



# Facility offers flexibility

**D**ryland agriculture in WA received a significant capacity boost recently with the opening of the ALOSCA Technologies manufacturing facility at Watheroo.

ALOSCA encapsulates Rhizobia in its world first clay granular technology, delivering inoculants to legume pastures and crops with minimal fuss, maximum life and maximum productivity.

Easier to handle than conventional slurry inoculation, ALOSCA allows dry sowing and more flexible seeding and is safe to use with pesticide seed dressings.

ALOSCA also remains viable for extended periods, particularly

in stressful conditions, allows 'spread' nodulation rather than single 'crown' and enables nodulation deeper on the root system, which means fixation further into spring when the topsoil has dried out.

Part-funded by a \$300,000 grant from the Australian Government's Regional Partnerships Program, the facility is located on ALOSCA shareholder Bill Scott's farm, 25km north of Watheroo.

During the tour of production facilities, ALOSCA Technical Manager, Chris Poole, revealed that about 1000 tonnes of ALOSCA granules were formulated at Watheroo in 2005/06 and that the bacterial culturing compo-

nent of the process was developed and piloted off-site at the Centre for Rhizobium Studies at Murdoch University.

"The experience and support from research Professor John Howieson and his team has been invaluable in overcoming the many challenges high volume bacterial culturing presents," Mr Poole says.

Professor Howieson says reaching the stage where ALOSCA now embedded Rhizobium into clay and moved it around the country, was a great achievement for all involved.

"Despite already being world's best practice for inoculating for dryland agriculture, ALOSCA still

has plenty of science to do to further improve its product and range.

"The exciting thing for farmers in WA and across Australia is the ALOSCA team, from the investors to the product developers, to the scientists, to the management team, is united, committed and focused on being the best and bringing the best granular legume inoculant technology to farmers," Professor Howieson says.

Neil Ballard of Ballard Seeds, Tincurrin, addressing the 30 farmers, investors, researchers and others at the launch, was blunt in his assessment of the former commonly used slurry method.

"Thousands of hectares of

legumes are sown annually without inoculation because the traditional slurry method is messy and time consuming when time is scarce at seeding," he says.

"Slurry is an outdated method, now replaced by an easy and efficient operation with ALOSCA.

"Dry sowing, with full Rhizobial survival, is now possible, as is under-sowing of cereals with hard seeded pasture varieties so that they emerge in the stubble the following year," Ballard says.

ALOSCA General Manager, Stuart Crockett, says ALOSCA was a wholly WA owned company and had recently received patents for its world first granular legume inoculating technology.