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**St. Louis, Mo. (Jun. 15, 2023)** — Bill & Melinda Gates Agricultural Innovations (Gates Ag One) is working with Australia’s national science agency to boost staple crop yields and incomes for smallholder farmers in Africa.

[The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation](#) (CSIRO) has been instrumental in developing improved varieties of important staple crops that are able to withstand threats from pests and diseases and climate change. For example, CSIRO researchers broke new ground when they isolated the very first rust pathogen gene that wheat plants detect to activate resistance, providing a significant boost to efforts to fend off wheat rust. CSIRO also played a key role in the development of the pod-borer resistant (PBR) cowpea, which is immune to a devastating insect pest. The PBR cowpea was first released in 2021 in Nigeria, where it is available to farmers.

“The CSIRO team is very happy to be working with Gates Ag One to progress research and innovation into important crops that hold the key to food and economic security in sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world,” said Dr Jose Barrero Sanchez, team leader at CSIRO.

CSIRO is a leader in research to advance global food security as well as tackling climate change and reducing biodiversity loss. Smallholder farmers are amongst the most impacted by climate change yet least responsible, with Africa producing just [three per cent](#) of global carbon dioxide emissions.

“CSIRO has a proven track record of delivering cutting-edge agricultural innovations that directly benefit smallholder farmers, which aligns with our

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mission to ensure farmers in low-income countries have the same chance to thrive as others,” said Joe Cornelius, CEO of Gates Ag One. “We’re immensely proud to be partnering with CSIRO to extend their work to develop improved staple crops with the potential to maximize yield, incomes, and food security.”

Gates Ag One, a non-profit affiliate of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was created to leverage advances in global crop science to serve the growing needs of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The organization invests in early scientific discoveries to accelerate the development of improved crops that can close the yield gap.

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**About Gates Ag One:**

[Bill & Melinda Gates Agricultural Innovations](#) (Gates Ag One) is a non-profit organization that accelerates breakthrough agricultural research to meet the urgent and neglected needs of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Out of the conviction that all lives have equal value, Gates Ag One serves the interests of smallholder farmers, who are most exposed to climate shocks yet lack the access that others have to the latest agricultural innovations. Gates Ag One works to level the playing field and empower smallholder farmers to transform their agricultural productivity, nutrition security and climate resilience. Learn more at [gatesagone.org](http://gatesagone.org).

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