer Craig Reynolds, on the property where teff was successfully grown and harvested last summer.



Growing well . . . The teff crop growing near Shepparton last summer.

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